

# MASTER'S THESIS

***Topic Conversation:* Reluctant Speakers in an 8th grade English Assessment-situation**

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## *Abstract*

### English

How can teachers assess the oral skills of pupils who are unwilling to communicate in the classroom? While assessment and learning have long been topics of concern for researchers, little attention has been paid to the use of the topic conversation in assessing reluctant speakers. This study aims to address this research gap by investigating the effectiveness of topic conversation as an assessment tool for improving learning outcomes among this specific group of pupils.

Specifically, my study explores how the use of topic conversation as an assessment tool can impact pupils' willingness to communicate, foreign language speaking anxiety, and ultimately, their language acquisition. To achieve this, I observed three 8th graders in Norway as they participated in both Norwegian and English topic conversations. Following the observation, the pupils were asked to complete two questionnaires to provide their perspectives on the topic conversation experience.

The study examines the implications of using English topic conversations as an assessment tool from the pupils' perspectives. The findings suggest that aspects of the English topic conversations triggered anxiety among the pupils. The study also addresses why and how to work with the reluctant speakers using the topic conversation as an assessment tool.

**Keywords:** *Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety, Reluctant Speakers, Willingness to Communicate, Formative Assessment, Group work, Topic Conversation, Pupil-centered activities, Oral skills, Second Language Acquisition, Language Learning*

## *Abstrakt*

Norsk

Hvordan kan lærere vurdere de muntlige ferdighetene til elever som ikke er villige til å kommunisere i klasserommet? Mens vurdering og læring lenge har vært tema for forskere, har det vært lite oppmerksomhet rundt bruken av fagsamtale i vurderingen av elever som opplever fremmedspråkangst. Denne studien tar sikte på å adressere dette forskningsgapet ved å undersøke effektiviteten av fagsamtale som et vurderingsverktøy for å forbedre læringsutbytte blant denne spesifikke elevgruppen.

Konkret utforsker studien hvordan bruken av fagsamtale som vurderingsverktøy kan påvirke elevenes vilje til å kommunisere, fremmedspråkangst og til slutt deres språktilegnelse. For å få til dette ble tre 8. klassinger observert i Norge mens de deltok i både en norsk og en engelsk fagsamtale. Etter observasjonene ble elevene bedt om å fylle ut to spørreskjemaer for å gi sine perspektiver på læringssituasjonen.

Studien undersøker implikasjonene av å bruke fagsamtale som et vurderingsverktøy, basert på elevenes perspektiv. Funnene tyder på at visse aspekter ved den engelske fagsamtalen utløste fremmedspråkangst blant elevene. Studien tar også for seg hvorfor og hvordan man kan jobbe med elevene som opplever talevegring, grunnet fremmedspråkangst, ved bruk av fagsamtale som et vurderingsverktøy.

**Nøkkelord:** *Fremmedsspråkangst, Talevegring, Vilje til å kommunisere, Underveisvurdering, Gruppearbeid, Elevsentrerte aktiviteter, Muntlige ferdigheter, Språktilegnelse, Språkopplæring*

### *List of Abbreviations*

Abbreviation	Definition
FLSA	Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety
TC	Topic Conversation
WTC	Willingness to Communicate
AFH	Affective Filter Hypothesis
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
RS	Reluctant Speaker(s)

# Table of Contents

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<i>ACKNOWLEDGENTS</i> .....	I
<i>ABSTRACT</i> .....	II
<i>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</i> .....	IV
<i>LIST OF TABLES</i> .....	VIII
<i>LIST OF FIGURES</i> .....	VIII
<i>LIST OF APPENDICES</i> .....	IX
<i>LIST OF KEY CONCEPTS</i> .....	X
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND .....	1
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION .....	2
1.3 THESIS STRUCTURE .....	3
<b>2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 RELUCTANT SPEAKERS .....	4
2.1.1 The Affective Filter Hypothesis .....	5
2.1.2 Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety .....	6
2.2 TOPIC CONVERSATION .....	9
2.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching .....	9
2.2.2 Topic Conversation and Second Language Acquisition .....	11
2.3 ASSESSMENT .....	12
2.3.1 The Norwegian Directorate of Education .....	13
2.3.2 The Topic Conversation as an assessment tool.....	16
2.4 SUMMARY .....	17
<b>3.0 METHOD</b> .....	<b>19</b>
3.1 SELECTION PROCESS.....	19
3.1.1 Formalities .....	19
3.1.2 Description .....	19
3.1.3 Participants .....	20

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN .....	20
3.2.1 Method.....	21
3.2.2 Questionnaire.....	21
3.2.3 Non-participant observation .....	23
3.3. ANALYSIS .....	25
3.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY .....	26
3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	27
<b>4.0 RESULTS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1 NORWEGIAN TOPIC CONVERSATION.....	29
4.1.1 Observation form.....	29
4.1.2 Questionnaire after the Norwegian TC .....	31
4.1.3 Notes taken during and after observation .....	32
4.2 ENGLISH TOPIC CONVERSATION .....	32
4.2.1 Observation form.....	33
4.2.2 Questionnaire after the English TC .....	35
4.2.3 Notes taken during and after the observation .....	36
4.3 SUMMARY .....	36
<b>5.0 DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>38</b>
5.1 MAIN FINDINGS .....	38
5.1.1 Follow-up questions .....	39
5.1.2 No communication between the pupils.....	40
5.1.3 Signs of FLSA .....	42
5.2 THE SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS.....	43
5.2.1 The groups perception .....	43
5.2.2 The groups' foreign language speaking anxiety .....	46
5.2.3 Impact on language acquisition .....	48
5.3 POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS .....	49
5.3.2 Pupils' perspective.....	49
5.3.3 Implications for teachers.....	51

5.4 SUMMARY .....	54
<b>6.0 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>56</b>
6.1 LIMITATIONS .....	56
6.2 REFLECTIONS .....	57
6.3 FURTHER RESEARCH.....	57
<b>7.0 REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>8.0 APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>66</b>



## *List of Tables*

---

Table 1: The group's reported seconds of FLSA signs.....	30
Table 2: The group's reported frequency of FLSA signs .....	30
Table 3: Seconds of observed FLSA signs in sub-categories and main categories. ....	33
Table 4: Seconds of observed FLSA signs in sub-categories and main categories .....	42
Table 5: The frequency of observed FLSA signs in sub-categories and main categories.....	42

## *List of Figures*

---

Figure 1: Process of the mixed method .....	21
Figure 2: Process of analysis .....	25
Figure 3: FLSA sign total reactions measured in seconds .....	30
Figure 4: FLSA signs total reactions measured in frequency .....	31
Figure 5: Mean on every answer from question 1 to 14.....	32
Figure 6: FLSA signs total reactions measured in seconds, in the English TC .....	33
Figure 7: Total FLSA signs reactions measured in frequency, in the English TC.....	34
Figure 8: Mean on every answer, from question 1 to 14, in the English TC .....	35
Figure 9: First categorization: Compared data from the Norwegian TC and English TC .....	44
Figure 10: Comparison of questionnaire data, categorized into positive and negative.....	45

## *List of Appendices*

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Appendix A: Information e-mail to the principal.....	67
Appendix B: The teacher's consent form.....	68
Appendix C: The pupils' electronic consent form .....	70
Appendix D: Approval from Sikt.....	73
Appendix E: Criteria for Reluctant Speakers .....	74
Appendix F: Gregersen's (2005) non-verbal cues form.....	75
Appendix G: Observation form.....	77
Appendix H: Horwitz' et al. (1986) FLCA scale .....	78
Appendix I: Electronic Questionnaire.....	78
Appendix J: Systematic Literary Search .....	81
Appendix K: Thematic Analysis .....	85
Appendix L: Exploratory Data Analysis .....	87
Appendix M: Individual answers from the questionnaire .....	88
Appendix N: Table of the main categorization .....	89
Appendix O: Questionnaire – Questions.....	90

## *List of Key Concepts*

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### *Reluctance versus Anxiety*

In the field of ‘foreign language acquisition’, it is vital to differentiate between ‘reluctance’ and ‘anxiety’ in terms of language learning. Reluctance refers to being unwilling to do something, while anxiety is a state of worry or nervousness (Oxford Learners’ Dictionary, 2023a, 2023b).

### *Reluctant Speaker (RS)*

Horwitz et al. (1986) define reluctance to communicate as "a state in which the learner has the language resources to complete a communicative act but is unwilling to do so because of anxiety about his/her ability to perform adequately" (p. 128). Based on this definition, I define RS as ‘pupils who are reluctant to communicate due to anxiety in an English as a foreign language setting.

### *Second Language Acquisition (SLA)*

SLA is the ‘process’ of learning a second language after acquiring the first (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 2), whereas language learning is the result of the process. This will be elaborated on further in subsection 2.1.3.

### *Topic Conversation (TC)*

In this thesis, the TC is defined as a communicative activity that provides pupils with an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. As Saabye (2013) notes, TCs can be used in any subject and time span and conducted in various ways (p. 36). The TC is *similar* to ‘Group Discussions’, as Littlewood (1981) defines the group discussions as “[...] an interactive process where a small group of individuals exchanges information, opinions, and ideas to solve a problem, in order to decide or explore a topic” (p. 56). This will be further elaborated and discussed in subsection 2.2.

### *Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA)*

FLSA refers to the anxiety that arises when speaking a second language. It is different from general anxiety and can be categorized into speaking, writing, and listening anxiety. The present thesis focuses on FLSA related to oral production. This definition is based on Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 154-167).

### *Assessment*

‘Formative Assessment’ is an ongoing, informal evaluation process that provides feedback to support learning and improve competence (Taras, 2012, p. 2), while ‘Summative Assessment’ is a formal evaluation that demonstrates what pupils have mastered at a given point in their education, typically graded and accredited



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

English teachers often face a significant challenge in motivating reluctant speakers (RS) to participate in oral activities. These pupils may need more confidence in their English language abilities or are introverted and shy. This phenomenon is called foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) (E. K. Horwitz et al., 1986a). Since this is a well-known phenomenon in the English classroom, English teachers must employ effective strategies to motivate these pupils, help them overcome their reluctance to speak, and simultaneously increase their willingness to communicate (WTC) (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). During my teaching placement, I observed that some primary and lower-secondary school pupils were hesitant to give presentations in front of the class, which I have observed is a commonly used assessment tool in the English classroom. However, I encountered another assessment form called the topic conversation (TC), which is an oral group activity. Malin Saabye defines TC as follows: "The subject discussion (TC) is an arena where pupils can show what they can do. The conversation can be used in any period, in any subject, and can be conducted in separate ways" (2013, p. 34). What I observed, was that in the encounter with the TC, some pupils who struggled with presentations in front of the class performed infinitely better in the TC assessment.

The objective of this study is to acquire an in-depth understanding of the assessment practices employed in lower secondary schools, with a specific focus on the use of a conversational method for assessing reading and writing skills in English. The aim of this thesis is to make a valuable contribution to the field of assessment and reading and writing skills in the English subject by exploring the phenomenon of FLSA (Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety) through the lens of the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1985) (AFH) and the approach communicative language teaching (CLT) (Littlewood et al., 1981a; Richards, 2006). Furthermore, the experience-based knowledge derived from the project can contribute to our understanding of developing concepts for competence enhancement and skill training for teachers in assessment situations where RS pupils are present. Finally, the thesis aims to test the hypothesis that learners who experience anxiety when speaking English are more comfortable being assessed in a group where a specific subject is discussed.

### 1.1 Background

My literature search suggests that there is little research on speaking reluctance in Norway (Daastøl, 2022; Moe, 2019; Skadsheim, 2016; Steinarsson, 2022). See Appendix J for the

‘Systematic Literature Search’ list. Further, even less research has been done on speaking reluctance in the English subject in Norway (Daastøl, 2022; Moe, 2019; Steinarsson, 2022). The studies in Norway have focused on the teacher’s perspective. During my study, I could not find any relevant research from the pupil’s perspective. For this reason, the choice fell on examining the issue from the pupil’s perspective.

According to Section 1-3 of the Education Act, teachers must adapt their teaching to the pupils' unique abilities, thus using a variety of teaching methods. To address the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, such as RS, research is essential, particularly in terms of English communication and how to increase their WTC. In addition, the Ministry of Education established a group to investigate an examination system for curriculum renewal subjects (Exam Review Group, 2019). In addition, the Exam Review Group (2019) recommends expanding knowledge on the formative and summative assessment field.

## 1.2 Research question

This study examines FLSA from the perspective of RS and their perceptions of being assessed through CLT using the TC tool. The study will use TC as a formative assessment tool in an 8th grade class in order to investigate its potential to reduce anxiety and its impact on second language acquisition (SLA). The reason for choosing 8th grade is that former research has predominantly focused on 10th graders and above, particularly on summative assessment (Daastøl, 2022; Moe, 2019; Skadsheim, 2016) and not formative assessment. The objective of this study is to contribute to the fields of RS and FLSA, with a particular focus on 8th grade, as these fields have not received substantial research thus far. The study will employ quantitative questionnaires *and* qualitative observations to answer the following:

***“What are the implications for using the topic conversation as an assessment tool with reluctant English speakers in the 8th grade?”***

To answer my primary research question, the following questions – referred to as subsidiary questions, will be investigated:

- 1. What is the group's perception of the topic conversation as a formative assessment tool?*
- 2. How does the assessment influence the group's foreign language speaking anxiety?*
- 3. In what aspect does the topic conversation impact language acquisition for the group?*

Finally, the study by Maren Moe titled "*A Teacher's Approach to Reluctant Speakers in the English Classroom: A Case Study*" influenced the research question and method for this present thesis. This is further elaborated in subsection 2.1.

### 1.3 Thesis structure

The structure of this thesis is designed to guide the reader through the various processes of my research. The main research question will be addressed throughout this thesis, whereas the subsidiary questions will be explicitly addressed in section 5.3. Due to the fact that the main research question encompasses three distinct areas within the EFL landscape - namely, RS, TC, and Assessment - as well as the perspective of pupils using TC, it was deemed necessary to divide the overarching research question into four subsidiary questions. These are presented in section 1.2.

The structure is as follows: The introduction defines the purpose, problem, and research question. The subsequent section presents relevant theories and research, which form the foundation for further analysis and discussion of the findings. The methodology is then described, including the research method and approach, followed by presenting results and findings. Thereafter will the discussion chapter provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the findings with the theoretical and research backdrop. Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes the results and provides insights into the research question, presenting limitations and suggestions for further research.

To facilitate the reader's understanding of this thesis, an overview of the more significant chapters will be provided in chapters 2, 4, and 5.



## 2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current chapter presents the theoretical framework required to answer the research question: *“What are the implications for using the topic conversation as an assessment tool with reluctant English speakers in the 8th grade?”*.

This chapter comprises three main sections. The first section, 2.1, Reluctant Speakers, delves into the AFH and investigates the process of language acquisition and learning. The section also presents theory and research on FLSA. Section 2.2, ‘Topic Conversation,’ explores theory and research on CLT before examining the intersection of TC and SLA. Moreover, section 2.3 presents regulations for teaching, practice, and assessment provided by the Norwegian Directorate of Education before examining the TC as an assessment tool. Finally, a summary in subsection 2.4 is provided.

### 2.1 Reluctant Speakers

The present thesis describes RS as “Pupils who are reluctant to communicate in an EFL setting due to anxiety” (See definition in the list of ‘Key Concepts’). One relevant study to present is Maren Moe's (2019). Her study is one of the few conducted in Norway in the field of FLSA. See Appendix J for the ‘Systematic Literary Search’. Whereas Moe (2019) investigates the field from the teachers’ perspective, this thesis focuses on the pupils’ perspective. In her study, Moe (2019) outlines three key findings: (1) oral participation is higher when assessment methods mirror ordinary teaching methods, (2) supportive and engaged teachers are crucial in encouraging hesitant pupils to participate orally, and (3) communicative and engaging oral activities boost pupils’ willingness to speak. Moe’s study and findings (2019) have affected the choice of ‘TC’ in this thesis, as stated in section 1.3. Firstly, the TC mirrors a natural conversation and group discussion, a commonly used exercise in the classroom. Secondly, the notion of ‘supportive and engaged teachers’ indicated that it would be interesting to observe a method where the teacher is active in the assessment. Thirdly, the last finding suggests using a communicative activity to assess RS since it boosts the pupils’ WTC.

Another relevant study conducted in Norway is Peter Skadsheim’s (2016) thesis on *“How can Norwegian subject teachers in lower secondary high school support pupils with speaking reluctance in their oral skills development?”* While Skadsheim and I have similar research questions, his thesis focused on speaking reluctance in the Norwegian subject from the teacher’s point of view. One of Skadsheim’s (2016) results is that reluctance to speak

appeared in conversations with the whole class. Another result is that RS, who had fewer listeners during an oral activity, gained more oral confidence over time. Furthermore, Skadsheim (2016) observed that classroom conversations trigger pupils' reluctance to speak, and that the pupils' level of communication increased when speaking in smaller groups or with the teacher. Moreover, Skadsheim (2016) found that group conversations tend to create a relaxed and natural setting, and the importance of preparation time, with support from the teacher, was emphasized additionally.

Over the last three decades, research in the field has provided valuable insight into factors that contribute to reluctance to speak among language learners (Aida, 1994; Donato & MacCormick, 1994; Gass & Varonis, 1985; E. K. Horwitz, 2010, 2016; Lynch, 1997; Oxford, 1994; Pappamihel, 2002; Phillips, 1992). It has been established that low confidence levels and fear of making mistakes are significant barriers to speaking (Lynch, 1997) and that task complexity can also impact speakers, with tasks that are too simple or challenging discouraging participation, while appropriately challenging tasks can encourage engagement (Gass & Varonis, 1985). Affective factors such as anxiety and motivation have been investigated likewise, and it was found that addressing these factors can boost pupils' confidence and engagement in the language classroom (Donato & MacCormick, 1994; Effiong, 2016). 'Confidence' will be further discussed in sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. Furthermore, strategies to improve language learning have also been explored by Oxford (1994), whose research emphasizes the importance of the creation of a supportive and positive learning environment that fosters a sense of comfort and security among learners, enabling them to undertake risks and embrace errors without fear of reprisal.

Another important researcher is Elaine Horwitz, who has throughout the years conducted research focusing on FLSA, individually and in the classroom (E. K. Horwitz et al., 1986a; E. K. Horwitz, 2010). Her theories and findings will be presented in 2.1.2. Horwitz's previous work makes the foundation for this thesis, both the theoretical framework in 2.1.2 and the method employed in Chapter 3.

### 2.1.1 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Stephen Krashen, an American linguist, has made noteworthy contributions to English as a foreign language. His numerous works, such as '*Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*' (1981) and '*The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*' (1985), have been foundational in language teaching and acquisition research. One of Krashen's theories in SLA is the AFH. The affective filter comprises emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, and

self-esteem. When learners are anxious or lack motivation, their affective filter is high, and they may struggle to learn new information. Conversely, when learners are motivated and confident, their affective filter is low, and they may be more open to learning (Krashen, 1981).

The AFH is relevant as this thesis examines how a group of RS experiences using a TC when being assessed and how it influences language acquisition. The AFH suggests that a learner's emotions and attitudes significantly affect their ability to acquire a language (Krashen, 1981, 1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). He argues that a supportive and low-stress learning environment can help lower the affective filter, enhancing language acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Negative emotions, such as anxiety, prevent efficient language input processing. However, the AFH (Krashen, 1985) likewise suggests that these obstacles can be reduced by generating interest, establishing low-anxiety environments, and reinforcing the learner's self-esteem.

Addressing how to diminish the affective filter in RS is one of the areas of investigation that this study aims to explore, as explained in section 1.2. Moreover, the theory presented on AFH adds to the theoretical framework for exploring the potential benefits and drawbacks of using TC as an assessment tool to answer the research question.

