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Abstract

Even though Norwegian learners tend to have a high proficiency in English, they still tend to be anxious in English-speaking contexts. Hence, the present master's thesis set out to investigate teachers' perceptions and reported practices related to foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) among Norwegian 7th grade learners in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. FLSA refers to the discomfort and apprehension experienced when engaging in a communicative foreign language situation (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). Two research questions were developed in relation to the study. The first research question focused on teachers' perceptions of FLSA among learners. The second research question examined teachers' practices and reported practices aiming to prevent and reduce FLSA among 7th grade learners. Based on these research questions, it was seen as appropriate to collect data through semi-structured interviews and observation. Three experienced teachers that were currently teaching English in 7th grade at different schools, participated in the present study. Each participant was observed during one English lesson and interviewed.

The present study attempted to investigate the current gap in Norwegian research regarding teachers' perceptions and practices related to FLSA. Speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom has been researched to a large extent in other countries around the world for many years; however, this is still a phenomenon learners encounter and an issue for teachers to handle to scaffold these learners. The thesis provided implications for teaching and suggestions for future research, such as investigating how digital tools can contribute to reduced FLSA.

The main findings from data analysis revealed how the teachers recognise FLSA among their learners, and factors they believed influenced FLSA. The three teachers mainly shared similar perceptions and reported practices in the EFL classroom. The teachers reported that they identified learners with speaking anxiety by observing behavioural patterns and body language when learners encountered anxiety-provoking situations. Regarding the factors that influence FLSA, current results indicated that teachers believed professionally qualified English teachers to be a factor that could reduce speaking anxiety because of their pedagogical approaches. According to the teachers, another factor influencing FLSA is the established classroom environment, such as predictable routines and structures, the way learners are grouped, and mutual respect between learners. It was revealed that teacher-learner and learner-learner relations are greatly impacted because learners tend to become insecure in 7th grade. The last

factor that could influence FLSA was the high level of fluency of some learners, causing insecurity in other learners prone to FLSA.

Concerning the second research question, present findings demonstrated that there were numerous suggestions for specific teaching strategies to incorporate in the EFL classroom to reduce and prevent FLSA. These strategies include different ways to scaffold and support learners in the EFL classroom. The main strategies include gradual adaptation to oral presentations, reading aloud, cooperation with parents, using games and songs, regularly utilising group work, establishing predictable routines, incorporating interesting topics in activities, and using digital tools.

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List of abbreviations:

FL – Foreign Language

EFL – English as a foreign language

FLSA – Foreign language speaking anxiety

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference

ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

SIKT - Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research

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1. Introduction

Learning English is required in Norwegian schools and the English subject is implemented throughout the entire obligatory education. Even though Norwegian learners tend to be skilled in English, they still show an incidence of anxiety in English-speaking situations. Learning a new language is a complex process which requires time and effort to become a proficient English speaker. Throughout this process, some learners encounter feelings of anxiousness in situations involving speaking a foreign language (FL), in other words, they experience the phenomenon referred to as foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA). Speaking anxiety in a foreign language is described as the fear of performing or speaking the FL in a communicative situation (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). FLSA is not always a consequence of the lack of proficiency or oral skills but is grounded in profound feelings and reactions. Such feelings and reactions can last for a short time or longer, which can potentially interfere with language learning and the development of other skills.

Regarding the choice of topic, FLSA in the EFL classroom has been a broadly investigated topic ever since the FL classroom anxiety measuring scale made by Horwitz et al. (1986) was introduced. However, despite the huge amount of quantitative research conducted on FLSA, this is still a common phenomenon among EFL learners. When searching for previous research on FLSA in English classrooms, no relevant empirical studies from Scandinavian countries were found. FLSA was identified as a topic worthy of investigating in the present thesis due to the lack of research conducted in Scandinavian countries. However, there were several studies concerning learners' perspectives of FLSA in other contexts. Most of the prior research conducted on FLSA has studied older language learners, such as high school learners, university students or adults some studies investigated both learners' and teachers' perceptions of FLSA among FL learners (Akkakoson, 2016; Azarfam & Baki, 2012; He, 2013; Tran & Moni, 2015). Most preceding research is based on the scales measuring anxiety among learners first made by Horwitz et al. (1986). Due to little research on teachers' how to reduce and prevent FLSA among learners, the present study aims to investigate this identified research gap to provide insight into Norwegian teachers' perceptions and (reported) practices concerning FLSA among young learners. Therefore, a qualitative data collection method was chosen.

Moreover, when working with learners, I observed that Norwegians tend to worry about speaking English in cross-cultural situations. Despite having a higher level of proficiency compared to young people from other countries, they still showed anxious behaviour. As a

soon-to-become teacher, I found it necessary to study this phenomenon by focusing on teachers' perceptions and learning from experienced teachers' classroom practices and teaching strategies through both observing teaching methods and in-depth interviews. This study was seen as relevant for my development in the teaching profession and to gain a better understanding of how to prevent and reduce FLSA among future learners while preparing them for future EFL speaking situations. The choice of topic is based on my observations of learners struggling to speak English in the classroom due to anxiety or reluctance. The observed learners did not struggle with proficiency or any oral skills, however, it was fear of speaking itself that hindered them from participating in oral activities. As a teacher-student myself, teacher cognition and reported practices were relevant to investigate in depth. This master's thesis investigated teachers' perceptions and reported practices regarding FLSA among Norwegian 7th grade learners in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

7th grade is a crucial year because the learners need to be prepared for the transition to secondary school where oral engagement and performances are evaluated and graded. According to Ormrod (2011, p. 403), younger learners often experience the feeling of belonging to a community and usually collaborate a lot, however, the transition to secondary school causes disturbances to this. This could affect learners in certain ways, and many are not ready for this type of change. As learners get older, tasks have a higher standard and demand more from the learners than before and the tasks often require learners' oral engagement. The teacher can attempt to make these situations less anxiety-provoking and at the same time create the feeling of mastery. How three Norwegian teachers working with 7th graders attempt to achieve this in their classrooms is the specific focus of the present thesis. Todal (2022) found in her thesis that some 7th graders are already developing FLSA to a moderate level in Norwegian schools. Thus, it was relevant to see how teachers address it with this age group.

Even though anxiety in EFL situations can include language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing, previous findings indicate that speaking in an FL is the most anxiety-provoking language skill among the four primary skills (Azarfam & Baki, 2012, p. 159). Speaking English is frequently referred to throughout the Norwegian curriculum, and concerns the development of personal skills such as communication, intercultural awareness and identity (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). "In the English subject, the interdisciplinary topic of health and life skills refers to developing the ability of the pupils to express themselves in writing and orally in English" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). To develop identity and become confident in themselves, the learners need to be able to express themselves orally in different situations.

This is consistent throughout the subjects, English included. Oral skills are one of the five basic skills that the school is obligated to facilitate in every subject. FLSA is one factor that affects and disrupts oral skills, especially when it comes to EFL learning. Communication through speaking is central to many of the competence aims in the English subject and some learners must take oral exams in English during year 10. The principles of education also include social learning and participation for which well-developed oral skills are crucial.

The present study sets out to address the following two research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety in the English subject in the Norwegian 7th grade EFL Classroom?

2. What are teachers' (reported) practices to prevent and reduce foreign language speaking anxiety in the Norwegian 7th grade EFL Classroom?

To answer these research questions, it was decided to investigate teachers' perspectives and practices through a qualitative study involving class observations and follow-up interviews. The participants of the present study were three experienced teachers teaching 7th grade learners in the English subject at Norwegian schools. Their teaching experience ranged between 15 and 20 years, and all three mainly taught learners between the 4th to grades. One criterion for participating in this study was that they needed to be qualified as English teachers, and their education varied between 60 study points to a master's degree in English. The teachers were contacted through an email that was sent to several schools. They were all from different schools and it was believed they did not have a connection to each other.

The present thesis consists of seven chapters together with attached appendices. The first chapter involves this present introduction, followed by Chapter 2 which provides a literature review and theoretical background for the thesis. The theoretical concepts give insight into teacher cognition and understanding of classroom practices and perceptions. Previous research provides an overview of existing international research on this field as a background for current research. Chapter 3 involves the methodology of this study and describes every step of data collection. This chapter describes the participants of this study, data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations, and the quality of this study. As this study involves both observation and interviews of teachers, it was important to handle every aspect with care and review that the ethical factors and general quality were endorsed. Chapter 4 elaborates on the results of this study and includes a synopsis of the observations and interviews, divided into

analysed topics and categories. Chapter 5 discusses the current findings related to pre-existing investigations and the two research questions. Chapter 6 attempts to conclude and summarise the complete thesis.

2. Theoretical background and literature review

A systematic search for existing literature was conducted to explore previous research, but findings imply that there was little to no research done on teachers' perspectives and reported practices in Scandinavian countries. The primary source for the literature search was databases accessible through Stavanger University Library, such as Oria, Eric, Idunn, and Academic Search Premier. The search terms employed a range of topics, for instance, "teacher", "perception", "perspective", "speaking anxiety", "foreign language speaking anxiety", and "classroom practice", as well as "reduce" and "prevent" in various combinations. Most studies concerning FLSA were focused on learners and their perspectives and experiences. This study investigated 7th graders, which indicates an age of 12 years old, whereas most studies aimed to investigate university students or high school learners. These studies were also conducted through quantitative methods like questionnaires or surveys. There were some qualitative studies on teachers' beliefs, most of these in Asian countries.

This chapter includes the theoretical background and literature review relevant to the present study. Firstly, this chapter introduces relevant terms that are seen as crucial to understanding prior and present findings. This is followed by investigating teacher cognition regarding FLSA and teacher perspective. Relevant earlier academic research is provided and elaborated to gain insight into studies that focus on similar issues as this thesis. Sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 are structured around different relevant topics and previous research is provided within each topic.

2.1 Definitions of relevant terms

There are certain terms used frequently throughout this thesis that are essential to define. Terms like anxiety and speaking are concepts that could be interpreted differently based on approaches or perspectives. Hence, it was deemed essential to specify and describe terms within the context of this study.

2.1.1 Speaking as a skill

Before investigating practices and perceptions of FLSA, it is beneficial to contemplate the term "speaking" as one of the four basic language skills in language education. Speaking as a skill can be determined by the amount of linguistic knowledge and the extralinguistic knowledge one has retrieved in one specific language. Additionally, this applies to all language skills, such as writing, reading and listening. Thornbury (2005, p. 13) illustrates linguistic knowledge as the ability to express oneself through an understandable vocabulary, grammatical features, and intonation. On the other hand, extralinguistic knowledge concerns contextual factors when

speaking, such as whom one is talking to, cultural behaviour and information, and the topic being discussed (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 11–12).

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), speaking skill is viewed as comprising oral production and oral interaction. Oral production involves telling short stories, monologuing, describing, explaining, or presenting (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 60). Achieving proficiency in this form of speaking requires the acquisition of extralinguistic knowledge, which refers to possessing specific knowledge, experience, or information about the topic that is being presented. Oral production, alternatively referred to as speech production, follows linear progress, indicating that: "words follow words, and phrases follow phrases" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 2). Further, the Council of Europe (2020, p. 70) describes oral interaction as communication through speaking or signing. This alludes to expressing a message directly through speaking to one another in a conversation. According to Thornbury (2005, p. 2), responses and utterances to the other part of a conversation are seen as spontaneous due to the short preparation time before responding. This type of speaking involves dialogue and depends on listening skills and being able to interact with others, which is determined by situation, context, and cultural factors (Pawlak et al., 2011, p. 4). When learning an FL, teaching methods usually prioritise speaking, however, speaking tends to be used as a tool for learning vocabulary or grammar, not to practice the skill itself (Thornbury, 2005, p. 28). Effective oral interaction plays a vital role in both collaborative learning and real-life communication, emphasising its significance in both contexts (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 70). When teaching methods are not facilitating opportunities for collaboration and interaction in the classroom, learners are less prepared for speaking the FL in an authentic situation (Thornbury, 2005, p. 28).

According to Thornbury (2005, p. 28), there is little difference in the cognitive state when learning a second language compared to a first language. FL speakers "produce speech through a process of conceptualizing, then formulating, and finally articulating, during which time they are also self-monitoring" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 28). Therefore, teachers need to be aware that EFL learning has the same functions as first-language learning. However, the learners encounter smaller amounts of the FL and tend to have a more distant approach to the language compared to their first language (Cameron, 2001, p. 241).

2.1.2 Anxiety

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of anxiety as a general term is crucial to place anxiety in a language-learning context. Anxiety is a term used to describe the feeling that occurs when one is placed in a stressful situation (Pawlak et al., 2011, p. 200). Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 125) describe anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system". According to Bandura (1993, p. 137), anxiety is "a state of anticipatory apprehension over possible deleterious happenings". Additionally, anxiety is personal and based on inner experience, which indicates that people do not react the same way to a situation because it is individual what they consider a risk or threatening situation (Ghinassi, 2010, p. 4). Ormrod (2011, pp. 401–402) distinguishes between facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. Facilitating anxiety improves performance because it has a challenging aspect with a low level of apprehension. Conversely, debilitating anxiety is experienced as much more uncomfortable and can intervene with performance because concentration is disrupted by negative emotions and feelings of being in a threatening situation (Ormrod, 2011, pp. 401–402).

In Ghinassi's (2010, p. 4) perspective, anxiety does not always involve negative consequences, it can also be used to sharpen senses or improve performance. According to Pekrun (1992, p. 29) and Tran and Moni (2015), there is support for the notion that anxiety can increase motivation in specific situations. The benefits of anxiety will, on the other hand, reduce and turn into a barrier when one is overpowered by negative emotions and physical behaviour entailed by anxiety (Ghinassi, 2010, p. 4). As a result, "the net effect of anxiety on performance may be either negative or positive" (Pekrun, 1992, p. 29). Too much anxiety can provide consequences, such as interference with the ability to pay attention in a learning situation, slow down the processing of information, and make it more difficult to retrieve already learned language skills or information (Cassady, 2004; Covington, 1992; Eysenck, 1992; Hagtvet & Johnsen, 1992; Sarason, 1980, cited in Ormrod, 2011, p. 402).

2.1.3 Language anxiety

Language anxiety is the negative mental and physical responses a learner experience while learning an FL (Pawlak et al., 2011, p. 201). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, p. 284) define language anxiety as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning". Language anxiety leads to several physiological and cognitive reactions interrupting behaviour and learning outcomes. This weakened learning outcome can be legitimised by examining how anxious learners often

avoid classroom situations and homework. Pawlak et al. (2011, p. 201) exemplify raised heart rate as a typical response to anxiety. Even though learners feel confident in their language proficiency, those who encounter language anxiety tend to experience sweat and apprehension, which can hinder their ability to speak an FL in a classroom situation (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 126). Further, Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 126) allege that weakened memory, concentration problems, worry, and fear are central cognitive responses caused by language anxiety. Experiencing anxiety in classroom-related situations over time can develop other learning-affecting issues. According to Gardner and Clément (1990, p. 501), there are certain personality traits and conditions that affect language proficiency and achievements, and one of them is language anxiety. The main problems are lowered self-esteem, confidence in language learning situations, and lack of motivation to embrace the new or unfamiliar language. These factors can easily restrict the development of language skills (Oxford, 1990, cited in Crookall & Oxford, 1991, pp. 141–142). In line with MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, p. 296), there are two dimensions related to language anxiety; general anxiety and communicative anxiety. General anxiety is the type of anxiety learners experience affected by several factors, including language learning, and speaking an FL. Within this context, when learners face anxiety related to FL-speaking situations, it is referred to as communicative anxiety. Communicative anxiety also called speaking anxiety, is the focus of this study.

2.1.4 Foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA)

This study focuses on foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) concerning Norwegian 7th grade EFL learners and teachers' perceptions and practices to reduce this phenomenon in the classroom. According to Wörde (2003, p. 1), foreign language anxiety exhibits numerous factors and viewpoints in compliance with psychological conditions. Hence, it is difficult to explain by one definition. Foreign language anxiety is often linked to EFL-speaking situations and is in this context referred to as FLSA.

FLSA involves the fear of performing in a communicative FL situation (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). Burden (2004, p. 5) describes FLSA as "related to self-focused, negative and anxious cognition during interaction". When experiencing an FL barrier caused by a lack of vocabulary combined with low amounts of practising on interacting and making oneself understood, the feeling of anxiety can rapidly occur (Thornbury, 2005, p. 28). This is supported by previous research, which argues that speaking an FL while being observed is the primary anxiety-provoking factor inside a classroom (Prince, 1991; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, cited in Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi, 2022, p. 21). This type of performance anxiety is divided into

communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation as three conceptual foundations concerning FLSA (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). According to Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 127), communication apprehension "is a type of shyness characterised by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people". Moreover, learners that experience test anxiety struggle with severe negative emotions in testing or performance situations due to the feeling of becoming a failure if making any mistakes. The last division presented by Horwitz et al. (1986, pp. 127–128), is the fear of being negatively evaluated by teachers or other learners in a speaking situation. This fear can occur not only in a testing or assessment situation but in a learning situation as well as outside of the classroom. As this study investigates FLSA among 7th graders, communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation are the most relevant foundation to examine.

Previous findings indicate that FL speaking is the language skill that causes the most anxiety among the four primary skills (Azarfam & Baki, 2012, p. 159), which include listening, writing, speaking, and reading. According to Thornbury (2005, p. 27), the feeling of reduced fluency within the FL can cause negative emotions such as embarrassment and discomfort. To achieve successful language learning it is crucial that learners experience enhanced self-confidence and low levels of anxiety (Krashen, 1982, cited in Drew & Sørheim, 2016, p. 58). This is supported by Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 127) who state that FL fluency is interrupted by FLSA. More specifically, communication apprehension affects learners who fear evaluation and lack control during oral activities. Additionally, these learners tend to struggle with speaking an FL in groups or classes (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). Learners' FLSA cannot only be defined as a personal trait but needs to be situated in contextual factors, such as their surrounding environment. "Therefore, it is necessary for language teachers to promote factors that facilitate communication and remove those that hinder communication" (Riasati, 2018), such as task type, the opportunity to speak, and classroom seating structure. Teachers can only control the environment outside their classroom to a certain extent. "If the presence of anxiety is well understood and carefully addressed by teachers, they may be able to create a safe and supportive language learning environment" (Bashori et al., 2021). Young (1991, p. 430) suggests that helping learners name their fears and talking about them could have an impact on FLSA because it allows them to stay in the situations rather than avoid them.

To summarise, these sections include definitions of pertinent terms that are relevant to the present study. These terms involve speaking as a skill, anxiety, language anxiety, and FLSA. The current study investigates teachers' practices and perceptions of FLSA in depth.

2.2 Teacher cognition

When investigating teachers' perceptions and practices related to learners with FLSA, it was regarded as pertinent to review the concept of teacher cognition. Investigating teacher cognition related to language learning and language practice has been of great importance in understanding the education of teachers (Li, 2020, p. 4). Nevertheless, studying FL teacher cognition is a recently introduced research concept, as the understanding of teaching has developed from behavioural to cognitive perspectives since the 1970s. Teacher cognition can be defined as teachers' knowledge, ideas and reflections on classroom practices (Borg, 2009, p. 1). According to Li (2020, p. 19), teacher cognition is closely related to terms like perceptions and beliefs. Teachers' practices and choices made in the classroom are determined to a large extent by their cognition and beliefs. The understanding of teacher cognition is grounded in the theory that teachers' perceptions, knowledge and thoughts build a foundation that reflects on their actions and classroom practices (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 29). Teachers are not only seen as thoughtful decision-makers who significantly influence classroom dynamics (Borg, 2009, p. 1), but they are also responsible for educating learners, making them directly important in learners' language development. Li (2020, p. 21) states that there are four main areas underlying the importance of teacher cognition: teachers' perceptions and practices, learners' and teachers' roles, pedagogy, and teacher learning. Even though observing teachers' practices is essential, finding the underlying intentions and reflections behind choices and methods provide a better understanding of teacher cognition and one's development as a teacher or researcher.

According to Li (2020, p. 33), teacher cognition is closely related to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory due to the relationship between language, culture and cognition. This applies to teachers' learning through interacting with other colleagues as part of their professional life as well as to learners developing through interactions with teachers and peers. Vygotsky's development of the sociocultural theory is based on an understanding that learning and cognitive development appear in social situations where interaction aims at active learning (Cameron, 2001, pp. 5–6). This indicates that people surrounding the learner contribute to learning through socialisation and input where the learners actively engage in interaction, for example giving instructions, asking questions, and discussing topics. In this sense, learning happens in two stages, in which the first stage is how communication with others contributes to learning. When one reaches the second stage, one reacts to the first stage by internalising the information and cognitive development occurs as a result. Vygotsky (1978, p. 24) stresses that speaking and activity are

the two most critical factors in cognitive development. Moreover, speaking is the basic foundation used to comprehend and make sense of different settings (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 25). Li (2020, p. 43-44) states that "teachers' thinking, understanding, displayed knowledge, and professional practice they engage in at work is primarily mediated through the use of language in their professional context".

Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Bruner implemented the term scaffolding as a description of meeting the learner's needs and providing adequate support as the learner developed (Cameron, 2001, p. 8). Scaffolding concerns using a more competent other to develop and enhance learning, and is closely connected to the concept of ZPD. Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) describes the ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". The principles within the ZPD and scaffolding can accordingly be transferred to teacher cognition and teacher learning, such as identifying the gap between current knowledge and potential capabilities, and challenging mindset and perceptions through interaction and reflection on practice (Li, 2020, p. 38). In other words, teachers can learn from experienced teachers and develop cognitive skills based on interaction and observation.

Li (2020, pp. 52-54) discusses three elements connecting cognition and language, more specifically oral production, and oral interaction. The first element is grounded in a belief that it is important to see thoughts and speaking as two different phenomena that affect each other internally. It is not possible to perceive or identify thoughts or know what someone is thinking, one can only assume thoughts based on communication through spoken words, utterances, or expressions. However, thoughts and understandings expand in social contexts or communicative activities. In situations where learners encounter FLSA or communication apprehension, it is important to recognise that their expression in an FL may not always accurately reflect their understanding or feeling. The second element focuses on learning in a social context and the scaffolding that needs to be provided. Culture and society are dependent on how one develops thoughts and meaning, which makes it important to use oral communication when sharing perceptions and knowledge. This requires scaffolding, either from a more competent other, such as the teacher, or the learning resulting in interactions. Scaffolding is an important factor when developing teaching methods and strategies to approach FLSA. The third element implies that speaking privately to oneself can increase development due to self-reflection on examples like information, challenging tasks, regulation, and ideas (Li, 2020, pp. 52–54).

According to Li (2020, p. 6), "teachers' professional knowledge, understanding and beliefs are shaped by the professional contexts they are in and the lived experience they may have". Teacher cognition and belief systems include both objective and subjective components which have been developed over a long period (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 30). Further, Richards and Lockhart (1994, p. 30-31) list six sources that affect teacher cognition and teacher beliefs. The first established source is the teachers' experiences as FL learners which later provides a perspective on how they preferred to learn e.g., new vocabulary or situations causing stress and a low sense of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy in a social cognitive context is closely related to the feeling of mastering tasks and self-confidence and is described by Bandura (1993, p. 118) as a visualisation of the ability to achieve something and the belief of being able to perform at a certain level. The second source involves teachers' experiences of working as a language teacher. Their perceptions of which methods or approaches are successful or not play a major part in determining their beliefs and cognition. The third is based on the established teaching culture within different schools such as norms and practices that teachers at the school are expected to follow. The fourth source focuses on practices and methods related to the teacher's personality and preferences. The fifth source involves which learning principles teachers choose to take into action based on research and recent studies they believe in or want to try out in the classroom. The last source is based on strategies and methods teachers try to implement in classrooms because they believe certain approaches may be more effective and successful than others. These sources are founded in aims, principles and beliefs by their roles as teachers within a systematic framework, in other words, an individual teaching culture (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, pp. 30–31). Understanding teacher cognition has been considered applicable when examining teaching strategies and provides a foundation for investigating previous studies related to teachers' perceptions of FLSA in the following paragraphs.

2.3 Teachers' perceptions of FLSA

This section involves previous research related to teachers' perceptions of FLSA among EFL learners. The section investigates teachers' perceptions of factors causing FLSA and teaching strategies to reduce or prevent FLSA among learners.

Although there is little research focusing solely on teachers' perceptions of FLSA, four prior studies were seen as relevant to the present study. These studies investigated teachers' and learners' perceptions of FLSA combined. Azarfam and Baki (2012) studied factors causing FLSA among EFL learners from the perspectives of three college students and three teachers. These teachers had between 11 and 15 years of teaching experience. In a comparative study

conducted by He (2013), 302 university students aged 17-23 years old and 30 teachers participated in a survey, and 30 students and three teachers participated in interviews regarding factors contributing to FLSA. Tran and Moni (2015) researched how to manage and reduce FLSA by providing questionnaires to 351 university students from 18-20 years old and conducting in-depth interviews with 18 students and eight teachers. The last study included in the present study was Akkakoson's (2016) qualitative research that included 88 undergraduate students and three teachers when investigating factors that could increase FLSA and strategies to reduce it.

Regarding teachers' perceptions of FLSA, findings from Azarfam and Baki (2012) discovered that all three participating teachers considered low levels of language anxiety somewhat beneficial because it enhances performance. This is supported by Tran and Moni (2015), who argued that teachers should facilitate learners to benefit from positive aspects of FLSA, but reduce negative effects. However, Azarfam and Baki (2012) reported that higher levels of language anxiety as unfavourable and hinder the learners' speaking skills. One teacher reported that the amount of language exposure affects FLSA. This indicated that learners with little FL experience outside the classroom are more likely to experience anxiety in FL-speaking situations. According to Tran and Moni (2015), anxiety "creates depression and pessimism, making us unwilling to communicate". Findings revealed that all the participating teachers reported physical changes and reduced communication when their learners were exposed to an anxiety-provoking situation (Azarfam & Baki, 2012, p. 159). Prior findings (Akkakoson, 2016; He, 2013) signified that teachers' believed that fear of being evaluated or tested increased FLSA and affected oral performances negatively. Further, it was reported that making mistakes during oral situations or tests, as well as having an anxious personality were contributing factors in the development of FLSA. Teachers also reported that native speakers in the classroom could increase FLSA because learners tend to compare themselves with each other (He, 2013).

According to Tran and Moni (2015), teachers believed FLSA should not be reduced because teachers should support learners in trying to manage the situation. Furthermore, teachers can involve families to scaffold learners with FLSA and provide emotional support. Findings also revealed that improved proficiency among learners could reduce FLSA. This is supported by Akkakoson's (2016) findings which indicated that increased self-confidence had a positive impact on FLSA. Tran and Moni (2015) argued that FLSA could have a positive effect on motivation to learn English as an FL. Moreover, they stated that removing every aspect of

FLSA could harm the willingness to learn and improve language skills. Findings revealed that all three teachers agreed that a teacher's role in the classroom involves motivating and facilitating learning, not acting as an authority or commander for learners (Azarfam & Baki, 2012, p. 160).

Previous findings (Akkakoson, 2016; Azarfam & Baki, 2012; He, 2013; Tran & Moni, 2015) clearly showed that teachers had certain strategies to reduce learners' FLSA. Teachers reported that focusing on learner-to-learner interaction and organising group work during activities helped learners to feel more relaxed in the classroom, which is supported in previous research (Crookall & Oxford, 1991; Horwitz et al., 1986; Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi, 2022; Ormrod, 2011; Young, 1991). Games were mentioned by one teacher as a strategy to reduce anxiety and exchange the focus on presentations for participation in playing. It was then easier to motivate them to interact in the FL, and anxious learners can more easily blend in. Another teacher stated how conducting needs analysis and examining students' needs and norms played a crucial part in creating a relaxed and safe learning environment (Azarfam & Baki, 2012, p. 159). This way the teacher could facilitate the needs of learners and reassure them that learners' values and aims are assisted and developed. It was suggested that learners should have more time to think or discuss a familiar topic before being expected to speak an FL in the classroom. Azarfam and Baki (2012, p. 160) argued that "this shows that experienced teachers' perceptions of anxious behaviours in students are exact and sound enough to identify the signs of students anxiety". In summary, EFL teachers should "seek for the appropriate strategies to assist students in decreasing or eradicating anxiety and build up a pleasant and encouraging classroom environment for them to practise the target language" (Akkakoson, 2016).

2.4 FLSA and willingness to speak

As FLSA can result in refusal to speak and avoiding FL oral communication situations, the concept of willingness to speak can be disrupted in learning situations. It was relevant to investigate willingness to speak concerning FLSA and teaching strategies to create oral engagement among learners despite the fear of speaking in an FL.

In Riasati's (2018) study, several questionnaires and a speaking test were used to study the link between motivation, FLSA, and willingness to speak in the classroom. Willingness to speak, also called willingness to communicate is the self-initiated oral engagement and interaction made without any enforcement from surroundings (MacIntyre et al., 2001). Riasati (2018) studied 156 EFL learners and evidence shows that more than 33% of the participants were

reluctant to talk if they knew they were being evaluated. This was grounded in concern of being humiliated or making mistakes. This was supported in Mak's (2011) FLSA mapping of 313 EFL university students, where participants answered "above average" that they panic and speak less if classmates humiliate them or must talk unprepared in front of the class and teacher. Opposite to this, the willingness to speak overruns the fear of speaking when the participants know their answer is correct. According to MacIntyre et al. (2001), authentic communication and support from surroundings affect motivation and the willingness to speak the FL in a language learning situation. Drew and Sørheim (2016, p. 58) signified this by stating "When the emphasis is on communication, it is important to avoid correcting mistakes, which should be left to times when the emphasis is on accuracy". To increase willingness to speak, the teacher should facilitate opportunities for the learners to speak freely and approach the language from a communicative perspective instead of having accuracy as a main focus.

Riasati's (2018) study found that willingness to speak could be influenced by environmental and individual factors. The environmental aspect involved classroom atmosphere, activity types, and the relationship with the teacher. The individual factors implicate the learner's anxiety, skill, and personal traits. "Findings showed that learners who benefit from a higher degree of willingness to speak achieved better scores on the speaking test, which can be attributed to the greater degree of practice and more language use they had in language classes" (Riasati, 2018). This is supported by Burden (2004, p. 6) who stated, in his study of 289 university students, that wanting to communicate and try a new language is central to FL learning, and could be delayed when learners are unwilling to speak. This shows how a learner's willingness to speak is highly related to increasing speaking skills. Furthermore, language anxiety affects the desire to speak, which can interfere with the development of speaking ability.

2.5 Reducing FLSA

Prior studies included in this section focused on different aspects related to teaching strategies that reduce FLSA. It was viewed as appropriate to divide this section into three parts. The first part concerns researchers' perceptions of why teachers need to recognise and reduce FLSA among EFL learners, while the second part involves research on factors that cause FLSA. The third part focuses on how FLSA can be reduced through teaching strategies, such as choice of activities, digital tools, routines, and increasing learners' self-efficacy.

Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128) stressed the importance of identifying learners with FLSA to reduce the negative aspects of anxious states. They introduced two concepts explaining why recognising learners with FLSA is important. The first concept involved recognising and addressing FLSA among learners because it allows teachers to scaffold and support learners in managing anxiety-provoking situations. The other concept is based on how teachers can more easily facilitate low-anxiety settings when identifying and understanding the needs of their learners. Teachers should not remove orally challenging activities or situations that could cause FLSA, but rather "help anxious students cope with existing anxiety-provoking situations and endeavour to make the learning context less stressful" (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1991, cited in Burden, 2004, p. 13). Tran and Moni (2015) claimed that teachers should focus less on reducing FLSA, but rather teach learners to manage anxiety-provoking situations. This is supported by Ormrod (2011, p. 403) who argued that teaching strategies should focus on preventing anxiety among learners instead of trying to cure it. This alludes to teaching methods that focus on preventive measures at an early stage can result in reduced anxiety as the learners get older because they learn to cope with anxiety-provoking situations, instead of treating anxiety as a problem to solve.

Mills et al. (2006) studied the link between FLSA, self-efficacy, and FL linguistic proficiency among 95 college students. Based on their findings, they argued that "incorporation of strategies that foster self-efficacy could foster positive linguistic behaviour from the very first days of instruction and reduce the subsequent need for techniques to reduce anxiety". A low level of self-efficacy could cause self-doubt and negative thoughts in the direction of not being able to accomplish their goals or create visions of situations that could go wrong. "A person with the same knowledge and skills may perform poorly, adequately, or extraordinarily depending on fluctuations in self-efficacy thinking" (Bandura, 1993, p. 119). Accordingly, self-efficacy implies that how one reacts to emotions and thoughts could impact action and outcome, and achievements have better results when self-confidence is combined with required skills (Bandura, 1993, pp. 118–119). Self-efficacy and the ability to manage emotions support learners during anxiety-provoking situations and could influence the amount of experienced anxiety during activities (Passiatore et al., 2019, p. 124). According to Mills et al. (2006), "anxiety serves as both a source and effect of self-efficacy beliefs". Previous findings have indicated that self-efficacy creates positive reactions during stressful situations in FL learning and performing (Chemers, Hu & Garcia, 2001, cited in Passiatore et al., 2019, p. 125). Findings

in a study by Mills et al. (2006) revealed that low amounts of self-efficacy hurt language anxiety

Regarding factors causing FLSA, previous findings (Burden, 2004) showed that a lack of competence and proficiency can typically lead to increased anxiety among learners, especially when it involves not understanding what the teacher says. Findings also indicated that misunderstandings often lead to learners criticising their language skills and experiencing negative emotions. Accordingly, the learners experienced similar emotions and a lack of confidence if they forgot the vocabulary they had learned before. Burden (2004, p. 15) stated that pair work received positive learning outcomes and created a more relaxed and predictable environment for learners. Pair work allowed learners to experiment with a new language and reduced comparison with more competent others. Another result from this study suggested that teachers should not encourage competition but should rather let the learners reach a common goal through collaboration and interaction. Findings imply that learners experienced increased motivation when they had the opportunity to support and scaffold each other during activities (Burden, 2004, p. 16). Mak (2011) revised an FL anxiety Likert scale to examine factors that influence FLSA among 313 first-year university students. Findings revealed that learners tend to compare themselves to others and worry about classmates having higher proficiency in English than themselves. This is supported by Wörde (2003) who found that native speakers or learners speaking the FL fluently could contribute to developing FLSA among learners. It was also discovered that FLSA is provoked when learners do not understand the teacher's intention or correction. In addition, findings expressed that FLSA is related to fear of negative evaluation during oral activities or performances, a hypothesis addressed in several prior studies (Akkakoson, 2016; He, 2013; Horwitz et al., 1986; Mak, 2011; Riasati, 2018).

Some studies aimed attention to suggested teaching strategies that can potentially support teachers in facilitating an EFL classroom that reduces FLSA. Numerous suggested teaching strategies could be incorporated into EFL classrooms to facilitate a low-anxiety classroom environment. For learners to engage in oral communication and be responsive to the competent other, the teacher needs to create a positive and low-anxiety atmosphere within the classroom (Drew & Sørheim, 2016, p. 58). Crookall and Oxford (1991, p. 142) suggested that the teacher can make the atmosphere more relaxed by acting as a role model. This includes being friendly and warm through communication, positive feedback, and recognition. According to Drew and Sørheim (2016, p. 58), the teacher should contribute to making the FL natural for the learners by speaking English most of the time. Even though it is known that Norwegian learners are

exposed to the English language to a high degree, the teacher should facilitate oral interaction and collaboration and assist them in gaining input from competent others (Drew & Sørheim, 2016, p. 77). Social interaction in an FL classroom plays an important role in language development, especially when enhancing oral skills (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Drew & Sørheim, 2016, p. 49). In a learning situation, this sociocultural approach removes the focus from assessing learners by what they manage to master on their own, to aiming at what the learners can accomplish when being scaffolded by more skilled others (Cameron, 2001, p. 6).

Previous studies (Brooks & Wilson, 2015; Hanifa, 2018) argued that being provided with an opportunity to prepare oneself before an FL-speaking situation is favourable for language learners as a means to reduce unnecessary negative emotions and reactions in an anxiety-provoking situation. However, when learners were given time to think before responding, results (Mak, 2011) revealed reduced FLSA in the classroom. Another suggestion included changing the pattern from learner-teacher communication to learner-learner communication (Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi 2022; Azarfam & Baki, 2012; Crookall & Oxford, 1991). Instead of giving a learner the whole class's attention by calling them out unprepared in front of everyone, the focus can be changed to communication in pair work, games, or small groups. This is supported by Ormrod (2011, p. 436) who stated that "social interactions in learner-learner and teacher-learner situations can contribute to better learning due to how learners must cognitively organise thoughts into words to communicate their intended meaning and discover for themselves knowledge breaches and more efficient resolutions". This could generate more active learning and let learners speak more freely. The purpose would then be to make oneself understood and understand others, focusing on mistakes and errors. Changing this type of approach refers to "learners then become more concerned with trying to communicate their viewpoint than with avoiding public humiliation, saving face, or impressing the teacher with the ability to parrot "correct" answers" (Crookall & Oxford, 1991, p. 142).

Mouhoubi-Messadh and Khaldi (2022) collected qualitative data through interviews with 16 EFL undergraduates to investigate pedagogical methods for reducing FLSA among learners. The main findings suggested that basing oral activities on familiar topics and letting learners suggest and contribute to activity design can reduce unnecessary FLSA and unwillingness to speak. This is supported by prior research (Bashori et al., 2021; He, 2013; Riasati, 2018) whose findings indicated that interest in the topic had a higher chance of reducing FLSA. These findings showed that if the participants are interested or familiar with the topic, they are more likely to engage in speaking activities.

Passiatore et al. (2019) conducted a study that aimed to investigate if singing as a teaching strategy had an impact on anxiety, self-efficacy, and performance within FL learning. Their studies involved six high school classes. Their findings implied that using songs as a teaching tool could reduce FLSA and increase self-efficacy while improving proficiency in English. Songs were also found to function as an engaging and motivating teaching method due to improved interest in learning an FL through topics and lyrics they identify with, as well as the teacher being able to create a better learning environment (Passiatore et al., 2019, p. 133-134).

Scaffolding is closely connected with routines, which according to Cameron (2001, p. 9) are "features of events that allow scaffolding to take place and combine the security of the familiar with the excitement of the new". Routines are important to create opportunities for the learners' ZPD to increase. At the same time routines can contribute to predictability in the classroom and let learners be familiar with intentions (Cameron, 2001, p. 10). Prior findings (Crookall & Oxford, 1991; Horwitz et al., 1986; Ormrod, 2011) implied that communication disruptions and experiencing a lack of control can be reduced by establishing a framework for routines and regular patterns because it allows learners to concentrate on the activity at hand. Accordingly, this could result in a more relaxed learning environment. In other words, routines let learners focus on language learning instead of worrying about intentions or not being able to anticipate coming events.

Recently, researchers have investigated the connection between technology incorporated in language learning and pedagogy (Li, 2008, cited in Li, 2020, p. 5) and discussed whether technology and digital tools contribute to reduced FLSA among learners. Bashori et al. (2021) investigated if technology could positively impact language learning and lower FLSA. They used Automatic Speech Recognition as a tool for their research. This technology allows the learner to communicate orally with a computer. Results indicate that among 232 secondary school learners, 77% of the learners reported that these digital tools reduced their FLSA compared to interacting in English with teachers or friends. The results confirmed that technology-enhanced tools positively affect learners' vocabulary by increasing language enjoyment and reducing FLSA. Through a selection of Likert scales among 475 college students, Punyanunt-Carter et al. (2017) found that digital tools, such as Internet, Snapchat, and social media, provide alternative communication methods beneficial for learners with FLSA, more specifically communication apprehension.

In summary, prior findings stressed the importance of recognising FLSA among learners before being able to reduce this phenomenon. When teachers identify learners' needs, they can scaffold and support them. This section includes factors that can contribute to increased FLSA, such as lack of proficiency, misunderstandings, competition and comparison with highly proficient peers or native-speaker classmates, low motivation and self-efficacy, and fear of negative evaluation. Previous research provided suggested teaching strategies for establishing a low-anxiety classroom environment by incorporating scaffolding through digital tools, routines, scaffolding, singing, topics, social interaction, and communication.

3. Methodology

This chapter covers the methodology of this study through different stages. A qualitative data collection method has been employed which included observing three 7th grade teachers and conducting in-depth interviews with them. This method has been chosen to explore ways of preventing, recognising, and reducing FLSA, not to create an overview of FLSA occurrence among learners. Most previous studies examine quantitatively the occurrence of FLSA among learners. These are good second-hand sources to use as the foundation for a qualitative analysis of FLSA. According to Kovac (2023, p. 50), qualitative research involves analysing words or observations with a focus on studying nuances and subjective experiences. A qualitative study will uncover more detailed information when investigating teachers' perspectives and practices than a quantitative analysis can. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 349) state that "interviews enable participants […] to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view". As the first research question involves investigating teachers' perceptions of FLSA, conducting interviews was considered a suitable method. The second question reviews reported practice methods. Therefore, a combination of interviews and observation is best fitted to obtain relevant data.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety in the English subject in the Norwegian 7th grade EFL Classroom?

2. What are teachers' (reported) practices to prevent and reduce foreign language speaking anxiety in the Norwegian 7th grade EFL Classroom?

3.1 Participants

Three teachers were interviewed. To maintain anonymity, they were referred to as Teachers A, B, and C. The pronoun "they" was used throughout the study to not reveal the participants' genders. There were three main criteria for choosing participants for this study. They had to teach a current 7th grade class in English when the data collection took place. After year 7, their learners' English-speaking skills should be represented at level A2 in the CEFR scale. The CEFR scale involves six levels of proficiency, where A2 is the second level and is described as a basic user of English (Council of Europe, 2020). It was thus considered essential for this study that the participants had relevant qualifications to teach English, such as 60 study points. The last criterion was that the participants had to have been teaching for at least 10 years. As

the focus of this analysis is on perceptions and practices, it was crucial that the participants had teaching experience and were not recent graduates. None of the participants work at the same school.

Finding participants was a time-consuming process. It started with contacting the heads of the 7th grade departments at nearby schools via e-mail. The e-mail (see Appendix A) contained short information about the researcher's master's thesis and research project. The e-mail also included the total number of participants, the competence needed, and the duration of the interview and observation period. They were informed that the project provided complete anonymity for both the participants and the schools. However, this approach got few responses and no participants that met the three criteria relevant to this study. Hence, the next best option was to contact teacher acquaintances, such as friends, family, and practice teachers. They were asked to invite colleagues to participate in this study or participate themselves if they were teaching English in 7th grade. This method succeeded. In a short time, it provided three participants who agreed to partake in both interviews and observations. This served as a convenience sample, which indicates that the choice of participants was based on finding available teachers in nearby or familiar areas due to accessibility (Cohen et al., 2007, pp. 113–114). No family members participated in the study.

Each participant received a consent form (Appendix B) before the data collection. The consent form included a brief description of this project, its purpose, the researcher's and participants' responsibilities, and the different aspects of participating. Additionally, it informed them of their rights as participants and provided the contact information of the researcher, their supervisor, the data protection officer, and the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT). Below, a short description of each participating teacher is provided. Table 1 summarises the relevant information about the three teachers.

Teacher A had been teaching for approximately 16 years. They were initially educated as a preschool teacher but had further education in specialised pedagogics. They were taking a master's degree in English when this study was conducted. Teacher A reported having taught English in every grade of primary school. When the data collection took place, they taught a class with few orally active learners. In the contemporary year, teacher A taught 3rd and 7th grade in English and had been teaching the 7th graders since they started 6th grade about 1.5 years ago.

Teacher B began working as a teacher in 2008 and had a degree as an adjunct with additional specialised education in History and English subjects. They had 120 study points in English. Teacher B had most of their experience teaching the 4th to 7th grades. They had been teaching the 7th grade in which the observation took place for about half a year.

Teacher C had nearly 20 years of teaching experience. In addition to their education, they had specialisation in several subjects, including 60 study points in English. They usually taught 5th to 7th grade but had experience teaching both younger and older learners. When the data collection was conducted, they taught two 7th grade classes in English.

Table 1 – Summary of relevant information about the participants of the study

Participant	Relevant education	Teaching experience	Most teaching experience	Currently teaching English
Teacher A	Pre-school + special pedagogy + master's degree in English	16 years	1st to 7th grade	7th and 3rd grade
Teacher B	Adjunct with additional education + English (120p)	15 years	4th to 7th grade	Two 7th grades
Teacher C	Adjunct with additional education + English (60p)	20 years	5th to 7th grade	Two 7th grades

3.2 Data collection methods

To answer the two chosen research questions, it was decided to explore teachers' perspectives and practices through a qualitative data collection method involving observations and semi-structured interviews. Collecting data involved observing each teacher during one English lesson and conducting a follow-up interview. The process of observation and interview is elaborated in the following sections, including the data collection procedures.

3.2.1 Observation

When conducting research, observation tends to be directly or indirectly involved (Greig et al., 2013, p. 148). Observing a situation is crucial when developing our understanding of people, and classroom observation can enrich the understanding of teachers' perspectives. To keep a study authentic, trustworthy, and valid, it is essential to avoid relying entirely on indirect sources (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 396). In this study, classroom observations and interviews with teachers function as direct sources, while previous quantitative studies will operate as second-

hand sources. Greig et al. (2013, p. 153) present four approaches to structured observation: the target participant method, time sampling, event sampling, and the checklist method. The target participant method involves recording an activity performed by a chosen participant through time and task schedules. However, this method focuses on analysing at a micro level, making it easier to ignore essential data. Time sampling is observing participants by recording their behaviour at specific periods. Event sampling records occurrences of pre-chosen events and collects when, for how long, and how often they happen. The checklist method provides a list of situations and actions expected to occur during the observation with checkpoints and a space for additional comments. Even though Greig et al. (2013) focus on research on children, the different observation approaches also apply to research with adults and teachers. The checklist method was utilised in this study when collecting data from classroom observation.

The present study employed semi-structured classroom observation, with the researcher not participating in the lesson because this research had no intention of interfering with the teaching itself. "Observational techniques divide mainly into *participant* and *structured* observation" (Greig et al., 2013, p. 148). Participant observation involves the researcher participating or contributing to the research group. In a structured observation, the researcher collects data by watching and using a more detached way of gathering information (Greig et al., 2013, p. 148). Due to the aim of authentically examining teaching strategies in EFL classrooms, the utilisation of participant observation would pose challenges to the study's overall reliability and quality. Thus, the most appropriate step was not participating in the lesson but observing the situation. Some learners find it invasive when unfamiliar visitors enter the classroom, even when they are not the target of the study. As this study focused on teachers' practices and not on specific learners with FLSA, there was no need to communicate with or collect personal data about any learners.

However, there are certain drawbacks to the use of observation, especially when it comes to observing during a short period. It can be challenging to distinguish between recurring patterns and one-time occurrences. When observing, researchers should be aware of this issue and attempt to provide an open-minded and objective perspective on every situation instead of focusing on specific happenings (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 404). Observation does not provide explanations or reflections but creates an overview of the situation. Therefore, in this study, conducting interviews after observation was seen as essential to retrieve additional information about the teaching strategies recently used. This entails that the observation occurred before

the interviews to avoid influencing participants to change their planned teaching methods because of the present study. Moreover, classroom observations provide the context of reported practices and illustrate teaching strategies. When conducting a study, researchers need to differentiate between the evaluation of teaching methods and the collection of data to achieve the research aims (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 12). The purpose of data collection through observation was to retrieve information about specific teaching strategies, not to assess someone's educational approaches.

The observation sheet constructed for the present study contained five columns named *categories*, *subcategories*, *checklist*, *comments*, and *notes for the interview*. A total of three observation sheets were used, one for each participant. The observation sheet is provided in full in Appendix C. A *checklist* was employed as a practical method to create a brief overview of the teaching strategies employed during the observed lesson. In addition, the checklist's purpose was also to support the data analysis. The *comments* section was created to provide short elaborations if needed for the data analysis. This applied to *notes for the interview* as well. They were essential because these summaries and notes would establish a basis for the interview questions regarding the teachers' practices. The researcher saw it as relevant to divide the comments sections and notes for the interview columns because each served a different purpose. The comments provided opportunities to supplement the data analysis of observation while notes for the interview were directed towards creating interview questions for the teachers. The specific elements included in *categories* and *subcategories* are elaborated in detail in the following paragraphs.

The column containing categories was divided into six rows named *description*, *activity setup, interaction, topic, scaffolding,* and *additional comments*. These were chosen as focus points when investigating strategies for reducing and preventing FLSA in practice. The two rows of *description* and *additional comments* were added to make room for writing a more detailed activity description and other relevant information, such as how the learners were seated during group work and a brief lesson overview. These categories were included based on the findings of previous research. Namely, learners have reported that activity setup and pedagogical practices impact FLSA (Wörde, 2003, p. 7). In the observation sheet, each category (*activity setup, interaction, topic,* and *scaffolding*) except for *description* and *additional comments*, included four to six subcategories to keep the data collection focused on the research questions.

These subcategories were based on earlier investigations regarding FLSA and are provided in detail below.

The row named *activity setup* included six subcategories. The different subcategories were "the activity involves individual work", "the activity involves group work", "the activity involves using digital tools", "the activity provides authentic dialogue", "the activity focuses on practising learned language", and "the activity focuses on producing new language". This row aimed to create a complete picture of the observed lesson related to oral activities. The first two subcategories were based on whether the activity involved individual or group work. Contemporary findings indicate that learners are more orally active in smaller groups or pair work than in larger groups (Riasati, 2018). This is supported by Mouhoubi-Messadh and Khaldi (2022, p. 30), who recommend forming groups of three to four learners during cooperative activities. Further, their findings suggest that group work decreases anxiety because it can be experienced as motivating and supporting to interact in small groups. The next two subcategories within the *activity setup* category focused on whether the activity employs digital tools or authentic language use in audio, films, or other resources. Previous findings display that using digital speech tools in FL learning had a profound effect on reducing FLSA among EFL learners (Bashori et al., 2021). They also found it engaging to participate in activities with digital recourses. The two last subcategories recorded whether the activity focuses on producing new or learned language.

As FLSA involves oral communication, factors regarding *interaction* were seen as essential to include in the collected data. This topic section had five subcategories: "the activity provides active feedback", "the activity provides learner-learner communication", "the activity provides teacher-learner communication", "the learners speak in front of the whole class", and "the learners discuss in groups/pairs before answering questions". The first category focused on active feedback during the activity. This included teachers or other learners, which was specified in the comments section. According to Mouhoubi-Messadh and Khaldi (2022, p. 29), feedback and responses with scaffolding intention can reduce FLSA and positively contribute to self-confidence among learners. The two following subcategories included learner-to-learner communication and teacher-to-learner communication. By making communicating a message the aim of the activity, learners will focus less on performance (Crookall & Oxford, 1991, p. 142). Mouhoubi-Messadh and Khaldi (2022, p. 24) argue that "in language classrooms, students are required to perform orally in front of the whole class", and that during language

learning, learners need to be approachable and open-minded to other language learners. Even though speaking in front of a peer is good practice, this is a typical anxiety-inducing situation, especially if they experience being evaluated. This is grounded in fear of being the focus of attention, which they find can lead to a higher possibility of the peers of teachers noticing their errors and lack of proficiency (Wörde, 2003, p. 5). Hence, the two last subcategories were grounded in speaking in front of the whole class and whether the topics were discussed in small groups beforehand.

The third category was named *topic* because prior findings indicate that incorporating interesting or familiar topics within oral activities could reduce FLSA (Bashori et al., 2021; He, 2013; Riasati, 2018). Hence, it was seen as relevant to focus on the topic during observation. This category included four subcategories called "the teacher introduces a new topic", "they work on a familiar topic", "the topic focuses on culture or literature", and "the topic focuses on language learning". The reason for this is that "the less familiar the situation, the greater the situational apprehension. When topics are unfamiliar, students may feel anxiety and low self-confidence" (Daly, 1991, cited in Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi, 2022, p. 24). This entails that introducing a new topic or working on familiar topics could impact FLSA and oral engagement during classroom activities, and findings argue that learners experience less anxiety when working on familiar topics (Bashori et al., 2021). The observation sheet included two subcategories about familiar and new topics to consider the possible impact of this factor. The last two subcategories were added to observe if the topic involves culture, literature, or language learning, which implies whether there was a direct focus on practising oral or writing skills.

The last topic section included *scaffolding* strategies and consisted of six subcategories: "the teacher provides vocabulary", "the teacher provides sentence structures or phrases", "the teacher mainly speaks English", "the teacher mainly speaks Norwegian", "the learners mainly speak English", and "the learners mainly speak Norwegian". Scaffolding involves approaching and supporting learners' needs to help them expand their ZPD (Cameron, 2001, p. 8-9). In agreement with this, the researcher decided to observe linguistic input such as providing vocabulary, sentence structures, or phrases to scaffold learners' proficiency. By scaffolding learners through speaking English and providing them with language input, they get "accustomed to having the teacher both provide the necessary vocabulary for speaking tasks and practising that vocabulary in meaningful contexts for more classroom interaction"

(Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi, 2022, p. 29). It was predicted that the participants would balance between speaking both English and Norwegian in the classroom. Observing scaffolding through language use was divided into two subcategories, one for providing help in English and one for providing help in Norwegian. This was believed to be a field of interest for the teachers to elaborate on in interviews. According to Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 126), learners mishear sounds or struggle to understand instructions in an FL because the level of FLSA could interfere with cognition. Following this, language use among the teacher and learners, when instructions were given during the lesson, was investigated. The two last subcategories focused on whether the learners interacted in Norwegian or English with each other and with the teacher.

3.2.2 Interviews

The use of interviews can be traced back to ancient times, and interviews are the most common data collection method used in qualitative studies (Rolland et al., 2020, p. 279). Collecting data through interviews allows participants to discuss and reflect on situations from their point of view (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 349). Further, Cohen et al. (2007, p. 349) state that "the order of the interview may be controlled while still giving space for spontaneity, and the interviewer can press not only for complete answers but also for responses about complex and deep issues". Regarding the current study, this qualitative data collection method allows the participants to express their thoughts and let researchers and readers understand the participants' thinking. Therefore, interviews in the present study functioned as an opportunity for thoughts and reflections to be expressed after the conducted observation.

The present study's attempt to answer the two research questions led to choosing semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview involves open-ended questions to facilitate opportunities for participants to contribute to answering the research questions or given intentions (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 97). However, how the researcher acts during an interview could influence the collected data. An interview situation functions as a dialogue and the research needs to be able to adjust itself and collaborate with the participant without leading the answers in one direction (Kovac, 2023, p. 184). It was indeed important to assure that questions included in the interview guide were open-ended and allowed the participants to freely express themselves although the researcher aimed to collect data that would answer the research questions. The semi-structured interviews were believed to facilitate opportunities for the participants to elaborate on data collected from the observation and provide important

insights into teachers' perceptions and practices related to FLSA in the 7th grade EFL classroom. The researcher concluded that observation in combination with semi-structured interviews was an appropriate data collection method considering the circumstances around the study's limited time and scope. Before conducting the interviews, a semi-structured interview guide was prepared. The interview guide is fully provided in Norwegian (see Appendix D) and in English (see Appendix E). The guide is described in detail in the following paragraphs.

The interview guide below was divided into three main sections and consisted of 24 questions in total distributed across the sections. The questions were based on theoretical concepts related to FLSA, previous research, the observation sheet, and relevance to the research questions. As the interviews involved a semi-structured format, the researcher could modify small parts of the interview guide adapted to make the conversation more authentic, such as the sequence of questions, added questions, or changes of words (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 351). In other words, these questions guided the participant and researcher to continue having a relevant discussion on the current topic. As a result, all three interviews were performed slightly differently, with various questions asked about data collected from observation.

The first section included five questions and was the smallest part of the interview. These questions were *background questions*, which were conversation starters and provided relevant context around the participant. These questions allowed the participant to freely inform of their general teaching experience, classes they were currently teaching, and qualifications. This way, the participants could choose how much information they were comfortable sharing with the researcher. The second section was named *FLSA* and aimed to elicit answers related to the first research question about teachers' perceptions of FLSA in the 7th grade EFL classroom. The third section involved *teaching practice* and aimed to elicit data related to the second research question about teachers' reported practices and teaching strategies to prevent and reduce FLSA. Sections two and three are elaborated on in the two following paragraphs.

The second section involved 10 questions and aimed to investigate the participants' perceptions and reflections related to learners with FLSA. The first two questions involved participants' experience and how they recognised learners with FLSA. Even though there are limited results in studies about the direct effect anxiety has on language learning, most teachers have encountered learners with language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 126). Therefore, it was decided to encourage the participants of this study to elaborate on their experiences related to meeting learners with FLSA Due to the significant difference between learners with FLSA and

introverted learners, it was intended to ask the participants how they recognise the difference between FLSA and personality traits. The guide included one question about native speakers in the participants' current classroom because it was believed to be helpful to investigate factors influencing FLSA. Native speakers' presence in the classroom tends to increase the stress levels of learners with FLSA due to the fear of being compared or because the teacher treats learners differently based on proficiency level (Wörde, 2003, p. 5). The following question involved investigating if and how the participants talked about FLSA with their learners. The last four questions were based on teacher cognition related to reducing and preventing FLSA among EFL learners.

The third section involved teaching practice and was closely connected to the second research question. This section consisted of eight questions and a reminder to include occurred questions from observation. The section was divided into two parts, where one part included questions that were directly related to data collected from observation. The observational questions involved asking for aims and clarifications of the observed lesson. In contrast, the other part focused on the participants' reported practices in the classroom and their teaching strategies related to learners with FLSA. Questions written down during observations in *notes for the interview* were included in this section. Two examples of questions asked from the observation were "Why did you choose that kind of activity?" and "Have you developed specific routines to create predictability?". The second part included questions such as "During the years that you have taught English, have you developed any strategies for engaging learners with FLSA?" and "Were there any strategies that you tried, but did not work out for learners with FLSA speaking anxiety?". These were questions asked to retrieve specific information about strategies and intentions behind chosen activities.

Choosing which language to use during an interview should be carefully reflected upon, and for high-standard interviews, the optimal choice is usually the participant's native language (Enzenhofer & Resch, 2011). It was essential to conduct the interviews in Norwegian because the research questions focused on content, not language production. Interviewing in the participants' native language made an authentic conversation and changed the focus from language performance to reflection and discussion. As the interviews were meant to function as a conversation about FLSA in the EFL classroom, interviewing in an FL could cause language barriers and generate a stressful situation for both the researcher and the participant. It was beneficial to avoid problems that could cause misunderstandings or limit the

participant's range of vocabulary. As a result, it was decided that "snakkevegring" would function as the Norwegian term for "foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA)".

3.2.3 Data collection procedures

The data collection procedure took place at the beginning of January 2023, with one week between each school visit. The participants were contacted between September and November 2022. Some of the participants requested to read the interview guide in advance. Therefore, the researcher decided to share the interview questions with all three participants. The participants received the interview guide on the 22nd of December 2022. This allowed the participants to be prepared before the interviews were conducted and facilitated more reflected answers that could be beneficial for the present study. The teachers were informed about the observation through the consent form and communication via e-mail. It was requested beforehand to observe a lesson where the participants had planned at least one oral activity. The teachers were also informed about the aim of the study.

Collecting data through observation was done in three different 7th grade classes at separate schools, and each participant was observed once. The observation took place in one English lesson per participant. In this case, two lessons lasted 60 minutes, and one lesson lasted 45 minutes. The researcher arrived at the school 30 minutes before the English lesson started. This way, it was possible for the researcher to ask questions, as well as answer questions from the participants before entering the classroom. The participants ensured their learners were informed about the observation and knew they would not be the focus of the observation. None of the learners decided not to be present during observation. When the observation took place, 13 learners were present in Teacher A's classroom, and the learners were seated in pairs. Teacher B had 21 learners present who was seated alone, and Teacher C had 17 learners present. These learners were seated in groupings that varied between four and five learners at each table. See Table 2 for an overview of information related to observations made per teacher.

Table 2 – Data collection procedure of observation

Participant	Learners present	Length of lesson	Seating structure
Teacher A	13	60 minutes	In pairs
Teacher B	21	60 minutes	Alone
Teacher C	17	45 minutes	4-5 in groups

The interviews were conducted individually shortly after the observation, with each participant at their workplace. This was to prevent participation in the study from being more time-consuming than necessary. Additionally, conducting the interviews shortly after the observation helped both participant and researcher to have a more detailed memory of the lesson. One interview occurred directly after the observation, while the two other interviews occurred within four hours after the observations. The interviews were planned to last about 30 minutes each and varied between 30 and 45 minutes. Every interview was audio recorded through two devices: A phone that used the Nettskjema Diktafon App and an audio recorder. The interviews were transcribed manually afterwards. Audio recording ensures more accurate reporting and valid data analysis than written notes. The researcher did not include hesitations and pauses in the transcriptions because they were not relevant in the attempt of answering the selected research questions. The entire transcription resulted in 11955 words.

3.3 Data analysis methods

Specific data analysis methods were used to analyse the collected data from observation and interviews. Qualitative data analysis involves dividing collected data into sections to review and find the essence behind the discoveries (Savin-Baden & Major, 2022, p. 434). In other terms, qualitative data analysis involves "organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities." (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 461). Data analysis is a procedure that begins at the stage where the researcher decides on research questions and continues through the search for theoretical background and is present during data collection (Savin-Baden & Major, 2022, p. 447). Due to the choice of qualitative data collection methods, qualitative analysis methods were seen as fit to organise and investigate results because of the inductive process that qualitative data analysis involves. An inductive method was initially used to generalise based on assumptions after studying a collection of participants (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 4). Yet, the researcher was aware of how theoretical background and previous research could influence current data analysis. Nevertheless, the inductive method has evolved into a process based on "moving from small units of information to uncover the larger picture that emerges from them" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2022, p. 435). Moreover, Savin-Baden and Major (2022) present in their chapter five elementary analytic methods, among them the *constant comparison*. This method is one of the most applied data analysis methods. It involves comparing findings in data, categories, and people's perceptions and practices with each other to create a theory or hypothesis (Savin-Baden & Major, 2022, pp. 436–437). This was the main

analysis method for this study because data retrieved from the interviews and observations were organised by Teachers A, B, and C, and their perceptions, reported practices and classroom practices were recorded. As a result, this created a foundation for comparing preceding research and the research questions to findings in analysis to find suggestions.

This qualitative data analysis involved identifying codes and within these finding subcodes before organising them into broader themes. Data retrieved from the interviews with the participants were analysed by using the software program NVivo. It was decided to use NVivo as a digital tool to code the data. NVivo is an analysis tool for qualitative research programmed to code texts, audio recordings or visuals.

When analysing the transcriptions, three main codes emerged in each interview. These codes were named "how teachers recognise FLSA", "factors influencing FLSA", and "classroom practices". Although there were other significant codes uncovered, these three were decided to have the greatest potential to answer the research questions. A total of 16 subcodes were discovered within the three codes. The code named "how teachers recognise FLSA" included two subcodes named *behavioural patterns* and *body language*. The second code "factors influencing FLSA" consisted of four subcodes such as *the importance of having professionally qualified teachers*, *classroom environment*, *relations between teacher and learner*, and *the presence of native speakers or learners speaking fluently*. The last code "classroom practices" had 11 subcodes e.g., *cooperation with parents* and *reading aloud*. Codes and subcodes retrieved from the analysed interviews are listed below in Table 3. Due to long subcode names, Table 3 includes shortened titles.

Table 3 – Codes and subcodes from analysed interview data

Codes	Subcodes
How teachers recognise FLSA	Body language
	Change in behaviour
Factors influencing FLSA	Qualified teachers
	Classroom environment
	Relations in the classroom
	Native speakers
Classroom practices	Cooperation with parents
	Practicing the use of voice
	Reading aloud
	Routines
	Group work
	Songs
	Games
	Topics
	Digital tools
	Presentations

It was decided to use four out of the six categories from the observation sheet (see Appendix C) when analysing collected data from observations. These categories were *activity setup*, *interaction*, *topic*, and *scaffolding*, in addition to a short description of each observed lesson. Each category included the subcategories from the observation sheet and a checklist that merged the three observation sheets after data collection. This allowed for comparisons between the three teachers. The categories, subcategories and checklist were organised into a table to provide a better overview of the analysed observations regarding each participating teacher, see Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Checklist, categories and subcategories used to analyse observation data

Categories	Subcategories	Checklist per teacher		
		A	B	C
Activity setup	The activity involves individual work			
	The activity involves group work			
	The activity involves using digital tools			
	The activity provides authentic dialogue (film, audio, TV etc)			
	The activity focuses on practising learned language			
	The activity focuses on producing a new language			
Interaction	The activity provides active feedback (from learners/teachers)			
	The activity provides learner-learner communication			
	The activity provides teacher-learner communication			
	The learners speak in front of the whole class			
	The learners discuss in groups/pairs before answering questions			
Topic	The teacher introduces a new topic			
	They work on a familiar topic			
	The topic focuses on culture or literature			
	The topic focuses on language learning (oral skills)			
Scaffolding	The teacher provides vocabulary			
	The teacher provides sentence structures or phrases			
	The teacher mainly speaks English			
	The teacher mainly speaks Norwegian			
	The learners mainly speak English			
	The learners mainly speak Norwegian			

3.4 Quality of this study

Certain quality criteria have been endorsed in this study. As this study involves a qualitative approach, it was essential to focus on qualitative quality in research. Reliability and validity are two concepts traditionally used in quantitative research. The terms are defined as "*reliable* describes an instrument; *valid* describes a way of reasoning" (Fendler, 2016). Validity is "concerned with whether a study appears, on its face, to be reasonable and appropriate" (Golafshani, 2003, cited in Tracy, 2010, p. 841). Traditionally, validity used to rely on proving that the tools used in research served the aims of the study (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 133). Quality in qualitative research is based on certain validity and reliability concepts; however, it also relies on a separate set of quality criteria, such as the ones presented in Tracy (2010), followed in the current study. Tracy (2010) presents eight criteria: worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence. These criteria are elaborated on and exemplified below.

According to Tracy (2010, p. 840-849), there are eight criteria for quality in qualitative studies. The first criterion is named *worthy topic* and implies that "good qualitative research is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative" (Tracy, 2010, p. 840). To make this study worthy, it needed to include a topic which discusses modern issues relevant to the present-day EFL classroom in Norway. To verify quality through *rich rigour* signifies that the data collection method and theoretical background are varied and well-suited to support the study in a complex and profound manner. This denotes that the procedures of this study should include the appropriate use of observations and interviews for the aims of this study. *Sincerity* "can be achieved through self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing" (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). This implies that every aspect of this thesis should be honestly portrayed, including intentions, errors, and weaknesses. *Credibility* in qualitative research involves that the researcher is trusted to make decisions based on knowledge about the specific topic related to prior research. The criterion *resonance* refers to researchers' ability to "engage in practices that will promote empathy, identification, and reverberation of the research by readers who have no direct experience with the topic discussed" (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). Accordingly, investigating experienced teachers' strategies could improve teaching practice in Norwegian schools beyond the researcher's own EFL classrooms. Studies should provide a *significant contribution* to the research field through new inputs related to practice or increased knowledge about the researched topic. In other words, a study of quality should attempt to fill gaps in current knowledge. Certain *ethical* aspects should be considered when doing research, such as

participant consent, securing personal information, drawing conclusions based on the data, mutual respect between participant and researcher, and avoiding misunderstandings by reporting on research clearly and transparently. The last criterion involves *meaningful coherence* in research, indicating that the study should include research questions that aim to link previous research and literature to present findings and methods (Tracy, 2010, pp. 840–849). Table 5 provides an overview of the present study's attempt to meet these eight criteria.

The present study attempts to meet the criterion involving rich rigour by relying on more than one data collection source and by finding varied literature and prior examinations as a theoretical framework. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 144) state that choosing data collection methods that can suitably answer the research questions will support the validity of the study. In addition, it was seen as appropriate to examine and include prior studies that focused on FLSA but used other data collection approaches and methods than the present study. Due to few pertinent studies investigating teachers' perceptions and practices, incorporating research that examines similar issues from the perspectives of learners contributed to enriching the study's rich rigour. When planning the observation, it was important to make sure that the research would not affect or interfere with the classroom situation. It was also central to ensure that the interviews were conducted after the observation because of authenticity. As a result of this, the collected data was more reliable and closely tied to real-life situations. According to Kovac (2023, p. 184), the researcher's ability to ask precise questions, and understand and respond to the participant during an interview situation could increase the quality of the study. The interview guide was developed based on previous research and literature to attempt to answer the research questions. Ethical considerations were seen as one of the most significant criteria regarding Tracy's (2010) eight quality criteria and are elaborated on in depth in the following section.

Table 5 – The steps taken in this study to meet Tracy's (2010) qualitative quality criteria

Quality criteria	This study's attempts to achieve qualitative quality
Worthy topic	Speaking anxiety is a modern and relevant topic in today's Norwegian EFL classrooms
	A focus on teacher cognition and teaching strategies provides a complementary perspective to most of the studies focusing on learner perspectives
Rich rigour	The present study relies on two data collection sources in addition to reviewing previous research
	The interview guide is detailed and focused on in-depth reflections
	The observation sheet includes specific categories related to teaching methods and to supplement data collected from interviews
	The present study is based on varied prior research that includes qualitative and quantitative investigations of teachers' and learners' perceptions
Sincerity	The present study includes honest details about limitations and research that was not conducted but is suggested for future researchers to investigate
	The study's introduction and conclusion are personal, and state the aims and intentions of the study, as well as the researcher's motivation for conducting it
Credibility	The present study attempts to include rich descriptions and details to encourage reflections and personal conclusions
	The present study and its findings conform with previous research
	Findings from observation align with findings from the interviews
Resonance	Fellow English teachers in Norway who read the present thesis might be inspired to study FLSA
	The current study attempts to transfer teachers' experience with speaking anxiety among learners to specific teaching strategies and create awareness
	The current study attempts to create a willingness to practice suggested teaching strategies
Significant contribution	There has been conducted little research on strategies for recognising and reducing FLSA among young learners
	There are few Scandinavian studies investigating FLSA
	There exist few to no studies regarding Norwegian teachers' perceptions of speaking anxiety
Ethics	The researcher has preserved the participants' anonymity and personal information and deleted material that contained personal data
	The researcher respects the participants and their wishes, along with collecting data from a learning perspective and not an evaluative perspective
	The researcher has obtained knowledge about precautions and considerations involved in human participants
	The present study attempts to counteract misunderstandings and open interpretations through detailed descriptions, coherent goals, and open suggestions
Meaningful coherence	The present study attempts to answer the established research questions that have been addressed in international research
	The present study connects present findings to previous research and research questions

3.5 Ethical considerations

There are specific ethical factors to consider before conducting research in general. Before the observation and interviews could be initiated, SIKT approved an application for this research. SIKT must always be contacted when a study involves gathering personal information or human participants. This organisation examines whether this study meets the requirements of collecting personal data in research. When conducting a study that investigates teachers' perspectives and practices, participants might share personal attitudes when being interviewed or encounter difficult decisions in the classroom during observation. These factors require a particular focus on the anonymity of personal information to prevent any possibility of tracing the participants' workplace. Anonymisation is "to protect the research participants' identity and integrity" (NESH, 2021). In other words, the participant's personal information can be known when collecting data, but the connection between the person and the information needs to be untraceable. Material that contained personal data, such as names, locations or voices were deleted after data collection and transcribing were completed. When transcribing the interviews, personal data and other information that could cause recognition were never documented or written down.

According to The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH, 2021), voluntary and informed consent is central when conducting research with participants. Cohen et al., (2007, p. 52) state that "the principle of informed consent arises from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination". To retrieve informed consent before conducting this study, the potential participants received a consent form which "should make clear to participants why they are asked to participate, what type of data is being collected, how it will be useful, who will make use of the data, and for which purposes" (NESH, 2021). As this study includes classroom observations and interview recordings, it was essential to inform the participants about their rights to voluntary consent, which involves an agreement to participate in the study without limitations or pressure (NESH, 2021). The consent form is provided in full in Appendix B. The participants had the right to partake solely in either observation or interview. Learners that were present during the classroom observation did not need to be given a particular consent form as they were not observed in any way, nor did any collected data involve learners. This has been conferred with SIKT (2022) beforehand. It was essential to make every part aware of the purpose of this type of observation. As a result, the learners were informed about the observation and were allowed to not be present during the lesson.

When conducting a study that involves human participants, the researcher considered relational ethics as relevant to base the present study on. According to Tracy (2010, p. 847), "relational ethics involve an ethical self-consciousness in which researchers are mindful of their character, actions, and consequences on others". The current study attempted to attain mutual respect between the researcher and participants by addressing wishes and expectations. This way the participants could experience honesty and ask questions freely. Regarding ethical considerations to ensure the quality of the present study, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were handed the information in advance. The present thesis and transcribed results were shared with participants if requested.

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 134) argue that every researcher has their values and thoughts, which implies that it is not possible to be objective about the collected research data. It is important to highlight that data collected from observations were collected and analysed solely by the researcher, indicating that specific situations, strategies, and perspectives could involve bias or simply be unconsciously ignored. However, the present study attempts to provide detailed descriptions and direct quotations before giving interpretations.

4. Results

The current chapter introduces the results retrieved and analysed from data collection. The results are divided into two main parts, the first part concerning data collected from observations and the second part including analysis of interview data. To keep the results coherent and transparent, it was decided to examine observations made in each participant's lesson before proceeding to reflections from their interviews. Hence, the observation section is divided into data collected from Teachers A, B, and C's lessons. Each teacher's lesson is structured into four categories: *activity setup, interaction, topic,* and *scaffolding*. Interview data are presented through the codes that were relevant to the investigation. Inputs from the three teachers are integrated into these codes. The main codes are how teachers recognise FLSA, factors influencing FLSA, and teachers' classroom practices. Specific subcodes are included within each main code.

4.1 Observation

Results retrieved from observations are structured according to the categories included in the observation sheet. There is a short description of the lesson observed in each participant's classroom followed by the four categories: activity setup, interaction, topic, and scaffolding. The last category involving additional comments provides supplementary information from the observations. The checklist from the observation sheet is added in Table 6 to give a clear overview of the different categories, subcategories and observations made. The checklist uses the letters A, B, and C as abbreviations for Teachers A, B, and C.

All three teachers were asked about the aim of the observed lesson as a supplement to the observations. According to Teacher A, the lesson aimed to help the learners become more confident in reading aloud and become more proficient in English pronunciation. They stated that "you should be able to ask your learning partner for help if you don't know how to pronounce a word" and referred to working on improving the classroom environment and lowering the bar to ask a classmate for help. Teacher B reported that the lesson had two aims, first to test the learners' knowledge about Australia, a topic they had been working on for four weeks. The second aim "was about whether they can sit down and have a conversation and use the language as a tool to carry out the various activities. I also think that went very well". The focus was reportedly not to assess the learners but evaluate if their teaching showed results and if their teaching methods were effective. Teacher C stated that the lesson aimed to "use the language. They had to write down keywords, so they had some help about that, but retelling

text, is an important goal. Then it is good to have some notes that they choose themselves" and further referred to the importance of practising retelling stories with their own words.

Table 6 – Analysed observation data

Categories	Subcategories	Checklist		
Activity setup	The activity involves individual work	A	B	C
	The activity involves group work	A	B	C
	The activity involves using digital tools			
	The activity provides authentic dialogue (film, audio, TV etc)	A		
	The activity focuses on practising learned language	A	B	C
	The activity focuses on producing a new language	A		C
Interaction	The activity provides active feedback (from learners/teachers)	A	B	C
	The activity provides learner-learner communication	A	B	C
	The activity provides teacher-learner communication	A	B	C
	The learners speak in front of the whole class		B	C
	The learners discuss in groups/pairs before answering questions	A		C
Topic	The teacher introduces a new topic			
	They work on a familiar topic	A	B	C
	The topic focuses on culture or literature	A	B	C
	The topic focuses on language learning (oral skills)		B	C
Scaffolding	The teacher provides vocabulary		B	
	The teacher provides sentence structures or phrases	A		
	The teacher mainly speaks English	A	B	
	The teacher mainly speaks Norwegian			C
	The learners mainly speak English	A	B	
	The learners mainly speak Norwegian			C

4.1.1 Teacher A

Regarding context and lesson description, the observation took place in a 7th grade class where thirteen learners were present. The learners were seated in pairs, in which they were called learning partners. The lesson lasted 60 minutes and started with an introduction to the lesson plan. The lesson plan included a structured list of instructions in Norwegian, but Teacher A presented the lesson plan orally in English. The lesson started with Teacher A reading *The Hunger Games* aloud for the learners followed by learners reading their English homework aloud to each other in the seated pairs. They then proceeded to read their book of choice and make a book review where they wrote down what they liked about the book and why. Teacher A walked around and talked with each learner about their book. They asked questions and encouraged the learners to answer in English and then write down what they had answered. The lesson ended with telling each other what they had written down and talking about the books. Teacher A provided sentence starters to initiate speaking. The lesson ended with Teacher A starting a movie in English which they continued watching during their lunch break.

In terms of the category *activity setup*, Teacher A's lesson included subcategories such as individual work, pair work, authentic dialogue, and production of a new language. Regarding individual work, the learners read a self-chosen book and proceeded to write down their opinions toward the book. This functioned as a preparation for the pair work where they shared their thoughts and their written sentence with each other. The learners then produced a new language by communication and self-made sentences spontaneously. In addition, the learners read their English homework aloud to each other, practising learning the language they had read at home. The last subcategory involving authentic dialogue was provided through a movie in English that Teacher A initiated at the end of the lesson that continued to play while the learners ate food during their lunch break.

The second category named *interaction* involved the subcategories active feedback, learner-learner communication, teacher-learner communication, and discussion in pairs before answering questions. Concerning active feedback, Teacher A provided recognition to every learner for trying to read and motivated those who needed it to read one sentence at a time. During the discussion in pairs about their book review, one learner refused to speak. Teacher A proceeded to encourage and challenge the learner to first speak Norwegian before translating to English. The teacher then gave positive feedback and recognition for trying. Both the reading of homework and book review provided learner-learner communication and discussion in pairs before answering questions. The learners discussed which part to read and spoke to each other

about the book, resulting in being prepared to interact with Teacher A when being approached. Regarding teacher-learner communication, Teacher A moved actively throughout the whole lesson, interacting with every learner during the lesson about the book they had read.

Even though the category *topic* was the smallest category with only four subcategories, this was a category seen as interesting to investigate in the interviews and should be seen in context with the teachers' interviews. The observed activities mainly involved working on a familiar topic that focused on culture or literature. It emerged from the interview that Teacher A read aloud from a book, in this period *The Hunger Games*, at the beginning of every English lesson as a part of the routine. The book review was based on a self-chosen book in English that every learner worked with over time. In summary, the learners were not introduced to any new topics.

Regarding *scaffolding*, Teacher A provided sentence structures or phrases and both the teacher and learners mainly spoke English during the observed lesson. Teacher A moved actively throughout the whole lesson, interacting with every learner during the lesson. They listened to the learners during the homework read-aloud and helped those who needed it to pronounce words. One strategy the teacher used was to read one sentence aloud and then told the learner to repeat it. Another strategy used was to read a difficult word or sentence and then ask if the learner knew the answer, if not the teacher would translate with them. The teacher provided sentence structures to formulate sentences in English. Teacher A asked the pairs "What did you like about the book?" and then told the learners to say "I liked … because …" if needed. The teacher proceeded to help them formulate a sentence in English by letting them speak Norwegian first. Some learners elaborated on what they liked about the book in Norwegian and were encouraged by the teacher to tell their learning partner in English. