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MASTER'S THESIS

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Abstract

This thesis is based on a case study of using Readers Theatre (RT), a group reading aloud activity in which pupils rehearse and perform texts, in a 6th grade English as a foreign language (EFL) class in Norway. The class comprised of 27 pupils and two teachers. The research questions aimed to find out what the cognitive and affective benefits, as well as the challenges of using RT were in the class.

Two variants of RT were used during two cycles: firstly, pre-written scripts were used, and secondly, pupils created and performed their own scripts about a Christmas story. The first cycle introduced the pupils and the two teachers to RT and lasted one week. The second cycle lasted three weeks.

Different methods were used for collecting data. The teachers were interviewed. The pupils wrote three journal entries: one before the first cycle, one after the first cycle, and one after the second cycle. Also, the researcher was a participant observer in all the English lessons during the four-week period of research. In addition, the first rehearsals of the texts and the performances were video recorded during the first cycle.

The video recordings made it possible, for example, to study some of the cognitive benefits of RT. One group was studied in detail and the improvement of pronunciation and word recognition was quantified, showing considerable improvement in pronunciation and word recognition from rehearsal to performance. Also, the members improved their reading fluency throughout the week. Both teachers commented upon the amount of text the pupils in the class had been able to read, and were excited by the impact of RT on improving the pupils' reading ability.

The study revealed that RT was an enjoyable and engaging method in English. During the observations the pupils seemed enthusiastic about participating in the project. Most of them wrote in the journal entries that they enjoyed learning English in the RT project and working in groups. All the pupils wrote that they would like to participate in another RT project. Also, the pupils seemed to increase their confidence in reading and performing, and also in other similar activities. During plenary discussions the teachers confirmed these impressions.

The main challenge of using RT concerned the logistics in preparing the project, both finding scripts and appropriate rooms to rehearse. Another challenge was how to include the most struggling learners in the different groups. Creating a separate group for these struggling learners, with constant supervision from one of the teachers, solved this problem.

Most research on RT has been conducted in first language (L1) contexts. Little research has been conducted on RT in second language (L2) contexts and even less at the L2 primary level. In Norwegian EFL contexts, some research on RT has been conducted at the lower secondary level. This study, with its focus on EFL at the primary level, has contributed to a gap in the research on RT. The results of this research have shown that RT has a huge potential at this level, but should be followed up by, for example, more case studies in order to confirm these findings.

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

This thesis is about a case study investigating the benefits and challenges of implementing Readers Theatre (RT) in a Norwegian 6th grade English as a foreign language (EFL) class. RT is in essence an art form in which the performers read a text aloud in a group after thoroughly rehearsing it. It is an activity that has been used much in schools, especially in the US and the UK (Drew and Pedersen, 2010:2). The study followed one class during two different RT cycles of rehearsing and performing texts over a period of one month. Firstly, RT was implemented in the class with pre-written narrative scripts, and secondly the pupils created their own stories and scripts and performed them as RT. Data was collected through teacher interviews, pupil journals, lesson observations and video recordings.

RT is an activity in which the readers bring characters, story, and even textbook material to life through voices, actions, and words. Trousdale and Harris (1993:201) describe RT as 'a stylised form of dramatisation'. Through RT pupils are able to communicate stories, poems, scenes from a play, songs, or even factual texts, such as newspapers, historical documents, and biographies. Black and Stave (2007:3) describe as one of the strengths of RT its ability to adapt to different texts and genres, ages, performance, and language.

The ability to read has become one of the major concerns in the Norwegian National Curriculum, *LK06*, and is emphasised by the fact that reading has been classified as one of the five basic skills in the curriculum, which are being able to express oneself orally and in writing, being able to read, having numeracy skills, and being able to use digital tools. These basic skills are integrated in and adapted to each subject[1]. According to Hellekjær (2007:23), reading becoming a basic skill was a result of weak scores in mathematics and reading in the OECD PISA surveys. In the English subject curriculum the basic skill of reading is described as a practical language competence, namely the ability to read and understand, and reflect and gain insight across cultures and disciplines. *LK06* claims that developing reading skills in English also improves general reading skills (*LK06* English subject curriculum).

Reading is a vital part of language learning. Even though it was, according to Hellekjær (2007), a forgotten skill in the Norwegian education system, the introduction of the *LK06* National curriculum breathed new life into its importance. Reading is important for learning a new language and its connected cultures. However, by classifying reading as a

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[1] <http://www.udir.no/Stottemeny/English/Curriculum-in-English/> Accessed: 22.04.14.

basic skill in the *LK06* curriculum, the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training has made reading a vital part of school education in every subject.

LK06 allows teachers a certain degree of autonomy and the focus is on reaching the learning goals, not how to get there. Drew and Sørheim (2009:41) point out that 'the *LK06* curriculum is much shorter and more concise than its predecessor, *L97*'. Whereas *L97* gave suggestions on various texts and reading materials, *LK06* focuses its attention on competence aims and not on material for teaching. However, there is still a strong tradition for using the textbook in Norway (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:115). Hellekjær (2007:27) claims that the strong focus on the textbook, and the focus on intensive reading for detail rather than extensive reading (see section 3.2.5), results in pupils not being able to adapt their reading according to the specified reading purpose. In her study on approaches of teaching EFL in the 4th and 5th grades in the Norwegian primary level (grades 1-7), Charboneau (2012:62) confirms Drew and Sørheim's (2009) and Hellekjær's (2007) claims that the presence of the textbook is strong in Norwegian EFL instruction. The predominant use of the textbook will not necessarily foster creativity, which is a quality that schools should cherish, according to the *LK06* Core Curriculum (1997:11)[2]. Too much use of the textbook may therefore result in instruction being less efficient, but also that pupils are not allowed to nurture their creativity. Therefore, it is advantageous for teachers to apply methods and texts other than the textbook.

1.1. Aims of the study

Since focus on the importance of being able to read has increased in recent years, it is the responsibility of the teacher to find activities that may enhance reading skills. Activities such as RT have the potential to increase both the pupils' reading skills and their motivation to read (Casey and Chamberlain, 2006; Forsythe, 1995).

Research shows that RT can motivate pupils to read more, give them confidence in reading aloud, motivate them to read silently, and improve their reading skills, while still having the impression that it is both fun and relaxing (Martinez et. al., 1999; Peebles, 2007; Worthy and Prater, 2002). However, research on RT in English lessons has not been conducted at the Norwegian primary school level at all and there is very little research

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[2] The Core Curriculum was originally created in 1993 for previous curricula, *R94* and *L97*, but was continued in the current *LK06* curriculum. See section 2.2 for more details on the *LK06* curriculum.

internationally on RT with young language learners in a second language (L2) context[3]. This thesis investigates the use of RT at the level mentioned and thus contributes to the gap in the research.

RT has been used with success in schools in the UK and the USA. However, most of the research on the method focuses on first language (L1) classes (Casey and Chamberlain, 2006; Forsythe, 1995; Lengeling et al., 1996; Young and Rasinski, 2009). In Norway, studies have researched the use of RT in EFL classes in lower secondary school (Drew, 2009a; Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Pettersen, 2013). This thesis in contrast focuses on its use in primary EFL. The study addresses the following questions:

What are the cognitive and affective benefits of using Readers Theatre in the 6th grade EFL class?
What are the challenges of using Readers Theatre in the class?

Since much of the research on RT is on young learners in L1 contexts and shows cognitive and affective benefits (e.g. improved reading fluency and pronunciation and increased motivation and confidence) the researcher expected that the pupils in the study would also benefit in similar ways. However, this would depend on the texts being at an appropriate level of difficulty, and that there would be sufficient time for rehearsing and assistance. The researcher also expected there would be logistical challenges, such as finding rooms for rehearsals and how to accommodate struggling learners in the groups.

1.2. Thesis outline

Chapter 2, 'What is Readers Theatre?', explains the nature of RT, its traditions, who can participate, and what reading material can be used. The chapter seeks to give a brief explanation of what RT is and how it is used in education.

Chapter 3, 'Theory and literary review', presents theory relevant for this thesis on educational psychology within the field of constructivism, reading and different approaches to teaching reading, and on RT. The chapter presents research on the cognitive and affective benefits of RT, such as increased comprehension, fluency, improved writing, attitudes, and

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[3] The terms second language (L2) and foreign language are used synonymously in the thesis.

motivation. Finally, there is a brief description of research conducted on RT in L2 contexts with a main focus on research conducted in Norway.

Chapter 4, 'Methodology', describes the nature of qualitative research, and the methods used for this study: Case study, observations, interviews with teachers, pupil journals and video recording. The chapter discusses the ethical considerations one must address when conducting research in education. In addition, the chapter addresses validity and reliability, and how the two apply to this study. Finally, the chapter elaborates on how RT was implemented in the class.

Chapter 5, 'Results', presents the findings from the current research. The chapter presents data collected through the interviews with the teachers, journal entries from the pupils, plenary discussions with the teachers and the pupils, observations, and video recordings. The chapter is divided into two main parts, presenting the findings chronologically in relation to the two cycles of the research.

Chapter 6, 'Discussion', discusses the findings of the research. The chapter is divided into four parts: discussing the findings in relation to the two thesis questions, the educational implications and recommendations of the study, and its limitations.

Chapter 7, 'Conclusion', concludes the thesis and highlights the main findings, as well as giving recommendations for future research.

2. What is Readers Theatre?

RT is an activity where a group reads a text aloud to an audience after rehearsing it, and integrates oral and written language. RT has long traditions, and, according to Coger and White (1967:10), dates back to ancient Greece where epic poems such as the Iliad and the Odyssey would be recited by wandering minstrels or 'rhapsodes'. This tradition has continued throughout history, up to the modern era. In the 1950s and 1960s RT was embraced as an accepted dramatic form in both the US and the UK, and was also practised in both American and English educational contexts.

The script plays an important part in RT during practice and also during the performance. The script is visible for the audience. According to Black and Stave (2007:4), the physical presence of the script tells the audience that the performance focuses on the text, and that the performance is first of all a reading of a text. Rasinski (2010:117) argues that RT is more manageable than the regular practice of drama, which is time consuming and in which the pupils have to memorise lines, learn movements, and create costumes, props and scenery. Different genres can be used as texts in RT activities and there are three main variants that can be used: pre-written scripts, pupils or teachers adapting scripts, and pupils creating their own scripts.

In an educational context, the pupils are normally the readers and performers in RT. The teacher, on the other hand, is often the director of the performance, producer, and writer of the scripts. However, once acquainted with RT, the pupils may also take part in the production and ultimately become directors, producers, and writers. The goal of RT is to scaffold pupil independence (Black and Stave, 2007:4). The teacher's goal in RT is to move from a teacher-directed to a pupil-directed classroom to facilitate pupil independence. However, the teacher's role will vary with the pupils' needs and abilities. The process of RT depends on the autonomy of the pupils and the teacher's role will vary in each class. According to Black and Stave (2007:19), it is important to remember that the teacher's role is indispensable, and will change according to the pupils in each individual class.

As with the teacher, the pupils' role also changes as they become more familiar with the process of RT. The ultimate goal is to create autonomous groups who direct, produce, and perform the text on their own. The entire activity is cooperation between the group of pupils and the teacher, where the teacher serves as an advisor where it is needed. According to Back and Stave (2007:22), observations in middle school classrooms found the teachers moving in and out of different roles, one of which was to create effective groups.

The pupils have certain roles and responsibilities when working on an RT project. Black and Stave (2007:24) claim that each group needs at least one pupil who has good comprehension skills and reads fluently. This is to create autonomous groups that manage to work more or less on their own. When a group is autonomous it is helpful to appoint the following roles in each group – director, stage manager, artist, sound creator, and researcher. Some of these roles were also found in the different groups during this research. The director is the most able reader, and is able to understand and communicate the text. The sound creator listens to each group member's reading and gives feedback on appropriate volume, rate, pronunciation, and feeling. These roles are flexible, and one or more pupils can handle the roles. It is up to each group, with the help of the teacher, to assign different roles and responsibilities within each group. The age of the pupils must be taken in to consideration. However, the present research shows that a certain degree of pupil autonomy can be achieved as low as the 6th grade, or aged 11 (see Chapter 5).

There is normally no need for the use of props, costumes or scenery in a performance of RT. Casey and Chamberlain (2006:18) point out that it is a minimal theatrical production where the pupils express 'meaning through fluent and prosodic readings of scripted stories'. Staging and movement is kept to a minimum, and the voice of the pupil is the only way to bring the story and its characters alive. However, research by Forsythe (1995:264) indicates that the creation and use of backdrops, props, and puppets is a good way to introduce RT, especially for younger learners.

2.1. Models of Readers Theatre

According to Shepard (2004:47), there are two main models for staging the performance of RT: the traditional and the developed model.

2.1.1. Traditional model

In the traditional model the performers are standing or seated in fixed positions, facing the audience. In one variant, according to Shepard (2004:47), 'narrators are placed at one or both ends, and major characters in the centre'. The scripts should be a visible part of the performance, and can be held in hand or set on music stands. The text is divided into small chunks, so that each reader reads the part of his or her character. The text may also be divided

between narrators, reading the background story, and characters, reading the dialogues and dramatising scenes. Alternatively, the text is divided between the readers without considering narrative or dialogue, and a reader may read narrative or dialogue at any given time (Drew and Pedersen, 2010:3).

In one variant of the traditional model (see Figure 1 below) the reading takes place in the following order: Narrator (N), Reader 1, Reader 6, Reader 2, Reader 5, Reader 3, Reader 4, Narrator, and so on until the text is completed. The following sequence illustrates the opening of the RT version of the fairytale 'Rumpelstiltskin', adapted by Drew (2009b).

<div align="center">

N

3   4

2   5

1   6

Dramatisation

</div>
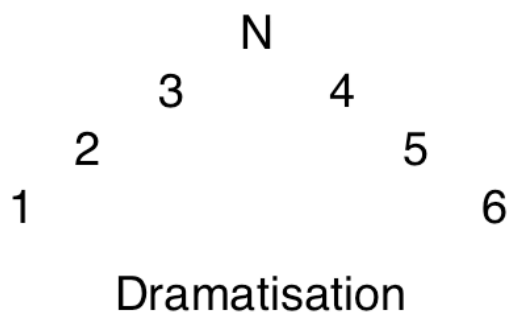
Figure 1: Illustration of a traditional RT model, adapted from Drew (2009b)

In this version there are seven readers, and two or three pupils who sometimes perform dramatised scenes in front of the readers.

N: A long time ago, a miller lived with his daughter in a kingdom.

1: His daughter was very beautiful.

6: She was a kind, but shy girl.

2: The king was out riding one day and saw the miller's daughter.

5: 'What a beautiful girl!' he said.

3: 'She's more than beautiful' answered the miller. 'She's also clever. She can turn straw in to gold!'

4: 'That can't be true?' said the king. 'No one can turn straw into gold? Come to my castle tomorrow with your daughter. I want to see for myself.'

N: 'Well… OK,' said the miller. Now he was nervous.

In this text there are three dramatised scenes with the little man and the miller's daughter. The seven readers read the text, and these dramatised scenes, with two or three other pupils, complement the text. Ideally the pupils should have learnt their lines, and not read, in these dramatised scenes.

2.1.2. Developed model

The developed model is 'designed for greater appeal to young audiences' (Shepard, 2004:47). The developed model, like the traditional model, is based on the visible use of scripts. However, the developed model adds movement to the reading as well. Shepard (2004) argues that the developed model takes more effort, but is more rewarding and involving for both performer and audience. Research done in the classroom by Peebles (2007:578) shows that a developed model, with using movement as part of the reading, is beneficial for especially the struggling learners. Shepard's (2004) developed model has some distinctive features. Like the traditional model the script is divided in small chunks. However, there is a clear distinction between 'characters' and 'narrators'. The characters in the play read the dialogues, portray the action described in the story, and look at each other during the performance. The narrators, on the other hand, provide the background information of the text. The same RT version of 'Rumpelstiltskin' in a developed model would involve four narrators and four characters: the king, the miller, the little man, and the miller's daughter. The introduction would be as following:

N1: A long time ago, a miller lived with his daughter in a kingdom.
N2: His daughter was very beautiful.
N3: She was a kind, but shy girl.
N4: The king was out riding one day and saw the miller's daughter.
King: What a beautiful girl!
Miller: She's more than beautiful. She's also clever. She can turn straw into gold!
King: That can't be true? No one can turn straw into gold? Come to my castle tomorrow with your daughter. I want to see for myself.
Miller: Well… OK.
N1: Now the miller was nervous.

In this model of RT, dramatisation and the reading itself are integrated, whereas in the traditional model the two are separated.

2.2. Readers Theatre in relation to the *LK06* English curriculum

From a general perspective, the attention towards reading in education has increased in recent years (Day and Bamford, 1998; Grabe, 2009; Hellekjær, 2007). Young and Rasinski (2009:4) claim that, for example, reading fluency has become a crucial goal in the elementary curriculum. However, fluency is just one of several skills in reading that should be paid more attention to. Reading comprehension is a 'higher order' process (Perfetti and Hogaboam, 1975:467), and may therefore be considered an important part of reading, and thus also an important aspect to include when considering a reading curriculum. RT can be used across the curriculum in content subjects, such as science, history, literature, and mathematics. Kinniburgh and Shaw Jr. (2007:17) point out that teachers can take content from science textbooks and transpose it to an RT script, but that it is important that these scripts add more explicit explanations than the textbook provides, rather than simply copying the text. This type of RT is called Curriculum-Based RT and emphasises information communication, and concerns precisely the topics of study particular to the class performing the script (Worthy, 2005:19).

The *LK06* curriculum is divided into one main part called 'Core Curriculum', and one curriculum for each subject, for example the English subject curriculum. *LK06* was the first curriculum to include primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school in one curriculum. National curricula prior to *LK06* were either made for primary and lower secondary school (grades 1-10) or upper secondary school. The Core Curriculum states that children's curiosity and creativity are qualities that the school must cherish and make use of in teaching, and that children learn from each other (*LK06* Core Curriculum, 1997:11). The Core Curriculum describes creative talent as the ability to originate novel forms of artistic expression. The curriculum also has a social-constructivist view, arguing that education must be structured in such a way that the pupils can take part in the development and acquisition of new knowledge.

The *LK06* English subject curriculum (2010) is divided into three main subject areas: Language learning, Communication, and Culture, society and literature. Firstly, the main area of Language has its main focus on 'knowledge about the language, language usage and

insight into one's own language learning'. This area states that pupils should be able to assess their own language use, needs, and select strategies and ways of learning the English language. The main focus in this area is that pupils should be able to see what is involved in learning a new language and the relationship between English, one's native language and other languages.

RT can easily be applied in this area of the English subject curriculum, for example the competence aim 'give examples of English terms and phrases connected to personal interests' (after year 2). This means that pupils should know different words applied in different settings. For example, 'football' involves words such as *pitch*, *offside*, *goalkeeper*, *referee*, and *penalty*. Flynn (2004:363) argues that in Curriculum-Based RT one must choose content that the pupils need to know, and provide them with the necessary information. This information may be, for example, a textbook page or a fact sheet. This content may be influenced by the pupils' interests.

Worthy (2005:15) argues that RT is a multilevel activity, where one is able to group pupils heterogeneously. Pupils can therefore be grouped by their interests and choice rather than reading level, by for example handing one group a text about football, who then creates a dialogue about football. This dialogue could then be performed as RT.

Secondly, the main area of Communication has its main focus on 'using the English language to communicate'. The subject curriculum states that pupils should be able to communicate by listening, reading, writing, prepared oral production, and spontaneous oral interaction. The abilities mentioned as communication are all abilities practised in RT. The English subject curriculum claims that 'good communication requires knowledge and skills in using vocabulary and idiomatic structures, pronunciation, intonation, spelling, grammar and syntax of sentences and texts'. These are also abilities that can be practised in RT.

One competence aim in Communication is 'to participate in conversations on everyday situations' (after year 7). This means that pupils should be able to have a conversation about situations, such as shopping and asking for directions. To continue the example about 'football', the pupils may be asked to create a dialogue about a match from last weekend or write a match report. The pupils could then perform the dialogue or report as RT.

Finally, the main area of Culture, society and literature has its main focus on cultural understanding. It is based on the English-speaking world and has its focus on key topics related to social issues, literature and other cultural forms of expressions. It also has its focus on developing knowledge about English as a world language and its different areas of use: developing linguistic skills, understanding how people live and their cultures and views of

life, by working with various types of texts and cultural expression. Reading literature is considered a tool to establish a joy for reading and provide the basis for personal growth, maturity and creativity.

One example of a competence aim in Culture, society and literature is 'to talk about some persons, places and events' (after year 7). This means that pupils should have a general knowledge about both the English language and its countries and inhabitants. To complete the example of 'football', the pupils could be asked to talk about a special event in football, such as the Charity Shield game, or the Hillsborough disaster. The pupils could then be asked to create, for example, a news broadcast on one of these topics and perform it as RT.

3. Theory and literature review

This chapter highlights theory and research related to RT, especially research on the benefits of RT. The chapter is divided into three main parts: theory on educational psychology, reading, and research on RT. Theory on educational psychology includes theories within the fields of constructivism and social constructivism. This theory is closely linked to RT as RT has its foundation within these fields. Reading includes theories about reading as a skill, the prerequisites and challenges of learning to read, and reading in the curriculum. Although most of the research on RT has been in L1 contexts, the final part of the chapter sheds light on RT research in L2 contexts.

3.1. Constructivism

Constructivism is a theory and an approach to education that focuses on the idea that pupils should learn by doing. As opposed to other fields of educational psychology, such as behaviourism or maturationism, where behaviours or skills are the goal of the instruction, constructivism focuses on cognitive development and deep understanding (Fosnot and Perry, 2005:10). Fosnot and Perry (2005:11) point out that constructivists view learning as a complex process that is nonlinear in nature. A basic principle of the constructivists is that pupils discover their knowledge, meaning that pupils must be active, experiment and figure things out on their own (Imsen, 2008:326). The constructivist approach is an effective method of teaching because it is based on internal motivation and also that, through experimentation, the pupils' way of learning will be based on their own interests. Bruner (1974:401) calls this 'learning by discovery'. He argues that every subject has a core problem, or basic ideas, that the pupils need to solve, and that these core problems should be part of the education from the very beginning. These core problems would be adapted to the level of the pupils, and the same problems would reappear throughout their education until they had 'grasped the full formal apparatus that goes with them' (Bruner, 1960:13). Bruner calls this the 'spiral curriculum', and argues that 'any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development' (Bruner, 1960:33).

Bruner's spiral curriculum is an example of where teaching is based on the pupil's level of comprehension, and not on whether or not the topic itself is too difficult. Bruner

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argues that a criterion for every subject in primary school is that it needs to be of importance when the pupil becomes an adult. Is the subject worth knowing as an adult, and does it make the adult a better person? Bruner (1960:52) claims that if the answers to the questions are negative, it should not be included in the curriculum. Literature is used as an example to define the spiral curriculum. For example, when trying to teach about human tragedy, and trying to teach children awareness and compassion regarding the topic, one cannot teach literature on tragedy to young children in a manner that does not frighten them. However, one possibility is to begin with great myths, children's classics, or even movies. As the level of comprehension increases, one may continue with more complex versions of the same type of literature. However, it is important that later teachings build on the earlier reactions to the topic, thus resulting in a more mature understanding (Bruner, 1960: 53). According to Imsen (2008:326), the spiral curriculum is being used in schools all over the world; it is especially noticeable in mathematics, where the same topics are revisited at different levels throughout a child's education.

Inspiration from the spiral curriculum is also to be found in the *LK06* English curriculum and its competence aims, for example in the following competence aim: 'the pupil is able to give examples of situations where it might be useful to have some English-language skills' (Language learning after year two). One finds similar aims for other levels in the curriculum:

- *The pupil is able to identify areas where English is useful for him or her* (year four).
- *The pupil is able to identify and use various situations to expand his/her own English-language skills* (year seven).
- *The pupil is able to use various situations, work methods and strategies to learn English* (year ten).
- *The pupil is able to exploit and assess various situations, working methods and strategies for learning English* (years 11 or 12).

In all of these competence aims one finds a common denominator in the ability to identify situations where English is important. However, the difference is found in the level of difficulty, which is also the basic principle of Bruner's spiral curriculum. An individual learns the same subject or topic several times by increasing the difficulty level.

Discovery learning is based on the principle that pupils learn by themselves or in groups. However, the teacher's role is not obsolete. The teacher plays a vital part in this

method of education. The teacher gives the pupils hints, or helps them when it is necessary. Bruner defines this as scaffolding (Imsen, 2008:328). Slavin (2012: 42) defines scaffolding as 'the assistance provided by more competent peers or adults', and argues that when using scaffolding as an approach, one provides the child with much support during the early stages of learning. However, when the child grows and increases his/her level of proficiency, the support is gradually diminished, thus resulting in the child's responsibility of learning being increased. Examples of scaffolding could be a mother helping her child when reading a storybook, or a mother helping her child when trying to speak (Rodgers and Rodgers, 2004:2). An example of scaffolding used in education is an approach called Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSR).

ScSR moves away from a more traditional silent reading approach where the pupil is given an unlimited choice of books from school, home, or the library. In ScSR the pupils are taught selection strategies that help them choose books at the appropriate difficulty level. One of the main differences from other silent reading activities is that in ScSR the teachers monitor their pupils with the help of activities, such as reading aloud, discussing the books, and setting goals for when to complete the book (Reutzel et al., 2008:196). Research on ScSR shows that it increases motivation, reading fluency, and reading comprehension (Reutzel et al., 2008: 205-206).

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is an extension of the field of constructivism. One of the most influential scholars within this field is Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky believed that the development of knowledge must include both the individual's history and his or her development in the future, and that only when one considers the two in relationship with the present is one able to understand the psychology of learning (Imsen 2008:254). Vygotsky (1978:79) argues that there are three major theoretical positions concerning the relation between development and learning. The first is that development is independent of learning, meaning that learning is an external process that utilizes achievements of development. This theoretical position is, according to Vygotsky (1978:80), based on the assumption that a child's development provides the foundation for learning. The second theoretical position is that learning is development and that the two processes are synchronous events. The third position is a combination of the first two. According to Vygotsky (1978:81-82), the two theories constitute two extremes, and the third theory is an attempt to overcome these extremes.

However, Vygotsky rejects all of the mentioned positions. As opposed to previous scholars, Vygotsky (1978:84) states that learning happens before the child begins at school, and argues that learning and development are interrelated from a child's very first day of life. Examples of this type of learning are found in many subjects, such as languages and maths, where the child has learned certain skills in the preschool years.

Vygotsky also argues that there are two arenas for learning – everyday learning and scientific learning. These two concepts are differentiated in the sense that a child learns social and spontaneous concepts every day. Scientific concepts, however, are learned through formal instruction in education (Au, 1998: 300). However, the two concepts of learning both play a part in the child's development. Vygotsky abandons old theories and introduces a new approach – the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

The ZPD is an approach where it is believed that learning takes place within each individual's zone (Slavin, 2012:42). According to Slavin, tasks within the ZPD are endeavours that cannot be accomplished by the pupil alone, but are, however, manageable with the assistance of peers or adults, as shown in Figure 2.
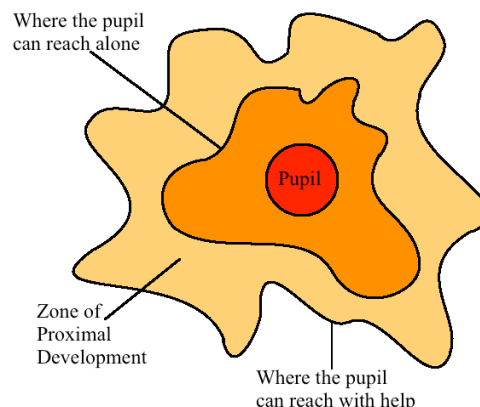
Figure 2: The Zone of Proximal Development (adapted from Imsen, 2008:259)

Vygotsky (1978:86) describes the ZPD as – 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers'. According to Slavin (2012:43), a Vygotskian approach to instruction also includes scaffolding, where the pupils can also benefit from cooperative learning activities in mixed ability groups. Instruction among peers, Slavin argues, may be an effective way of increasing an individual's growth within the ZPD. The role of peers, teachers, parents, or

family members aiding in learning is also one of the main focuses in social constructivist research on literacy learning (Au, 1998:300).

Much of literary education today is founded and influenced by social constructivist theories, and RT is one method influenced by constructivism (McKay, 2008:135). Rather than focusing teaching on the knowledge of the teacher, a constructivist classroom focuses instruction and assessment on the aim of pupils constructing knowledge. RT focuses its attention on collaboration in groups, and on both reading instruction and assessment, thus making RT an approach to teaching with similarities to constructivist theories (Tsou, 2011:728). McKay (2008:135) refers to Vygotsky (1978) and claims that pupils provided with interactive activities are able to structure independent thinking. Vygotsky's ZPD becomes important when choosing scripts for pupils. When working with struggling learners, one should always try to use texts that are slightly above the level of the pupils (Rinehart, 2001:71).

According to McKay (2008:135), Cambourne (1988) introduced eight conditions for learning that make it possible to compare RT with relevant learning theory (see Table 1 below). These are immersion, demonstration, expectations, responsibility, approximations, response, and engagement.

Table 1: Cambourne's conditions for learning applied to RT (adapted from McKay, 2008:136)

Cambourne's conditions for learning	Application to RT
Immersion: It is important for pupils to be immersed in language and text of all kinds.	In the process of planning, preparing, and performing RT, pupils are immersed in literacy rich language as well as in text.
Demonstration: Pupils need to see, hear, or experience what literacy learning looks like, sounds like, and feels like. Modelling is a key element of learning.	The teacher demonstrates the process of planning and preparing for RT and models fluent and dramatic reading. This demonstration and modelling helps pupils to understand what both good reading and RT looks and sounds like.
Expectations: Learners often achieve what they are expected to achieve. It is important for learners to receive messages that tell them they can be successful.	Because pupils are expected to prepare and present the RT text, they realise that there is an expectation of success. Learners are successful because they know that the expectation is that they will succeed.
Responsibility: Learners need opportunities to make decisions about their own learning. Increased pupil responsibility improves the likelihood of learning engagement.	When pupils are given the opportunity to plan and prepare an RT presentation, they are accepting responsibility for that presentation and the learning that takes place during the process. They become responsible for the interpretations of the literature and for the organisation of the reading.
Employment: Learners need to practise what they are learning. As pupils practise, they gain control over their learning. They also gain increased confidence.	Practice is an essential component of RT. Pupils are required to practise various roles and characters. This practise results in pupils reading with better understanding of the text, as well as, increased confidence and competence.
Approximations: Learners need opportunities to try things out, to make mistakes in the process of learning, and to recognise that the mistakes help them to improve their approximations.	During the preparation and practising of RT, pupils support each other in trying out various roles and characters.
Response: Feedback is important for learning, growth, and improvement. The feedback needs to be specific, timely, and nonthreatening.	Feedback is a part of the RT preparation process. Teacher and pupil feedback supports the pupils' reading, group work, and interpretations.
Engagement: Engagement is the critical condition for learning. Engagement occurs when learners believe that they are capable and likely to engage in whatever is being demonstrated. Learners are also more likely to be engaged if the demonstrations are given by those they trust and anxiety is minimized.	The conditions of engagement apply in the preparations and performances. Performing makes the planning and the practice authentic because it is for a real audience and purpose. Pupils feel safe because they are supported by their group. They also feel safe because they do not have to rely on memorisation, can read the text, and have practised with feedback. Pupils have a choice about what they read and how they will perform the text. Choice is a key component of engagement.

These conditions for learning are, according to McKay (2008:138), one of the foundations for the success of RT in education, and can be found in both the planning, preparation and presentation of an RT project.

3.2. Reading

3.2.1. The nature of reading

Reading is unquestionably an important skill to master, both in everyday life, and even more importantly in education. The ability to read in one's L1 becomes important already in the early grades of primary school. Slavin (2012:45) argues that reading is one of the most important developmental skills because other subjects depend on it and because school success is often measured by reading success. This view corresponds well with the OECD PISA surveys measuring reading as one of the key skills (mathematics and science being the other two)[4]. According to Slavin (2012:45), the language skills of children are often complex and critical in reading, and the process of teaching the reading skill can often begin early. Slavin points out that research on emergent literacy shows that children enter school with much knowledge about the concept of reading or reading itself, which contributes to success in teaching reading. The knowledge the child brings from home may be knowledge about the concept of print, or even the ability to read some words or sentences. Acquiring the ability to read is therefore based on collaboration between the home and the school.

According to Grabe (2009:4), reading is a skill that for many is taken for granted. Once learned, it takes little effort, and a little over 80% of the world's population is able to read to some extent. Most people are able to read newspapers, advertisements, and use their reading skills in their daily lives. Some, however, read at a much higher level of comprehension, and are able to learn and combine information from multiple texts (Grabe, 2009:4). However, there is a huge gap between countries defined as highly developed and those less developed[5]. Norway, considered as highly developed, is no exception, and it is expected that the literacy rates in Norway are as high as 100%, meaning that illiteracy is

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[4] <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/> Accessed: 06.11.13.
[5] <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/101406.html> Accessed: 06.11.13.

considered extinct[6]. According to Grabe (2009:4), universal literacy is one of UNESCO's ideal goals, and is also an ongoing priority.

Literacy is most commonly known as 'a set of tangible skills – particularly the cognitive skills of reading and writing – that are independent of the context in which they are acquired and the background of the person who acquires them' (UNESCO, 2005:149). The transition of oral language to literate modes plays an important part on the human mind. Literacy allows signs to represent words, and words to represent thought. Wolf (2007:3) points out that reading is a skill that was invented, and not something humans were born to do. With this invention, Wolf argues, the organization of the human brain was rearranged, thus resulting in expanding the way of thinking, and inevitably expanding the intellectual evolution of the human species. One may therefore argue that the invention of literacy, and the ability to read and write, is one of the most important skills of the human species.

People read many texts as fluent readers. Some types of texts are read intentionally, and some are picked up or encountered (Grabe, 2009:5). The printed word is everywhere in modern societies, and is being used in more ways than most people are aware of. One reads in everyday situations, such as shopping, watching TV, and text messages, and also for pleasure, namely reading books, newspapers or magazines. On the other hand, one also reads in formal settings, such as at the workplace, at the university, or at school. These types of formal texts may often be quite demanding to read. However, this is also the type of reading where much of the learning occurs. Grabe (2009:5) points out that this kind of reading requires the reader to 'synthesise, interpret, evaluate and selectively use the information from texts' to discuss, address, or argue from multiple viewpoints. Even though it is no guarantee for success, it is definitely much harder to be successful in contemporary societies without the ability to read.

Being able to read in an L2 is also important in many situations and, according to Grabe (2009:6), it is also an ability mastered by a large percentage of people around the world. Reading skills in an L2 are used all over the world for getting jobs, travel, communication or entertainment. With an increasingly globalised world over the past 100 years, the importance of being able to communicate in an L2 has increased. Norway is no exception to this development.

The skill of reading can be defined as 'the construction of meaning from a printed or written message' (Day and Bamford, 1998:12). However, Grabe (2009:14) argues that when one considers the different purposes and varying processes of reading, it is obvious that one

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[6] <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2103.html> Accessed: 04.03.14.

sentence will not cover the complexity of reading. Day and Bamford (1998:11) point out that different reading materials, such as academic literature, comics, novels, or subtitles, are all activities labelled reading, and can be viewed from several perspectives. These perspectives include socio-cultural, physiological, affective, philosophical, educational, and cognitive ones. Two of these, cognitive and affective, will be addressed in more detail in the following sections because of their close link to RT.

3.2.2. Reading from a cognitive perspective

Decoding, sight vocabulary and vocabulary knowledge
Decoding is the 'transfer of the written code to the language code' (Perfetti and Hogaboam, 1975:462). Decoding usually involves word recognition and code breaking and is considered to be a basic word skill. However, basic skills, such as decoding, are also vital for more advanced reading skills, such as comprehension. Perfetti and Hogaboam (1975:461) point out that if a reader requires considerable time and energy on decoding a single word, his or her capacity on more important processes, such as comprehension, will not suffice. Perfetti and Hogaboam (1975:467) even suggest that differences in high order processes like comprehension, come as a result of differences in basic word skills, such as decoding.

Another basic cognitive skill is sight vocabulary. Sight vocabulary is the ability to recognise words automatically (Day and Bamford, 1998:16), which is achieved through over-learning. Beginning readers encounter words from familiar contexts again and again in new and various contexts. These multiple encounters enlarge the reader's sight vocabulary, and with it automaticity. Vocabulary knowledge is considered the key to fluency in L1 reading, and Day and Bamford (1998:17) argue that the larger 'children's vocabularies are, the better their comprehension'. There is no reason to believe that the same cognitive processes and skills do not apply in an L2 context, or that there is a notable difference between L1 and L2 in this respect. The need for a large vocabulary is therefore also important for reading fluently and comprehending texts in an L2. Both in L1 and L2 a reader can acquire new words by guessing their meaning in the context in which they are being read, namely 'incidental acquisition'. According to Day and Bamford (1998:16-17), this is possible for L2 learners by reading material that is just above their current level of acquisition, which corresponds to Krashen's (1982) theory of *i+1*. Krashen claims that language is acquired through comprehensible input, where one understands language that is just beyond one's present level,

where 'i' is the present level and +1 is the next. However, it is important to consider the level of the L2 reader. Since a learner's oral vocabulary may be lacking in an L2, it may be difficult, especially in the early stages, to learn vocabulary through incidental acquisition. It is therefore important to begin reading texts with a low number of unknown words. Day and Bamford (1998:18) argue that L2 learners must read much, both to learn new words from context and to become better readers, making incidental acquisition easier.

Fluency

Fluency, according to Pikulski and Chard (2005:510), is the bridge between decoding and comprehension. Rasinski (2010:31) defines fluency as the ability to read words in a text with automaticity, efficiently and without effort. Automaticity of reading is, according to Hellekjær (2007:28), the basis of fluent reading. Rasinski argues that fluency is the further development of phonics or word recognition, and points out that even though readers are fully capable of decoding words accurately, they may not be fluent in their word recognition. These readers spend too much time and energy on understanding the pronunciation and meaning of words, rather than understanding the meaning of the text itself, a far more important aspect of reading (Rasinski, 2010:32). A fluent reader, on the other hand, is able to recognise words and phrases instantly on sight, and uses the time and energy on making sense of the text. However, Rasinski (2010:32) argues that there is a second component to reading fluency that is often forgotten in programs for teaching fluency, namely prosody, which is the ability to read orally with expression. A fluent reader is able to rise and lower volume and pitch, speed up and slow down when appropriate in the text, read text in groups and phrases, and pause at appropriate places. These are elements of expression, or prosody, that add meaning to our oral language.

Worthy and Broaddus (2002:335) claim that the importance of reading fluency becomes clear after the primary grades, when pupils are expected to read independently. After the primary grades, not only does the complexity of both the reading and the materials expand, but also the sheer volume of the reading material. For struggling readers who are not fluent, this may result in them having problems keeping up with the schoolwork, and ultimately falling behind at school. Attention to fluency is therefore especially important for these pupils.

Comprehension

Comprehending texts begins already from the first words that are processed (Grabe, 2009:40). However, there is a huge gap between recognising single words and creating an understanding

of an entire text. According to Cain et al. (2004:31), text comprehension is a complex skill that comes as a result of several cognitive skills and processes. This view is supported by Grabe (2009:41-42), who points out that comprehending a text involves cognitive processes, such as background knowledge, genre knowledge, word recognition, and vocabulary.

Cain et al. (2004:32) claim that there is a strong relationship between the working memory and a child's reading comprehension. However, the working memory has limitations, and information can only be retained for 25-30 seconds (Hellekjær, 2007: 23). Therefore, Keehn et al. (2008:337) suggest that there is a close link between fluency and comprehension Hudson et al. (2005:703), for example, argue that learning word recognition to the level of automaticity frees the space of the limited working memory on comprehension. They also point out that comprehension requires cognitive processes that can never become automatic, thus making the automaticity of the lower processes very important for comprehension.

Nation et al. (1999:139) claim that children struggling with comprehension have poorer vocabulary knowledge than children not struggling with comprehension. These struggling comprehenders also use context less efficiently.

Oral reading

Rasinski (2010:24) argues that oral reading 'can be a fun, engaging and authentic experience'. He points out that even though oral reading is dismissed in many classrooms because it is not an authentic form of reading, text forms made for reading aloud allow pupils to develop love and appreciation for the language. Examples of such texts are stories, poems, scripts, and speeches (Rasinski, 2010:27). Oral reading may also help pupils to see the connection between oral speech and the written word. Through a process of encoding and decoding speech to text and vice versa, one allows pupils to create connections between speaking and listening, and writing and reading (Rasinski, 2010:29). Most importantly, however, oral reading has the ability to foster fluency. Both oral reading and reading fluency have been called the 'missing ingredient' in many reading programs. However, this has changed in recent years, and Rasinski points out that reports such as the National Reading Panel (2000) confirm the connection between fluency and reading success. Rasinski (2010:31) argues that reading fluency must be a substantial and integral part of the curriculum for reading instruction to be effective at any level. One activity to foster reading fluency through oral reading is RT.

Oral reading makes the words come to life through stress, intonation, and volume, and is very different from silent reading with the eyes alone. Reading aloud also stresses the

importance of the rhythm in language. Reading aloud is not only an effective, aesthetic, and emotional experience, but also a powerful learning experience. When reading aloud children learn about the material being read, but more importantly it helps them in learning to read. In fact, one of the key factors to children's early reading success is regular oral reading by parents (Barton, 1994; Duursma et al., 2008; Wells, 1985).

Reading aloud is related to the audio-lingual method, which is based on learning through the use of oral language, and has its roots from teaching language to soldiers during the Second World War (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:25). The main focus in the audio-lingual method is listening and talking, and is based on learning language through listening and trying to speak through imitation and practice. One slogan about language is 'Language is speech, not writing' (Simensen, 2007:53) implying that the spoken language is an important platform for acquiring a new language. Drew and Sørheim (2009:25) argue that the audio-lingual method is based on the three Ps (Presentation, Practice, and Production), and points out that one learns the language by firstly being presented to a language, before practising and ultimately producing the chosen language.

Background knowledge

Learning to read in an L2 is often more challenging than in an L1. Gibbons (2002: 82) points out that one of the most important factors of learning to read in an L2 is the ability to read in one's L1, since it builds the foundation for the L2. However, cultural differences between the L1 and L2 may make it difficult for the learner to comprehend the text. Gibbons (2002:78) uses an example about the sun: 'The sun rises in the East and sets in the ___'. The information provided in the sentence allows the reader to use knowledge obtained earlier to fill in the blanks, and convey the meaning of the sentence. However, in an L2, previous knowledge about the text may not exist, which deprives the reader of one the key resources for reading and makes it more difficult for the reader to comprehend the meaning of the text. Gibbons (2002:83) also points out that most children's books are written with the assumption that the reader understands the cultural aspects of the story. This may result in difficulties for L2 readers. However, teachers should not avoid books with unfamiliar content or cultural differences, since cultural awareness is an important part of language learning. The *LK06* English subject curriculum states that work 'with various types of texts and other cultural expressions is important for developing linguistic skills and understanding how others live, and their cultures and views on life'. Culture is also part of one of the main subject areas of

the English curriculum, thus supporting Gibbons' view on the importance of culture in language learning.

3.2.3. Reading from an affective perspective

Attitude

Attitude is a psychological tendency where one evaluates an object, person, institution, or event with a degree of favour or disfavour (Day and Bamford, 1998:22). Day and Bamford argue that attitude is a complex, hypothetical construction, and that the evaluative aspect is what defines attitude and also what distinguishes it from other affective variables.

Attitude is not a concrete state of the mind, and the attitude of an individual has the possibility to be changed. However, Day and Bamford (1998:22) point out that there are many variables associated with attitude change, such as other attitudes, strength of the particular attitude, and its source. It may therefore be difficult to change negative attitudes.

Day and Bamford (1998:23) claim that there are four sources of attitude when it comes to reading in an L2. These are attitudes towards reading in the L1, previous experiences with reading in an L2, attitudes towards the L2, culture and people, and the L2 classroom environment.

First language reading attitudes are based on the assumption that pupils are already literate in the L1 (Day and Bamford, 1998:23). It is the attitude towards reading in their L1 that lays the foundation for the attitude towards L2 reading. In other words, positive attitudes to L1 reading nourish positive attitudes to L2 reading, whereas negative attitudes to L1 reading will most likely result in negative attitudes to L2 reading. According to Day and Bamford (1998:24), attitudes towards reading, especially in the L1, derive from early experience. Early experiences of reading may therefore be considered a hallmark in reading due to the fact that they serve as both a source for attitude as well as the learning itself.

A previous experience with learning to read in an L2 is the second source of attitude mentioned by Day and Bamford (1998:24-25). If a pupil has had experiences with learning to read in other languages, the experience of this learning, positive or negative, will influence his or her attitudes towards reading in the new language. If the prior experience was of success and was positive, the learner will bring the same expectations and positivity towards learning the new language. On the other hand, if the previous experience was one of failure and

negativity, the pupil will most likely have a negative attitude towards reading. Previous negative experiences may result in the pupil 'turning off' even before the learning has begun.

Day and Bamford (1998:25) describe attitudes toward the L2, its culture and its people, as the third source of attitude. Pupils can be motivated to read in an L2 about its culture and people and, by doing so, develop a positive attitude towards the target language. Communities with ancestors who emigrated to the community often have such positive attitudes, and a wish to learn the language. Descendants often have a wish or need to learn the language of their ancestors, to better understand the culture, and also to visit their ancestral homeland.

The fourth and final source of attitudes is the L2 classroom environment. A learner that has positive experiences with the teacher, classmates, or the activities, develops positive attitudes towards reading in the L2. The opposite experiences will most likely result in a negative attitude. According to Day and Bamford (1998:25), teachers know that learning to read in an L2 is a difficult task, and acknowledge this by, for example, building background knowledge prior to the actual reading, so that the reading will be easier for the pupils. However, Day and Bamford argue that for most pupils, reading in an L2 is considered a relatively difficult task, and that reading without background knowledge is in some cases inevitable. The reason for reading without said background knowledge is because some courses prepare the pupils for reading text passages above their linguistic ability. However, courses like this take their toll on the pupils, and may in the end cause negative attitudes towards reading in an L2.

Motivation

Motivation is 'an internal process that activates, guides, and maintains behaviour over time' (Slavin, 2012:286), or simply put, it is 'what makes people do (or not do) something' (Day and Bamford, 1998:27). Drew and Sørheim (2009:21) claim that when it comes to determining success in language learning, motivation is one of the most important factors. Motivation is easily confused with attitude and Day and Bamford (1998:27) point out that both have aspects in common. Neither can be directly observed, and both have degrees of intensity. However, there are differences between the two.

Day and Bamford (1998:27-28) argue that from a teacher's point of view motivation has two equal components: expectations and value. The pupils do what they expect to accomplish with success and avoid the tasks that they expect they cannot accomplish. This is connected with value, where pupils will choose tasks that have value to them, whereas tasks

with little value are avoided or neglected, even if they are within the pupil's level of proficiency. In terms of reading, pupils will most likely not begin the task, unless they expect to be able to read the text with understanding. In an ideal classroom, pupils see the value of learning to read, and also find reading a source of pleasure and information. These pupils will consequently try to read books at a more advanced and difficult level, and find the value of reading more rewarding than the effort it takes to read. However, the ideal classroom is usually far from reality, and most classes will consist of pupils with mixed abilities and different opinions about reading.

Day and Bamford (1998:28-30) claim that there are four major variables that motivate a pupil to read in an L2: materials, reading ability, attitudes, and sociocultural environment. The first two relate to the expectations of success in reading the L2. The latter two relate to the values attached to reading an L2.

Firstly, materials are, according to Day and Bamford (1998:29), important for motivating pupils to read in an L2. The reading material motivates if it is interesting and at the appropriate level. The latter is vital since a text at the appropriate level helps the pupils to learn, without being at a difficulty level where one has to stop to look up words, making the learning tedious and demotivating. For example, Krashen's (1982) *i+1* theory, where 'i' represents the present level and +1 represents the next level.

The second important variable for motivation in an L2 is reading ability. Day and Bamford (1998:29) claim that pupils with low-level reading abilities will often have lower expectations of success than pupils with a higher level of ability. This will often result in lower motivation towards reading. However, Day and Bamford argue that if these pupils read at an appropriate level, they will not experience the frustration of not being able to understand or of reading a text with much difficulty. There are a wide variety of texts, ranging from easy to difficult, and pupils should be able to choose material appropriate for their level.

The third variable is attitude, and Day and Bamford (1998:22) claim that the reader evaluates reading in an L2 with previous experiences from reading in the L1. These experiences are evaluated with a degree of favour or disfavour. Day and Bamford point out that the evaluative aspect of attitude is one of its defining attributes, making the reader either positive or negative towards reading in the L2. However, Day and Bamford also claim that another important factor of these attitudes are that they are not concrete, and point out that negative attitudes can be changed.

The fourth variable is the sociocultural environment. Day and Bamford (1998:30) argue that a classroom environment should value and encourage reading, and that such an

environment can counteract possible less encouraging environments, such as society, family, and friends. Day and Bamford point out that the classroom may provide a safe haven for reading literature.

3.2.4. Reading in the curriculum

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the focus on reading as a skill has increased in Norway in recent years, especially after the introduction of the *LK06* curriculum. *LK06* is the latest reform in the Norwegian education system and is, according to Drew and Sørheim (2009:40), heavily influenced by trends in European foreign language education. *LK06* defines five basic skills that must be integrated in each subject and which also apply in the teaching of English.

According to Berge (2008:228), the basic skills were introduced in the curriculum to even out the social differences in society, and are considered important skills necessary to participate in a democratic society and succeed in education, work, and spare time. The idea of basic skills was gathered mainly from OECD's DeSeCo definition of selected competencies and their work in the PISA-program. Berge (2008:241) points out that in many cases teachers argued that there was a huge focus on the basic skills even before the introduction of *LK06*. However, the major change is that assessment in the new curriculum focuses on the basic skills. Firstly, the pupil's competence in each subject must be considered in light of the basic skills. Secondly, some of the basic skills are assessed in national tests, and these national tests are created so that the results can be compared with other countries. According to Berge (2008:242), this has been a success in both numeracy and reading. In reading, for example, Norway has participated in the PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) test. However, according to van Daal et al. (2007:104), the PIRLS test in 2006 showed that Norway was still behind its neighbouring Nordic countries, and even though the gap had decreased since the test in 2001, Norway still had scored better in previous studies. However, the study from 2006 showed that the number of weak readers had decreased, but unfortunately so had the number of the strongest readers. The goal in Norwegian education, according to van Daal et al. (2007:104), must therefore be to decrease the number of weak readers while increasing the number of strong readers.

LK06 defines reading as a basic skill as follows:

Reading means to create meaning from text in the widest sense. Reading gives insight into other people's experience, opinion, and knowledge, independent of time and place. The reading of texts on screen and paper is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and for active participation in civic life. To read involves engaging in texts, comprehending, applying what is read and reflecting on this. In the context of this Framework, texts include everything that can be read in different media, including illustrations, graphs, symbols or other modes of expression. Knowledge about what characterizes different types of texts and their function is an important part of reading as a basic skill (*LK06* Framework for Basic Skills, 2012:8).

In the Framework for basic skills in *LK06,* there are also subcategories divided in the levels 1-5. The levels describe progression through the categories, and formulate what is required at the different levels. These subcategories for reading are: understand, find, interpret, and reflect and assess. Firstly, 'understand' is the ability to process and comprehend texts, based on previous knowledge and expectations. The goal is to understand increasingly more advanced texts. Decoding strategies where one understands that letters are contracted to words, words to sentences, and sentences to text, is also one of the premises to be able to understand. Secondly, 'find' is to find the information that is explicitly or implicitly expressed in the text. Thirdly, 'interpret' is the ability to draw conclusions based on multiple texts. Finally, 'reflect and assess' is the ability to comment on the content of a text, and create opinions, analyses or evaluations.

3.2.5. Reading practices

Intensive and extensive reading
'Intensive reading' and 'extensive reading' are two contrasting approaches to learning, focusing on the different aspects of reading. Hafiz and Tudor (1989:5) point out that intensive reading activities apply to relatively short texts and focus on the lexical, syntactic, or discoursal system of the target language, whereas extensive reading applies to large texts and focuses on large quantities of language input. In other words intensive reading focuses on the details of the text, whereas extensive reading focuses on the text as a whole and understanding 'the bigger picture'. Charboneau (2012:53) points out that intensive reading methods, such as

language through translation, or reading line by line, have been used in the L2 classroom to focus on learning vocabulary, expressions, and grammar.

Extensive reading is a well-known concept in educational research and dates back to the 1920s (Grabe, 2009:312). Extensive reading is extremely difficult for a non-fluent reader, and Grabe points out that in order to read extensively one must usually know 98-99 per cent of the words in the chosen text. According to Grabe (2009:311), extensive reading is a unique skill with unique task requirements because of the number of processes that are involved in it. Firstly, extensive reading requires some level of fluency and efficiency for processing words and sentences. The process memory has only a limited time to process the data, and it is therefore necessary to get through words and sentences with ease. Also, the sheer volume of the text makes it hard to stay motivated if one needs to stop several times to look up words that are unfamiliar. Secondly, one needs some awareness of how texts are structured. Thirdly, strategies that are commonly used need to be carried out with a sense of routine. Finally, important affective factors, such as motivation to persist and prior experiences of success, are also important factors in extensive reading.

One educational approach towards extensive reading is so called 'book floods', with their roots from the 1950s, where a classroom is stocked with 50-100 books, and the pupils are encouraged to read them independently (Grabe, 2009:312). In recent years the focus on extensive reading has increased, and both researchers and teachers claim that extensive reading has benefits and is of importance when teaching reading. However, Grabe (2009:312) points out that even though both researchers and teachers claim that extensive reading is important in education, it is to a large extent ignored in classrooms around the world. The reason for this is unclear. However, Grabe points out firstly that extensive reading is not a popular approach, especially when learning an L2 where the attention is focused on language skills, vocabulary, grammar, translation, or study skills. Secondly, extensive reading demands much resources. Both financial resources for class libraries and multiple copies, and class time, may cause it to not be the school's priority. Thirdly, the teaching of an L2 often has the goal to create good comprehenders, and that pupils who need to be fluent extensive readers will become so on their own. Fourthly, teachers are not able to rethink how reading should be taught, or are just afraid of not being able to respond to all the potential questions from pupils needing help in class. Finally, Grabe (2009:312) argues that many administrators and teachers think that pupils should be 'taught something', and that reading often is used as homework.

Reading aloud

Reading aloud, according to Rasinski (2010:46), is a powerful learning experience. It is an activity that has the ability to transport the listener to another place and time. Many have childhood memories of being read to by parents, grandparents, or teachers.

Rasinski (2010:46-48) argues that reading aloud helps to achieve three important goals apart from building reading interest: comprehension and vocabulary, fluency, and motivation. Firstly, reading aloud activities expose pupils to texts that they may not be able to find or read on their own. When the pupils are exposed to these texts, their comprehension and vocabulary improves. Most children's books have more sophisticated words and wider vocabulary than nearly any other form of oral language. Duursma et al. (2008:554) point out that there is a relationship between oral language skills, such as vocabulary, syntactic, and semantic processes, and narrative discourse processes, such as memory, storytelling and comprehension, and reading ability, which contribute to word recognition and reading comprehension. Secondly, reading aloud increases fluency. When listening to a text being read, the listener is able to experience how a reader can use his or her voice to create and extend meaning. The meaning is expressed not only through the words, but also through intonation, expression, phrasing, and pausing. Reading aloud models fluent, meaningful reading. Finally, reading aloud builds motivation. It is an enjoyable experience that motivates pupils of different ages to read on their own. Duursma et al. (2008:555) argue that there is a link between reading aloud and emergent literacy, and that reading aloud is an activity of extreme importance between parent and child. However, even though it is most commonly used in pre-school and lower grades of primary school, Rasinski (2010:48) argues that when considering the benefits of reading aloud, it is an activity that should be used daily.

Reading aloud is not necessarily an activity that must include fictional texts. Yopp and Yopp (2006:31) argue that informational texts are important for young children as they provide children with answers to important questions and enable discussions that will not occur with stories. Very few of the texts used for reading aloud are informational. However, teachers are urged to use informational texts in read aloud activities, as literacy knowledge is linked with literacy experience (Yopp and Yopp, 2006:49-50). Children should therefore, at an early age, be aware of the different forms of literature, both from narrative and fiction to informational or factual texts.

