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## **Abstract**

This thesis is about the implementation of Readers Theatre (RT) in a minority background adult learners' class of English at an adult education centre in Norway. RT is a group reading activity where the students rehearse scripts that are eventually going to be performed. The aim of the research was to gain insight into these learners' experiences of RT and to investigate the possible benefits and challenges of this method with the group in question.

The subjects in this study were adult minority background learners following the 10<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum since, for various reasons, they had not completed their lower secondary education in their home country. Two cycles of RT were implemented in the class. In the first cycle, the students were provided with pre-written scripts, whereas in the second cycle the students created personal scripts.

Qualitative research methods were used in the research. Interviews were conducted with the teacher and four of the students. In addition, the researcher observed the rehearsals and performances of the two RT cycles. In both cycles, the first rehearsals and performances were audio-recorded, which allowed the researcher to measure the students' improvement in fluency, pronunciation, and word recognition.

The findings of the research showed that RT was a relatively successful method with the students. Both cycles of RT, the pre-written scripts and the self-written scripts, functioned well in the context. This applied especially to the personal scripts, as the students were eager to share information about their own home countries and their backgrounds. The students enjoyed working with RT and the performances boosted their confidence. The performances were also a valuable experience for these students as they had very little experience with any form of public speaking in their home country. In addition, the audio-recordings showed that RT had improved the learners' fluency, pronunciation and word recognition in English.

The students' motivation to read beyond the RT activity itself did not seem to increase as it has with studies of younger learners. Various aspects of RT motivated the students, but it did not seem to have a motivational effect on the students' reading habits beyond the actual process, a finding which contrasts with previous studies on RT. Based on the interviews it seems as if the students' motivation to learn English was primarily instrumental, e.g. getting a certificate of lower secondary education and functioning within the Norwegian society.

One of the challenges in the research was that some of the students were occasionally absent, which disrupted the flow of the rehearsals. The logistical challenges included finding

appropriate scripts, creating groups, and assisting all the groups when they were often practising in separate rooms.

This research has contributed to the research on RT with its particular focus on minority background adult learners. The group represented in this research distinguishes it from earlier studies, which have primarily been conducted with young learners. Furthermore, most of the research on RT has been conducted in L1 contexts, and less in L2 or L3 contexts. Finally, unlike other studies, this research has also explored the way that personal scripts were a beneficial variant of self-written scripts used for RT.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Topic and aims

This thesis investigates the use of Readers Theatre (hereafter referred to as RT) with minority background adult learners of English in Norway. The learners were attending an adult education centre and were following the 10<sup>th</sup> year curriculum of lower secondary education. Readers Theatre ‘is essentially an activity in which a group reads a text aloud from scripts’ (Drew and Pedersen, 2012: 71). The thesis aims to investigate if the adult learners benefited from the use of RT as a method to improve their reading abilities and if it increased their motivation to read texts. It also aims to find out if and what the challenges were when implementing RT in the minority background adult learner class.

This is a qualitative case study. It is based upon pre- and post-interviews with the teacher, post-interviews with four students, observation of two RT cycles, and an analysis of the learners’ fluency, pronunciation and wrongly recognized words in audio recordings from the learners’ first rehearsals and performances of the RT scripts. In the first cycle of RT, pre-written scripts were used, while the students wrote scripts based on their own culture and traditions in the second cycle.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How did the minority background adult learners experience the use of RT?
2. What were the benefits and challenges of RT for the learners involved?

The researcher expected the adult learners’ fluency, pronunciation and word recognition to improve as these have been identified among the cognitive benefits of RT in multiple studies (e.g. Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Martinez et al., 1999; Myrset, 2014). However, the expectations towards the affective benefits were ambivalent. It was also expected that some of the students may find the method childish and uncomfortable based on the fact that they were adults. Unlike children, adults might struggle to embrace the characters in a script, as opposed to younger learners who are used to adapting to new characters through play. Furthermore, it was expected that this group of learners might be critical about the amount of time devoted to RT, as they are adults and most likely mature and reflected learners. The assumption was that

these adults would be focused on the learning objectives in the subject and might struggle to understand why and how RT could fulfill those objectives.

## 1.2 Background and relevance

The idea behind RT is that students are able to rehearse a script by reading it over and over again before they eventually perform the script in front of an audience, which in the present case would be in front of other learners at the same school (Black and Stave, 2007; Drew and Pedersen, 2010). Studies show that RT has both cognitive and affective benefits (Drew and Pedersen, 2010, 2012; Martinez et al., 1999; Myrset, 2014). Students' fluency and comprehension improved, as well as their motivation and attitude towards reading in general (Hoyt, 1992; Uthman, 2002; Worthy and Prater, 2002)

In the present study, RT was implemented in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade class who were completing their lower secondary education at an adult education centre in western Norway. The subjects were immigrants with various nationalities and backgrounds. According to GSI (grunnskolen informasjonsystem), the number of minority background adult learners in adult education in Norway has increased over recent years<sup>1</sup> and, due to the migrant crisis, the need for compulsory education for adults will most likely grow.

The lower secondary education at the adult education centre followed the same national curriculum plan as any regular Norwegian school. Learning English was generally challenging for the learners involved as many had not learnt much English in their home country and it was their third, fourth or even fifth language.

RT is first and foremost a method that focuses on the development of the reading skill. The ability to read has become a prioritized skill in Norway's newest curriculum reform, *The Knowledge Promotion (LK06)*. This is because reading functions as the basis for future learning and, without being able to read, one is not able to understand written information. *LK06* defines reading as one of the five basic skills, together with the ability to express oneself orally and in writing, to master numeracy, and to be able to use digital tools. It is

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/tall-og-forskning/statistikk/gsi/voksne\\_gsi\\_2015-16.pdf](http://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/tall-og-forskning/statistikk/gsi/voksne_gsi_2015-16.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>

[https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utdanning/voksnes\\_laering\\_og\\_kompetanse/artikler/rett-til-opplaring/id213311/](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utdanning/voksnes_laering_og_kompetanse/artikler/rett-til-opplaring/id213311/)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/b3b7e92cce6742c39581b661a019e504/education->



important to find different strategies to develop the ability to read and express oneself orally, and Readers Theatre provides one approach to reading.

The thesis aims to contribute to the research on RT through its focus on minority background adult learners of English in Norway. A good deal of research has been conducted on the use of RT with younger learners, primarily in primary and secondary school (e.g. Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Myrset, 2014; Pettersen, 2013). Based on these studies, there appear to be clear advantages for choosing RT as a reading strategy among younger learners. However, Drew and Pedersen (2010:17) suggest that there should be more research on RT with different age groups and in different teaching contexts in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the method. As opposed to previous research, the present research fills a gap in the research on RT since it is within a different context (an adult education centre), and with different subjects (minority background learners). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, little research has targeted the use of RT with adult learners in general, especially in a foreign language. In addition, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, previous research on RT has not been partly based on learners writing and presenting personal texts about their own cultures and backgrounds.

### **1.3 Outline of thesis**

The thesis is structured into seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter two provides background information about the English curriculum and about adult education in Norway. Readers Theatre is defined and explained in Chapter three. In Chapter four, Vygotsky's theory of the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) is presented and is seen in light of RT. Furthermore, theory on reading and reading in a third language is addressed. The cognitive and affective benefits of RT are also presented, based on previous studies. Chapter five provides an overview of the qualitative methods used in this research, namely the observation of two cycles of RT, pre- and post-interviews with the teacher, interviews with four of the students, and the analysis of fluency, pronunciation and wrongly recognized words in the audio recordings of the first rehearsals and performances of the RT scripts. Furthermore, the chapter provides a comprehensive description of the actual process of collecting data. Validity, reliability and ethical issues are also addressed in the chapter. Chapter six presents the findings of the research. In Chapter seven, the findings are discussed in relation to the

research questions, the theory, and previous studies on RT presented in earlier chapters. Limitations of the research and recommendations for future studies will also be presented in this chapter. Finally, in Chapter eight the main findings are presented and conclusions are drawn.

## **2. Background Chapter**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents background information that is considered to be relevant for this case study of RT with minority background adult learners of English in this thesis. Section 2.2 gives the reader insight into the aims and structure of the Norwegian curriculum, *The Knowledge Promotion*, with special emphasis in section 2.3 on the English subject. In addition, section 2.4 provides information about the adult education system in Norway, with focus on primary and lower secondary education for adults.

### **2.2 The Knowledge Promotion**

*The Knowledge Promotion (LK06)* is Norway's latest curriculum reform from 2006. It applies to primary, lower, and upper secondary school (The Knowledge Promotion Reform, 2006,).

In the *LK06*, there is great emphasis on the development of the basic skills. The curriculum presents a framework for five basic skills that are regarded as the basis for future learning. The ability to read is one of the basic skills, as well as the ability to express oneself orally, in writing, to master numeracy, and to be able to use digital tools. The Framework for Basic Skills (2012), an accompanying document, explains the basic skills, how they are integrated in every subject curriculum, and how these are important in order for students to develop and show their competence in the different subjects. By implementing these skills into every subject, one ensures that the skills are taught more frequently and that students are able to adapt and use them in other areas of learning (Framework for Basic Skills, 2012). The ability to read and express oneself orally is especially relevant to this thesis, as RT is an oral reading activity (Drew and Pedersen, 2012: 1).

The basic skills are linked to the competence aims. Each skill is emphasized to a various degree in each subject, depending on the relevance of the specific subject that is being taught.

### 2.3 The English subject curriculum

The English subject curriculum emphasizes that English is a universal language and more than ever, it is acknowledged that it is the most important language to acquire. Not only is it important to be able to communicate in English for educational reasons, but also in work contexts and in social life (The Knowledge Promotion Reform, 2006). Therefore, English is at present the only compulsory foreign language in Norwegian schools from year one to the first year of upper secondary school.

After the 2013 revision of *LK06*, the English curriculum has been divided into four main subject areas: Language learning, Oral communication, Written communication and Culture, society and literature (*LK06* English subject curriculum). These areas are emphasized in the English curriculum in order to achieve a holistic approach to the learning of English. This means that the subject areas are not meant to be taught separately, but to complement each other. For example, if a group of students is taught about the indigenous people in Australia, which is learning about an English-speaking country's culture and society, one also integrates language learning and oral and written communication by giving the students tasks where these foci are practised (*LK06* English subject curriculum).

Language learning, one of the subject areas in the English curriculum, is about gaining knowledge about English and developing effective methods for studying a new language. In the second subject area, Oral communication, the aim is to develop the students' oral skills in order to communicate properly, both in everyday conversation and in more formal forums. Written communication, the third subject area, focuses on the ability to read and produce texts. Students learn appropriate vocabulary, and correct grammar and sentence structure in order to write with purpose. In the final subject area, Culture, society and literature, the purpose is to give students some insight into the different lifestyles, social issues, and influential literature in English-speaking countries (*LK06* English subject curriculum).

There are competence aims within each of the four areas: Language learning, Oral communication, Written communication, and Culture, society and literature. In the English subject, the competence aims are set after grades 1-2, grades 2-4, grades 5-7, and grades 8-10 at the primary and lower secondary levels. At the upper secondary level, there are competence aims after Vg1 (Udir, the English subject curriculum). The competence aims in English expect more of the students as they grow older and become more experienced learners of English.

Below are some examples of competence aims which are relevant for the learners in the present thesis after the 10th grade.

- Use various situations, work methods and strategies to learn English (language learning).
- Understand spoken and written texts on a variety of topics (written communication).
- Discuss the way young people live, how they socialize, their views on life and values in Great Britain, the USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway (Culture, society and literature)

(LK06, English subject curriculum)

In lower and upper secondary school, the students are given grades on a scale of 1-6, 1 representing low achievement in line with what is expected in the competence aims, and 6 representing excellent work.

## 2.4 Adult Education in Norway

Adult education covers several areas of education and training. The main focus is on lower and secondary education for adults. Some adult education centres also offer introduction courses in Norwegian and social studies, preparatory courses for compulsory education, and training in the basic skills<sup>2</sup>. As the students in this thesis are following the 10th grade curriculum, it is relevant to present adults' right to primary and lower secondary education in Norway.

According to the Education Act § 4A-1, adults have the right to complete their primary and lower secondary education (*The Education Act*<sup>3</sup>). This right applies to people above primary and lower secondary school age, namely sixteen years-old, and for people who

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<sup>2</sup>

[https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utdanning/voksnes\\_laering\\_og\\_kompetanse/artikler/rett-til-opplaring/id213311/](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utdanning/voksnes_laering_og_kompetanse/artikler/rett-til-opplaring/id213311/)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/b3b9e92cce6742c39581b661a019e504/education-act-norway-with-amendments-entered-2014-2.pdf>

have a residence permit in Norway. In addition, § 4A-1 states that primary and lower secondary education shall be free of charge.

According to GSI (grunnskolen informasjonssystem), 10,991 adults received primary and lower secondary education in 2015-2016. This includes the students who received ordinary primary and lower education and special needs education. This number is an increase of 920 compared to the year before. In recent years, there has also been an increasing number of minority background adult learners following lower-secondary education. 7,459 of the students who benefitted from the offer of adult education in 2015-2016 were minority background learners, which constitutes 68% of all the students. In the regular compulsory education program for adults (up to grade 10), 93% were speakers of minority languages.

The compulsory education for adults follows the national curriculum plan, *The Knowledge Promotion*. According to the Education Act, students need instruction in Norwegian, English, math, social studies, and natural science in order to get a 'certificate of completed lower education for adults'<sup>4</sup>. However, § 4A-1 states that the education should be adapted to the individual's needs, which in § 4A-2 includes the right to special needs education if the student is struggling<sup>5</sup>.

Each municipality has the responsibility to organize and facilitate the education for adults. This means that each municipality decides, in accordance with the students' needs, whether the tutoring should be arranged in daytime or in the evening. If the municipality does not have enough resources, the students are transferred to the closest district within the county that offers education for adults<sup>6</sup>.

At the school represented in this research, there were 700 adult students. Minority background adults are mainly the students at this particular adult education centre. In research conducted by NOVA<sup>7</sup>, 80% of all municipalities in Norway stated that more than half of the students at adult education centres lacked English skills equivalent to the primary and lower secondary levels. However, 67% of the municipalities stated that over half of their minority

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/rapporter/educationmirror/the-educationmirror\\_english.pdf](http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/rapporter/educationmirror/the-educationmirror_english.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/b3b9e92cce6742c39581b661a019e504/education-act-norway-with-amendments-entered-2014-2.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>

[http://www.vox.no/contentassets/242644e044844c1ba1b6a21dddbd80a9/vox\\_speilet\\_kapittel\\_1.pdf](http://www.vox.no/contentassets/242644e044844c1ba1b6a21dddbd80a9/vox_speilet_kapittel_1.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/rapporter/2013/nettversjon-rapp7-13-2.pdf>

background learners complete their primary and lower education (Nova, 2013: 87). Normally, this group spends two to three years to complete their education. There are various reasons why the remainder do not complete their education. Some of the aspects that are pointed out in NOVA's research are lacking knowledge in Norwegian and English and personal matters.

## **3. Readers Theatre**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the RT method is defined and explained in section 3.2. Furthermore, section 3.3 provides examples of materials to use with RT. In section 3.4, two types of RT models are described. Finally, in section 3.5, RT is connected to the curriculum competence aims after 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **3.2 What is Readers Theatre?**

Drew (2013: 2) explains RT as ‘a method of oral communication which involves several readers reading aloud a text that had been divided into smaller units’. The scripts are present during rehearsal and performance, which makes it clear that the focus is upon the reading of the script (Black and Stave, 2007: 6). The main task is to breathe life into the RT script through intonation, reading pace, and to put emphasis on important words to create the correct meaning and atmosphere (Hoyt, 1992: 582).

Reading practice is at the heart of RT, but it also involves different aspects of language learning, such as oral language, listening, and sometimes also writing (Drew, 2013: 2; Rinehart, 1999: 75-76). There are pre-written RT scripts, but it is also possible to adapt other texts into RT scripts, or one can create one’s own scripts (Hoyt, 1992: 582). RT can be adapted so that it fits the needs of a specific group or class (Black and Stave, 2007: 4). Equally, if there is a significant difference in the reading levels within a class, it is possible to adjust the scripts so that they fit the individual reading abilities (Drew and Pedersen, 2010: 4). Black and Stave (2007: 3) point out that one of the benefits of using RT is its flexibility and it can be used with various text types, ages, presentation form and language.

This way of engaging with a text can be traced back to ancient Greece. According to Coger and White (1967: 10), national epics and poems, such as the Iliad and Odyssey, were recited by wandering minstrels called ‘rhapsodes’. The ‘rhapsodes’ would read the poems as a dialogue between two characters, sometimes even accompanied by music. This recitative art form from ancient Greece contains similar elements to that in RT, but the method has evolved



and developed into the contemporary form that is used today (Coger and White, 1967: 10-11).

RT scripts are divided into smaller parts and each part is divided between the members within the group (Drew, 2013: 3). The group members are given a role in the script, such as the narrator, a character, reader one, or reader two, depending on the type of script that is being read and the number of participants. The length of each role varies and some roles may appear more frequently than others (Black and Stave, 2007: 16).

In RT it is first and foremost the reading skill that is most important, and RT should not be confused with a regular drama piece, where lines are memorized. Therefore, there are limited props when performing an RT script (Black and Stave, 2007: 6; Shepard, 2004). The only requirement is the script. Costumes are not needed. In other words, Readers Theatre is not a visually demanding method to perform. Shepard (2004) states that ‘Readers Theatre frees the performers and the audience from the physical limitation of convention theatre, letting the imagination soar’<sup>8</sup>.

### **3.3 Materials to use for RT**

There are no rules or limits for what types of texts can be adapted into RT scripts. Narratives, fairytales, articles or historical documents can all be used as a basis for RT scripts (Black and Stave, 2007: 4). Narratives and literature that have been adapted into RT scripts, and factual texts from subjects such as science and social studies, can also be made into RT scripts (Flynn, 2004: 360; Young and Vardell, 1993: 398). Black and Stave (2007: 4) point out that songs, plays, and biographies can also be used as an inspiration or a basis for an RT script. Young and Rasinski (2009: 11) encourage the use of adapting all types of texts into RT because the students are then introduced to different genres and the teaching does not become monotonous. However, Martinez et al. (1999: 327) state that the texts one chooses for RT are of importance and can have a positive and negative effect on the implementation of RT. The scripts should be ‘within the readers reach’ so that the readers do not feel inadequate, but instead become motivated by RT (Martinez et al. 1999: 327).

When using RT as a method in the classroom, one can choose between pre-written scripts, adapted scripts, or self-written texts (Drew, 2013). Pre-written scripts are texts that have already been adapted or created for RT and are ready to be used. For example, there are

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.aaronshp.com/rt/Tips2.html>

RT scripts available on the Internet that one can download or buy. The benefit of using pre-written texts is that they are less time-consuming to conduct and they usually also include guidelines on where and how to place the readers. Shepard (2005) has produced many RT scripts for older learners (Shepard, 2005). The scripts are on various topics, which makes it easy to find scripts that are suitable for the group one is teaching (Drew, 2013).

Adapted scripts refer to texts that are converted into RT texts. The task of converting existing texts, such as speeches, articles and narratives into an RT script, can be done by both teachers and students (Drew, 2013). The final option is for learners or teachers to create their own scripts for RT. Coger and White (1967: 6-7) claim that creativity is one of the greatest strengths of RT. For example, the teacher or the students can create texts based on themes or topics that are in line with one or several competence aims in the *LK06* curriculum. According to Hoyt (1992: 582), it is generally the texts that are created by the students that have most educational value. The students learn multiple skills simultaneously; they choose topics, write, practise, and set up the performance. The final two options (i.e. adapted and self-written texts) take more time and can be a challenging task for the teacher to direct, but the benefit is that one more aspect in language development is integrated into RT, namely writing.

### **3.4 Two models of Readers Theatre**

Shepard (2004) categorizes Readers Theatre into two models: the ‘traditional model’ and the ‘developed model’. The two models are more or less distinguished by the readers’ degree of movement (Shepard, 2004).

### *The Traditional Model*

In the traditional model the readers are stationary during the performance and little or no movement is added. In Figure 1, the readers are placed in a semi-circle and the narrator is placed in the middle of all the readers (Drew and Pedersen, 2010: 7).

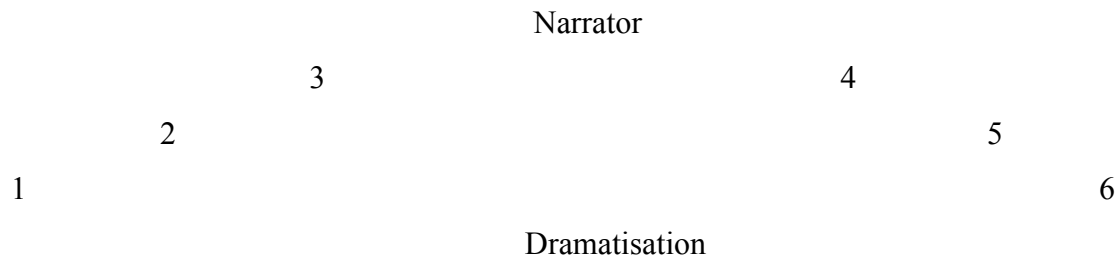


Figure one: A traditional RT model (from Drew and Pedersen, 2010).

The reading is systemized in a fixed order according to the positions of the readers: Narrator, Reader 1, Reader 6, Reader 2, Reader 5, Reader 3, Reader 4, Narrator. This order of reading is repeated until the RT script is finished (Drew and Pedersen, 2010: 7). The participants read the part that is connected to their number in the text and therefore get to read many times throughout the text.

The following is the beginning of the text adapted for Readers Theatre from the easy reader *The Swan Knight* (Drew et al., 2009).

Narrator (Stand) - It was in the days of a great King.

1 (Stand) - Anne was a young girl who lived with her father and mother in a little village.

6 (Stand) - Her father was a blacksmith and made horseshoes from metal.

2 (Stand) - He made weapons, too. Many knights came to their village to buy his armour.

5 (Stand) - Anne liked to watch her father making shiny things.

3 (Stand) - But her mother got angry.

4 (Stand) - She wanted Anne to help her in the dark kitchen.

Narrator: But Anne did not like to help in the house....

The organization of readers depends upon the size of the group and the roles presented in the RT script. In this traditional variant, the narrator is of great importance and is therefore placed in the middle. However, the size of the RT group may vary, and this type of formation may not always be the most logical one.

Movements are limited in the traditional form of RT. However, students may stand when it is their turn to read or, if they are standing, the reader may take a step forwards when reading his/her line. This makes it easier for the audience to follow who is reading (Drew, 2013). It is also possible to add small movements to illustrate certain points in the script. Drew (2013: 3) uses an example of a text on the topic of The American Civil Rights Movement, and states that dramatization can be used as a tool in order to exemplify and complement the reading. One could do this, for example, by adding a dramatization scene of a conversation between Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy (Drew, 2013). The dramatization then happens in front of the readers, as shown in Figure one, but with other students than those in the semi-circle.

### *The Developed Model*

In the developed model, some of the readers are more actively engaged by adding suitable movements to the script (Drew and Pedersen, 2012: 73). As depicted in Figure 2, the positions in the developed model may not be as fixed as in the traditional model, and the model allows more movement for those reading the roles of characters. The characters may play out some of the actions described in the text, while the narrators would usually stay in their fixed positions (Drew, 2013: 4). Small movements may also be added, such as walking or sitting, to illustrate the actions in the story. In the developed model, the script is usually held in one hand so that it becomes easier to use body language and gestures as an illustration-. In Figure 2, which is adapted from Roald Dahl's *Mr Twit's Revenge*, with four narrators and the roles of Mr Twit (C1) and Mrs Twit (C2), the narrators are in the same position from start to finish, while the positions of the characters are more flexible during the performance (Shepard, 2005:119)

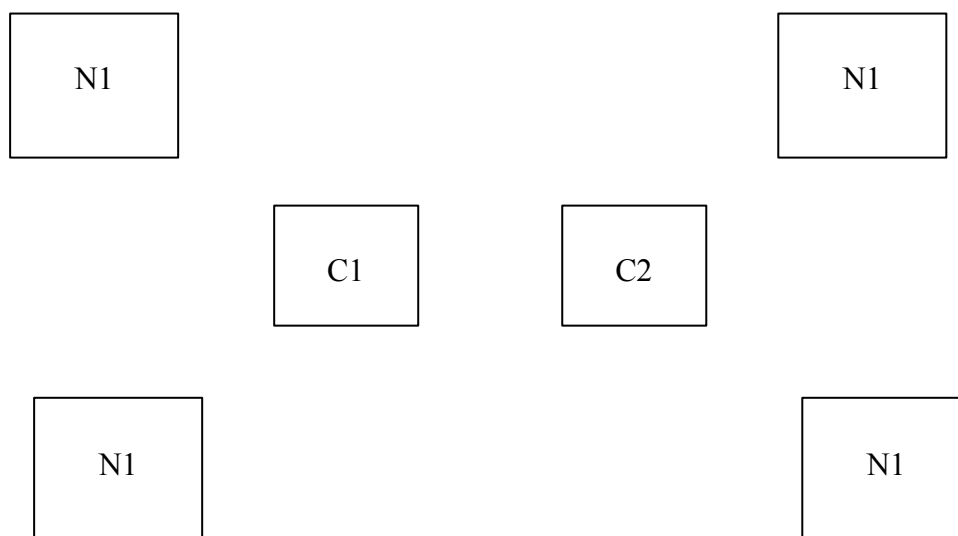


Figure two: The developed RT model (from Drew, 2013: 4)

Implementing RT into a classroom can be a demanding task in the beginning. It is the teacher's task to find or produce RT scripts and facilitate the process from rehearsal to performance (Black and Stave, 2007: 4). The goal is that when the students are familiar with the method, they will be able to choose or make RT scripts themselves and to direct the activity themselves. In other words, the purpose is to help students become autonomous learners (Black and Stave 2007: 4).

The students take on the role of performers, but they are also an audience to their peer groups within the class. The audience does not need to be their classmates; it is also possible to invite parents, the librarian, or other school classes. Another opportunity is take the performance out to nursing homes, local libraries, or community centres (Black and Stave, 2007: 4). Black and Stave (2007: 4) claim that for RT to become what it is intended to be, namely creating meaning of the text, all elements need to be present: the text, the performer and the audience. The audience's task is to visualize the texts by listening to the performers read and therefore the combination of audience and performers is an important factor. Actually, the goal of RT is to read the script so that the audience is able to imagine and visualize what is being read (Black and Stave, 2007: 6).

### 3.5 RT and the Knowledge Promotion Curriculum

As primary and lower secondary education for adults also follows the national curriculum plan, it is important that the method of RT meets the criteria and the competence aims for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level. The basic skills, which are applied and trained within every subject, are that students shall be able to express themselves in writing, be able to read, and use oral language for communicational purposes (*The Knowledge Promotion*).

In Readers Theatre, it is first and foremost the practice of the students' oral reading skill that is in focus. The Framework for Basic Skills (2012) divides reading into four sub-categories that the competence aims for reading are based upon. The students should be able to 'understand', 'find', 'interpret', and 'reflect and assess' various types of texts (Framework for Basic Skills, 2012). These sub-categories are visible within the English subject curriculum, which states that students should be familiar with different types of text material and be able to use different types of approaches to developing their reading skills.

RT can fulfill many of the competence aims after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. For example, one of the competence aims after 10<sup>th</sup> grade states that one should 'use the central patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and different types sentences in communication'. The students get to practise these aspects in RT.

One of the competence aims under the area Culture, society and literature says that students should be able to 'discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway'. RT scripts on these topics could be used as a variation to the regular instruction or textbook materials. The teacher or even students could also adapt textbook material and employ information about how they 'socialise in Great Britain' into the adapted version.

RT can also be arranged in such a way that the students develop their writing skills by adapting or writing the scripts themselves. In the current research, the students wrote scripts about their own cultures during the second cycle of RT.

In Table 1 below are some competence aims that are relevant to this thesis, as they can be connected to and fulfilled through the use of Readers Theatre.

Table 1: Curriculum competence aims in relation to RT

<b>Competence aims after 10<sup>th</sup> grade</b>	<b>In relation to RT</b>
<b>Language learning:</b> Use different situations, working methods and learning strategies to develop one's English learning skills	RT adds variation to regular reading instruction. In this method the students have to work together.
<b>Oral communication:</b> Use the central patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and different types of sentences in communication.	The students work actively to improve these aspects through rehearsing the scripts. In addition, it gives the teacher and peers the opportunity to assist the development of these aspects.
<b>Oral communication:</b> Understand the main content and details of different types of oral texts on different topics	The students practise their listening abilities when rehearsing with their group and as the audience of RT performances. They understand and learn how to speak within different contexts.
<b>Written communication:</b> Write different types of texts with structure and coherence	The students learn how to write a manuscript. They practise writing in the voice of the narrator and character. Also, the manuscripts need to be organized logically.
<b>Written communication:</b> Understand the main content and details of texts one has chosen	The students need to understand the content of the RT scripts in order to read with expression. If the students are producing the scripts themselves they also need to have knowledge and an understanding about the topic they are writing about.

## **4. Literature Review**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents theory that is relevant for this thesis. First of all, multilingualism is addressed in section 4.3, since the subjects in this case study have English as their third, fourth or fifth language. Furthermore, theory on the social aspect of learning, referred to as social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978: 86), is included in section 4.4, as RT is a group activity. In addition, the cognitive and affective benefits of RT, with reference to several studies in the field of RT, are presented in sections 4.6 and 4.7. Finally, section 4.8 presents studies on RT in Norway.