### 2.1.2 Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

The anxiety that comes with speaking in a second language (L2) is not the same as general anxiety. Foreign language anxiety can be divided into speaking, writing, and listening anxiety, according to Horwitz (1986, 2016). FLSA is related to oral production (Horwitz, 2010) and is the present study's focus.

Elaine Horwitz has provided research on 'language anxiety,' which refers to the fear, nervousness, and discomfort experienced by individuals when required to use a foreign language (Horwitz, 2010, 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986a). Her findings suggest that language anxiety can significantly affect language learning and use, as well as overall communication and confidence (Horwitz, 2010), which is supported by other researchers such as Woodrow (2006) and Yashima et al. (2004). The findings of their studies suggest that affective factors, such as confidence, attitudes, and anxiety, play an essential role in language learning and communication. Specifically, Woodrow's (2006) study established that confidence and positive attitudes toward language learning were strongly correlated with motivation and enjoyment of the subject, while anxiety levels were negatively correlated with confidence and attitudes toward language learning. Similarly, Yashima et al.'s (2004) study found that

attitudes towards the second language were positively correlated with WTC in that language, while anxiety levels were negatively correlated with WTC.

Moreover, in Horwitz' (2001) research, she found that language anxiety can manifest in numerous ways, including physical symptoms such as sweating, shaking, and increased heart rate and psychological symptoms such as self-doubt, negative self-talk, and avoidance behaviors. Horwitz (2001) also found, which Oxford's (1994) findings on language anxiety concur with, that language anxiety can be caused by various factors, including personal traits, classroom environment, teaching methods, and cultural differences.

Other researchers such as Dörnyei (1998), Dörnyei & Ushioda (2009), Roser et al. (1996), Soo & Yun (2016) concur with Horwitz' (2010), and Horwitz et al.'s (1986) findings. Dörnyei explored the relationship between language learners' motivation and anxiety. He found that anxiety could result from low motivation and that increasing learners' motivation could help reduce their anxiety (Dörnyei, 1998). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) argue that language learning is a complex process involving various psychological and social factors, including anxiety.

Roser et al. (1996) investigated the relationship between language learners' anxiety and their proficiency levels in the language. They found that language learners' anxiety was correlated with their levels of proficiency in the language. Soo and Yun (2016) studied the impact of various factors on language-speaking anxiety among Korean learners of English. They found that anxiety was negatively correlated with learners' WTC in English. According to McCroskey and Baer (1985) and Zarrinabadi (2019), WTC involves three key components: a person's perceived communication competence or confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in each situation. Firstly, the level of communication apprehension, or anxiety, a person experiences in a communication situation. Secondly, the person's motivation to communicate in a particular situation. This can be influenced by various factors, such as the perceived importance of the communication topic, the anticipated outcomes of the interaction, and the social norms of the situation. The third component of WTC, as identified by McCroskey and Baer (1985) and Zarrinabadi (2019), is the motivation to communicate in a specific situation. This aspect of WTC reflects a person's desire or willingness to communicate and can be influenced by various factors.

Following Horwitz' and the researchers' notions on FLSA, Lindy Woodrow (2006) also contributed to the field of Speaking Anxiety. In her study, Woodrow (2006) explored the experiences of English language learners and the factors contributing to their language anxiety. She found that a lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and negative past

experiences with language learning were familiar sources of anxiety, as in correlation with the researchers previously presented in this subsection (Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Horwitz et al., 1986; Oxford, 1994; Soo & Yun, 2016).

Overall, the findings of these researchers suggest that language-speaking anxiety is a significant factor affecting language learners and is closely related to learners' motivation, proficiency levels, and other psychological and social factors. Understanding the nature and sources of language-speaking anxiety can help educators and learners develop strategies to reduce anxiety and improve language learning outcomes.

To sum up, Horwitz's research (2016) highlights the importance of addressing language anxiety in language learning and teaching. Nonetheless, Horwitz found strategies that can help reduce language anxiety, such as creating a supportive classroom environment, using various teaching methods, and providing opportunities for pupils to practice in low-stake situations. For instance, research on language anxiety (E. K. Horwitz et al., 1986a; Pappamihel, 2002; Phillips, 1992; Teimouri et al., 2019) has consistently shown that anxiety can be a significant negative impact on language learning and practice. Addressing anxiety is an essential consideration for language educators and is an interesting field to investigate, which can aid in future work with language teaching.

In addition to social factors such as the fear of being judged by native speakers and cultural differences in communication styles, language anxiety in second language learners can be influenced by factors related to the language learning process itself. Cook (2002) suggests that non-native speakers can be influential language teachers, as they have gone through the same process of language acquisition as their students and can relate to their struggles and difficulties. However, non-native speakers are unlikely to have the same level of linguistic and cultural competence as native speakers, which could limit their ability to provide more advanced instruction or address more complex language issues. Woodrow's (2006) study on language anxiety further explores the challenges that second language learners face when communicating with native speakers of the target language, particularly the fear of being judged by native speakers and the pressure to avoid making mistakes. To address these challenges, Woodrow (2006) suggests that language educators should provide opportunities for learners to practice communicating with native speakers in supportive environments and to provide resources and strategies for navigating the challenges of communicating in a second language.

The research on language anxiety is relevant to the investigation in this thesis into the implications of using TC as an assessment tool for RS. Horwitz's work (E. K. Horwitz, 1986;

E. K. Horwitz et al., 1986a; E. K. Horwitz, 2010) highlights the importance of addressing anxiety in language learning and teaching. The research presented in this chapter consistently shows that anxiety significantly impacts language learning and use. Educators must be aware of the potential impact of anxiety on pupils' performance and well-being. By addressing anxiety and creating a supportive learning environment, educators can better support their pupils' language acquisition and help reduce any emotional barriers that may prevent RS from participating in conversation-based assessments. The insights provided by research on language anxiety will be instrumental in this thesis' attempt to answer the research question.

## 2.2 Topic Conversation

The TC can be used both as a tool for learning and as a form of assessment in equal measure with, for instance, submissions and presentations (Joval, 2017). Joval (2017) highlights that a TC takes care of all three elements of orality: speaking, listening, and conversation. What distinguishes the TC, for example, from oral presentations is that pupils must be able to keep a conversation going without having memorized a text in advance. The TC thus leads to more spontaneous orality (Joval, 2017, p. 36).

As the study aims to address how using a TC as an assessment tool impacts RS in 8th grade, it is crucial to provide a clear definition of what a TC entails. Saabye (2013) defines TC as follows: "The subject discussion is an arena where pupils have the opportunity to show what they can do. The conversation can be used in any period, in any subject, and can be conducted in separate ways" (p. 34). A TC is a communicative approach for group assessment that allows for evaluating individual and group performance. The following subsection presents the characteristics of CLT, and further details on the characteristics of a TC will be presented in subsections 2.2.1 to 2.2.3.

### 2.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching

As mentioned, the TC is considered a communicative approach in language teaching and assessment. Therefore, it is relevant for this thesis to elaborate on and define what CLT is and how the TC is considered a communicative approach. CLT has been widely recognized as a practical approach to language learning (Canale & Swain, 1980; Littlewood et al., 1981a; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 2017) and is implemented in the Norwegian school system.

According to Littlewood (1996) and Littlewood et al. (1981), CLT is a pupil-centered approach that emphasizes communication as the primary goal of language learning. One of

Littlewood's key findings is that CLT can increase pupil motivation and engagement. Thus, when pupils are encouraged to communicate meaningfully, they are likelier to stay engaged (Littlewood et al., 1981a). Furthermore, Littlewood et al. (1981) found that CLT can improve pupils' ability to use language in real-world situations. Littlewood et al. (1981) further state that by focusing on communication, pupils are more likely to develop the skills and confidence they need to use language in practical settings. They have discovered that CLT can be adapted to suit a variety of teaching contexts and learner needs correspondingly (Littlewood et al., 1981).

Moreover, Littlewood et al. (1981b) found that CLT can increase pupil motivation and engagement by emphasizing communication as the primary goal of language learning and improving pupils' ability to use language in real-world situations. CLT can be adapted to suit a variety of teaching contexts and learner needs. Richards (2006) also advocates for CLT, as it encourages learners to use language in meaningful and authentic ways. However, CLT has potential downsides, such as being time-consuming, challenging for beginner language learners, and not suitable for *all* learners.

Another study that highlights the effectiveness of CLT was carried out by Savignon (2017), who emphasizes the importance of authentic materials and tasks for language learning to reflect real-life language. An example that reflects real-life language is when players in an online game communicate with other players from different countries. Savignon further highlights the importance of teacher training and ongoing professional development as essential for effective CLT implementation (2017). Thus, a good knowledgebase of what CLT is can develop learners' communicative competence, including sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge (Savignon, 2017). Overall, CLT is a practical approach to language teaching that aims to help learners acquire language best when they can use it in authentic communicative contexts. However, teachers should consider their learners' needs, preferences, and goals when deciding whether to adopt CLT in their classroom as explained by Canale and Swain (1980), Littlewood et al., (1981a), Richards (2006) and Savignon (2017).

However, while CLT is a widely recognized and much-valued approach to language teaching that emphasizes genuine communication and interaction in language learning environments, the approach has potential downsides as well. CLT, for example, is time-consuming, has limited focus on accuracy and is challenging for beginners. CLT is not suitable for all learners according to Littlewood et al. (1981b). Firstly, CLT requires a considerable amount of time for both teachers and pupils. The communicative activities involve a lot of preparation time, and the teacher must facilitate and monitor the activities

closely. The activities might not produce immediate results, which can frustrate some pupils and teachers (Ellis, 2008). Secondly, CLT activities can be challenging for beginners with limited language proficiency. They may struggle to complete tasks that require complex communication skills, which could lead to frustration and demotivation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Moreover, CLT is more effective for learners motivated to learn and participate actively in the classroom. CLT may not be suitable for learners who prefer a more structured and teacher-centered approach to language learning (Nunan, 1991).

The CLT theory is nonetheless highly pertinent to the research question on which this thesis is based as it offers critical insights into the advantages and disadvantages of using TC as an assessment tool for RS. By integrating the knowledge obtained from the CLT theory into the research, the objective is to elucidate the most efficacious strategies to evaluate and instruct language abilities for individuals who are reluctant to speak and could help address this thesis' aim.

### 2.2.2 Topic Conversation and Second Language Acquisition

To differentiate between language acquisition and language learning and between first and second language acquisition (SLA), Krashen and Terrell's (1983) theoretical framework is employed to define SLA. See 'List of Key concepts' for the definition. Krashen and Terrell emphasizes the importance of input in both first language acquisition and SLA and suggest that language acquisition occurs subconsciously through exposure to comprehensible and meaningful language input (1983). In contrast, language learning involves conscious study and memorization of language rules and vocabulary. This thesis adopts Krashen's natural approach to language acquisition, respectively language acquisition, and how this happens according to the AFH.

On the importance of acquiring language, the Directorate of Education, entails that teachers should work with the basic skills and core values (2017). Schinke-Llano and Vicars (1993) found that a low affective filter and communication, and negotiation of meaning are essential for successful language learning. Teacher-centered activities may lead to a higher affective filter and less language acquisition. Therefore, pupil-centered activities and communicative activities that focus on the conversation's social setting should be employed to create a supportive learning environment for RS, according to Schinke-Llano and Vicars (1993). They state that the latter is crucial as successful language acquisition is the underlying goal of language teaching.



For RS to have a low affective filter it is vital to facilitate especially tailored teaching, as stated in section 2.1. Considering pupils' perceptions of anxiety in assessment, and focusing on communicative activities can help create a supportive learning environment and lower the affective filter, leading to successful language acquisition (E. K. Horwitz, 2010; Krashen, 1981). Research on language acquisition emphasizes the value of communication and negotiation of meaning (Krashen, 1981). The first subsidiary question in this thesis aims to capture RS perspectives on the use of TC as an assessment tool, which can help address the aspects of the assessment situation that relate to anxiety, leading to successful language learning.

## 2.3 Assessment

Since the main research question pertains to the utilization of TC as an assessment tool, it was imperative to delve into the facet of assessment. Consequently, the focus is on how assessments impact both TC and RS. The theoretical framework presented in this subsection serves as the basis for the discussions in subsections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. These sections will address the subsidiary research questions "*What is the group's perception of the topic conversation as a formative assessment tool?*" and "*How does the assessment impact the foreign language speaking anxiety of the group?*" through the use of results obtained from the study.

Given that the participants in this study are pupils in the 8th grade who have had little to no experience with either formative or summative assessments, the focus is on formative assessment. Black and William's (1998a, 1998b) research is relevant for the present study as it highlights the importance of formative assessment and its potential benefits, specifically the potential of using TC as a formative assessment tool among 8th graders. According to Black and William (1998a), formative assessment is one of the most powerful ways to improve learning, as it provides ongoing feedback that can be used to adjust instruction in real-time. Furthermore, Black and William (1998a, 1998b) established several key principles which must be followed for formative assessment to be effective: (1) learning goals and criteria must be defined and shared with the pupils, (2) a variety of assessment techniques should be used to gather evidence of learning, (3) feedback must be timely, specific and actionable, (4) pupils should be involved in the assessment process, and (5) assessment data should be used to inform instructional decisions.

As previously stated, formative assessment is utilized in this study through the TC's group conversation format. This was because the pupils in this study are in the 8th grade, and they have had no experience with summative assessment. Thus, it is essential to examine the Directorate of Education's position on formative assessment. The Directorate of Education (2020a) asserts that teachers must encourage pupil participation and further a desire to learn, engage in dialogue with pupils regarding their development, and provide guidance on further learning. The Education Act (2020) and regulations from the Directorate of Education (The Directorate of Education, 2020a) provide a framework for formative assessment and associated teacher practices. Moreover, it states that teachers shall actively include pupils in the assessment and provide guidance on further research. It is important to highlight that Black and William's (1998a, 1998b) principles on formative assessment are present in the Norwegian Directorate of Education's (2020a) portrayal of formative assessment.

### 2.3.1 The Norwegian Directorate of Education

The first educational policy that is relevant to this study is the Education Act (2020). The second is the Norwegian Directorate for Education, respectively the Knowledge Promotion 2020 (LK20) with its core values, principles, and basic skills.

The purposes of assessment in subjects are to promote learning and contribute to a desire to learn during the training and also to provide information on competence during and at the end (regulations to the Education Act § 3-3). This does not mean that all assessments must contribute to a desire to learn, but it does emphasize that the assessment practice is important for pupils' and apprentices' desire to learn and self-esteem. Since the TC is used for an assessment in this study, elaborations on the framework provided by the Norwegian Directorate of Education (2017) are vital. They state that assessment during the course, formative assessment, must be used to adapt the training. This is related to Section 1-3 of the Education Act (2020), which states that education must be adapted to the individual's abilities and requirements. The overall section also mentions adapted training in the assessment several times, stating :

"Providing room for in-depth learning requires that the school takes into account that pupils are different and learn at different paces and with different progressions. [...] Good assessment practices, where expectations are clear and the pupils participate and are heard during the learning process, is a key to adapting teaching" (The Directorate of Education, 2017).

Given the focus of this study on employing the TC as a tool for assessing RS English speakers, it is crucial to consider the guidelines set forth by the Norwegian Directorate of

Education (2020b) regarding assessment practices, formative evaluation, and personalized teaching methods to cater to diverse individual abilities and requirements. Assessment practices, where expectations are clear and pupils are heard during the learning process, are key to adapting teaching (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). By incorporating theoretical and regulatory frameworks, it will be possible to demonstrate the significance and relevance of the research question in a broader educational context.

### **Core Values**

In the Norwegian education system, promoting core values is essential for creating a positive and inclusive learning environment. The objective clause expresses values that define the Norwegian society, and school practice (The Directorate of Education, 2017). Three values stipulated by the Directorate were deemed relevant for this study as they highlight the significance of a supportive classroom, fostering confidence in pupils, and promoting respect. These values include *human dignity*, *identity and cultural diversity*, as well as *democracy and participation* (The Directorate of Education, 2017).

*Human dignity* recognizes the uniqueness of each individual and promoting respect for differences (The Directorate of Education, 2017). In the context of assessing reluctant English speakers using the TC, it is crucial for teachers to consider this value. Teachers should create a supportive environment that encourages pupils to participate without fear of judgment or discrimination. Providing equal treatment and respect for all pupils is essential, and in the case of RS, it is crucial to create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates differences. This involves not only promoting acceptance of differences, but also cultivating an appreciation for the unique contributions that individuals from different backgrounds can make to society. When focusing on the learning aspect of this thesis, the latter on the importance of promoting human dignity can help lower the affective filter by increasing their motivation and engagement, and facilitate language acquisition and learning (Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Moreover, *Identity and cultural diversity* refers to the importance of instilling confidence in pupils' language proficiency and developing their language identity in the English subject (The Directorate of Education, 2017). By focusing on these values, teachers can create opportunities for pupils to use language for thinking, meaning-making, communication, and social connection (Ellis, 2008, 2015). This can improve pupils' confidence in speaking English and facilitate their participation in the TC (Richards, 2006).

Finally, *democracy and participation* emphasize the importance of promoting respect for diversity and peaceful conflict resolution. Thus, promoting democratic values and principles among pupils can support their growth and development (The Directorate of Education, 2017). Thus, facilitating a supportive learning environment where pupils show democracy and engagement. Promoting core values is essential for creating an inclusive and respectful learning environment that supports the growth and development of all pupils. By considering values such as human dignity, identity and cultural diversity, and democracy and participation, teachers can create opportunities for pupils to learn and thrive (The Directorate of Education, 2017). This, in turn, can facilitate language acquisition and learning and help lower the affective filter for reluctant English speakers.

### **Principles for the school's practice**

Considering that the research question (See section 1.2) pertains to the field of RS, it is essential to comprehend the factors that give rise to pupils' reluctance to engage in oral communication in the English classroom. The possible factors have been addressed in subchapter 2.1, along with possible actions teachers should take in working with RS. Moreover, subchapter 2.1 also highlights the term 'Confidence' and 'Learning Environment' since these terms have been the subject of investigation for over three decades, and continue to be relevant to the present day (Daastøl, 2022; Moe, 2019; Zhao, 2022). As these terms continue to receive persistent attention, the two following principles were deemed relevant for this present thesis.

*An inclusive learning environment* is fundamental to creating a positive culture that fosters the academic and social development of pupils (The Directorate of Education, 2017). When pupils feel anxious and uncertain, their ability to learn may suffer. Therefore, a confidence-inspiring learning environment must be created and maintained through the collaborative efforts of caring and transparent adults working alongside pupils, school staff, parents, and guardians. Pupil involvement is an essential aspect of creating a successful learning environment (The Directorate of Education, 2017). Pupils must actively participate and assume co-responsibility for the learning environment they create with their teachers (The Directorate of Education, 2017). Learning occurs through interaction with others and requires communication, collaboration, and learning processes. It is the school's responsibility to teach pupils to use good judgment when expressing themselves and to interact appropriately in various contexts (The Directorate of Education, 2017).

According to the Directorate of Education (2017), the principle of *Teaching and differentiated instruction* focuses on prioritizing pupils' learning and development, irrespective of their background and aptitudes. To ensure equal opportunities for all pupils, good classroom management based on professional judgment and a warm environment are necessary. Schools should provide time for in-depth learning, considering the varying learning speeds of each pupil, and they should encourage trial and error as a source of learning (The Directorate of Education, 2017). Assessments should promote learning and development. The Directorate of Education states that differentiated instruction involves adapting teaching methods and approaches, curriculum, and assessment in order to cater to pupils' varying needs (2017). The principles also state that teachers must exercise good judgment when implementing differentiated instruction (The Directorate of Education, 2017).

### **Basic skills**

The Norwegian education system aims to incorporate five basic skills, as recommended by the Directorate of Education (2017). These skills are integral to understanding and learning subjects and are crucial for developing social relations and individual identities. They also help students participate in educational, occupational, and societal contexts. It is imperative to develop these skills continuously throughout the learning journey, from learning how to read and write to comprehending advanced subject texts. All teachers in every subject should support students in honing these basic skills. English oral skills involve listening, speaking, and conversing to convey meaning effectively. This entails presenting information, selecting appropriate strategies, and adapting the language to suit the situation, recipient, and purpose. To develop English oral skills, pupils must gradually improve their spoken language accuracy and nuance to communicate effectively on diverse topics in both formal and informal settings with people from various linguistic backgrounds.

#### **2.3.2 The Topic Conversation as an assessment tool**

Several researchers have explored the use of group discussions as an assessment tool (Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Boud & Soler, 2016; Brookfield & Preskill, 2015). Although these studies do not directly discuss TC, their contribution to the field are included since group discussions are an aspect of TC and both terms will be used interchangeably in this subsection. Littlewood (2005) defines group discussion as "[...] an interactive process in which a small group of individuals gather to exchange information, opinions, and ideas in order to solve a problem, make a decision, or explore a topic" (p. 56).

Group discussions, respectively the use of TC, can be advantageous and disadvantageous as an assessment tool (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Weir, 1990). One benefit of a well-designed TC assessment is that it can evaluate a pupil's communication ability, including their ability to express knowledge concisely and analyze a topic while encouraging active listening (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Weir, 1990). In addition, Fulcher and Davidson (2007) state that group discussions can provide valuable feedback on critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills, leading to a more meaningful assessment experience. However, there are potential drawbacks to using TC, such as unequal participation, inconsistency in results, time-consuming nature, and groupthink (Brookfield & Preskill, 2015; Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Biggs & Tang, 2011; Johnson & Johnson, 2015). Furthermore, using TC as an assessment tool may not cover all relevant topics or concepts, and may be subject to biases and not suitable for all pupils, such as those with social anxiety (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Weir, 1990). Therefore, educators should carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of using group discussions as an assessment tool and provide proper guidance to pupils beforehand to ensure a fair and standardized assessment.

In conclusion, a TC assessment can be a valuable tool for assessing a pupil's communication and critical thinking skills (Littlewood et al., 1981b; Richards & Schmidt, 2014), but it should be used in conjunction with other assessment methods to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the pupils learning (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Weir, 1990). Incorporating conversation as an assessment tool can give teachers a more comprehensive understanding of their pupils' abilities and enable them to adapt their teaching accordingly. Through conversation, teachers can better understand their pupils' strengths and weaknesses, identify gaps in their knowledge, and develop targeted interventions to support their learning.

## 2.4 Summary

Chapter 2 has presented relevant theories and literature which is focused on RS, TC, and assessment, in order to answer the research question ***“What are the implications for using the topic conversation as an assessment tool with reluctant English speakers in the 8th grade?”*** The theoretical framework of this thesis suggests how to facilitate successful language acquisition for RS and the possible implications for doing so. In subsection 2.1.1, Krashen highlights the importance of lowering the affective filter, suggesting that the teacher should create a supportive learning environment and address the pupils' perceptions of anxiety. Which in turn will bolster their confidence. ‘Confidence’ and ‘Learning

Environment’ are terms that have been the subject of investigation for over three decades and continue to be relevant today, as evidenced by the continued discourse surrounding them (Daastøl, 2022; Moe, 2019; Zhao, 2022). This chapter also highlights the importance of assessment in language learning and teaching. The research of Black and William presents guidelines on how to exercise formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998b; 2009) and is relevant for this study as assessment here is formative.

Moreover, the study draws on research on CLT, which emphasizes the importance of using language in authentic communicative contexts, providing feedback on language use, and promoting learner motivation. The study acknowledges that while CLT has many benefits, it may not be suitable for all learners or teaching contexts as stated in subsection 2.2.1. Lastly, The Norwegian Directorate of Education (2017) emphasizes the need for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. This aims at fostering motivation, confidence, and participation, which in turn can lead to language learning for RS in assessment situations.

## 3.0 METHOD

As already established, this thesis focuses on RS responses toward TC as an assessment tool. A mixed method field study was chosen due to the intricacy of the research question and its investigation of various facets of the assessment scenario. Two methods are used in this thesis: (1) pre- and post-questionnaire, and (2) non-participant observation. The questionnaire aims to obtain quantifiable data, enabling the study to compare pupils' perceptions of Norwegian and English TC. As for the observation, its purpose is to acquire data on the levels of FLSA in different settings and determine if it can contribute to understanding the use of TC in assessing RS.

The present chapter will discuss and rationalize various aspects of the present thesis's methodological choices, including the formalities and research design. See appendix D for 'Approval from SIKT'. Furthermore, the validity and reliability will be presented. Lastly, ethical considerations will be discussed.

### 3.1 Selection process

#### 3.1.1 Formalities

An 8th grade class in a lower secondary school in Norway was selected for the purposes of this research. I already had a connection to the school, its teachers, and the principal thanks to my earlier practice placements. Having an established relationship with the informants was essential, as it is considered crucial in terms of language speaking anxiety by not being an unfamiliar factor that triggers their FLSA (Houts et al., 2010; Micheletta, 2012).

After discussing the research project with the principal, a formal letter was sent via e-mail (Appendix A). Also, I asked my former practice placement teacher if she and her class would like to participate in my research project. She answered positively and was willing to help collect consent and select RS as participants. The selection was based on criteria I designed by modifying aspects of the FLCA scale (Appendix H) and Horwitz's definition of RS (1986, p. 128). See definition in 'List of Key Concepts'. As the pupils in the class are under the age of 15, parental consent was necessary. An application was accordingly sent to SIKT, who approved my project.

#### 3.1.2 Description

This thesis aims to uncover how a TC as an assessment tool impacts the levels of FLSA in a group of RS. Thus, it is vital to investigate the pupils' point of view. To do so, I chose to have



one Norwegian TC and one English TC. This was because FLSA focuses on anxiety when speaking a second language, not anxiety in its general form, as mentioned in the FLSA theory subsection 2.1.2. This indicates that FLSA occurs only when speaking in a foreign language and Norwegian is not a foreign language for my focus group. As the focus group consists of RS, an interview was not appropriate. Therefore, to avoid increasing the focus groups' FLSA, I chose to use questionnaires.

A group of three pupils who met the criteria of FLSA was established for observation. See appendix E for the criterion. The group conducted two TCs with the teacher: one in Norwegian and one in English. After each TC, they answered a questionnaire that investigated their experiences of the TCs and if they felt any FLSA.

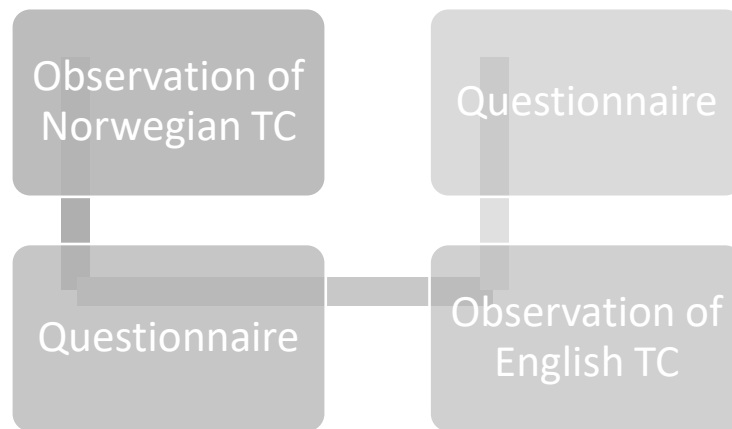
### 3.1.3 Participants

The participants for the present study were the three RS and the teacher. Since the research focuses on RS, it was crucial to ensure that they felt comfortable, at least as best they could, in an environment where they would normally feel reluctant to speak. Thus, the participants were chosen from a class that was comfortable with me. Since the thesis deals with RS, the chance of them not producing orally is high when placing them in a situation that requires them to communicate or if they feel observed (E. K. Horwitz, 2016; Houts et al., 2010; Steinarsson, 2022). Hence, as a researcher collaborating with the teacher, I must facilitate classroom-similar activities to ensure they will carry out the TC. Similar activities can help them feel comfortable and lower their affective filter (E. K. Horwitz et al., 1986a; Moe, 2019).

## 3.2 Research design

Due to the complexity of the main research question, and how the question involves various aspects of educational policies, this thesis employs **two** methods. These methods, both qualitative *and* quantitative, aim to explore the implications of using a TC as an assessment tool for reluctant 8th grade speakers. Since the research question delves into the field of TC, RS, and assessment, it was natural to choose a mixed method. The choice of using the mixed method will be justified in the following subsections.

The data was collected accordingly to figure 1. The following subsections will provide a detailed description about this thesis' mixed method approach.



*Figure 1: Process of the mixed method*

### 3.2.1 Method

Mixed methods research is a research approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). As Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) explain, mixed methods research aims to provide a broad understanding of the research problem beyond what could be achieved through solely qualitative or quantitative research. The idea behind using a mixed-method approach in this study was to integrate diverse forms of data. Mixed methods research can present a holistic view of the research topic while enhancing the validity and triangulation of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 4). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), mixed methods research can be beneficial when a research question requires a combination of different types of data or when a research topic is complex and requires multiple perspectives to fully understand. Mixed methods research aims to collect qualitative and quantitative data to supplement each other and gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). When using quantitative methods, data can be collected and analyzed as measurable units. In contrast, qualitative methods aim to capture experiences and individual points of view that cannot be measured numerically (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

### 3.2.2 Questionnaire

Planning the questionnaire involved careful consideration of the research problem since it was essential to ensure that it was clear, concise, and easy to understand to get reliable and accurate results. The aim of the questionnaire was to provide more depth to the data retrieved from this study's mixed method, namely focusing on the pupils' perspective. When designing the questionnaire, it was essential to consider the target group and tailor the questions to their

specific needs and values and their level of understanding. The questionnaire used after the Norwegian and English TC were identical and in Norwegian to avoid misunderstandings. The questionnaire was designed as a Likert Scale, with scales from 0 to 4. When analyzing the results based on the questionnaire, I tried to simplify the analysis process by calculating and presenting the mean for the entire group's answer to each question. Thus, giving me statistical numbers to compare the results of the Norwegian TC and English TC. Furthermore, the Likert scale was translated into text to simplify the discussion in chapter 5: (0) "Not at all/No", (1) "Very little", (2) "To some degree", (3) "To a higher degree", and (4) "Very much/Yes".

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, it was essential to test the latter. The issues of validity and reliability are addressed in subsection 3.4. To ensure that the questions were understandable, and to clarify possible misunderstandings, a fellow student tested the questionnaire. Based on the feedback, revisions were made.

Before the data collection started, I explained the purpose of the research to reduce their anxiety about being observed and mitigate any potential changes in behavior (Spradley, 1980) and to clarify any questions they might have had.

As previously stated, the questionnaires aimed to collect the pupils' perspectives. Studies on FLSA in *Norway* have mainly been carried out from the point of view of teachers (Skadsheim, 2016), whereas the phenomena of FLSA studied from the pupils' point have mainly been investigated in other countries (Aida, 1994; Dörnyei, 1998; Soo & Yun, 2016; Teimouri et al., 2019). Thus, was it interesting for this present thesis to examine the phenomena from the pupils' perspective in Norway.

To measure the RS's experience, two different assessments and two questionnaires were based on the FLCA schema of Horwitz et al. (1986) (Appendix H). The two questionnaires are identical and function as a pre-and post-test for the observations. The pre-and post-test research design is defined by Lund as a quasi-experimental method (Lund, 2002). According to Lund (2002), quasi-experimental methods contain an experiment with little control over irrelevant factors. Lund (2002) explains that there are two research designs with a pre-and post-test, one with one group and one with several groups. On this occasion, a pre-and post-test with one group was used as a research design. With a pre-and post-test design, two tests are normally carried out: a test before and one after the intended data-collection (Lund, 2002). In this study, a test was done after the Norwegian TC and another after the English TC. The data collected from the two identical questionnaires were used to compare the analysis.

It is important to note that the questionnaire design should consider the target population language level, cultural background, and the study context. In this study, the language used in the questionnaire was Norwegian to avoid misunderstandings and ensure that it was easy for the target population to understand. The questionnaires were distributed in class by the teacher, allowing the researcher to be present to answer any questions the pupils may have had. First, the data were collected, then analyzed, and the results were interpreted.

The questions are divided into five different categories: (1) Preparations, (2) Nervousness before TC, (3) Feelings during TC, (4) After TC, and (5) Thoughts about TC. The category “Preparations” includes questions 1 and 2, “Nervousness before TC” includes questions 3, 4, and 5, “Feelings during TC” includes 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, “After TC” includes 11 and 12. And lastly, “Thoughts about TC” includes questions 13 and 14. The list of questions can be seen in Appendix O.

### 3.2.3 Non-participant observation

In addition to the questionnaires, a qualitative observation of the TC was carried out with the RS. Given that the research question focuses on RS in an assessment situation, it is vital to investigate this circumstance. Since the focus is on RS, it was crucial to avoid triggering their FLSA. Therefore, an active choice was to conduct a non-participant observation, which is defined as “Non-participant observation refers to observing behavior in a natural setting without participating in the participants' activities.” (Bernard, 2011, p. 259). Thus, the observation took place from the sideline, without interfering with the TC or interacting with the participants. They knew, however, that I was present and an engaged outsider (Johannessen et al., 2010). By not participating in the observation, it was possible to gain insight into the pupils' behavior, the group environment, and whether or not unique situations suggest well-being or dissatisfaction when being assessed.

During the first TC session, the Norwegian TC, the teacher introduced a conversation framework. This included presenting their topic, discussing what was practiced and answering follow-up questions. After the presentations, the group completed a survey. Consent forms had to be collected electronically from participants and their parents beforehand. Before undertaking the data collection, participants' and parents' consent had to be collected. The consent forms (Appendix C) were sent to the teacher, who then sent them to the parents for approval. This was done electronically in two rounds, using nettskjema.no.

Johannessen et al. (2010) explain that observation is the only way to acquire valid information in many contexts “ [...] because knowledge is not always formulable, possible to

remember or possible to construct in an interview" (p. 118). They also mention that we do not always do what we say we do. What we want or strive to achieve in practice can be challenging to translate into action, and experiences of actions are always subjective. Hatch (2002) refers to Patton (1990) on some of the advantages of observation as a method and writes: "Firsthand experience allows the researcher to be open to discovering inductively how the participants understand the setting» (p. 72). The result from the analysis concurs with this notion, as the data from the questionnaire was contradictory.

The original plan was to record the observation on video, but because of the possibility of triggering the groups FLSA, the choice fell on taking notes. A schema was designed to analyze and interpret the observation based on the Non-verbal cues form (Gregersen, 2005) for both the Norwegian TC and the English TC. See appendix F for Gregersen's (2005) form.

The observation form (Appendix G) was divided into four categories. Each category was divided into four sub-categories. The categories are face activity, gazing, body activity, and posture. These were studied to see how they changed during the conversation. The aim was to (1) to explore whether there were any differences in behavior in the group between the two different conversations conducted in the Norwegian TC and the English TC (2) if all the participants were RS, and (3) to explore how the group reacted in the English TC. The same observation form was used for the Norwegian and English TC to measure the differences. Acquiring knowledge about how RS behaves in this type of assessment, using TC as an assessment tool could help teachers to note language anxiety early and prepare for positive experiences when using TC for assessment. This knowledge could thus facilitate language learning and acquisition (Krashen, 1981). Also, the observation was designed to identify other possible factors regarding the use of TC in a group with RS, thereby helping answer the research question.

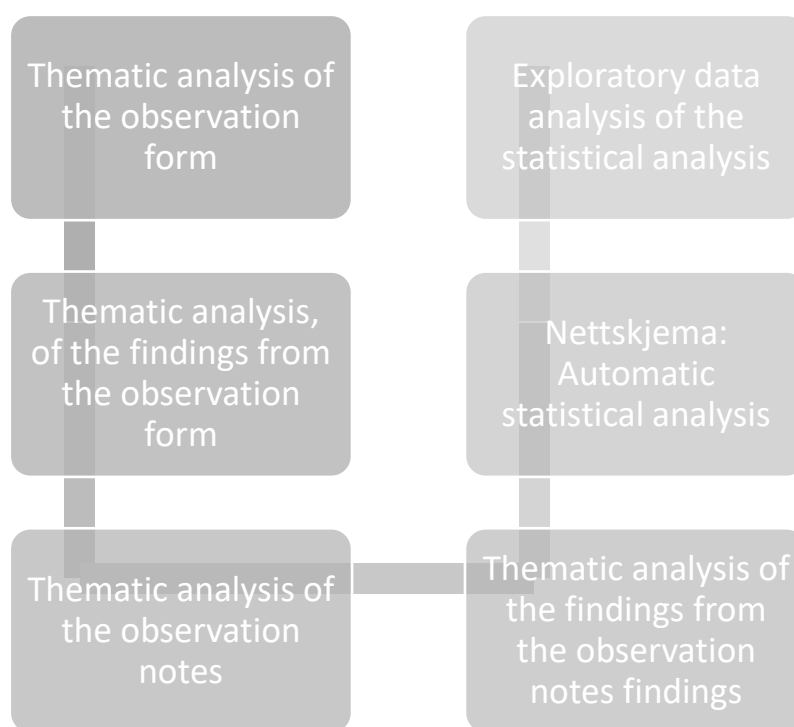
Moreover, to minimize the potential influence of my presence, I adopted a passive role during the observation (Babbie, 2016, p. 211). As established in the theory chapter, a positive classroom environment can either increase or decrease the level of FLSA for the focus group (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie, 2009; King, 1990; Oxford, 1994). Therefore, I chose to do my best to blend into the environment to reduce anxiety.

Efforts were made to make the situation as natural as possible and not influence behavior. The extent to which this type of observation may influence the participants in the study depends on various factors, such as the nature of the research, the setting, and the participants' awareness of being observed. Modifying one's behavior because someone is watching is known as the Hawthorne effect – a well-known phenomenon in social research

where participants modify their behavior because they know they are being observed (Wickström & Bendix, 2000). Similarly, in non-participant observation, the mere presence of the researcher may cause participants to modify their behavior. As a result, they may become more self-conscious, try to conform to social norms, or act in a way they think is expected of them. This can lead to a bias in the data collected, as the observed behavior may not accurately reflect participants' actual behavior in natural settings (Spradley, 1980, p. 80).

### 3.3. Analysis

To analyze the data from the questionnaires and observations, I employed two methods: thematic analysis (appendix K) and exploratory data analysis (appendix L). Thematic analysis is a qualitative research technique that identifies patterns or themes within data by generating initial codes, searching for themes, refining, and naming themes, and producing a report summarizing the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). See figure 2 for visual representation.



*Figure 2: Process of analysis*

The thematic analysis was used for the data collected during the observation. The thematic categorizations are presented in subsections 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, and 4.2.3. These results were further analyzed as unexpected data emerged. The unexpected data regarded the role of the teacher in the assessment situation and the effect of the English TC on the RS.

In contrast, exploratory data analysis is a statistical approach that explores data and identifies patterns or trends (Grolemund & Wickham, 2017, p. 2). I employed Nettskjema.no to automatically analyze the questionnaires, and based on their analysis, I further conducted an exploratory data analysis to capture the RS attitudes towards TC.

For the questionnaires, I first calculated descriptive statistics (Appendix M). Thereafter I calculated the means of the categorized questions (Appendix N). I then performed a frequency distribution and correlation analysis on both questionnaires for the sake of comparison. Finally, I identified patterns with the aid of color coding (Appendix K, L, M, N) to see if I could find any correlations between the results. And at the same time, compared the data from the two questionnaires and observation to complete the data analysis in subsection 5.3.

To summarize, while thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that focuses on identifying patterns or themes within textual or visual data, exploratory data analysis is a statistical approach that aims to explore and understand quantitative data.

### 3.4 Validity and reliability

In any research method, it is essential to consider the meanings and applications of validity and reliability concerning the specific research questions and methods being used and to take steps to ensure that the research is as valid and reliable as possible (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2016). As stated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), validity and reliability must be considered in every aspect of mixed-method research, where this thesis focuses on questionnaires and observation. By questioning validity, it can be established if the method chosen gives an accurate and truthful picture of the research or if other factors pollute it. In the case of reliability, the focus is on the consistency and stability of the research instrument or tool (Befring, 2015, p. 51) In this study, both validity and reliability were addressed in several ways which the following paragraphs will explain.

Once the procedure for conducting the study was decided and the data was collected, it was necessary to examine the accuracy and consistency of the data itself, thereby establishing the reliability of the research (Befring, 2015, p. 53). There are several ways to ensure reliability, one of which is to have clear categories into which answers can easily be classified (Befring, 2015, p. 54). See Appendix K, L, M, and N for my categorizations of the data.

Validity was established by thoroughly reviewing the literature on RS, assessment, and language acquisition literature (Babbie, 2016). The questionnaire was developed based on

the literature review. The questionnaire was reviewed by two co-students to ensure that the questions were relevant to the research question. Validity was increased by conducting a factor analysis on both the questionnaire and the observation form. The factor analysis was used to identify the underlying constructs of speaking anxiety. The factor analysis results confirmed that the survey questions measured the intended constructs: the pupil's perspective on using TC and the implications of using TC as an assessment tool. Furthermore, using a well-established scale designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) enabled me to raise the level of validity. See appendix H for the scale. Finally, before collecting data, I checked the research design and procedure with my supervisor and fellow students.

Reliability is often evaluated in relation to whether other researchers can reproduce the same or similar result(s) on other occasions and other circumstances (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 250). The norm states that the presentation of the results must be such that it is possible to control, verify, and critique the results (Dalland, 2012, p. 118). When it comes to qualitative research, the starting point is different to that applying to quantitative research, as it is not possible to reproduce a qualitative interview exactly. When using a qualitative method, you do not have measurable data as in a quantitative method. The reliability of the research will also be affected by the researcher's preconceptions during the process of analyzing the data from both the observation and questionnaire.

It was necessary in this study to consider the difference between ensuring reliability in qualitative and quantitative methods. Reliability was established to some degree by conducting a test-retest reliability analysis on the questionnaire and observation. To achieve a higher level of reliability, a re-test could be taken using the same instruments in a different group of RS in order to measure the reliability of the data.

### 3.5 Ethical considerations

The focus of this thesis was to collect data from both pupils and their teachers in order to measure how pupils experienced FLSA during a TC and what the implications of using TC were for assessment. The thesis addresses a vulnerable topic prevalent in many English classrooms, and all necessary precautions have been taken to ensure the wellbeing of those involved in the research. According to Dalland (2017, p. 236), research ethics is concerned with the assessment of research in all forms, covering everything from the planning stages to the methods used. Ethics in research involves assessing research in accordance with social norms and values. Survey researchers have a responsibility to ensure that their work is



conducted ethically and according to established standards, including obtaining informed consent from participants, protecting the confidentiality of respondents, and minimizing any potential harm (Babbie, 2016, p. 70-73).

As a researcher, I am individually and institutionally autonomous and responsible for addressing ethical considerations in this study. In line with APA 7th guidelines, previous literature on heteronormativity, textbooks, and methods have been thoroughly reviewed and appropriately cited throughout the text to ensure accuracy (NESH, 2022). This is in fulfillment of my responsibility towards other researchers and their work (NESH, 2022). Central ethical requirements and considerations in research processes are the researcher's responsibility, including gaining voluntary and informed consent, protecting confidentiality, accepting the consequences of the research, and obtaining formal approval for the research project (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Before data collection began, several consent forms were signed (Appendix B and C) to ensure that sensitive information was kept confidential, and participants' anonymity was protected. The choice to focus on pupils' perspectives over teachers' perspectives was made after considering psychological factors, including anxiety. Protecting the anonymity of this vulnerable group was of utmost importance.

## 4.0 RESULTS

The following chapter presents the collected data chronologically, starting with the Norwegian TC followed by the English TC. The data was collected by observing the TCs before the participants completed the questionnaires. As explained in section 3.2.2, the questionnaires were designed to gather the pupil's perspectives and to compare the data sets. The questionnaire results are presented in chart format. To observe signs of FLSA, a form based on Tammy S. Gregersen's (2005) observation form from her study *"Nonverbal Cues: Clues to the Detection of Foreign Language Anxiety"* was utilized (See Appendix F). The results of the FLSA observation forms are presented in charts and tables throughout the chapter. Following the presentation of observation and questionnaire results, a subsection outlines the notes taken during the observation. Lastly, an overview of the results is presented. These results will be subsequently discussed in chapter 5, where they will be discussed in relation to my research question: ***"What are the implications for using the topic conversation as an assessment tool with reluctant English speakers in the 8th grade?"***

### 4.1 Norwegian Topic Conversation

The results presented in this section are separated into three categories: the data from the observation form, the results of the questionnaire, and the notes taken during and after the observations. The data was collected from the Norwegian TC first, then the English TC.

#### 4.1.1 Observation form

**Table 1:** The data from the observation form are categorized into 'Second' and 'Frequency', using both tables and charts. 'Seconds' will be presented first and 'Frequency' after. Though the Norwegian TC is not a foreign language for the pupils, the observation form designed to measure FLSA signs is used in the Norwegian TC in order to compare the data from the two TCs. This helped to measure the increase of FLSA signs in the English TC and answer the research question by providing additional knowledge on how using the TC affects the pupils.

The overall data from the observation form from the Norwegian TC showed that none of the participants showed any FLSA signs in the category of 'Face activity'. All participants showed signs of FLSA in the categories of 'Gaze', 'Posture' and 'Body movement'. The group as a whole showed signs of FLSA throughout the TC.

FACE ACTIVITY	Facial	Brow	Blinking	Smile	Total
Seconds	0	0	0	0	0
GAZE	Gaze at teacher	Gaze up	Gaze down	Eyes closed	
Seconds	40	0	50	0	90
BODY MOVEMENT	Body-focused	Object-focused	Speech dependent	Foot/leg movement	
Frequency	60	60	20	25	165
POSTURE	Leaning	Tense	Closed		
Frequency	0	60	60		120

Table 1: The group's reported seconds of FLSA signs

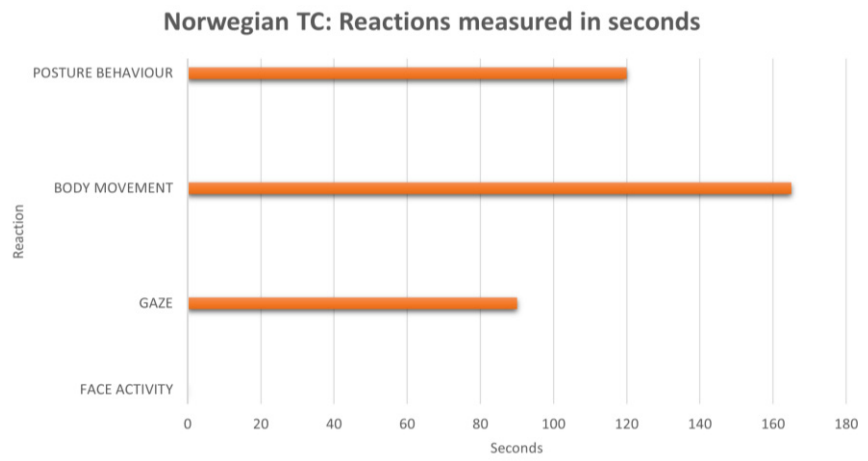


Figure 3: FLSA sign total reactions measured in seconds

The above chart (Figure 3) shows that ‘Body movement’ was the most prominent sign of FLSA within the group, with a measured period of 90 seconds. According to the observation form, the second most visible sign of FLSA was a change in ‘Posture’, with a measured length of 120 seconds. The third most visible sign of FLSA was to be found in ‘Gazing’, with a measured length of 90 seconds.

**Table 2:** Regarding the frequency of FLSA-related body language, ‘Body movement’ had the highest occurrence with a frequency of 11, followed by ‘Gaze’ with seven occurrences. ‘Posture’ had the lowest frequency, with only five occurrences.

FACE ACTIVITY	Facial	Brow	Blinking	Smile	Total
Frequency	0	0	0	0	0
GAZE	Gaze at teacher	Gaze up	Gaze down	Eyes closed	
Frequency	3	0	4	0	7
BODY MOVEMENT	Body-focused	Object-focused	Speech dependent	Foot/leg movement	
Frequency	3	2	4	2	11
POSTURE	Leaning	Tense	Closed		
Frequency	0	3	2		5

Table 2: The group's reported frequency of FLSA signs

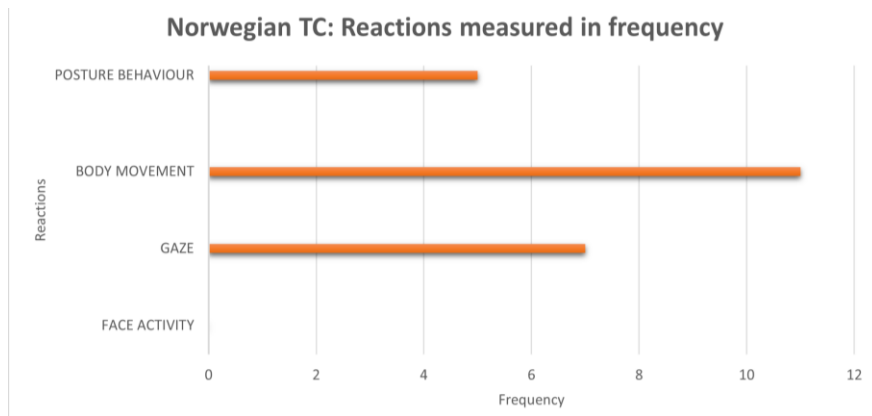


Figure 4: FLSA signs total reactions measured in frequency

To summarize, in terms of the total frequency of FLSA-related body language, ‘Body movement’ had the highest occurrence, with a frequency of 11, followed by ‘Gaze’, with a frequency of 7, and ‘Posture’ had the lowest frequency, with only five occurrences as seen in the chart (Figure 4).

#### 4.1.2 Questionnaire after the Norwegian TC

As mentioned in subsection 3.2.2, the results from the questionnaires conducted after the TC are divided into five different categories, which are grouped into numbers: (1) Preparations, (2) Nervousness before TC, (3) Feelings during TC, (4) After TC, and (5) Thoughts about TC. See appendix N for these categories.

The chart (Figure 5) displays numerical values that follow a sequential order of 1 to 14, representing the questions from the questionnaire. See Appendix O for the full questions. The data presented is the group’s mean since the thesis focuses on the group’s experience as RS. The results from the category ‘Preparations’ show that the respondents felt prepared to a greater degree by answering 3.33, where 4 is the highest score, and 0 is the lowest. Interestingly, the group answered that they felt little nervousness, as demonstrated in the low score of 1. Regarding the category ‘Nervousness before the TC’, the data showed that there was no nervousness or very little regarding the TC beforehand, resulting in a mean score below 1 in this category.

From the category ‘Feelings during’, the data showed that the participants did not feel or experience that the other respondents performed significantly better orally or struggled to use the correct words. It seems that there was little stress or anxiety among the respondents. The results belonging to the category ‘After TC’ showed that the group scored 0.66, which

shows zero relief or very little concerning the TC end. The group scored 1.67 on the scale when answering if they remembered something they had forgotten in the conversation.

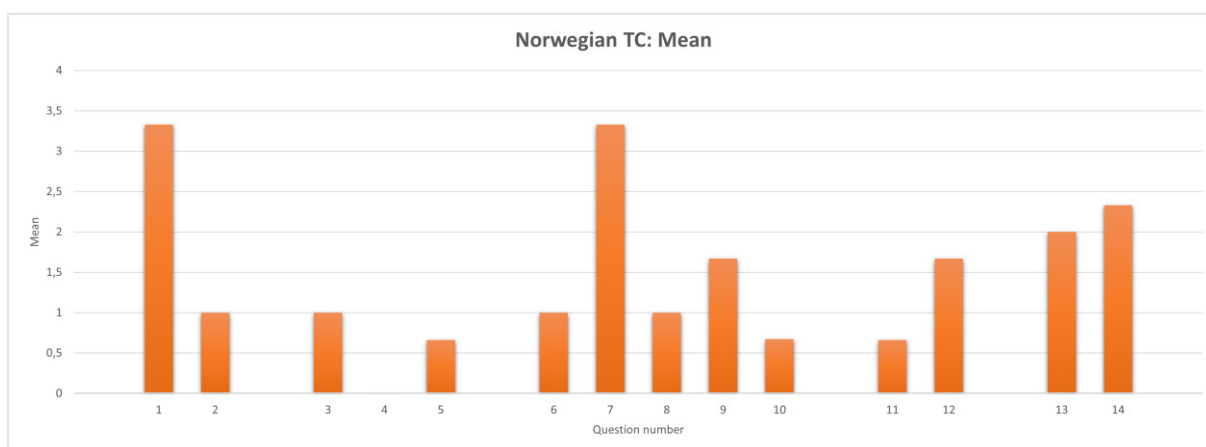


Figure 5: Mean on every answer from question 1 to 14

#### 4.1.3 Notes taken during and after observation

The Norwegian TC lasted for 185 seconds. The notes show three main observations (Appendix K): (1) there was a significant increase in ‘Body movement’ among the participants when the teacher asked follow-up questions; (2) there was no communication between the pupils and (3) one pupil became flustered and red in the face when asked questions.

First, the increase of FLSA signs in the category when the follow-up questions were asked was so significant that it was difficult to register every movement simultaneously and consecutively. These movements primarily involved ‘Body- and Object-focused adaptors’, such as touching their sweaters, holding their hand before their mouth, and fidgeting with their pencil. The second observation revealed that the rest of the group seemed more preoccupied with their presentations. They did not communicate with the presenter and focused solely on their notes and computer. In the last observation, one of the participants became visibly flustered and turned red in the face when it was their turn to speak.

#### 4.2 English Topic Conversation

The results from the English TC are divided into three categories: (1) The data from the observation forms, (2) the data from the questionnaires, and (3) Notes taken during and after the observation. The data from the observation are categorized with the aid of charts and tables. The charts are presented first, followed by the tables. The notes are presented in written form.

#### 4.2.1 Observation form

**Table 3:** Just as in 4.1.1, the observation data is categorized into ‘Seconds’ and ‘Frequency’ using tables and charts. ‘Seconds’ will be presented first, followed by ‘Frequency’. The overall data from the observation form demonstrated that the group showed signs of FLSA throughout the entire TC. Another result was that none of the participants showed any reactions or differences in face activity. However, all participants showed signs of FLSA in the categories of ‘Gaze’, ‘Posture’, and ‘Body Movement’. FLSA signs were detected in the category of ‘Body movement’. Furthermore, signs were detected in the subcategories ‘Body-focused’, ‘Object-focused’, ‘Speech dependent’, and ‘Foot/leg Movement’ -with the highest measurement being 80 seconds in ‘Body focused’. In contrast, ‘Object-focused’ and ‘Foot/leg movements’ both lasted 20 seconds. ‘Speech dependent’ lasted only 5 seconds.

Next came the category ‘Gaze’, where the data showed that the group gazed at the teacher for 30 seconds and looked down for 70 seconds. The ‘Posture’ category showed the subcategory ‘Closed’, which was observed for 60 seconds. This subcategory had the lowest recorded duration of all the observed categories.

FACE ACTIVITY	Facial	Brow	Blinking	Smile	Total
Seconds	0	0	0	0	0
GAZE	Gaze at teacher	Gaze up	Gaze down	Eyes closed	
Seconds	30	0	77	0	107
BODY MOVEMENT	Body-focused	Object-focused	Speech dependent	Foot/leg movement	
Seconds	80	20	5	20	125
POSTURE	Leaning	Tense	Closed		
Seconds	0	0	60		60

Table 3: Seconds of observed FLSA signs in sub-categories and main categories.

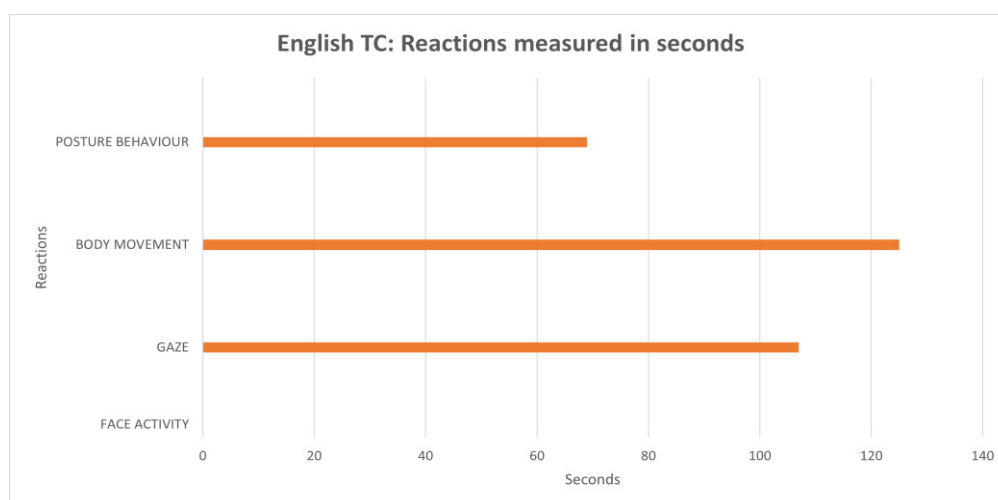


Figure 6: FLSA signs total reactions measured in seconds, in the English TC

As figure 6 demonstrates, the category ‘Gaze’, data show that the group gazed at the teacher for 30 seconds and gazed down for 70 seconds. The observation detected all the sub-categories (Body-focused, Object-focused, Speech dependent, and Foot/leg movement) in the category ‘Body Movement’. The highest measurement was in the category ‘Body focused’ with 80 seconds. Next came ‘Object-focused’ and ‘Foot/leg movement’, which measured 20 seconds. Lastly comes Speech dependent, with only 5 seconds. When looking at the category ‘Posture’, only the subcategory ‘Closed’ showed signs of FLSA within 60 seconds.

**Table 4:** Regarding the frequency of FLSA-related body language, ‘Body movement’ showed the highest occurrence, with a frequency of 8, followed by ‘Gaze’, with a frequency of 6, and ‘Posture’, with the lowest frequency: with just five occurrences.

FACE ACTIVITY	Facial	Brow	Blinking	Smile	Total
Frequency	0	0	0	0	0
GAZE	At teacher	Up	Down	Eyes closed	
Frequency	2	0	4	0	6
BODY MOVEMENT	Body-focused	Object-focused	Speech dependent	Foot/leg movement	
Frequency	5	1	1	1	8
POSTURE	Leaning	Tense	Closed		
Frequency	0	0	1		1

Table 4: The frequency of observed FLSA signs in sub-categories and main categories.

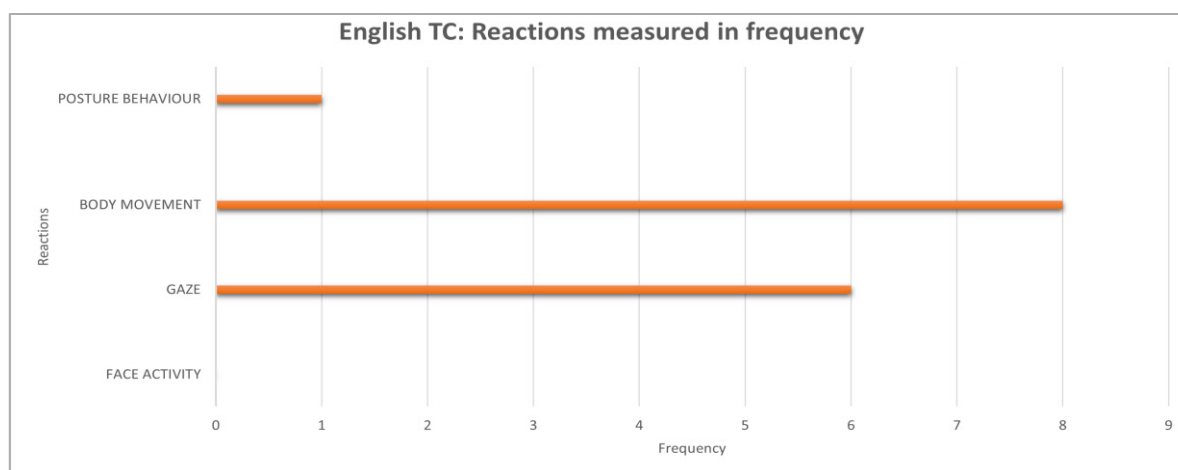


Figure 7: Total FLSA signs reactions measured in frequency, in the English TC

Figure 7 shows that the category ‘Body movement’ had the highest frequency, with eight occurrences, whereas ‘Gaze’ registered only six. In addition, the category ‘Posture’ registered the lowest data with only one occurrence.

#### 4.2.2 Questionnaire after the English TC

As in subsection 4.1.2, the result from the questionnaire is divided into five different categories: (1) Preparations, (2) Nervousness before TC, (3) Feelings during TC, (4) After TC, and (5) Thoughts about TC. These categories are listed in appendix N. The results from this questionnaire are compared to the results from the Norwegian TC when presenting. The results which are retrieved using the Likert scale, will be discussed in text form as explained in 3.2.2: (0) “Not at all/No”, (1) “Very little”, (2) “To some degree”, (3) “To a higher degree”, and (4) “Very much/Yes”.

The results from ‘Preparations’ show that the respondents felt prepared to a higher degree. This category also showed that the pupils reported only to some degree of experiencing nervousness. The results from ‘Nervousness before TC’ show different nervousness levels before the TC. The results from ‘Feelings during’ show that the participant(s) felt that the other participants performed better orally than themselves. A higher score, score three on the Likert scale, showed that the pupils felt they could communicate what they planned to do. They reported, to a lesser degree, that they felt that they struggled with finding words. The results from the category ‘After TC’ show that the participant(s) felt a moderate degree of relief after the English TC. The last category ‘Thoughts about TC’ reports that the overall results show that the negative feelings are low, with a mean of 1.63, and that the positive questions (1, 7, and 13) about the TC have a mean score of 2.88.

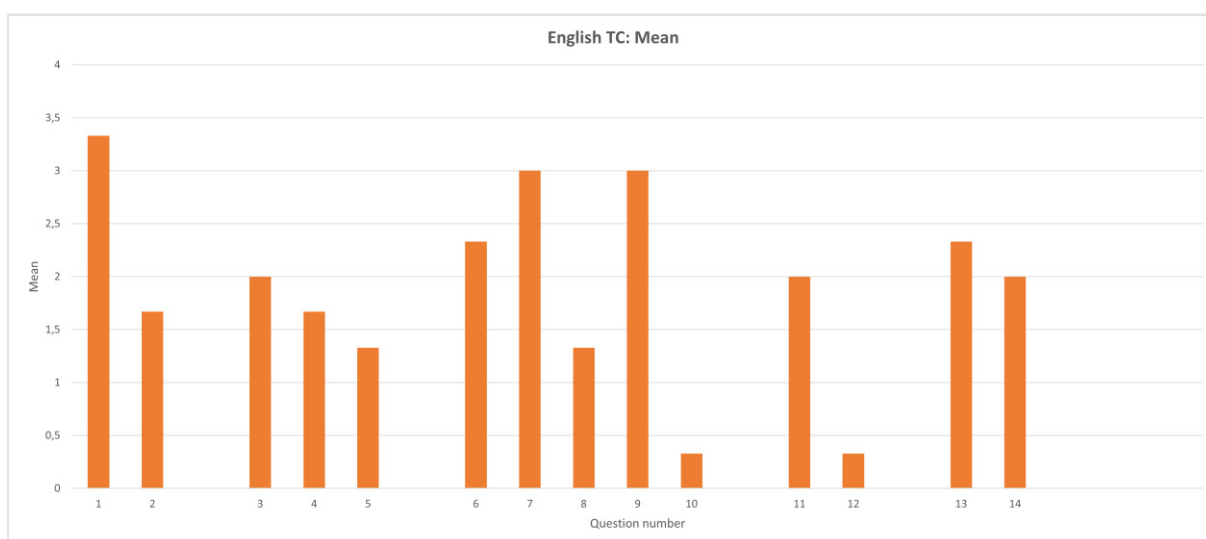


Figure 8: Mean on every answer, from question 1 to 14, in the English TC



#### 4.2.3 Notes taken during and after the observation

The English TC lasted 107 seconds. The teacher explained that the group would receive another questionnaire this time, identical to the one they had just answered after the Norwegian TC. The teacher then gave the first pupil the signal to start. This was the same pupil as started in the previous TC.

The observation resulted in four main observations (Appendix K): (1) There was a significant increase in 'Body Movement' among the participants when the teacher posed follow-up questions. (2) The pupils mostly looked at their screens or notes when they were not presenting, and the rest of the group did not interact with each other. (3) The pupil who exhibited signs of FLSA when a teacher and a fellow pupil asked follow-up questions, showed no signs of FLSA. (4) The pupil who posed the inquiry spoke in Norwegian. The responder signaled a preference for responding in Norwegian.

The increase in 'Body Movement' was mainly seen in the categories 'Body focused adaptors' and 'Object focused adaptors'. The signs were touching one's sweater, holding one's hand in front of one's mouth, and fidgeting with the pencil. One distinct observation made in this TC was that the pupils did not increase body activity when the question was asked by a fellow pupil, as opposed to when the teacher asked questions. When the responder received a question from a fellow pupil, the responder signaled a preference for responding in Norwegian through nonverbal cues, such as smiling at the teacher, facial expressions, and hand gestures, which the teacher and I recognized. However, the teacher suggested attempting to answer in English, with the option to reply in Norwegian if the pupil could answer on that specific comment in English. As a result, the pupil answered the question briefly in English.

#### 4.3 Summary

The summary presents this chapter's result and compares the results between the two TC's. During the Norwegian TC, the data from the observation form indicated that none of the participants displayed signs of FLSA in the category of 'Face Activity'. However, all of them showed signs of FLSA in the categories of 'Gaze', 'Posture', and 'Body movement'. In conclusion, the group demonstrated signs of FLSA throughout the TC, with 'Body movement' occurring most frequently, followed by 'Gaze' and 'Posture'. Likewise, the results from the *English TC* show that the observation form data presents registered FLSA signs in 'Gaze', 'Posture', and 'Body movement' categories during the English TC, with no signs in 'Face activity'. 'Body movement' demonstrated the most prominent FLSA signs, with the 'Body-

focused adaptors' subcategory having the highest duration. The participants felt well-prepared and reported little to some degree of anxiety.

The results from the Norwegian TC questionnaire revealed that the respondents felt well-prepared and were surprisingly calm. They did not feel that the other participants performed better orally or struggled to use the correct words. However, the results showed little relief regarding the TC ending. On the other hand, the results from the *English TC* reported that the participants felt that others performed better orally. Furthermore, they reported feeling moderate relief after the TC and did not forget anything to say.

The Norwegian TC lasted for 185 seconds. The notes show three main observations (Appendix K): (1) a significant increase in 'Body movement' among the participants when the teacher posed follow-up questions; (2) no communication between the pupils, and (3) one pupil became flustered and red in the face when asked questions. Furthermore, the *English TC* lasted for 107 seconds. The notes show four main observations (Appendix K): (1) follow-up questions from the teacher led to a significant increase in body activity, mainly 'Body focused adaptors' and 'Object focused adaptors'; (2) the respondents were concerned about their presentation, looked at their screens or notes, and did not interact with the talking pupil, and (3) pupils did not show an increase in FLSA signs when a question was asked by a fellow pupil, as opposed to when the teacher asked questions.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the English TC was 43% shorter than the Norwegian TC. This will be elaborated on and discussed in section 5.3 as it affects the findings. Certain findings stand out as the most significant, such as the absence of FLSA in the Face Activity category, the prevalence of FLSA in both TCs, with higher levels in the *English TC*, and an incident involving a pupil with the highest FLSA levels during the observation, and how this pupil reacted to the follow-up inquiries with the teacher. This summary will validate the main findings in section 5.1 and will be presented in chart form in section 5.2.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the results highlighted in chapter 4, accompanied by an examination of other dimensions of my study. The following sections cover a discussion of the main findings. Thereafter, will these main findings be discussed in relation to the subsidiary questions from section 1.3. The rest of the chapter discusses various possible implications, such as: addressing the pupils' FLSA; considering the pupils' perspective in assessment-situations; and on the teacher's work. The following chapter will focus on the research question ***"What are the implications for using the topic conversation as an assessment tool with reluctant English speakers in the 8th grade?"***.

The summary of results in section 4.3 revealed unexpected data from the observation material, which were not anticipated at the start of the study. As a result, these surprising elements will be given more attention in relation to this thesis' theoretical framework.

### 5.1 Main findings

This study obtained five main findings: three findings were from the observations and two from the questionnaire analysis. These findings were prominent in terms of duration or frequency and deemed vital in answering the research question. The results from the observations revealed results regarding (1) follow-up questions, (2) minimal oral production and communication between pupils, and (3) the most and least prominent categories observed. The main findings from the questionnaires show that (4) the group has mixed perceptions towards the use of TC and (5) the results show negative emotions before, during, and after the TC. As outlined in subsection 3.3.2, the questionnaire (Appendix I, O) aimed to capture the pupils' perspective on their experience with TC. As a corollary, to address the pupils' perspective, which is an integral part of the aim of this study, their viewpoint will be discussed in sections 5.2.1 and 5.3.3.

This present section will exclusively elucidate the outcomes obtained from the observation form and notes, given that this mode of data collection was deemed the most efficacious in contributing to the resolution of the research question. Therefore, the findings from the questionnaire will be discussed in subsection 5.2.1 as the first subsidiary question investigates the pupils' perspective on the use of TC. Also, the questionnaires' data will be further discussed in 5.3.2 since this subsection focuses on the implications the pupils' perspective can have for the classroom setting.

### 5.1.1 Follow-up questions

The first finding from the observation was that follow-up questions from the teacher increased FLSA in both TCs, where it was an even higher degree in the English TC. This is the unexpected data, referred to in 3.3, which will receive substantial attention in the following sections.

The AFH (Krashen, 1985) asserts that the emotions and attitudes of learners have a crucial impact on their SLA. The theory suggests that learners who have a high affective filter, which may be due to factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-esteem, may face difficulties in acquiring and retaining new information. Conversely, learners who are motivated and self-assured are more likely to be receptive to learning (Dörnyei, 1998).

When considering this discovery, it is plausible that the pupils may perceive the EFL teacher as a native speaker. Even though the teacher's L1 is Norwegian, she is fluent in English. As a result, the pupils may perceive the teacher to be proficient in English, and therefore, comparable to a native speaker. Hence, the teacher can be intimidating to speak with due to superior oral skills, thus making it stressful for the pupils to perform because they become more aware of their skills, or perhaps, their lack of skills (Woodrow, 2006; Yashima et al., 2004). This finding is supported by research conducted by Woodrow (2006) and Yashima et al. (2004), who also found that learners may experience language anxiety when communicating with proficient non-native speakers of the target language.

However, it is important to note that this is not a universal experience and there may be pupils who do not feel intimidated by speaking with their EFL teacher, even if the teacher has superior oral skills. In addition, some pupils may find it helpful to learn from a non-native speaker who has learned the language as a second language, as they can relate to their struggles and approach to learning the language (Cook, 2002). Furthermore, it is possible that the anxiety experienced by RS when questioned by their teacher could be related to the AFH (Krashen, 1985). According to this hypothesis, learners have an affective filter, which is a mental barrier that affects their ability to learn a second language. Anxiety, nervousness, and stress are among the factors that can increase the affective filter, making it more difficult for learners to acquire the language (Krashen, 1985). In this case, the anxiety experienced by pupils might have made it more difficult for them to speak.

Moreover, regarding the need for silent periods, Krashen's theory suggests that learners need time to absorb the language before they can produce it (Krashen, 1982). The findings from the observation notes (Appendix K) show that there was a direct communication between the pupil and the teacher, which was considered intensely because of

the gazing. This could be intimidating and stressful for the pupil as argued by Woodrow (2006) and Yashima et al. (2004). In addition, the teacher had not encouraged for silent periods at any time during my presence. It is possible that the pupils needed more silent periods to absorb the language before they were asked questions by their teacher. The fact that pupils did not experience anxiety when a fellow pupil asked a follow-up question could be because the pupils felt more comfortable with their peers and were less concerned about being evaluated by them. This suggests that creating a supportive and safe classroom environment where pupils feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes could help reduce anxiety and increase language acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Oxford, 1994). As stated in subsection 2.2.1, CLT is not for everyone (Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Firstly, beginners with limited language proficiency may find it difficult to complete tasks that require complex communication skills, leading to demotivation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The demotivation will naturally impact the pupils WTC and engagement. Secondly, CLT is most effective with learners who are highly motivated and prefer an active learning environment, as opposed to those who prefer a more structured and teacher-centered approach (Nunan, 1991).

Finally, since the pupils are in the 8th grade, the use of conversation and dialogue could be beyond their ability, which in turn can lead to frustration and demotivation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). If the pupils lack the knowledge of how to produce orally, there will naturally be little oral production in the TC (Bot et al., 1991). Another reason for low participation in the TC is that CLT is more effective for learners who are motivated to learn and participate actively in the classroom. It may not be suitable for learners who prefer a more structured and teacher-centered approach to language learning (Nunan, 1991) or that experience FLSA.

#### 5.1.2 No communication between the pupils

During both the Norwegian and English TC, it was observed that pupils who were not presenting their topics seemed more focused on taking notes than on actively participating in the conversation. To discuss this behavior, three hypotheses were proposed. The first hypothesis suggests that some pupils may have experienced anxiety or nervousness, which could have hindered their ability to engage in the discussion. The second hypothesis proposes that pupils may have relied on the teacher to lead and facilitate the conversation, leading them to adopt a passive role. Another possible explanation is that silent periods were necessary to enable pupils to absorb the language, thus inhibiting their ability to produce it simultaneously. A third reason, as discussed in 5.1.1, is that the teacher could be perceived as a native speaker.

As observed (Appendix K), the lack of communication among the pupils during the conversation might be attributed to specific features of the classroom structure or teaching methodology. Specifically, it is conceivable that the pupils had insufficient opportunities to practice speaking with one another in English. This possibility appears to be particularly strong given that the pupils are in 8th grade and have received limited or no exposure to formative assessments, as indicated in section 2.3 of the report. Since the TC aims to facilitate learning for pupils at their current level, it is noteworthy that Littlewood et al. (1981) have found that CLT can be adapted to suit different teaching contexts and learner needs. This finding could support the adoption of TC, as it can both assess pupils as regulated by the directorate (See section 2.3.1) and, more importantly, cater to their individual needs by providing opportunities for formative assessment. Therefore, the proposed use of TC could serve a dual purpose of assessing pupils in line with regulatory requirements while also meeting their needs for language practice and development. This approach may be especially effective given the lack of prior experience with formative assessment among the pupils. Ultimately, the use of TC could contribute to improving communication skills and language proficiency among the pupils, thus enhancing their overall academic performance.

However, in this study, it was found that communication was minimal between the pupils in the assessed situation, occurring only twice. It is important to discuss the reasons for this, particularly as the pupils may perceive the teacher as a fluent speaker as discussed in 5.1.1. If so, it can trigger the pupils' own feelings of inadequacy in their foreign language as Woodrow (2006) argues. While engaged and supportive teachers have been shown to minimize FLSA in RS (Moe, 2019), this study found no observable signs of FLSA when pupils were asked questions, but such signs were present when communicating with the teacher. Therefore, it is possible that anxiety and nervousness may arise not only in direct communication, but also in group discussions.

One possible explanation for the lack of communication among the pupils could be related to the FLSA theory proposed by Horwitz (2001, 2010, 2016) and Horwitz et al. (1986), as discussed in section 2.1. FLSA can have significant effects on language learning and use, and can manifest in various ways, such as physical symptoms like avoiding eye contact, restlessness, and reluctance to participate in conversations. In this study, it is possible that the pupils were nervous and anxious due to FLSA, which is related to oral production and can cause fear, nervousness, and discomfort when required to use a foreign language (Effiong, 2016; Teimouri et al., 2019). According to Horwitz (1986), lack of confidence, fear of making

mistakes, and negative past experiences with language learning are common sources of anxiety, which could explain why the pupils were not engaging during the TCs.

### 5.1.3 Signs of FLSA

The last finding was that 'Body movement' was the most prominent sign of FLSA in both TCs. Interestingly, no registered FLSA signs were observed in the category of 'Face activity'. The findings imply that 'Body movement' may be a significant indicator of engagement and attention in the classroom. The absence of 'Face activity' could be attributed to pupils' intense gazing at the teacher or a limitation resulting from the challenge of a single researcher observing several pupils using a tool that monitors various signs. Nonetheless, further research may be needed to explore the significance of face activity as a potential indicator of FLSA in this context.

Recognizing FLSA signs in RS is crucial for creating a supportive learning environment that can boost the RS's confidence (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Effiong, 2016). According to Table 4, the most prominent FLSA sign is 'Body focused,' which serves as a key indicator to take note of for when identifying FLSA in pupils. Additionally, in a learning situation, this sign could serve as an indicator to evaluate which methods are effective and which ones are not. The subcategory 'Tense' is recorded in the Norwegian TC (see subsection 4.1.1), but it is not documented in the English TC. The reason for this discrepancy can only be surmised, but it should not be disregarded that the Norwegian TC provided pupils with an opportunity to practice, albeit in Norwegian.

FACE ACTIVITY	Facial	Brow	Blinking	Smile	Total
Seconds	0	0	0	0	0
GAZE	Gaze at teacher	Gaze up	Gaze down	Eyes closed	
Seconds	30	0	77	0	107
BODY MOVEMENT	Body-focused	Object-focused	Speech dependent	Foot/leg movement	
Seconds	80	20	5	20	125
POSTURE	Leaning	Tense	Closed		
Seconds	0	0	60		60

Table 4: Seconds of observed FLSA signs in sub-categories and main categories

FACE ACTIVITY	Facial	Brow	Blinking	Smile	Total
Frequency	0	0	0	0	0
GAZE	At teacher	Up	Down	Eyes closed	
Frequency	2	0	4	0	6
BODY MOVEMENT	Body-focused	Object-focused	Speech dependent	Foot/leg movement	
Frequency	5	1	1	1	8
POSTURE	Leaning	Tense	Closed		
Frequency	0	0	1		1

Table 5: The frequency of observed FLSA signs in sub-categories and main categories

Moreover, the data presented in table 4 and 5 could provide insights into how RS may display FLSA signs during a TC-assessment. By understanding the different FLSA signs that may be displayed, teachers can identify and address any potential barriers (Lynch, 1997) to RS participation in the assessment. Possessing knowledge of FLSA signs empowers teachers to establish a supportive learning environment that caters to individual needs, especially those related to RS. The Exam Review Group (2019) argues that teachers should expand their knowledge, and teacher education in Norway should improve its instruction on assessment, including facilitating assessment situations. However, as I have personally experienced, catering to every pupil's needs in every aspect of the school situation is not always easy. Therefore, a systematic approach should be implemented to address RS unwillingness to communicate, as per the Exam Review Group's findings (2019) on assessment in Norway. This thesis' theoretical framework on facilitating successful language acquisition for RS, combined with the data showing that 'Body Movement' is the most prominent FLSA signs, can guide the development of such an approach.

## 5.2 The subsidiary questions

The utilization of subsidiary questions in my thesis allowed for a more structured and thorough investigation of the main research question (See section 1.2). As established in section 1.2, by breaking down the main research question into smaller, manageable parts, enabled me to focus on specific aspects and ensure comprehensive coverage. Ultimately, the incorporation of subsidiary questions enhanced the depth of research by exploring different facets of the main research question. The following subsections present the four subsidiary questions, and subsequent discussions will attempt to address them.

### 5.2.1 The groups perception

The first subsidiary questions address the groups perception on the use of TC as a formative assessment tool: *"What is the group's perception of the topic conversation as a formative assessment tool?"*. To answer this, a questionnaire was designed (Appendix O). The results in figure 9 include both the answers from the Norwegian and English TC. The focus of this subsection is the groups perception on the use of TC, and not if they experienced FLSA. Furthermore, Figure 9 is designed to give an overview of the main categorizations and works as a visual aid in presenting the pupils perception from both the questionnaires. Therefore, is the figure presented in the discussion and not the analysis-section.



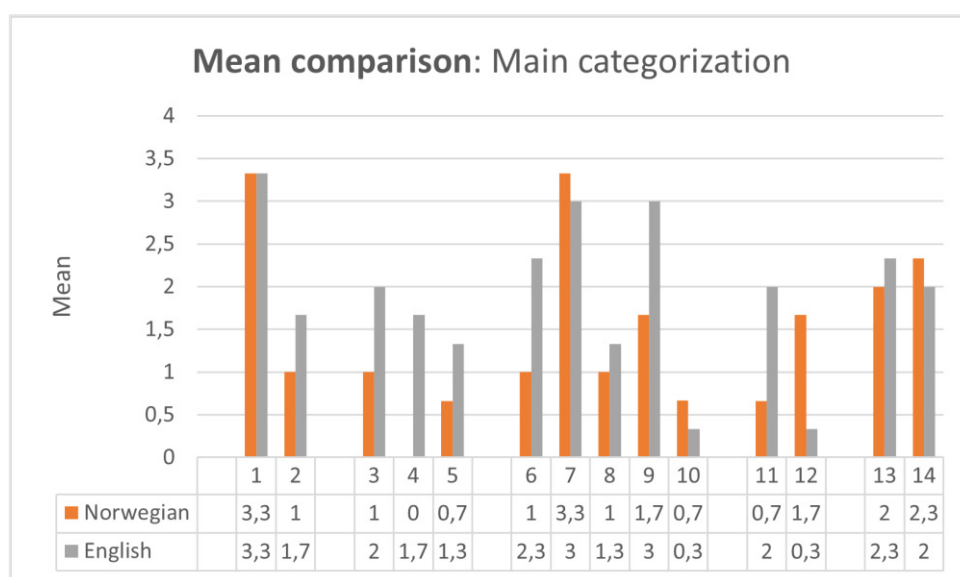


Figure 9: First categorization: Compared data from the Norwegian TC and English TC

Based on the results presented in figure 9, which show similarities between the categories of ‘Preparations’ and ‘Thoughts about TC’, as well as ‘Feelings during TC,’ it can be argued that using a TC as an assessment tool may be a valuable approach for assessing RS since they report a higher degree of positive attitudes. However, the greater variation in the mean for ‘Feelings during TC’ and the larger difference in ‘Nervousness before’ and ‘After TC’ suggest that more attention needs to be paid to supporting pupils' emotional well-being throughout the assessment process since these results show that they have both positive and negative feelings towards the TC.

As Krashen (1981) notes, creating an encouraging, relaxed, and comfortable atmosphere where learners feel safe to make mistakes without fear of criticism can help lower their affective filter. By addressing these concerns, it may be possible to create a more supportive environment that can help reduce anxiety and increase pupils' confidence (Daastøl, 2022; Moe, 2019; Zhao, 2022), leading to more accurate and reliable assessments. The results suggest that pupils may feel nervous, which can raise their affective filter and result in low confidence and poor language acquisition (Krashen, 1981). Therefore, teachers need to consider how pupils perceive different assessment methods, including the use of TCs in this study.

As presented in subsection 2.3.1, the core values emphasize the importance of instilling confidence in pupils' language proficiency, developing their language identity, and enabling them to use language for thinking, meaning-making, communication, and social connection (The Directorate of Education, 2017). Overall, these findings highlight the

significance of considering pupils' perspectives and emotions when designing and implementing assessment strategies. By considering how pupils experience and perceive assessments, it may be possible to develop more effective tools and approaches that better meet their needs, ultimately leading to better outcomes for both pupils and educators.

Moreover, by specifically addressing whether or not they perceive the TC as positive or negative, it can help answer the first subsidiary question. As Krashen's (1985) proposes, learners' emotions and attitudes significantly affect the ability to acquire language. He further suggests that learners with a high affective filter, due to factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-esteem, may struggle to learn and retain new information (Krashen, 1985).

Therefore, is figure 10 presented, which categorizes the questions from figures 5 and 8 into positively and negatively loaded questions. The reason for this figure being in the discussion chapter, and not in the analysis section, is the same as for figure 9. The 'positively loaded' and 'negatively loaded' questions are based on the wording of the question or statement. The three positively loaded questions (1 and 2) have a mean of 2.9 and are on the left side of the chart, while the 11 negatively loaded questions (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14) have a mean of 2.8 and are on the right side of the chart.

The chart shows that the group had negative feelings Before the TC, During the TC, and After the TC, with more negative feelings experienced in the English TC. In conclusion, the data suggest a positive perception of the use of TC among the group.

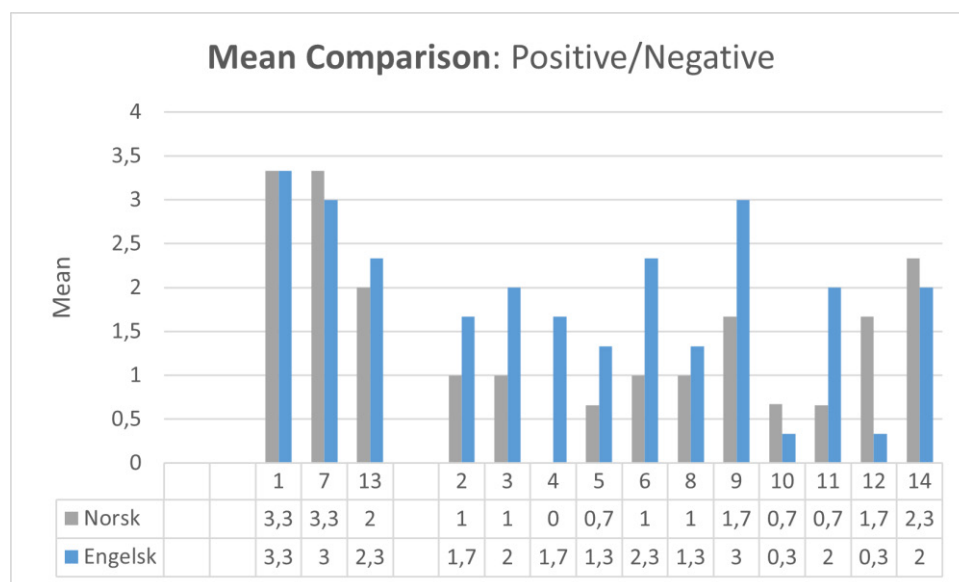


Figure 10: Comparison of questionnaire data, categorized into positive and negative

The findings of my study suggest that there are both positive and negative perceptions of the use of TCs among the group. The positive questions relating to the TC show that there is a generally positive perception of the use of TCs among the participants. However, the

negatively loaded question (question 14) revealed a negative attitude towards TCs. In addition, the chart indicates that the group experienced negative feelings before, during, and after the TC, particularly in the English TC. This is consistent with Horwitz's (2016) research on language anxiety, which suggests that negative emotions and attitudes can negatively impact language learning and use.

The implications of these findings are potentially useful for language instructors. Instructors need to be aware of the potential negative impact of TCs on language learners' anxiety and negative attitudes toward the use of TCs. To mitigate these negative effects, instructors can create a supportive learning environment that promotes positive attitudes toward TCs and reduces anxiety. According to McCroskey and Baer (1985) and Zarrinabadi (2019), this can be achieved by fostering a sense of community among learners and promoting a non-judgmental atmosphere in which learners feel safe to practice their language skills.

### 5.2.2 The groups' foreign language speaking anxiety

The second subsidiary question is "*How does the assessment influence the group's foreign language speaking anxiety?*". The data from both questionnaires (Appendix K and M) show that the pupils felt a 'to a higher degree' of FLSA in the English TC. Naturally, did this result in low, to no communication between the pupils and therefore is of essence to discuss.

According to Roser et al. (1996), language learners' anxiety is significantly correlated with their levels of proficiency in the language. Previous research on language anxiety (Effiong, 2016; E. Horwitz, 2001; E. K. Horwitz, 1986; E. K. Horwitz et al., 1986b; Woodrow, 2006; Zhao, 2022), states that negative emotions and attitudes can increase FLSA, which can negatively impact language learning and use (Dörnyei, 1998; Krashen, 1981). By taking into consideration the pupils' perspective and perception, teachers can address anxiety in language learning. Therefore, is it important for teachers to address *how* the assessment influences the groups' FLSA, so proper adjustments can be made. This can be done by including the pupils in the design of the assessment as explained in section 2.3, where point (4) states that pupils should be included in the assessment design (Black & Wiliam, 1998), which also aligns with the Education Act (2020) and the regulations from the Directorate of Education (2020a).

To understand the significance of the observed lack of communication in the TC sessions, it is important to first discuss the use of TC as an assessment tool. According to Joval (2017), TC serves as a learning tool and a form of assessment that encompasses all three aspects of orality: speaking, listening, and conversation. This makes TC an appropriate

assessment tool for evaluating basic skills, as noted in subsection 2.3.1 (The Directorate of Education, 2017a).

However, the observed TC sessions in chapters 4 and 5 showed that pupils primarily spoke during their presentations and rarely engaged in conversation or listening with each other, except for a few follow-up questions. This lack of communication could be attributed to the high levels of FLSA reported by pupils during the TC sessions. As noted by Daastøl (2022), FLSA can lead to reluctance in speaking and reduced communication. The lack of two-way conversation between pupils in the English TC sessions contradicts Joval's (2017) definition of TC and renders the assessment unsuitable or invalid for this context. The observation notes in Appendix K and the data from observation forms (Appendix M, N, O) further support this conclusion. This finding has significant implications, as it raises doubts about the effectiveness of TC as an assessment tool for evaluating basic skills. It also makes it difficult to address the second subsidiary question regarding the effectiveness of TC in this context.

In addition, anticipated outcomes of the communication interaction and social norms in each situation can also play a role in WTC. In contexts where communication is expected or valued, such as in a classroom or job interview, individuals are more likely to be motivated to communicate (Macintyre et al., 1998). Therefore, this should indicate that the pupils participated orally and contributed to the conversation. Lastly, it is important to consider the influence of individual personality traits on WTC. Macintyre et al. (1998) have demonstrated that extroverted individuals are more likely to engage in communication in social situations, while introverted individuals may be more reserved. Nevertheless, determining the specific reasons for the pupils' unwillingness to communicate may be challenging due to the complex and composite definition of FLSA as proposed by Horwitz. This definition encompasses several fields, and as a result, various factors such as self-perception, anxiety, reluctance, nervousness, language skills, and motivation may all contribute to the decision to engage in or abstain from communication. The drive to communicate plays a significant role in WTC, impacting individuals' willingness and involvement in interactions. Given the difficulty of participation and the low oral production from the group, customized assessments that cater to their needs are crucial for motivation and engagement in the communication process as proposed by the Directorate (2017). By experiencing FLSA it impedes WTC and also language acquisition, making formative assessments based on CLT principles preferable *as long as* the downfalls of using CLT are also considered.

In summary, the observed lack of communication and two-way conversation in the TC sessions could be attributed to the presence of FLSA, rendering the TC assessment unsuitable or invalid for this context. This finding has significant implications for the effectiveness of TC as an assessment tool for evaluating basic skills and raises questions about its suitability for this purpose.

### 5.2.3 Impact on language acquisition

The last subsidiary question asks, “*In what aspect does the topic conversation impact language acquisition for the group?*” This question is relevant due to the framework regulated by the Directorate of Education (2020a; 2020b) as to how teachers should design their teaching lessons. We as teachers should try to diminish unwillingness to communicate, but in a positive manner. By encouraging pupils to participate and to foster positive emotion, hence facilitating for a low stress environment, which makes pupils feel comfortable and confident as argued by Krashen's (1982). And it is in this situation, that language acquisition will happen according to the AFH (Krashen, 1982). The results of the study suggest that using TC as an assessment tool may have positive implications for the affective filter of reluctant language learners as seen in the pupils’ responses from the questionnaire. Though these data showed both negative and positive perceptions of the TC, there was a positive response towards the use of TC. Moreover, by discussing the facet ‘language acquisition’, it is natural for me as a teacher to also discuss WTC. Because without communication, there is no language acquisition. Thus, this subsection will address both interchangeably to try answering the subsidiary question.

The study found that using the TC as an assessment tool aligns well with the principles of the affective filter hypothesis (AFH) by promoting a low-stress environment for language learning and building learners' confidence in their abilities. While the TC may have temporarily increased anxiety levels as reported in the English questionnaire, the participants still reported feeling that the experience was helpful, suggesting that the TC assessment tool may have been effective in promoting language acquisition. However, the study also found that there was minimal communication between the pupils in both TCs, except for a few questions asked in the English TC. This lack of interaction could indicate a lack of motivation or negative feelings such as nervousness or anxiety, as argued by Woodrow (2006) and Yashima et al. (2004). Affective factors such as motivation (Clément et al., 1977; Dörnyei, 1998) and anxiety (E. Horwitz, 2001; Schinke-Llano & Vicars, 1993; Woodrow, 2006) can

impact language acquisition, as suggested by the SLA-theory provided in this thesis' theoretical framework. Thus, it is important to consider these factors in language learning.

In conclusion, the study provides insights into how affective factors and individual differences can impact WTC, thus SLA, by using the TC as an assessment tool. Future research could investigate the pupils' perceptions of different assessment methods in the English assessment situation and the impact of affective factors on language acquisition. Customized assessments and instructional approaches that cater to individuals' needs and motivate their WTC are crucial for effective language acquisition.

### 5.3 Possible implications

The previous sections of this chapter have discussed the results in relation to the theoretical framework of this thesis. An attempt has been made to understand the complexity of FLSA and how this affects pupils, including how the pupils' perception be taken into consideration when designing. The subsidiary questions in 5.2 tried to give a whole picture and to provide a foundation for answering the main research question: ***“What are the implications for using the topic conversation as an assessment tool with reluctant English speakers in the 8th grade?”***

This section concentrates on the facet of 'implications', as the main research question specifically inquire about them. Additionally, the discussion in this section will center on the findings from the English TC, given that the research question explores the use of TC in an English assessment context. Therefore, the findings from the Norwegian TC will receive limited attention.

#### 5.3.2 Pupils' perspective

The pupils' perspective is essential when designing classroom activities. As the Directorate states, the responsibility for facilitating a supportive classroom environment, facilitating individual needs, and fostering confidence lies on the teacher (2017). The results of the questionnaires indicate that the use of a TC as an assessment tool can have a positive effect on pupils' affective filter, but there are areas where improvement is needed. Figure 10 show that the group had both a positive perception of the use of TC, with the three positively loaded questions having a mean of 2.9. However, the negatively loaded questions have a mean of 2.8.

The data from the English questionnaire indicate that the effectiveness of TC as an assessment tool may depend on several factors. See appendix M and N, with further details provided in 4.2.2 regarding the English questionnaire. The different factors to address are the pupils' confidence, language proficiency and speaking comfort. First, since the pupils' language proficiency and speaking comfort level affects the learning situation, according to Roser et al. (1996), necessitating adjustments in the TC format to better accommodate different groups of pupils is crucial, as also regulated by the Directorate (2017). Additionally, the English TC indicates that this form of assessment may aid RS in developing confidence in their oral communication abilities. Although the sense of relief that was reported in the questionnaire (Appendix M) could suggest an improvement in the FLSA after, it is important to investigate their feelings during. This is because how negative emotions hinder language learning.

Further, the findings of this study suggest that negative emotions and nervousness hinder SLA as suggested by Krashen (1985). Negative emotions can create language barriers and decrease WTC as noted by Yashima et al. (2004) and Lynch (1997). Additionally, the observed scenario of learners communicating only with the teacher, besides few occasions, highlights a lack of two-way communication. Despite the potential sources of negative emotions, the use of TC offers a valuable tool for communication and collaboration across language barriers. However, it is critical to address these sources to ensure a positive and effective TC experience. Therefore, it is important to consider and address potential sources of negative feelings and perceptions and to ensure a positive and effective TC experience, since these negatively impact language acquisition and learning (Clément et al., 1977; Woodrow, 2006). If there is no communication, there is no language acquisition either.

As mentioned in subsection 2.1.2, anxiety in language learners can be caused by various factors, including classroom environment and teaching methods (E. Horwitz, 2001; Oxford, 1994). FLSA impedes language acquisition (E. K. Horwitz, 2010; Woodrow, 2006), and therefore it is important to consider teaching methods that can help reduce language anxiety and improve language learning outcomes. According to Figure 10, the use of TC in language learning can be a useful teaching method for reducing anxiety because it creates a supportive and low-stress environment. It allows learners to engage in a conversation on a topic that they are interested in or knowledgeable about, which can help to reduce anxiety and increase motivation (Dörnyei, 1998). Since the TC is considered to be a communicative activity, an opportunity for learners to practice communication skills in a non-threatening environment will help with RS confidence (Littlewood et al., 1981b).

Nonetheless, the negative attitude towards the TC revealed in question 14, with a score of 2.15, highlights the need to address pupils' concerns about the method. In addition, the chart in Figure 10 shows that the group experienced negative feelings before, during, and after the TC, with more negative feelings experienced in the English TC. This suggests that more attention needs to be paid to supporting pupils' emotional well-being throughout the assessment process, particularly in areas where nervousness is high.

The results in Figure 9 show similarities between the categories of 'Preparations' and 'Thoughts about TC' as well as 'Feelings during TC,' indicating that using the TC as a tool may be a valuable approach for assessing pupils' reflective skills. However, the larger variation in the mean for 'Feelings during TC' and the larger difference in 'Nervousness before' and 'After TC' highlight the need for strategies to support pupils' emotional well-being throughout the assessment process.

In summary, because how emotions impact pupils' confidence, self-awareness and WTC, which in turn, influences language learning, it is essential to consider the pupils perspective.

### 5.3.3 Implications for teachers

This subsection examines the potential benefits and drawbacks of using TC as a formative assessment tool for 8th graders. It outlines key principles for effective formative assessment and emphasizes the importance of minimizing FLSA and encouraging pupil participation and a desire to learn. Additionally, it explores alternative assessment methods and the need for teachers to support pupils' emotional well-being during assessments. The section also highlights the implications of the study's findings for language teachers, including the importance of promoting collaboration and interactive language learning, using appropriate forms of assessment, and carefully considering the degree of teacher-centeredness when using the TC.

The theoretical framework (Section 2.3) highlights the importance of formative assessment and its potential benefits, specifically the potential of using TC as a formative assessment tool among 8th graders. The study's findings indicate that the TC can be an effective tool as it provides ongoing feedback that can be used to adjust instruction in real-time. However, the findings also highlight the importance of following the key principles established by Black and William (1998a, 1998b) for formative assessment to be effective, such as defining and sharing learning goals and criteria with pupils, using a variety of techniques to gather evidence of learning, providing timely, specific, and actionable feedback



and involving pupils in the assessment process. The study findings suggest that the TC format may lead to some FLSA among pupils, particularly in categories such as 'Gaze', 'Posture', and 'Body movement', and that teachers should be aware of this and provide guidance and support to pupils to minimize FLSA.