Speaking has been a neglected skill in English lessons in the Norwegian education system in previous decades (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:54). Drew and Sørheim point out that a recent change in habits, both travelling more often abroad and the position of the TV in most

homes, has made the ability to speak and communicate in English more important. From being an academic exercise, with the focus on the ability to read and write, the focus is more often on communication in English classes today. Drew and Sørheim (2009:55) argue that one of the most important aims in the English subject curriculum is the ability to speak and communicate, and that pupils should be given opportunities to use English in different interesting and relevant settings. Activities focusing on speaking English require a relaxed and positive atmosphere, as well as pre-planned classroom organisation.

3.3. Research on Readers Theatre in education

This section is divided into the following: cognitive findings of RT, affective findings of RT, RT for the struggling learner, RT in the curriculum, and RT in L2 contexts.

The use of RT as method in education is well documented, and the research shows that there are many benefits of using it. However, most of the research conducted has been carried out in L1 contexts. Less research has been carried out on RT in L2 contexts, both in Norway and elsewhere.

Much of the research into RT draws a picture of an effective method for education. However, most of the research is case studies with scholars documenting the results of implementing RT in class in either L1 contexts (e. g. Forsythe, 1995; Martinez et al., 1999; Peebles, 2007; Worthy and Prater, 2002) or L2 contexts (Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Pettersen, 2013). Much of the literature on RT is either 'how-to use it literature' or qualitative research, focusing for the most part on case studies. Denscombe (2010:61) claims that findings in case studies can be met with scepticism as to whether the findings from one case can be used to generalise about trends or phenomena. It would therefore be an advantage to see more quantitative research on RT. However, the many case studies providing the same kind of evidence are a sign of strength about a phenomenon being studied, and the little quantitative research available on the topic also shows that RT has benefits in the classroom (Millin and Rinehart, 1999; Rinehart, 1999).

3.3.1. Review of cognitive aspects of Readers Theatre

Fluency and RT

Martinez et al. (1999:327) show in their research that there is evidence that RT can support instruction in reading fluency, and that RT is associated with growth in reading fluency. They point out that for a reader to become fluent, one needs manageable texts, and in RT it is important to choose texts within the reader's reach. By doing so, one reduces the energy used on word recognition, and allows for more rapid reading. When the rate increases, one can focus on phrasing and expressiveness, two abilities that are reduced when the text is too difficult (Martinez et al., 1999:328).

Peebles (2007:578) shows in her research that fluency instruction is particularly important for struggling readers. She explains that struggling readers often have slow and laborious oral reading, thus resulting in comprehension being nearly impossible to achieve. This corresponds well with Hellekjær's (2007:23) argument that speed is essential for fluent reading. Hellekjær argues that if a reader has to stop reading to look up words, the reader will forget what he or she was reading, resulting in having to read the passage again. Hellekjær (2007:23) points out that repeated interruptions of this kind may disrupt the reader to the extent that he or she forgets what he or she has been reading. One may also assume that this tedious way of reading also affects the reader's motivation towards reading. Finding effective reading strategies, such as RT, is vital for learners, especially those who are struggling. When using RT as a fluency strategy in her reading program, Peebles (2007:579) witnessed that the struggling readers improved in fluency through repetition, and with it ultimately their comprehension.

Martinez et al. (1999:333) found that in order for pupils to achieve the fluency necessary for their RT performance, it was necessary to practise on reading the text repeatedly. However, the upcoming performance and audience made the repeated reading authentic and motivational. The same results were found in Peebles (2007:579) research, showing that even the most reluctant readers improved confidence and experienced growth.

Worthy and Broaddus (2002:342) argue that an essential aspect of mature reading is oral reading fluency. They point out that fluency instruction did not use to play an important part in teaching, and that the pupils who developed fluency, did so on their own. However, the focus on fluency instruction has increased, and activities such as RT provide a meaningful reason to practise on accurate reading. When teachers make fluency one of the major concerns in the classroom, and the instruction is engaging, the pupils can accomplish the

ultimate goal of reading – reading for learning and for pleasure (Worthy and Broaddus, 2002:342). However, RT is much more than fluency instruction (McKay, 2008:142).

Comprehension and RT

RT also increases pupils' comprehension of texts (McKay, 2008:140). For example, Martinez et al. (1999:333) showed that RT helped pupils increase their level of comprehension as a result of having to become the characters, and also having to understand the character's feelings. This kind of oral interpretation helped the pupils with expressiveness, but more importantly it helped both the performer and the listeners to gain insight and understanding from the text. The process of reading became an enjoyable activity that engaged the reader, and by reading it aloud pupils experienced the text in a different way that helped comprehending it.

Worthy (2005:16) argues that comprehension is one of the most important skills in reading, and that reading without comprehension is nothing more than pronouncing words. However, comprehension may be difficult to measure or assess, thus making it difficult to make sure that pupils actually comprehend what they read. RT can involve discussions between the pupils about the texts and scripts to make performances that are easy to understand for the audience. These discussions allow the pupils to become aware of their own performance, thus creating or performing texts that are more easily comprehensible to the audience. It is important to perform a text that the audience understands, not only the readers after practising, so that all pupils benefit from the reading. As a result, groups may have to discuss how to change or perform the text, so that everyone is able to comprehend it. It is important to have a deep understanding of the text to be able to interpret events and characters properly. Comprehension may therefore be understood as an active process that involves discussions, rereading, and maybe even additional reading, so that the text can be performed with as many 'tools' for aiding the audience's comprehension as possible.

RT is an activity that involves repeated readings. Black and Stave (2007:4-10) claim that RT creates the opportunity for the reader to explore a text and get involved in the rehearsal and repeated readings and more importantly, allows for the pupils' reading to become automatic and concurrent. According to Rasinski (2010:89) repeated reading allows pupils to improve in comprehension, which is expected as one improves in the skills that are being practised. In other words, when rereading texts, less time and attention is devoted to skills such as decoding and fluency, and more of the time and attention is used on comprehension. The most common method of practising reading is wide reading, where one

reads for example a book, and when the book is finished one finds another one. However, this is often not applicable for young and struggling learners. The level of reading for these pupils is so low that they will go from one mediocre reading to another, and have problems with improving their comprehension (Rasinski, 2010:87-88). For these pupils, repeated reading allows them to read one text with mastery before moving to the next text. In RT, the repeated reading is incorporated in a meaningful way (Black and Stave 2007:10), and, according to Millin and Rinehart (1999:80), enhances pupils' comprehension of what is read aloud.

Language and writing

RT helps pupils become more aware of language and language structure (Black and Stave, 2007:13). This applies especially for knowledge of word order, phrasing, and syntax. Black and Stave argue that when pupils explore scripts in RT they learn the basics of the targeted language. This exploration and use of language often results in a more critical use of syntactic patterns. Also, playwriting activities can reinforce syntactic knowledge (McMaster, 1998:579). Black and Stave (2007:14) point out that the attention given to the scripts often teaches pupils the awareness of the variations in language, and that by creating or adapting scripts pupils reinforce their syntactic knowledge. McMaster (1998:579) points out that in order to give a good acting performance one must attend to details of punctuation and phrasing.

The collaboration among peers in RT is one aspect that helps pupils better understand the variations and syntax of the targeted language. According to Johnsons and Johnson (1999:67), collaboration has the potential of making pupils achieve greatness and has a higher potential than individual work. Slavin (1987:7) argues that the ability to cooperate is one of the most important skills in modern life, and points out that even though it is not a primary focus in education it is a tool that can help pupils become successful. When writing RT scripts, pupils edit constantly, reread, read aloud, and give feedback, thus giving them the opportunity to discuss and learn about language structure as well as becoming more accurate and fluent readers (Black and Stave, 2007:14). In a similar vein, McMaster (1998:579) argues that a group discussion on how a character should sound like can lead to valuable insights on syntactic clues about meaning. Working with RT also gives pupils the opportunity to play with words and choose appropriate language for specific texts, thus making RT an activity where pupils learn different aspects of written and oral language, such as the ability to entertain, create, think, reflect, and communicate (Black and Stave, 2007:14).

According to Bridges (2008:27), RT is an excellent method for developing oral language. Oral communication skills are enhanced through the use of RT. When performing a text, it is important to speak clearly and enunciate in order to make the listeners understand the performed text. The use of proper grammar is also a vital part of RT, as well as an indicator of successful oral language (Black and Stave, 2007:7).

In RT both fiction and non-fiction texts can be used, including dialogue, narrative and conversation (Black and Stave 2007:7). Conversations in the texts are based on what the characters say, and McMaster (1998:579) claims that pupils' oral reading skills improve as a result of thinking the dialogue while reading, namely that pupils look for syntactic clues and punctuation clues to perform the dialogue in a sense that aids the audience's comprehension. The conversations in an RT text may also shed light on different social statures. Black and Stave (2007:7) point out that in scripts, as well as in real life, language changes according to status, role, or mood of the character. The conversations between different characters allow the listeners to engage in the story together with the characters, thus making the pupils learn the skill of listening, both as fellow performers and as audience, and the audience learn both efferent and aesthetic listening skills, being able to listen for pleasure as well as for learning and understanding.

Reading and writing are closely linked. Drew and Sørheim (2009:75) point out that reading serves as an input for writing. The different reasons and contexts for writing make it important for pupils to be allowed, and encouraged, to write a variety of texts, and for different contexts.

RT exposes readers to well written literature and thus aids in enhancing writing skills (Worthy, 2005:17). As the pupils practise and perform scripts, they will be exposed to models of writing that are exciting to readers and listeners. When pupils write a script for RT, they are writing for a real audience. This makes the writing meaningful. Worthy argues that with experience pupils will learn that it is important to write thoughtfully and revise the text to maintain the attention of the audience. One goal of writing is to make the pupils' writing more comprehensible and RT may be an activity to help pupils to improve comprehensible writing. According to Worthy (2005:18), writing connected to RT activities conducted in class shows great potential.

One of the most important benefits of writing a script for RT is that it is motivational, and Worthy refers to a class where even the reluctant writers asked for more time, and improved their work at home. However, after performing their plays in class, the pupils became aware of other important aspects of writing, such as revision, details, and 'the big

picture'. The pupils also learned how to write an introduction, as well as descriptions of characters and places to situate the scene.

Writing scripts for RT helps pupils become more aware of the structure in a language (Black and Stave, 2007:13). The syntax of the language becomes important when writing a script for RT. Black and Stave (2007:13) refer to Hill (1990) and Ratliff (2000), who claim that if pupils create scripts for RT, they learn to use effective language rather than 'trite or contrived language'. Suddenly devices such as rhythm of words, the length of sentences, rhymes and repetition, all become important to consider. Black and Stave (2007:14) stress that whatever makes a narrative or non-fiction text exciting and effective becomes obvious when the text is read aloud in RT. Drama activities are useful in helping pupils acquire knowledge about narrative structure (McMaster, 1998:580). When pupils work on a script for RT they are allowed to use the language to describe ideas and moods, organize the text, and to make a point. The knowledge of the audience also makes it important for the writer to edit the text to make sure that the audience is able to understand the story (Black and Stave, 2007:14).

Writing scripts also allows the pupils who struggle in communicating orally to take their time in writing a text to convey meaning. For example, Liu (2000:357-358) describes an experiment performed at the university level with EFL students writing and performing a dialogue. During the experiment two students who struggled with grammar and rhetorical weakness suddenly thrived in both writing their dialogue and performing it. After the experiment was finished, the students were asked to write about their experiences with RT. The students enjoyed writing the stories as they could picture the ending, but they were also inspired by listening to each other and received ideas for their own scripts (Liu, 2000: 358).

3.3.2. Review of affective aspects of Readers Theatre

Attitude
RT allows pupils to have a voice in making decisions and collaboration (Black and Stave, 2007:10), and it is important that pupils are allowed to select roles that they are comfortable with. Each pupil may be a reader, performer or organizer. The different roles require the same amount of reading, speaking, listening and preparing. However, by allowing each participant to choose a role, the participant feels more secure, thus enhancing enthusiasm.

According to McMaster (1998:575), the development of affect is one of the reasons for using drama in the reading program. Drama creates interest, which is a crucial factor in

facilitating pupils' understanding and response. Drama has a positive effect on personal attitudes, such as self-confidence, self-concept, self-actualization, empathy, helping behaviour, and cooperation (Wagner, 1988:48). McMaster (1998:575-576) points out that drama lets children experience a role that is new to them and see themselves in a new light. Sometimes they may even find talents they have never been able to express before. Drama can increase pupils' self-concept and desire to participate in a learning community and, when dramatizing books or stories, pupils naturally desire to dramatise new stories, thus seeking out more reading experiences. According to McMaster (1998:576), pupils are 'inspired to find the "perfect" story to dramatise and may read several selections to find the best one'. Research conducted by Bridges (2008:27) showed that the pupils participating in the RT project in question had a positive attitude and they believed that there was value in participating.

Motivation

Motivation is probably the most documented and praised of the benefits of RT. Scholars such as Casey and Chamberlain (2006), Clementi (2010), Peebles (2007), and Worthy and Prater (2002) all argue that RT motivates pupils. According to Black and Stave (2007:10) pupils are motivated as a result of being given a meaningful context for practising reading, as well as writing, speaking and listening. Rehearsals of the text increase the pupils' confidence and allow them to be comfortable when performing the text despite different levels among the readers. The repeated reading towards a performance serves as a major motivating factor for pupils. Gibbons (2002:92) claims that RT is a great context for reading aloud since it allows pupils to practise and prepare, and points out that this is what adults would do if they knew that they were going to read in front of others.

RT requires collaboration between the pupils, which is conducted in a meaningful way (Black and Stave, 2007:10). Tyler and Chard (2000:166) argue that as a result of the collaboration, pupils who are struggling readers will not feel isolated while reading. The repeated readings are now purposeful and no longer competitive. The interaction among peers, which RT allows, is an effective motivational tool.

Since the text is divided into smaller chunks it is read in a different manner from other texts. However, the reader must pay attention through the entire read to be able to enter on cue, which results in a motivated close read. RT motivates pupils to read with expression and to be understood. The process from written work to 'something living and entertaining performed by the group' was one of the motivating factors for the pupils in a study on the use of RT with struggling L2 learners by Drew and Pedersen (2010:12).

According to Black and Stave (2007:11), activities such as RT motivate the pupils to remain on a task for longer periods of time. Moreover, the performance in RT motivates pupils to develop their vocabulary. The aspect of motivation is the key to its success in the classroom, and Black and Stave (2007:11) argue that when participating in RT pupils' motivation increases significantly.

3.3.3. Readers Theatre for the struggling learner

There are several benefits of RT for struggling readers. Tyler and Chard (2000:166) present five benefits. Firstly, RT is an activity that requires cooperation among peers. Research by Drew and Pedersen (2010:13), whose study focused on struggling learners of EFL in the 8th grade in Norway, found that the groups in the RT project gained a group mentality that had not been present before. The performance of the group as a whole became more important than that of each member.

Secondly, the scripts used in RT are divided into smaller chunks with the entire group cooperating, resulting in the read often being less difficult for the individual. Rinehart (2001:71) argues that text difficulty most certainly influences the probability of pupils' reading success. It is therefore important to use texts at the appropriate level. Texts that are too easy will not be interesting or challenging, and will not result in the desired practice opportunities. Texts that are too difficult, on the other hand, will cause frustration and wasted instructional time. Rinehart argues that the texts can be at the level slightly above a pupil's level, but refers to Vygotsky's ZPD and points out that the difficulty level of the text should be within this zone. The use of familiar books is beneficial when working with struggling readers, as the reader will already be familiar with the text, and thus benefit from the confidence and prior knowledge of the reading material that is being used.

Thirdly, RT requires active participation by all members of the group, and may therefore be more engaging than most reading assignments. The texts also vary in length and difficulty, and each pupil may be allowed to choose roles appropriate to his or her level. All the pupils in a class may be part of an RT project, and all the pupils would rely on each other. Pupils not only have to work cooperatively, but also communicate what they understand as well as what they want, and be able to describe reasons why they want it (Black and Stave, 2007:14).

Fourthly, RT requires interaction during practice. The collaboration between pupils 'to successfully create, practice, and implement RT not only helps to eliminate labels of reading ability' (Black and Stave, 2007:14), it also helps pupils to work towards shared goals. Struggling pupils increase confidence, see themselves as part of a successful project, and gain a sense of pride and satisfaction through RT. A project with RT may last only a few days or weeks. However, during this period the less able pupils will find that they are able to complete a project, and often see their own improvement in reading.

Finally, with RT reluctant readers are provided with 'an acceptable, legitimate reason to reread the same text several times' (Tyler and Chard, 2000:166). This repeated reading is an important part of rehearsal towards the performance, as well as a great educational approach for teaching reading. Repeated reading is a tested and proven method for increasing reading fluency (Worthy, 2005:27). The benefit of repeated reading is that it helps especially struggling pupils improve word recognition, speed, and phrasal reading. These benefits can also be transferred to new texts. However, repeated reading alone will not improve comprehension and interpretation. Worthy (2005:29) claims that one can practice accuracy, speed and appropriate phrasing without understanding the text. However, Worthy (2005:30-31) points out that the performance in RT makes it a repeated reading activity in which understanding the text is as important as being able to read it accurately.

3.3.4. Readers Theatre in L2 contexts

Research on RT in L2 contexts is less common than in L1 contexts. However, research conducted on RT in L2 contexts shows that many of the same benefits found in L1 research, also apply in L2. For example, Liu (2000:358-359), in his research on Asian EFL students at the university level, shows that through RT one has a chance to understand the readings through collaboration and discussions with peers. In this collaboration of reading, students 'explore issues through interpretive thinking, reflective writing, and dramatic reading' (Liu, 2000:358). The participants must be independent decision makers when choosing what to read and what to perform. Liu's research focuses much on self-assessment and reflection, and shows that these are abilities that come to play in all the roles of RT: author, storyteller, audience, and critics. Liu (2000:359) claims that in a diverse classroom with different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds, RT provides opportunities for students to understand their peers' perspectives through collaboration and interaction. This will

ultimately help build social competence and confidence towards communicating in the targeted language. In language classrooms with similar backgrounds, Liu argues that RT can improve cultural awareness, both towards the targeted language, but also one's own culture. Liu (2000:360) concludes that RT has the potential for both learning and teaching languages, and that the way RT combines 'linguistic competence with performance, emotional engagement with physical participation, and reading with writing' makes it an activity that cannot be ignored in language teaching.

Little research has been conducted on Readers Theatre in Norwegian schools. However, research by Drew and Pedersen (2010) shows some benefits for the struggling reader in a Norwegian school. Their research was based on findings in four classes in the subject 'Engelsk fordypning' or 'specialisation' classes in the 8th and 9th grade. The majority of pupils in lower secondary choose to learn a second foreign language, such as German, French or Spanish. Therefore, the specialisation classes usually consist of the pupils who are struggling learners, or those who has the most difficulties with learning English as their first foreign language and to not want to learn a second foreign language (Drew and Pedersen, 2010:1).

According to Drew and Pedersen (2010:12) RT was an excellent icebreaker for the groups of struggling readers in the study, and was a great method when starting a new school year: 'It [RT] put them all on equal footing and gave them a common goal'. In Drew and Pedersen's (2010) study, the pupils used an adaptation of the traditional model (see section 2.1.1), and even though different texts were used, the most successful one was the adaptation of Rumpelstiltskin (see section 2.1.1). When working on this RT project the shy pupils thrived, and the pupils who had been reluctant to participate orally improved their reading skills. Chan and Chan (2009:43) support Drew and Pedersen's (2010) findings, and argue that RT made the pupils in their study more confident and excited.

The process from written work to 'something living and entertaining performed by the group' was one of the motivating factors for the pupils (Drew and Pedersen, 2010:12). Drew and Pedersen's (2010) research showed that RT created a bond between the pupils and the teacher. For example, the pupils were willing to ask the teacher for assistance on pronunciation and stress in order to convey the intended meaning. In order to produce the best possible performance of the text the teacher became an asset for the pupils. The importance of teacher participation is supported by Bernhardt (2010:16), who argues that teacher scaffolding is important when teaching reading.

In a different study of RT in two 8th grade mainstream EFL classes, Drew and Pedersen (2012) found that, when comparing the mainstream pupils to their previous study on struggling learners (Drew and Pedersen, 2010), RT was even more motivational and there were more perceived benefits for the mainstream pupils than the struggling learners. However, RT as method in mainstream classes posed some logistical problems that may not have been as apparent in the smaller 'specialisation classes'. Firstly, the teacher had to choose and acquire several texts to use in the RT project. Furthermore, finding rooms for all the different groups to rehearse was challenging and made it difficult for the teacher to spend much time with each group (Drew and Pedersen, 2012:81). However, the pupils participating in the project showed much improvement in oral presentation techniques when they gave regular oral presentation in pairs later the same year, and were, according to the teacher in the study, miles ahead of previous pupils he had taught at the same level (Drew and Pedersen, 2012: 81). During their research, Drew and Pedersen used three variants of RT: handing out pre-written scripts, pupils writing adaptations of texts, and pupils creating their own scripts. According to Drew and Pedersen (2012:81), the third variant was the most popular. The third variant was popular because the pupils were given creative freedom and showed a great level of commitment and achievements, which impressed the teacher and the two authors.

Finally, in her research on the use of Curriculum-Based RT in a Norwegian 8th grade EFL class, Pettersen (2013:63) argues that RT has a huge potential for teaching both content and language at the same time. In her research Pettersen used the three variants of RT used in Drew and Pedersen's (2012) research. Pettersen (2013:62) claims that many learning objectives in the *LK06* English curriculum can be achieved by using Curriculum-Based RT as teaching method. As in Drew and Pedersen's (2012) research, the most popular variant of RT in Pettersen's (2013) study, was the one where the pupils created their own scripts. This was also the variant the teacher preferred, as it allowed for monitoring the pupils and integrated the basic skills in the *LK06* curriculum. This was also the variant that covered the most basic skills in *LK06,* and also required less planning, in terms of finding stories and scripts, for the teacher.

3.4. Summary

This chapter has highlighted theories on educational psychology, reading and the benefits of RT. Constructivism and social constructivism is a field within educational psychology where

the pupil is in the centre, focusing both on each individual's ability to learn and also how each individual learns. It was pointed out that the goal of constructivism is that each individual is able to 'construct' one's own knowledge through, for example, collaboration, which applies when using RT as teaching method.

There were sections on reading as an important skill, both in general and in relation to the basic skills in *LK06*. This chapter has introduced research on RT as a reading activity in education. These scholars refer to cognitive benefits, such as improved fluency, comprehension, language and writing, and affective benefits such as, positive attitude and increased motivation. The benefits of RT apply both in L1 and L2, mainstream classes and specialisation classes, as well as different age groups.

4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The study follows a class of 6th grade pupils through two cycles of RT during a four-week period in November and December 2013. This chapter presents the methods applied in the thesis to answer the following research questions:

- What are the cognitive and affective benefits of using Readers Theatre in the 6th grade EFL class?
- What are the challenges of using Readers Theatre in the class?

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section 4.2 addresses the nature of qualitative research. It describes the methods that have been used: case study, participant observation, video recording, semi-structured interview, and journals. Section 4.3 explains the selection of the subjects and the use of the methods during the research. Section 4.4 addresses the question of validity and reliability in the research. Section 4.5 is about questions of ethics during the research. Finally, Section 4.6 explains how RT was implemented in the class for this particular research.

4.2. Selections of subjects

The subjects consisted of 27 pupils and their two English teachers in a 6th grade class. The school is an urban primary school (grades 1-7) consisting of approximately 350 pupils. In grades 1-4 the school has no parallel classes, while in the 5th and 6th grades there is only one class as a result of the low number of pupils. The 7th grade has three parallel classes. The school administration paired the teachers in teams for each grade, which resulted in this class having two teachers, Elisabeth and Lisa. The two teachers cooperated well, and they conducted most subjects and lessons together. In English, Elisabeth would teach the larger part of the class; Lisa would focus on a smaller group of struggling learners, focusing on the pupils' individual subject curriculum (individuell opplæringsplan, *IOP)*. Lisa was asked to take notes of her observations and her thoughts about the RT project during the research. At

the end of the project the researcher had a short interview with her, where she explained what she had experienced during the four weeks.

The class may be described as a mainstream class. It is a heterogeneous group consisting of pupils representing all the levels of ability. Two of the pupils suffer from autism, and an assistant teacher in the school helps one of these pupils. There are also four pupils with dyslexia in the class. Two of the pupils have learning difficulties in English and are taken out of regular class to be taught an individual subject curriculum (IOP) by Lisa. However, the majority of the pupils are proficient learners of English.

A larger sample of subjects would have provided more data, and also a longer period of research would have been preferable. For example, Check and Schutt (2012:191) claim that case studies often involve more than a year of data collection. However, time limitations did not allow for this, as the research period lasted for four weeks.

The subjects were selected through what Dornyei (2007: 98) refers to as a 'convenience sample', in which the researcher uses those available. Dornyei (2007:129) claims that a convenience sample is 'the least desirable but the most common sampling strategy'. However, Dornyei (2007:129) also points out that this sampling strategy usually results in willing participants, resulting in rich datasets. The researcher of this study and Elisabeth were introduced through mutual acquaintances. Elisabeth used her own class.

4.3. Implementing Readers Theatre in class

First RT cycle
RT was first introduced to the class by using pre-written scripts. The researcher and Elisabeth agreed that the scripts should be fairy tales, and the researcher found fairy tales adapted by Gerard (2007). However, the language in the texts was rather difficult as the scripts were written for native speakers of English, and some roles were either too long or too short. It was therefore necessary for the researcher to rewrite the scripts to suit the level of the pupils. The fairy tales used were: *The ugly duckling, Three little pigs, Thumbelina, The King's new clothes,* and *Puss in boots*. These fairy tales were well known among the pupils from beforehand, thus facilitating their comprehension.

The first RT cycle was started and completed during the first week of the research. The scripts were handed out on a Tuesday, and the class was given 45-90 minutes a day at

school to practise, until they performed their story on the Friday of the same week. The stories were approximately the same size (four pages), and took about ten minutes to perform.

The class was divided into five groups consisting of five to six pupils each. Elisabeth selected the groups because the researcher did not know any of the pupils, and it was preferred that the members in each group would be able to cooperate. She was asked to group the pupils considering ability and cooperation level. The groups were to be mixed ability groups and include pupils from all levels of ability.

Second cycle

During the second RT cycle a sixth group was created. Elisabeth and Lisa had discussed the organisation of the groups and concluded that some of the pupils in the class would not be able to cooperate well enough without close attention from a teacher. In this cycle they were going to create their own story and perform it in front of the class, and the two teachers thought that these specific pupils would not function well in a regular group. This special group would be the most homogenous group as all the pupils were struggling learners. It was decided that Lisa would focus all her time in this single group, guiding them through the process of both writing and producing, and also helping them maintain focus on the task. This was also the group where the roles of the different pupils, during the process, overlapped the most. For example, there were no pupils in this group who took the main responsibility for writing or for producing the story, and this responsibility remained with Lisa. The members of the group all took part in the different processes of writing.

The rest of the groups would be the same as they had been in the first cycle. The writing process was done in two stages: Firstly, each pupil was asked to write the beginning of, or the summary of, a story about Christmas. These stories would then be brought into the groups, where the group would decide which story to finalise and perform. The reason why each pupil was asked to first write on their own was so that everyone would practise writing, and so that each individual would start the process of generating ideas which they would bring to the groups. Secondly, the group collaborated on writing the story.

The groups had different approaches on how to write the story, and also deciding which roles each pupil should have in the process. Some were excellent writers and took the role as scriptwriters, whereas some had more creative skills and took the role as producers and 'story-makers'.

4.4. Qualitative research

Qualitative research methods include case study, participant observation, intensive or in-depth interviewing and focus groups (Check and Schutt, 2012:188). Check and Schutt argue that these three methods of research differ in many respects, but share features that distinguish them from quantitative research. These features are firstly that qualitative researchers have a sensitivity to the subjective role of the researcher, and consider themselves as necessarily part of the educational process. Secondly, qualitative researchers focus on human subjectivity. Finally, qualitative researchers have an orientation to the social context. Lichtman (2010:15) argues that rather than studying specific variables, qualitative research involves studying a situation in its entirety.

Case study

The case study provides examples of real people in real situations in a unique way (Cohen et al., 2011:289). Check and Schutt (2012:190) claim that researchers often use case studies, and that it is a way of thinking about what a research project can focus on. Case studies can be conducted in, for example, an organization, community, classroom, school or school system. The basic principle or idea of a case study is that 'the educational world functions as an integrated whole' (Check and Schutt, 2012:190). In other words, findings from research conducted in one class may often apply in all similar classes. The fact that it allows the researcher to look at one group and assume that the same behaviour or results might be found in similar groups, makes the case study effective and with strong traditions in educational research (Borg and Gall, 1989:402).

The advantage of a case study is that it includes observations and interviews with participants, and that it has the ability to shed light on a topic from up close (Cohen et al, 2011:290). The case study also allows for describing a participant's experiences, feelings and thoughts about a situation. The way a case study is conducted, and the thick descriptions, make it a great tool for looking at, for example, affect in the classroom. The case study is especially convenient for individual researchers, since it allows for one aspect of a problem to be studied in depth within a limited time scale. However, Borg and Gall (1989:402) point out that one must be careful to draw general conclusions based on a single case study. Case studies are, however, great indicators of trends, and may help researchers generate new hypotheses.

For this thesis, case study was chosen as the method for collecting data because of its possibilities of rich datasets, and also because part of the study looks at pupils' affective benefits of RT. Observation of the class and the pupils' attitudes to and experiences with RT, was central in the research.

Participant observation

Many educational researchers conduct their research as participant observers (Check and Schutt, 2012:192). According to Check and Schutt (2012:192), natural educational processes are observed and studied in the field as they happen, rather than afterwards in a laboratory. Observations and interactions with the participants in a normal setting and activities avoid the artificiality of experimental designs, and also unnatural structured questions of questionnaires. Observations also allow the researcher to consider the context in which social interaction occurs. However, Check and Schutt (2012:194) point out that participants may alter their behaviour due to the fact that a researcher is taking notes and will most likely publish findings from the observations. Also, pupils may find it difficult to distinguish between a researcher and a teacher, as both are perceived as an adult authority figure.

Check and Schutt (2012:192) argue that it is important for the participant observer to decide on the balance between participating and observing, and also if one should reveal one's role as researcher (overt observation). These decisions must take several factors into account: the situation being studied, one's own background and personality, the larger educational context, and ethical concerns. Check and Schutt also point out that the balance between participation and observation often changes during projects, and the researcher's ability to maintain either a covert or an overt role may be difficult.

During the study the researcher attended all the English classes of the research group. The class was first of all observed during both practice and performing, but it was necessary to take part as a participant observer in implementing RT in the class, considering that Elisabeth was not familiar with RT before the first cycle was started. The researcher therefore prepared the first RT cycle. However, it was important for the research that Elisabeth felt a certain ownership of the activities, and that she took part in the planning and implementation of the activities.

The observations during practice focused on how the groups rehearsed and cooperated in order to make the best performance, and also the teacher's role in the classroom. During these observations the researcher took field notes, and also wrote brief summaries of each day. The performances were showcases of the results of the practice. The observations during

the performance focused attention on technical aspects of reading, such as pronunciation, but also the pupils' confidence, the effectiveness of their reading as a communicative act, and the engagement of the listeners. Because of the detailed focus during the performances, video recordings of the performances aided the researcher by making it possible to study the performances at a later time. The author is unfamiliar with video recordings being used in any other research on RT.

Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview is the interview method that is most commonly used in educational research (Borg and Gall, 1989:452). Semi-structured interviews differ from structured interviews in the sense that they seek to gather more information than just 'yes' or 'no'. Borg and Gall (1989:452) argue that semi-structured interviews, as apart from structured ones, have the 'advantage of being reasonably objective' while allowing for a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions and the reasons behind them. This would not be possible in, for example, a questionnaire. Borg and Gall claim that the semi-structured interview is the most appropriate tool for interview studies in education, due to its ability to provide both objectivity and depth, and also gather data that could not be obtained in any other approach.

Elisabeth was interviewed twice: once before the first cycle, and the second time after the second cycle. The first interview focused on her experiences about teaching English, with the main focus on reading, but also about her expectations of RT. Both interviews were conducted at the school. Only the interview subject and the interviewer were present during the interview. The interviews were carried out in Norwegian because it allowed for a more relaxing environment and allowed Elisabeth to speak more freely and elaborate on topics[7].

Both interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were recorded with an audio recorder, as well as notes taken, in case of technical problems with the recorder. The teacher was informed that the interviews would be deleted on completion of the thesis. She willingly agreed for them to be recorded.

Semi-structured interviews are organised so that the interviewer first asks a series of structured questions, before switching to more open-ended questions in order to obtain more complete data (see Appendix 7). In this research, for example, the interviewee, during the first interview, was first asked structured questions about education and her experience:

[7] The interviews have been translated into English by the author.

- When did you get your education?
- Where did you get your education?
- How much English did you study during your education?

The interview then switched to open questions, such as:

- How would you assess your pupils' reading skills?
- What are your expectations for Readers Theatre?
- Why did you agree to take part in the project?

The second interview (see Appendix 7B) focused on benefits and challenges of RT, and the teacher's experiences, for example:

- How has RT been compared to your expectations before the project started?
- Do you see any benefits or challenges of using RT?
- How do you think your pupils have experienced RT?

Journals

The journal is a great technique for reflection (Ary et al., 2010:557). It allows one to think about one's own setting and consider positive and negative sides. Ary et al. point out that there are several approaches to reflection, such as interviews or dialogues. However, for this project, interviews or dialogues with the pupils were considered too time consuming, also it was considered that some pupils would not be able to speak their mind in larger groups. Therefore, the journal was chosen as a method of collecting data from the pupils.

Three times during the study the pupils were asked to hand in a journal in Norwegian[8], before the project started, after the first cycle, and at the end of the project. Each time the pupils were given a set of questions and asked to answer them with as much detail as possible (see Appendix 6). The first journal entry[9] (see Appendix 6A) focused on each pupil's reading habits, motivation, and expectations for RT, for example:

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[8] The journal entries have been translated into English by the author.
[9] The questions were originally in Norwegian and have been translated into English by the author.

- What do you usually read? (text books, magazines, novels, newspapers)
- Do you like to read? Why?
- What are your expectations to Readers Theatre?

The second journal entry (see Appendix 6B) focused on the first RT cycle, and what the pupils thought about the presentations, for example:

- What did you think about the first week of Readers Theatre?
- What did you think about performing the fairy tale?
- What was it like to be an audience? Did you understand what the other fairy tales were about?

In the third journal entry (see Appendix 6C) the pupils were asked about the RT project as a whole, focusing on their experience of creating stories and scripts, the cooperative aspect, and also their positive and negative reactions to RT, for example:

- What did you think of creating your own RT performance?
- How do you think RT has worked in class?
- What was the most fun with RT?

Video recording
During the performances of the RT texts, the pupils were video and audio recorded. This was done first and foremost so that the performances could be observed again at a later time. In the first cycle all the groups were recorded during the performances. Also, three of the groups were recorded during rehearsals in the beginning of the first cycle, so that the researcher could compare the pupils' oral performance, such as pronunciation and word recognition from the rehearsals to the performances. In the second cycle, the different approaches towards making the produced text, and the progress of the groups made it difficult to compare them from the beginning to the end of the cycle. Therefore, the groups were not recorded until the presentation of the created stories.

According to Dornyei (2007:183), video recording may be considered ideal for classroom research. Dornyei argues that video recordings save the researcher much time and attention during observation as the data can be reviewed at a later time. The availability of

quality equipment in recent years allows for more use of this method. However, Dornyei (2007:184) claims that video recording is not a perfect method, and points out that the quality of the image is usually better than the quality of the sound. This problem was solved in the current study by using an additional source for sound, placed closer to the performances. Dornyei also argues that a fixed camera cannot record everything because of its blind spots. Also, the camera may serve as a distraction for the pupils, creating out-of-the-ordinary behaviour. However, this was not a problem for the current research. Firstly, the camera was used in either a group rehearsal or during performance, and the importance of being able to see everything was not crucial. Secondly, neither group rehearsals nor performances are ordinary classroom settings, and therefore the camera is not that terrifying. Finally, the presence of an observer may in itself cause different behaviour than normally.

4.5. Validity and reliability

Validity indicates the degree of relevance between the topic and the research. According to Ary et al. (2010:242), validity is the most important consideration in developing and evaluating measuring instruments. In most educational and psychological research, the instruments used are designed for measuring hypothetical constructs. Therefore, it is important to assess the validity of the score-based interpretations of these instruments. When research focuses on, for example, anxiety, motivation, creativity, or attitude, it becomes more difficult to measure, since there are no instruments to measure. However, it is possible to study these constructs if one moves from the theoretical domain of the specific construct to an empirical level for measuring. In other words, the subjects are given tasks that can be observed and are founded in theory through the observations.

Reliability focuses on the consistency of the measuring (Ary et al., 2010:256). Ary et al. point out that the meaning and interpretation of the scores is a question of validity, and is not concerned in reliability. The relationship between validity and reliability is that scores can be reliable without being valid, but cannot be valid without first being considered reliable (Ary et al., 2010:256).

This thesis includes rich datasets in the sense that it includes observation, interviews, journals and recordings (video and audio). Both the interviews and the journals were conducted in Norwegian, so that both the teacher and the pupils were allowed to speak their mind freely. Both journal questions and interview guides were revised and improved with the

help of an independent reviewer. It was not possible to pilot the interview guides because of the uniqueness of the situation. There were no other researchers or teachers trying the same method. Also, a peer of the researcher reviewed the video recordings during the first cycle, so-called 'inter-rater reliability'. Cohen et al. (2011:200) argue that, because human judgement is fallible, if more than one researcher is taking part in a piece of research and agreeing on the data it adds to the reliability of the research, for example by reviewing observation through video recordings. The peer review adds to the reliability of the data of this research.

4.6. Ethics

In both quantitative and qualitative research, it is important that the researcher has strict adherence to ethical standards (Ary et al., 2010:622). Ary et al. point out that researchers have an obligation to their subjects and to their profession, and argue that the researcher should be familiar with the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Code of Ethics. The principles of the Code of Ethics serve as a guide for educational researchers in determining ethical courses of action (AERA, 2011: 146-147). These principles are: Professional competence, integrity, professional, scientific, and scholarly responsibility, respect for people's rights, dignity and diversity, and social responsibility.

Informed consent is one of the basic principles in research on human populations, and thus also in educational research (AERA, 2011:151). AERA point out that educational researchers do not involve participants without the consent of either the individual or the individual's legally authorised representatives. An educational researcher must obtain and document oral or written consent. As Stake (1995: 57) points out, data gathering in most educational case studies involves at least a small invasion of privacy. In this study, information about the project was given orally to the pupils and in writing to the parents. Both pupils and parents were asked to sign a note confirming that they would participate in the project (see Appendix 2).

The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)[10] also approved the research project (see Appendix 1). NSD is the Data Protection Official for Research for all Norwegian universities. NSD states that research gathering information about individuals, or using audio and video recordings are most likely subject to notification. The current study does not

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[10] <http://www.nsd.uib.no/nsd/english/index.html> Accessed: 12.05.14.

contain personal data, but was nevertheless subject to notification, thus making sure that the subjects are protected in the thesis.

5. Results

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the research data collected. It is divided into two main parts: 'The first Readers Theatre cycle' and 'The second Readers Theatre cycle'.

Section 5.2 (First Readers Theatre cycle) is divided into four sub-sections: firstly, the pre-project data from the subjects included in the study. This sub-section includes the pupils' journal entries from before the project was started about their abilities and motivation for reading, attitudes and experiences of practising reading aloud, and also their expectations for RT. Secondly, the first teacher interview includes the teacher's assessment of the pupils' reading abilities, her reflection of reading methods she uses, and expectations for RT. Thirdly, introducing, rehearsing and performing the first RT texts includes my observations during the first RT cycle, and a comparison between the rehearsals and the performance of three of the groups of pupils. This sub-section also addresses improvement in reading the actual texts, and analyses the pronunciation, word recognition, and reading progress in one of the groups in detail. Fourthly, assessment of the first RT cycle includes a plenary discussion in class after the performances and the second journal entry by the pupils, written after the first cycle was completed. Finally, the section about the second pupil journals includes the pupils' assessment of the first cycle of RT during their second journal entries.

Section 5.3 (Second Readers Theatre cycle) is divided into five sub-sections: firstly, the creative process of creating an RT story. This sub-section reports the different groups' approaches towards creating a Christmas story for RT. Secondly, there is a sub-section that addresses the performance of the RT texts and a short discussion the teacher had with the pupils afterwards. Thirdly, there is a sub-section that addresses the writing process of a group of struggling learners created for the second cycle. This sub-section reports on a short interview with Lisa, who followed this group throughout the three weeks, from the beginning of the writing process until the performance. This group is focused on separately because it had a different approach to the creative process, and also needed more attention from an adult. Fourthly, there is a sub-section that addresses the assessment of the second cycle and the RT project as a whole. This sub-section presents both the pupils' third and final journal entry, and the second and final interview with Elisabeth. Finally, the last section gives a short summary

of the pupils performing their own stories for the pupils from the 4th grade, the week after the research project was completed.

5.2. First Readers Theatre cycle

5.2.1. First pupil journals

Reading and reading aloud
Before the project started the pupils were asked to write about what they read in general, and which reading level they considered themselves to be at (see Appendix 6A). Out of the 27 pupils, 15 claimed to be good readers, and the main argument being the ability to read fast. One pupil considered herself to be a good reader because of the ability to decode words, whereas another wrote that it was the amount of reading carried out that was the foundation for improving in reading. Also, practising reading was mentioned as an important factor for being a good reader. Approximately six out of ten of the pupils found a connection between practising reading and reading level. Two of the pupils wrote:

> I read magazines. I'm a good reader because I don't have to stop on difficult words. My eyes see the word, and I know what the word is. (P4)[11]

> I read mostly books, not so much newspapers or magazines. I think I'm a fairly good reader because I read often. (P15)

In contrast to the high number of pupils considering themselves good readers, only two pupils wrote that they were poor readers. One of them struggled with learning difficulties, while the other commented that: 'I am not a good reader, because I do not read that often' (P22).

When asked about the time spent on reading, there was a huge gap between the pupils reading the most and those reading the least. The time scheduled for reading differed from less than 15 minutes a day to 60 minutes a day. However, most of the pupils spent between 15 and 30 minutes a day on reading activities, for example magazines, comic books, novels, and the textbook. Only five of the pupils claimed that they did not like to read. For example one of

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[11] Each pupil's journal entry has been labeled with a number, for example P4 (Pupil number four).

the pupils wrote: 'No, I do not like to read because it is not like seeing and hearing, besides I do not like the content of books' (P4).

However, the same pupil considered herself a good reader and read 30 minutes every day, so there was not necessarily a link between low proficiency and attitudes towards reading. As one of the struggling readers commented: 'I like to read because you can learn to like different kinds of literature' (P22).

Reading literature that was fun and exciting seemed to be one of the major motivations for reading, even more so than ability. Two of the pupils wrote:

I like reading, because books are exciting and fun. (P14)

I like to read very much because I relax when reading exciting books. (P15)

Reading aloud was not much used in this class. However, it seemed that reading aloud was used as a tool for practice and assessment of the struggling readers, both in school with a teacher and at home with a parent. One of the struggling readers wrote that he read aloud every day at home as part of his homework. The teacher read aloud sometimes to the class as a whole during lunch. This was, however, the only reading aloud activity most of the pupils had during the week. Most of the pupils also wrote that they did not like to read aloud because it took more time than silent reading. Some of the pupils also wrote that they were afraid of not pronouncing words properly. However, two of the pupils with learning difficulties wrote:

I like reading aloud because then the listener can help me if I read something wrong. (P12)

Yes, [I like to read aloud] because then someone corrects me, and I become a better reader. (P13)

The struggling pupils found reading aloud a positive activity because it allowed them to be corrected by an adult supervising them. Also, they saw a connection between reading aloud and improving their reading.

Expectations for Readers Theatre

When asked about their expectations for RT, 17 of the 27 pupils wrote that they were looking forward to the project, expecting it to be fun and that they were going to learn new words in English. As one of the pupils wrote: 'I think that it is going to be fun because I am quite good at English and it is fun to speak in a different language' (P4).

However, not everyone was looking forward to the RT project. For example, one of the struggling learners wrote: 'I am somewhat sceptical. I do not think I will manage to learn all the words in English' (P20).

The class was therefore divided between the pupils who were looking forward to the project, and those who were not. However, no one reported that they did not want to take part in the project and the scepticism some had before the project was because of their abilities and not about the project itself.

5.2.2. First teacher interview

Reading and reading aloud

The reading level of the pupils, and their assessment of their own abilities, was confirmed by Elisabeth. She claimed that even though there was a huge gap between the struggling and the proficient readers in her class, the majority of the class were good readers. This was also confirmed when they were tested in reading in the 4th grade national tests, where over half the class scored at the highest level, level 3. These reading tests measured comprehension in different genres and were conducted through pupils reading and then answering questions on the text. The tests did not focus on reading speed, but rather the ability to understand different texts. At the other end of the scale, the class also had pupils who were struggling with reading, with two pupils diagnosed with autism and four pupils diagnosed with dyslexia. The class therefore had pupils representing all the different levels of ability.

This huge gap between the struggling and the proficient readers may be challenging for teachers when teaching reading in class. However, Elisabeth pointed out some factors that made them able to keep momentum going forward, and which were 'dragging all the pupils along'. Firstly, she mentioned the classroom environment. In this class they had created an environment where no one was afraid of reading. The teacher claimed that the struggling readers 'are part of a class where it is accepted that there are differences, so they are not embarrassed or afraid of standing in front of class, or of sitting in class reading in their

stuttering manner'. There was a safe classroom environment, resulting in no one being afraid of reading. Secondly, the textbook was divided into three different 'steps', where each step represented a level of proficiency. These steps made it possible to use different texts while focusing on the same topic. Thirdly, the class focused much attention on practising reading, and one lesson, 45 minutes, every week was scheduled for reading. However, the teacher pointed out that reading was also used, for example, if the pupils had finished other work. Often during reading, the teacher would read as well. Fourthly, the class often used the library at school. The teacher claimed that the school had a great librarian who was excellent at guiding the pupils, giving them tips and suggestions based on books the pupils liked. The pupils were at a level of reading where they no longer used graded readers in Norwegian. The main focus now was on each pupil's interests. Books that were especially popular in this class were the Norwegian translations of the *Diary of a wimpy kid* series by J. Kinney and the *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling. Finally, reading had been given an increased focus at the school in recent years. The school took part in a project called 'Leselos' (translated 'Reading Pilot') by The Reading Centre at the University of Stavanger. 'Leselos' was an observation tool to support pupils' reading development and was used in different subjects and grades. The project focused on skills, such as vocabulary and comprehension. The way 'Leselos' worked was that some of the teachers at the school had attended a reading course at the University of Stavanger. These teachers were responsible for teaching their colleagues. Elisabeth claimed that 'after being a part of this project I have become a different teacher. I teach in a different manner, and focus on reading in every subject. That is really exciting and fun'. She also pointed out that the reason for the success in the national tests in reading was because of the new focus on reading.

According to Elisabeth, reading aloud activities were usually conducted in class by reading in groups or pairs. She claimed that such activities were great for assessing the pupils' reading abilities, because they allowed for the teacher to move from group to group and listen to each pupil. Besides reading during lunch, which was in L1, the teacher rarely read aloud. She pointed out: 'I rarely read English aloud because there is a lack of appropriate texts. If I was going to read aloud it would be texts that I knew everyone benefits from. However, these are rare'.

Before starting the RT project, Elisabeth had never heard of RT. She wanted to participate in the project because she wanted to learn something new:

I like to get new impulses when it comes to teaching, in this case towards teaching English. When it comes to teaching English I have not received any 'professional updating' since I studied. So I am hoping to learn something that I can apply in my teaching.

Elisabeth had the expectations of RT being an activity where there would be a high level of activity and energy among the pupils, that the pupils would practise much oral English, that they were going to have fun, and that RT would motivate them to be creative: 'I am expecting that they will learn new stories and words. Also seeing how they will react to the process of being in a group in a subject they have not cooperated much in before will be interesting'.

5.2.3. Introducing Readers Theatre

Rehearsing Readers Theatre fairy tales
The first cycle was an introduction to RT, and also the first time both the pupils and Elisabeth had taken part in an RT project. Elisabeth divided the pupils into five mixed ability groups consisting of five to six pupils each and each group was given a script. Some of the pupils could not wait to get started, as they participated in drama groups in their spare time. These pupils were looking forward to a dramatic approach to learning. Each script consisted of a summary of the story, a list of new vocabulary, a list of characters, as well as the script itself (see Appendix 3). The researcher had adapted the scripts for the appropriate level. The groups used the first part of the lesson to read the summary, discuss the story, and divide the different characters amongst the members of the group. An interesting observation during this process was that each group had one member that took charge of the different aspects of practising as a 'leader'. In each group these leaders were girls. Some groups even had two members who 'pushed the group forward'. These leaders were not necessarily the most proficient learners, but still took control of the group. The group leaders also took the responsibility of making sure that the group agreed on how to perform the text.

The groups contained both proficient learners and struggling learners. This allowed for the higher performing pupils to help the struggling ones. For example, a boy in one group, who was at a higher level of proficiency in English than the rest of the group, helped the other pupils in the group. Already during the first reading of the text, he helped the other pupils when they had problems with pronouncing a word. This created a relaxed environment, where

everyone was allowed to read without being made fun of. The three following interactions between the pupils are examples of the group being able to learn the pronunciation of words in the text without the help of a teacher, but with the help of a peer:

R1: *Good afternoon, your Majesty. We are weavers.*
R2: *The best weavers in the <u>entry</u> world.*
Boy: *Entire.*
R2: *Oh OK. The best weavers in the entire world.*

R3: *The whole night the crooks pretended to work. They burned more than sixteen <u>clan</u>…*
Boy: *Candles.*
R3: *Candles! They burned more than sixteen candles.*

R3: *I am ready. Eeeh. <u>Don't</u> my…*
Boy: *Doesn't.*
R3: *Doesn't my suit fit me marvellously?*

A more capable pupil helping less capable pupils was not unique for this group. In a different group one of the less capable pupils said to a girl who had lived in the US for the last couple of years: 'You are a lot better than us in English. Can you please tell us if we mispronounce any words?'

The first day RT was introduced showed that the pupils were excited to do something different from what they usually did in the English lessons. Some pupils wanted to spend the break practising the script, and many of them discussed which fairy tale and character the different groups and members had got. After the first day, each group had read through the text and divided the characters amongst themselves. The pupils were told to read their parts for homework.

Throughout the week there developed a positive attitude towards the RT project. Pupils practised their parts at home, asked if they could read the scripts during reading activities and breaks, and when they met the researcher in the school's halls, they asked when the next RT lesson would be. The upcoming performance was motivational because it was both a way for the pupils to show what they had practised and also it set a final deadline for the rehearsals.

Performing the Readers Theatre fairy tales

On Day 4 of the first cycle, the pupils performed their texts after having prepared in four English lessons. Many of them were eager to perform their fairy tale, and some of them had spent the break organising the classroom so that there was a stage surrounded by chairs in a semi-circle. Some groups applied a traditional RT model, where the group was standing in a line and each member took a step forward when they read. Other groups used a developed model of RT and turned the reading into a performance with characters dramatizing and the narrators in fixed positions on stage (see section 2.1.2).

The pupils had improved both their reading fluency and their pronunciation throughout the week. The three tables in Appendix 4 are excerpts from the performed texts *The King's new clothes, The ugly duckling* and *Three little pigs*, and illustrate the improvement in the pupils' reading. These tables illustrate the progression from the first reading to the performance. In the excerpt of *The King's new clothes* (see Appendix 4A)*,* 37 words were mispronounced in the first reading of the text. However, during the performance only three of the words were mispronounced. In the complete text, 142 words, or 9,9% of the total number of words in the text, were misread or mispronounced when the pupils read through it for the first time. Tables 2 and 3 below, based on a close analysis of the video recording, illustrate the improvement from the pronunciation and word recognition of the group reading *The King's new clothes* during rehearsal. Table 2 illustrates mispronounced words during rehearsal of *The King's new clothes*. Table 3 illustrates words wrongly recognised during rehearsal.

Table 2: Mispronounced words during the rehearsal of *The King's new clothes* (figures in brackets show the number of times a specific word was mispronounced)

Word mispronounced	Pronounced during rehearsal	Word mispronounced	Pronounced during rehearsal
Upon	/epɒn/	Could	/koʊl/
Thought	/θɜːd/	Weave	/weɪv/
Dressed	/dresed/	Thread	/tred/
Suit (8)	/suːiːt/	Foolish	/fɔːlɪʃ/
Crooks (2)	/krɒks/	Unfit	/ʌnfaɪt/
Weavers	/weɪvərz/	Approval	/əpɒruːvl/
Imaginable	/ɪnɪmædʒɪnəbəʊ/	Whole	/wɒl/
Clothes (3)	/klaʊðes/	Burned	/braʊn/
Their	/dər/	Busy	/bʌsi/
Job (4)	/jɒb/	Could	/koʊld/
Foolish	/fɔːlɪʃ/	Worked	/wɜ˞ːrked/
Majesty (2)	/mæjəsti/	Sew	/suː/
Weavers	/weɪvərz/	Thread	/θriːd/
Weave	/weɪv/	Indeed	/ɪnded/
Unfit	/ʌnfaɪt/	Could	/koʊld/
Looms (4)	/lʌms/	Majesty	/meɪəsti/
Seemed	/siːmed/	Putting	/pʊtɪŋ/
Whatsoever	/wʌtsoʊvər/	Undressed	/ʌndresed/
Worked	/wɜ˞ːrked/	Admired	/ədmiːred/
Would	/wɒl/	Mirror	/mɪroʊ/
Honest	/hoʊnəst/	Fit	/faɪt/
Nobody	/nuːbədi/	Marvellously	/mɑːrweluːsli/
Pattern	/pætrən/	Fits	/faɪts/
Pleased	/pliːsed/	Through	/tɜ˞ːr/
Worked	/wɜ˞ːrked/	Marched (6)	/mɑːrʃɜ˞ːred/
Stayed	/steɪed/	Admired	/ədmiːred/
Looked (2)	/lɒked/	Wearing	/wiːrɪŋ/
Talked	/tɔːked/	Through	/truː/
Wanted	/woʊntəd/	Castle	/kæstel/
While	/wɪl/	Lived	/lɪv/
Group	/groʊp/	Nobles (2)	/noʊbl̩es/
Came	/kəm/	Held	/hoʊld/
King's	/kɪŋ/	Clever	/levər/
Magnificent	/mægɪnɪfəsənt/	Magnificent (2)	/mægnɪfənt/
Magnificent	/mægɪfəsənt/	Candles	/klænts/
Including	/ɪnkluːdeɪʃn/	Clothes (2)	/kloʊð/

As Table 2 shows, many different words were mispronounced. However, some trends appeared during the first reading of the text. For example, the word *suit* was mispronounced eight times the same way throughout the text (/suːiːt/). Also past tense verbs ending with –*ed*,

for example *talked*, were mispronounced (/tɔːked/). There were also words that were mixed between English and Norwegian. For example, the word *marched* was pronounced /mɑːrʃɝːred/, which is similar to the Norwegian word *marsjerte* with the same meaning.

Table 3: Words wrongly recognised in *The King's new clothes* during rehearsal (figures in brackets show the number of times a specific word was wrongly recognised)

Word in the text	During rehearsal	Word in the text	During rehearsal
His	This	Pretended (7)	Presented
Could	Cloud	Could	Would
Cloth (10)	Clothes	These	They
Entire	Entry	This	There
Imagine	Image	Are (2)	Is
Who	So	Is	Are
He	I have	Beauty	Beautiful
Gave	Give	But	Buy
How (3)	Who	Assist	Assistant
The	He	Doesn't	Don't
Amazing	Magazine	His	The
This	That	Wished	Wishes
The	This	Admit	Admin
This (3)	The	Anyone	Anybody

As Table 3 illustrates, many words were wrongly recognised. However, words such as *cloth* and *clothes* were wrongly recognised many times. For example, *cloth* was read as *clothes* through the entire text. Also the word *pretended* was read as *presented* throughout the text. At times the boundary between mispronunciation and wrong recognition of words is somewhat fuzzy, and it has therefore been necessary to make a decision to place the words in one of the tables.

In contrast to the first reading during rehearsals, after reading through the text approximately eight times, only eight words, or 0.5%, were misread or mispronounced during the actual performance. Table 4 shows the words misread or mispronounced during the performance.

Table 4: Words mispronounced, wrongly recognised or misread during the performance of *The King's new clothes*

Word in the text	Read during performance
Suit	/si:t/
Crooks	/krɒks/
Imagine	Image
Honest	/hoʊnəst/
Magnificent	Magificent
Approval	/æpru:væl/
Sew	/si:ə/
Marvellously	Marshawell

The trends of improvement were found in all the groups and Table 5 illustrates the improvement in the readings of *The ugly duckling* and *The three little pigs*:

Table 5: Words mispronounced, wrongly recognised, or misread during rehearsal and performance of *The ugly duckling* and *The three little pigs*

	During rehearsal	% of text	During performance	% of text
The ugly duckling	134	8,3	14	0,8
The three little pigs	88	6,5	8	0,5

In the excerpt of *The ugly duckling* (see Appendix 4B) 18 words were mispronounced during rehearsal, whereas only three words were misread or mispronounced during performance. In the complete text, 134 words, or 8,3% of the words in the text, were misread or mispronounced. During the performance 14 words, or 0,8%, were misread or mispronounced. In the excerpt of *The three little pigs* (see Appendix 4C), 18 words were misread or mispronounced during rehearsal, whereas only one word was mispronounced during performance. In the complete text 88 words, or 6,5%, were misread or mispronounced. During the performance of the text eight words, or 0,5%, of the words in the text, were misread or mispronounced.

      Most interesting, however, was that the struggling readers seemed to have the steepest learning curve. For example, the girl reading the part of Narrator 2 in *The three little pigs* had big problems reading the text during the first rehearsals, not only with pronunciation, but also

with reading fluently. During the first reading she misread or mispronounced 45 words (13,2% of the total). However, by practising throughout the week, she improved every day, and when she performed, she was able to read almost the entire text without problems, and; only three words, or 0,8%, were mispronounced.

Another example of improvement from the first reading to the performance was reading fluency. When reading difficult words the pupils used sounds, such as *eh,* as pauses. In oral language these pauses are common because they are used by the speaker as a sign of telling the listener that the speaker is not finished talking, often in relation to the speaker pausing to think. Bortfeld et al. (2001:124) argue that this makes the language in spontaneous conversation notoriously disfluent. These pauses are called 'fillers'. One of the more extreme examples of using 'fillers' while reading was one of the pupils reading *The King's new clothes*. He used fillers as pauses when he was uncertain about words. This made his reading disfluent and caused him to have difficulties being understood when reading. The rehearsals were important for this pupil. During the first reading he was uncertain about both words and plot. As a result his first reading included 70 fillers. For example:

Good afternoon, *eh…* your Majesty. We are *eh…* weavers.

During the performance this number was reduced to only four 'fillers' through the entire reading. The boy seemed more comfortable with the text and focused more attention on his performance.

The scripts that had been used during the first cycle were originally written for 4th grade American L1 learners, and had been adapted by the author for the subjects of this research. However, the level of the texts turned out to be somewhat difficult, meaning that the texts were suited best to the more proficient learners. The struggling learners in the class would most likely have struggled with reading the texts individually. However, when working in groups and helping each other the groups managed to improve fluency and comprehension through practice.

5.2.4. Plenary assessment of the first cycle

After the performances, Elisabeth arranged a short discussion where the pupils were asked what they thought about the different performances and how they had experienced the first

week. One of the pupils replied: 'This has been really fun. It has been much practice, but this way of practising has been both fun and exciting'. Another pupil commented that RT was: 'Fun and easy to practise. We learned more English, and practised pronunciation at the same time as we had fun'.

When asked about what had been the most important aspect, the pupils agreed that the process of practising had been the most important. Some of the pupils also shared their opinions on being in the audience:

> I think it was fun to watch. I did not understand all the words, but I understood the stories in general. Because they were well-known fairy tales, they were easier to understand.

> It was easy to understand *Thumbelina*. Even though I had not heard the play before, it was easy to understand because of their acting.

Afterwards the researcher and the two teachers had a brief talk about the first week and the performances. Elisabeth said:

> The excitement and enthusiasm the pupils showed throughout the week, and especially during performance, and also the response the audience gave after the performance, shows that RT is without a doubt something we must do again. I'm looking forward to seeing if RT has an effect on the pupils' writing as well, because it is often difficult to find engaging and fun writing activities.

Lisa commented:

> I am so impressed with the amount of text the pupils have been reading. During the performances I thought about us preparing our pupils for the national tests a couple of years ago, and we were thinking about how much text they had to read. Now they are reading these long texts in English. The pupils showed huge improvement today.

Lisa also pointed out that RT has the potential to help the teachers create individual curricula (IOP) for the struggling pupils, claiming that the RT performances were transparent, thus showing who needed help with what, and also who had not been practising.

5.2.5. Second pupil journals

The following week the pupils wrote their second journal entry. In this journal entry the pupils were asked if they would like to read some of the fairy tales that had been performed. 22 of the pupils wanted to read one or more of the fairy tales, while only five did not want to read any of the fairy tales. When asked about what they had learned during the first week, 23 of the pupils responded that they had learned pronunciation and new words. One of the pupils had discovered that one could learn much by cooperating with other pupils. One boy wrote: 'I have learned that I am better in speaking English than I thought' (P17).

This was the same boy who had helped his peers with pronunciation throughout the first week. All of the pupils responded that they had benefitted from the first week, and that they had learned something. When asked about how they had experienced the first cycle of RT, one of the boys wrote:

> It was lots of fun and I learned a lot at the same time. I was really looking forward to the Friday, when we were going to perform. I also enjoyed watching the other groups. (P18)

As an audience most of the pupils responded that they understood parts or most of the performances. However, the pupils replied that the groups that had used a developed model of RT were easier to understand than the groups who had used a traditional model. For example, one pupil wrote that as a listener:

> I understood most of the plays, but it was difficult to understand some of the groups because they only read the text and took a step forward when they said something. (P2)

Another pupil wrote: 'I understood most of it, but it was easier to understand the groups who were acting' (P26). The groups that used a traditional model had problems reading the text with proper intonation and stress, and where reading in a monotonous manner. The monotonous reading may have caused the pupils in the audience to have difficulties understanding what was being read.

Some of the struggling pupils had problems with understanding the other performances. One of them did not understand anything of the other performances, while two

pupils understood very little. However, even though they had problems understanding, all of the struggling pupils wrote that they had fun both performing and watching the other groups, and one of the girls who was struggling the most in English even wrote:

> It was fun to watch and listen. I did not understand everything. But, apart from one, I had heard or seen all the plays before, so I was able to understand more. (P27)

Even though the struggling pupils had problems understanding the other performances, they still seemed to have had positive experiences as listeners as well.

5.3. Second Readers Theatre cycle

The week following completion of the first cycle, the second cycle was started. This variant of RT focused on the pupils creating their own story with characters and dialogues. The goal was to nurture the creativity of the pupils and also allow them to practise their writing skills. Some changes were made from the first cycle: firstly, a new group of pupils who struggled with both cooperating with others and with learning difficulties was formed, and secondly, Lisa would now be present in every English lesson and would have the responsibility for mentoring this new group. This meant that there would be one or two adults supervising this group at all times. How the group collaborated, and how Lisa organised it, will be explained in detail in section 5.3.3.

5.3.1. Creating a Readers Theatre Christmas story

The second cycle of RT involved the pupils creating their own Christmas stories. The pupils were asked to start the project by writing individually. Each pupil would create a mind map, character description, introduction, dialogue, or summary of a story. These ideas would be brought to the groups, and the groups would agree what should be included in their story.

In one group one pupil created a mind map and included all the words he could find about Christmas and characters for his story, and tried to make characters based on traditional Christmas stories. A girl created a brief summary about a story in which Santa Claus became sick and needed a substitute to deliver all the presents for him. Another boy created a mind

map with characters and main events of a story. His story included a gummy bear that stole all the presents from Santa Claus together with the Easter bunny. When the pupils in this group put together the different ideas, they realised that they could include parts from each of the three pupils and make them into one story. This included both plot and characters. In the first English lesson the group started to discuss how they could incorporate the different stories. They decided that the plot would be that Santa Claus became sick and arranged an audition for potential substitutes. Gummybear would audition for the job and would become jealous when he did not get the job. The group named the story *Sick Santa* and the original text written by the group is shown below.

Sick Santa

Narrator	Once upon a time. There was a fat man whit name Santa. He live in the North Pole. One time he got sick 22. December. All the helpers have panic. Then they thought and thought. The Santa find out that they will have a audition to be santa in one day.
Santa	Ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the audition to be Santa for one day. First up we have gummi bear.
Gummybear	Hi! I want to be santa for one day.
Santa	Why?
Gummybear	Becaus I want to see wat is in the presents.
Santa	NEXT! Who are you?
Narrator	A littel fairy came in.
Fairy	Hi! I will be santa in one day.
Santa	Why?
Fairy	Becaus I will make the kids happy.
Santa	Why do you want to make the kids happy?
Fairy	Becaus I am a littel good fairy. Daaah!
Santa	Ok! You are the santa for one day.
Fairy	(dancing and singing) Yes I am the santa.
Gummybear	(angry) But I want to be santa!
Narrator	Two days later the Christmas came.
Fairy	(wakes up and jums around) Today is the Christmas. Yey! Oh, I'm not to be late to the stabel to find my Bluedolph and Rudolph.
Narrator	Then the fairy walked to the stabel.
Santa	Here is the Rudolph and here is the bluedolph. Good luck.
Fairy	Ok. Now we have to go up in the sky and give presents to all the kids. 123 GO! (Rudolph and Bluedolph starts pulling the sleigh)
Fairy	Oh! Look! There's the first house.
Narrator	Then they delivered the presents in the cimeni. After they done that in a few houses, they were up in the air again.
Fairy	Look! It's the easter bunny and the gummy bear. What do they want? They look angry!

Narrator	Suddenly the easter bunny throwed an easter egg. It hit the sleigh and out of the egg came a karate rabbit. It jumped right over the little fairy and began to attack Rudolph and Bluedolph.
Gummybear	Ha ha! Now your Christmas is destroyed! Mohahahaha!
Narrator	Up on the sleigh, Rudolph and Bluedolph was very badly hurt. Soon they were not able to fly any longer.
Fairy	What are we going to do now? How can we deliver all the presents?
Narrator	The sleigh fell down from the sky
Fairy	What am I going to do now?
Bluedolph	You have to fly back to the north pole and say this to santa.
Narrator	And the little fairy flew back to the North Pole. She told everything to Santa.
Santa	What? I don't believe it! I thought the easter bunny was friendly. But we have to get the presents back.
Narrator	One of the helpers came in.
Helper	Santa! We have made a medicine for you!
Santa	How did you do that?
Helper	We just…
Santa	Give me the medicine! (drinks) I feel good again!
Narrator	Santa eated the medicine. And then he was good again.
Fairy	How can we get back to the Rudolph and Bluedolph?
Santa	I have an idea. We can take the ekstra power sleigh. 123 GO!
Narrator	Then they drive back to the place there the Rudolph and Bluedolph fell down.
Fairy	There it is!
Santa	OK! We can land down there.
Narrator	They landed on the closest roof. Then Santa and fairy see the gummy bear take the presents. Santa jumped down and take the gummy bear and easter bunny and tied them to the sleigh. Meanwhile the fairy went to rescue Rudolph and Bluedolph.
Fairy	Come with me Rudolph. Come with me Bluedolph. (puts them in the sleigh)
Narrator	Then they fly up in the air.
Santa	Hey, let's drop the gummi bear. What do you think?
Fairy	Don't drop that gummy bear. Hey!
F & S	Don't drop that gummy bear. Don't drop that gummy bear. Don't drop that gummy bear.
Santa	OK, but we must punish him.
Fairy	Let's put the gummy bear and the easter bunny in the ginger bread jail.
Santa	That's a good idea. And then you must help me deliver all the presents.
Narrator	Santa and the fairy put the gummy bear and the easter bunny in jail and delivered all the presents. One of Santa's helpers gave Rudolph and Bluedolph some medicine, and they became well again. And Santa, the Fairy, Rudolph and Bluedolph lived happily ever after.
All	And don't forget, the Santa is real. The End.

The group decided to give each other different responsibilities during the creative process. One of the members had the main responsibility for writing, one used a dictionary to look up words they did not know, while the two others wrote small dialogues or lines they could use.

All members took part in discussing how the story would unfold, and the pupil who had the responsibility for writing took notes while they discussed. She also made sure that all the members of the group got to say what they wanted to include in the story. The dynamic of this group worked very well, and they all managed to help each other and listen to what the different members had to say.

The different groups had different approaches to the writing process. Another group decided that since nobody wanted to be the writer, they would take turns writing. This group wanted to make a funny story and started the writing process by creating funny scenes. For every scene they created they would try to dramatise it and see if they liked it. This group was the only one that used dramatisation while writing. The group would write short parts and see how they functioned in dramatised scenes before they continued writing. They created a story called *Bad Santa* (see Appendix 5A). In their story Santa Claus had been bad to both his helpers and other people and is sent away to the South Pole by his mother. He drives away on his motorcycle with one of his helpers. On their trip they meet a girl. Santa finds new friends on their journey and adopts the little girl. The story ends with Santa, the girl, and the new friends coming back to Santa's mother in the North Pole.

Another group chose to have two writers, while the rest would discuss and make an outline of the story. One of the members of the group had lived the last couple of years in the US and was a fluent speaker of English. She took charge of the group and was one of the writers. This group created a story called *The big Christmas secret* (see Appendix 5C). Their story was about a girl named Sophie and her brother Toby, who meets Santa Claus when he comes to their house to give them their presents. They get to see the reindeer and are allowed to sit in the sleigh. By accident they push a button, and end up in the North Pole together with Santa. In the North Pole they get to ride reindeer, and see Santa's workshop. The story ends with the two going back to their home and promising Santa to never tell anyone what happened.

One group chose to discuss what to include in the story together, while taking turns on being the writer. None of the members wanted the responsibility of writing alone. This group's approach to writing was that one would take notes while they discussed and after discussions they would start writing dialogues. At one point, two of the members were so excited during a discussion that they started acting out the scene. The other two tried as best they could to write notes on what they acted. This group created a story called *The failed Christmas* (see Appendix 5E). The story was about a boy named Calvin and his two mean siblings. The two siblings were on Santa's naughty list, and never received any presents. One

year they were so angry that they decided to kidnap Santa. Santa, who had broken his leg, sent Mother of Christmas to deliver the presents. When she came to Calvin's house, his siblings kidnapped her, but when they realised that they had not captured Santa, they forced her to bring them to him. Calvin had seen everything and hid in the sleigh. When they arrived the North Pole, Calvin saved the Mother of Christmas from his siblings, and ultimately helped her save Christmas by delivering the presents.

The group dynamics varied, and some had more problems cooperating than others. One group decided that they wanted to create a story about an evil witch. However, the group had problems deciding the roles during the writing process, as well as during the actual performance. One of the group members complained to Elisabeth that she did not get to speak her mind during the writing process and felt that she did not get to choose a character. Elisabeth solved this by assigning different responsibilities to the different members of the group, and making the girl one of the writers. In this way she took more part in the writing process and was allowed to speak her mind in the group. Their play, *The evil witch and the little girl* (see Appendix 5D), included different ideas that the members had incorporated from their individual texts. The story was about an evil witch who lived together with a crow and a pig. One day a girl comes to their house to sell cupcakes. The girl is kidnapped and the witch turns her into a girl of gingerbread. One of Santa's helpers comes to the house and hears the girl crying for help. He saves the girl and brings her to Santa, who turns her back into a girl. The girl lives happily ever after with Santa and his helper on the North Pole.

5.3.2. Performing the Christmas story

When the day of performance came, many of the pupils were eager to show their peers what they had created. All the groups had spent much time on both creating the story itself and on how to perform it. As a result of the stories being written by the pupils themselves, they had less difficulty reading the texts.

During the second cycle all the groups chose to use a developed model of RT when performing. This meant that they dramatised the text with different characters, and used objects they found in the classroom, for example chairs, tables, balls, and ropes, as props in their performance. Some of the groups had more roles in the story than actual pupils, thus resulting in one pupil reading different characters during the performance. However, all of the groups who faced this challenge chose to distinguish the characters by using, for example a

hat or a jacket. This also made it easier for the audience to separate different characters and understand the story. All the groups performed with a pride of their own work and each performance lasted approximately five minutes. More importantly, however, the audience watched the plays with a profound level of engagement and concentration. Even after performing themselves, the pupils showed interest in watching the other groups perform.

Discussion after the performances

After all the groups had performed their texts, Elisabeth organised a short discussion where the pupils gave each other feedback on what they had created and performed, and also expressed their thoughts about their own performances. One of the pupils said: 'It was fun to perform and I especially enjoyed when they laughed, since we tried to make a funny story'. Another commented that he was glad that they had been able to perform the reading the way they had practised.

The pupils were positive when giving feedback and focused on what had been fun. Things that were mentioned as positive were funny stories, reading loud and clearly, assigning the right roles, good ideas for performance such as using props, and original stories. In addition, the pupils reassured their peers if they were disappointed about their own performance. One of the pupils said that she was disappointed because she moved from one part of the stage too early, to which one of the pupils who had been in the audience replied: 'I could not tell'. The groups also said that they had managed to cooperate. One of the pupils even felt that they had been able to turn 'joking around' into something positive by incorporating it into the story. Many of the pupils agreed that the process of creation and practice had been both fun and important. As a final comment during the discussions, Elisabeth said to the groups: 'I think you have had a lot of fun when practising. You all seemed enthusiastic during rehearsals'. The pupils nodded their heads.

5.3.3. The group of struggling learners

The group of struggling learners was organised differently from the other groups. The group began the project with each pupil writing down characters and ideas they wanted to include in the story. When they gathered as a group for the first time, they discussed what could happen in the story, and chose a couple of ideas the different members had brought to the group. They voted on the main plot, and agreed that the plot was that all the Christmas gifts were stolen.

Afterwards each member told the group which character they wanted to be and which characters to include in the story.

When interviewed after the cycle, Lisa pointed out that these pupils would have been reluctant to take part in the play if they had been forced to be a character that they did not like, or as the teacher said: 'They need the choice, otherwise it becomes difficult'. Apart from being struggling learners, the members of this group also had difficulties with cooperating in a group. As a result, the members of the group worked more individually than in the other groups. Everyone wrote down what they wanted to include and the teacher helped the pupils to connect the different ideas into one story. The teacher stressed that she did not take part in creating the story and pointed out that at one point the group had five different texts that did not fit together. 'One of the main challenges for the pupils in this group is to cooperate and, for this project, use different sources of text to create one text'. The teacher felt that the pupils did not have problems creating ideas, but rather to connect the different ideas into one story. The pupils choosing characters and agreeing on the main plot was, according to the teacher, the key to success for this group. Other groups had one or more proficient learners of English who would write or who were able to help the rest of the group. In contrast, this group was lacking such a member and was therefore depending on the teacher. Also, Lisa claimed that:

> Two of the pupils in this group would not have been able to cooperate without adult supervision, because collaboration is one of the biggest challenges for them. However, during this project both have showed huge improvement in their ability to cooperate, and when they were finished the entire group showed pride and felt a certain ownership to what they had created.

This group created a story named *The story of Clanta Sauce* (see Appendix 5F). Their story focused on a group of evil penguins stealing all the presents from Santa Claus, named Clanta Sauce in this story. Together with a Christmas Pig, Rudolph and an elf, Clanta Sauce seeks to find the thieves, but gets injured by falling out of the sleigh. The evil penguins kidnap Clanta Sauce and take him as prisoner in their cave. The pig, Rudolph, and the elf rescues Clanta Sauce, and the penguins are forced to work in the stables. *The story of Clanta Sauce* was a story focusing on comedy and the group included jokes and funny dialogues, as they wanted the audience to laugh. The group received much positive feedback from their peers, both during the performance and also afterwards.

5.3.4. Final assessment of Readers Theatre

Pupils' third journal entries

After the performances, the pupils wrote their third, and final, journal entry. The final journal entry focused on the pupils' experiences of creating a story, how they cooperated, their experiences with RT, and whether or not RT had met their expectations. When asked about how it had been to create an RT story, approximately three out of four of the pupils wrote that it was fun to create a story. Of these, five pupils also added that it had been difficult at the same time. Another four pupils wrote that it had been difficult, whereas one wrote that it was 'OK', one wrote that she did not know if it had been difficult, and one did not answer.

When asked about how the groups had managed to cooperate, 23 of the pupils wrote that the groups functioned well and that they were able to cooperate. Of these, five pupils thought that the group had been perfect and that they would not change anything, whereas three pupils wrote that they could at times have focused more on the task. Of all the pupils asked, only two were negative to the cooperation of the groups. One wrote that that it was difficult to cooperate, while the other did not like the group she was in because all the other members were boys.

The pupils were asked how they had experienced their role as audience and if they had understood the other readings. 22 of the pupils wrote that they had understood the other stories, and 11 of these wrote that it was fun to be the audience. One pupil wrote: 'Yes, I understood much of the stories, but had difficulties with some words. It was fun being in the audience' (P10). Another wrote: 'Yes! It was fun to watch all the performances' (P16).

Three pupils wrote that they did not understand the stories, and the final two pupils did not answer the question. The reason for having problems with understanding differed. Some problems in understanding were because of difficult words or because the groups read too fast. One of the pupils wrote: 'Some groups spoke indistinctly, making it difficult to understand' (P17).

One of the pupils had problems because of the structure and wrote: 'I understood what they were saying, but the structure of some stories made them difficult to understand' (P24).

The pupils were asked whether they wanted to participate in an RT project again, and all 27 wrote that they did. When asked how RT had functioned in class, all 27 were positive and thought that RT had worked well in class:

It has worked well. It has been fun with the combination of acting and English. (P23)

I think RT has worked well in class, because everyone thinks it's fun. And we learn new words and pronunciation. (P22)

RT has worked well in class. I think many have learned something. (P19)

It has been fun with something new. This is one of the most fun activities I have done this autumn. (P15)

It has been the most fun English lessons I have ever had. (P5)

This has worked really well in class and I think everyone wants to do this again. (P4)

One of the pupils who had been in the group of struggling learners also wrote that she had enjoyed the project. However, she had also had difficulties being placed in this group and not having any other girls in the group: 'It has been fun. Especially in the beginning [first cycle]. But I have enjoyed both. Difficult to switch groups' (P27). All the replies gave the impression of the pupils finding RT an enjoyable activity where they learnt something new.

When asked what had been the most fun and the most difficult part of RT, 14 pupils replied that creating a story had been the most fun. Four of these also mentioned the performance as being fun. In total, 11 pupils mentioned the performance and five pupils mentioned practice as a fun part of RT. Two pupils wrote that the experience of cooperating had been the most fun. One of the pupils wrote: 'To practise, create stories on our own and learning new words and pronunciation has been the most fun' (P22).

When it came to what had been the most difficult part of RT, eight pupils wrote that the writing process had been difficult. Seven pupils mentioned pronunciation as one of the most difficult parts of RT. Also, seven pupils found it difficult to work in groups. Maintaining focus, agreeing during the writing process, and being heard were some of the reasons for cooperation being the most difficult.

The final question in this journal entry was whether RT had been as they had expected. 11 pupils wrote that RT had met their expectations, whereas 11 had found RT to be more fun than they had expected. Some of the pupils wrote:

I was expecting this to be fun, but when we began it was even more fun then expected. (P4)

I thought it was going to be boring, but it was fun! (P8)

I remember that I wanted to become better in English, and I think I have achieved that. And I have learned pronunciation of new words. (P22)

None of the pupils wrote that they were disappointed or that RT had been worse than expected. One pupil wrote that it was different from what she had expected, but still that it had been a fun activity, while one of the boys wrote that 'RT has been fun and I have realised that I am better at speaking English than I thought' (P17).

Teacher assessment of RT

After the completion of the second cycle, Elisabeth was interviewed for the second and final time. The interview focused on her experiences with the second variant and RT as a teaching method.

Elisabeth said that one of the major challenges with the second cycle of RT was to include the struggling learners. 'They have problems with written language, and how to connect several ideas into one story. However, the way we arranged the groups, and how we work as teachers in a team, resulted in this activity being beneficial and fun for them as well'. Elisabeth pointed out that this way of arranging the class, and Lisa focusing all her attention on one group, was not unique for this project: 'This is how we arrange the class, and it makes us able to adapt our teaching accordingly'. Elisabeth said that it was a good idea to organise the groups in such a way so that the struggling pupils were together. It allowed for close attention from Lisa, and also all the other groups had one less member, which she thought was beneficial, especially during the writing process. According to Elisabeth, when a class had this many struggling pupils, being diagnosed with, for example, dyslexia or autism, the school was given extra resources to subsidise an extra teacher in class. In this case the class had at least two members of staff present in every lesson, at least one teacher and one assistant teacher. However, most of the time they had two teachers and one assistant. Elisabeth pointed out that had she been alone, the struggling pupils would have been spread into different groups, and would probably have been given tasks such as creating small props so that they were part of the groups, but would not take as much part in the process of writing. However,

she thought that it would still be a goal to include these pupils as much as possible in the actual writing process.

When considering the second variant as a whole and how it was organised, Elisabeth pointed out that even though the activity had been challenging for both Lisa and the group of struggling pupils, the final result had been more than she had ever expected, and 'most importantly the feeling of mastering those pupils experienced after creating and performing their own text has been incredible'.

When asked about how she had experienced RT, Elisabeth replied:

These weeks have been amazing. Before the project started I was excited to see how the pupils would respond to RT, and how such a heterogeneous group of pupils would react to this kind of activity. We have pupils who are not part of the regular English classes who participated in class only for this project[12], and it was especially nice to see that they were able to join in with the other pupils…

For me as a teacher it was nice to move from group to group and see how much fun the pupils had and how creative they were. The groups figured out much on their own, and it was not much I had to help them. My main concern was to help them with pronunciation.

Elisabeth commented on how the quantity of text was much more than what they were used to in English, especially when considering that the pupils were at such different levels:

RT showed that they are able to read more text than what we think. We have a tendency to be afraid of giving them too long or too difficult texts. This goes for the textbook as well. The textbook could also include longer texts.

RT has been lots of fun. There has been more life and energy in the groups than I had expected, because I thought that they were supposed to read in fixed positions. There was action and a lot of creativity.

Elisabeth pointed out that the first cycle and the second cycle were different: the first texts were more difficult in themselves, whereas the second texts were easier since the pupils had written them themselves. This allowed the pupils to focus more on the actual presentation

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[12] Two pupils, a boy and a girl, were usually taken out of class and taught in English by Lisa, focusing on their individual subject curricula (individuell opplæringsplan, *IOP)*.

during the second variant, whereas the first required more focus on the actual reading. In hindsight, Elisabeth said that she would have liked to have had more time during the first cycle, thus allowing the pupils to become more acquainted with the text and more creative about the performance.

When asked about the benefits of RT, Elisabeth said that one of the major benefits was how it engaged the pupils:

> It is often difficult to find such engaging activities. Also, it is an activity where they use English, whether it is reading, writing, or speaking, which are all included in RT. It is a fun way to learn new words. It is a fun way to learn how to pronounce new words because the activity itself and the texts are enjoyable.

The abilities in the class were what may be considered an average Norwegian 6th grade, in the sense that there were pupils who represented all the different levels of ability. However, Elisabeth pointed out that both the pupils and parents reported that there was a positive atmosphere in the class and it was accepted to make mistakes or be at different levels. Nobody laughed at each other and everyone felt safe when reading. Even though there were four dyslexic pupils in the class, they had no problems reading in front of class. This was possibly an environment different from many 6th grade classrooms, and may have resulted in it being easier to introduce activities such as RT in class. Elisabeth also pointed out that the class having four dyslexic pupils and two suffering from autism was the reality in mainstream Norwegian primary school classrooms. She said that there were now many pupils being diagnosed with handicaps, and that was the main difference between now and before:

> The pupils and the difficulties have always been there, but the difference is that today the children are diagnosed. These diagnoses enable more resources for teaching, also it helps teachers to adapt and prepare teaching according to the individual pupil. The resources are being used to try to keep the pupils in heterogeneous classes rather than pulling them out of class… RT works perfectly with adapted education.

When asked how she thought the pupils had experienced RT, Elisabeth said that she thought that they had had a great experience with RT:

There has been so much excitement, creativity, and so much interest that I can say that RT has been without a doubt nothing but positive. During these weeks the pupils have improved their creativity, but more importantly they are more confident when working on such assignments. When working on reading assignments they have improved in pronunciation and read with passion. That is exciting to see.

When Elisabeth was asked if she would recommend RT, she answered:

I would absolutely recommend RT for other teachers. A couple of times during the year all the English teachers at school gather to share and discuss ideas and activities. I am thinking that I want to present RT for the other teachers, explaining how this project was and what we did, and also how I am thinking about using RT later. I feel that I have acquired a new method for teaching.

One month after the research project was finished, I spoke with Elisabeth again. She informed me that the skills that the pupils had learned during the RT project had been used in different contexts after the project was completed. They had started a film project, and already knew how to create a story and a script. In English they were focusing on a chapter about myths, such as Robin Hood, and Elisabeth had decided that they were going to make an RT presentation. She said that:

The most exciting is to see that now they are familiar with this kind of work. For example, when we started on myths and Robin Hood, I just had to say: 'and now you can form groups and do like we did during the RT project last month'. They know exactly what they are supposed to do.

The pupils had developed a certain degree of autonomy, and knew what they were supposed to do when they started on the project. Also, one of the pupils who was part of the English IOP-group wanted to be part of an RT group, and joined the rest of the class for this project. Elisabeth explained:

One day one of the two pupils had a talk with Lisa, so the other one did not have anything to do. I told him 'go over to that group and get a character in their text about

Robin Hood'. He joined the group without hesitation and participated in their performance.

This was a pupil who struggled the most with learning English, who was diagnosed with autism, but who participated without problems. Elisabeth pointed out that this came as a result of the previous experiences of RT being positive, thus resulting in him having no problems taking part in the activity.

5.3.5. Performing the Christmas story for the 4th grade

The week after the pupils had performed their Christmas stories to their peers, Elisabeth invited pupils from the 4th grade to come and watch the groups perform their texts. The pupils were highly motivated because they had younger brothers and sisters or friends that would come and watch what they had created. During these performances the researcher was introduced to one of the teachers in the 4th grade. She told the researcher that the pupils had been looking forward to coming and watching the performances, and had been thrilled and amazed when they were told that the pupils themselves had written the stories. After the performances the 4th graders were asked what they thought about the performances and replied that they had enjoyed it very much. When they where asked whether they thought they could create a similar story of their own, they replied 'no'. However, they said that they would like to try.

5.4. Summary

This chapter has presented the results from the research data collected through observations, video recordings, pupils' journal entries, and teacher interviews. The first pupil journal entry and teacher interview gave the impression of a class paying much attention to reading. All the pupils read daily and both Elisabeth and the school's administration tried to give the pupils many opportunities to practise reading by using the library and taking part in projects, such as 'Leselos' by The Reading Centre at the University of Stavanger.

After the first RT cycle, the pupils wrote their second journal entry. Most of the pupils wanted to read one or more of the fairy tales that the groups had performed. Many of the pupils wrote that they had improved pronunciation and learned new words during the first

variant of RT. In their role as audience, the pupils reported that it was easier to understand the groups who had used a developed model of RT rather than a more traditional model. However, the pupils who had struggled with understanding what the other groups had performed still wrote that it had been fun to be in the audience. One of the teachers, Elisabeth, later said that she wished there had been more time for the rehearsals of the first cycle.

In the second RT cycle the pupils created a Christmas RT story. Approximately three out of four of the pupils reported that it had been fun to create a story. The majority of the pupils wrote that the groups had functioned well and that they had been able to cooperate. In their role as audience, the majority of the pupils said that they understood the other performances, whereas only two wrote that they had difficulties understanding the stories. When asked whether they wanted to participate in another RT project, all the pupils wrote that they did, and were positive to how RT had functioned in class.

In an interview, Elisabeth agreed with the pupils and said that she wanted to use RT again and also to introduce and recommend it to her colleagues. She had thought if she had been alone during the second cycle, one of the major challenges would have been to include the struggling learners in the different groups. However, this had not been a challenge because of the creation of a sixth group supervised by another teacher, Lisa. Elisabeth pointed out that the quantity of text, especially during the first cycle, was much more than they were used to in English and that RT showed that they could work with longer texts in English lessons. One month later she also commented upon the autonomy the pupils had achieved in tasks similar to RT. When they had started on a new chapter in the textbook, she had told the class to perform a text as RT, and they all knew what they were supposed to do.

6. Discussion

The present chapter discusses the findings of the research presented in the previous chapter in relation to the research questions of the thesis, aiming to find the cognitive and affective benefits, as well as the challenges of using RT in a 6th grade EFL class.

6.1. The cognitive and affective benefits of Readers Theatre in the 6th grade English class

6.1.1. Cognitive benefits

Fluency
Throughout the research project the pupils improved their reading fluency. Improved reading fluency is also supported by research conducted by, for example, Peebles (2007) and Worthy (2005). One of the most important aspects of this improvement was becoming familiar with the text, and especially the difficult words. A general observation in all the groups was that they paused during rehearsals before reading a difficult or unfamiliar word. However, the number of these pauses decreased for every time they read through the text, and especially the pupils who had practised at home showed great improvements from one day to the next. Gibbons (2002:92) points out that adults would prepare before reading a text and argues that the rehearsal is one of the reasons for RT being an effective activity in education. Rasinski (2010:29) argues that oral reading, for example RT, has the ability to strengthen decoding skills. The skill of decoding is often taught with words in isolation, and pupils are taught to examine the words carefully to both recognise and pronounce them properly. Rasinski argues that studying words in isolation must be balanced with studying the word within the context it is being read. This is where RT serves as a tool for increasing reading fluency. Through examining words in an authentic and meaningful context, and by practising reading the text multiple times, the pupils in this study were allowed to improve their reading fluency in an enjoyable and engaging activity.

A specific example of improving reading fluency during this research was the boy who used so-called 'fillers' while reading. The boy improved tremendously during rehearsal from the first reading to the actual performance of the first cycle. This boy was one of the pupils who struggled most with reading, and was one of the members in Lisa's group of struggling learners during the second cycle. His improvement from the first reading to the performance, during the first cycle, showed that the rehearsals had helped him with reading

fluency. Peebles (2007:579) also found that struggling pupils improved in fluency through the repeated reading of RT.

Comprehension

Reading fluency and comprehension are closely linked components of reading, for example, in the case of the above-mentioned boy who, through practice, decreased the number of 'fillers' while reading. When considering Hellekjær's (2007) argument that the short-term memory is only able to store information for about 30 seconds, thus making reading fluency a vital component in comprehension, there is reason to believe that the rehearsals helped this boy to understand better what he was reading.

During this RT project the pupils were allowed to experience texts in a different manner from the more common silent reading activities or reading texts from the textbook. When rehearsing the texts they were aware of a future audience that would be listening. This awareness made them focus on conveying the meaning. During performances the pupils used acting, props, and different voices to make the audience understand which character said what. This relates to Martinez et al. (1999:333), who argue that the awareness of different characters and their feelings help both the reader and ultimately the listener to gain insights from the texts.

The pupils also acted as audience and listeners during the project. This is one aspect that is not often considered in research of RT, namely the comprehensive input the pupils receive as audience. During the journal entries, the pupils were asked about their role as audience and whether they wanted to read any of the texts. The latter was during the first cycle and will be discussed in section 6.1.2 when considering the affective benefits of RT. In general, the pupils benefitted from being in the audience. However, the pupils agreed that there was a difference between a traditional model and a developed model when it comes to comprehension. In their journal entries most of the pupils wrote that they understood performances with a developed model better than a traditional model. The plenary discussions and the journal entries made it clear that the pupils relied on more than their language skills to understand the groups' performances, and the dramatisations served as a tool for improving comprehension. When listening to a traditional model, the pupils had to rely mostly on their listening skills and therefore needed a higher level of language proficiency. The pupils using the dramatisations as a tool for comprehension corresponds well with McMaster (1998:575), who argues that dramatisations create interest, which could have facilitated the pupils' comprehension. Most of the pupils had difficulties reading the text with proper intonation and

stress, which is important when using a traditional model. During a traditional model the listeners rely on readers that are able to give life to the performance through variations in tone and speed. During this project the pupils may have been too young to make use of a traditional model properly. A traditional model seems to be more applicable to more mature readers. This may have been one of the reasons for all the groups choosing a developed model during the second cycle.

Pronunciation and word recognition

The benefits mentioned most by the pupils themselves in the journals were learning new words and pronunciation. RT served as a tool both to learn new words and also to practise them. The first variant of RT, handing out pre-written scripts, gives teachers the opportunity to write, or use, texts that include appropriate content and words, which may also be somewhat challenging for the pupils. For example, both Elisabeth and Lisa thought that the texts used during the first cycle were longer than the pupils were used to. However, the pupils' performances showed that they were both capable and excited to read texts that included a challenging content. This finding is supported by Krashen's (1982) *i+1* theory, which claims that pupils acquire language through comprehensible input just above one's present level. In this case, the language in the texts may have been too difficult for some pupils if they had read them individually, because the level of the texts turned out to be most suitable for the most proficient pupils. However, as a group they were challenged, but still able to read the texts. The groups being able to learn new words and pronunciation mostly on their own relates to the constructivist principle of 'discovery learning' (Imsen, 2008:328), where pupils learn by themselves or in groups. During the project the pupils made use of more competent peers or adults to learn.

Since the fairy tales used were well known to the pupils, they were familiar with the stories and to some degree the language. Therefore, with the opportunity to practise, they were able to learn the unfamiliar words and also help each other learn and improve both words and pronunciation. This was evident during observations of rehearsals and performances. For example, the group reading *The King's new clothes* improved considerably from the first reading to the performance, decreasing misread words (word recognition) and pronunciation from 142 words during rehearsal to eight words during performance. This improvement was first and foremost a collaborative effort between peers. However, Elisabeth played an important part by helping the group when they had problems with pronouncing or understanding words.

The collaboration between peers and Elisabeth's role as a 'wandering' supervisor resulted in autonomous groups who managed to figure out most of the challenges on their own. However, if they had problems with, for example, recognising words or pronunciation Elisabeth would be available to help them. This is what is called 'scaffolding' in a constructivist approach to education (Slavin, 2012:42).

6.1.2. Affective benefits

Attitude and motivation

RT gives pupils a meaningful context to read, write, speak, and listen (Black and Stave, 2007:10). It allows pupils to learn through cooperation and dialogue with peers rather than through the teacher. Drew and Sørheim (2009:82) argue that shared reading activities are beneficial in education because they inspire individual reading. This was evident in the current research. RT is a shared reading activity. The pupils share a text and perform it for the other pupils, which makes RT a motivating activity that inspires further reading. For example, in their journals the pupils were asked whether they wanted to read some of the fairy tales they had heard others reading, and most of them did. One of the pupils who did not want to read fairy tales did not like to read in the first place, whereas the others claimed to like reading. More importantly, however, two of the pupils who struggled the most in both reading and English, one of whom attended a separate IOP-schedule with Lisa in English, were inspired to read one or more of the texts performed. RT could therefore be used as an introduction to larger texts, for example by performing parts or scenes from a book, and in this way inspire the pupils to read the rest of the book on their own.

RT allowed the pupils to learn language from a different perspective than regular language instruction, which mostly focuses on solitary silent reading activities with texts from the textbook. RT focused on skills that the pupils did not use often in reading activities and the pupils were expected to make use of creative skills. McMaster (1998:575-576) argues that drama activities allow pupils to find hidden talents. During this research project some pupils made use of their dramatisation skills, while others made use of their language skills. For example, in the group reading *The ugly duckling* one pupil, who was a member of the local theatre, produced the dramatisation, whereas another pupil helped the pupils with pronunciation. During the project some pupils even discovered skills they did not know they

had, for example the boy who wrote that RT made him realise that he was better in English than he thought.

In their journals, all of the pupils wrote that they wanted to participate in an RT project again. The most important feature of RT was that it included all the pupils. Everyone participated in the project, with equal tasks and responsibilities, and, for an entire month, even the IOP-pupils attended the regular English lessons, participating on the same terms as the rest of the class.

During the four weeks of the research project the pupils were allowed to practise reading in smaller groups and become familiar with the texts. Rasinski (2010:28) argues that oral reading builds confidence and has the potential of making self-conscious pupils become excellent performers. The key component of the success is the rehearsals. Rasinski is supported by Black and Stave (2007:10) and Gibbons (2002:92), who also argue that the rehearsals are vital for building confidence in reading. Day and Bamford (1998:30) mention the sociocultural environment as a major variable for motivating pupils to read. A positive learning environment should be present in L2 education. Such an environment was present in the class during the current project.

Confidence

Throughout the project the pupils seemed to increase their confidence in both reading and performing. Some of the pupils had experience of drama by being part of drama groups in after-school activities. However, most of the pupils were unfamiliar with drama and performing. Some of the pupils were nervous the first week of the project, knowing that they were going to perform in front of their peers at the end of the cycle, but when the final day of the cycle came, everyone participated and read with confidence. For example, at the beginning of the week, one of the pupils as narrator in the group reading *The three little pigs* complained that she was not able to read the text because of length and difficulty. However, during the week she practised reading the text both at school and at home, and when the group performed, she read the text almost without mispronounced or wrongly recognised words. As a result of familiarising herself with the text throughout the week she seemed much more confident during the performance than she had been during the week. The following week, when starting the second cycle, she volunteered to read the parts of the narrator as well as a small character role.

The teachers also noticed the increased confidence of the pupils, and Elisabeth said that she could see that the pupils were more confident in other reading and writing activities.

Elisabeth used the example of a film project they were starting in Norwegian. She said that they were writing film scripts, and all the pupils felt confident about doing the task because of their experience of writing RT scripts. One month after the project was completed, Elisabeth mentioned that when they were working on a topic about myths in English, she chose to use RT again and told the pupils to work in groups and prepare an RT performance. One of the struggling pupils who was usually out of regular class in English joined one group without hesitation and participated on equal grounds with the rest of the group, showing that this pupil had increased his confidence and was able to join in the project. He was confident that he would be able to participate.

Working in groups

Working in groups is considered an effective tool in education (Johnson and Johnson, 1999:67-68). During this RT project the pupils' ability to cooperate was tested throughout the entire project. Apart from the first day of individual writing during the second cycle, the entire project was based on cooperative learning, where the pupils worked in groups. Slavin (1987:8) argues that research documents the benefits of cooperative learning. During this research project, the pupils showed pride and a certain ownership of their performances and the texts they had written. Through four weeks of observation, three journal entries, and discussions, not one pupil gave the impression that they were not satisfied with their performances or the texts they had written. Some pupils indeed complained how the groups could have cooperated better, through more focused sessions or letting everybody voice their opinion. However, the pupils were young and to work in groups may be a challenge even for adults. Therefore, it was no surprise that the groups had problems at times. All the groups still managed to create and perform a text.

Oral reading activities also create community (Rasinski, 2010:28). Instead of making reading a silent solitary act, oral reading activities, such as RT, build a community among the pupils, which was also what happened in the current project. The pupils focused on how to perform or write a text so that it was easy to understand, and during the plenary discussions after performances, the pupils gave each other positive feedback.

6.2. The challenges of using Readers Theatre in the class

There were several challenges connected to introducing RT in the class. Firstly, RT was new both for the teachers and for the pupils, so it was a challenge to introduce it to Elisabeth and the class. This would have been an even bigger challenge had Elisabeth, who was inexperienced with RT, introduced RT in the class on her own. Secondly, cooperative learning was challenging both for Elisabeth and the pupils. However, as mentioned in section 6.1, working in groups was also one of the major benefits of RT, and allowed for all the pupils to 'play on the same field'. Thirdly, logistics is one of the major challenges for RT. Finding scripts and having enough rooms was demanding during this project. Finally, the challenge of assessing pupils in RT activities was discussed during this project. Even though assessment was not an important part of this particular research, it is nevertheless discussed as a challenge.

The introduction of Readers Theatre
During this research project the researcher played an important part when introducing RT. Elisabeth was not familiar with RT and did not have any scripts available. Therefore, the role of the researcher was as a participant observer (Dornyei, 2007:133). The researcher spent much time preparing for this project through introducing Elisabeth to RT, and also finding and adapting the initial scripts at an appropriate level. It is clearly beneficial for the teacher to have tried RT before utilising it in the classroom. The researcher was introduced to RT through courses at the university, and had tried RT both as a participant and as organiser during teaching practice at the upper secondary level. Through previous experiences one is familiar with both the time necessary to complete an RT activity and the logistics necessary for completing RT with success. Without these experiences RT would have been much harder to utilise in the classroom.

Cooperation
One of the major challenges of RT is that it is based on a cooperative format. Working in groups is first and foremost a challenge for the pupils, because it requires that they are able to, for the most part, work individually. Johnson and Johnson (1999:67) argue that achieving greatness in the classroom requires a cooperative effort and that cooperative groups have higher potential than individual work. Not all groups function as they should and whereas some groups facilitate learning and increase the quality of education, other groups can create

disharmony and dissatisfaction. Johnson and Johnson (1999:68) state that some criteria should be met for successful cooperation between pupils. Most importantly is to make the pupils feel that cooperating and helping each other award them both individually and as a group. The opposite is where pupils have no interest in working together and believe that they will be evaluated from the highest to the lowest performer. In this scenario pupils will hide information from each other.

In RT it is important that each individual feels that it is necessary to help the group, and that everyone feels that they are awarded through the best possible result of the group. Since the groups are sometimes left to figure out things on their own, it is important that the groups are willing to help each other and play on each individual's strengths. To make groups that are able to function with a certain degree of autonomy is vital for the success of RT. There are two components that one should consider when creating groups: mixed ability and ability to cooperate.

The first component to consider when creating groups is the ability of each pupil in each group. One of the reasons for the relative success of RT during this project was the different abilities of the pupils in each group. Each group had at least one pupil with a high level of proficiency in English, which contributed to a degree of autonomy within the group; they were able to figure out much without the help of an adult. However, high proficiency in English was only one of the assets in the groups. Creativity was also appreciated in the groups and the creative pupils often had suggestions about how to perform the text or ideas when writing the Christmas story.

This class also contained some pupils who were extremely challenging and were lacking the ability to function well in groups without supervision. Creating the group of struggling pupils during the second cycle could have been avoided by dividing the members between the other groups. However, these pupils' lack of ability to cooperate with others and the problems they had with assigning roles and characters suggested that these pupils would work better in a group with adult supervision. When there was a second teacher available, as well as the assistant teacher, it was a good choice by the teachers to create this group. Gathering these pupils in a separate group also relieved the other groups of the responsibility of helping these pupils. Elisabeth said that she would have been able to complete the project without the second teacher, but would then have to spread the struggling pupils into different groups and often give them tasks, such as creating props, resulting in the struggling pupils taking less part in the writing process.

Another consideration, especially during the second cycle, was not to have too many members in each group so that everyone would have a say and take part in the writing process. Having smaller groups, while conducting the project the same way, would have been difficult in this class without a second teacher because of the struggling pupils. The struggling pupils had problems collaborating and needed adult supervision to function properly. During the second interview, Elisabeth said that she would be able to conduct an RT project alone, but would have to find other tasks that the struggling pupils could do.

The second component when creating groups is each pupil's ability to cooperate. The two cycles of RT challenged the different skills of the group members: written and oral English skills, creativity, and ability to perform. At the same time they were left alone for most of the rehearsal time. Therefore it was important that they were able to solve some of the challenges on their own. For example, during the first cycle the boy in the group reading *The King's new clothes* helped the other members of the group when they had problems pronouncing words. However, when they were uncertain about words that he did not know either, they asked an adult to help them. Elisabeth played an important part during the rehearsals of the first cycle since she could help each individual group when it was necessary. During the second cycle the dynamics of the groups, and Elisabeth's role, changed. Previously the groups needed help with pronunciation and comprehension, whereas in the second cycle Elisabeth helped the pupils with the processes of writing and collaboration by giving them tips or telling them the different roles the members should have, for example the group where one of the members complained that she was not heard, and Elisabeth made her responsible for writing. The groups had different approaches towards writing the text and because the pupils made use of words and language they were familiar with, the difficulty level of the language decreased to a certain degree. However, the adult supervision was still important when the pupils needed help with words or sentences. The way the pupils helped each other when practising corresponds with Vygotsky's (1978:86) ZPD, where pupils are able to learn with the help of peers or adults.

Logistics

Another challenge for the teacher when using RT in education is the logistics. This includes the logistics of making scripts, finding appropriate rooms, and organising the lessons, both during rehearsals and during performance.

Making scripts for the first RT variant was a tedious process that was time-consuming. For this research, the researcher and Elisabeth first discussed which genre would be

appropriate for using in the class. The choice ended up on fairy tales. One of the difficulties of finding RT scripts suitable for classes in L2 contexts is finding appropriate texts, with both the right language and the right content. Most of the scripts found online or in books are made for L1 learners of English. It is therefore arguably the same challenge with finding RT scripts as one would face if L2 learners used graded readers intended for L1 learners. The level of language and reading proficiency differs from L1 and L2 learners. The texts for L1 readers are not always suitable for L2 learners of the same age, since the level of proficiency of, for example, a first grade L1 learner would normally be higher than that of a first grade L2 learner. For example, if a text has the appropriate language for an L2 reader, the content may often be too immature or childish. On the other hand, if the content is suitable for the L2 reader, the language may often be too difficult. This was also a challenge the researcher faced when finding suitable scripts for the first cycle. The result was using scripts suitable for 4th grade American L1 learners, and adapting them to Norwegian 6th grade L2 learners. This took both time and effort, and would be difficult to carry out for a teacher with many tasks during the workday. In addition, for a teacher not familiar with RT, one could assume it would be very challenging to implement RT in teaching. However, this challenge would become less and less over time, as one could use the same scripts in new groups of pupils and, over the years, one would add new scripts to one's 'RT-bank'. Also, if more teachers used RT at the same school, teachers could collaborate and share scripts and ideas.

Another logistical challenge of RT is finding appropriate rooms to use during RT projects. To organise an RT project, one needs space so that the groups are able to read the texts without being disturbed too much (c.p. Drew and Pedersen, 2012). For this particular research, Elisabeth managed to find rooms for the different groups. The class had their classroom in a separate building from the rest of the school, and was therefore able to use the hallway as well. The groups were spread in five separate rooms, apart from two groups who shared the main classroom during the second cycle. This allowed for the groups to rehearse and discuss without being interrupted, and may have contributed to the different groups unfolding their creativity, especially during the second cycle. However, allowing the pupils to use different rooms makes it important for them to achieve a certain degree of autonomy. Without this autonomy it would be difficult to organise the groups in these rooms, and ultimately to use RT as a teaching method. Pupil autonomy increases when using RT, and was strengthened by Elisabeth when she implemented another RT project after the current one was completed. In this follow-up RT project, Elisabeth organised the groups, gave the pupils texts,

and asked them to practise and perform the texts as RT. The pupils knew what they were supposed to do, which resulted in the new RT project being implemented smoothly.

Organising the lessons is also a challenge for RT. Because of the cooperative format, and the pupils being organised in groups, it is only possible for the teacher to be with one group at a time. Therefore it is necessary to use tools that may help the groups without the help of the teacher. For example, as for this project, pre-written scripts may include a list of possible new words with the meaning, and also a short summary of the text may help the pupils to gain comprehension of the text. For the second cycle, one of the challenges for the pupils was finding the words to use in English. This challenge could be solved in two different ways. Firstly, one could begin the writing assignments by arranging a short pre-writing discussion on typical words for the topic and writing them in a mind map on the board. For example, one could have discussed what words are typical for Christmas stories, such as *Santa Claus, presents* or *ginger bread,* and write them down on the board. Secondly, each group should have at least one dictionary. For this research, all the groups had one dictionary and were able to find some of the words in the dictionary. If they could not find the words, they would write them down in Norwegian and ask Elisabeth when she came to their group. This way they could continue writing without waiting for help.

Worthy (2005:24) argues that even though RT is an innovative approach to learning, there is still an aspect of time to consider for teachers. She claims that many teachers considering RT as a potential activity will feel conflicted by the time spent both preparing and carrying out an RT activity. When considering the many competence aims of the curriculum, as well as other tasks one faces in a workday, many teachers may find it difficult to justify spending time on activities such as RT. Also, parents are often invested in what happens at school, both socially and academically. During this research Elisabeth and the researcher faced questions from parents about RT and how it applied to the curriculum. The class had their annual parent-teacher meeting during the research period, and many parents had questions about RT. Some were interested because their children told them about RT at home, and some were interested in whether the pupils benefitted from spending time on RT. However, after being told how RT applied to the curriculum (see section 2.2 and 6.1.3) all the parents were satisfied with what they had been told. This also confirms what Worthy (2005:24) stresses: RT is 'well worth the time and effort' and research shows both cognitive and affective benefits by applying it in education.

Assessment

One important factor of education is assessment, which is important for teachers when finding activities for pupils. Assessment may be difficult to carry out with activities such as RT. During a discussion between Elisabeth, Lisa, and the researcher, Elisabeth reflected over how one could assess the pupils during an RT project. Lisa commented that some aspects would be easier to assess than others, for example looking at where each pupil was struggling and where to focus attention when reading the text. At the Norwegian primary level there are no grades and the attention in assessment is focused on the pupil's potential and 'where to go from now'. Kinniburgh and Shaw Jr. (2007:18) also mention assessment as a challenge when using RT. However, they point out that a rubric may serve as a great tool. Their rubric assesses *Group participation, Science learning, Expression and volume, Phrasing, Smoothness,* and *Pace.* With such a rubric one can assess the preparation and ability to cooperate, the explanations and elaborations of the language, and the reading fluency. Kinniburgh and Shaw Jr.'s (2007:19) rubric is based on a scoring system where each individual can score from 6-24 points. Therefore RT has the potential to act as a platform for assessing pupils.

The pupils could also be asked to assess their own improvement. The journal entries opened for some self-assessment. However, the main focus in the journal entries was on the pupils' experiences of RT, and their reflections on how it had functioned in class. There are, however, possibilities for self-assessment in actual RT activities. *Read Write Think*, an organisation providing educators with material for reading instruction, has published an RT self-assessment sheet. This sheet allows pupils to assess their improvement in *Phrasing and fluency, Pace* and *Accuracy*, as well as personal reflections on further improvement[13]. By asking pupils to self-assess they are made aware of progression and reflect over potential improvement. This may also serve as a motivational tool for the pupils, where they use self-assessment to set goals for future learning.

Another self-assessment tool could be the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)*. The *ELP* aims to document the learner's progress in every language he or she knows (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:36). It makes it possible for the learners to record their learning. One of the Language Portfolio's features is 'My language profile', which allows pupils to record what they are able to do according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) grid, also called 'can dos', where each 'can do' refers to a level on the CEFR grid. The CEFR

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[13] <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/30621_selfrubric.pdf> Accessed: 04.04.14.

grid has six levels ranging from A1 to C2, A1 being the highest level of proficiency. By using the ELP in RT projects, pupils can document their progress in the language, as well as choosing goals for future learning.

6.3. Educational implications and recommendations

Finding reading activities that are beneficial and engaging for pupils may be a challenge. In a busy schedule, teachers are pressured from directives, reforms, school administrations, parents and colleagues. Many teachers will find it too time consuming to implement new activities such as RT into the classroom. RT requires the teacher to spend time planning lessons, especially in the beginning.

This study has investigated the benefits and challenges of using RT in EFL instruction in a Norwegian 6th grade mainstream classroom. The project was a case study and aimed at comparing previous results from L1 and L2 research to see if similar results would apply in this study. One of the goals of the study was to find out if RT could provide teachers with a new tool for teaching EFL reading.

Before the project started the subjects were unfamiliar with RT. This resulted in the researcher having to take responsibility for parts of the logistics and introduction of RT. However, the subjects being unfamiliar with RT was positive considering that their expectations, views, or experiences of RT were not clouded by previous experiences, making their responses during journal entries, discussions and interviews, reliable.

The *LK06* English curriculum, in comparison to previous curricula, gives teachers competence aims, but does not tell teachers what to teach or what methods to use (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:41). This gives teachers freedom to explore new activities, but also serves as a challenge because the teachers are responsible for planning activities, as well as relating them to the curriculum. As a result many teachers base most of their teaching on the textbook. The textbook may serve as one tool when teaching. For example Elisabeth explained that their textbook had different levels, or 'steps', and supplied pupils with texts according to their ability level. However, too much use of the textbook may cause English lessons to be tedious, or act as a 'pillow' for the teachers. Activities such as RT can make English lessons more engaging and different, as shown in the current research.

When considering the challenges of RT, many teachers will find it too challenging or time consuming. However, the potential benefits of RT should make it worth considering

spending time on, and there are some factors that would make RT easier to use in education, for example having experienced RT as reading activity, sharing experiences, and more scripts available for L2 contexts. Firstly, the best premise for using RT in education is having experienced it oneself. This could be achieved by teaching RT in courses in both pre-service and in-service teacher education. Also, more studies and articles, both research and 'how to guides', would increase knowledge about RT. Secondly, one could make it easier to use RT by having colleagues share experiences with each other. Elisabeth, for example, wanted to share her experiences with her colleagues and recommend them to try RT in their classes. This is a key for using RT in education: teachers using, showing, and recommending it to colleagues. Finally, there is the question of sources of appropriate L2 scripts. Some 'how to use RT' sources are available for Norwegian teachers of EFL, for example Drew's (2009b) 'Using Readers Theatre in Language Teaching', published by the Norwegian Centre for Foreign languages in Education[14]. This includes both a guide on using RT and scripts. However, the number of such resources should be increased. As a result of the mentioned factors, one could ultimately create networks of RT users that could share experiences and, more importantly, solutions to logistical challenges by, for example, giving each other appropriate texts and scripts. This way the threshold for starting to use RT will be somewhat lower to cross.

The groups' performances for the younger pupils at the school, specifically the 4th grade, also showed that RT has the potential to motivate younger learners. The younger pupils said that they enjoyed the performances and that they wanted to try to write their own scripts. RT could therefore be used to motivate younger learners to read. For example, every year the 6th grade performs Christmas stories for pupils from the 4th grade. This way the younger learners will look forward to when they are in the 6th grade and would perhaps perform an RT text for younger pupils. This could also be a great way to introduce younger pupils to RT itself.

Were the generally positive results of the project because of the class being positive to the project or were they because of RT being a fun and engaging activity? The results of similar research conducted on RT in both L1 (Peebles, 2007; Tyler and Chard, 2000) and L2 contexts (Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Pettersen, 2013), supports the results of this research, thus adding to the growing body of case study research on RT and its benefits in education. The current research has been a contribution to this body of research

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[14]<http://www.fremmedspraksenteret.no/nor/fremmedspraksenteret/laringsressurser/leseveiledning-i-engelsk/methodological-approaches/readers_-theatre>. Accessed: 10.09.13.

and has contributed to a gap in the research by studying the use of RT at the Norwegian EFL primary level.

6.4. Limitations of the study

The study is limited to being a case study of one class. The number of subjects in the study was limited, and one cannot therefore generalise the results in relation to other schools or other subjects. Nevertheless, the class can be considered as a mainstream 6th grade class and therefore provides a reasonable impression of how RT may have worked in other classes. However, the study was conducted in a way that was somewhat different from regular lessons: the researcher was a participant observer, two teachers were present during the second cycle, and there was an assistant teacher present. As a result there were three or four adults present in the class during the study. This would not have been a normal teaching situation, and may have affected the results because there were more adults available to help the groups when they needed help, thus giving each group more time with an adult than they would have had in a normal teaching situation.

Moreover, when considering the cognitive and affective benefits of RT in the Norwegian primary 6th grade classroom, there are some considerations that must be addressed. First of all, this project was conducted in a class where both the teachers and the pupils were positive to participating in the project from the outset. This resulted in a learning environment where the pupils were excited and eager to learn, which may have contributed to the positive impact of the project. Secondly, the organisation of the class may have benefitted how the research project functioned. The way the two teachers were included at all times, how Lisa mentored one group of struggling pupils throughout the second cycle, and how the researcher participated in the project, may have caused the lessons during the research to be somewhat different from regular RT lessons. Nevertheless, Elisabeth said that RT was a positive experience for both teachers and pupils, and that she would continue using RT as method.

7. Conclusion

This thesis has aimed at studying the cognitive and affective benefits, and challenges, of implementing RT in EFL instruction in a 6th grade class in Norway. The project was carried out in a class selected through a convenience sample, and the subjects consisted of 27 pupils and two teachers, Elisabeth and Lisa. Different methods were used for collecting data: observations during a four-week period, video recordings of the first readings and the performances, three journal entries by the pupils, two interviews with Elisabeth, one short interview with Lisa, and plenary discussions with the pupils. The different methods used for collecting data in the study increased the validity of the research.

Two variants of RT were used during this research. During the first cycle the pupils were given pre-written scripts, and were given one week to practise before they performed the texts, either as a traditional or a developed model of RT. The first cycle aimed to introduce both the teachers and the pupils to RT, as well as, for example, serving as a tool for learning new words and practising pronunciation. During the second cycle the pupils created their own stories and scripts. This cycle focused on the pupils' creativity, as they had to create their own Christmas story, as well as performing it. During the second cycle all the groups chose to use a developed model, resulting in an increased focus on dramatisation in addition to the actual reading. The second cycle was also the cycle that took the most time and lasted for three weeks.

Many of the competence aims and basic skills in the *LK06* English curriculum were incorporated in the RT activities. During the first cycle, the pupils practised reading, speaking and listening. During the three weeks of the second cycle, the pupils trained all the four basic language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing). As the pupils used a computer for writing the scripts, they also practised their digital skills.

When Elisabeth was asked which variant she preferred, she answered that both had benefits. The first variant made it possible to introduce RT, whereas the second variant allowed the pupils to use their creativity and practise writing. When Elisabeth reflected on the two variants, during the second interview, the benefits and differences between the two became clearer. The first variant had its benefits not only for the introduction of RT, but also for introducing new and unfamiliar language. The second variant allowed the pupils to 'play' with language and make use of newly learned words in a fun and engaging setting.

The journal entries indicated that RT was an activity that the pupils enjoyed, both as performers and as audience. The performances were a cornerstone in this project and were

both motivational and educational, and provided a different approach to oral presentations. The script played an important part in the performance and emphasised the importance of the text itself, which caused the pupils to focus more attention on the actual reading. The pupils became familiar with the text through repeated reading and rehearsing, and with the physical presence of the scripts during the performance they could focus on conveying meaning rather than remembering what to say. The repeated readings also seemed to have an impact on the pupils' confidence in reading. There were examples of struggling readers being able to read in front of peers with confidence, and also participating in new RT projects, or similar projects, with the confidence of being able to succeed.

The video recordings allowed for detailed studies of a group's improvement in pronunciation and word recognition, comparing the first reading during rehearsals and the performance. The video recordings revealed considerable improvement in pronunciation, word recognition, and reading fluency. The results of the group studied in detail were not unique, and the video recordings of two other groups seemed to show similar results, although they were not analysed in detail.

Before the project started, and the subjects were selected, the researcher expected that the pupils at the EFL primary level would have similar benefits of RT as pupils in L1 contexts. There were, however, some uncertainties as to whether the texts would be at an appropriate level. The texts turned out to be suitable for the more proficient learners, but because RT was a group reading activity, the more proficient readers were generally able to help the struggling readers, with the exception of the group made up of the most struggling readers.

It was uncertain how the teachers would embrace RT. However, the way both Elisabeth and Lisa responded to RT showed that they welcomed it. Their response to the project also showed how experienced teachers could experience RT as an engaging activity for their pupils. Also, the fact that Elisabeth chose to use RT after the research project was completed is a testament to the impact of the activity.

One of the most important benefits of RT was the increased motivation it provided for pupils, especially the struggling learners. RT put everyone, irrespective of ability, on the same 'playing field'. This became clear when the struggling pupils, who were usually taught English separately, participated with the rest of the class for an entire month. Also, one of these pupils was able to participate in a new RT project after the research project without the need of any instructions from Elisabeth.

The positive benefits of RT raises the question why RT is not more common in EFL instruction in the Norwegian education system. The answer is probably related to knowledge about it. If RT is to become more common, it should be taught more extensively in courses related to teacher training, both in pre-service and in-service teacher education. There are some sources available online for teachers of EFL in Norway, giving teachers a quick guide on how to use RT, as well as providing some scripts (e. g. Drew, 2009b). However, the number of sources is limited, and it would be preferable if the number of such materials increased. More teachers familiar with RT would also make it easier to find scripts and material appropriate for RT, as it is usual that teachers share experiences and material with colleagues.

Logistics was a challenge during this research, as in previous research in Norwegian EFL mainstream classes (e.g. Drew and Pedersen, 2012) and was for the most part an issue of space. In other words, the availability of appropriate rooms was important for the smooth implementation of RT. Also, finding appropriate texts was a challenge. Nevertheless, that is a challenge that would decrease in time with teachers increasing their stock of scripts. By using different variants of RT, some variants not needing pre-written scripts, the amount of time planning an RT project would decrease. The increasing autonomy of the pupils would also decrease the time consumed when preparing an RT project. When pupils become familiar with RT, it is easier to apply new texts and topics.

The logistical challenges would probably also have applied if the project had been implemented in similar classes. However, when comparing the cognitive and affective benefits of RT to the challenges, it is apparent that it is worth the time to use RT as method for teaching English.

This study has added to an increasing number of case studies on the use of RT in education. This study, however, was different in several ways from the main body of research about RT. Firstly it was conducted in an EFL context at the primary level, more specifically in a Norwegian primary school. There have been very few studies of RT in connection with L2 primary learners, and none in Norway. Secondly, this study included video recordings of both rehearsals and performances, thus making it possible to analyse specific features of the reading process during RT activities in detail. The author is not familiar with video recordings being used in any other research on RT, thus adding to both this study's validity and its uniqueness from similar research. Thirdly, this research has quantified data, specifically the improvement of pronunciation and word recognition throughout an RT activity, comparing the first readings during rehearsals with the final readings during performances. Whereas

most case studies on RT have relied solely on the researcher's observations, the video recordings allowed for a detailed study of pronunciation and word recognition. The video recordings and the detailed studies of pronunciation and word recognition have provided this research with quantitative data, which distinguishes it from most research on RT, which is purely qualitative.

The generally positive results of RT in this research add to an increasing body of case studies about RT with similar findings. However, there is a need for more case studies on RT in primary EFL contexts, and it would be preferable to increase the number of subjects, both the number of schools, teachers, and pupils, in similar research. One could also study the possible benefits of RT in comparison to a control group. Also, it would be interesting to investigate on a larger scale pupils' actual language development in different skills through pre- and post-tests.

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Appendix 1 – NSD approval

Ion Drew
Institutt for kultur- og språkvitenskap Universitetet i Stavanger
Postboks 2557 Ullandhaug
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 07.11.2013   Vår ref: 35908 / 2 / MSS   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 14.10.2013. Meldingen gjelder
prosjektet:

35908	*A case study of the challenges and benefits of Readers Theatre in a Norwegian primary school*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Ion Drew*
Student	*Anders Myrset*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er
meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i
personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i
meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og
helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de
opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget
skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år
dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database,
http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.05.2014, rette en henvendelse angående status for
behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim
                                        Marie Strand Schildmann

Kontaktperson: Marie Strand Schildmann tlf: 55 58 31 52
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Formålet med prosjektet er fordeler og utfordringer ved bruken av Readers Theatre (RT) som aktivitet i faget Engelsk i grunnskolen.

Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal det innhentes skriftlig samtykke basert på muntlig og skriftlig informasjon om prosjektet og behandling av personopplysninger. Personvernombudet finner informasjonsskrivet til foreldre/foresatte tilfredsstillende utformet i henhold til personopplysningslovens vilkår, men bemerker at språket med fordel kunne vært bedre tilpasset elevene. I tillegg bør det fremgå av informasjonsskrivet hvordan samtykke skal formidles (til student eller via lærer). Vi ber om at revidert informasjonsskriv sendes oss innen det opprettes kontakt med utvalget. Informasjonsskrivet kan sendes til: personvernombudet@nsd.uib.no

Det innhentes ikke direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger, men bakgrunnsopplysninger og fornavn i tillegg til videoobservasjonene vil være indirekte personidentifiserende.

Innsamlede opplysninger registreres på privat pc. Personvernombudet legger til grunn at veileder og student setter seg inn i og etterfølger Universitetet i Stavanger sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet, spesielt med tanke på bruk av privat pc til oppbevaring av personidentifiserende data.

Prosjektet skal avsluttes 15.05.2014 og innsamlede opplysninger skal da anonymiseres og video-opptak slettes. Anonymisering innebærer at direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger som navn/koblingsnøkkel slettes, og at indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger (sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. navn på skole, alder, kjønn) fjernes eller grovkategoriseres slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes i materialet.

Appendix 2 – Letter of consent

Kjære elev og foreldre/foresatte,

Forskningsprosjekt om Readers Theatre utført av Universitetet i Stavanger

Mitt navn er Anders Myrset. Jeg er 25 år og er student ved Universitetet i Stavanger, hvor jeg skriver min masteroppgave i faget English Literacy. Jeg ønsker å invitere deg og klassen din til å delta i et forskningsprosjekt der vi skal prøve en aktivitet som heter Readers Theatre i engelsktimene. Readers Theatre har blitt prøvd mange ganger i skoler i England og USA med positive resultater. Prosjektet er fullstendig anonymt, og det vil ikke bli lagret noe informasjon om deg. Alle bidrag til prosjektet vil være anonyme når de kommer på trykk i oppgaven min.

I prosjektet vil dere jobbe i grupper. Dere vil få utdelt et manus som dere skal øve på og deretter fremføre. Deretter skal dere få skrive et manus på egenhånd, som dere til slutt skal få fremføre. Hvilke roller og oppgaver hver enkelt av dere skal ha i gruppen skal dere få lov til å være med på å bestemme. Presentasjonene vil bli filmet. Disse opptakene vil bli slettet etter prosjektets slutt. Jeg og læreren din vil være med og hjelpe dere med både arbeidsfordeling i gruppen og under øving. Som en del av prosjektet vil dere bli bedt om å levere inn en journal der dere skriver ned erfaringer og tanker om prosjektet.

Det er frivillig å delta i dette prosjektet, og du kan på hvilket som helst tidspunkt trekke deg. Jeg håper likevel at du vil være med å bidra til prosjektet mitt, og tror at du også vil ha utbytte av å delta. Det er ingen andre enn meg og min veileder som har tilgang til opplysningene som samles inn. Vi er underlagt taushetsplikt og opplysningene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. I publikasjoner vil alle opplysninger være fullstendig anonymisert, og ingen enkeltpersoner vil kunne gjenkjennes.

Prosjektet er planlagt ferdig i juni 2014, og det er godkjent av Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS. Etter prosjektslutt vil videoopptak og øvrig datamateriale bli slettet. Universitetet i Stavanger er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

Jeg håper at hele klassen vil delta, både fordi det vil gjøre prosjektet mest mulig lærerikt, men også fordi jeg håper og tror at hver enkelt av dere vil ha utbytte av å delta. Hvis du ønsker å delta må du levere en signert svarslipp til læreren din.

På forhånd takk for samarbeidet.

Med vennlig hilsen

Anders Myrset

Svarslipp

Forskningsprosjekt om Readers Theatre utført av Universitetet i Stavanger

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om prosjektet, og er villig til å delta i studien.

Signatur elev: _____

Signatur foreldre/foresatte:_____

Dato: _____

Appendix 3 – Example script first cycle, *The King's new clothes*

The King's New Clothes

Summary

The king spends all of his money and time on new clothes. Two crooks see the opportunity to steal money from the king by pretending to create a magical cloth that will allow others to know whether the person in the cloth is fit and wise enough to do their job. The king's trusted helpers all pretend to see the cloth so that others do not believe they are fit and unwise. The day arrives when the king will wear the new suit of cloth and show it off to all of the people. Everyone begins pretending they see the marvellous new suit of clothes. A little child speaks up and says that the king is not wearing any clothes. The crowd begin to agree with the child. But the king marches on pretending not to hear the crowds. He is the king, and he wants all of the people to believe that he is fit to be king, and that he is wise.

New words

Admire - beundre
Amazing - fantastisk
Approval - godkjenning
Beautiful - vakker
Crooks - skurker
Handsome - vakker, stilig
Heaven - himmelrike
Invisible - usynlig
Kingdom - kongerike
Loom - vevstol
Magnificent – storslått, praktfull
Majestic - majestetisk
Marvellous – fantastisk, vidunderlig
Noble - adelsmann
Pattern - mønster
Pretend – late som
Silk - silke
Tailor - skredder
Thread - tråd
Weave/weavers – veve/vevere
Wonderful – fantastisk, strålende

Characters

Narrator 1
Narrator 2
King
Crook 1
Crook 2
Old Tailor
Trusted Noble
Little Child

1

The King's New Clothes

Narrator 1: Once upon a time, many years ago, lived a king who only thought of new clothes. He spent all of his riches buying them. He only wanted to be well dressed. The only thing he thought about was showing off his new suit of clothes. He had a suit for every hour of the day.

Narrator 2: One day, two crooks came to his kingdom. They made people believe that they were weavers. They said they could weave the finest cloth imaginable. The clothes made of their cloth were invisible to any man who was unfit for his job, or who was foolish.

Crook 1: Good afternoon, your Majesty. We are weavers.

Crook 2: The best weavers in the entire world.

Crook 1: We can weave the finest cloth you can ever imagine.

Crook 2: So fine, that any man who is unfit for his job, or is foolish, will not be able to see it. The cloth will be invisible for this man.

King: This must be wonderful cloth. If I dress in a suit made from this wonderful cloth, I will be able to find out who in my kingdom is unfit for his or her job. I could tell the clever from the foolish. I must have this wonderful cloth for a new suit.

Narrator 1: He gave money to the crooks. They went right to work. They set up two looms. They seemed to work hard. They did nothing whatsoever on the looms. They worked at the empty looms until late at night.

King: I would like to know how they are doing with the cloth. I will send my honest old tailor to the weavers. He can tell me how the wonderful cloth looks. He is smart and nobody understands his job better than the old tailor.

Narrator 2: The good old tailor went into the room where the crooks sat in front of the empty looms. He went to see how the wonderful cloth looked.

Old Tailor: (whispering to himself and the audience) Heaven help me! I cannot see anything at all. I cannot see anything at all. But I must not say anything. The King will think that I am unfit for my job or that I am foolish. Heaven help me!

Crook 1: Come and see this wonderful cloth close up. It has a beautiful pattern and amazing colours. Come and see this wonderful cloth close up.

Old Tailor: (whispering to himself and the audience) Oh, dear. Oh, my! Can I be so foolish? I do not believe it. Nobody must know it! Is it possible that I am not fit for my job? Oh, dear. Oh, my! I cannot say that I was unable to see the wonderful cloth.

2

Crook 2: Now do you have anything to say about our wonderful cloth?

Old Tailor: Oh, it is very pretty, very, very handsome. What a beautiful pattern, what amazing colours! I will tell the king that I like this wonderful cloth very much.

Crook 1: We are pleased to hear this. We worked so hard to make this beautiful pattern. We stayed up all night to make these amazing colours.

Old Tailor: (nodding his head very hard) Yes! Yes! I can see the beautiful pattern. I can see the amazing colours.

Crook 2: We need more money, more silk and more gold cloth. We must have more money, more silk, and more gold cloth to keep working.

Narrator 1: Soon afterwards, the king sent a trusted noble to the weavers to see how they were doing. He sent his trusted noble to see if the cloth was nearly finished.

Narrator 2: Like the old tailor, the noble looked and looked. He did not see anything. There was nothing to see.

Crook 1: Come and see this wonderful cloth close up. It has a beautiful pattern and amazing colours. Come and see this wonderful cloth close up. Isn't it a beautiful piece of cloth?

Trusted Noble: (whispering to himself and the audience) I am not foolish. It is therefore my job for which I am not fit. It is very strange. Oh dear! Oh my! Can I be so foolish? I do not believe it. I must not let anyone know it.

Narrator 1: Everybody in the kingdom talked about the wonderful cloth. Everybody in the kingdom wanted to see the wonderful cloth.

Narrator 2: One day the king wanted to see the wonderful cloth for himself while it was still on the loom. He took a group of his nobles along to see the wonderful cloth, including the old tailor and the trusted noble who had already been there.

Narrator 1: The crooks pretended to work as hard as they could. They pretended to weave without any thread. The nobles pretended to see the wonderful cloth.

Crook 2: Isn't it magnificent? Come and see this wonderful cloth close up. It has a beautiful pattern and amazing colours. Come and see this wonderful cloth close up. Isn't it a beautiful piece of cloth?

King: (whispering to himself and the audience) What is this? Oh, dear! Oh, my! I do not see anything at all. This is terrible! Am I foolish? Am I unfit to be king? I do not believe it. I must not let anyone know it.

3

Trusted Noble: It is very beautiful. It is magnificent, beautiful, and excellent.

Old Tailor: Yes! Yes! It is very beautiful. It is magnificent, beautiful, and excellent.

King: (nodding to the crooks as the crooks pretend to weave) Yes! Yes! It is very beautiful. It is magnificent, beautiful, and excellent. Your cloth has our approval.

Crook 1: We will finish soon, your Majesty. We will finish the king's new suit soon.

Crook 2: Yes! Yes! We will finish soon, sire. We will finish the king's new suit soon.

Narrator 2: The whole night the crooks pretended to work. They burned more than sixteen candles. Everybody in the kingdom could see that they were busy working to finish the king's new suit. Everybody in the kingdom could see that they were working to finish soon.

Narrator 1: The crooks pretended to take the cloth from the loom, and worked about in the air with big scissors. They pretended to sew with great needles without thread.

Crook 1: The king's new suit is ready now.

Crook 2: The king's new suit is ready now.

Narrator 2: The King and all his nobles then came to the hall; the crooks held their arms up as if they held something in their hands.

Crook 1: These are the suit pants.

Crook 2: This is the coat!

Crook 1: Here is the jacket!

Crook 2: Here is the shirt!

Crook 1: Here are the socks!

Crook 2: Here is the belt!

Crook 1: They are all as light as a feather. You must feel it. It feels as if there is nothing at all.

Crook 2: That is just the beauty of these clothes. It feels as if there is nothing at all.

4

All: Indeed! Yes! Yes! They are very beautiful. They are magnificent, beautiful, and excellent.

Narrator 1: But they could not see anything, for there was nothing to be seen.

Crook 1: Does it please your majesty to undress?

Crook 2: May I assist your Majesty in putting on the new suit before the large mirror?

Narrator 2: The King undressed to his underwear, and the crooks pretended to dress him in the new suit, one piece at a time.

Crook 1: These are the suit pants.

Crook 2: This is the coat!

Crook 1: Here is the jacket!

Crook 2: Here is the shirt!

Crook 1: Here are the socks!

Crook 2: Here is the belt!

Narrator 1: The King admired himself in the mirror from every side.

King: It looks so good! It fits so well!

All: What a beautiful pattern! What fine colours! That is a wonderful suit of clothes!

King: I am ready. Doesn't my suit fit me marvellously? It looks so good! It fits so well! It feels as if there is nothing at all.

Narrator 2: The King marched through his kingdom. He marched for everyone to see his wonderful new suit of clothes.

All: The King's new suit is very beautiful. It is magnificent, beautiful, and excellent! It looks so good! It fits so well!

Narrator 1: Nobody wished to let anyone else know that they saw nothing. Each one would have to admit they were unfit for their job or too foolish. Never were the King's wonderful new clothes more admired

Little Child: But he has nothing on at all!

Old Tailor: Good heavens! Listen to the voice of a little child.

Little Child: But he has nothing on at all!

5

All: (a gasp of embarrassment from all the people) Oh no! He has nothing on at all. He has nothing on at all!

Narrator 2:   And so the king marched with his head held high. He marched as if he was wearing the finest suit ever. He marched all through the kingdom. He marched as if he was fit for his job as king. He marched as if he was very wise. He marched all the way back to the castle. And all of his nobles marched along as if they were fit for their job, too.

6

Appendix 4 – Excerpts of performances

Appendix 4A – *The King's new clothes*

Excerpt from *The King's new clothes*. Words in *italics* were mispronounced during the first reading. Words in **bold** were mispronounced during both rehearsal and performance.

Narrator 1:	Once *upon* a time, many years ago, *lived* a king who only *thought* of new *clothes*. He spent all of his **riches** buying them. He only wanted to be well *dressed*. The only thing he thought about was showing off his new suit of clothes. He had a suit for every hour of the day.
Narrator 2:	One day, two *crooks* came to his kingdom. They made people believe that they were *weavers*. They said they *could* weave the finest cloth *imaginable*. The clothes made of their cloth were invisible to any man who was unfit for his *job*, or who was *foolish*.
Crook 1:	Good afternoon, your *Majesty*. We are *weavers*.
Crook 2:	The best weavers in the *entire* world.
Crook 1:	We can weave the finest cloth you can ever **imagine**.
Crook 2:	So fine, that any man *who* is unfit for his *job*, or is foolish, will not be able to see it. The cloth will be invisible for this man.
King:	This must be wonderful *cloth*. If I dress in a *suit* made from this wonderful cloth, I will be able to find out who in my kingdom is *unfit* for his or *her job*. I could tell the clever from the foolish. I must have this wonderful cloth for a new *suit*.
Narrator 1:	He *gave* money to the *crooks*. They went right to work. They set up two *looms*. They seemed to work hard. They did nothing whatsoever on the *looms*. They worked at the empty *looms* until late at night.
King:	I *would* like to know *how* they are doing with the cloth. I will send my **honest** old tailor to the weavers. He can tell me *how* the wonderful cloth looks. He is smart and nobody understands his job better than the old tailor.
Narrator 2:	The good old tailor went into the room where the crooks sat in front of the empty looms. He went to see how the wonderful cloth *looked*.
Old Tailor:	(whispering to himself and the audience) Heaven help me! I cannot see anything at all. I cannot see anything at all. But I must not say anything. The King will think that I am unfit for my job or that I am foolish. Heaven help me!
Crook 1:	Come and see *this* wonderful cloth close up. It has a beautiful *pattern* and *amazing* colours. Come and see this wonderful cloth close up.

Appendix 4B – *The ugly duckling*

Excerpt from *The ugly duckling.* Words in *italics* were mispronounced during the first reading. Words in **bold** were mispronounced during both rehearsal and performance.

Ugly Duckling:	I am so *ashamed*. I am so large and so funny looking. I can not stand this any longer. I can not *bear* it any more. The world goes all the way to the *other* side of the garden. The world goes all the way to the *other* side of the field. I will go out into the world.
All:	The world goes all the way to the other side of the garden. The world goes all the way to the other side of the field.
Narrator 2:	So the Ugly Duckling steals away from the duck pond while the ducklings are asleep. He steals *through* the leaves to the bank of the *canal*. He lays down in the soft, marshy grass where the reeds grow on the bank of the *canal*.
Ugly Duckling:	I am happy here. I am so large and so funny *looking*. I can live here on the bank of the *canal*. I can live in the soft, *marshy* grass **where** the reeds grow.
Narrator 1:	Then, the sound of a duck hunter's gun reaches the ugly duckling. The duckling can not fly *away*. The ugly duckling is **caught**.
Narrator 2:	Then, the sound of the duck hunter's dog reaches the ugly duckling. The ugly duckling cannot fly away. The dog sniffs the ugly duckling, who is sitting in the soft, marshy grass where the reeds grow on the banks of the canal. But the dog passes by the ugly duckling.
Ugly Duckling:	Oh my! I am *too* funny looking for a hunter. I am *too* ugly **even** for a dog to eat. The world goes all the way to the *other* side of the garden. The world goes all the way to the *other* side of the field. I will go out into the world.

Appendix 4C – *The three little pigs*

Excerpt from *The three little pigs*. Words in *italics* were mispronounced during the first

reading. Words in **bold** were mispronounced during both rehearsal and performance.

Big, Bad Wolf: Little pigs, I know where there is a nice apple tree.

Pig 3: HUH?? Where?

Big, Bad Wolf: Down at Miller's **orchard**. If you will not trick me again, I will come for you at five o'clock tomorrow morning and we will pick some red, *ripe* apples. Be awake! Be ready!

Narrator 2: Well, the little pigs hurried off the next morning at four o'clock for the apples, *hoping* to get back before the wolf *came*. They had *further* to go, and had to *climb* the tree all by *themselves*.

Narrator 1: If you have never seen a pig climb an apple tree, you do not know how much work this was for the little pigs. Just as they were coming down from the apple tree, they saw the wolf coming.

Big, Bad Wolf: Little pigs, little pigs, why are you here before me? Are they red, *ripe* apples?

Pig 1: Yes, very red and *ripe*!

Pig 2: We will *throw* you down some.

Narrator 2: And the little pigs *threw* down so many apples and *threw* them so far that, *while* the wolf was running to pick them all up, the little pigs jumped down and ran home. The next day the wolf *came* back again.

Big, Bad Wolf: Little pigs, little pigs, there is a *county fair* at Franklin. Will you go along with me to the *fair*?

Pig 3: Oh yes, we will go along with you to the *fair*. What time shall we be ready?

Big, Bad Wolf: At three o'clock. If you will not trick me again, I will come for you at three o'clock tomorrow morning and we will go to the *county fair*. Be awake! Be ready!

Appendix 5 – Scripts produced by pupils in the second cycle (unedited)

Appendix 5A – *Bad Santa*

Bad Santa

Roles: Narrator, Santa, Helper#1032, Mrs. Bad, B, and Penguin.

Narrator: Onse apon a time there was a santa. He was mad and bad. He whips his helpers and throw egg at houses and peopele. He dosnt give any gifts at all. He made a catastrofe.

Santa: I am so cool. I am bad ass.

Helpers: Wrap gifts. Wrap gifts. (Throws a gift between each other)

Santa: These are my helpers. They just think about them self. Mean workers. (pushes one of the helpers in the arms of the others)

Santa: Get up, you drunken helper #1032.

Helper#1032:   You are the mean here.

Narrator: He got so mad and angry that smart-helper#1 went to Santa's mom, Mrs. Bad.

Mrs. Bad: Come here.

Santa: What is your problem?

Mrs. Bad: Cause I don't like you! Go to the south away from the north.

Santa: Ok. I don't care about you guys anyway.

Narrator: Then he went with his dumb helper #1032.

Santa: Join me dumb helper.

Narrator: Then they drove four hours. Suddenly they stopped.

Santa: Buy us some chocolate in the store.

Helper: I like chocolate. Yummy, chocolate for my tummy. Where is the chocolate?

Santa: Hahaha! Looser!!! (Helper screams)

Narrator: He drove away from his helper #1032. He stopped at the road, where a little girl sat in the sunshine, crying.

Santa: Why are you here alone? Why are you crying?

1

Liza:	My best friend melted. (shows a cup) I have him in this cup.
Santa:	Who is your best friend?
Liza:	Snowman Jack. He was a good friend. (drinks from the cup) Yummy! Ice water.
Santa:	Wasent that your best friend?
Liza:	I forgot. It was your fault!! Why are you so fat?
Santa:	Eh… eh. It's my jumper?
Narrator:	Liza joined Bad Santa on his trip. And they drove for four hours. Again they stopped. Suddenly they see a person that could not talk.
	(The person mimes and S and L guesses)
Liza, Santa:	Hungry? Tired? Water? Flying? Air? I don't understand.
Mimer:	(gets angry and hits both) Hey! I can talk again.
Santa:	(wakes up) Are you allright?
Liza:	Yes I am, but not my best friend.
Santa:	We not talk about your best friend.
Liza:	Not talk about him? That makes me cry. Bu-hu.
Santa:	What do I do when kids cry? Tickle them? (tickles her, but it dosent work) Oh, well. I'm taking a nap.
Narrator:	Santa fell asleep. When he was sleeping. A person came to take the little girl.
Girl:	Don't touch me.
B:	Milk? Cheese? Chocolate?
Liza:	Do you want chocolate? Chocolate is over there.
B:	Is it pooh?
Liza:	No it's chocolate.
B:	(smells) It smells like pooh.
Liza:	No it smells like chocolate.

2

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B:	(feels) It feels like pooh.
Liza:	No it feels like chocolate.
B:	(tastes) It tastes like pooh.
Liza:	No it tastes like chocolate.
B:	Peew. Lucky I didn't step in it.
Liza:	Do you want to join us on our trip?
Narrator:	And the wirdoe joined them. They drove back to say sorry for Santa. Santa wakes up.
Santa:	Why is this wirdoe here?
Liza:	He walked in the street, the poor man. Can he come to our home?
Narrator:	They drove for 8 hours. Suddenly they stopped.
Penguin:	Hi. I'm a penguin woman.
Santa:	Why do you dress like a penguin?
Penguin:	Because I'm so sad. The reason I'm sad is that no penguins stick to the north. Everyone goes to the south.
Santa:	Jump in to our motorbike.
Narrator:	They drove home and saw all the helpers and mrs. Bad.
Santa:	This is my new daughter Liza. All the others is my new friends. Merry Christmas!
Liza:	He is not my real daddy.
Mrs. Bad:	Burt all kids should have a family. Welcome.
All:	Merry Christmas, and a happy new year.

3

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Appendix 5B – *Sick Santa*

Sick Santa

Narrator	Once upon a time. There was a fat man whit name Santa. He live in the North Pole. One time he got sick 22. December. All the helpers have panic. Then they thought and thought. The Santa find out that they will have a audition to be santa in one day.
Santa	Ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the audition to be Santa for one day. First up we have gummi bear.
Gummybear	Hi! I want to be santa for one day.
Santa	Why?
Gummybear	Becaus I want to see wat is in the presents.
Santa	NEXT! Who are you?
Narrator	A littel fairy came in.
Fairy	Hi! I will be santa in one day.
Santa	Why?
Fairy	Becaus I will make the kids happy.
Santa	Why do you want to make the kids happy?
Fairy	Becaus I am a littel good fairy. Daaah!
Santa	Ok! You are the santa for one day.
Fairy	(dancing and singing) Yes I am the santa.
Gummybear	(angry) But I want to be santa!
Narrator	Two days later the Christmas came.
Fairy	(wakes up and jums around) Today is the Christmas. Yey! Oh, I'm not to be late to the stabel to find my Bluedolph and Rudolph.
Narrator	Then the fairy walked to the stabel.
Santa	Here is the Rudolph and here is the bluedolph. Good luck.
Fairy	Ok. Now we have to go up in the sky and give presents to all the kids. 123 GO! (Rudolph and Bluedolph starts pulling the sleigh)
Fairy	Oh! Look! There's the first house.

1

Narrator	Then they delivered the presents in the cimeni. After they done that in a few houses, they were up in the air again.
Fairy	Look! It's the easter bunny and the gummy bear. What do they want? They look angry!
Narrator	Suddenly the easter bunny throwed an easter egg. It hit the sleigh and out of the egg came a karate rabbit. It jumped right over the little fairy and began to attack Rudolph and Bluedolph.
Gummybear	Ha ha! Now your Christmas is destroyed! Mohahahaha!
Narrator	Up on the sleigh, Rudolph and Bluedolph was very badly hurt. Soon they were not able to fly any longer.
Fairy	What are we going to do now? How can we deliver all the presents?
Narrator	The sleigh fell down from the sky
Fairy	What am I going to do now?
Bluedolph	You have to fly back to the north pole and say this to santa.
Narrator	And the little fairy flew back to the North Pole. She told everything to Santa.
Santa	What? I don't believe it! I thought the easter bunny was friendly. But we have to get the presents back.
Narrator	One of the helpers came in.
Helper	Santa! We have made a medicine for you!
Santa	How did you do that?
Helper	We just…
Santa	Give me the medicine! (drinks) I feel good again!
Narrator	Santa eated the medicine. And then he was good again.
Fairy	How can we get back to the Rudolph and Bluedolph?
Santa	I have an idea. We can take the ekstra power sleigh. 123 GO!
Narrator	Then they drive back to the place there the Rudolph and Bluedolph fell down.
Fairy	There it is!
Santa	OK! We can land down there.

2

Narrator	They landed on the closest roof. Then Santa and fairy see the gummy bear take the presents. Santa jumped down and take the gummy bear and easter bunny and tied them to the sleigh. Meanwhile the fairy went to rescue Rudolph and Bluedolph.
Fairy	Come with me Rudolph. Come with me Bluedolph. (puts them in the sleigh)
Narrator	Then they fly up in the air.
Santa	Hey, let's drop the gummi bear. What do you think?
Fairy	Don't drop that gummy bear. Hey!
Fairy & Santa	Don't drop that gummy bear. Don't drop that gummy bear. Don't drop that gummy bear.
Santa	OK, but we must punish him.
Fairy	Let's put the gummy bear and the easter bunny in the ginger bread jail.
Santa	That's a good idea. And then you must help me deliver all the presents.
Narrator	Santa and the fairy put the gummy bear and the easter bunny in jail and delivered all the presents. One of Santa's helpers gave Rudolph and Bluedolph some medicine, and they became well again. And Santa, the Fairy, Rudolph and Bluedolph lived happily ever after.
All	And don't forget, the Santa is real.
	The End.

3

Appendix 5C – *The big Christmas secret*

The big Christmas secret

Narrator 1:	Once upon a time in a small town near the city, there lived a little girl named Sophie.
Narrator 2:	Sophie loved Christmas and was so exited for the presents Santa would give her.
Narrator 1:	She had already written her wishlist and was as ready as confetti.
Sophie:	I'm ready, I'm ready, just like confetti.
Crowd:	Christmas is here!
Narrator 2:	Yes! She was exited. But let's see how Santa is doing at his magical workshop at the North Pole.
Santa:	HOHOHO and merry Christmas! I have my little helpers here to help me make all of the presents you are wishing to have. Every year I get thousands of wishlists that I have to give to my elfs. I also have a Nughty list and a nice list. I can figure out myself if you are naughty or nice.
Narrator 1:	A little gingerbread man crawled out of Santa's pocket and jumped up to the table next to him.
Ginger:	I want to help for this years Christmas. Let me do something, please!
Santa:	Of course Ginger! Let me show you what you can do.
Narrator 2:	The gingerbread man jumped into Santas pocket again and they walked over to the oven.
Narrator 1:	Let's go back to Sophie and see how she has it.
Sophie:	I'm so exited, so exited. Christmas is almost here! I shall go to bed and wake up tomorrow with presents under the Christmas tree.
Narrator 2:	Sophie went to bed and closed her eyes, hoping to get what she wanted under the tree.
Narrator 1:	Sophie woke up in the middle of the night because of a sound she heard from downstairs. (Santa drops a book on the floor) She woke up her brother Toby and they went downstairs together.
Narrator 2:	They went downstairs to see what it was. They both dropped their jaw right down to the floor.
Toby:	It's really you? Are you the real Santa Claus?

1

Santa:	Yes, but don't tell anyone. It has never happened to me before.
Sophie:	We promise. But only on one condition, we get to see your sled and raindeers.
Santa:	Fine. Follow me…
Narrator 1:	Santa snapped his fingers and they were on the roof in no time.
Narrator 2:	Sophie and Toby ran over to the raindeers and started playing with them.
Toby:	(Toby whispers to Sophie) Let's go in the sled!
Sophie:	Yes! Let's go!
Narrator 1:	Toby and Sophie looked around and saw many magical buttons.
Toby:	What does this button do?
Narrator 2:	Santa ran into the sled and shouted…
Santa:	No, no, no! Don't press that!
Narrator 1:	Toby pressed the button and the raindeers and the sled left off to the North Pole.
Narrator 2:	It was quiet but then Sophie asked…
Sophie:	Can we ride the raindeers?
Santa:	No, not now. But maybe when we get there.
Sophie, Toby:	YES!
Narrator 1:	The sled landed and Toby, Sophie and Santa went to the main entrance.
Santa:	Welcome to the North Pole. Here anything can happen.
Narrator 2:	A snowman walked by.
Snowman:	Hello! Who are those children?
Santa:	This is Sophie and this is Toby.
Snowman:	Hello Sophie and Toby. My name is Jalle the Snowman.
Sophie, Toby:	Hi!
Snowman:	Well, welcome! I hope you have fun here.

2

Santa:	Well, Toby and Sophie? Would you like to ride the reindeers?
Sophie, Toby:	Yeah!
Narrator 1:	Santa, Sophie and Toby walked over to the reindeer stalls and found Rudolph and Rudline's stall.
Santa:	Here's Rudolph and Rudline. If you want you can ride them over to the workshop.
Toby:	Yes! Let's get on them.
Narrator 2:	Sophie and Toby hopped on Rudolph and Rudline and the reindeer started flying.
Sophie:	Oh look! There's the workshop.
Narrator 1:	Toby and Sophie landed and Santa followed them to the workshop.
Ginger:	Stop right there! Who do you have with you today?
Toby:	Hi! My name is Toby and this is my sister Sophie.
Ginger:	Oh well. Hi! You can come past. But I will be watching.
Santa:	Here is my workshop. My elves make all of the present for you.
Sophie:	Speaking of present, did you give out all the presents for the children?
Santa:	Uh oh! I think I forgot. But you can meet the elves and I'll fly you home after.
Narrator 2:	They walked over to some elves working. It looked like they were busy.
Santa:	I think they are busy, I'll fly you home now.
Narrator 1:	They walked over to the sled again and Santa got the reindeers in place.
Narrator 2:	They got in the sled and they left off.
Narrator 1:	Santa landed on the roof and he snapped his fingers again. They were in Toby and Sophie's room.
Toby:	Let's go to sleep Sophie. And we can't tell anyone that we went to the North Pole with Santa.
Santa:	Good night, sleep tight. Sweet dreams, no screams.

3

Narrator 1:	Santa hopped into the sled and left off to give presents to the rest of the children. Sophie and Toby went to bed, they fell asleep right away.
Narrator 2:	They woke up the next day with a BIG present under the Christmas tree. It was from Santa.
Narrator 1:	And they never told the secret.
Crowd:	THE END.
Crowd:	We wish you a merry Christmas. We wish you a merry Christmas. We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

4

Appendix 5D – *The evil witch and the little girl*

The evil Witch and the little girl

Narrator: Once upon a time there was a witch. Her name was Madam Mim. She had a big fat pig and a crow.

Witch: Do you want more gingerbread?

Pig: Honk honk! Yes.

Witch: Hihi. Here you go!

Crow: Can I have some gingerbread too?

Witch: Shut up. I am going to kill you if you say it again.

Narrator: The crow was afraid and kept his mouth shut. Next day there came a little girl to the door, to sell some cupcakes.

Girl: Hello, do you want some cupcakes?

Witch: Yes, I am going to give them to my pig, Wralte!

Narrator: And the pig came. And the witch bought all of the cupcakes.

Witch: Do you want to come in?

Girl: Yes, please!

Crow: Crow, crow, take her to prison.

Narrator: The girl tried to run away when she heard this.

Witch: Hocus Pocus.

Narrator: The witch turns the girl into a mirror.
Witch: Mirror, mirror on the wall. Who is the fairest of them all?

Girl: It's me! I'm the fairest of them all.

Witch: Who is the ugliest of them all?

Girl: It is you! You are the ugliest of them all.

Pig: (screams) There is no more gingerbread!

Crow: Crow, crow. Hocus Pocus…

Witch: Shut up ugly crow. Shut up ugly crow. Shut up you ugly black crow. (piiiiiiiiiiiiiiiip)

1

Narrator:	The witch turns the girl into a gingerbread woman.
Witch:	Wralte, I have some more gingerbread to you!
Pig:	Jeeeeeee! Honk honk.
Narrator:	The pig came running up to eat the little gingerbread girl. Then along came an elf, who was Santa's helper. He saw the gingerbread girl in distress.
Greg:	Hello! I am Santa's helper Greg. I have come to pick up a present for Santa.
Witch:	Pick up present? I do not have any present.
Narrator:	Suddenly a scream appeared from the back.
Greg:	Who is screaming in the back?
Witch:	Oh! It's nothing. It's just my pig squealing.
Greg:	That doesn't sound like a pig.
Narrator:	Greg was curious about the scream, and went into the back of the witch's house, and found the gingerbread woman.
Greg:	Who are you?
Girl:	(crying) I'm just a little girl who came here to sell some cupcakes, and the bad witch turned me into a gingerbread woman.
Narrator:	Greg turned to the witch and said:
Greg:	Release the gingerbread woman and turn her back into a girl.
Narrator:	Greg pulled his sword, and challenged the witch to a sword fight.
Witch:	I will not fight you. Let's see if you can fight my pig. Get him, Wralte.
Narrator:	Wralte and Greg started to fight. (pause as they fight) Greg defeated the pig by stabbing him in the heart.
Witch:	No you killed my pig. Now, I'm going to turn you into a mouse. Crow, get me my wand.
Crow:	Crow, crow. Yes, Madam Mim.
Narrator:	But the crow did not get the want. Instead he took a knife and dropped it on her head. The witch died.
Greg:	Come with me little girl. Santa will help you become a girl again.

2

Narrator: Greg and the girl travelled to the North Pole, and asked for Santa's help. Santa blew his breath on the gingerbread woman, and turned her back into a girl.

Girl: Thank you Santa! But I have nowhere to live. Can I live here with you on the North Pole? I will help you prepare for Christmas.

Narrator: The girl was allowed to live with Santa and Greg. And they lived happily ever after.

All: We wish you a merry Christmas. We wish you a merry Christmas. We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

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Appendix 5E – *The failed Christmas*

The failed Christmas

Narrator: Once upon a time in Holland on a farm far, far away lived a little boy named Calvin with his mother and his big brother and big sister. Their names was: Miss Hains, Roger and Rachel. Calvin and his family had never celebrated Christmas.

Roger: I know what I wants for Christmas if we had celebrate that. World piece… of cake.

Rachel: Me to!

R and R: Piece of cake! Piece of cake! Piece of cake!

Calvin: I want just 1 thing for Christmas.

Rachel: We don't want to know Calvin!

Roger: Yes! Go to your room stupid kid.

Narrator: At the same time on the Northpole the Santa lookt on the Nice/Bad list.

Santa: Hmm. Let me see. Rachel and Roger has been bad the hole year. But their little brother Calvin is just nice.

Narrator: And the Santa flue with his sled to the nice children and gave them candy in their stockings. But when they come to Rachel, Roger, and Calvin Santa broke his leg. But Santa was lucky because there was an Elf who saved Santa. They flew away to Northpole.

Santa: I can't give the children their presents now.

Mother: I can do it for you. I can do it for you. Where were you last time?
Santa: In Holland. In Roger, Rachel and Calvin's house.

Mother: Ok! I'm leaving right now.

Narrator: And then mother of Christmas flue away on the sled to Holland. She jumpt down the chimney. But when she came down to the livingroom she saw a plate with some biscuit and a cup with milk, and with the plate there was a note where it was written: To Santa. From Calvin. Merry Christmas.

Mother: Oh. How nice that boy is!

Narrator: But Mother of Christmas didn't know that Rachel and Roger was hiding in the living room. They did that every year to get revenge of Santa, cus they never get present.

R and R: Attack!!!!

1

Roger:	Now weg get revenge cus you never give us present!
Rachel:	Wait! Isn't Santa a man?
Roger:	So what! Fly us to the Santa.
Narrator:	And they flue to Northpole. But in the sled behind the present was Calvin. He know that his sister and brother was bad, but not evil! Then they met a dancing candy.
Candy 1:	(singing and dancing) I am a dancing candy, du du. Dancing, du du. Candy, du du. Smile!
Candy 2:	You get me tired.
Candy 1:	No I don't.
Candy 2:	Znork.
Rachel:	Mmm! You smell like candy! Maybe you taste the same!
Candy:	Uh oh.
Rachel:	Mmm. Delicious.
SBRFF:	Have you seen my dancing candy?
Rachel:	Eh, no! It is in my stomach!
SBRFF:	Did you eat my candy?
Narrator:	And then Sheik Ben Reddik Fy Fasan tried to catch Rachel. But Roger saved her. And then Rachel and Roger took Mother of Christmas to the kitchen.
Rachel:	Sit on that chair.
SBRFF:	Don't do that.
Calvin:	Hello! Who are you?
SBRFF:	Hello, I am Sheik Ben Reddik Fy Fasan.
Calvin:	Did you see Rachel and Roger? Where did they go? Are they alive? (SBRFF points at Roger and Rachel)
	(Calvin hits Roger and Rachel. They faint)
Mother:	Thank you! You saved the Christmas. But we have to deliver all the presents. Will you help me Calvin?
Calvin:	Yes!

2

Narrator: And then Calvin and Mother of Christmas delivered all the presents. When they came to Northpole there was 1 present left. On it was Calvin's name and in the box was the dancing candy.

Candy: Thank you Calvin cus you saved the Christmas.

Narrator: And Calvin gave the dancing candy to Sheik Ben Reddik Fy Fasan.

SBRFF: Thank you! Do you want to come to the United Arab Emirates with me on Holiday.

Calvin: Oh yes. Thank you.

Narrator: And then they lived happily ever after.

All: The End.

Narrator 2: And now to the weather. It's very sunny outside…

Narrator 3: (whispers) Hey. The end!!!

Narrator 2: Ahh. Ok!

3

Appendix 5F – *The story of Clanta Sauce*

The story of Clanta Sauce

Narrator:	Once upon a time there was a man who lived on the North Pole. His name was Clanta Sauce (bows). He lived with his friends the Christmas Pig (bows), Rudolph (bows), and a elf (bows). You will also meet the evil penguins (bows). One week before Christmas all the present suddenly disappeared without a trace.
Clanta Sauce:	Ho, ho, ho, where are all my Christmas presents?
Christmas Pig:	I don't know.
Clanta Sauce:	When I catch the thief I will make him or her shovel reindeer-poo in the stable.
Christmas Pig:	Or he can be my slave and clean my toes.
Clanta Sauce:	Rudolf, search for clues.
Narrator:	Rudolf jumps over the Christmas Pig.
Rudolf:	Come on Christmas pig. Stop eating candy and sweets and candy and come with me.
Narrator:	Rudolf and the Christmas Pig runs out the door. They look and look, but the is nothing to see… except from slide-marks in the snow.
Christmas Pig:	Come on elf, let's follow the slide-marks.
Clanta Sauce:	Hey Rudolf, take your four best reindeers and get the sleigh.
Rudolf:	Yes sir!
Elf:	We can get the reindeers and the sleigh.
Narrator:	In another place, in a cave full of presents there are 14 happy penguins.
Penguins:	Jippikajei, happy go Christmas.
Penguin 1:	We did it, we got away with the presents.
Penguin 2:	With all these presents, it will be a good Christmas this year.
Narrator:	Let's go back to Clanta Sauce.
Clanta Sauce:	Come on elves, jump into the sleigh. We have to find the presents.
Elf:	Yeee, let's travel all over the world.
Christmas Pig:	It's very windy.

1

Clanta Sauce:	(stands up in the sleigh and sings) I believe I can fly. I believe I can touch the sky. (falls out of the sleigh)
Elf:	Wow, Clanta Sauce fell out of the sleigh. It was an accident, the north wind took him.
Narrator:	Clanta Sauce fell down on the snow and…
Christmas Pig:	Clanta Sauce has been takent by the evel penguins.
Rudolf:	We must save him.
Christmas Pig: Narrator:	Rudolf, fly down to where Clanta Sauce landed. The elves, the Christmas Pig and Rudolf were trying to save Clanta Sauce. They landed the sleigh. Then they saw a penguin.
Christmas Pig:	Hey you penguin, do you know anything about the missing presents?
Penguin:	You will never find the presents. I've got the power.
Rudolf:	Give us the presents. You don't have the power.
Narrator:	The penguin disappeared into the cave and they all followed him. Inside they saw all the presents, 14 penguins laughing (penguins laughing), and Clanta Sauce laying fainted on the floor.
Christmas Pig:	I have the power. Pull my tale, I have a secret weapon. (Rudolf pulls the tail and the Christmas Pig farts)
Narrator:	Then all the penguins fainted and Clanta Sauce woke up.
Clanta Sauce:	Christmas Pig, what have you done now? That was not necessary.
Narrator:	They caught the penguins and took them to the reindeer-stable. They had to work as slaves for Clanta Sauce.
Clanta Sauce:	Ho ho ho, I love this.
Penguin 1:	When will this end? I hate the smell of reindeerpoo ☹
Everybody:	Ho-ho-ho-ho
Penguin 2:	I am tired!!!
Christmas Pig:	And now it is time to clean my toes. Hihihihihihi

2

Appendix 6 – Journal entries

Appendix 6A – First journal entry questions

1. Hva pleier du å lese? (For eksempel skolebøker, blader, romaner, aviser)

2. Hvor ofte leser du? (En halvtime hver dag, en halvtime hver uke osv.)

3. Liker du å lese? Hvorfor?

4. Pleier dere å ha høytlesning?

5. Hvor har dere høytlesning? (Skolen, hjemme osv.)

6. Liker du å lese høyt? Hvorfor?

7. Liker du å bli lest for? Hvorfor?

8. Hva er dine forventninger til leseteater (Readers Theatre)?

(My translation)

1. What do you usually read? (For example textbooks, magazines, novels, newspapers)

2. How often do you read? (Half an hour a day, half an hour a week, etc.)

3. Do you like to read? Why?

4. Do you read aloud?

5. Where do you read aloud? (School, home, etc)

6. Do you like reading aloud? Why?

7. Do you like being read to?

8. What are your expectations to Readers Theatre?

Appendix 6B – Second journal entry questions

1. Hva syntes du om den første uken med leseteater?

2. Hva har du lært?

3. Hva synes du om å fremføre eventyret?

4. Hvordan var det å være publikum? Forstod du hva de andre stykkene handlet om?

5. Hvordan fungerte gruppa? Jobbet dere godt sammen?

6. Fikk du lyst til å lese noen av eventyrene etterpå? Hvilke? (*Three Little Pigs, Ugly Duckling, Thumbelina, Puss in Boots, The King's new clothes*).

(My translation)

1. What did you think about the first week of Readers Theatre?

2. What have you learned?

3.What did you think about performing the fairy tale?

4. What was it like to be an audience? Did you understand what the other fairy tales were about?

5. How did the group function? Did you cooperate well?

6. Did you want to read any of the fairy tales afterwards? Which? (*Three Little Pigs, Ugly Duckling, Thumbelina, Puss in Boots, The King's new clothes*).

Appendix 6C – Third journal entry questions

1. Hvordan var det å skrive en fortelling selv?

2. Hvordan synes du det har gått med å lage en egen forestilling til leseteater?

3. Hvordan fungerte gruppa?

4. Kunne dere ha gjort noe annerledes? Hva?

5. Hvordan var det å være publikum? Forsto du hva de andre fortellingene handlet om?

6. Hvordan synes du at leseteater har fungert i klassen?

7. Kunne du tenke deg å ha leseteater en gang til?

8. Hva har vært det kjekkeste med leseteater?

9. Har noe vært vanskelig med leseteater? Hva?

10. Før vi begynte med leseteater skrev du om dine forventninger til dette. Hvordan har de blitt innfridd eller hvordan har de ikke blitt innfridd?

(My translation)

1. What was it like writing your own story?

2. What did you think of creating your own RT performance?

3. How did the group function?

4. Could you have done anything differently?

5. What was it like being in the audience? Did you understand the other stories?

6. How do you think RT has worked in class?

7. Would you like to participate in another RT project?

8. What was the most fun with RT?

9. Has anything been difficult with RT? What?

10. Before we started this RT project you wrote about your expectations. How have they been fulfilled or not?

Appendix 7 – Interview guides

Appendix 7A – First interview guide (my translation)

1. When did you get your education?

2. Where did you get your education?

3. How much English did you study during your education?

4. How would you assess your pupils reading skills?

5. What kind of texts do you usually use, and how do you use them?

6. Which methods do you use to motivate your pupils to read?

7. Are your pupils motivated for reading?

8. What are your views on silent reading and reading aloud?

9. Do you read aloud to the class? If so, what, how often, and why?

10. How much time is used to practise reading in your class?

11. With the introduction of Kunnskapsløftet, LK06, the focus on reading was increased with it being classified as a basic skill, and in the English curriculum reading is mentioned as important for understanding different languages and its connected cultures. What is your view on reading in LK06? How important do you consider the reading skill in English? How important is it in your teaching?

12. What do you know about RT?

13. We are about to start a project with RT as activity, where much of the responsibility for both learning and practising lies with the pupils. What are your thoughts on that?

14. What are your expectations to RT?

15. What do you think about RTs potential and possible pitfalls in your class?

16. Why did you agree to take part in the project?

Appendix 7B – Second interview guide (my translation)

1. How would you assess the last four weeks?

2. How has RT been compared to your expectations before the research project started? Did RT meet your expectations?

3. Do you see any benefits or challenges of using RT?

4. How has RT functioned in your class?

5. How do you think your pupils have experienced RT?

6. Have you noticed any improvements in your pupils the last four weeks?

7. Are you going to use RT again?

8. Would you recommend RT to other teachers?