### **4.2 Multilingualism**

As globalisation becomes increasingly common, people are travelling and moving across language borders for various reasons. This makes it appear as though learning more than one language is useful, if not necessary in some cases (Hammarberg, 2001: 21). Across different social, educational and occupational contexts, additional language skills are of great interactive value. Considering these different situations, being multilingual is not unusual in today's society. Being multilingual means that one has 'knowledge of three or more languages' (Hammarberg, 2001: 21). According to Hammarberg (2001: 21), one has reason to believe that bilingualism or multilingualism is as common, or even more so, than monolingualism.

In Norway, multilingualism is not an uncommon phenomenon either. In recent years, nearly 10 percent of the Norwegian population have foreign citizenship<sup>9</sup>. Depending on their native language(s), the majority of these immigrants study English as their third, fourth or fifth language, as opposed to Norwegians, who learn English as their second language. Unless one of the parents or both are from another country, English will be a Norwegian child's second language.

Multilingual speakers are known as skilled and experienced language learners (Cenoz et al., 2001:1). However, Trudgill (2000: 122-123) argues that linguistic minorities who are

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<sup>9</sup><http://www.ssb.no/befolkning/statistikker/folkemengde>



expected to acquire two additional languages in order to communicate in the country they live in may find this difficult, especially if the linguistic difference between their native language and the target language is great (Trudgill, 2000: 123). For example, some of the students in this research come from the Middle East and Asian cultures and have to learn a new writing system, which in this case would be the Latin alphabet that English and Norwegian is based upon (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002: 117-118), in addition to learning a new language. The students in this research are multilingual and they are dependent on acquiring other languages than their mother tongue in order to communicate and socialize in different arenas in Norway.

The area of multilingualism has not been researched as much as the learning of a second language (Cenoz et al., 2001: 2). It has been a common belief among language scholars that when learning a new language the mother tongue is often used as the mother tongue has the greatest influence when learning new languages. However, studies on third language acquisition show that L2 (s) might be more significant than first presumed when acquiring a third language or more (Hammarberg, 2001: 22).

Nowadays, scholars agree that all the languages known to the learners, i.e. the mother tongue and the second language(s), may function as source languages when learning new languages (De Angelis and Selinker, 2001: 44; Cenoz, 2001: 8). This is referred to as cross-linguistic influence (Sharwood Smith and Kellerman, 1986, cited in Cenoz, et al., 2001: 1). In other words, language systems the learners are familiar with function as the basis for constructing words and sentences in the target language (De Angelis and Selinker, 2001: 42-43) therefore argue that acquiring a third language or more can be difficult because the L1 and L2(s) may interfere with the production of language in L3 (Cenoz, 2001)

According to Hammarberg (2001: 22), one of the source languages is often more dominant than the other(s). There are various factors that determine if it is the L1 or L2 (s) that is favoured over the other. Some factors affecting the choice of source language may be based on typological similarity and L2 status (Hammarberg, 2001: 22-23).

Research shows that when learning a third language or more, it is not necessarily the mother tongue they will be used as a source language (Hammarberg, 2001: 22). Instead, language learners use their second language(s) if it is more similar, or typologically more alike the third language. For example, one project conducted on 90 young learners of English who had Spanish or Basque as their native language (Cenoz, 2001: 11), examined the role of L2 on L3 learning. For 23 percent of the participants, Spanish was the first language, 44 percent had Basque as their first language, whereas the remaining participants considered

both languages as their first. The participants in the research transferred words from Spanish more frequently than from Basque, even though the majority of students had Basque as their native language, or one of their native languages. This could be explained by the fact that Spanish 'is typologically closer to English than Basque' (Cenoz, 2001: 18). However, one cannot dismiss it as only an effect of its typological closeness to English, since Spanish was also a second language to many of the participants. Even though the effect of the typological similarity between Spanish and English is questionable in this case, it reveals that typological likeness is a stronger influence than L2 status (Cenoz, 2001: 18).

Furthermore, research on cross-linguistic influence has revealed that the L2 status is of great importance in the learning of a third language. One example of this is a study that was conducted on a French - Canadian woman and a British man, who were both learners of Italian (De Angelis and Selinker, 2001: 47-48). The French- Canadian woman had three interlanguages: English, Spanish and Italian, whereas the British man had two: Spanish and Italian. What the two subjects had in common was that both used Spanish as a reference when learning Italian. Their Spanish was traceable throughout their production of words and phrases in Italian. Out of the different interlanguages they had, Spanish was the language that was typologically closest to Italian, and it may be the reason for the influence of Spanish (De Angelis and Selinker, 2001). However, De Angelis and Selinker (2001: 56) point out that the learners' targeted language might be influenced by the L2(s) since a second language(s) may sound more foreign. Furthermore, learners 'do not want to sound as if they are speaking their native language' and therefore an L2 language that they consider more similar to the targeted language is favoured over the learners' L1, as the learners believe it to be more closely linked with the language they are now attempting to acquire (De Angelis and Selinker, 2001: 56). In the case of the two learners of Italian, both subjects used Spanish grammar rules and even Spanish words when they were lacking knowledge in the target language, Italian. The purpose of constructing words and phrases based on the background language, Spanish, may be because it is perceived to be more similar and sounds more correct (De Angelis and Selinker, 2001: 56).

### 4.3 Zone of Proximal Development

RT can be related to Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which states that children develop and learn through social interaction (Slavin, 2012: 42). Vygotsky (1978: 86) believed that children learn best when it is within the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). The ZPD is described 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. (Vygotsky 1978: 86)

The ZPD represents what students are able to do with assistance from more knowledgeable people. Vygotsky (1978: 85) exemplifies the ZPD by referring to two ten-year-old students who performed equally on tests which they solved independently. At first, the two students seemed to be on the same cognitive level because both solved problems at the level of an eight-year-old. However, when they were assisted by an adult, the outcome was different. One of them was able to find the solutions to tasks similar to what a twelve-year-old could solve, while the other student solved tasks corresponding to a nine-year-old. Independently, these students achieved the same results, but with support from an adult, one of them performed better than the other. According to Vygotsky (1978: 86) these students were no longer on the same cognitive level.

When one has the competence needed to solve tasks without assistance, it is because the operations and processes have matured. This is referred to as 'the actual development' (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). However, the reason why these students needed guidance was because the skills needed to solve more complicated tasks had not yet matured, but were still in formation (Vygotsky, 1978: 87). At first, the children may be dependent on a more proficient learner to understand how to solve a specific task, but eventually they are able to overcome the task independently (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). Slavin (2012: 42) refers to this as 'scaffolding'. Thus, the ZPD has to do with what is still in the process of maturing, but with guidance, one is eventually able to carry out the task independently (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). Vygotsky puts it like this: 'What a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself

tomorrow (1978: 87)' This notion establishes an idea of what the student is able to do on their own in the near future.

#### 4.3.1 ZPD in Relation to RT

RT is an optimal method in the light of Vygotsky's theory of the ZPD. As mentioned, the core of his ZPD concept is that development is to a great extent the result of input from more proficient peers or adults (Slavin, 2012: 41; Vygotsky, 1978). Slavin (2012: 42) states that 'Vygotsky's theories support the use of cooperative learning strategies in which children work together to help one another learn'. RT creates a platform where it is natural to provide guidance and feedback when it is needed (Black and Stave, 2007). Various proficiency levels are usually represented within each group, which makes it possible for students to assist each other. It is especially useful for the less skilled readers, who can get support and input from the teacher and more skilled readers within a safe environment.

According to Vygotsky (1978:88), people have the ability to imitate and follow the example of other students as long as it is within the students' ZPD. Vygotsky links this process to how children imitate their parents and siblings when learning how to speak. At first, they listen and pick up on how people around them speak and then they try to copy them. As for RT, the teacher or experienced readers can model fluent reading to students who are striving to become fluent. For example, students who mispronounce or decode words incorrectly can listen to and imitate more proficient members of the group. This notion establishes a debate on whether or not ZPD and imitation should be given higher priority in educational instruction (Vygotsky, 1978: 87).

Young and Rasinski (2009: 6) point out that RT provides students with a unique opportunity to help each other become more fluent readers. Martinez et al. (1999: 333) share the view of Young and Rasinski (2009), and state that RT functions as a 'vehicle for direct explanation, feedback and effective modeling'. Garret and O'Conner (2010) observed that the students corrected one another's pronunciation mistakes, an observation also confirmed in several other studies (e.g. Corcoran and David, 2005; Hoyt, 1992; Myrset, 2014). In the study by Garrett and O'Conner (2010: 12), when practising the script, one of the students decoded incorrectly and read 'a fox got my shoes', instead of 'a fox got my socks'. Apparently, a peer corrected the mistake and together they reread the phrase. This time the more proficient

students also modelled how to read with expression (Garrett and O’Conner, 2010: 12). In this particular incident, when the student was struggling with word identification, it was helpful to get ‘insight into one another’s reasoning process and find out how more experienced people solve problems’ (Slavin, 2012: 42).

As mentioned, imitation is not possible if it is not within the students’ ZPD. Therefore it becomes important to choose scripts that are within the ZPD, meaning that the texts can be slightly above the students’ current level of proficiency. Black and Stave (2007: 12) state that RT improves students’ vocabulary because they are working together and students can help one another. However, they underline the importance of selecting scripts that suit the students’ proficiency levels (Black and Stave, 2007).

#### **4.5 The cognitive and affective benefits of RT**

When researching the topic of RT, it is reasonable to look at its cognitive and affective benefits. Other studies (e.g. Black and Stave, 2007; Drew and Pedersen 2010; Myrset, 2014; Pettersen, 2013) have shown how RT can improve fluency, comprehension, motivation, and attitudes. These aspects of reading will be addressed in connection with studies on RT.

##### **4.5.1 RT and Fluency**

Several studies show that RT is an effective method when the goal is to develop fluency (Black and Stave, 2007; Flynn, 2004; Martinez et al., 1999; Rasinski, 2012). Before these studies are presented, the term ‘fluency’ needs to be explained.

Black and Stave (2007: 9) define fluency as ‘the ability to read accurately and with expression, pacing and ease’. A fluent reader would then be someone who reads effortlessly and does not hesitate through a text. However, Rasinski (2012: 516) claims that in general most people associate fluency with the ability to read fast. The reason why people link fluency to reading speed has to do with the way fluency is measured. When measuring fluency, it is often the readers’ reading rate and accuracy that is in focus (Samuels, 1997: 377). For example, teachers recall students who ask for a stopwatch in order to measure the

number of words they are able to read within a minute (Rasinski, 2012: 517; Samuels, 1997: 377). Consequently, fluency instruction has become a misunderstood term and developed a negative reputation among teachers (Rasinski, 2012).

However, Rasinski (2012: 517) proposes that fluency is a skill that entails other characteristics than speed and accuracy by stating that ‘fluency is reading with and for meaning’. This supports Black and Stave’s (2007) definition; fluency extends beyond speed and accuracy and includes correct use of intonation to create meaning. Today most scholars agree that there are several layers of the term fluency. Accuracy, automaticity and expressive reading are all elements needed to become fluent. Subsequently, fluency will result in comprehension (Rasinski, 2006: 704).

According to Rasinski (2012: 517), there are two main factors that are recognizable in a fluent reader: automaticity and prosody. In order to become a fluent reader the process of reading needs to become automatic. Rasinski (2012: 517) explains automaticity as the ‘ability to recognize words automatically or effortlessly’. For example, readers who struggle through an RT script trying to piece together the letters in a word, and focus all their energy on word recognition and pronunciation, do not have energy left to focus on creating meaning.

The other factor, prosody, means to read with expression (2007: 519). Reading with expression is often stressed when describing fluency (Black and Stave, 2007), and is also an indication of ‘higher levels of oral reading’ (Zutell and Rasinski, 1991 cited in Rinehart, 1999: 85). RT gives the students the chance to rehearse on prosody when reading. For example, one study on RT found that the average student’s ability to read with expression increased by 20 percent (Young and Rasinski, 2009: 11).

A method that is well-known for developing fluency is *repeated reading* (Samuels, 1997). The phrase itself ‘repeated reading’ suggests its meaning, which is to read the same passage or text over and over again. The concept of RT is built upon the repeated readings of the script, which is beneficial for developing sight vocabulary, automaticity, pronunciation, increased reading rate, and comprehension (Black and Stave, 2007; Cohen, 2011:20; Rinehart, 1999; Samuels, 1997; Tyler and Chard, 2000). Samuels (1997: 380) compares the notion of repeated readings to athletes who need to practise their skills in order to become better athletes. In the same way that athletes need to practise their skill, students need to practise their reading skills in order for the process to become automatic.

According to Samuels (1997: 377), there are many benefits of repeated readings. His most significant finding was that when the students were given new texts after practising RT,

the process of achieving fluency was shorter and less rereading was necessary than before (Samuels, 1997: 377). This finding is also supported by Cohen (2011: 20), who reported that students read more accurately and faster because of the repeated reading method. It also applied when the students were given new texts (Cohen, 2011:20). Repeated reading not only improves reading fluency in the targeted text, but it supposedly has effects on new texts and develops fluency in general (Samuels, 1997: 377).

For example, a study conducted in a second-grade class showed that nearly all of the students exposed to RT developed in fluency (Martinez et al., 1999). Overall, these second-graders produced 17 more words per minute than what they did prior to the study. Some students developed more than others; one subject had an increase from 74 words per minute to 125 words per minute due to the repeated readings (Martinez et al., 1999:331). When reading the same passage multiple times the reading naturally improved.

Another research project, performed on 29 monolingual second grade students in English, also confirms that RT has a positive effect on the students' reading rate and fluency (Young and Rasinski, 2009). RT was chosen as a method because it gave the teachers the opportunity to help and guide the students during reading practice in order to strengthen their reading skill. The findings showed that the average student read twice as fast after the RT project than before (Young and Rasinski, 2009: 10). The goal of RT in the project was to emphasize reading with expression to impart meaning. As a result of the repeated readings, the students practised the skills of recognizing words and the students' automaticity improved. In the same study, it was noticeable that RT fostered students' prosody (Young and Rasinski, 2009: 11).

Repeated readings of a text have been debated on the grounds that it might be boring practising reading multiple times. However, research shows that students become motivated when they notice their progress (Samuels, 1997: 378). Besides, with RT, the performance gives the readers an authentic reason for rehearsing their scripts multiple times (Rasinski, 2012; Tyler and Chard, 2000). The fact that the script is being performed in front of an audience can create extra motivation for performing well. Rehearsing and re-reading becomes a necessity in order to ensure that the reading is fluent and that meaning is conveyed during the performance (Martinez et al., 1999: 333).

These empirical studies show that RT should be given higher priority in the classroom for a number of reasons. One of the reasons is that students who are unable to read fluently tend to dislike reading because they do not master it (Cohen, 2011:20). Cohen (2011: 20)

notes that ‘reading ability and reading confidence are very closely related’, and therefore fluency should be a higher priority within the classroom.

#### 4.5.2 RT and Comprehension

Reading is neither informative nor pleasurable if one is not able to get an understanding of the text. Therefore, the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension (Rasinski, 2012: 517). Kabilan and Kamarudin (2010: 147-149) found that the students who struggled to understand literary texts were the ones who did not enjoy English literature. However, after RT the students’ interest in reading changed. RT helped the students develop their comprehension skills as they understood more for every time they read the script.

As mentioned, comprehension is closely linked to fluency (Samuels, 1997: 379). Readers who are unable to read fluently do not have any ‘cognitive energy’ left to focus on comprehension (Raskinski, 2012: 517). According to Laberge and Samuels (1974), cited in Pikulski and Chard (2005: 511), this is because humans are unable to focus on both decoding and comprehension at the same time, unless one of the processes had become automatic. If the skill is not automatic, the reader must take turns and focus entirely on decoding before comprehension. The goal is then to help students read fluently instead of in a staccato-manner (Black and Stave, 2007: 9).

According to Black and Stave (2007: 12) ‘vocabulary development occurs, not through assigned word lists but through repeated encounters with words in natural contexts’. The foundation of RT is rehearsal, which serves the purpose of learning vocabulary and creating meaning of the RT scripts. The first time the students read an RT script they may not fully understand it because their attention is on word identification and they are trying to connect the right sounds to the letters (Ehri 1995,1998 cited in Pukulski and Chard, 2005:512). However, they may make more sense the second time they read it (Samuels, 1997:379). In other words, if the students do not decode automatically, it will slow down the comprehension process (Cohen, 2011: 25).

Since comprehension is a goal (Rasinski, 2012: 517), one should choose scripts that are within the students’ instructional level (Martinez et al., 1999: 327;). Scripts that are slightly above the students’ proficiency make the process of decoding manageable and will prompt fluency (Martinez et al., 1999; Samuels, 1997). Hedge (2000: 193) also argues for the



use of texts that are within the students' instructional level. Skilled readers then have the possibility to guess the meaning of up to 60-80 per cent of the unfamiliar words (Hedge, 2000: 193). In this process, learners use knowledge they are already in possession of in order to understand the overall meaning of the text. Black and Stave (2007: 12) share Hedge's view, and think that the RT script should be within the readers' instructional level. Then the students can use semantic and syntactic clues to make sense of the words unknown to them (Black and Stave, 2007: 12). This is also referred to as the 'top-down approach', or 'schematic knowledge' (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:75). Drew and Sørheim (2009: 75) encourage students to use existing knowledge to support comprehension.

Studies have found that comprehension is improved with RT, as RT helped the students to visualize the narrative (Kabilan and Kamarudin, 2010:152, Martinez et al., 1999: 333). The purpose of RT is that the characters' tone and characteristics are expressed through the reading. This means that the students have to acquaint themselves and comprehend the role they are reading in order to be get to know the personality of the character (Martinez et al., 1999: 333).

#### 4.5.3 RT and Motivation

Motivation is essential when the goal is to learn a new language (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 21). Drew and Sørheim (2009:21) refer to Gardner and Lambert (1972), who distinguish between *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation. If a person is fascinated by a specific language or culture and wants to acquire that language out of interest, it is referred to as *integrative* motivation. However, if a person wants to acquire a language for the purpose of external factors, for example a job or moving to another country, the motivation is *instrumental* (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 21). Normally, it is a combination of these two that makes the most influence on people's motivation.

Motivation in the educational arena, on the other hand, is also dependent upon instructional methods, materials, and teacher- student relations (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 21). The teacher's task is to find different methods and strategies that increase students' motivation. A review of research on RT shows that it has the potential to increase students' motivation to read (Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Hoyt,1992; Myrset, 2014; Uthman, 2002; Young and Rasinski, 2009).

Student motivation can change if learning is fun, relevant and if they experience success (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 21; Hedge, 2000: 23). In the preparation time for an RT performance, the students are given ample time to rehearse. It gives both skilled and less skilled readers a chance to succeed and perform well. Drew and Pedersen (2012) found that RT motivated the students to rehearse their reading skills. In this study the students were so eager to perform well that they asked the teacher help them after school hours. In addition, Martinez et al. (1999: 326) found that students experienced the rehearsals as ‘purposeful and fun’ due to the fact they were eventually going to perform.

Furthermore, Martinez et al. (1999: 333) observed that the readers’ confidence increased due to the improved results they experienced from the re-readings of the scripts. For every time they read the script, the students were able to decode faster and their fluency improved. One of the subjects stated that ‘I never thought I could be a star, but I was the BEST reader today’ (Martinez et al., 1999: 333).

Uthman (2002: 56) also discovered that students who had previously showed clear signs of anxiety for reading aloud were able to put aside and forget the anxiety through RT. The students felt responsibility to perform well since they were part of a group and they therefore helped each other to overcome difficulties. Other reading methods rarely facilitate reading practice to the same degree as RT and this gives the weaker students the opportunity to perform well (Rinehart, 1999: 85). Rinehart (1999) found that students who had doubted their reading ability gained confidence during the rehearsal period, which in itself was motivational.

An essential factor for creating a successful RT experience is to let the students pick their own scripts. According to Turner and Paris (1995: 664-665), students who have the opportunity to choose the texts they want to read will put more effort into practising the reading and it will prompt responsibility. For example, Young and Rasinski (2009: 8) adapted humorous child poetry as RT scripts to evoke the desire to read. Also Worthy and Prater (2002: 296) were surprised to see in particular one of the unmotivated and struggling students showing genuine interest in reading when working with RT. All the students were allowed to choose the scripts they liked the most, which had a motivational effect on this particular struggling student. He was motivated to rehearse a script that he had chosen, and showed up in class reading his part fluently.

Others may find the group dynamics in RT motivating (Tyler and Chard, 2000: 166). RT gives a platform for group work and it forces the students to collaborate (Black and Stave,

2007:14). The group have to collaborate on dividing the roles between them. The students then get experience from working in groups and organizing, in addition to being readers and performers (Black and Stave, 2007: 10). RT can become motivating because it ensures that none of the group members end up doing everything alone. Everyone has to participate and everyone is given a role, which varies in length and complexity. This characteristic is part of what makes RT rather unique. It ensures that the workload does not lie simply on a few of the members. At the same time, students' needs are taken into consideration through the selection of characters within the script (Tyler and Chard, 2000: 166).

#### 4.5.4 RT and Attitude

Attitude could be defined as a 'disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event' (Ajzen, 1988, cited in Day and Bamford, 1998: 22). Put differently, it is the attitude one has towards someone or something. On the subject of RT, this would be the students' attitudes towards RT as a reading method. The positive aspect of attitudes is they can change. The process of improving attitudes is easier if one is able to identify their source (Day and Bamford, 1998: 22). For example, some may have negative attitudes towards reading because they are poor readers.

There is a general agreement that attitude is crucial in language learning. However, teachers seem to forget and neglect giving attention to students' attitudes when teaching (Day and Bamford, 1998: 21). Day and Bamford (1998: 23) refers to Mathewson's (1994) 'Model of attitude influence upon reading and learning how to read' in a second language, and argues that there are four factors that determine students' attitudes. These are first language reading attitudes, earlier experiences of learning a new language, opinions of the language, culture and people, and, finally, the classroom environment (Day and Bamford, 1998: 23). In relation to the present study, these aspects can have a significant effect on students' attitudes towards RT.

Firstly, the theory claims that students' attitudes to their mother tongue, negative and positive, affect their attitude within a second language learning context. Secondly, students can develop negative attitudes towards second language learning if they have tried before but failed. In the context of RT, this means that if a student struggles to learn English in general, RT may sound overwhelming. Thirdly, since the majority of the subjects in this study had just

started learning Norwegian and learning about the Norwegian society, they may not yet have a positive attitude to learning another language and culture, in this case English. The subjects already had to learn Norwegian, which might affect their attitude towards learning English as an additional second language. Last but not least, if the classroom environment is not uplifting, and social relations hinder learning environments, students can become ignorant and develop negative attitudes (Day and Bamford, 1998: 23-25)

RT has the potential to change students' attitudes towards reading (Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Rasinski, 2006; Worthy and Prater; 2002). According to Black and Stave (2007), the students are not so concerned about their labels as skilled or less skilled readers in RT because the focus is upon succeeding as a group. When the group perform well, the 'students gain a sense of pride and satisfaction' and the students' attitudes change (Black and Stave, 2007: 14).

Furthermore, Rinehart (1999: 85) also observed that students' negative attitudes altered when they finally had the chance to impress their group and peers. This aspect sparked off a greater interest to do well. In another study, Worthy and Prater (2002: 294) found that the students did not only maintain positive attitudes towards RT, but that there was an increased willingness to read in general. Martinez et al. (1999:333) also discovered that the students' enthusiasm for reading increased with RT. The students were suddenly eager to go to the library to read and perfect the craft (Martinez et al., 1999: 333)

Corcoran and Davis (2005: 110) concluded in her study that RT benefitted students' attitudes. In her study, there were pre- and post-tests conducted to measure twelve students' attitudes towards reading. In the pre-tests, forty-five percent stated that maths was the most interesting subject, whereas only 18 percent chose reading. However, after the students had been exposed to RT for six weeks, the post-tests showed that 37 percent now favoured Readers Theatre (Corcoran and Davis, 2005: 109). They were also asked how RT made them feel about their own reading. 97 percent stated that they were very excited about it (Corcoran and Davis, 2005: 110).

#### **4.6 Oral Language Skills and Listening Skills**

One of the aims of RT is to develop the students' oral communication skills (Black and Stave, 2007:). Drew and Sørheim (2009: 46) state that oral language consists of two skills, namely

speaking and listening. Both skills are important for communication and should be emphasized in foreign language classrooms (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 46). These two skills are practised through RT as students take on the roles of both performers and listeners (Black and Stave, 2007:7).

Research shows that the students who have a negative association with reading aloud, have often practised a method called ‘round robin oral reading’ (Rasinski and Hoffman, 2003: 512). In ‘round robin oral reading’, the teachers randomly pick students to read orally from a text. When the students are unprepared and uncertain of when or if they have to read out loud, it causes anxiety among many students (Rasinski and Hoffman, 2003: 512). However, the students who have the chance to prepare and know what part they are going to read often report reading as a positive experience.

As performers, the goal is that students learn how to use their voice as a communication tool so that the audience understand what is being read. The reader must speak clearly, decode and pronounce correctly in order to successfully convey meaning (Black and Stave, 2007: 7). In addition, oral activities allow students to practise reading with prosody (Hudson et al., 2005:704). According to Hudson et al. (2005: 707), prosody indicates students’ comprehension level due to the fact that ‘prosodic readers understand what they read and make it easier for others as well’. Oral activities such as RT, allow teachers and peers to observe how students are managing and give feedback to their reading (Rasinski and Hoffman, 2003: 519).

Black and Stave (2007:7) state the method of repeated reading is even better combined with an oral activity like RT. Black and Stave (2007:7) refer to Post (1971), who states that a student who is struggling to understand a text when it is read silently ‘may find it much easier to grasp when he reads it out loud or when it is read to him by a student who understands it’.

Another reason why oral rereading strengthens the students’ comprehension and fluency skills is that they have to get inside the role they are reading. In order to become the character or narrator in the script, they have to dig deeper and understand how it thinks, behaves and speaks. Black and Stave (2007: 7) point out that ‘just as in real life, language changes according to the status, role, or mood of the character’ and therefore the students’ speech must suit the role they are reading. For example, Kabilan and Kamarudin (2010: 152) found that RT helped the students visualize the narrative. The purpose of RT is that the characters’ tone and characteristics are expressed through the reading. That means that the

students have to acquaint themselves and comprehend the role they are reading in order to get to know the personality of the character (Martinez et al.,1999: 3).

In RT, the students also practise their listening skills (Black and Stave, 2007: 8). According to Drew and Sørheim (2009: 47), listening is essential in language learning. One cannot learn a language without listening to how people speak. This also applies when learning to speak one's own native language. As audience to an RT performance, students have to be able to recognize sounds, vocabulary and phrases to comprehend what is being read (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 47). Students pay attention and listen to the performance not only to get an understanding, but also for entertainment, also known as aesthetic and efferent listening skills (Black and Stave 2007:8). Black and Stave (2007: 6) state that 'listening to such performances enables them to understand literature or the written text beyond the medium of the print'. Also as performers, listening skills are developed. When performing readers have to listen carefully to the other group members in order to know when it is their turn to read.

#### **4.7 RT in the Norwegian context**

The majority of studies on the effects of RT have been in relation to the learning of English as a mother tongue. However, in recent years, some research has also been conducted in Norwegian classrooms to find out the effects of RT in foreign language contexts (Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Pettersen, 2013; Myrset, 2014)

A qualitative study conducted by Myrset (2014) on a class of 6<sup>th</sup> graders in a Norwegian EFL class showed that RT had an effect on the students' cognitive and affective skills. This was a typical Norwegian class, where the proficiency level varied greatly. First, the students were exposed to pre-written scripts, then they wrote their own scripts about Christmas.

When the students were asked to point out the areas in which they had improved the most, they pointed out that RT had developed their vocabulary and improved their pronunciation. In the beginning, Myrset (2014: 90) noticed that the students often stopped before difficult and unfamiliar words, especially the struggling learners. However, from rehearsal to performance there was a significant decrease in the number of stops because the students were able to decode automatically. Myrset (2014) observed that the students helped

each other with mispronounced words. It should be noted that the teachers and the researcher also assisted the students' reading.

Myrset (2014: 106) pointed out that the biggest reward was to see how the students' motivation to read English grew with the use of RT. The motivational effect was one of the researcher's main findings. The teacher was of the same mind and stated that RT was a method she would definitely use again. One of the students even stated that it had 'been the most fun English lessons I have ever had' (Myrset, 2014: 83). The students were eager to work with RT and would ask the researcher when they could start rehearse again.

Another study examined the benefits of RT together with low-skilled learners in the 8th and 9th grade (Drew and Pedersen, 2010). The subjects' abilities in English were rather weak and therefore the students had chosen to take an additional English course called 'engelsk fordypning' (English specialization). This is an optional subject instead of learning a second foreign language, such as Spanish, German or French. The teacher was surprised how RT helped the students' proficiency even after a very short amount of time (Drew and Pedersen, 2010: 13). One of the reasons was that RT created a platform where the students felt they could easily ask the teacher for help. The students were eager to have their teacher model how certain words were pronounced and how to read with prosody (Drew and Pedersen, 2010:13). Moreover, RT allowed the students to rehearse words and phrases until they were able to read fluently. The students' motivation flourished and their proficiency got better (Drew and Pedersen, 2010: 15).

#### **4.8 RT with the struggling readers**

A good deal of research on Readers Theatre has been carried out in order to investigate the effectiveness of RT on learners who are struggling to read (e.g. Rinehart; 1999; Uthman, 2002). Struggling readers lack the ability to identify words instantly and therefore read word by word (Black and Stave: 2007: 9). Hudson et al. (2005:704) further note that their reading is 'monotone without expression or with inappropriate phrasing'. It hinders them from focusing on meaning, which in turn takes away the pleasure of reading (Rasinski, 2012: 517). Therefore, reading can easily become a boring and frustrating process that leads to unmotivated students (Cohen 2011; Tyler and Chard, 2000; Samuels, 1997).

Today, repeated readings are used in all types of classroom using RT, but the principle was actually first intended for struggling readers (Cohen, 2011:21). When reading the same part numerous times, the students can learn how difficult words are pronounced and are able to decode automatically. This is confirmed by Uthman's (2002: 56) study on the benefits of RT together with at-risk students. The students learnt new vocabulary and their fluency skills improved as they got more and more familiar with the scripts (Uthman, 2002: 56). Rinehart's (1999) research on RT in the context of struggling learners also shows that less-skilled readers also benefit from RT. For example, Rinehart (1999: 85) reports that the less-skilled students in the study were able to read more fluently due to the repeated readings of the text. RT gave them the opportunity 'al footing with better readers' (Rinehart, 1999: 85)

Students who have reading problems tend to read less because they do not enjoy it (Cohen, 2011:20). In RT, struggling students are not burdened with long and complex texts. Instead, the students have the opportunity to choose between various parts that vary in difficulty (Tyler and Chard, 2000: 166). Uthman (2002: 57) expressed the view that RT benefited the struggling learners because they had the opportunity to choose a smaller role. Now, the struggling students who had never wanted to read aloud, suddenly took initiative themselves to do so. RT provides an opportunity for all readers to have a positive reading experience, which in turn strengthens even struggling students' motivation (Martinez et al., 1999, Tyler and Chard, 2000).

Another aspect of RT is that it can be used to introduce struggling readers to different kinds of text (Young and Rasinski, 2009: 11). Young and Rasinski (2009: 11) state that RT was valuable because the struggling readers became familiar with different types of genres, such as fairy tales and poems. Martinez et al. (1999: 326) used RT as a tool to make literature more interesting and to inspire learners to read more.

#### **4.9 Research into curriculum-based RT**

Non-fiction material can also be made into RT scripts (Stewart, 2010: 80). Studies show that scripts written or adapted from curriculum material can be suitable for RT (Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Pettersen, 2013; Stewart, 2010). In addition, they can make textbook material easier to understand and they may give students a more pleasurable reading experience (Young and Vardell, 1993: 397).



Stewart (2010: 80) was looking for a method that could make her science classes more exciting and fun, so she adapted the material into RT scripts. The students took on roles as the sun, planets and animals. This helped them get other perspectives on nature. For example, by taking on the role of a snake, the students get a glimpse of its life and surroundings. According to Stewart (2010: 80), RT 'makes reading practise an adventure instead of a chore'.

Likewise, Flynn (2004) states that curriculum based RT scripts have great potential, as students gain information in a fun way. Flynn's (2004) study shows that when RT was implemented into a history class, the students performed better on tests. In this particular case, the RT scripts included facts and concepts presented in the US Bill Of Rights (Flynn, 2004: 363). The teacher assured that the scripts met the educational standards, which in a Norwegian context would translate into the curriculum aims described in the *LK06* curriculum. Since information was incorporated into dialogues or told by the narrator, the students got a deeper understanding of what happened when the 'Bill Of Rights' came to be. The students were not only practising their reading skills, but were learning curriculum material at the same time (Flynn, 2004: 360).

In addition to offering the students a more realistic description of events, the information was stored in the long-term memory, as the scripts were read multiple times. It may not have been as easy getting the students to read a chapter from a textbook as many times as they did when rehearsing for the RT performance. Flynn (2004: 363) points out that RT should be interesting and that humorous comments can be used to emphasise certain points. The students were likely to remember ideas, concepts and events, if it made them laugh or had an impact on their emotions (Flynn, 2004: 363).

Curriculum-based RT scripts have been researched also in second language learning contexts (Pettersen, 2013). Pettersen (2013: 5) researched the effectiveness of using content-based RT as a method in an 8th grade EFL classroom in Norway. Pettersen (2013: 59) observed that the students seemed to enjoy working in groups instead of producing texts alone and that it added variation to the regular classroom instruction. Pettersen (2013) concluded that content-based RT scripts could be used as a supplement or even replace oral presentations and regular classroom instruction.

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the methods used to answer the research questions will be described.

The research questions are:

1. How did the minority background adult learners experience the use of RT?
2. What were the benefits and challenges of RT for the learners involved?

Qualitative research was used in order to answer the research questions. This chapter aims to give a description of the qualitative research methods (section 5.2 and 5.3) and explain why they were used in this case study (section 5.4). The specifics of how the study was conducted are presented in detail (section 5.5, 5.6, 5.7). Finally, research ethics, validity and reliability of the research are addressed.

### **5.2 Research methods**

In research one distinguishes between three types of methods: quantitative, qualitative or mixed methodologies. In quantitative research the emphasis is on collecting numerical data to base the research on (Dörnyei, 2007: 32). Through quantitative research methods the goal is to use large-scale measurements to ‘capture common features’ within a group (Dörnyei, 2007:33).

This contrasts with qualitative research, where the focus is upon the individual human experience rather than the masses (Dörnyei, 2007: 126). Dörnyei (2007: 38) explains qualitative research as following:

Qualitative research is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals and thus the explicit goal of research is to explore the participants' views of the situation being studied.

Qualitative research is narrower than quantitative research and the aim is to describe and explain how individuals react and experience the situation that is under investigation (Dörnyei, 2007: 126). In the present case, it means finding out and observing how adults respond to and experience working with RT.

In mixed-methods research, quantitative and qualitative research methods are combined and used in the study (Dörnyei, 2007: 42). The benefit of mixed methodologies is that the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods are combined and provide rich data to base the research on.

### **5.3 Qualitative Research**

The research described here is a case-study. Dörnyei (2007: 151) refers to Stake (1995), who states that a case study is the ‘particularity and complexity of a single case’. The present study is an ‘intrinsic case study’, where the goal is to get insight into the inherent characteristics within a specific context or case (Dörnyei, 2007: 152). Drawing on the research in this thesis, it means that the findings in this case-study might be similar if one implemented RT into a similar adult education class.

This case study is based upon qualitative research. When choosing either quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods, it is essential to choose the method which is most relevant and suits the research questions best. More importantly, one has to be able to explain and give reasons for selecting one method over the others (Borg, 2010: 9).

There are several reasons for choosing a qualitative approach for this case study. First of all, earlier studies conducted in order to identify possible benefits and challenges of RT have largely been based on qualitative research (e.g. Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Myrset 2014). Second, this thesis aims to answer questions about human responses to and experiences with RT, hence a qualitative approach seemed the most suitable.

There are both pros and cons of a case study such as the one researched in this thesis. The positive aspect of qualitative research is that it focuses especially on the subjects’ experiences, behaviors and attitudes and the development of these aspects within a specific context (Dörnyei, 2007: 155). It can give insight that would not have been provided if another research method had been in use. The negative aspects of a case study, in contrast, are that qualitative research is time-consuming and provides insight into only a small sample. The

findings cannot be generalized because it is only a small group within one context that is researched and the group is not representative of the general population. People are different and therefore people will react differently. This means that adults might have different attitudes towards RT than younger learners. To increase the credibility of this study, it would be beneficial to evaluate the findings against similar studies (Dörnyei, 2007: 41).

## **5.4 The data collection**

The findings in this thesis are based upon two qualitative methods: observations and interviews. Two cycles of RT were observed. In the first cycle, the students were given pre-written scripts, and in the second cycle, the students wrote scripts themselves. The interviews were conducted with four students and their teacher. The purpose of interviewing the teacher and the four students was to gain a more holistic picture of how the teacher and the students experienced the use of RT as a method to improve reading and reading motivation.

### 5.4.1 The sampling selection

Dörnyei (2007: 126) points out that one should ideally find a ‘purposeful’ sample, meaning that the subjects’ age, background and gender are relevant and bring forth rich and diverse insight into the case that is being studied. However, the subjects in this study were a *convenience sample* (Dörnyei, 2007: 129). This type of sampling is the ‘least desirable but the most common sampling strategy’ (Dörnyei, 2007: 129). The choice of sample was based on availability rather than finding a purposive sample. The researcher needed to find participants who had the time and were willing to be a part of an investigation. This type of strategy might affect the credibility of the research but, on the other hand, there is a positive aspect, namely that one is working with willing participants (Dörnyei, 2007: 129)

The subjects in this study were adult minority background learners who were studying at an adult education centre in Norway. Therefore, the age range varied greatly within the class, where the youngest was 17 and the oldest was 39 years old. The author contacted the teacher of the adult minority background class through the university’s English Department’s contact network. Being able to cooperate with the teacher was a practical solution for the researcher since a sample was needed. Also, the research was original and relevant considering that the

students represented a different type of group, namely they came from a different context than those previously researched in relation to RT, i.e. mostly young learners, and especially in L1 contexts.

RT was implemented in a 10th grade (final year of compulsory school) class consisting of 15 students. This number is not of importance in a qualitative study, as there is no perfect number of participants for this type of study. The sample of choice can bring about a new understanding or confirm other research (Dörnyei, 2007: 127), and it is therefore important that the group of subjects reveal information that can be useful.

The group of students was a diverse one, where various nationalities and backgrounds were represented. Four of the subjects came from Somalia, three from Afghanistan, two from Burundi, two from Burma, one from Thailand, one from Eritrea, one from Sudan, and one from Bulgaria. Ten of the students represented in this study were men and five were female. One of the females took a pause from the education and quitted as the second cycle of RT started. However, one new female student from Thailand started in the class at that time and participated in the project. Since the sample is diverse one, one can argue that it is a representative sample of a typical group of minority background adults in Norway. Moreover, the students in the class were all on a relatively low proficiency level, meaning that very few proficiency levels were represented in the study. The limitation of the research is that it only targets a small group of people. Although a larger sample and more time to research would strengthen the findings in the research, this was not possible due to the curriculum plan they were following.

At the adult education centre, the English students in the 10th grade were divided into two groups. One of the groups was more advanced than the other. The groups were formed on the basis of the significant differences in the students' English abilities. The majority of the students in the more advanced group had been taught English before arriving Norway. However, the group of fifteen students represented in this study formed the weakest group. They had very little or no experience with English before joining this class. This group was chosen due to practical reasons, namely that the contacted teacher only taught this class. The more advanced class was taught by someone else.

The majority of the students in the class had never been taught English in school. For many of them, this was the first year they had participated in any formal instruction in English. Most of the students came from areas and countries where the popular culture was not as heavily influenced by the English language and culture as it was in other western

countries. Therefore, many of them had very little or no experience of English also outside of the classroom. As a result, the students had low proficiency in English. As a matter of fact, English was either their third, fourth or fifth language.

Irrespective of abilities, the adult education program followed the same curriculum as other schools, namely the *Knowledge Promotion* curriculum for grade 10. This meant that the students were assessed as any other Norwegian 10th graders (See Chapter 2). Their proficiency level was lower than most Norwegian 10th graders and the aim for most of the students was to pass and complete their education.

The students had primarily one teacher, but occasionally they had an extra teacher in class. The other teacher would help the students with tasks and function as an extra resource within the classroom. The researcher's role was mostly to observe the class, but she would now and then get involved in the teaching and guide some of the groups.

## **5.5 Two cycles of RT**

As mentioned, two cycles of RT were implemented. First, the students performed pre-written RT scripts, and in the second cycle the students wrote the scripts themselves.

Before the project started, the teacher used nearly a whole lesson to introduce RT and the project. The class had been exposed to RT on one earlier occasion and therefore most of the students were somewhat familiar with it. However, for some of the students RT was a new experience because they were not a part of the class the first time RT was introduced. Since the students at the adult education centre were refugees and asylum seekers, there were regularly new students coming into the class. During the time of research, there was one new student in the class who participated in the second cycle of RT. One student also quit just before the performance of the pre-written scripts and the teacher therefore took the student's part.

### **5.5.1 Pre-written scripts**

In the first cycle of RT the students read pre-written scripts. The class was divided into two groups that consisted of seven and eight subjects. One of the groups read an RT script called ‘

Help! Hilary! Help!', and the other group read a script called 'Bim's Bamboo'. Aaron Shepard adapted both scripts.

As emphasized in earlier research on RT, it is important that the scripts are within the students' instructional level. Therefore, the class was observed prior to the research on RT to identify the level of proficiency among the students. According to the teacher, these two scripts matched the students' level of proficiency. 'Bim's Bamboo' is a fantasy story and is recommended for readers aged eight to twelve. 'Help! Hilary! Help!' is adapted to be read by students between the age of six and nine. 'Bim's Bamboo' is the longest text and takes about ten minutes to perform, whereas 'Help! Hilary! Help!' takes about seven minutes. The students who performed 'Help, Hilary Help' were less-skilled readers than the other group and were therefore assigned the easiest script. The scripts were on a lower proficiency level than would normally be assigned to a regular 10<sup>th</sup> grade class.

Both groups were asked to perform the scripts in front of the whole school when they celebrated the United Nations day. The students who read 'Bim's Bamboo' were positive about performing in front of the whole school, while the students in the other group stated that they wanted to perform in front of the class instead.

The students had English lessons on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Each English lesson lasted 90 minutes and 12 lessons were spent preparing for the first performance. In other words, the students started practising the pre-written scripts in the middle of September and performed at the end of October. The students had a break for one week during the autumn break. It should be noted that they did not always use entire lessons practising their scripts. Usually, forty-five minutes were put aside for practising the scripts, sometimes less and more. This was because the teacher already had a curriculum plan to follow. However, the week before the first performance, the students used the ninety minutes to rehearse. It was a time-consuming process, and the students needed more time to practise than first planned. Also, the students who performed in front of the school requested more time to practise before they went on stage. The students who read 'Help, Hilary Help' did not practice as much as the other group. Usually, the group would practise their scripts in separate rooms. This practical aspect was never a hinder because there were always other rooms available that the students could use.

### 5.5.2 Self-written scripts

In the second RT cycle, the students produced their own scripts. Since the participants were beginners of English, the scripts were based on knowledge they already possessed so as not to overwhelm them with too many difficult tasks. The scripts they created were personal as the students wrote about their own cultures and backgrounds. This was an original approach (to the best of the author's knowledge) compared to previous research with student-written RT scripts.

This time the class was divided into three groups with four or five students in each group. The teacher helped form the groups. At first the plan was to create groups based on the students' nationalities. It would be natural, for example, to group students from Asia together because they had the same cultural references and therefore had the opportunity to help each other in the process of writing the script. However, the teacher changed her mind and stated that the students would benefit more if the groups consisted of people from various nationalities, backgrounds, gender and age. The students would then create a script where they told about their home country and discussed similarities and differences between their countries and others (See Appendix 5, 6, 7).

The teacher and researcher created different examples of how an RT script could be structured. In one example, people met at school and started talking about their national foods, spare-time activities, and how they celebrated Christmas. In another example, the RT script was about Game-shows on TV where the questions concerned different countries. Various examples were read aloud in class to facilitate creativity.

The teacher pointed out that the students needed careful guidance for this type of task. Thus, they were provided with a sheet that had key words on what they could write about, such as spare-time activities, family life, national foods, celebrations, and traditions. All the groups filled out this sheet individually before they started to create the scripts together. The groups performed the self-written texts in front of each other. The second cycle started at the beginning of December. In other words the students had a small break between the first and the second cycle so that the teacher could prepare them for the mid-term tests coming up. In the second cycle the entire lessons, ninety minutes, were usually spent on writing the scripts. The students got five lessons to write their scripts and performed them at the beginning of January, after the Christmas break. The goal was to finish the research before the Christmas



break, but there were events that the class had to attend to and therefore the students missed one week of writing in December.

### **5.6 Time-span of the project**

The data collection took a great amount of time. The RT project was first introduced to the class at the beginning of September, but the last cycle of RT was not finished until the end of January. The aim was to have completed both cycles of RT and all the interviews by December. However, there were some mid-term tests, holidays and other unforeseen happenings that delayed the process. An issue that arose was that when the students had been busy with midterms, they forgot about the project, and the process therefore went slower afterwards than first expected. In addition, the groups needed more rehearsals, as students were frequently absent from lessons. However, the teacher was still positive to the project, though it was more time-consuming than first presumed.

### **5.7 Observations**

In qualitative research, every occurrence or observation in the classroom can be regarded as potential data. Observations allow the researcher to see first-hand how the subjects experience the task that is being examined. Unlike in interviews, where one relies on the subjects' statements, observations can provide an objective description of the sessions in the classroom (Dörnyei, 2007: 185).

On occasions where there are students who are having problems articulating and speaking their mind, observations are valuable. For example, observations can inform one if RT seems to be motivating the students to read, or if the students enjoy group work or not. However, Dörnyei (2007: 178) refers to Wragg (1999: 2), who states that 'classrooms are exceptionally busy places, so observers need to be on their toes'. This is why observing a classroom can be a tricky and complex process. Usually, the researcher ends up with a great deal of data and the greatest task is to sort out the data that is not useful for the research (Dörnyei, 2007: 125). The goal is to create a comprehensive description of the events and experiences observed in the classroom. In applied linguistics, the limitation of observational data is that one is also supposed to give a comprehensive description of mental experiences

that in reality are unobservable (Dörnyei, 2007: 185). With reference to RT, it is impossible to give an account of the students' thoughts. Yet, one can still observe students' experiences, and if they seem to be motivated.

Since classrooms are busy places and it is difficult to write down every comment made by students during the rehearsals, the rehearsals were regularly audio-recorded. Because there was more than one group, and it was impossible to follow all groups at all times, the researcher focused especially on observing and audio-recording one of the groups. However, the every group was audio-recorded during the first rehearsal and performance. Audio-recording made it possible to measure if and how much progress the students made on pronunciation and fluency. This was done by measuring the difference in how much time the students needed to read the scripts from the first time they read, and periodically until their performance. Since the rehearsals were audio-recorded, it was possible to measure how many pronunciation mistakes were made the first time the students read the script, and how many were made the during performance. During the practice period, the author observed if RT seemed to motivate reading among the participants and what challenges there were when using this method.

During both RT cycles, notes were taken during the process and after each lesson to ensure that the observations were recorded also in this way. Positive and negative remarks about the project were written down. If the students corrected each other, or stated something about their own development or their peers' development, it was recorded as potential data. Such notes are often used in research by providing examples of observations or remarks uttered by the participants in the study, which in this case would be notes written down by the researcher when working with RT (Dörnyei, 2007: 160). These comments may provide a truthful understanding of the subjects' experiences and should therefore be included in the thesis. However, for these personal notes to be trustworthy, the researcher must leave no doubt about the process that took place to gather this information. The researcher should make it clear where the theories and thoughts presented in the study come from. If there remains uncertainty of how and when the data was collected, it will influence the reliability of the research (Dörnyei, 2007: 160).

## 5.8 Interviews

The interview was the other qualitative method used in order to investigate the benefits and challenges of implementing RT with the class of adults. The teacher was interviewed twice, before and after the RT project. Since these interviews took place at different stages of the project, they provided rich insight into the teacher's experience of the project. An additional objective for interviewing the teacher, both before and after the project, was that one interview usually does not provide enough and thorough information (Dörnyei, 2007: 134). It is also advised to conduct more than one interview because it is then possible to plan ahead and prepare oneself for the second interview to ensure that the answers are useful and measurable (Dörnyei, 2007: 135).

There are three different basic ways of structuring interviews: structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are well prepared interviews, where the interviewer follows the interview guide fully. The benefit of a structured interview is that the topic is the centre of attention and one does not get so easily distracted. The disadvantage is that there is little room for flexibility because the interviewer is relying on his/her detailed and structured plan (Dörnyei, 2007: 135).

In unstructured interviews, very few or no questions are prepared in advance so that the interviewee can speak his/her mind freely without interference (Dörnyei, 2007: 135). Sometimes there will be follow-up questions in order to avoid misunderstandings, but the main goal is to get the interviewee to talk freely on the targeted topic. In contrast to structured interviews, the aim is that the interviewee will talk openly and shed light on aspects that might not have been brought up if the interview was structured more formally (Dörnyei, 2007: 136). An aspect that needs some consideration is that the interviewee might answer what he/she thinks the interviewer wants to hear.

The final interview type is the semi-structured interview, which is the most frequently used one in applied linguistics (Dörnyei, 2007: 136). Semi-structured interviews balance the use of structured and unstructured interviews. The format is adapted from the structured style and is planned in detail, but the interview object has the chance to add thoughts and opinions that he/she feels need more consideration (Dörnyei, 2007: 136). Put differently, the interview has a set of thought-out questions, but there is room for creativity and expressing perspectives that may not have been addressed specifically in the interview questions.

For this thesis, only semi-structured interviews were conducted. Dörnyei (2007: 136) recommends researchers to use semi-structured interviews if one already has a great deal of knowledge on the area and is qualified to carry out an interview that will give an in-depth and valuable understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, a semi-structured approach seemed most suitable for the present research. RT has been researched before and there are numerous sources that can be used as a basis when forming the interview questions (e.g. Myrset, 2014; Pettersen, 2013). This generated a clear idea of what kinds of questions needed to be asked in order to elicit information that would be worthwhile for the study. In addition, it allowed the teacher and the students to add thoughts and opinions on aspects they felt needed more emphasis. Since semi-structured interviews are a mix of the unstructured and structured interview style, it is possible for the researcher to gather a good deal of information and for the interviewee to add information that is relevant to the topic under discussion (Dörnyei, 2007: 136).

In this study, the teacher and four of the students were interviewed in order to get a broad enough understanding of the experience of RT. The first step was to get the ethical issues in order, such as to receive approval from the teacher and the students that they were willing to be interviewed (Dörnyei, 2007: 136). The next step was to create an interview guide that included all the questions that were significant for the research. By doing so, the researcher ensured that nothing was left to chance and that it was possible for the subjects to describe their encounter with RT.

### 5.8.1 Teacher interviews

The two interviews with the teacher were conducted in English. This was done because it was less time-consuming for the researcher since the interview did not have to be translated into English. Also, the teacher had no objections to being interviewed in English. The type of questions that were asked during the first teacher interview concerned the teachers' educational background, the students' reading abilities and motivation to read English, previous experiences using RT, and the teacher's expectations towards this RT project (see Appendix 11). Since the teacher had experience working with RT, the aim was to elicit the teacher's thoughts and opinions of using the method with adults. For instance, the teacher was asked:

- How do motivate you students to read?
- Where did you first hear about Readers Theatre?
- What do believe are potential challenges before starting this RT project?
- What are your expectations to RT this time?

These types of questions were relevant because they gave some insight into the students' level of proficiency in English, as well as their motivation to learn.

In the second interview the teacher was asked if she experienced the project as a successful one or not, and why or why not. The purpose was to uncover any attitudes and beliefs the teacher had about the RT project. Dörnyei (2007: 137) refers to Patton (2002), who states that there are six types of questions that are possible to ask about the topic of concern. These six questions types involve: 'Experiences and behaviors, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, sensory information and background or demographic information'. Most of the questions were based on these factors in order to get a holistic impression of the implementation of RT in a classroom with these adults (see Appendix 12).

As suggested by Dörnyei (2007: 138), the interview had an open end, where the interview subject was asked if there were some important issues that had been neglected or needed more elaboration before closing the interview. In addition, the teacher was asked if there was anything she would do differently when looking back at the way the RT cycles had been organised and carried out within the classroom.

### 5.8.2 Student interviews

The students were interviewed in Norwegian. This was because they had more competence in Norwegian than they did in English. Due to their low proficiency in English, they would not have been able to express themselves as well in English as in Norwegian. This decision was also based upon advice from the teacher, who stated that the students' English would limit their answers.

The four students were all asked the same questions (see Appendix 13). Since the interviews were semi-structured, the students were asked different follow-up questions based on the answers they gave. The objective was to let the students freely express their thoughts and opinions about the RT project. The questions were targeted towards the students'

attitudes, motivation, and experience of RT. The students were asked how they had experienced RT, what they considered as its benefits and challenges, and if their motivation to read English had increased. The following are examples of questions that the students were asked:

- Did you think your reading improved from the first rehearsal to the performance?
  - Why/why not?
- How did you experience working in groups?
- How did you experience listening to the other group(s) performing their Readers Theatre texts?
- Has Readers Theatre made you more motivated to read (aloud and in general)?
- What was the best/worst aspect of working with Readers Theatre texts?
- Would you like to do Readers Theatre again some other time?
  - Why/why not?

All the interviews were audio-recorded in order to make most use of the interview data. Notes were also taken during the interviews, but it was impossible to write all of them down. The recordings were a guarantee for the researcher and ensured that no information or arguments were lost or forgotten. It also made it possible for the researcher to go over the answers multiple times (Dörnyei, 2007: 139). The teacher and the students consented to being audio-recorded on the condition that no one but the researcher was able to listen to them, and that the recordings would be deleted when the necessary data had been transcribed. The interviews were recorded on both the researcher's private cellphone and a recorder. Dörnyei (2007: 128) stresses the importance of bringing two technical devices to the interviews as a guarantee if one of them should suddenly not work and to secure good sound quality. However, audio-recordings alone are not enough to reveal all information transferred during an interview session. Gestures and facial expressions can also reveal how the person actually feels (Dörnyei, 2007: 139). In some lessons, the researcher focused especially on writing down these impressions since it was not possible to video record them

## **5.9 Research ethics, validity and reliability**

It is important that the research carried out meets all the ethical standards. Ethical research shields the participants in the study and does not reveal any personal information that could harm or create a negative outcome for the people involved. It is a principle that the participants have consented and are aware of the research that is taking place (Borg, 2010: 11). The teacher and students were informed that this was an anonymous research project and all consented to take part in it.

For this type of study, there was no need for approval from The Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD), who have an online survey where one could find out if it was necessary or not to report the research. This study includes indirect information, such as background information, but this information is not enough to identify the individuals. Although the interviews and RT cycles were audio-recorded, it was not possible to identify the students since the recordings were never heard by anyone other than the researcher and all the recordings were deleted after the data had been put in writing. Since no personal or sensitive information was exposed, there was no obligation to report the study.

This study researches the experience of RT on a relatively small group of people and therefore the question of validity is relevant. This is a qualitative study and the focus is upon the experience of RT and the growth of the individuals' reading skills and motivation, which justifies the reason for a small sample. The subjects in this study were multilingual adult learners and therefore might not be representative of all adult learners in Norway. However, within the context of multilingual learners who are a part of adult education, this sample was able to provide a legitimate understanding of the phenomenon within this context. The use of different research tools, namely observations, audio-recordings of the RT readings, in addition to the interviews with four students and their teacher, increased the validity of the study.

When the reliability of research is strong, it means that it is trustworthy (Dörnyei, 2007: 57). If the same research was conducted again, the findings would be nearly the same. One way to examine the reliability in a research is to allow external scholars take a look at the interview guides (Dörnyei, 2007: 57). The teacher interview guides and the student interview guide were checked by a member of the university English department. By double-checking the interview guides, one ensured that they were not coloured by the researcher only, and that there were no biases in the interview questions.

The teacher was also asked whom she would choose as interview objects. She named four students that represented different levels of proficiency: weak, average and strong readers. It should be noted that strong readers in this context refers to the strongest readers in this class and not strong in relation to the average 10<sup>th</sup> grade student. The fact that the students were interviewed in Norwegian, a language that they were more proficient in than English, made it easier to express themselves and understand the questions. In addition the researcher studied previous methods of researching RT, including previous interview guides, which strengthened the reliability of this study.

Another way to increase the research reliability was to check that the classroom observations were in agreement with the teachers' observations. The researcher's impression might be in disagreement with the teacher's. The researcher discussed some of the findings with the teacher to ascertain if the observations were more or less similar. One should therefore be critical when analyzing classroom observations or interview answers to ensure consistency within the research (Dörnyei, 2007: 57)



## 6. Findings

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the research will be presented. Firstly, the observations from the rehearsals and performances in both cycle one and two will be presented in section 6.2. Section 6.3 will give a summary of the pre- and post- interviews with the teacher, including the post-interviews with the four students. Finally, an analysis of the students' fluency, mispronounced and wrongly recognised words in the data recordings will be presented in section 6.4.

### 6.2 Observations

The researcher only had the capacity to observe one of the groups carefully, especially in the first cycle of RT. The group that read *Bim's Bamboo* was the researcher's focus group in cycle one. In the second cycle, group one was observed more closely than the others. However, the writing process was relatively easy to observe, as all the groups were usually writing in the classroom. In addition, it was possible to record and observe every group during the first rehearsal since they finished writing their scripts at different times.

#### 6.2.1 Observations during first RT cycle

In the first cycle, the students were given two pre-written scripts: *Bim's Bamboo* and *Help! Hilary! Help!*. The first lesson was used to introduce the RT project and partly to start rehearsing the scripts. The teacher spoke both English and Norwegian during the introduction to RT. Norwegian was mainly used to clarify certain points when the students had questions regarding the research. Overall, the students seemed to understand how RT functioned.

In the introduction, the teacher, substitute teacher and researcher performed both scripts with great enthusiasm as a demonstration. The students were not provided with any background information about the scripts prior to the performance. The main point was to illustrate how RT functioned and to model fluent reading. Body language and prosody were used to facilitate comprehension and to create a model RT performance. The students'

response to the teachers' performance was positive, and it seemed as if the teachers had managed to engage them. The students paid close attention and seemed to enjoy the teachers' performance of both scripts. The students laughed when humorous points were made. For example, when the girl got swiped away by the bird in *Help! Hilary! Help!* or when one of the teachers read 'Bim's Bamboo! Foo!' in a loud and clear voice, the students laughed. It was evident that the students thought it was entertaining to listen to the performances. The students seemed eager to start rehearsing the scripts themselves after being the audience. However, some of the students uttered their uncertainty about their abilities to perform in the way that was demonstrated. One of the students consulted the researcher and asked, 'Do you really think we are able to do that? We are never going to be able to read it like that'. Although the students had their doubts about their reading abilities, the teacher clarified that they would improve with practice and they showed great willingness to work on the scripts.

### *Rehearsals*

In the first lesson the task was to divide the parts between the group members. One interesting observation was that it seemed as if the students were motivated by making their own decisions and being able to choose which part they wanted to read, which applied to both groups. One drawback was that two of the students who were part of the group that read *Bim's Bamboo* were absent, and one student was absent in the other group. This deprived them from the chance to choose their part in the script, so their group members had to choose for them.

The students discussed who was most fitted to read the different roles. One student in the *Bim's Bamboo* group focused in particular on the characteristics of the different roles and who was most suited to read them. However, the other group members were more concerned with the length of the text and tried to identify which parts they thought they would be able to read. Some of the students were ready to challenge themselves and read the parts with a good deal of text, whereas others instantly chose the parts that contained the least text. However, the impression was that the majority of the students were very considerate of each other and therefore carefully discussed the different parts in order to make sure that everyone was satisfied. However, in the group that read *Bim's bamboo*, a man stepped up and took leadership over the group. In order to increase the group's efficiency, he would ask leading questions, such as 'What part could you be interested in reading?' or 'Maybe you could read

that part’.

In the beginning, the students seemed to enjoy the rehearsals, especially the group that read *Bim’s Bamboo*. They were very concerned with their own reading and asked the teacher a good number of questions regarding pronunciation and decoding. During rehearsals, students would pause and ask ‘How is this pronounced? Am I doing it right now?’ The majority of students in both groups were actively engaged and wrote marks in their scripts to remember how certain words were pronounced. However, at times the teacher had problems understanding the students’ questions and vice versa. When this happened, the group members tried their best to translate the questions into another language they were more proficient in. If the students did not have another additional language in common, the teacher would use gesticulations in order to get the message across. As a result, the rehearsals were time-consuming, at least in the beginning.

The students put less effort into the rehearsals if the rehearsal time became too lengthy. However, the time devoted to rehearsing the script was valuable as many of the students were frequently absent or arrived late for class. This applied especially to the two English lessons that started at 08.30 p.m. If some students showed up late, they always approached their teacher to excuse themselves and give an explanation for being late, or not being present lately. In the four-week period that was used to rehearse the pre-written scripts, it was not unusual that two to three students from each group were missing. Consequently, their teacher or substitute teacher read the parts of the students who were absent.

There was a noticeable difference in the atmosphere when all the group members were present and when they were not. When all or the majority of the group members were present, the students seemed to have more fun rehearsing. The students helped each other with pronunciation and acknowledged each other’s roles. When a group member strived to pronounce a word, there was a strong tendency to whisper the correct pronunciation as they were reading through the script. On occasions, they also stopped to explain certain words. For example, when one of the students had problems pronouncing the word *foolish*, the group stopped to rehearse the /f/ sound.

However, when a larger number of the group members were absent, the students seemed to lose concentration and got tired of rehearsing. A few students complained about group members’ absence and felt that it affected them as a group. However, others were very understanding of their peers’ situation and explained why they were away. In other words, this aspect affected the atmosphere once in a while. However, the teacher utilized the situation

as she had the chance to give increased focus to the students who actually were present.

The teacher and substitute teacher also spent time rehearsing with all the students individually. The students expressed that they considered the individual assistance as valuable. As opposed to the group rehearsals, the teacher focused on details in the students' pronunciation.

As the performance day approached, one of the groups showed more interest than the other to rehearse for the RT performance. The group that was performing *Bim's bamboo* in front of the whole school seemed motivated to rehearse for the performance irrespective of how many group members were present or not. The autumn break was the week before the performance and therefore the students were eager to refresh and strengthen their reading skills when they came back after the break. In addition, they asked numerous questions about the performance.

However, group two, who read *Help! Hilary! Help!*, was not as enthusiastic about practising their script. It seemed as if they did not have high expectations of themselves. Although, they were not able to read the script fluently, they still insisted that they had finished their rehearsing. Therefore, their teacher decided to give them additional tasks that they could work on, while the other group continued to practise.

### *Performance*

The two groups performed on separate days, as group one performed at the UN event that was held at a small concert hall near the school. This group had their final rehearsal in the concert hall and practised with microphones for the first time. They were not used to performing, at least not in front of the sizeable audience represented in this occasion. Already during the rehearsal, the students were clearly anxious about performing. The greatest challenge for them was to multitask and to maintain control over the manuscript and the microphone, as there were no music stands. During the rehearsal, it seemed as if their nervousness got the best of them and their reading became more hesitant than it had been during previous rehearsals. Furthermore, some of the students were afraid to read into the microphone, resulting in difficulty hearing what they said. Multiple times the students did not start reading their parts because they were struggling to pay attention to their manuscripts as they were reading. It seemed as if some of them struggled to adjust to the change in location and to the fact that they were going to perform in front of an unknown audience. However, their teacher was able

to calm them and they were given a second chance to rehearse with microphones. In the second rehearsal, the group's focus improved and their performance was unrecognizable from their first rehearsal. The students succeeded in reading the way that they had practised previously.

In-between the final rehearsal and performance, the students' nervousness seemed to diminish. They were able to relax after the final rehearsal went well. Some of them were even looking forward to the performance. One of the students said: 'I felt lucky to be picked out to perform in front of the school'. Only minutes before the performance, they were practising their parts individually and some were asking questions regarding pronunciation and intonation in order to perfect their reading. The teacher had to participate in the performance, since one of the students was on leave of absence.

It was clear that the students' fluency and pronunciation had improved from rehearsal to performance. Although the students had seemed somewhat worried during the final rehearsal, the impression was that the audience experienced it differently. The performance went well and it was on a level with their best rehearsal.

Another aspect that distinguished their reading during the performance from the first rehearsal was their use of intonation and prosody. The students read with expression and emphasized certain words to make the performance more entertaining, which it was. There were some humorous points within the script that the students were able to convey to the listeners. The audience laughed several times when these points were highlighted by the use of the students' voices. For example, the students used more stress and enthusiasm when they read words such as *fantastic* or *miracle*.

However, although the students read with great enthusiasm and passion, their intonation was not perfect. The teacher had emphasized the importance of using their voice to impart feelings and characteristics, but at times their intonation was inaccurate. For example, one student read 'try Bim's bamboo' and stressed the word *bamboo*. However, the keyword *try* was not stressed and its meaning was not conveyed as it was intended to.

The students who read *Help! Hilary! Help!* seemed less nervous to perform than the group that read *Bim's Bamboo*. The students had practised at taking a step forwards when it was their turn to read aloud, which functioned well during the performance. However, some of the students still struggled to read fluently during the performance. Although the amount of time spent reading through the script had reduced, the reading was still somewhat staccato. Throughout the performance the students did not read with expression to the same degree as

the other group had done. However, they were able to read with expression to some extent when reading words such as 'h-e-l-l-l-l-p!' or 'loop-de-loop-de-loop'. The student who read the word 'h-e-l-l-l-l-p!' understood the meaning of it, and therefore raised his voice when reading this word. However, the students seemed pleased with their own efforts after the performance. When they received the applause from the audience, the students bowed and smiled.

#### 6.2.2 Observations during the self-written scripts

In the introduction to cycle two, the teacher showed the students several samples of RT scripts that could be used as models or as an inspiration when writing their own scripts. Since the students were asked to write scripts about their own culture and background, the samples exemplified how they could write such a script. The students thought the demonstrations of the different samples were entertaining, or so it appeared. There was a good atmosphere within the classroom, as the students were informed that they would be writing RT scripts based on their own backgrounds. The majority of the students understood what they were asked to write about and how an RT script could be structured. However, it varied how independent the groups were when brainstorming the content and structure for the RT script.

Group 1 worked independently and only asked for clarification questions during the brainstorming process. All the group members were eager to share some of their own story in the RT script, resulting in one of the group members wanting to be both the narrator and a character. One student commented: 'I love it when we can write about something that is interesting and personal'. Clearly, this group appreciated the variation this task offered.

One of the students took on the role of a leader and came with suggestions for delegating different tasks and how they could write the script. The other group members were actively involved, but clearly followed his lead. Firstly, they agreed on topics that should be included in the script, such as food, family and hobbies. Afterwards, the students wrote individually what they wanted to include under each topic. Some of the group members wrote keywords, while others started on producing text that could be incorporated into their script. Subsequently, all the group members presented their own notes to the other group members and used this information as a basis for their disposition. However, the writing process was more or less done together. The students assisted each other with orthography and sentence structure throughout the entire process. During the writing process, they also helped each

other elaborate on their points. One of the students claimed that their script was ‘a little bit boring’, and therefore they needed to include more details. For example, since one of the students’ hobbies was to cook food, another student suggested that: ‘You should say something about why you like to cook food, so that it becomes more interesting’. It seemed as if the students enjoyed writing their script. They were laughing and reading phrases from their script out loud to the other groups in the class. One of the students said:

We are writing about Afghanistan, where a guy carries a mirror in his pocket and when he sees the girl he likes, he uses the mirror to reflect the sun into the girl’s face. Hahah, It would be impossible to do that in Norway, because there is never sun.

One of the group members said: ‘We should make that about Norway a joke in the script’. The fact that they were able to have fun seemed to fuel creativity within this group. This incident made the two other groups laugh and they seemed to understand more of how they could include personal and humorous points because their scripts were very informal so far. In addition, the group dynamics functioned well. However, one of the group members seemed to become a bit of an outsider at the end, as he struggled to put his thoughts down on paper. The other group members tried to help him, but he seemed committed to try and solve it himself.

Group 1 worked mostly independently, yet they struggled more towards the end. The group seemed tired of the task and stated that they had finished writing the script, even though they clearly had more work to do. At that point they had written roughly one page and the teacher pointed out that they should make the most out of the task they had been given, as it was a good writing exercise. In addition, they did not know how to write an ending and needed careful guidance from their teacher. At this point the students basically wanted their teacher to construct their sentences for them. The teacher provided them with different ideas on how to finish their script, but the students asked: ‘What would you have written? Could you construct a sentence for us?’

Group 2 was carefully guided in the brainstorming process. It seemed as if the students had several ideas for the setting, which topics could be addressed, but they were hesitant and reserved in presenting their ideas to the group members. However, the substitute teacher managed to create a relaxed atmosphere and it seemed as if the pressure withdrew and the students were willing to share their ideas with each other. The students disagreed on whether

the script should have a humorous tone, or have a more serious and informative one. Even those students who were normally very passive, involved themselves in the discussion. The general impression was that the students enjoyed themselves, since they managed to relax with the task they had been provided with.

In their writing process, the Group 2 students struggled to decide whether to write their parts individually or together as a group. They never seemed to agree entirely on how to produce text and therefore some parts were written individually and other parts were written collectively. Another challenge for Group 2 was to produce a great amount of text. For example, on the topic of 'food', the majority of them only wrote 'my favorite food is rice and chicken' and then continued with a follow-up question such as 'and what is your favorite food?' In other words, the content was very simplistic and they needed some guidance and advice on how to develop their script. The students seemed to be very dependent on the topics suggested in the sheet provided by the teacher. Therefore, the teacher used a great amount of time asking them about what they wanted to tell their audience about their own culture and how these facts could be incorporated into the script. The students overcame some barriers and their script progressed as they revised it. However, it seemed that the group needed monitoring from either their teacher or substitute teacher every step of the way in order to produce text.

One of the groups decided that they also wanted to incorporate dance into the performance as one of their group members was a dancer. The general impression was that this group was excited when they were encouraged in the brainstorming process phase, but struggled to maintain this excitement throughout the writing process.

In Group 3, one of the group members took charge from the very beginning. The effort put into the brainstorming phase varied within the group. Some of the group members seemed more motivated to develop the script than others. The 'group leader' drove the process forward by engaging the other group members in the discussion of possible ideas.

Maybe the people in the script can be friends who meet. And where should they meet? Any suggestions (...) Maybe the narrator could introduce the setting? Like, we could be friends that meet at a shopping center maybe?

Although the brainstorming process was challenging, all the group members contributed to the actual writing process. As long as someone had an idea, they were quick to try and get it



down on paper. However, in the last two English lessons, it seemed as if their motivation to write had also decreased. One of the students said: 'We have written a lot, and I hate to write'. The students expressed that they had a hard time trying to put their thoughts and ideas on paper. They asked their teacher to correct their text several times and pointed out that they were concerned with all their language mistakes. Multiple times they asked if they were allowed to perform the script although there were major and multiple mistakes (Their teacher did not have the capacity to correct all the RT scripts).

### *Rehearsals*

The researcher's general impression was that the students' pronunciation improved and less time was needed to rehearse the scripts. In the production phase, the students were constantly practising their pronunciation as they were reading phrases aloud and discussing them in groups. During the rehearsal one of the students commented 'It is easier to read this script, because these are our words'.

The students seemed to assist each other to a greater extent in the second cycle than they had done in the first cycle. A number of times, the person sitting next to the person reading whispered the correct pronunciation if their peer was struggling. Another interesting observation was that many of the students seemed to decode incorrectly during the first rehearsal. Several words were omitted and never read aloud, especially conjunctions and amplifiers. The students did not seem to take any notice of it before the teacher directed their attention to it. For example, instead of reading 'Norway is so cold', as written in the script, the student read 'Norway is cold'. On a different occasion, one student read 'got know' instead of 'got to know'. The correspondence between the manuscript and what was actually read aloud was at times incorrect and affected the students' accuracy. It seemed as if the students put their confidence in the fact that they had written the script themselves and believed they remembered what the script said. However, in practice the students dropped words as they were reading. Although they were familiar with the script, the students still had to rehearse their scripts multiple times in order to become fluent readers.

### *Performances*

The performances of the second cycle were more informal because they were performing in front of their class this time. The students seemed less nervous to perform than they had been previously. In fact, they seemed excited to perform their self-written scripts. They were looking forward to showing their peers what they had produced, but even more so to read about themselves.

All of the groups had put a good deal of effort into the writing of the scripts and were enthusiastic about performing them. Mostly, their reading was loud and clear, was easy to understand, and the pronunciation and speed of their reading had improved. However, some had a tendency to read each word separately at a fast speed. Nevertheless, they were able to include some prosodic features into their oral reading. Certain words were stressed and the pauses were timely. The students very much succeeded in using the right tone and intensity when reading words such as *wow*, *no*, and *beautiful*. The word *no* was read with a lower pitch than, for example, the word *beautiful*, which was read smoothly and gently. However, some of these prosodic characteristics were at times exaggerated.

One of the groups used the developed model of RT, while the two remaining groups used the traditional model when performing. In all the groups, the students stood in a row and took one step forward when it was their turn to read. In the developed model, the students added movements to their performance. For example, on the topic of hobbies, one of the students showed some dance moves. The group had prepared for this dance by moving some of the writing desks so that the student could take a backflip in the middle of the classroom. The audience was impressed by his talent and applauded him after his solo dance. This particular student had been expectant towards the performance and was clearly satisfied with his own accomplishments. He commented: 'I feel like we did well. It is very fun to tell our peers about our hobbies and ourselves. I feel like we get to know each other more'. In this group, all the members had made an effort to produce an interesting performance by making it personal and stepping out in the limelight. The audience was entertained and encouraged the readers throughout the performance by applauding and laughing at their humorous points.

The other group, which had also planned to show some dance moves, withdrew these from the performance. The student clearly became shy and regretted his decision to dance and therefore said ‘maybe some other time’. The group members continued reading as if nothing had ever happened.

### 6.3 Teacher interviews

#### *Pre-project interview with Stine*

Stine had been teaching for 25 years. She had a Bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Bergen and had finished her Master’s degree in English Literacy Studies a few years ago at the University of Stavanger. At the time of the interview, Stine was teaching at an adult education centre in Rogaland. She had a good deal of experience teaching adults as she had been working there for several years.

In the beginning of the interview, general questions were asked to get some insight into the teaching context. Stine was teaching a 10<sup>th</sup> grade class in English and Norwegian. Her adult minority background students were finishing their lower secondary education (grunnskolen) and were following the same curriculum plan as any regular Norwegian 10<sup>th</sup> grader. However, they were beginning learners of English and, according to the international standards of the American School Counsellor Association (ASCA)<sup>10</sup>, these students met the criteria for plus/minus A1. In other words, the students’ proficiency level was well below what was expected from 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

When starting to teach at the adult education centre, Stine was surprised by the students’ low proficiency level in English: ‘English and American culture is not as important in all the world as I previously thought’. The students were struggling because many of them had little or no references to English at all. One might believe that the students listened to American music and watched American films, but Stine’s impression was that they mostly watched series from the home country. She had taken for granted that they would be familiar with pop bands, such as the Beatles. However, due to their different backgrounds, the students

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<sup>10</sup> ASCA:

[http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/asca\\_national\\_standards\\_for\\_students.pdf](http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/asca_national_standards_for_students.pdf) National standards for students, which are used by teachers worldwide. Learners at stage A1 have an interest in learning and take pride in work and achievement. Students accept ‘that mistakes are essential to the learning process’.

did not share the same common knowledge and at times it was difficult to find common points of reference.

The students were using an adapted version of a textbook called *Searching*. In the adapted version, the texts and tasks were made simpler. On the one hand, the students understood more of the texts but, on the other hand, the adapted texts often lacked the aspects that make texts interesting. Stine would therefore frequently read the adapted version to her students first, and then read the original text afterwards. Intensive reading was in focus rather than extensive reading. Stine had tried to find material for extensive reading, but it was difficult to find books or texts that suited their proficiency level and which fulfilled the criteria in the curriculum plan.

These students had English as their third, fourth or fifth language. Stine exemplified why and how some of the students had acquired several languages.

(...) if you are from Afghanistan, you know at least one of the Afghan languages, and perhaps Arabic as well, and also they have travelled and lived in other countries, you know being on the run, so they have picked up maybe some Iraqi language or something like that. Then they come to Norway and they learn Norwegian and English.

Stine believed it was important that the students were proficient in their mother tongue as it was the foundation for learning other languages. She argued one must have knowledge of the words or expressions in the mother tongue in order to understand them in a different language.

Different reading strategies were used in order to develop the students' reading skills. These reading strategies depended on whether the students struggled with pronunciation, comprehension, listening, or vocabulary. In Stine's experience, it was important to provide the students with scaffolding and clear models that illustrated how tasks could be solved. This applied to both reading and writing abilities. In this particular context, it was important that the teacher modelled fluent reading and demonstrated RT to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty regarding how RT functioned. Normally, Stine would start the lesson by demonstrating or providing them with models, both in reading and writing, to scaffold the students into independence. An aim was always to help them become independent when solving tasks, but she was uncertain if they would ever get there.

According to Stine, some of the students in the class were motivated to learn English. They were motivated to read because ‘they know that they have to be able to read in order to learn’. The majority of them understood the importance of learning English in Norway, both for communicational and educational purposes. Others only made an effort to learn English because they were obligated to. Stine believed that the best way to motivate them was to ‘give the students a feeling of accomplishment’. She emphasised the importance of choosing texts that they could master. In addition, it was important to find texts that the students could relate to and enjoy. For instance, they had read a text called ‘Saint George and the dragon’, which fostered a great discussion about mythical creatures from their own cultures.

As a teacher, Stine said that her greatest challenge was the time aspect. There was not enough time to go through all the areas mentioned in the curriculum plan. The students were beginning learners of English and the distance between their proficiency level and the level that they were expected to perform at was too great. The students were preoccupied with developing the basic skills, such as reading, writing, and speaking. There was no time to focus on the history and culture of English-speaking countries as well. Though these aspects should be included, it was easier said than done.

Another challenge Stine faced as a teacher at the adult education centre was a high degree of absence. She explained that the consequences of absence at lower secondary school were few as long as one met up for the exam. However, Stine took this issue seriously as it disrupted her teaching and had a negative effect the students’ learning.

Stine was first introduced to RT through a course at the Literacy Studies programme at UIS. Since then she had implemented RT into her English and Norwegian classes. RT was used to develop the technical aspects of language learning, such as pronunciation, automacy, and to practise expressive reading. RT was also implemented in order to add variation to reading practice. Also, the students were generally not comfortable with performing in front of others. RT therefore seemed a good method to get the students out of their comfort zone. Furthermore, Stine explained that she used RT for the following:

RT is good way to spark this audience awareness. (...) you have to think about the people who are listening to you whether you are speaking or reading. I used that as an excuse to discuss that. It also has to do with a general language thing because some of the students do not speak Norwegian or English very clearly, and the problem is very often that they speak too fast. When you don’t know that much about languages, you

think that if I speak fast, that means that I can speak it well. But the fact of the matter is that if you slow down, people understand you much better. It has to do with pronunciation, but also with what you call enunciation... whether it is in Norwegian or English, so it was a way to discuss this and practise slow careful reading that gets the message across. And it is nice to accomplish something that you can show to others and also a good excuse to practise something that other people can enjoy.

Stine's earlier experiences with RT had been positive. She remembered the rehearsal periods as somewhat frustrating since the students did not show up regularly. However, she was pleasantly surprised by the responsibility and seriousness towards the actual performances. For instance, when they were once performing an RT script at a Christmas show that had been arranged outside school hours, the students showed up because they wanted to support their peers. They were grown-ups and had jobs and children, but still prioritized the performance. They knew there was nobody there to read their part and therefore their peers were dependent upon them. In addition, Stine believed that some of her students 'overcame some shyness'. While some of them did not feel comfortable with others listening to them read, they still made an effort and were loyal to their peers. In Stine's words: 'I do not think they wanted to ruin things, and so they performed'.

Based on her previous experiences, Stine stated that she would not go as far as saying that students became more motivated by using RT. They were motivated in the actual process and became more motivated to perform well. However, Stine could not say whether RT had a lasting effect on their motivation to read, and she did not believe it had.

When asked what had been emphasised during the introduction and rehearsal of RT, Stine answered that it was important that the students understood why RT was implemented. The goal was to make the rehearsal period fun and give the students an experience of what it means to be well prepared. The students were also informed how valuable the experiences of performing and presenting were to them, as they would be performing or presenting later on when they continued their upper-secondary education. In the rehearsals, Stine had emphasised pronunciation, the use of their voices, and they had practised body language.

One of the benefits of RT was that it promoted class spirit. Stine pointed out that they finally had a chance to accomplish something together and also had the opportunity to show others what they had been practising.

As for the challenges of implementing RT, Stine expressed her concern regarding the students' absence, which there were various reasons for. It was not unusual for many of the students to work late on school nights, as they were adults and had the responsibility to provide for themselves and their families. Some also worked during school hours in order to afford, for example, their driver's licence. Stine believed that there was a connection between the students' attendance and the responsibility they had as adults. She added that the students' lack of motivation, and cultural differences, most certainly also had an influence on their attendance. Stine assumed that this aspect could be a problem for the implementation of RT, considering that it was a group activity. However, it was more important that the students got some experience with working in groups and performing, as the teacher could take on the parts of the students who were absent.

Another potential challenge with implementing RT was partly making sure that the scripts were interesting enough. Stine did not consider childish scripts as a barrier, but they should contain some interesting aspects or humour. If the texts were too simplistic and dull, RT could be demotivating. She also pointed out that the time aspect could be a challenge. However, the majority of the students had some experience with RT and therefore Stine thought the process would become easier than in previous times.

Stine would not change much based on her previous experiences with RT. However, she was eager to see the students' reactions and efforts when assigned the task to write their own scripts. If it became a success, Stine would like to get the students to write their own scripts some other time as well. This was a more holistic approach that she thought would benefit the students even more. Stine was expectant to see whether RT would be easier to implement now and whether the students would improve faster as they were familiar with the concept of RT.

#### *Post-project interview with the Stine*

The first question asked in the post-project interview was how Stine would evaluate the RT project as a whole. Her immediate response was that the students had benefitted from RT. She said that RT had stimulated them, especially the last cycle, where the students wrote their own scripts. Stine was impressed with how much text the students were able to produce. Usually, they would spend more time producing the same amount of text and she had therefore already started planning how she could implement the same activity into other subjects. However,

Stine commented that it was hard to point out how much the students' reading abilities had improved, although it seemed as if the students 'had a new seriousness in their approach to English in general'.

Stine mentioned that the RT project had benefitted her as a teacher as well. It had provided her with a 'renewed approach and a new boost as a teacher'. The project had given her new ideas and new ways of how to implement RT. In addition, some of Stine's colleagues had started to use RT, others were interested in using it, and the project made it easier to try to help her colleagues so that they could move forward in their language teaching.

When asked whether Stine thought the students had enjoyed working with RT, she answered that it seemed as if the students worked with RT with great enthusiasm. Elaborating on this topic, Stine stated that this was a complex matter because the students were loyal and flexible and they usually would go along with whatever the teacher proposed. She mentioned that in many cultures it is rude or disrespectful to state one's opinion to authorities such as a teacher; it was at least her experience.

Stine still believed the students had enjoyed working with RT. She referred to one student in particular who had been very resistant in the beginning and who did not want to perform in front of an audience. However, the second time around it seemed to be perfectly fine and he did not question it the way he had done the first time.

When asked what it was like to implement RT with such a diverse group of students, both in age and background, Stine did not consider any of the aspects directly problematic. As long as one explained the reasons why RT was used, the students usually did not show any resistance because they believed that the teacher knew best. The students also seemed to like the choice of scripts.

Stine believed that the students' reading skills had improved with RT because they were able to practise their reading skills more than they had done before.

They have become much better at reading English and also partly speaking English. Whether that is because of RT alone or the whole focus we have put on reading in general I cannot say. But I think their oral skills have developed quite significantly without having any sort of test to put behind that...it is just my impression.

Stine also commented that RT was valuable because the students got to practise performing and presenting in front of an audience. Where the majority of the students came from, it was



only the professionals and the experts that spoke in front of people, also in school contexts. She therefore argued that these students needed as much experience with presenting and performing as possible to overcome the fear that many of them had. Stine said that one of the female students who was a part of this RT project had said in a Norwegian class: 'We should do something in front of the class every week. It is so good, such good training.' Stine believed the student said this partly because of her recent experience with RT. Now that the student had performed and presented in front of an audience frequently in a short period, performing RT was not as stressful as it had been initially. When the student noticed her own development, there was a quest for more opportunities to perform and develop even more.

Stine's impression was that the students' reading abilities had definitely developed from rehearsal to performance. This was even more evident in the first cycle of RT than in the second cycle. In the first cycle, there was a noticeable improvement in their fluency and pronunciation from the first rehearsal to the performance. They had rehearsed both in groups and one-to-one with the Stine, which both had great effects, but in different ways. RT gave Stine the chance to remind them several times how a specific word was pronounced and the students gradually remembered. Her impression was that the students also helped each other with pronunciation if they were familiar with the word, but the group functioned more as a place to automatize the reading.

Fluency and the security in the pronunciation will probably improve when they are practising in groups. As long as somebody is told exactly how to say a word they can sort of automatize that in the groups.

Stine also mentioned that the students had gained a good understanding of how reading should 'sound'. After some practice, Stine noticed that the students were able to read with pauses, correct tone, and rise and fall in their voice. Usually, she would read their parts first and then the students would imitate her. However, she stated that she did not know how the students would perform on a new text if they were not given any assistance. Stine could not say whether these aspects had improved in the students' reading in general, but stated that it was much easier to help them now because they were more alert to those features.

During rehearsals, Stine had focused on several different aspects. First, she had focused on pronunciation and then she had emphasized the importance of suitable speed and rhythm when reading.

I get a feeling that a lot of them have an idea that to read well is to be able to read fast. And reading something is quite the opposite [of reading fast]. [It is being] the artist to read slowly enough for the listener to understand. The only vehicle for understanding is your voice and the words you say.

When asked about the group dynamics, Stine said that she had a positive experience of how the students cooperated during both cycles of RT. She explained the cultural challenge between people with this kind of background and Norwegian children when working in groups.

These are students who are not as used to working together as Norwegian kids are after having been many years in Norwegian schools. It can be more of a struggle to make them understand that you are here to help each other...it is the sum total that is important. Because you can often observe that you asked somebody to do a task together, and surely they do. They sit next to each other and do the task. But Norwegian kids will automatically start communicating because they are used to working together after ten years at school. But the way RT was organized and the fact that the students had to develop the text together meant that they just had to cooperate. In other words, RT was a very effective method when the goal was to make them cooperate, especially when they wrote their own texts.

Stine elaborated on the students' role as performers and listeners and said that they seemed very proud and satisfied with what they had accomplished. Particularly in the last cycle, the students had seemed surprised over how much text they had produced. It also seemed to her that they had taken the role as audience very seriously and that they had especially enjoyed listening to the performances of the self-written scripts because it was personal and they knew how much work their peers had put into it. It was hard for Stine to know if her impression was correct because they were very positive and supportive of each other in general. Stine underlined the cultural aspect that can give the observer a misrepresentative impression. In many cultures, it is impolite to be critical and show that they do not enjoy something. In addition, these students were also mature adults and therefore often very polite.

Though it seemed as if they had enjoyed RT, Stine was uncertain of how much they had actually understood of each other's performances. The words and content were quite easy

to understand, but the fact that the pronunciation was still not perfect may have hindered the students' understanding. The next time she implements RT, she would provide the listeners with more background information to support comprehension before they listen to the performances.

When asked about the pros and cons of implementing RT, the time aspect was brought up. Stine commented that RT takes a great amount of time, at least with this type of group. The students need support and therefore it was good that there were two or three teachers present, as the observer also functioned as a teacher occasionally. Since every second counts for these students, as exams are coming up, this factor meant that one could reduce the time spent on the project. In addition, the problem of the students' absence was brought up again. Stine was used to the issue but acknowledged that the performance would probably have been even better if all students had been present for rehearsals. Though this was mentioned as one drawback, Stine still believed that RT was not a bad way to spend the time.

I think it [RT] has so many advantages that it is worth spending time on. Because the advantage(s), at least what has been my experience, is that you can focus on intonation, pronunciation, prosody and all that in a logical setting. It is not just something you say when they read aloud a little bit from text, but there are people that must understand what you are saying that do not have the text in front of them. It focuses the students in a new way. And for every time we do it, they get more used to it and it takes less time because they know how RT works. (...) it has become internalized in them.

Stine thought that one of greatest challenges with the second cycle was to make sure the students would understand the task. The students were not used to writing this type of text that was based on so much dialogue between characters. Though they had read an RT script, the models of how RT could be structured and organized were crucial to their understanding. Stine believed the models of how to read and write that were demonstrated had helped the students in the process and fostered their creativity.

When asked how the students experienced writing about their own culture and background, Stine believed that it was a motivational factor:

I think they really enjoyed that. Because it is something they rarely experience in our school anyway...because it is all about learning Norwegian culture and general history or science. We do not use their experiences nearly enough, so that was very good. And I think that was motivating for the students. You know for once they are the experts.

When asked which of the two cycles had benefitted the students most, her answer was that she would not have had the one without the other. Although some of them already had an idea of what RT was, they had learned the form and shape of it in the first cycle. It had created an important foundation that profited them when producing the self-written scripts.

The second cycle was even better because they could write their own texts. So both personally and linguistically, they probably learned more from the second cycle. But I think the first part was important.

Stine observed that the students became more confident when working with RT. She pointed out two factors that she thought had an influence on the students' confidence. One was that they were not alone, but together. The second was that the students had rehearsed well and it had given them the security they needed. Stine also mentioned that the fact that the students in the second cycle were allowed to write about themselves gave them confidence. The personal aspect made it possible for them to show new sides of themselves. Stine referred to one of the students who was reading about his interest in dance, and suddenly started dancing during the performance. He even took a backflip in the middle of the classroom. This student was an excellent dancer and since he was able to combine it with writing and reading, he succeeded. She also mentioned another student who got enthusiastic when talking about the traditional food in her country and used a good deal of body language and gestures. However, she added that though the students became more confident, she did not think the student who took a backflip in the classroom would have done it in front of a bigger audience. The feeling of security, Stine believed, was also connected to the friendly audience. Maybe if he had had the chance to practise and get comfortable in front of a bigger audience, it would have provided him with the confidence he needed. Stine reflected that RT had showed the students the importance of practice and that practice makes perfect.

Stine did not believe that the students' motivation and attitudes towards reading in general had improved. Even though they had learned new words and were quicker to decode,

she did not believe that the RT project had made the students more motivated to read books. It was rather the method of RT that had led to the greater motivation to read during that specific period. However, Stine made a distinction between reading silently and reading aloud and argued that she thought RT had motivated them to perform and read out aloud. Before this project, the students did not see reading as something one performed for others. From Stine's point of view, most of her students' motivation was instrumental. She added that their minds were constantly on upper secondary school and their future jobs. These students were adults and felt they had no time to waste and wanted to get an education so that they could provide for their families. Stine thought very few were learning for its own sake, which made this group quite different from regular school classes.

In general, the RT project had been a success and Stine therefore said she would want to use the method again another time. She believed the more they got familiar with the method, the more advantages there would be. They would become even more comfortable and creative after being familiar with the concept. If she would implement RT into a new class, Stine would probably implement both cycles, i.e. pre-written scripts and self-written scripts. However, if the class had worked with RT several times before, she would choose one of the two. The self-written scripts had a more holistic approach to learning and integrated reading, writing and speaking, and would therefore cover more of the curriculum competence aims they were required to follow.

In her final comments, Stine reported that RT had been a great experience and that it had strengthened her conviction that RT was an effective method to develop reading abilities.

## **6.4 Student interviews**

### *Interview with Lise*

The first interview subject was 'Lise', a 35-year-old woman from Burundi in Africa. At the time of the interview, Lise had been living in Norway for four and a half years. She had been unable to complete her education in Burundi because of her economical situation. When arriving in Norway, the only education she had was seven years at a primary school in her home country.

Lise spoke Swahili, which was her mother tongue. In addition, she could speak Norwegian and English. She pointed out that her language skills in Norwegian were stronger

than her English skills, even though she could speak some English before she had arrived in Norway. Lisa explained that that she had not learnt any English at school, but she had picked up some English when she had lived in South Africa for a short period.

Lise had been a student at the adult education centre for three years, but she had only received formal instruction in English for two years. She explained that so far it had been an enjoyable process learning a third language. In general, she liked to read and speak English, but said that the process of writing was not as enjoyable because she did not see herself as a good writer and said that it took a great amount of time and energy to produce text. However, when asked if she was motivated, Lise answered the following:

Yes, of course...because I can use the language when I go out and so yes, it is very important for me to learn how to speak English. And it is very important for me to know two languages, both Norwegian and English.

Lise continued to talk about her motivation to learn English when asked why she was a student at the adult education centre. It was a great opportunity for her to complete her lower secondary education, since she did not have the chance to do so in her home country. Lise had to pass English in order to continue her education so she could get a job as a nursing assistant in the future. She thought that it was difficult to find the time to read anything other than school material. Due to homework and having eight children, she rarely read anything for pleasure. If she read anything else, it was usually children's books.

Lisa did not consider herself a strong reader in English. The vocabulary was often too difficult and she struggled to pronounce and understand texts. Furthermore, she explained that even though reading in English was difficult, she would usually continue reading until she understood at least parts of it, making reading a time-consuming process. However, these factors did not demotivate and discourage her. Even though the process went rather slowly, she was still learning.

Lise emphasized the importance of comprehension and stated that reading was the source of knowledge and therefore it was very important for her to develop her reading skills also in English. She explained that comprehension was a less demanding task if she read aloud. In other words, reading aloud versus reading silently made it easier for her to understand: 'Do you know what, if I read aloud I understand. It helps me in a way. And if I do not understand, I repeat it again and then I understand what the text is about.'

Personally, Lisa felt that her ability to read out aloud was better than her ability to read silently. The response from her peers during these two years was that she read aloud clearly, which made it easier for them to understand. However, she seldom spoke any English outside the classroom. Once in a while she would use English when shopping at an Arabic store. Lisa explained it was good practice, but that sometimes it was hard to separate English and Norwegian.

When asked if she liked to write in English, she replied that writing was the most challenging skill. Since she had started at the adult education centre, Lisa had noticed improvement in her writing, but the process was still somewhat frustrating at times. In her own opinion, she was a bad writer. Furthermore, when Lisa was asked if writing was an important skill to master, she commented that it was in fact very important in order to communicate and write messages to people in English-speaking countries.

When reflecting on the first cycle of RT, Lisa said that it was the first time she had worked with RT and that it was an enjoyable and entertaining experience. The script *Bim's Bamboo* suited her proficiency level, though it contained some difficult words. Lisa said that the performance in front of the whole school at the UN day had stretched her.

It was fun, but also scary. There were a lot of people, different place, different school... yeah a little scary. I get shy whenever there are a lot of people watching. But when we went through it there, the performance day, two or three times before the performance, that helped. It stretched me, because I was nervous. But I managed to do it, like I had practised it.

On the topic of the second cycle, Lisa stated it was 'actually fun'. Elaborating on the process, it was clear that for Lisa it was easier to write about something personal. She did not have to use secondary sources because she wrote about her own experiences and traditions from her home country. Lisa said that 'It was very fun to write. When I write many times the words come easier. I remember more the words I am using, how to write them, pronounce. So it was very fun. I was satisfied'.

When asked if there was a noticeable improvement in reading from rehearsal to performance, Lisa said that she felt so herself:

The words that are difficult, I repeat many times so yeah...because I read many times and repeat and repeat...help me get better at reading. First time, I do not understand words I cannot read. I continue, and next time, I remember and I read faster than before. Yes, because now I know how to read. I know now how to pronounce.

Lisa thought that it was fun working in groups. It was stimulating to work together instead of solving a task individually, like they often did. If there were words in the text they did not understand, they had the chance to help each other. Being an audience and listeners was in her words 'cosy and entertaining'. Lise felt that she learnt new things about her peers and at the same time got an understanding of different cultures and traditions.

According to Lise, her general motivation to read had increased as a result of RT. She said her motivation increased when she had noticed that the rehearsals had a positive effect. When asked about the best and worst experience of working with RT, she stated that the best part was the second cycle. However, when talking about the worst experience, she did not remember one and thought it was hard to put one into words. She stated that if she had the chance, she would like to use RT another time because she learnt new words and became a stronger reader in English.

#### *Interview with Kjetil*

The second student interview was with a 19-year-old boy from Burma, Kjetil, who had been living in Norway for five years. When he arrived, Kjetil had first started at a Norwegian lower secondary school before he became a student at the adult education centre. In other words, he was taking 10th grade for the second time. At the regular lower secondary school, Kjetil had been exempted from the English lessons and instead he had participated in courses to learn Norwegian. His first language was Chin, but he also spoke Burmese, Norwegian and English.

Kjetil thought that English was a difficult subject and he struggled to decode words, especially long words. However, his motivation was strong and stated that 'One needs to know some English when living in this world'. It was the necessity of the language that motivated him to learn English.

In lower secondary school, Kjetil did not complete the last exams like the majority of his fellow students. He decided that he was not ready to start his education at an upper secondary school and was therefore taking 9th and 10th grade all over again at the adult



education centre. Kjetil explained that he was not as proficient in Norwegian as he wanted to be, and therefore decided that it was wise for him to learn more so that upper secondary school would not become overwhelming and too difficult. He was participating in the adult education programme to prepare himself for his education to become a mechanic.

When asked if he liked to read in general, Kjetil said that it depended on the material. The only books he read were the Bible or books about his home country, Burma. He said that thick books were usually boring and that they demotivated him.

When you see those thick books, you think maaaaan, åååh. How am I ever going to finish that one and you are bored even before you start reading? Maybe it is because we read so much at school all the time and so I do not read a book voluntarily.

Kjetil enjoyed reading newspapers online, cartoons and he read a paragraph from the Bible every morning. That was something his parents had done with him his whole childhood and it had become a habit.

When asked questions about his skills and motivation to read in English, Kjetil said that it was a difficult subject and that he sometimes mixed Norwegian and English. In addition, he struggled with pronunciation and reading complex words. He therefore preferred English texts that were short. If the texts were long and complicated, he struggled to understand them. The one thing that motivated him was reading aloud, especially if there were teachers or students who could correct him, as his goal was to improve.

Kjetil saw it as important to learn how to read, write and speak English. He emphasized the necessity of knowledge in English when travelling since Norwegians travel frequently. One needs to be able to ask for directions, read the information at the airport, and also for educational and communicational purposes. However, he did not consider himself as especially strong in either of those skills and felt that he needed to work harder. In his home country, Burma, the teachers focused primarily on developing the writing skills, so he was still trying to get used to the focus on speaking and reading in Norwegian classrooms. He said that he enjoyed reading aloud and that it 'felt like his brain worked faster when reading aloud'. When reading aloud, Kjetil could hear the speed and pronunciation of his reading. There were limited situations in everyday life where he could practise English. He only spoke English in class and when meeting his friends from Nigeria once in a while.

This was the first time Kjetil had been part of an RT project. He thought that the script

*Bim's Bamboo* was at his proficiency level. The text was neither too difficult nor too easy. Kjetil said that he could hear all his group members improve after repeatedly practising the script, including himself.

For me it became easier and easier to read for every time. If you give me a text, and if I read more and more every day, I cannot forget the words. When I see the words I go 'oh yes', I remember, I have read it before...that I can read.

When reflecting on the process of producing an RT script, Kjetil explained that it was at times stressful. In the second cycle, some of his group members were often absent and the process therefore went slowly. When the group members were absent, they were not there to write their part about their culture. Neither could they collaborate and help each other with the writing process as they had planned to. In addition, a few of the group members were not willing to work hard. Kjetil and one of his peers put more effort into the writing of the script than the rest of the group. When the group did not function as intended, it helped that they were writing about their own culture and traditions. Kjetil said 'It is our culture. It is like writing about home country and myself, if you know what I mean? And I know what we do in our home country'.

When asked about the performance, Kjetil explained that it was nerve-wracking before and during the performance, but that it was fun afterwards. Before the first performance of the script *Bim's Bamboo*, Kjetil practised ten minutes on the bus between school and work every day. He felt the pressure to perform well, since the audience was large. For the second cycle, Kjetil only practised reading his script at school. He was less nervous when performing the script his group had written because this time it was only in front of the class. It was exciting to have a chance to tell his peers about himself and his culture. It added variation to the regular instruction where they usually had to write about something in which they really did not have an interest. Also, listening to the other groups perform the self-written scripts was an enjoyable experience. They read loud and clearly and Kjetil understood most of what they read. He reflected on their level of proficiency from when they had started at the adult education centre, and said that it had become clear to him how much they had improved since then. Two years ago they could hardly read anything, but now they wrote their own scripts and read them in front of the class.

RT was enjoyable, had challenged him in new ways, and had motivated him, at least during the process. However, Kjetil explained that he had always been motivated to learn English and therefore struggled to point out the most positive and negative experiences with RT. He answered that ‘I usually enjoy everything’ and stated that if there was another opportunity to participate in RT, he would.

### *Interview with Johannes*

The third student interview was conducted with a 33-year-old Somalian man, Johannes. Firstly, he was asked some general questions in order to get some insight into his background and nationality. Johannes had moved to Norway five years ago. Before that he had lived in Somalia, where he had attended a Koranic school for 16 years. There he learned how to read and write in Somali and Arabic. However, Johannes said that the main focus was more on reading and reciting religious texts. Besides that, he had not completed any formal education.

English was Johannes’s fourth language. He could speak Somali, Arabic, Norwegian and some English. Before he had become a student at the adult education centre, Johannes had never been taught English. At the time of the interview, he had received formal instruction in English for two years. Johannes said that he was very motivated to learn English because he was motivated to finish his education so that he could become a mechanic.

On the topic of general language skills, Johannes said that he had received instruction and practice at the Koranic school in reading and writing, but less in oral language. Daily, Johannes would read something for pleasure. Usually it was newspapers, or historical or fantasy books in Somali or Arabic.

Personally, Johannes did not regard himself as a strong reader, writer or speaker of English. When reading in English, he said that he made many mistakes. In general, Johannes liked to write in Somali. He had a book in which he would once in a while write down his thoughts or special happenings. However, Johannes struggled to write in English. He did not have enough vocabulary to put his thoughts into words and would frequently misspell words. Johannes would misspell words because he felt that there was often little compliance between the sounds of words and how they were spelled. On the topic of oral language, Johannes said that he disliked reading aloud and speaking if he was not fluent: ‘If it is perfect, then I can read aloud’. Johannes was afraid that his peers would laugh if his pronunciation was wrong. He felt that it was very important to pronounce all the words correctly. The interviewer asked

whether it was he who personally felt that his reading needed to be perfect or if it was a norm from Somalia that he had carried with him. He answered that in Somalia, it was very important that performances or speeches in the public are planned and well-rehearsed, also in school contexts.

Johannes acknowledged the importance of English. Although it was important to be able to read in English, his English was not progressing as much and as fast as his Norwegian. This was because there are too few arenas outside the classroom where he was exposed to and able to practise his English, whereas he was using Norwegian all the time. Johannes did not have any English-speaking friends and there were rarely situations where he used his English language. Being able to understand what people are saying or writing in English was the key and therefore Johannes wanted to develop his English skills.

Johannes had taken part in RT once before. Though he was familiar with RT, he still got nervous about the performance. He felt that the script *Help! Hilary! Help!* was on his proficiency level. It was difficult the first time they read through it, 'but it got easier and easier the more they practised'. He was really impressed by the other group that performed in front of the whole school and said that they were not 'as scared as him'. Everyone could hear that their reading and their pronunciation had improved.

It was easier to produce text since he was writing about himself. Johannes said that 'It was OK to write the manuscript because it was my own experiences. I know a lot about my home country and therefore it does not get too hard'.

The performances went fine. They had practised individually and as a group and Johannes noticed that their reading had improved. However, he did not practise reading any of the scripts at home. He felt more in control when reading the self-written script because it was his own words and while writing it he was able to read through it several times. He did not need to stop to decode words, as he normally had to. Johannes also felt that his pronunciation had improved, but he was not certain.

Moreover, it was enjoyable working in groups because they had the chance to help each other. It was also amusing to be the audience of such entertaining performances. Johannes could not remember properly, but he believed he had understood most of what the performers read. The best part of the performances was the performers' contact with the audience. They had eye contact with the audience and they used gestures and body language as well, which made it more interesting to watch.

Johannes said that RT motivated him to read. Mostly, it motivated him to read the scripts, but he was uncertain if he was more motivated to read other types of material. Yet, the most positive aspect of RT was the performances. Johannes was still nervous and afraid of performing, but he did not have the negative attitude towards it he used to have. He needed to get used to standing in front of people and therefore RT was a great experience that he would choose to take part in another time if an opportunity presented itself.

### *Interview with Elin*

The final student interview was conducted with Elin, a student from Eritrea. Elin had managed to complete primary school in her home country before she moved to Norway. At the time of the interview, Elin had been living in Norway for five years. She spoke four different languages: Tigrinag, Amarisk, Norwegian and English. Tigrinag was her mother tongue and Amarisk is the official language in Eritrea. She had only participated in the adult education centre for two years.

When asked if she was motivated to learn English, she stated that ‘she had to learn English, which in itself was a motivation’. At the school in Eritrea she was taught English for half a year, but she could not remember anything and further stated that it felt as if she had started from scratch at the adult education centre. Elin had not been motivated to learn English in Eritrea because it was not an important language. Neither did she think it was an important language in Norway, as it was not the official language. However, she responded: ‘I have to learning English to get an education here in Norway’. She was motivated to learn English to be able to complete her education and become a nursing assistant. In addition, she stressed the communicational value of English when meeting new people or travelling.

When asked if she was a strong reader, writer or speaker of English, her response was immediately ‘No’. Elin emphasized the point about writing. English and Norwegian were based on another alphabet than she was used to and therefore she struggled. Elin explained that she would often misspell words because it was difficult to connect the right letter to the right sound. When it came to reading, Elin liked to read. However, since there was so much schoolwork, she barely read anything other than school material. The only time she could read for pleasure was during holidays. Then she usually read fiction and romantic novels in her own language. Though she liked to read in general, Elin pointed out that the experience of reading English was not as pleasurable. She was not a strong reader in English and normally

would struggle to understand fifty percent of the texts she read.

When asked if she felt whether her reading had improved from rehearsal to performance, her answer was that RT had helped her in many ways. For every time she had read the script, she had become a more fluent reader. Her mother tongue was based on a different alphabet and therefore the decoding process of words and sentences had been hard, but became easier with practice. Lisa explained that she would often skip words and read slowly, but that it helped to read aloud. When she read aloud, she could hear herself better and the text made more sense. When practising the first script, *Help! Hilary! Help!*, she noticed that her reading had improved. It was also helpful to practise the script individually with the teacher because she would correct the pronunciation mistakes and made sure she did not skip words when reading. Although it became easier to read after rereading the scripts several times individually and together with the group, Elin said that there was still a long way to go before her reading became perfect.

Elin commented about RT that it was nice to do something else than regular reading instruction. Elin had participated in RT once before with their teacher. However, she did not like group work. The reason was that she felt her peers were not taking enough responsibility. Some group members were absent very often and therefore some ended up doing more than others. In addition, the group members were not always willing to help each other. Hence, there was no reason to work together. However, the second cycle was not as bad as she had expected. This was probably because they wrote about a topic that they were familiar with and they did not depend on secondary sources. It was easier to come up with ideas on topics and how they could structure the RT script.

Although she liked practising the script and reading aloud, she did not enjoy performing in front of the class. Elin explained that in Eritrea they never had to present, perform or stand up in front of the class and the whole experience was therefore uncomfortable. It was not that her reading had not improved, but she did not like performing in general. Elin would choose not to engage in an RT activity on a later occasion, if given the option. In her opinion, the benefits of RT were not great enough despite the fact that that her reading skills had improved. She disliked the foundation of RT, namely working in groups and performing in front of other students.

## 6.5 Analysis of data recordings

This section presents the data collected from the audio recordings of the students' first rehearsals and RT performances. It follows a similar pattern to that used by Myrset (2014). The audio recordings reveal the students' progression in fluency and pronunciation from the first rehearsal to performance. Tables are used to show words that were mispronounced or wrongly recognized during the first rehearsals and performances of the RT scripts.

It was occasionally challenging to categorize certain words as either mispronounced or wrongly recognized. This is because the dividing line between the two can be fuzzy. For example, the word *stopped* was read as *shopped*. The researcher had to decide, for example, whether *stopped* was mispronounced or wrongly recognized was a matter of decision from the researcher's side (see also Myrset, 2014:70).

### 6.5.1 Analysis of audio-recordings in the first RT cycle

#### *Rehearsal*

Table 1 shows the words that were mispronounced during the first rehearsal of the script *Bim's Bamboo*. It is necessary to point out that the students practised the script individually a few times before they read through it as a group for the first time. In addition, two students were absent during the first rehearsal and therefore the remaining parts were read by one of the group members and their teacher.

Table 2 shows the words that were mispronounced during the first rehearsal of *Bim's Bamboo*.

Table 2: Mispronounced words during the first rehearsal of *Bim's Bamboo* (The numbers after some words refer to the number of times these words were mispronounced).

Word	Mispronounced	Word	Mispronounced
Garden	/gɑ:dən/	Things x 2	/tɪŋz/
Was	/wəs/	During	/dʒurɪŋ /
His	/ɪs/	Too	/tʊ:/
Face	/fes/	Turtle	/tɜ:tlɪ/
Wrinkles	/wɪŋkləs/	Useless x 2	/ju:slɪ/, /'ju:seles/
Than	/den/	Months x 2	/mɔ:nts/
The x 2	/də/	Years	/jes/
Trees	/tris/	Street	/sti:t/
White	/wɪt/	Moved	/mu:fed/
Always	/ɔ:weɪs/	Away	/əwe/
Hats x 2	/hæs/	Dusting	/dɔ:ɪtɪŋ/
Pots x 2	/pɔ:s/	Foolish	/fu:lɪs /
Mats x 2	/mæs/	Covered	/kəvəd/
Frames	/fremz/	Summer	/sɔ:mə/
Hurry	/ɔ:ri/	Disappeared	/dɪsə'peəd/
Inside	/ɪsaɪd/	Humming	/ʌmɪŋ/
Touched	/tʌʃəd/	Ran	/rɑ:n/
Others	/ɔ:də/	Picked	/pɪkəd/
Said	/seɪd/	Whistles/whistle	/wɪslɪs/ /wɪsl/
Mountain x 6	/maʊntə/, /maʊntɪ/, /maʊntaɪn/	Factory	/fæktɜ:r/
Best x 2	/bes/	These	/tes/
Foo x 2	/fɔ:/	Make	/mek/
Windstorm	/wɪnstɔ:m/	Miracle x 2	/mɪləkle/
Soon x 2	/sʊn/	Treasures	/trɛ:nses/
They	/teɪ/	Smiled	/smaɪəd/
Wanted	/wɛntɪn/	Things x 2	/tɪŋz/

Table 2 shows that the students struggled to pronounce many words. One of the key words within the text, *mountain*, was mispronounced six out of nine times during the first rehearsal of the text. The students made several attempts to pronounce it correctly, but particularly strived to pronounce the ending of the word correctly. The same tendency could be seen with regard to longer words in general, both disyllabic and multisyllabic words within the script, such as *disappeared*, *miracle*, *factory* and *treasures*.

Some of the students struggled to pronounce the phoneme [t] in the middle or at the end of a word, especially students who had Chin or Thai as their mother tongue. Words such as *pots*, *mats*, *hats* and *best* were pronounced as /pɔ:s /, /mæs/, /hæs/, and /bes/. The words were pronounced without the [t], making it difficult for the listeners to understand which word was actually being read. The students also faced problems when pronouncing words that contained the [r] sound. In words such as *wrinkles*, *street*, and *miracle* the [r] sound was omitted, and they were pronounced as /wɪŋkləs/, /sti:t/ and /mɪləkle/.



Another mistake that reoccurred was the tendency to put a sound to all letters in a word, for example the – *ed* endings in verbs such as *disappeared*, *picked* and *touched*. These words were pronounced as /disɪpɪred/, /pɪked/, /tʌʃed/.

Table 3 shows words that were wrongly recognized during the first rehearsal of *Bim's Bamboo*.

Table 3: Wrongly recognized words in first rehearsal of *Bim's Bamboo*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Misread</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>Misread</b>
Wore	Were	Near	Now
Shining	Smiling	Stopped	Shopped
Looked	Walking	During	Dusting
From	For	Became	Become
Came	Come	These	This
Talking	Taking	Dusting	Doing
Went	Wait	Water	Waiting

As Table 3 shows, the students decoded the words in the script into similar words they were familiar with or had recently read. All the words, except for one, were confused with words that had the same initial letter. For example, *talking* was read as *taking* and *stopped* read as *shopped*. In both instances, there were only small differences in spelling, which confused the reader, especially since the word *shopped* also appeared several times throughout the script.

#### *Performance of Bim's Bamboo*

Table 4 provides an overview of the words that were mispronounced during the performance of *Bim's Bamboo*. It should be noted that, as one of the group members was absent, the teacher performed the part that contained the least text.

Table 4: Mispronunciations during the performance of *Bim's Bamboo*

Word	Mispronounced	Word	Mispronounced
Village	/vɪlɑːʃ/	Disappeared	/dɪsɪpɪrd/
Wrinkles	/wɪŋkləs/	People	/pɪbel/
Trees	/tris/	Factories	/fɪktəɪrɪs/
Hats x1	/hæs/	Turtle	/tɜːrtlɪ/
Mats x 2	/mæs/	Street	/sti:t/
Pots x 2	/pɔːs/	Dusting	/dɔːɪsɪŋ/
Frames	/fremz/	Foolish	/fuːlɪs /
Hurry	/ɔːrɪ/	During	/dʒʊnərɪŋ/
Bowed	/baʊəd/	Whistle/whistles	/wɪsl/, /wɪslɪs/
Touched	/tʌʃəd/	They x 2	/teɪ/
Best	/bes/		

Table 4 shows that the students' pronunciation improved considerably from rehearsal to performance. During the first rehearsal 84 words out of 704 were mispronounced or wrongly recognized, which constitutes 11,9 % of the entire text. However, during the performance only 25 words, or 3,5 % of the words, were mispronounced.

The students more or less succeeded in pronouncing the [r] sound that they had failed to vocalize during the first rehearsal. The number of wrongly pronounced – *ed* endings in verbs also decreased. For example, the students were able to correctly pronounce the –*ed* ending as [t] in /pɪkt /.

Although the number of pronunciation errors decreased considerably, the words *pots*, *hats* and *mats* were still mispronounced. The same trend could be seen in words such as *whistle* and *dusting*, where the phoneme [t] appears beside the [s]. Another interesting observation was that the students mispronounced some words during the performance that had not been mispronounced earlier. Words such as *village* and *people* were only mispronounced during the performance, at least as far as the researcher was aware.

The students' fluency also improved from the rehearsals to the performance. The audio-recordings revealed that the students needed thirteen minutes to read through the script *Bim's Bamboo* during the first rehearsal, while the performance lasted for approximately seven minutes, meaning that it was six minutes shorter. During the first rehearsal, a great amount of time was used to 'puzzle out' the pronunciation of different words. The students made multiple attempts to pronounce certain words, but to a certain degree all the students stuttered through many words. The example below illustrates how the students hesitated to pronounce the words *others* and *treasures* correctly in the sentence 'I must tell the *others* about these *treasures*' during the first rehearsal.

I must tell the ååå..åda (ɔ:da)... others about these thes...traa...no...transes (tra:nse)s)...(teacher pronounced the word and student imitated) treasures!

During the performance, the students did not stutter through the script as they had done in the first rehearsal. They had become familiarized with many words they had struggled to pronounce and were able to decode faster due to the rehearsals. Nevertheless, although the students' fluency did improve, their reading was still occasionally staccato at times. Sentences that especially contained several lengthy words were still read in a word-for-word manner.

*Help! Hilary! Help!*

Group 2, who read *Help! Hilary! Help!*, performed their text in front of the class. During the first rehearsal of the script 39 out of 448 words (8.7%) were mispronounced or wrongly recognized. As Tables 5 and 6 show, Group 2 made fewer mistakes during the first rehearsal compared to the other group. However, it should be mentioned that the script *Help! Hilary! Help!* contained simpler words than *Bim's Bamboo*.

Table 5 provides an overview of the words that were mispronounced during the first rehearsal of *Help! Hilary! Help!*

Table 5: Words that were mispronounced during the first rehearsal of *Help! Hilary! Help!*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Mispronounced</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>Mispronounced</b>
Trying	/traɪɑ:nɪŋ/	Raced	/reɪs/
Slammed	/slæmed/	Headed	/hɑ:dəd/
Played	/plɑɪd/	Dropped	/drɑ:pəd/
Carrying	/kæjɪŋ/	Swooped	/swu:bəd/
Street	/stɪt/	Giant	/gɪənt/
Chasing	/ʃɑ:sɪŋ/	Flew	/flɪw/
Shore	/ʃɔ:rə/	Serpent x 3	/sepənt/
Swallowed	/səlʊəd/	Throat	/troʊt/
Coughed	/kɔ:fəd/	Backyard	/bɑ:kjəd/
Town	/daʊn/	Mouth	/maʊt/
Ahead	/ɑ:əd/	Wind	/wɪ:n/
Climbed	/klaɪməd/	Bird	/bɪd/
Airport	/əpɔ:t/	Them x 2	/tem/
Splash	/splæʃ/	They x 3	/teɪ/

Similarly to Group 1, Group 2 also struggled to pronounce verbs that had *-ed* endings. The *-ed* endings in verbs such as *swallowed*, *coughed*, *climbed*, *swooped*, and *dropped*, were pronounced wrongly. The words beginning with [ð] were repeatedly mispronounced as a plosive [t] in words such as *they*, and *them*. The word *serpent* occurred three times throughout the script and was pronounced incorrectly every time as /sepənt/. The teacher corrected one of the students' pronunciation errors the first time it appeared, yet other students repeatedly mispronounced the word.

Table 6 shows words that were wrongly recognized during the first rehearsal of *Help! Hilary! Help!*

Table 6: Wrongly recognized words during the first rehearsal of *Help! Hilary! Help!*

Word	Misread	Word	Misread
Her	The	Dropped	Stopped
Got	Hopped	Flew	Fly
Blew	Back	Such	Just

Six words were wrongly recognized during the rehearsal of *Help! Hilary! Help!*. Similarly to Group 1, the students in this group also mixed up words in the script with words that had the same initial letter. However, some of the words that were wrongly recognized were read as a completely different word. It seems as if the students guessed some of the words based on the content of the script. For example, *got* was read as *hopped* and both fitted into the context of: 'Hilary *got/hopped* in the plane and took off after the bird.'

### *Performance*

The students who performed *Help! Hilary! Help!* improved their pronunciation from rehearsal to performance.

Table 7 shows the mispronunciations made during the performance of *Help! Hilary! Help!*

Table 7: Words mispronounced during the performance of *Help! Hilary! Help!*

Word	Mispronounced	Word	Mispronounced
Street	/stɪt/	Mouth	/maot/
Chasing	/ʃɑ:sɪŋ/	Splash	/splæs/
Throat	/troot/	Giant	/gɪənt/
Coughed	/kɔ:fed/	Other	/ɔ:da:/
Serpent	/sepənt/	Waterfall	/wa:tərfɔ:l/

Some of the main errors in pronunciation that were made consistently throughout the rehearsal were now pronounced correctly. For example, the students made fewer errors when it came to pronouncing verbs with – *ed* endings and were able to pronounce the [ð] in words such as *them* and *they*. However, a great number of the words that were mispronounced during the rehearsal were still mispronounced during the performance of *Help! Hilary! Help!*. Students still had difficulties when pronouncing the /θ/ sound in words such as *mouth* and *throat*. The [dʒ] sound in *giant* was pronounced with the Norwegian sounding of the phoneme [g]

The number of wrongly recognized words was reduced from six to three words. However, none of the words that were wrongly recognized during the first rehearsal were wrongly recognized during the performance. Table 8 display the words that were wrongly recognised during the performance of *Help! Hilary! Help!*

Table 8: Wrongly recognized words in the performance of *Help! Hilary! Help!*

Word	Misread
Shore	Store
Now (Right now)	Away (Right away)
That	The

Again, the trend was to confuse the word in the script with a word that looked the same. *Shore* looks very much alike the word *store*. The other trend was to exchange words that had the same meaning, such as *right now* and *right away*.

Similarly to the *Bim's Bamboo* group, the students' fluency improved during the performance. They used slightly above eleven minutes to read through the script the first time. During the performance the students used seven. At the performance, the students were able to decode faster and as the result the reading speed had developed. However, the reading still sounded somewhat 'interrupted' or influent.

## 6.5.2 Analysis of audio-recordings in the second cycle of Readers Theatre

### *Rehearsals*

The students' pronunciation also improved from the first rehearsals to the performances during the second RT cycle. The number of errors in pronunciation during the rehearsals of the self-written scripts were fewer compared to the first rehearsals of the pre-written scripts. The wording in the self-written scripts was more simplistic compared to the pre-written scripts because the students mostly wrote words they were familiar with. The students also got to practise the scripts as they were reading through them to check spelling and sentence structure. As these learners were beginners, the scripts reflected that. The scripts contained many spelling mistakes and faulty sentence structure, as their teacher did not have the capacity nor time to correct several drafts of the scripts.

Table 9 shows words that were mispronounced and wrongly recognized by Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 during the rehearsal of the self-written scripts.

Table 9: Mispronounced words during the first rehearsals of the self-written scripts

<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Group 3</b>
Carrot /kɑ:rot/	Chinese /tʃʌɪnə/	Sausages x 2 /saʊsɪdʒɪs/
Favorite /feɪvə:rite/	Face /fes/	Kinds /kɪnds/
Mom /mu:m/	Fish /fis/	Rice /rɪs/
Famous /fɑ:mɑ:s/	Vegetables /veʒtəbl/	Tasty /tɑ:stɪ/
Celebrate /selebretə/	Wish /wis/	Meal /mel/
Which /wɪd/	Yeast /jest/	Sauce /saʊs/
Sauce /saʊs/	Lives /lɪbs/	Watch /wɑ:ts/
Start /stɑ:rted/	Shoes /sho:s/	Easter /estɜ:r/
Matches /mɑ:dʒəs/	Weather /weter/	Church /tʃʌtʃ/
Laughed /lɑ:fted/	Potato /pəteɪtəʊ/	National /nəʃjənəl/
Relaxing /ɪlæksɪŋ/	Traditions x 2 /trədɪtʃɪnz/	Throwing /troʊɪŋ/
Conversation /kɑ:nbrəseɪʃən/	Important /ɪmpɔ:rtɑ:nt/	
Beach /beʃ/	Seen /sen/	
Tink /tɪŋk/	Called /kɔ:ləd/	
Lay /lɑ:i/	Danced /dænsəd/	
People /pi:bəl/	Joined /jɔ:ɪnd/	
Fantastic /fɑ:ntəstɪk/	Street /stɪt/	
	Lose /lo:s/	
	Weekend /wɪknəd/	
	Best /bes/	
	Gifts /ɹɪfts/	
	Celebrate /seləbrete /	

As illustrated in Table 9, Group 2 made most errors when it came to pronunciation. They struggled especially to pronounce the [ʃ] sound in words such as *fish*, *shoes*, and *wish*. In Group 1, there was a tendency to pronounce an [ɑ:] similar to the Norwegian sound in words such as *lay* and *famous*.

It seemed as if all the groups had problems pronouncing dissyllable and multi-syllable words. A trend that reoccurred was to abridge or change the sound of the last part of the words. For example, the word *traditions* was pronounced /trədɪtlɔ:ns/.

Table 10 shows words that were wrongly recognized during the first rehearsals of the self-written scripts.

Table 10: Wrongly recognized words during the rehearsals of the self-written scripts

Group 1	Group 2	Group Three
Became (Become)	Taste (Test)	Won (win)
Love it (Love that)	At (in)	Is (it)
Talking x 3 (Telling/taking)	Raisins (rosin)	
Way to (way of)	Pancakes (pannekaker)	
Of (to)	Conversation (confrontation)	
Fun (funny)	Came (come)	
	Three (their)	
	Chin (China)	

Table 10 shows that in Group 1, the word *talking* was several times confused with similar words and read as *telling* or *taking*. Group 2 pronounced two of the words in Norwegian, as they resembled Norwegian wording. The words *raisins* and *pancakes* were pronounced as *rosin* and *pannekaker*. In Group 3, only two words were wrongly recognized during the first rehearsal. Again, the misread words were very similar to the words in the text. Common for all the groups was the tendency to read another tense of the word than what was written in the script. For example, *became* was read as *become*. In addition, the students had a habit of changing small words, such as *that* to *it*.

#### *Performances of the self-written scripts*

All three groups made fewer pronunciation mistakes in the performances of the self-written scripts than they had done during the first rehearsals. Group 1 mispronounced or misread 4,2 % of the text during the first rehearsal (27/650 words of the text). In the performance they made only 1,1% errors. Group 2 decreased their error margin from 4,1% during the rehearsal to 1,3 % during the performance. In Group 3, the same level of decrease was not found. In the

rehearsal, 2,3 % of the words in script were mispronounced or wrongly recognized, whereas 2,0% of errors were made during the performance.

Table 11 shows the number of mistakes that were made by each of the groups during the performances.

Table 11: Mispronounced words during the performances

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
People /pɪbəl/	Because /bɪkəʊz/	Which /wɪt/
Sun /sʌn/	Chinese (chɪna)	Rice /rɪs/
Favourite /feɪvəːrɪt/	Chatting /tʃetɪŋ/	Tasty /tɑːstɪ/
Mom /muːm/	Raisins /raɪsɪn/	Sauce /saʊs/
Famous /fɑːməːs/	Food /fuːd/	Much /mʌs/
Sauce /saʊs/	Fish /fɪs/	Sporty /spɔːtɪ/
Laughed /lɑːfted/		Street /stɪt/
		Competing /kɔːmpɪtɪŋ/
		Throwing /tɹoʊɪŋ/
		Easter /estɜːr/

Table 11 shows that words that were mispronounced during the performance were mostly words that the students had strived to pronounce during the rehearsals. However, Group 3 had the fewest pronunciation mistakes during the rehearsals, but made the greatest number of mistakes during the performance. On the other hand, in Group 2 the opposite was found. In total, they made the most pronunciations mistakes during the rehearsal and the least during the performance.

Table 12 provides an overview of the words that were wrongly recognized during the performance of the self-written scripts.

Table 12: Wrongly recognized words during the performances of the self-written scripts

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Way to (Way of)	Their (Three)	Sang (singing)
Sometimes (Sometime)	Taste (Test)	Win (won)
	Came (come)	Hots (Hot)
	Great (greatest)	Is it (It is) x 2
		Sounds (Sound)

Group 2 continued to misread words during the performance. Many of the same words that were wrongly recognized during the rehearsal were misread during the performance.

Nevertheless, the words that were read were often appropriate words to use within the context. For example, Group 2 wrote ‘They wanted to taste all the food they were talking about’. When the students replaced the word *taste* with *test* during the performance, the



sentence still made sense. In addition, many of remaining words that were wrongly recognized were misread as another form of the verb, for example *come* instead of *came*, and *won* instead of *win*.

The amount of time needed to read through the texts was reduced considerably from the first rehearsal to performances. However, it should be noted that the first time they read through the scripts, the students commented on each other's reading, which added some time to the rehearsals. Group one spent eleven minutes to read through the script the first time, but spent seven minutes during the performance. However, it should be mentioned that this group did not show the dance during the first rehearsal, whereas in the performance, the student danced for about thirty seconds. Group two spent nine minutes to read through the script the first time, but needed five minutes to do so during the performance. The last group spent ten minutes to read through the script during the first rehearsal, while they reduced the time to just under seven minutes during the performance.

## **7. Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the findings of the research will be discussed in the light of the theory and earlier studies on RT presented in Chapter four. The findings will be addressed according to the two research questions of the thesis. Section 7.2 discusses the minority background adult students' experiences of RT. The benefits of RT on the students' readings skills and motivation will be discussed in section 7.3. Furthermore, section 7.4 discuss the challenges of using RT within this context. Implications and recommendations will be addressed in section 7.5. Finally, limitations of the study will be presented in section 7.6.

### **7.2 The minority background adult learners' experiences of RT**

The first research question concerned how the minority background adult learners experienced RT. This research question was investigated by conducting pre- and post-project interviews with the teacher, four student-interviews, and observations of the RT cycles.

#### *Rehearsals*

Generally, it seemed as if the students had positive experiences with the rehearsals of RT. On the basis of the answers from the interviews, there were various reasons why the students enjoyed practising the scripts. Johannes pointed out that long and complex texts demotivated him and he therefore preferred RT because he could choose his own part, a factor that seems to reduce stress for struggling readers (Tyler and Chard, 2000; Uthman, 2002). Furthermore, Elin claimed that RT added variation to the regular reading instruction and believed her pronunciation and fluency improved more because the teacher had more opportunities to help her during the rehearsals. This claim was similar to Kjetil's and Elin's, who commented that they learnt more when reading aloud. They paid closer attention to what they were actually reading and peers or teachers could correct their mistakes. In other words, the students noticed the fruits of the rehearsals, which was individual improvement and improvement as a group.

However, it seemed as if the students, to various degrees, became tired of the intensity and practice RT required of them. As mentioned, the proficiency level in English within this group was low and therefore it required a good deal of practice in order for them to improve their fluency and accuracy. In addition, the absence of some students from time to time slowed down the rehearsal process even more, resulting in lengthy periods practising the same scripts. According to Worthy and Prater (2002: 295), reading the same text multiple times can become a boring task. For example, the group that read *Help! Hilary! Help!* stated they had finished practising for the performance although their reading was not fluent. Another possibility is that the transition from working individually to working so much in groups might have influenced their engagement. When rehearsing the scripts, the students have to concentrate and listen to when their group members are reading to be fully aware when it is their turn. When reading individually, on the other hand, they only have to think about themselves, and they do not have to pay attention in the same way.

These findings contrast with, for example, Drew and Pedersen's (2012: 79) study, where the researchers had rarely seen such commitment from the involved lower secondary pupils throughout the entire process. The students were having so much fun that they forgot the time and were willing to rehearse after school to perfect their performances.

Even though the rehearsals were tedious at times, the performances seemed to drive the students to put effort into the rehearsal period. It seemed as if they took pride in performing well. For example, Johannes did not want the audience to laugh at him. Other studies have also found that RT performances provided the students with a reason to practise reading the scripts (Rasinski, 2012; Tyler and Chard, 2000). Another possible reason why the students continued to practise, even though they got tired of it, might be because they needed to gain a certificate in lower secondary education and trusted the educational value of this method.

### *Self-written scripts*

One of the most positive aspects of RT in this project was the self-written scripts the students wrote in the second cycle. Stine commented that the second cycle was a more holistic approach to learning and covered more of the curriculum competence aims. For example, one of the competence aims after 10<sup>th</sup> grade states that students should be able to write various text types with 'structure and cohesion' (*The English subject Curriculum*). According to Hoyt

(1992: 582), 'The most effective scripts often are designed by the students'. These findings are also similar to Drew and Pedersen's (2012) and Pettersen's (2013) studies, which show that self-written scripts seem to be the most beneficial in RT.

In the current study, it seems as if the personal angled scripts were a recipe for success. This personalization of the script is what makes the present study different from previous studies on RT. The students expressed their excitement about having the opportunity to share their own stories and experiences with their peers. Therefore, one might argue that this approach would benefit a wide range of students because they are given creative freedom and the chance to speak of something they personally find interesting and wish to share with others. In the present study, this worked exceptionally well due to fact that the students had various background and nationalities. Stine also suggested that this approach was an uplifting task for the minority background adult learners, who rarely got to share their stories. However, not all students might be comfortable with sharing their experiences, and some would therefore prefer writing about more general topics. Nevertheless, in the present study, it seemed as if the personal angle worked well and the students showed ownership of their work.

Furthermore, the self-written scripts seemed to be an interesting but also a suitable task for the students. Since their proficiency level in English was not very advanced, it was therefore easier to write about themselves as opposed to a more abstract topic. This was supported by all of the students who were interviewed. They agreed that it was easier to write scripts that were based on themselves than on something else. For instance, Elin commented that the second cycle was not as bad as she had anticipated since she was able to write about something she was familiar with. If they would have had to find and organize external sources and adapt them into an RT text, the task may have been overwhelming, considering their low language proficiency level in English. The fact that they were able to use themselves as sources narrowed down the focus areas, leaving room for increased attention to language and the writing process. The teacher also acknowledged that the personal approach was a success and stated that the students were able to show new sides of themselves. For once, the students had the expertise. The teacher was also impressed by the amount of text the students were able to produce.

That being said, the time-span used to produce the scripts seemed for some to be too long. Even though they were enthusiastic in the start, the motivation seemed to fade when some of them struggled to complete the scripts. For example, it was observed that one of the

students asked Stine to write the ending for them, as they struggled to express themselves in writing.

However, the adapted or self-written scripts give the students the chance to be creative and add their 'own voice' by adding, for example, humour and expression (c.f. Flynn 2004: 363). The teacher commented that the students infused life into the scripts by adding dancing, humour, and stories. Nevertheless, although all three groups incorporated some hints of humour and wrote about their own experiences, it seems as if their creativity may partly have been restricted by the guidelines the teacher provided them with (see Appendix 14). The groups seemed to be concerned with fulfilling the suggestions on the guidelines sheet instead of letting these be more of an inspiration. However, Stine argued that the students needed scaffolding, and therefore it was important to provide them with guidelines, namely suggesting topics to get them going with their scripts. The scripts they created addressed these topics differently, but it was evident that the scripts revolved around the specific topics they were provided with. It appeared that it was helpful for the students to focus on the suggested topics (food, traditions, family, and spare-time), which they all wrote about, but in different ways.

Another positive aspect of the personal scripts was that they equipped the students with meaningful language, both in terms of relevance and content. The variation of the self-written scripts was useful to develop their social communication skills. It provided the chance to develop essential vocabulary for everyday- conversational use. In that way, the self-written scripts were relevant and, at the same time, it gave them a chance to communicate a message that was meaningful to them.

### *Performance*

Three of the four students who were interviewed said that RT provided them with positive experiences of performing. The students seemed to become more comfortable with performing as they noticed their own improvement. A specific example of this was the Somalian student, Kjetil, who feared that people would laugh at him if his performance was not error-free. However, after RT he felt more comfortable with his reading and claimed that it was a valuable experience. According to Worthy and Prater (2002: 295), struggling readers' fear and anxiety of performing in front of an audience disappear when they are given enough time to become fluent.

Kjetil and Elin explained that they associated any form of public speaking with perfectionism, as it was always the best learners who were given the opportunity to speak in public in their cultures. Stine also stressed that some of these students were afraid that the performance would not meet the expectations of the audience. This might apply to others who came from the same areas as Kjetil and Elin. Thus, RT seemed to be a good method for students who have little or unpleasant experiences with performing, since they are well prepared for the performances. On the other hand, Elin claimed that RT did not reduce her fear of performing and that it was still an uncomfortable situation. This underlines that there were individual differences within this group.

In addition, the performances seemed to appeal to the students as an audience, especially the performances of the self-written scripts. The scripts were based on topics that everyone could relate to, such as food, traditions, and hobbies. Their connection to the performers made the personalized scripts even more thrilling to watch. Two of the students who were interviewed stated that they understood most of what was read and that they learnt new information about their peers' backgrounds and got a wider understanding of their different cultures and traditions.

### *Group-work*

Since RT is a group reading activity, one of its strengths is that all students get to practise their cooperating skills, as it forces the students to work together (Black and Stave, 2007:14). In the present study, the students seemed to have had various experiences with collaborating in groups during the RT project. Based on the researcher's observations, some students were willing to assist others to the best of their abilities. This was confirmed by Lise and Johannes, who asserted that it was fun working in groups and it allowed them to help each other. According to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the 'Zone of Proximal Development', this is an ideal group work situation. RT creates a platform for students to develop with help of more proficient peers or adults, which is the essence of Vygotsky's theory. Young and Rasinski (2009) also found that RT strengthened the students' co-operation skills and gave them a chance to help others become more fluent readers within a logical setting, which happened through students in this research helping to correct peers' pronunciation as they were rehearsing.

However, some of the students expressed their frustration about working in groups. It

was challenging working with other students who were not fully committed to the task, or who were frequently absent. For example, Elin stated that there was no point in working together if the group members did not show up. Stine's impression, on the other hand, was that the students who were present collaborated well and that they got the support that was found in similar studies (e.g. Pettersen, 2013; Myrset 2014). Furthermore, Sine stated that it was a valuable experience that strengthened the class spirit. However, it seemed the group lost its momentum during rehearsals when several of the group members were absent,.

Since the students' answers varied, it was difficult to get a full picture of the group-work experiences. While group work can be a challenging task in general, the high degree of absence seemed to have complicated the cooperation even more, as some students had to update the students who had been absent on their progression.

Nevertheless, these students showed flexibility and did their best to handle the problems that followed with, for example, the absence of others. One can assume that the students responded maturely to complications because they were adults. Although some students were absent from time to time, they always showed up for the performance, which seems to indicate that these students did not want to disappoint their group when it mattered most.

### **7.3 The benefits of the RT project**

#### *Reading skills*

Firstly, RT benefitted the students' fluency. The findings in this research show that the students' reading speed improved considerably as they practised the scripts. The students needed less time to read through the scripts in the performances compared to the first rehearsals. These findings were not unexpected, as several studies have shown increased fluency after students practise reading RT scripts (Martinez et al., 1999; Tyler and Chard, 2000; Young and Rasinski, 2009). For example, Young and Rasinski (2009: 10) found that students' reading speed developed and they were able to recognize words automatically as they reread the script. In the present study, it was evident that the students had difficulties when reading through the scripts the first time, especially multisyllabic and other complex words. A great amount of time was spent on 'puzzling out' words, thus interrupting the flow in the students' reading. One of the students pointed out that it was particularly difficult since English was based on a different alphabet from her mother tongue. However, they all agreed

that it had become easier to read the scripts for each time they practised them. Less time was needed to decode words as they became familiarized with the words.

Furthermore, Samuels (1997: 377) claims that less practice is needed for every text that the students reread because fluency development carries over onto new texts. One interesting finding was that the students needed less time to read through the self-written scripts compared to the pre-written scripts, and fewer word recognition mistakes were made (see section 6.5). There could be several explanations for why less time was needed to decode words when comparing the first rehearsals in the two cycles.

On the one hand, this could indicate that the students' automaticity in word recognition had carried over to the self-written texts. The teacher's impression was that the students had become more proficient readers in English and that the students' vocabulary had evolved (See section 6.3). On the other hand, the self-written scripts were shorter and more simplistic compared to the pre-written scripts, as they were based more or less on their own vocabulary. For example, Johannes claimed that the rehearsal process was less demanding in the second cycle of RT, due to the fact that he had used his own words. This could indicate that the students' reading was more fluent because the scripts were easier to read. In addition, the students had reread the scripts as they were producing them in order to make them coherent, which in turn could have had a positive effect and made the rehearsals easier.

#### *Pronunciation and word recognition*

The current research found that the students' pronunciation improved considerably from the first rehearsals to performances. The students benefitted from rehearsing on pronunciation and accuracy, and there were similar patterns within all the groups. The students made roughly half the number of pronunciation mistakes during the performances than they had done during the rehearsals. When comparing the audio-recordings from the first rehearsal to the performance, it was evident that the students' ability to pronounce unfamiliar sounds had improved. A common feature in the first rehearsals was to mispronounce words by putting sounds to every letter in a word, producing non-existing forms of words, and using the wrong choice of sounds. It is likely that the errors made were influenced by the students' L1, and even their L2(s), as research shows that all the languages known to a multilingual learner tend to influence the production in the target language (Hammarberg, 2001: 23). However, this aspect was not under investigation and therefore cannot be addressed. Nevertheless, the



results show that the students became more capable of correctly pronouncing unfamiliar ‘English sounds’ as they rehearsed them.

The findings in this study can be directly tied to Myrset’s (2014) study, which followed a similar pattern to measure improvement in pronunciation and word recognition. Myrset’s (2014: 69-72) study also showed considerable improvement in the number of mispronounced and misread words between the first rehearsal and the final performance. Furthermore, the students’ vocabulary expanded as they were exposed to scripts that were longer and contained more complex words than they were used to (Myrset, 2014: 92). According to Black and Stave (2007: 12), ‘vocabulary development occurs, not through assigned word lists but through repeated encounters with words in natural contexts’. In the present research, some of the interviewees claimed that they had acquired new words as they re-encountered them.

The teacher believed that the pronunciation corrections that were made during the group-rehearsals and individually were significant for the high decrease in pronunciation mistakes. This is comparable to Drew and Pedersen (2010: 15), where the teacher drew the students’ attention to errors in pronunciation and, as a result, their pronunciation gradually improved while rehearsing. In the current study, the teacher was able to correct the students’ mispronunciation of certain words or phrases during the rehearsals and the students had the chance to listen to correct pronunciation and intonation.

### *Prosodic features*

The performances incorporated more prosodic features compared to the first rehearsals of the script. During the first rehearsals, the students’ reading was rather monotonous, but their ability to read with expression gradually improved. According to Stine, the students gained a new understanding of what it is to read well. The focus shifted from being able to read as fast as possible to read so that it was understandable for the audience. Although the prosodic features were at times inflated and exaggerated, this aspect indicates ‘higher levels of oral reading’ (Zutell and Rasinski, 1991, cited in Rinehart, 1999: 85).

According to Hudson et al. (2005: 707), students who comprehend what they read tend to incorporate more prosodic features into their reading. Furthermore, Rasinski (2012: 517) argues that when the reading has become automatized, the students have the capacity to focus on comprehension. In the present research, there were no post-tests that could reveal the

students' understanding of the scripts. However, prosodic features might indicate that the students' comprehension had improved.

### *Motivation*

To what extent RT motivated the students was difficult to determine because of cultural, circumstantial and age-affiliated factors.

In the present study it seemed as if students' motivation was instrumental rather than integrative (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 21). The students interviewed stated that English was an important language to acquire for educational purposes and their motive to study it was to obtain jobs. Likewise, Stine's impression was also that very few of the students at the adult education centre were learning for its own sake, but rather to pass English to gain a certificate in lower secondary education. In other words, it did not seem as if they had an inclination to read for pleasure or to become a part of this English-speaking world and that English had a high functional value for these students. The aim was to succeed in the English subject to function in the Norwegian society and to be able to continue their education. This was not surprising considering that these students were adults and therefore it was likely that their minds were on the future. Despite the fact that the students saw the importance of learning to be able to pass the subject, their motivation was not always as observable when working with RT. During both cycles of RT, there were some engagement and enthusiasm along the way.

However, it seems as if the impact of RT on this group was not as lasting as with learners in other studies (Drew, 2013; Hoyt, 1992; Myrset, 2014; Uthman, 2002). When the students were present, there was high engagement and hard work, but with high rates of absenteeism, the students who showed up the most had more work to do to make-up for the others who were absent. This did not lead to problems between the students, but rather could be said to have affected their motivation. Myrset (2014: 94), in contrast, who implemented RT into a 6<sup>th</sup> grade class, found that one of the reasons why the students wanted to participate in a similar RT project (following the one they had participated in) was the fact that they were all involved, both skilled and less skilled, and were provided with equal responsibilities and tasks throughout the process. These 6<sup>th</sup> graders claimed that RT was one of the best things they had done all autumn. Therefore, with the increased workloads on some of the students in the present study, it seemed as if these students understandably lost motivation at times during

various stages of the project. Although students tend to be motivated by working in groups, it seems to have adverse effects when several are absent (c.f. Tyler and Chard, 2000: 166).

Only Lise said that RT had increased her motivation to read more. When interviewed, three out of four of the students were either uncertain if RT had motivated them to read other material than RT scripts, or they were certain that it had not motivated them to read any more. Their teacher also expressed her doubts about RT having a lasting effect on the students' motivation to read. These findings contrast with previous studies, which show that RT increases students' motivation to read in general (Hoyt, 1992; Martinez et al., 1999; Myrset, 2014; Uthman 2002; Young and Rasinski, 2009).

However, there were some parts of RT that seemed to be more motivating than other parts, such as the self-written scripts. The students felt that the latter was a new way of contributing and it motivated them to produce text, which was surprising considering that all the interviewed students said they were not really fond of writing in English. However, the students' responses to RT may have been a consequence of cultural differences. The teacher stated that, in her experience, when working with minority background adult students, they really trusted the different authorities' decisions and methods of doing things. Kjetil even said he enjoyed everything, when asked about the best and worst aspects of the RT project. One could consider this as a factor in determining whether or not the engagement and increased motivation were genuine or out of a cultural difference in how to show respect.

Based on the interpretations of the various data collected, therefore, it seems as if the motivational benefits were not as great as in studies with younger learners (e.g. Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Myrset, 2014).

### *Confidence*

RT seemed to build the students' confidence in their ability to read and speak aloud. Prior to the performance, the students had expressed their nervousness, especially as RT was a new experience for many of them. Although the students had been questioning their own abilities, the sense of accomplishment they got after the performance seemed to boost their confidence. For instance, Stine referred to one student who had been resistant and anxious to perform during the first cycle of RT, but who did not show similar signs when it came to performing the self-written scripts. It seems as if his self-esteem and attitude towards performing had changed after this experience. These findings are comparable with other

studies on RT in a foreign language context (e.g. Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Myrset, 2014; Pettersen, 2013).

Some students showed signs of being comfortable and confident while performing in front of the class. For example, Stine referred to one student who unexpectedly prepared a dance as a part of his RT performance. On the whole, the students seemed pleased and satisfied with their own efforts. One student in particular was clearly proud of his own performance and stated that he felt he did very well. The teacher's experience was that the students' confidence had grown. She pointed out that the students were well rehearsed, which gave them the security they needed. In addition, working on the personalized-angled scripts seemed to add to the students' confidence as their knowledge, which they wanted to share, was the focal point in these scripts. This made it possible for the students to write about topics that they felt they were experts in. Combining their own experiences and talents allowed them, to a certain extent, to succeed with the task, and thus boost their confidence.

#### **7.4 Challenges**

The second research question addresses the possible challenges of implementing RT with the class of minority background adults. There were a number of challenges involved. These challenges had to do with absenteeism, group dynamics, choice of scripts, time-span, and logistical challenges.

##### *Absence*

One challenge was the absence of students during rehearsals. Group work consists of having several people working together on a task, therefore making absence a challenge to its inherent meaning. This aspect disrupted the flow of the group rehearsals. These are reliant on people showing up, doing what they are supposed to be doing, and reading their parts.

As for them being absent, it seemed as if these learners found it difficult to prioritize school due to their responsibilities as adults. On occasions, the students did not attend school because they needed to work in order to provide for their families or take care of their children. For example, Lisa had eight children and said she rarely had the chance to read anything at home. Furthermore, Stine claimed that these students sometimes prioritized work

instead of going to school. Amongst younger students, this might not prove to be a big problem since they do not have the same responsibilities as these adults. This implies that this group posed challenges that would probably not have occurred if the same project was implemented in a class of twelve-year-olds.

The absenteeism also posed a challenge when creating groups. For example, during the second cycle of RT, the class was divided into three groups consisting of four to five students. If two of the group members were absent or arrived late, the whole group suffered, especially since the scripts were based on themselves. The students present were able to write their parts, but it delimited the progression of the whole text, as they needed all the group members to write their parts in order to produce a complete RT script.

It was important to create as good group dynamics as possible. As mentioned, these students were more or less on the same proficiency level, both in reading and writing. The students helped each other when they were able to, but none of them was exceptionally good in English. It was therefore an aim to create groups that contained students who would take initiative and leadership during the rehearsals and writing process in order to have well-functioning groups.

### *Logistics*

Another challenge was to assist the different groups during the rehearsals. At the adult education centre, there were always extra rooms available for the students to practise in and whenever there was only one teacher present, only one group could receive assistance at a time. On the one hand, the students had the chance concentrate on the rehearsal without being disturbed by the other groups that rehearsed the scripts. On the other hand, the majority of these students were beginners in English, and therefore needed regular assistance from their teachers.

A further challenge was the use of microphones when performing on the UN day. The students had not practised using microphones, which in turn posed a problem when they needed to perform with microphones. It created a dual focus, where they needed to concentrate on holding the microphone in the right place, and the script in a place where they could read from it. This hindered them from reading the way they had rehearsed. RT is supposed to ensure that students are prepared for the performance through rehearsals (Black and Stave, 2007: 4). However, in this case it was difficult to prepare the students for this

situation, as there were no microphones to practise with at school. This was overcome by giving the students more time to rehearse with the microphones than initially planned when they arrived at the new location prior to the performance.

Another challenge was to find appropriate scripts to use in the first cycle of RT. There are several resources online where one can download pre-written scripts. Yet, many of the scripts that suited the students' proficiency level were originally intended for younger learners. The challenge was therefore to find scripts that would be within the students' ZPD and that were not too dull or childish for these adult learners (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). Although the pre-written scripts that were chosen for this study were intended for younger learners, they contained some aspects that adults also tend to enjoy, that is humour and sarcasm. Considering that the students read the same scripts over and over again, it was important to find scripts that the students would not find dull.

An additional challenge, according to Stine, was to ensure that the students understood how to write the self-written scripts. The students were not used to writing in groups, and neither were they used to creating this type of text. Therefore, Stine predicted that the students would find this task demanding unless they were provided with examples that demonstrated how the scripts could be structured. The fact that the students were first provided with pre-written scripts during the first cycle also seemed to be a logical step that facilitated the students' understanding of how to write a script.

Finally, Stine commented that the negative aspect of RT was that it was a time-consuming task, at least with this type of group due to their low proficiency in English, and partly also in Norwegian. However, the time-span would have been even longer if there had not been two or three teachers regularly present. However, the question arises whether one can justify the amount of time spent on practising the scripts. Stine believed that RT was as good as other reading instruction, and therefore the advantages of RT were greater than the disadvantages.

## **7.5 Implications and recommendations**

One of the main implications of the study was that RT helped to improve these learners' cognitive skills, such as fluency, word recognition and pronunciation. In addition, the students' confidence was also boosted with RT. However, the unexpected finding was that RT

did not seem to benefit the students' motivation to read more, as has been the case with studies of younger learners (e.g. Drew and Pedersen, 2012; Myrset, 2014). In Drew and Pedersen (2012), for example, the learners were so dedicated and passionate about their RT project that they requested the teacher to help them after school hours to perfect their performance. This enthusiasm was not reflected in the current situation when implementing RT with this group. However, despite the fact that the students' motivation and love for reading did not seem to grow in general, RT still seemed to be a useful method for developing the minority background adult learners' reading skills.

The results of this study indicate that RT has a potential with minority background adult learners and can therefore be used in similar contexts. Three out of four of the interviewed students wanted to participate in a similar project. In addition, the teacher stated that RT was worth spending time on and that her adult education centre planned to implement similar RT cycles into other classes. In the study, the benefits seemed to outweigh the drawbacks and RT.

Furthermore, the personal approach to the self-written scripts seemed to be a popular approach among these students. It seemed as if the students found it easier to put their thoughts down on paper as they were based on themselves. In addition, this personal approach seemed to inspire them to share their experiences and stories. The fact that there were cultural differences between the students seemed to contribute to this approach, as there were no group members who had the same experiences and traditions.

The successes with the self-written scripts in this study indicate that personal texts can be used more in RT. There is no reason why this approach should not be applied in a wide range of age groups and with various proficiency levels. Children and younger learners also tend to enjoy sharing personal stories and experiences with their peers.

In addition, RT can be implemented more frequently as it covers, or can be adapted to, covers several of the curriculum aims after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. For example the students in the present study were supposed to be able to 'use the central patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and different types of sentences in communication' (*LK06*, English subject curriculum). Although RT can be a time-consuming process, at least in the beginning, the time spent on RT seems to be as valuable as time spent on other forms of reading instruction. This was because the implementation became easier and easier as the students became more familiar with RT. In addition, RT allowed the teacher(s) to help improve the students' fluency and pronunciation.

Furthermore, one of the purposes of the English subject is to equip and teach students how to communicate with people on a personal level, which in turn can be valuable in order to create an understanding between people from various cultural backgrounds (*LK06*, English subject Curriculum). The self-written scripts were based on language that the students were likely to use when communicating on an everyday basis.

The fact that there were high rates of absence made the implementation of RT more complicated than it tends to be. RT is based on a cooperative format, which more or less depends on students being present. It is therefore important to stress to students that they need to be present to gain fully from RT.

## **7.6 Limitations**

This research was limited to include a small target group of fifteen pupils. Due to the size of the research group of minority background adult learners, these findings cannot be generalized to all minority background adult learners in Norway. Due to aspects such as individual differences between the learners, teachers, and learning environments, another group of minority background adult learners might experience RT differently from this specific group. Nevertheless, as this research is based on a relatively rich data set, it does provide some impressions of what it was like to implement RT within this type of context.

Another possible limitation is the fact that, in the teacher's experience, the students were generally positive and rarely questioned the teacher's authority. This raises the question of how honest the students were in their interviews. They may have given answers they believed the researcher (and teacher) wanted to hear, or may have behaved in a certain way not to offend anyone. For example, if students had been absent or arrived late, they were usually quick to apologize. However, the fact that some of the students said that RT did not motivate them to read any further, indicates that they could also be direct in their answers.



## 8. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the use of RT with minority background adult learners of English in Norway. These adult learners were completing their lower secondary education at an adult education centre in western Norway. The aim was to find out how these learners experienced the use of RT and what the benefits and challenges were.

RT was implemented into the 10<sup>th</sup> grade class. There were fifteen students in the class who came from various countries and who had different backgrounds. The autumn was used to gather data from two cycles of RT. In the first cycle, the students practised pre-written scripts, whereas in the second cycle it was the students who produced the scripts. The self-written scripts had an original approach, namely they were based on the students' experiences, traditions, hobbies and backgrounds.

Qualitative research methods were used to collect data. The data was collected through a pre-project and post-project interview with the teacher, through four student interviews, and through observations during the project period. In addition, an analysis of fluency, pronunciation and word recognition was performed based on audio recordings from the first rehearsals and performances.

RT seemed to be a relatively successful method with the minority background adult learners. The interviews revealed that the students experienced RT as a refreshing activity that brought variation to their regular reading instruction. Furthermore, it seemed as if the learners had positive experiences with RT. They took their roles as performers and audience seriously. The performances were valuable to these students as they had very little experience with any form of public speaking in their home country. The rehearsals prepared them and the students gained the confidence that they needed in order to perform in front of others, which confirms other studies in this field. Most importantly, the majority of the students interviewed stated that they were interested in participating in a similar project.

Both cycles of RT, the pre-written scripts and the self-written scripts, functioned well in the context. However, the second cycle seemed to work particularly well with these learners. The personal scripts allowed them to share their own stories and experiences, which they were excited to do. In addition, it boosted the students' confidence as they were able to combine reading, writing and oral production with a topic they were interested in. An expectation had been that these learners would perhaps find RT childish, as they had to take

on the role of different characters. However, the majority wanted to participate in a similar project at a later time, which implied that RT was not a childish method to use with adults. The fact that they wrote about themselves might have made it easier to relate as adults to the various RT roles.

From the teachers' perspective, both cycles of RT were important, but she believed the self-written scripts had the greatest educational value. Thus, RT was worth spending time on in an English foreign language classroom. An expectation had been that some of the students might question the amount of time devoted to practising the scripts. However, the students seemed to notice their own development and trusted the teacher's methods. Furthermore, the personal self-written scripts included reading, writing and speaking, which are defined as basic skills in the *Knowledge Promotion* curriculum and which are essential for further learning. In addition, several of the competence aims in the English Subject curriculum are addressed through RT. The English subject also aims to enable students to communicate in various arenas. In the personal self-written scripts, the students practised the use of everyday language that is used in communication.

An unexpected finding was that the students' motivation to read beyond the RT activity itself did not seem to increase as it has with younger learners (Drew and Pedersen, 2010; Myrset, 2014). The interviews revealed that, although the students were motivated by various aspects of RT, it did not seem to motivate them to want to read more in general. The interviews revealed that the students' motivation to learn English was primarily instrumental, e.g. getting a certificate of lower secondary education and functioning within the Norwegian society.

The audio-recordings showed that RT had improved the learners' fluency, pronunciation and word recognition in English. These were not unexpected findings considering the findings of other research on RT. In addition, the findings in this research followed a similar pattern to Myrset's (2014) and therefore confirm and strengthen his research by pointing to similar findings in the area of fluency, pronunciation and word recognition. The repetition of the same scripts allowed the students to automatize their reading. In this case, the students appreciated that the teacher was able to correct, e.g. their mispronunciations, more frequently when they read in groups, as opposed to when they read individually.

As for challenges, the absence of students during the rehearsals of RT was a challenge. It hindered the individual student's development (those who were absent), but also the

development as a group because it disrupted the rehearsals. It meant that some students had to carry heavier workloads than others. According to the teacher, absenteeism was not an uncommon problem within this group as they were adults and often had other duties to attend to. There were also some logistical challenges involved, such as finding appropriate scripts, creating groups and assisting all the groups when they were practising in separate rooms.

This thesis has contributed to research on the use of Readers Theatre in two particular ways. Firstly, its focus was on minority background adult learners. Both adults and minority background learners have been little researched in the context of RT. Secondly, the personal approach of the self-written scripts makes this research different from previous contexts in which RT has been used.

More research into the benefits and challenges with the implementation of RT with minority background adult learners would be useful in order to strengthen the findings in this research. For further research, it would be of interest to investigate the effects of RT on students' writing. Another possibility would be a research on younger learners who has written personal scripts and compare the findings to the results in this study. Finally, more case studies of RT with adult learners, both those with and without a minority background, would supplement the many studies of RT with younger learners.

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## Appendix 1

### First cycle script: «Bim's Bamboo»

Mr. Bim's Bamboo, By Carol Farley Adapted for reader's theatre by Aaron Shepard, from Carol Farley's story in *Cricket* magazine, January 1989.

**Preview:** Mr. Bim's shop faces hard times when his customers turn to new things.

**Genre:** Fantasy

**Readers:** 8

**Culture:** East Asian (general)

**Readers Ages:** 8-12

**Theme:** Tradition vs. modernity

**Length:** 6 minutes

**Roles:** Narrators 1 and 2, Mr. Bim, Friend, Man, Boy, Woman 1 and 2

**Notes:** Bamboo, with its strength, rapid growth, and versatility, has a thousand traditional uses throughout East Asia. For a sample, see *Bamboo*, by Robert Austin, Koichiro Ueda, and Dana Levy. For best effect, place NARRATOR 1 at far left, and NARRATOR 2 at far right, as seen from audience.

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### Bim' Bamboo

**Narrator 1:** Mr. BIM had a bamboo garden and a bamboo shop in a small village by a large mountain. He was old, and his face had more wrinkles than the mountain had trees. But he wore a shining white suit, and he always looked fine.

**Narrator 2:** His bamboo was fine too, and his shop was filled with useful things.

**Mr. Bim:**

I have bamboo trays and bamboo hats  
Bamboo pots and bamoboo mats  
Bamboo frames and bamboo poles,  
Bamboo rugs and bamboo bowls.

Try Bim's bamboo!

**Narrator 1:** People would hurry inside and buy.

**Friends:** Mr. Bim has the best bamboo in all the world!

**Narrator 2:** ...they told each other, smiling and nodding and bowing. This made Mr. Bim feel so good, his head as he bowed nearly touched the ground.

**Narrator 1:** Then one morning, some people came from the other side of the mountain.

**Mr. Bim:**

I have the best, as you can see.  
Come and buy bamboo from me!

**Woman 1:** (sneering) Bim's bamboo. Foo!

**Narrator:** Mr. Bim's smile disappeared as quickly as a butterfly in a windstorm.

**Man:** Bamboo is old! We want *new* things, *modern* things.

**Woman 1:** In *our* city, we buy *plastic*. Bim's bamboo. Foo!

**Mr. Bim:** I've never heard of "plass-tick." Where does it grow?

**Man:** Plastic doesn't grow! Plastic must be *made*.

**Woman 1:** *Nobody* wants bamboo. It's old and useless!

**Man:** New things are always better!

**Narrator 1:** Soon all the people in the village were talking about the plastic from the other side of the mountain. *They* wanted plastic things, too. So they went to new shops.

**Narrator 2:** MR. Bim's friend told him,

**Friend:** You must change your ways. You must become modern. Go over the mountain to the factories, and buy new things to sell in your shop.

**MR. Bim:** I am old like a turtle, and my ways are like a turtle shell- they make me what I am. Anyway, I don't think old things are always useless!

**Narrator 1:** As the months and years passed, Mr. Bim stayed near his quiet shop on the empty street.

**Narrator 2:** He took care of his lovely garden, kept his white coat and trousers shining, and dusted his beautiful bamboo. But no one came to buy.

**Narrator 1:** One day, after all the people had moved away from the small village, Mr. Bim stopped dusting his bamboo.

**Mr. Bim:** It's foolish. No one will ever buy it again. Just like me, it's old and useless.

**Narrator 2:** Mr. Bim closed the door of his shop and sat down. He looked at the mountain far off in the distance.

**Narrator 2:** He saw that, in the wintertime, the mountaintops were covered with glistening white snow.

**Narrator 2:** Every spring, the snow melted into sparkling waterfalls.

**Narrator 1:** During the hot summer months, the water disappeared.

**Narrator2:** But then, in late fall and winter, the snow came back to the mountaintops, glistening white and beautiful, the same as before.

**Narrator 1:** The old became new,

**Narrator 2:** and the new became old.

**Mr. Bim:** (*thoughtfully, to himself*) I believe the mountains are trying to *tell* me something.

**Narrator 1:** Mr. Bim opened his shop door. Humming and smiling, he began dusting his beautiful bamboo

**Narrator 2:** Just then, a little boy ran into the shop.

**Boy:** What's this?

**Narrator 1:** He picked up a bamboo whistle and blew it.

**Boy:** (*whistles*) Mommy! Come listen to this beautiful whistle!

**Narrator 2:** A young woman with travel bags hurried inside.

**Woman 2:** We must hurry on with the others. You have *many* whistles. You don't need another.

**Boy:** But this is different!

**Woman 2:** Different? (looks around the shop) My goodness! None of these things are plastic! (to MR. BIM) What are they made of?

**Mr. Bim:** (smiling) Bamboo!

**Woman 2:** " Bam - boo"? I've never heard of it. Is it new?

**Mr. Bim:** NO, it's old!

**Woman 2:** What factory makes it?

**Mr. Bim:** Bamboo grows! I have bamboo plants in my garden, and I made these bamboo things myself!

**Woman 2:** It grows? And you make these beautiful things yourself? This is a miracle! A miracle!

**Mr. Bim:** (bowing) The old is not always useless. The new is not always best.

**Woman 2:** I must tell the others about these treasures! (to other outside) Over here! Quickly! You must see this!

**Narrator 1:** Soon Mr. Bim's shop was full of people.

**Man:** Beautiful!

**Woman 1:** A miracle!

**Man:** And what do you suppose? Bamboo grows!

**Narrator 2:** As people began buying his bamboo, Mr. Bim smiled and nodded.

**Mr. Bim:**

I have bamboo trays and bamboo hats  
Bamboo pots and bamoboo mats  
Bamboo frames and bamboo poles,  
Bamboo rugs and bamboo bowls.

Some useful things are old.  
Some useful things are new.  
But what can be both old and new?

**All:**

Bim's bam-boo

## Appendix 2

### First cycle script: «*Help! Hilary! Help!*»

Adapted for reader's theater (or readers theatre) by the author Aaron Shepard. Script copyright © 1998, 2002 Aaron Shepard. Scripts in this series are free and may be copied, shared, and performed for any noncommercial purpose, except they may not be posted online without permission.

**Preview:** Hilary gets the chance to show just how helpful she can be.

**Genre:** Tall tales, humor

**Culture:** American

Theme: Helpfulness, heroines

**Readers:** 12 or more

**Reader ages:** 6–9

**Length:** 3 minutes

Roles: Narrators 1–8, Mom, Hilary (female), Bad Guys 1 and 2, (Serpent)

**Notes:** For best effect, place NARRATORS 1 to 4 at far left, and 5 to 8 at far right, as seen from the audience.

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### Help! Hilary! Help!

**Mom:** Hilary!

**Narrator 1:** —said her mom.

**Mom:** Can't you be more of a help?

**Hilary:** I was trying!

**Narrator 8:** —said Hilary.

**Narrator 2:** She went to her room and slammed the door. She played with her toys.

**Mom:** (offstage) Help! Hilary! Help!

**Narrator 7:** It was her mom!

**Hilary:** (yelling) I'm coming.

**Narrator 3:** Two bad guys were carrying her mom away!

**Narrator 6:** Hilary ran after them down the street.

**Bad guy 1:** Look out!

**Narrator 4:** —said one.

**Bad guy 1:** That kid is chasing us!

**Bad guy 2:** Let's get out of here fast.

**Narrator 5:** —said the other.

**Narrator 1:** They stuffed her mom in a car and drove off.

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! Help!

**Narrator 8:** Hilary got in another car and raced after them.

**Narrator 2:** They stopped at an airport and headed for a plane.

**Narrator 7:** Hilary was right behind them.

**Hilary:** (yelling) Drop my mom! RIGHT NOW!

**Narrator 3:** The bad guys dropped her mom and ran off.

**Narrator 6:** But something swooped down. A giant bird!

**Narrator 4:** It picked up her mom and flew away!

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! Help!

**Narrator 5:** Hilary got in the plane and took off after the bird.

**Narrator 1:** She flew right above it and climbed down a rope.

**Narrator 8:** But the bird dropped her mom!

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! Help!

**Narrator 2:** Hilary got back in the plane and flew a loop-de-loop-de-loop.

**Narrator 7:** Her mom landed on top.

**Hilary:** (yelling) Hold on!

**Narrator 3:** But the wind blew her off!

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! H-e-l-l-l-p!

**Narrator 6:** Hilary jumped from the plane.

**Narrator 4:** They landed in a river.

**Mom:** SPLASH!

**Hilary:** SPLASH!

**Narrator 5:** But a waterfall was just ahead!

**Mom:** Help! Blub. Hilary! Blub. Help!

**Narrator 1:** Hilary grabbed her mom in time and started for shore.

**Narrator 8:** But a giant serpent rose from the water.

**Narrator 2:** It opened its mouth!

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! EEEEEEEEEEEK!

**Narrator 7:** The serpent swallowed them!

**Narrator 3:** On the way down, Hilary tickled its throat.

**Narrator 6:** The serpent coughed, and they flew through the air.

**Narrator 4:** They passed over the town.

**Narrator 5:** They landed in their own backyard.

**Mom:** Hilary! You're such a great big HELP!



## Appendix 3

Words that were mispronounced or wrongly recognized during the first rehearsal of Bim's Bamboo are in *Italics*. Words that were mispronounced or wrongly recognized during the performance are **bolded**.

### ***Bim's Bamboo***

**Narrator 1:** Mr. BIM had a bamboo *garden* and a bamboo shop in a small **village** by a large *mountain*. He was old, and his *face* had more **wrinkles** than the *mountain* had **trees**. But he *wore* a shining *white* suit, and he always looked fine.

**Narrator 2:** *His* bamboo was fine *too*, and his shop *was* filled with useful *things*.

**Mr. Bim:**

I have bamboo trays and bamboo **hats**  
Bamboo *pots* and bamoboo **mats**  
Bamboo *frames* and bamboo **poles**,  
Bamboo rugs and bamboo bowls.

Try Bim's bamboo!

**Narrator 1:** People would **hurry** *inside* and buy.

**Friends:** Mr. Bim has the *best* bamboo in all the world!

**Narrator 2:** ...**they** told each other, smiling and nodding and bowing. This made Mr. Bim feel so good, his head as he  **bowed** nearly  *touched* the ground.

**Narrator 1:** Then one morning, some people *came* from the other side of the *mountain*.

**Mr. Bim:**

I have *the* **best**, as you can see.  
Come and buy bamboo *from* me!

**Woman 1:** (sneering) Bim's bamboo. *Foo!*

**Narrator:** Mr. Bim's smile **disappeared** as quickly as a butterfly in a *windstorm*.

**Man:** Bamboo is old! We want *new* things, *modern* things.

**Woman 1:** In *our* city, we buy *plastic*. Bim's bamboo. *Foo!*

**Mr. Bim:** I've never heard of "plass-tick." Where does it grow?

**Man:** Plastic doesn't grow! Plastic must be *made*.

**Woman 1:** *Nobody* wants bamboo. It's old and useless!

**Man:** New things are *always* better!

**Narrator 1:** *Soon* all the **people** in the village were *talking* about the plastic from the other side of the *mountain*. *They* wanted plastic things, too. So they *went* to new shops.

**Narrator 2:** MR. Bim's friend told him,

**Friend:** You must change your ways. You must become modern. Go over the *mountain* to the **factories**, and buy new *things* to sell in your shop.

**Mr. Bim:** I am old like a *turtle*, and my ways are like a **turtle** shell- *they* make me what I am. Anyway, I don't think old things are always *useless*!

**Narrator 1:** As *the months* and *years* passed, Mr. Bim stayed *near* his quiet shop on the empty **street**.

**Narrator 2:** He took care of his lovely garden, kept his white coat and trousers *shining*, and dusted his beautiful bamboo. But no one came to buy.

**Narrator 1:** One day, after all the people had *moved away* from the small village, Mr. Bim *stopped* **dusting** his bamboo.

**Mr. Bim:** It's **foolish**. No one will ever buy it again. Just like me, it's old and *useless*.

**Narrator 2:** Mr. Bim closed the door of his shop and sat down. He *looked* at the mountain far off in the distance.

**Narrator 2:** He saw that, in the wintertime, the mountaintops were *covered* with glistening white snow.

**Narrator 2:** Every spring, the snow melted into sparkling waterfalls.

**Narrator 1:** **During** the hot *summer months*, the *water* disappeared.

**Narrator 2:** But then, in late fall and winter, the snow came back to the mountaintops, glistening white and beautiful, the same as before.

**Narrator 1:** The old became new,

**Narrator 2:** and the new *became* old.

**Mr. Bim:** (*thoughtfully, to himself*) I believe the *mountains* are trying to *tell* me something.

**Narrator 1:** Mr. Bim opened his shop door. *Humming* and smiling, he began *dusting* his beautiful bamboo

**Narrator 2:** Just then, a little boy *ran* into the shop.

**Boy:** What's this?

**Narrator 1:** He *picked* up a bamboo whistle and blew it.

**Boy:** (*whistles*) Mommy! Come listen to this beautiful **whistle**!

**Narrator 2:** A young woman with travel bags hurried inside.

**Woman 2:** We must hurry on with the *others*. You have *many* **whistles**. You don't need another.

**Boy:** But this is different!

**Woman 2:** Different? (looks around the shop) My goodness! None of *these* things are plastic! (to MR. BIM) What are **they** made of?

**Mr. Bim:** (smiling) Bamboo!

**Woman 2:** "Bam - boo"? I've never heard of it. Is it new?

**Mr. Bim:** NO, it's old!

**Woman 2:** What *factory* makes it?

**Mr. Bim:** Bamboo grows! I have bamboo plants in my garden, and I made *these* bamboo things myself!

**Woman 2:** It grows? And you *make* these beautiful things yourself? This is a *miracle!* A *miracle!*

**Mr. Bim:** (bowing) The old is not always useless. The new is not always *best*.

**Woman 2:** I must tell the others about these *treasures!* (to other outside) Over here! Quickly! You must see this!

**Narrator 1:** *Soon* Mr. Bim's shop was full of people.

**Man:** Beautiful!

**Woman 1:** A miracle!

**Man:** And what do you suppose? Bamboo grows!

**Narrator 2:** As people began buying his bamboo, Mr. Bim *smiled* and nodded.

**Mr. Bim:**

I have bamboo trays and bamboo *hats*  
Bamboo *pots* and bamoboo *mats*  
Bamboo **frames** and bamboo poles,  
Bamboo rugs and bamboo bowls.

Some useful *things* are old.  
Some useful things are new.  
But what can be both old and new?

**All:**

Bim's bam-boo

## Appendix 4

Words that were mispronounced or wrongly recognized during the first rehearsal of *Help! Hilary! Help!* are in *Italics*. Words that were mispronounced or wrongly recognized during the performance are **bolded**.

### **Help! Hilary! Help!**

**Mom:** Hilary!

**Narrator 1:** —said her mom.

**Mom:** Can't you be more of a help?

**Hilary:** I was *trying*!

**Narrator 8:** —said Hilary.

**Narrator 2:** She went to *her* room and *slammed* the door. She *played* with her toys.

**Mom:** (offstage) Help! Hilary! Help!

**Narrator 7:** It was her mom!

**Hilary:** (yelling) I'm coming.

**Narrator 3:** Two bad guys were *carrying* her mom away!

**Narrator 6:** Hilary ran after *them* down the **street**.

**Bad guy 1:** Look out!

**Narrator 4:** —said one.

**Bad guy 1:** **That** kid is **chasing** us!

**Bad guy 2:** Let's get out of here fast.

**Narrator 5:** —said the **other**.

**Narrator 1:** *They* stuffed her mom in a car and drove off.

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! Help!

**Narrator 8:** Hilary *got* in another car and *raced* after them.

**Narrator 2:** *They* stopped at an *airport* and *headed* for a plane.

**Narrator 7:** Hilary was right behind them.

**Hilary:** (yelling) Drop my mom! **RIGHT NOW!**

**Narrator 3:** The bad guys *dropped* her mom and ran off.

**Narrator 6:** But something *swooped* down. A *giant* bird!

**Narrator 4:** It picked up her mom and *flew* away!

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! Help!

**Narrator 5:** Hilary got in the plane and took off after the *bird*.

**Narrator 1:** She flew right above it and *climbed* down a rope.

**Narrator 8:** But the bird *dropped* her mom!

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! Help!

**Narrator 2:** Hilary got back in the plane and *flew* a loop-de-loop-de-loop.

**Narrator 7:** Her mom landed on top.

**Hilary:** (yelling) Hold on!

**Narrator 3:** But the *wind blew* her off!

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! H-e-l-l-l-l-p!

**Narrator 6:** Hilary jumped from the plane.

**Narrator 4:** They landed in a river.

**Mom:** SPLASH!

**Hilary:** SPLASH!

**Narrator 5:** But a **waterfall** was just *ahead*!

**Mom:** Help! Blub. Hilary! Blub. Help!

**Narrator 1:** Hilary grabbed her mom in time and started for **shore**.

**Narrator 8:** But a **giant serpent** rose from the water.

**Narrator 2:** It opened its **mouth**!

**Mom:** Help! Hilary! EEEEEEEEEEEK!

**Narrator 7:** The **serpent** *swallowed them*!

**Narrator 3:** On the way down, Hilary tickled its **throat**.

**Narrator 6:** The *serpent coughed*, and they flew through the air.

**Narrator 4:** They passed over the *town*.

**Narrator 5:** *They* landed in their own *backyard*.

**Mom:** Hilary! You're *such* a great big HELP!

## Appendix 5

The students used their own names when writing the scripts, therefore these names have been changed into Norwegian names within the scripts.

### Self-written script, group 1: «The lunch break»

**Narrator:** Hello everyone. Welcome to this urban education centre for adults. It is very nice to meet you. Four people from different countries met at school and became good friends as they got to know each other over lunch break.

**Character 1:** I just love my lunch today. We have a lot of different food in my home country, ``Afghanistan``. Like; ghabili, shorwa, and kashkew. However, the traditional food in my country is Qabli and people love it.

**Character 2:** Wow that sounds good. What is Qabili? can you explain it a little bit?

**Character 1:** Yes of course. Qabili is made of rise, meat, carrot, and raisins. But my favorite food is Kashkew, I love it when my mom makes Kashkew. But what do you eat Stian?

**Character 2:** My favourite food is xalwa. Xalwa is one of the traditional food in my country. We use when we have celebration like 'Eid. It tastes every sweet. What do you eat Caroline?

**Character 4:** We have different traditional food. However, we have one of famous food in my country and that is ugali. We have it when we celebrate and at Christmas.

**Character 2:** Okay. How did you make it? What do you use to make it?

**Character 4:** I make boil water and put porage and corn in it. What about you Lennart? What is the traditional food in Sudan?

**Character 3:** Yes of course! In Sudan, we have two type's traditional food, easida with mula, which is a sauce.

**Character 4:** ooh sounds nice!

**Character 3:** Yes it is. cisra is also nice, it is traditional food.

**Character 4:** What is that?

**Character 3:** Well, Cisra is Sudanese chapatti or pancake.

**Narrator:** They had a lot of fun talking about food. They laughed and decided that sometime they should try each others food. But then one of the guys started talking about dance and really wanted to show them.

**Character 1:** I like to exercise in Sats Elixia, and sometimes I dance Hip Hop and Bboing.

**Character 2:** What is Bboing dance I have never heard of it before?

**Character 1:** Bboing dance is a special new dance, most of people they don't know about Bboing. But is very fun to watch. I like it very much. I feel very good when I dance.

**Character 4:** Can you show us some moves?

**Character 1:** No. I am too shy to do that. Or maybe I could show a little move.

**ALL:** CLAP

**Character 1:** What do you like to do, Stian?

**Character 2:** Well, I like to play football best, when I have a free time. I also watch football matches. My favorite team is fc Barcelona. What about you Caroline?

**Character 4:** I like to take a trip with my bicycle when the weather is nice. I love the beach, it's very relaxing and comfortable.

**Character 2:** I love to lay on the beach. It is so relaxing.

**Character 1:** Lennart would do you like to tell us about what you do in your free time?'

**Character 3:** Absolutely! I like to do different activities, but I prefer playing football in my free time. I love to play football because it is so exciting.

**Narrator:** The two guys got into a conversation about girls. Dan started telling a story about what they would normally do in Afghanistan when they were telling a girl they liked her.

**Character 1:** In my country when a boy likes girl they have a special way of telling it. The young boys have a mirror in their pockets and they use it to reflect the sun to the girls face. When the sun hits the girls face it means that she is the one he loves

**Character 2:** Wow! We do that in Somalia too.

**Character 1:** I want to do it, but I do not think I am going to find sun in Norway.

**Character 4:** Wow, that is cool. I would love it if a guy did that to me sometime,

**All:** hahahah.

**Character 4:** Have you ever done that to a girl?

**Character 2:** No, I have not. However, my friend in Somalia he did it and it was fantastic. The girl loved it and they are still together.

**Narrator:** The bell rang in and they had to go to class. They all agreed that they had a fantastic time talking and getting to know each other. They decided that they should meet up next time they had a longer break at school.

## Appendix 6

### Self-written script, group 2:«Why I like my country»

**Narrator:** It was an exciting day because three friends are meeting for the first time at a Chinese restaurant. They had started chatting on Facebook and decided that they should meet face to face.

**Johannes:** what do you eat in your country?

**Ola:** In my country make Kabuli palaw, Corma, we use potato, rice, meat, carrot, rasins. It is also our national food.

**Johannes;** IN CHIN LAND, we eat rice, chicken, fish, chili, potato and vegetables.

**Line:** We have different food like rice meet spaghetti canjero sambuus and we have different sweets like halwo shushumow.

**Johannes:** What is anjero?

**Line:** Anjero look like a pancake but it taste different. It is made out of flour, corn fand yeast.

**Pål:** Wow! I would really like to try it sometime

**Line:** Some day I can make it for you. You should all come an visit me and everyone cat try it.

**Narrator:** They had a lot of fun talking about food. They wanted to taste all the food they were talking about. Then they got into a more personal conversation and got to know each other more.

**Line:** In Somalia, we have a big family. The family they live together in Somalia. Do you have a big family in Chin?

**Johannes:** I have a big family. Everyone lives in Norway now. I sometimes wish that I lived in chin because the weather back there is so much warmer. Norway is so cold.

**Line:** YES! Norway is very cold. BRRRR!! But snow is beautiful though. I had never seen snow before I came to Norway.

**Johannes:** I had only seen snow on TV, but know is see snow every winter.

**Narrator:** They started talking about their national day and traditions in their home country. They where from different places and so it fun. Now they learned more about different cultures and traditions.

**Johannes:** The National day in chin is very important to us. Our national day is 29 of February. This day we eat lots of National food, and lots of sweet for example chocolate, ice and other. We sit together and talk about old times. We wear the National dress, which is called Laithil! How do you celebrate the National day in Somalia?

**Line:** We celebrate together with family and friends and we visit other people like neighbors. We also go into the streets to sing and dance.

**Johannes:** Wow. Can you show us how you dance?

**Line:** NOOO!!! Ha-ha I like it, but it is difficult.  
Can you show dancing in Chin?

**Johannes:** of course! My friend! (dance)



**Narrator:** Johannes danced like crazy. He learned the others some moves and they joined in on the dance. Then started to talk about spare time and get to know each other better.

**Johannes:** I like to play football with my team.

**Line:** Ohh! I don't like football. How often do you play football?

**Johannes:** ohh yeah! I play 6 hour a week. What do you like to do in your spare time?

**Line:** I like watch TV and play computer games.

**Johannes:** wow! I like to play computer games too! So maybe we can play together online in the weekend.

**Line:** Yes, we can! But I bet I am better than you!

**Johannes:** NOOO! I am the best. And definitely better than you because I have played every day for 5 years. So you are going to lose.

**Narrator:** They talk for a long time about who is the best. And they talk about Christmas what they doing in a Christmas.

**Johannes:** Christmas I will celebrate with my family in church. We will sing and eat Christmas food with friends and other family. We eat ribs and lots of good food from chin, and we give gifts to each other. This year I hope I get new football shoes. What about you. How will you celebrate Christmas?

**Line:** I do not celebrate Christmas.

**Johannes:** Oh, what do you celebrate then?

**Line:** We celebrate something called 'Eid. We go to the mosque and we visit friends and family. We stay up all night to talk. It is one of the greatest days in the year. We also gives a gift. Some family give gifts to their children, they are very happy and happiness to opening gift.

**Johannes n:** ohh it sounds like very nice out maybe one day I will join to celebrate with you.

**Line:** yeah! You are always welcome!

**Johannes:** Thank you! But I think they should close the store about 5 minutes. So we have to go home now. So maybe we come back next week, talk together, and eat together.

**Line:** Ok Thank you for today and good-bye.

**Johannes:** ok see you!

**Narrator:** All had a good meal and the times go fast and the all we went to rest because we were very tired.

## Appendix 7

### Self-written script, group 3: «Moving to Norway»

**Narrator:** Once upon a time four different people from four different countries, met in a shopping center in Oslo. They knew each other from school. They started talking about the National Day in Norway.

**Character 1:** 17<sup>th</sup> of May, the national day in Norway, is very different from the national day in Thailand. In Norway they eat sausages and ice-cream all day long. I get sick if I do that.

**Character 2:** Yes, I know! In Burma we don't eat sausages and ice-cream, we eat Savuti on our national day, which is rice and all kinds of meat.

**Character 1:** Sometime food in Norway is very boring because, in Thailand they eat of Spysi food. What they eat in Somalia?

**Character 3:** In Somalia we eat different food. We eat rice, sambusa and vegetables. We eat a lot of sambusa because it is so tasty.

**Character 4:** Wow! That sounds nice! In Eritrea we have different food. We eat Engera with the same kind of sauce.

**Narrator:** They had a lot of fun talking about food. But then they started to talk about family.

**Character 2:** I have a small family. Only me and my sister live here in Norway. Rest of my family live in Burma. Me and my sister have so much fun. We watch a Burmese film every day. Do you have a small or big family, Lene?

**Character 4:** I have a small family. We like to play football and we always play in the weekend. We have so much fun playing.

**Character 1:** wow... how exciting. I don't like to play football because I am not sporty. But what I do like to go shopping. What about you?

**Character 3:** I don't like shopping, but I love to cook. It makes me happy to cook for other people.

**Character 1:** wow I love to cook too. How about you? What do you like to do?

**Character 2:** I like to restling. I train for it often.

**Narrator:** Then they talk about celebration. They do not have the same type of traditions and therefore they learn about different cultures which is very fun and interesting.

**Character 3:** In July the first we celebrate our national day. People go into the streets to celebrate and I used to celebrate every national day when I was Somalia. How about Burma?

**Character 2:** In Burma we have a lot of competition on our national day. We play football, volleyball and dance competitions. The people who win gets a prize.

**Character 4:** Cool. We have competition in Eritrea on our national day as well. We have singing and volleyball competitions. Did you ever win a competition in Burma?

**Character 2:** No I never won. But it is fun competing. How is it in Thailand?

**Character 1:** well, the national in Thailand are a lot of fun. It last one week, and we throw water on each other. This is because it is very hot outside. We call this sonkran festival.

**Character 3:** wow. I don't want to go to Thailand this time, because I don't want people throwing water on me.

**Character 1:** no no. it is very funny. It is not dangerous.

**Character 3:** hah no I don't want to go to Thailand on this time. But maybe I can come at other time. How about your celebration Lene?

**Character 4:** In Eritrea we celebrate the Easter on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March. Everybody tries to get home to their family to celebrate with a very nice meal.

**Character 2:** Wow. We also have the Easter. But we just celebrate it in church.

**Character 1:** What did you do in the church? I have never been to a church because we go to the temple where I come from.

**Character 2:** There were a lot of people, we sang together and we praised the lord.

**Character 1:** That sounds fun. Maybe I should join sometime.

**Narrator:** now all finished eating and they had to go home. But they agreed to meet again. They had a good time together and they were pleased to meet each other.

## Appendix 8

### Group 1 – «The lunch break»

**Narrator:** Hello everyone. Welcome to Sandnes Læringscenter. It is very nice to meet you. Four *people* from different countries met at school and *became* good friends as they got to know each other over lunch break.

**Character 1:** I just love my lunch today. We have a lot of different food in my home country, ``Afghanistan``. Like; ghabili, shorwa, and kashkew. However, the traditional food in my country is Qabli and people love *it*.

**Character 2:** Wow that sounds good. What is Qabli? Can you explain it a little bit?

**Character 1:** Yes of course. Qabli is made of rise, meat, *carrot*, and raisins. But my favorite food is Kashkew, I love it when my **mom** makes Kashkew. But what do you eat Stian?

**Character 2:** My **favourite** food is xalwa. Xalwa is one of the traditional food in my country. We use when we have celebration like ‘Eid. It tastes every sweet. What do you eat Caroline?

**Character 4:** We have different traditional food. However, we have one of **famous** food in my country and that is ugali. We have it when we *celebrate* and at Christmas.

**Character 2:** Okay. How did you make it? What do you use to make it?

**Character 4:** I make boil water and put porage and corn in it. What about you Lennart? What is the traditional food in Sudan?

**Character 3:** Yes of course! In Sudan, we have two type’s traditional food, easida with mula, *which* is a **sauce**.

**Character 4:** ooh sounds nice!

**Character 3:** Yes it is. cisra is also nice, it is traditional food.

**Character 4:** What is that?

**Character 3:** Well, Cisra is Sudanese chapatti or pancake.

**Narrator:** They had a lot of *fun talking* about food. They **laughed** and decided that sometime they should try each others food. But then one of the guys started *talking* about dance and really wanted to show them.

**Character 1:** I like to exercise in Sats Elixia, and **sometimes** I dance Hip Hop and Bboing.

**Character 2:** What is Bboing dance I have never heard *of* it before?

**Character 1:** Bboing dance is a special new dance, most of **people** they don’t know about Bboing. But is very fun to watch. I like it very much. I feel very good when I dance.

**Character 4:** Can you show us some moves?

**Character 1:** No. I am too shy to do that. Or maybe I could show a little move.

**ALL:** CLAP

**Character 1:** What do you like to do, Stian?

**Character 2.** Well, I like to play football best, when I have a free time. I also watch football *matches*. My favorite team is fc Barcelona. What about you Caroline?

**Character 4:** I like to take a trip with my bicycle when the weather is nice. I love the *beach*, it's very *relaxing* and comfortable.

**Character 2:** I love to *lay* on the beach. It is so relaxing.

**Character 1:** Lennart would do you like to tell us about what you do in your free time?'

**Character 3:** Absolutely! I like to do different activities, but I prefer playing football in my free time. I love to play football because it is so exciting.

**Narrator:** The two guys got into a *conversation* about girls. Dan *started* telling a story about what they would normally do in Afghanistan when they were telling a girl they liked her.

**Character 1:** In my country when a boy likes girl they have a special way **of** telling it. The young boys have a mirror in their pockets and they use it to reflect the **sun** to the girls face. When the sun hits the girls face it means that she is the one he loves

**Character 2:** Wow! We do that in Somalia too.

**Character 1:** I want to do it, but I do not *think* I am going to find sun in Norway.

**Character 4:** Wow, that is cool. I would love it if a guy did that to me sometime,

**All:** hahahah.

**Character 4:** Have you ever done that to a girl?

**Character 2:** No, I have not. However, my friend in Somalia he did it and it was *fantastic*. The girl loved it and they are still together.

**Narrator:** The bell rang in and they had to go to class. They all agreed that they had a fantastic time *talking* and getting to know each other. They decided that they should meet up next time they had a longer break at school.

## Appendix 9

### Group 2- «Why I like my country»

**Narrator:** It was an exciting day **because three** friends are meeting for the first time at a **Chinese** restaurant. They had started **chatting** on Facebook and decided that they should meet face to *face*.

**Johannes:** What do you eat in your country?

**Ola:** In my country make Kabuli palaw, Corma, we use *potato*, rice, meat, carrot, **rasins**. It is also our national food.

**Johannes;** IN CHIN LAND, we eat rice, chicken, **fish**, chili, potato and *vegetables*.

**Line:** We have different food like rice meet spaghetti canjero sambuus and we have different sweets like halwo shushumow.

**Johannes:** What is anjero?

**Line:** Anjero look like a *pancake* but it **taste** different. It is made out of flour, corn fand *yeast*.

**Pål:** Wow! I would really like to try it sometime

**Line:** Some day I can make it for you. You should all come an visit me and everyone cat try it.

**Narrator:** They had a lot of fun talking about food. They wanted to *taste* all the food they were talking about. Then they got into a more personal *conversation* and got to know each other more.

**Line:** In Somalia, we have a big family. The family they live together in Somalia. Do you have a big family in *Chin*?

**Johannes:** I have a big family. Everyone *lives* in Norway now. I sometimes *wish* that I lived in chin because the *weather* back there is so much warmer. Norway is so cold.

**Line:** YES! Norway is very cold. BRRRR!! But snow is beautiful though. I had never seen snow before I **came** to Norway.

**Johannes:** I had only *seen* snow on TV, but know is see snow every winter.

**Narrator:** They started talking about their national day and *traditions* in their home country. They where from different places and so it fun. Now they learned more about different cultures and traditions.

**Johannes :** The National day in chin is very *important* to us. Our national day is 29 of February. This day we eat lots of National food, and lots of sweet for example chocolate, ice and other. We sit together and talk about old times. We wear the National dress, which is *called* Laithil! How do you celebrate the National day in Somalia?

**Line:** We celebrate together with family and friends and we visit other people like neighbors. We also go into the *streets* to sing and dance.

**Johannes:** Wow. Can you show us how you dance?

**Line:** NOOO!!! Ha-ha I like it, but it is difficult. Can you show dancing in Chin?

**Johannes:** of course! My friend! (dance)

**Narrator:** **Johannes** *danced* like crazy. He learned the others some moves and they *joined* in on the dance. Then started to talk about spare time and get to know each other better.

**Johannes:** I like to play football with my team.

**Line:** Ohh! I don't like football. How often do you play football?

**Johannes:** ohh yeah! I play 6 hour a week. What do you like to do in your spare time?

**Line:** I like watch TV and play computer games.

**Johannes:** wow! I like to play computer games too! So maybe we can play together online in the *weekend*.

**Line:** Yes, we can! But I bet I am better than you!

**Johannes:** NOOO! I am the *best*. And definitely better than you because I have played every day for 5 years. So you are going to *lose*.

**Narrator:** They talk for a long time about who is the best. And they talk about Christmas what they doing in a Christmas.

**Johannes:** Christmas I will celebrate with my family in church. We will sing and eat Christmas food with friends and other family. We eat ribs and lots of good food from chin, and we give *gifts* to each other. This year I hope I get new football *shoes*. What about you. How will you celebrate Christmas?

**Line:** I do not celebrate Christmas.

**Johannes:** Oh, what do you celebrate then?

**Line:** We *celebrate* something called 'Eid. We go to the mosque and we visit friends and family. We stay up all night to talk. It is one of the **greatest** days in the year. We also gives a gift. Some family give gifts to their children, they are very happy and happiness to opening gift.

**Johannes:** ohh it sounds like very nice out maybe one day I will join to celebrate with you.

**Line:** yeah! You are always welcome!

**Johannes:** Thank you! But I think they should close the store about 5 minutes. So we have to go home now. So maybe we come back next week, talk together, and eat together.

**Line:** Ok Thank you for today and good-bye.

**Johannes:** ok see you!

**Narrator:** All had a good meal and the times go fast and the all we went to rest because we were very tired.

## Appendix 10

### Group 3: «Moving to Norway»

**Narrator:** Once upon a time four different people from four different countries, met in a shopping center in Oslo. They knew each other from school. They started talking about the *National Day* in Norway.

**Character 1:** 17<sup>th</sup> of May, the national day in Norway, is very different from the national day in Thailand. In Norway they eat *sausages* and ice-cream all day long. I get sick if I do that.

**Character 2:** Yes, I know! In Burma we don't eat *sausages* and ice-cream, we eat Savuti on our national day, **which** is *rice* and all *kinds* of meat.

**Character 1:** Sometime food in Norway *is* very boring because, in Thailand they eat of Spysi food. What they eat in Somalia?

**Character 3:** In Somalia we eat different food. We eat *rice*, sambusa and vegetables. We eat a lot of sambusa because it is so **tasty**.

**Character 4:** Wow! That sounds nice! In Eritrea we have different food. We eat Engera with the same kind of **sauce**.

**Narrator:** They had a lot of fun talking about food. But then they started to talk about family.

**Character 2:** I have a small family. Only me and my sister live here in Norway. Rest of my family live in Burma. Me and my sister have so **much** fun. We *watch* a Burmese film every day. Do you have a small or big family, Lene?

**Character 4:** I have a small family. We like to play football and we always play in the weekend. We have so much fun playing.

**Character 1:** wow... how exciting. I don't like to play football because I am not **sporty**. But what I do like to go shopping. What about you?

**Character 3:** I don't like shopping, but I love to cook. It makes me happy to cook for other people.

**Character 1:** Wow I love to cook too. How about you? What do you like to do?

**Character 2:** I like to restling. I train for it often.

**Narrator:** Then they talk about celebration. They do not have the same type of traditions and therefore they learn about different cultures which is very fun and interesting.

**Character 3:** In July the first we celebrate our national day. People go into the **streets** to celebrate and I used to celebrate every national day when I was Somalia. How about Burma?

**Character 2:** In Burma we have a lot of competition on our national day. We play football, volleyball and dance competitions. The people who **win** gets a prize.

**Character 4:** Cool. We have competition in Eritrea on our national day as well. We have singing and volleyball competitions. Did you ever win a competition in Burma?

**Character 2:** No I never *won*. But it is fun **competing**. How is it in Thailand?

**Character1 :** well, the national in Thailand are a lot of fun. It last one week, and we throw water on each other. This is because it is very **hot** outside. We call this sonkran festival.



**Character 3:** wow. I don't want to go to Thailand this time, because I don't want people **throwing** water on me.

**Character 1:** no no. it is very funny. It is not dangerous.

**Character 3:** Hah no I don't want to go to Thailand on this time. But maybe I can come at other time? How about your celebration Lene?

**Character 4:** In Eritrea we celebrate the **Easter** on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March. Everybody tries to get home to their family to celebrate with a very nice *meal*.

**Character 2:** Wow. We also have the Easter. But we just celebrate it in *church*.

**Character 1:** What did you do in the church? I have never been to a church because we go to the temple where I come from.

**Character 2:** There were a lot of people, we **sang** together and we praised the lord.

**Character 1:** That **sounds** fun. Maybe I should join sometime.

**Narrator:** now all finished eating and they had to go home. But they agreed to meet again. They had a good time together and they were pleased to meet each other.

## **Appendix 11**

### **Teacher Interview Guide nr. 1**

The purpose of this Interview is to gather information and to get a better overview of the students for my case study. In addition to taking notes the interview will also be recorded. This way I am able to go back and make sure my data are correct and nothing has been missed. All names will be anonymous.

#### **Background**

How many years have you been teaching English?

What educational background do you have?

What ages are the students in your class(es)?

Where do your students come from?

Do you use the same curriculum as other schools?

What is the level of English among your students?

What challenges do they have when learning English?

How motivated are they to learn English?

Do you believe it is important to have a high degree of proficiency in the mother tongue as a foundation for learning other languages? Why/why not

#### **Reading**

How much time do you spend on teaching your students to read?

How do you teach such a diverse group of students to read?

What types of texts do you normally use and how do you use them?

Do you focus your teaching of reading on intensive or extensive reading, or both?

What would you say your biggest challenges are when helping your students to improve their reading/English in general?

Are your students motivated to read?

How do you motivate your students to read?

## **Readers Theatre**

Where did you first hear about Readers Theatre?

Why do you use Readers Theatre?

How do you use Readers Theatre ?

What are your experiences of using Readers Theatre?

What do you emphasize in the introduction of RT and in the rehearsing period?

What about the performances?

What do you think are the benefits of using Readers Theatre?

What do believe are potential challenges before starting this RT project?

Would you change or have you changed anything based on previous experiences?

What are your expectations for RT this time?

## **Appendix 12**

### **Second Teacher Interview Guide**

The purpose of this post-interview was to get insight into the teacher's experience of the RT project. The goal was to get an understanding of the teacher's perspective on RT and whether she felt there were any benefits and challenges with this method.

#### **General**

How would you evaluate the RT project?

Did the project meet your expectations?

Did the students enjoy working with RT? Why/why not?

What was your experience of implementing RT with such a diverse group of students, both in age and background?

What were the challenges of using RT with these adults?

What do you think the students benefitted most from the project? Why?

Did the students develop from rehearsal to performance? Why/why not?

If yes, how did they develop?

What did you emphasize during the rehearsals of the scripts? Why?

What was your observation or experience of the group dynamics?

Did they give feedback to each other during practice? If so, how and on what?

How did they experience performing the scripts?

What were the pros and cons of implementing RT with these students?

#### **The first cycle**

Did the students understand the introduction to the RT project? Why/why not?

Did the RT scripts 'Bim's Bamboo' and 'Help! Hilary! Help!' suit their level of proficiency and age? Why/why not?

### **The second cycle**

What was the biggest challenge for your students when writing the scripts themselves? How did the students experience writing about their own culture and background?

### **Final comments**

In your opinion, which of the two RT cycles benefitted the students most? Why?

Do you feel that RT has affected their motivation and attitude towards reading in general?

Would you use RT again some other time with a similar group of students? Why/why not

Would you like to add any final comments?

## **Appendix 13**

### **Student interview guide**

Four students in the class of adults were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to uncover the students' attitudes and experiences of the RT project. By using semi-structured interviews the goal was to make the students will feel comfortable in order to speak freely about the two cycles of RT.

The first part of the interview asks general questions about their background and how long they had been living in Norway. The intention was to create a relaxed atmosphere and make the situation less nerve wrecking.

#### **Background information**

Where are you from?

How long have you lived in Norway?

What type of education do you have?

What is your mother tongue?

What other languages do you speak?

Did you learn English before arriving in Norway?

If yes: How long have you been taught English?

Have you been taught oral, written skills or both before?

How long have you been learning English in Norway?

What is your experience of learning English?

Are you motivated to learn English?

Why are you attending this course?

What do you plan on doing after finishing this course?

**Reading:**

Do you like to read (in general)? Why/why not?

How often do you read?

What type of reading do you like the most? (books, magazines, articles?)

Do you consider yourself a strong reader in English?

- Why or why not?

Do you like to read English texts?

Do you like to read English texts aloud?

Do you believe that it is important to be able to read in English? Why/Why not

**Writing**

Do you like to write (In general)?

Why or why not?

Do you consider yourself a strong writer in English?

Why or why not?

Do you believe it is important to be able to write in English?

Why or why not?

**Oral skills:**

Do you enjoy to read out loud (In general)?

Why or why not?

Do you consider yourself a strong reader in English (Orally)?

Why or why not?

Do you believe it is important to be able to communicate orally in English?

Why or why not?

Do you often communicate in English?

When?

### **Readers Theatre**

Have you been a part of a Readers Theatre project before?

Did you think the text *Bim's Bamboo* was on your level?

Why/Why not?

How did you experience the process of writing your own script for RT?

How did you experience performing your own script for RT?

The fact that the scripts were about your own culture and background, did that make it easier?

Why/why not?

Did you practise the scripts at home as well as at school?

Did you think your reading improved from the first rehearsal to the performance?

Why/why not?

If yes, in what way did your reading (aloud?) improve?

How did you experience working in groups?

How did you experience listening to the other group(s) performing their Readers Theatre texts?

Has Readers Theatre made you more motivated to read (aloud and in general)?

What was the best/worst aspect of working with Readers Theatre texts?

Would you like to do Readers Theatre again some other time? Why/why not?



## **Intervju Guide (Norsk)**

### **Bakgrunnsinformasjon**

Hvor er du fra?

Hvor lenge har du bodd i Norge?

Hvilken skolebakgrunn har du?

Hva er morsmålet ditt?

Hvilke andre språk snakker du?

Før du ankom Norge hadde du lært noe engelsk? Hvis ja: hvor lenge har du lært engelsk?

Har du hatt undervisning i muntlig, skriftlig eller begge deler før?

Hvor lenge har du lært engelsk i Norge

Hvor lenge har du vært student her ved voksenopplæringen?

Hva er erfaringene dine med å lære Engelsk?

Er du motivert til å lære engelsk?

Hvorfor går du på dette kurset? Hvorfor tar du denne utdanningen?

Hva tenker du å gjøre etter at du er ferdig på voksenopplæringen?

### **Lesing**

Liker du å lese (generelt)?

Hvor ofte leser du?

Hvilke type tekster leser du? (F.eks blader, bøker, artikler )

Anser du seg selv som en dyktig leser?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Liker du å lese engelske tekster?

Liker du å lese engelske tekster høyt?

Syns du det er viktig å kunne lese på engelsk ? (Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?)

### **Skriftlig engelsk**

Liker du å skrive (generelt)?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Anser du deg som sterk/flink elev i engelsk skriftlig?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Tror du det er viktig å kunne skrive på engelsk?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

### **Muntlig engelsk**

Liker du å lese høyt ?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Anser du deg selv som en sterk leser i engelsk generelt?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Tror du det er viktig å kunne kommunisere muntlig på Engelsk?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Hvor ofte kommuniserer du på engelsk?

### **Leseteater**

Har du vært en del av RT prosjekt før?

Opplevde du at teksten, *Bim's Bamboo/ Help! Hilary! Help!* var tilpasset ditt nivå i engelsk?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Hvordan opplevde du prosessen med å skrive ditt eget manus til RT?

Hvordan opplevde du å fremføre ditt eget manus?

Siden manuset var basert på sin egen kultur og bakgrunn, ble det lettere å skrive og lese?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Øvde du på teksten hjemme?

Opplevde du at lesingen din forbedret seg fra første øving frem til fremførelsen av leseteateret?

- Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Hvis ja, hvordan forbedret din muntlige engelsk seg?

Likte du å jobbe i grupper på denne måten?

Hvordan likte du å lytte og høre på de andre gruppene fremføre RT manuset sitt?

Har du blitt mer motivert til å lese (høyt eller generelt)?

Hva var det beste og verste med RT?

Er dette en metode du kunne likt å være en del av ved en senere anledning?

## Appendix 14

### Readers Theatre

Write your own Readers Theatre script. Use knowledge and experiences from your own home country as a basis for an RT script. It is possible to talk about, for example, the traditional food, family life and special traditions in your home country.

Brainstorm with your group on how to structure the RT scripts.

Divide the roles between the members within the group; narrator and character (There may be one or two narrators and several characters).

Create dialogs to use in the script.

Use your own creativity. You are free to include anything you like about your home country. It is also possible to add suitable movements to visualize the actions within the text.

**Food:**

**Family:**

**Traditions (Mention some traditions from you home country).**

**Sparetime:**

**Other:**

**Example of how to write an RT script**

Roles: Narrator, The Norwegian and the American

**Narrator:** This is a story about an American and a Norwegian man who meet at the airport in London. They are both waiting on their flight and therefore start talking.

**Greek:** What on earth do you have on your bread?

**Norwegian:** It's brown cheese and it is used as a spread on bread. It is a Norwegian specialty.

**American:** Oh, we do not have brown cheese in America. We are famous for our American burger. Have you ever tried it? It is very good.

**Norwegian:** No I have not but I would really like to try it sometime.

**Narrator:** The Norwegian let the American man try a little bit of his brown cheese. He did not really think it tasted that good. However, the two of them got along and continued to tell each other about their home country.

**Norwegian:** 17th of May we celebrate our National day. During the whole day there are colourful parades, and people are wearing their national dresses - which we call bunads. Everyone who wants to can join this parade: school children, parents, music corps, graduates (russ), etc. Everyone joins the parade.