In agreement with Boud and Falchikov's (2007), I acknowledge that TC's can be advantageous and disadvantageous as an assessment tool. Traditional assessment methods often fail to capture the complexity of learning, however alternative assessment methods, such as group discussions, can provide a more authentic and meaningful experience (Boud & Falchikov, 2007). Group discussions allow for collaborative learning and the exchange of diverse perspectives, which can help learners develop critical thinking and communication skills. As Boud and Falchikov (2007), I also acknowledge that group discussions can be problematic as well, particularly when it comes to assessing individual performance, ensuring equal participation, and providing constructive feedback. These issues are echoed in the findings of the study, which highlight both the benefits and drawbacks of using TC as an assessment tool.

As I analyzed the data, I observed that the presentations were done individually and not as a group discussion. I also noticed that the pupils seemed to experience negative emotions during the presentations. They appeared anxious and nervous, perhaps due to the pressure of being in the spotlight. Additionally, the pupils expressed that they did not enjoy it when the teacher asked them questions during their presentations. They felt uncomfortable and put on the spot, which contributed to their negative emotions. Interestingly, when the pupils asked questions, I did not observe any signs of negative emotions. They seemed genuinely curious and engaged in the discussion, which suggests that they may have felt more comfortable when they were in the role of the questioner rather than the presenter. This could be due to the fact that asking questions allowed them to take on a more passive role, whereas presenting required them to take on a more active and visible role. Overall, my observations suggest that while individual presentations may have some benefits, they can also be a source of negative emotions for pupils. Additionally, it may be helpful for teachers to be mindful of how they ask questions during presentations, as this can also impact how pupils feel about the experience.

The results of this study, on the use of TC, can have implications for language teachers when planning language learning and assessment situations. Firstly, the positive perception of the use of TC among the participants suggests that it can be a useful tool for language learning. Teachers could consider incorporating TC into their teaching as a means of

enhancing the language learning experience for their pupils. However, the study also highlights the importance of considering the potential negative feelings associated with the use of TC, particularly among English-speaking participants. Teachers may need to be mindful of these potential negative effects and take steps to mitigate them, such as providing support and guidance to pupils before, during, and after TC sessions (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). Furthermore, the negative attitudes towards the use of TC as an assessment tool, as shown in question 14, suggest that teachers may need to be cautious about using TC for assessment purposes. Teachers should carefully consider the appropriateness of using TC for assessment, considering both the potential benefits and drawbacks of doing so (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). Furthermore, while the use of TC can have benefits for language learning and assessment, teachers should be mindful of the potentially negative effects, and carefully consider how they use TC in their teaching and assessment practices. This is emphasized by among others, Fulcher & Davidson (2007).

According to the findings of my study, the teacher-centered nature of the TC has important implications for language teachers. The unexpected data from the observation of the teacher asking follow-up questions and the pupils' reactions, are deemed vital in answering the research question. Because of this, it is essential to discuss the process of planning language learning and assessment situations. Teachers should consider using alternative forms of assessment to preserve the pupils' WTC and also, enhance RS oral participation (Gass & Varonis, 1985). In relation to RS, it is imperative to consider the level of teacher-centeredness in the TC design and strive for a more pupil-centered approach when interpreting the findings of this study. As supported by Littlewood (1996) and Littlewood et al. (1981), I contend that CLT is a potent tool, particularly when implemented in a pupil-centered manner. However, I also acknowledge the significance of a supportive and engaged teacher, as suggested by Moe (2019). Nevertheless, when dealing with RS, one should be cautious as these pupils are self-aware and have low confidence in their language proficiency (Horwitz, 2010, 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986a). If the teacher's presence and engagement reduce their WTC, it begs the question of why the teacher's active participation is essential in this assessment situation.

To achieve this, teachers should provide pupils with more opportunities to take the lead in conversations, choose topics, and ask questions. Additionally, teachers should integrate activities or exercises that foster pupils' confidence and reduce anxiety around speaking (Littlewood et al., 1981a). By taking these considerations into account, language teachers can create a more supportive and effective learning and assessment environment for RS using TC.

Furthermore, assessments should promote learning and development, and teachers must exercise sound judgment when implementing differentiated instruction. The Directorate of Education (2017) also provides guidelines for proper assessment practice, which can facilitate language acquisition and improve the performance of reluctant English speakers. This study did not examine how the teacher prepared the pupils or what their feedback was after the conversation. As the thesis pertains specifically to the perspective of the pupils, the teacher and her methodology were not subject to study. Therefore, no inquiry has been made with the teacher regarding this matter. The discussion is based on the observations made by the researcher upon the group's entry and exit from the classroom. It was noted that the teacher simply provided a signal to commence the activity, with limited guidance other than the conversation being unformal and the goal being to share and ask questions about what has been learned. The teacher also indicated that she would be asking questions during and after the activity.

Lastly, by creating a supportive environment that encourages pupils to participate (The Directorate of Education, 2017) and by addressing the pupil's FLSA, the teacher will facilitate participation in class since this can help lower the affective filter by increasing their confidence and facilitating for mastery of feelings (Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

#### 5.4 Summary

My study has examined the use of TC as an assessment tool with reluctant English speakers in 8th grade, obtaining six key findings from observations and questionnaires. This study aims to localize a method that prevents enhancing the pupil's FLSA. Hence, increasing their WTC.

The observations revealed insights into minimum oral production, lack of two-way communication between pupils, and the most prominent FLSA sign which was 'Body movement'. Consequently, the characterization of the assessment as a TC was not warranted, and the methodology employed bore more similarity to a presentation-style approach.

The questionnaires' results revealed that while pupils had a favorable view of using TC, they reported experiencing more negative emotions during the English TC compared to the Norwegian TC. This implies that while the TC is viewed positively by pupils, anxiety related to English assessment persists even when using this method.

It is clear from the observations and hypotheses presented in this thesis that there are several possible reasons why some pupils in the were not actively participating in the

conversation. These reasons include anxiety and nervousness, a reliance on the teacher to lead the conversation or not to be engaged, a need for silent periods to absorb the language, insufficient opportunities to practice speaking with peers, and the possibility of FLSA. The adoption of TC as a formative assessment tool may offer benefits beyond regulatory requirements, as it provides pupils with opportunities for language practice and development that may improve their communication skills and overall academic performance. However, it is important to address the underlying reasons for pupils' lack of communication to maximize the effectiveness of TC. Efforts to minimize FLSA and anxiety, as well as creating a supportive and engaged classroom environment, may be particularly important in encouraging pupils to take an active role in group discussions and engage with their peers in English. A teacher should address each of the pupils' needs and customize the assessment situations to create a supportive learning environment. However, the potential downfalls of using CLT should be considered correspondingly.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This thesis examined *“What are the implications for using the topic conversation as an assessment tool with reluctant English speakers in the 8th grade?”*. The study employed a mixed-method approach that incorporated assessment-situation observations and post-test questionnaires to explore signs of FLSA during the TC assessments, and to investigate the importance of the pupils’ perception. The observations revealed that certain aspects of the TC triggered FLSA in pupils, emphasizing the need for teachers to foster a safe and supportive learning environment. Teacher-centered assessments were found to increase anxiety levels and hinder effective communication, while pupil-centered activities facilitated participation and decreased reluctance to speak. The study offers insights into employing research-based and methodical teaching and assessment strategies to promote a less stressful environment. By investigating the use of TC as a pupil-centered activity, this study builds on previous research to address the challenges associated with FLSA in language assessment and improve assessment practices in the 8th grade.

### 6.1 Limitations

Despite the insightful findings and contributions of this study, there are certain limitations that should be acknowledged and addressed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

One limitation of the study is that external factors, such as teacher behavior and classroom environment, may have influenced pupils' reluctance to speak. Not all these factors were accounted for, which could have affected their behavior. Furthermore, the researcher's presence during the study may have influenced the pupils’ behavior, which is another potential limitation. Additionally, the study was conducted within a specific cultural and linguistic context, and two out of three participants had a different first language than Norwegian. This could have impacted the data, and these limitations should be considered when interpreting the results. Another limitation is that the selection of participants was narrow, which has implications for the generalizability or external validity of the results. For example, it may be challenging to extend the conclusions drawn from the study to other populations or contexts beyond the specific group of individuals studied. Therefore, the scope and impact of the study may be limited, and it may not be possible to make definitive recommendations or draw broad conclusions based on the results.

While thematic analysis is valuable for identifying patterns and themes in qualitative data, it has limitations, including potential subjectivity and difficulty ensuring that themes represent the entire dataset. Therefore, it is essential to consider these limitations when interpreting the results of a thematic analysis.

Although the initial plan was to conduct an extensive survey involving participants from 8th to 10th grade, time constraints led to a smaller, more focused, qualitative approach for this small-scale study. This decision was driven by the researcher's interest in qualitative studies, which allowed for a deeper exploration of the research questions.

Lastly, it is essential to note that conducting the Norwegian TC before the English TC could have impacted the latter. For example, the Norwegian TC may have functioned as a rehearsal, resulting in fewer and less frequent FLSA signs during the subsequent English TC.

## 6.2 Reflections

This study enhanced my understanding of effective teaching practices and the current challenges faced by educators. I learned about the importance of pupil-centered activities, research-based methods, and personalized formative assessments. It has shifted my perspective on the English teacher's role, highlighting the diverse range of responsibilities and essential knowledge base required to meet regulatory requirements while tailoring instruction to individual pupil needs to foster a supportive and motivational learning environment. In addition, I gained insight into the cognitive processes involved in language learning and the factors that may influence them. This experience emphasized the need for ongoing professional development and self-reflection to create positive learning environments. To finalize, I hope that my findings can contribute to the improvement of teaching practices.

## 6.3 Further research

To gain better understanding of the challenges faced by pupils in schools regarding reluctance to speak, it may be necessary to explore new methodological and thematic approaches. For example, the current study, which focused on three pupils, offered insights into their perspectives on conversation topics and the implications of their reluctance to speak.

Moreover, given that previous research suggests a lack of systematic training in oral skills and teachers' knowledge based on assessment (Exam Review Group, 2019) it is crucial to address this gap allowing pupils receive the teaching they are obliged to.

Some suggestions on further research are to replicate the study with a completely pupil-centered approach to the TC, with the teacher being absent during the assessment. This

could be achieved through various means, such as having the teacher present in the room without participating, using technological tools like podcasts to facilitate the group discussions, or employing a different framework like role-playing. Moe's (2019) research, including the research done in this thesis, has shown that pupil-centered activities can enhance oral production, making it worthwhile to investigate the impact of removing the teacher from the equation during assessments of RS in the English subject. Such research could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of assessment practices in the English subject and inform future pedagogical strategies.

Ultimately, these efforts could lead to a better understanding of the challenges faced by pupils and the development of effective strategies to support their communication abilities.

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## 8.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Information e-mail to the principal.....	67
Appendix B: The teacher's consent form.....	68
Appendix C: The pupils' electronic consent form .....	70
Appendix D: Approval from Sikt.....	73
Appendix E: Criteria for Reluctant Speakers .....	74
Appendix F: Gregersen's (2005) non-verbal cues form.....	75
Appendix G: Observation form.....	77
Appendix H: Horwitz' et al. (1986) FLCA scale .....	78
Appendix I: Electronic Questionnaire.....	78
Appendix J: Systematic Literary Search .....	81
Appendix K: Thematic Analysis .....	85
Appendix L: Exploratory Data Analysis .....	87
Appendix M: Individual answers from the questionnaire .....	88
Appendix N: Table of the main categorization .....	89
Appendix O: Questionnaire – Questions.....	90

## **Appendix A: Information e-mail to the principal**

Informasjonsskriv om masteroppgaven: «*Tilpasse vurderingssituasjoner for elever som opplever muntlig fremmedsspråkangst*»

Jeg – Mayliss Pedersen – skal skrive en masteroppgave i Engelsk hvor jeg ønsker å forske på hvordan en fagsamtale fungerer på elever som opplever utfordringer med å snakke engelsk foran klassen. Spesielt hvordan de opplever det å snakke engelsk i **vurderingssituasjoner**. Problemstillingen min er «*I hvilken grad kan en fagsamtale øke muntlig produksjon blant elever som opplever muntlig fremmedsspråkangst?*» Gjennom å forske på denne problemstillingen håper jeg kan tilføye til forskningsfeltet rundt vurdering og elevens oppfatning av selvet, og hvordan de muligens måler sitt selv med resultater på vurderinger. Dette innebærer en klasse på 8.trinn deltar i en spørreundersøkelse om hvordan de opplever ulike vurderingssituasjoner, og det å snakke engelsk. Denne spørreundersøkelsen er anonym. Deretter vil 3-5 elever til å bli observert i en lærerstyrt vurderingssituasjon, hvor metoden blir en fagsamtale. Det vil først bli gjennomført en fagsamtale på norsk, deretter på engelsk. Etter dette vil elevgruppen som har blitt observert svare på en spørreundersøkelse som anonym. Avslutningsvis så ønsker jeg å gjennomføre et intervju med læreren som har klassen jeg skal samle data i. Spørsmålene i intervjuet går ut på å spørre om erfaringer rundt problemstillingen. Informanten vil bli anonymisert og intervjuet vil bli tatt opp med Diktafon-appen ihht. Sikt (NSD) sine retningslinjer for oppbevaring av data. Elevene sine personvernshetigheter vil også bli tatt hensyn til og beskyttet.

- Det er ønskelig at prosjektet gjennomføres i perioden mellom 17.februar til 16.mars.  
Det er mulighet for å flytte datoene
- Jeg ønsker å utføre en spørreundersøkelse (20min) av 8.trinn i forkant av observasjonen
- Deretter to observasjoner av en valgt gruppe
  - o Lærer bestemmer omfang: tema, vurderingskriterier og lengde
  - o Begge observasjonene bygger på samme tema og vurderingskriterier.
- Etter at begge observasjonene er gjennomført, vil elevene få en spørreundersøkelse som har til hensikt å sammenligne hvordan det var å bli vurdert på norsk i motsetning til engelsk.



## Appendix B: The teacher's consent form

### **Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet**

*«Masteroppgave: Tilpasse vurderingssituasjoner for elever som opplever muntlig fremmedsspråkangst»*

**Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke hvorvidt det å bruke en fagsamtale som vurderingsmetode kan bidra til å øke elevers muntlige produksjon på 8.trinn. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.**

#### **Formål**

Jeg –Mayliss Pedersen– skal skrive en masteroppgave i Engelsk hvor jeg ønsker å forske på hvordan en fagsamtale fungerer for elever som opplever utfordringer med å snakke engelsk foran klassen. Men spesielt hvordan de opplever det å snakke engelsk høyt i vurderingssituasjoner. Problemstillingen min er **«I hvilken grad kan en fagsamtale øke muntlig produksjon blant elever som opplever muntlig fremmedsspråkangst?»**. Jeg ønsker å intervju en engelsk lærer som jeg vet bruker fagsamtale som metode i vurderingssituasjoner. Før intervjuet blir det gjennomført en observasjon av en lærerstyrt fagsamtale.

#### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Ansvarlig for prosjektet er Høgskolen i Østfold, fakultet for lærerutdanninger og språk ved professor Jane Mattison Ekstam

#### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

Du er valgt ut til å få denne forespørselen fordi du er engelsk lærer som bruker fagsamtale som metode i vurderingssituasjoner.

#### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

- Metoden jeg ønsker å bruke er observasjon og intervju
- Fagsamtalene som du styrer blir observert
- Jeg har lagd en intervjuguide med spørsmål, i tillegg vil det bli brukt tilleggs spørsmål.
- Intervjuet tar ca 30 min
- Opplysningene som samles handler om dine erfaringer og tanker om bruk av fagsamtale som metode i vurderingssituasjoner.
- Opplysningene samles inn med lydopptak. Dette blir avidentifisert og slettet etter levert oppgave. Du kan se intervjuguiden på forhånd hvis du ønsker det.

#### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

#### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er Mayliss Pedersen og veileder Jane Mattison Ekstam som har tilgang til prosjektet. Din deltagelse vil aidentifiseres i min masteroppgave, og ved eventuell publikasjon eller muntlig formidling av data vil det ikke bli brukt personidentifiserende opplysninger og ingen vil kunne identifisere deg.

#### **Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?**

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 15.mai 2023. Dataene vil lagres anonymt i henhold til Høgskolen i Østfold sine retningslinjer for lagring av forskningsdata.

#### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskolen i Østfold har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

#### **Dine rettigheter**

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Mayliss Pedersen, [mayliss.m.pedersen@hiof.no](mailto:mayliss.m.pedersen@hiof.no), +47 95 96 53 77
- Høgskolen i Østfold ved Jane Mattison Ekstam, [jane.m.ekstam@hiof.no](mailto:jane.m.ekstam@hiof.no), +47 69 60 81 75
- Vårt personvernombud, [personvern@hiof.no](mailto:personvern@hiof.no), +47 95 06 19 30
- Personverntjenester på epost ([personverntjenester@sikt.no](mailto:personverntjenester@sikt.no)) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig,  
Jane Mattison Ekstam, +47 69 60 81 75  
Mail: [jane.m.ekstam@hiof.no](mailto:jane.m.ekstam@hiof.no)

Lærerstudent,  
Mayliss Pedersen +47 95 96 53 77  
Mail: [mayliss.m.pedersen@hiof.no](mailto:mayliss.m.pedersen@hiof.no)

## **Samtykkeerklæring**

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «*Masteroppgave: Tilpasse vurderingssituasjoner for elever som opplever muntlig fremmedsspråkangst*» og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- ☐ å delta i et intervju
- ☐ å bli observert

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

Lærer

-----  
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker/elev, dato)

## Appendix C: The pupils' electronic consent form

### Samtykkeskjema elever

Obligatoriske felter er merket med stjerne

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet «Masteroppgave: Tilpasse vurderingssituasjoner for elever som opplever muntlig fremmedsspråkangst»

**Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke hvorvidt det å bruke en fagsamtale som vurderingsmetode kan bidra til å øke elevers muntlige produksjon på 8.trinn.**

**I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.**

#### Formål

Jeg –Mayliss Pedersen– skal skrive en masteroppgave i Engelsk hvor jeg ønsker å forske på hvordan en fagsamtale fungerer for elever som opplever utfordringer med å snakke engelsk foran klassen. Men spesielt hvordan de opplever det å snakke engelsk høyt i vurderingssituasjoner. Problemstillingen min er «**I hvilken grad kan en fagsamtale øke muntlig produksjon blant elever som opplever muntlig fremmedsspråkangst?**».

Hele 8.trinn blir spurt om å delta i en elektronisk spørreundersøkelse om hvordan de opplever ulike vurderingssituasjoner og det å snakke engelsk. Deretter kommer 3-5 elever til å bli observert i en lærerstyrt vurderingssituasjon, hvor metoden blir en fagsamtale. Det vil først bli gjennomført en fagsamtale på norsk, deretter på engelsk.

#### Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Ansvarlig for prosjektet er Høgskolen i Østfold, fakultet for lærerutdanninger og språk ved professor Jane Mattison Ekstam

#### Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du er valgt ut til å få denne forespørselen fordi du går på 8.trinn ved Haugeåsen ungdomsskole.

#### Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

- Metodene jeg ønsker å bruke er en spørreundersøkelse og to observasjoner.
- Spørreundersøkelsen er elektronisk (nettskjema.no) og tar ca. 5 minutter å gjennomføre
- Observasjonen går ut på at jeg kun observerer samtalen som læreren styrer.

#### Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

## Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er Mayliss Pedersen og veileder Jane Mattison Ekstam som har tilgang til prosjektet. Din deltagelse vil aidentifiseres i min masteroppgave, og ved eventuell publikasjon eller muntlig formidling av data vil det ikke bli brukt personidentifiserende opplysninger og ingen vil kunne identifisere deg.

## Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 15.mai 2023. Dataene vil lagres anonymt i henhold til Høgskolen i Østfold sine retningslinjer for lagring av forskningsdata.

## Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskolen i Østfold har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

## Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Mayliss Pedersen, [mayliss.m.pedersen@hiof.no](mailto:mayliss.m.pedersen@hiof.no), +47 95 96 53 77
- Høgskolen i Østfold ved Jane Mattison Ekstam, [jane.m.ekstam@hiof.no](mailto:jane.m.ekstam@hiof.no), +47 69 60 81 75
- Vårt personvernombud, [personvern@hiof.no](mailto:personvern@hiof.no), +47 95 06 19 30
- Personverntjenester på epost ([personverntjenester@sikt.no](mailto:personverntjenester@sikt.no)) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig,  
Jane Mattison Ekstam, +47 69 60 81 75  
Mail: [jane.m.ekstam@hiof.no](mailto:jane.m.ekstam@hiof.no)

Lærerstudent,  
Mayliss Pedersen+47 95 96 53 77  
Mail: [mayliss.m.pedersen@hiof.no](mailto:mayliss.m.pedersen@hiof.no)

## Samtykke gis ved å svare på spørsmålene nedenfor

Navn på eleven

Skriv inn fullt navn

Jeg (eleven) samtykker til å delta på spørreundersøkelse

Dette er utgangspunktet for alle elevene i klassen og er anonymt

☐

Ja

☐

Nei

Jeg (eleven) samtykker til å delta på en observasjon

Blir du valgt ut til å bli observert, så er det Åsa som gjennomfører opplegg hvor jeg sitter og ser på, uten å kommentere.

☐

Ja

☐

Nei

Jeg (foresatt) samtykker til at eleven deltar på prosjektet

Skriv inn fullt navn på foresatte som samtykker. Det holder at en foresatt gjør dette.

## Appendix D: Approval from Sikt

# Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

**Referansenummer**

806672

**Vurderingstype**

Standard

**Dato**

03.02.2023

**Prosjekttittel**

Masteroppgave: Tilpasse vurderingssituasjoner for elever som opplever muntlig fremmedsspråkangst

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**

Høgskolen i Østfold / Fakultet for lærerutdanninger og språk / Institutt for pedagogikk, IKT og læring

**Prosjektansvarlig**

Jane Mattisson Ekstam

**Student**

Mayliss Pedersen

**Prosjektperiode**

01.01.2023 - 15.05.2023

**Kategorier personopplysninger**

Alminnelige

**Lovlig grunnlag**

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 15.05.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#)**Kommentar****OM VURDERINGEN**

Sikt har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

**FORELDRE SAMTYKKER FOR BARN**

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra foresatte til behandlingen av personopplysninger om barna.

**TAUSHETSPLIKT**

Lærer har yrkesmessig taushetsplikt og kan ikke dele taushetsbelagte opplysninger med forskningsprosjektet. Vi anbefaler at du minner dem på taushetsplikten.

**DATABEHANDLER**

Vi legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. personvernforordningen art. 28 og 29.

**FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER**

Vi har vurdert at du har lovlig grunnlag til å behandle personopplysningene, men husk at det er institusjonen du er ansatt/student ved som avgjør hvilke databehandlere du kan bruke og hvordan du må lagre og sikre data i ditt prosjekt. Husk å bruke leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med (f.eks. ved skylagring, nettpørreskjema, videosamtale el.)

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

**MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER**

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Se våre nettsider om hvilke endringer du må melde: <https://sikt.no/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

**OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET**

Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

## **Appendix E: Criteria for Reluctant Speakers**

### **Reluctant Speakers Criteria**

Criteria are based upon Horwitz' et al. FLCAS scale (1986b) and Tammy S. Gregersen's Non-Verbal Cues form (2005).

- *Reluctant speakers* do not willingly speak.
- There are signs of being uncomfortable, such as avoiding eye contact, speech gaps when talking, and not being able to sit still.
- Mutism is not considered to be a characteristic of a reluctant speaker.
- The pupil must be able to produce orally.

## **Appendix F: Gregersen's (2005) non-verbal cues form**

*Facial Movement: Anxious or Nonanxious*

Participant #:

Nonverbal Behavior	Frequency	Duration	Descriptive Commentary
Total facial movement (tense facial muscles, grimaces, contortions, twitches)			
Brow behavior			
1. Brows up			
2. Brows together			
Blinking behavior			
Smiling behavior			
Gazing behavior			
1. Look up			
2. Look down			
3. Look at teacher			
4. Eyes closed			

*Posture: Anxious or Nonanxious*

Participant #:

Nonverbal Behavior	Frequency	Duration	Descriptive Commentary
Leaning behavior			
1. Lean forward			
2. Lean back			
Rigidity			
Weight shifts			
Open/closed body position			
1. Position of arms			
2. Position of legs			



*Movements of the body (limbs, hands, head, feet, legs)*

Anxious or Nonanxious

Participant #:

Nonverbal Behavior	Frequency	Duration	Descriptive Commentary
Body-focused adaptors			
Object-focused adaptors			
Foot/leg movements			
Speech-dependent gestures			
Head nods/shaking			

## **Appendix G: Observation form**

PARTICIPANT NR:

TOTAL TIME:

SUBJECT:

FACE	Facial activity	Brow behavior	Blinking behavior	Smiling behavior

GAZE	Gaze up	Gaze down	Gaze at teacher	Eyes closed

POSTURE	Leaning behavior	Tense posture	Closed posture	

BODY MOVEMENT	Body-focused adaptors	Object-focused adaptors	Speech dependent gaps	Foot/leg movement

## **Appendix H: Horwitz' et al. (1986) FLCA scale**

### **Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)**

Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz, M.B., Cope, J., 1986. Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70 (2), 125–132.

#### **33 Items**

##### **1 Dimension**

- (1) I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
- (2) I do not worry about making mistakes in language class.
- (3) I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
- (4) It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in foreign language.
- (5) It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes
- (6) During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
- (7) I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.
- (8) I am usually at ease during my tests in my language class.
- (5) I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
- (6) It does not embarrass me to volunteer answers in German in my German class.
- (7) Even if I am well prepared for my German class, I feel anxious about it.
- (9) I feel confident when I speak German in my German class.
- (10) I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class
- (11) I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language class.
- (12) In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
- (13) It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
- (14) I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
- (15) I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
- (16) Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it
- (17) I often feel like not going to my language class.
- (18) I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
- (19) I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
- (20) I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
- (21) The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
- (22) I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
- (23) I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
- (24) I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
- (25) Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
- (26) I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
- (27) I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
- (28) When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
- (29) I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
- (30) I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
- (31) I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
- (32) I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
- (33) I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

5-point Likert Scale (SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree; D = disagree)

Cronbach alpha= .93

## **Appendix I: Electronic Questionnaire**

Obligatoriske felter er merket med stjerne \*

Brukernavn \*

Hvor godt synes du at du har forberedt deg til fagsamtalen? \*

0  
|

1  
|

2  
|

3  
|

4  
|

Verdi

Hvor nervøs var du i forkant av fagsamtalen? \*

0  
|

1  
|

2  
|

3  
|

4  
|

Verdi

Har du gruet deg til fagsamtalen? \*

0  
|

1  
|

2  
|

3  
|

4  
|

Verdi

Hvor mye har du tenkt på fagsamtalen idag? \*

0  
|

1  
|

2  
|

3  
|

4  
|

Verdi

Jeg følte at de andre var flinkere til å prate enn meg \*

0  
|

1  
|

2  
|

3  
|

4  
|

Verdi

Jeg følte at jeg fikk fortalt alt jeg skulle \*

0  
|

1  
|

2  
|

3  
|

4  
|

Verdi

I denne fagsamtalen slet jeg med å finne riktig ord \*

0  
|

1  
|

2  
|

3  
|

4  
|

Nå som fagsamtalen er over, føler jeg meg lettet \*

0 1 2 3 4

Verdi

Nå som fagsamtalen er over, husker jeg mye av tingene jeg glemte å si \*

0 1 2 3 4

Verdi

Jeg følte meg stresset og nervøs i fagsamtalen \*

Nettskjema

VILKÅR  
Personvern og vilkår for bruk  
Nettskjema bruker informasjonskapsler  
Tilgjengelighetserklæring

HJELP OG KONTAKT  
Veiledning for Nettskjema  
Kontaktinformasjon

NETTSKJEMA ER UTVIKLET OG DESIGN  
Universitetet i Oslo

På grunn av at det var vanskelig å finne det riktige ordet, så lot jeg være å si noe i det hele tatt \*

0 1 2 3 4

Verdi

Selvom jeg føler meg godt forberedt, så er jeg nervøs \*

0 1 2 3 4

Verdi

Jeg synes fagsamtale er en bra måte å vise hva jeg kan på \*

0 1 2 3 4

Verdi

Det verste jeg vet er muntlig fremføring, som for eksempel en fagsamtale på dette språket \*

0 1 2 3 4

Verdi

Det verste jeg vet er muntlig fremføring, som for eksempel en fagsamtale på dette språket \*

0 1 2 3 4

Verdi

## **Appendix J: Systematic Literary Search**

### **Keywords and synonyms**

<b>Topic Conversation</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Reluctant Speakers</b>	<b>Other keywords</b>
Professional Conversation	Group Assessment	Willingness to Communicate	School/Pupils
Theme Conversation	Formative Assessment	Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety	Norway/Norwegian
Subject Conversation	Evaluation	Foreign Language Anxiety	Fagsamtale/Tema samtale/ Emne samtale
Conversation	Test		

### **Søketabell – dokumentasjon av litteratursøk**

<b>S</b>	<b>Database</b>	<b>Søkestreng</b>	<b>Avgrensninger</b>	<b>Dato</b>	<b>Antall treff</b>
<b>1</b>	ERIC, ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER, EDUCATION SOURCE	Topic Conversation OR Professional Conversation OR Theme Conversation OR Subject Conversation			6058
<b>2</b>	"	Group Assessment OR Formative Assessment OR Evaluation			2 m
<b>3</b>	"	Reluctant Speakers AND Willingness to Communicate AND Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety AND Foreign Language Anxiety			2484
<b>4</b>	"	S1 AND S2 AND S3			254
<b>5</b>	"	Topic Conversation AND Assessment			0

		And Reluctant Speakers			
<b>6</b>	"	Topic Conversation AND Assessment			165
<b>7</b>	"	Topic Conversation AND Reluctant Speakers			0
<b>8</b>	"	Assessment AND Reluctant Speakers			0
<b>9</b>	"	S6 OR S7 OR S8 AND School			40
<b>10</b>	"	S9 AND Norway AND English			0
<b>11</b>	"	S9 AND English Language Learners			0
<b>12</b>	"	Fagsamtale OR Emne Samtale OR Tema Samtale ( <i>Norwegian definitions of Topic Conversation etc.</i> )			0
<b>13</b>	ORIA	Topic Conversation OR Professional Conversation OR Theme Conversation OR Subject Conversation	Fagfelleverdert		37 895
<b>14</b>	"	Group Assessment OR Formative Assessment OR Evaluation	"		3, 8 m
<b>15</b>	"	Reluctant Speakers AND Willingness to Communicate AND Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety AND	"		4266

		Foreign Language Anxiety			
16	"	Reluctant Speakers AND Topic Conversation	"		0
17	"	Reluctant Speakers AND Assessment AND Norwegian	Avhandling		1
18	"	Reluctant Speakers AND Norwegian	Avhandling		10
19	"	Topic Conversation AND Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety			10
20	"	S19 AND Assessment OR Test OR Evaluate			0
21	JSTOR	Topic Conversation AND Assessment AND Reluctant Speakers	All Content; English; Education, Linguistics		395
22	"	Topic Conversation AND Assessment AND Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety	All Content; English; Education, Linguistics		465
23	"	Topic Conversation AND Assessment AND Reluctant Speakers AND Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety	All Content; English; Education, Linguistics		52
24	"	Topic Conversation AND Assessment AND Reluctant Speakers AND Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety AND	All Content; English; Education, Linguistics		3



		Norway			
<b>25</b>	"	Topic Conversation AND Assessment AND Reluctant Speakers AND Willingness to Communicate AND Norway	All Content; English; Education		2
<b>26</b>	"	Topic Conversation AND Reluctant Speakers AND Willingness to Communicate AND Norway	All Content; English; Education		4
<b>27</b>	"	Conversation AND Reluctant Speakers AND Pupils AND Norway	All Content; English; Education		1
<b>30</b>	Taylor & Francis	Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety AND Topic Conversation AND Assessment			5307
	"	Speaking Anxiety	Keywords		6
<b>31</b>	"	Speaking Anxiety AND Norway OR Norwegian	Keywords		0
<b>32</b>	"	Topic Conversation AND Formative Assessment AND Norway AND Pupils	Literature		0

## Appendix K: Thematic Analysis

### Findings Norwegian TC:

The notes:

- Lasted for 185 seconds
- Significant increase in body movement among the participants when the teacher posed follow-up questions.
- Rest of the group seemed more preoccupied with their own presentations.
- One of the participants became visibly flustered and turned red in the face when it was their turn to speak.
- 

### The observation form (seconds)

- The overall data from the observation form from the Norwegian TC showed that none of the participants showed any reactions or differences in face activity.
- All participants showed signs of FLSA in the categories *Gaze*, *Posture*, and *Body movement*.
- Body movement was most prominent: 165 seconds, then came Posture with 120 seconds, and lastly was Gazing with 90 seconds.

### The observation form (frequency)

- Body movement was most prominent with a frequency of 11, then came Gaze with 7 and Posture with 5.

### Findings English TC:

The notes:

- Lasted for 107 seconds
- Significant increase in body movement among the participants when the teacher posed follow-up questions. = 43% shorter than NTC
- Rest of the group seemed more preoccupied with their own presentations.
- The pupils did not show signs of FLSA when a fellow pupil asked follow-up questions.

- The pupil who was to answer wanted to answer in Norwegian, this could be seen through non-verbal cues. The pupil managed to answer in English.
- The pupils only look at the teacher when talking
- Very intense eye-contact with the teacher when gazing

#### The observation form **seconds**

- The overall data from the observation form from the English TC showed that none of the participants showed any reactions or differences in face activity.
- All participants showed signs of FLSA in the categories *Gaze*, *Posture* and *Body movement*.
- Body movement was most prominent: 125 seconds, then came Gaze with 107 seconds and lastly was Posture with 60 seconds.

#### The observation form **frequency**

- Body movement was most prominent with a frequency of 8, then came Gaze with 6 and Posture with 1.

## **Appendix L: Exploratory Data Analysis**

### **Mean Comparison Positive/Negative**

The results for the Norwegian TC show that the negative feelings are at a very little degree with a mean being 1.07 and that the positive questions (1, 7 and 13) about the TC together show a mean of 2.88. The results for the English TC show that the negative feelings are at a very little degree with a mean being 1.44 and that the positive questions (1, 7 and 13) about the TC show a mean of 2.88. This shows that there is a positive perception regarding the use of TC among this group, being that these questions directly asking the participants about what degree they like the TC. However, question 14 asks about the use of TC as a negatively loaded question and the group had a relatively high score of negative feelings. Moreover, it indicates that the group experienced negative feelings Before the TC, During the TC and After the TC. Thus, the data show that the group was mostly negative in the English TC.

## Appendix M: Individual answers from the questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE	A			B			C	
	N	E		N	E		N	E
Hvor godt syns du at du har forberedt deg til fagsamtalen?	4	3		3	4		3	2
Hvor nervøs var du i forkant av fagsamtalen?	1	1		1	3		1	2
Har du gruet deg til fagsamtalen?	0	1		0	3		0	1
Hvor mye har du tenkt på fagsamtalen idag?	1	1		0	2		1	1
Jeg følte at de andre var flinkere til å prate enn meg	1	1		0	3		2	3
Jeg følte at jeg fikk fortalt alt jeg skulle	3	3		3	3		4	3
I denne fagsamtalen slet jeg med å finne riktig ord	2	1		0	2		1	1
Nå som fagsamtalen er over, føler jeg meg lettet	0	0		1	4		1	2
Nå som fagsamtalen er over, husker jeg mye av tingene jeg glemte å si	3	0		0	1		2	0
Jeg følte meg stresset og nervøs i fagsamtalen	0	3		0	3		1	3
På grunn av at det var vanskelig å finne det riktige ordet, så lot jeg være å si noe i det hele tatt	1	0		0	2		0	0
Selv om jeg føler meg godt forberedt, så er jeg nervøs	1	1		0	3		2	1
Jeg syns fagsamtale er en bra måte å vise hva jeg kan på	3	2		1	3		2	2
Det verste jeg vet er muntlig fremføring, som for eksempel en fagsamtale?	2	2		2	2		3	2

QUESTIONNAIRE NORWEGIAN	11	33	44
Hvor godt syns du at du har forberedt deg til fagsamtalen?	4	3	3
Hvor nervøs var du i forkant av fagsamtalen?	1	1	1
Har du gruet deg til fagsamtalen?	0	0	0
Hvor mye har du tenkt på fagsamtalen idag?	1	0	1
Jeg følte at de andre var flinkere til å prate enn meg	1	0	2
Jeg følte at jeg fikk fortalt alt jeg skulle	3	3	4
I denne fagsamtalen slet jeg med å finne riktig ord	2	0	1
Nå som fagsamtalen er over, føler jeg meg lettet	0	1	1
Nå som fagsamtalen er over, husker jeg mye av tingene jeg glemte å si	3	0	2
Jeg følte meg stresset og nervøs i fagsamtalen	0	0	1
På grunn av at det var vanskelig å finne det riktige ordet, så lot jeg være å si noe i det hele tatt	1	0	0
Selv om jeg føler meg godt forberedt, så er jeg nervøs	1	0	2
Jeg syns fagsamtale er en bra måte å vise hva jeg kan på	3	1	2
Det verste jeg vet er muntlig fremføring, som for eksempel en fagsamtale?	2	2	3

## **Appendix N: Table of the main categorization**

Question nr:	Question	Category
1	How well prepared did you feel for the topic conversation?	Preparations
2	Though I feel well prepared, I feel nervous	Preparations
3	How nervous were you prior to the topic conversation?	Nervousness before TC
4	Have you been dreading the topic conversation?	Nervousness before TC
5	Do you feel that you have been thinking a lot about the topic conversation today?	Nervousness before TC
6	I felt that the other participants performed better orally	Feelings during TC
7	I felt that I was able to say what I was supposed to	Feelings during TC
8	I struggled to find the correct words to use in this topic conversation	Feelings during TC
9	I felt stressed and anxious in this topic conversation	Feelings during TC
10	Because it was difficult to find the right word, I refrained from saying anything at all	Feelings during TC
11	Now that the topic conversation is finished, I feel relief	After TC
12	Now that the topic conversation is finished, I recall many of the things I forgot to say during the conversation	After TC
13	I think that the topic conversation is a good way for me to show my competence	Thoughts about TC
14	The worst thing I know is oral presentations, such as a topic conversation in this language	Thoughts about TC

## **Appendix O: Questionnaire – Questions**

*The questions below are translated into English with the intention to be used when reading the result- and discussion-chapter. For original questions in Norwegian, see Appendix I.*

1. How well prepared did you feel for the topic conversation?
2. How nervous were you prior to the topic conversation?
3. Have you been dreading the topic conversation?
4. Do you feel that you have been thinking a lot about the topic conversation today?
5. I felt that the other participants performed better orally
6. I felt that I was able to say what I was supposed to
7. I struggled to find the correct words to use in this topic conversation
8. Now that the topic conversation is finished, I recall many of the things I forgot to say during the conversation
9. Now that the topic conversation is finished, I feel relief
10. I felt stressed and anxious in this topic conversation
11. Because it was difficult to find the right word, I refrained from saying anything at all
12. Though I felt well prepared, I felt nervous
13. I think that the topic conversation is a good way for me to show my competence
14. The worst thing I know is oral presentation, such as a topic conversation in this language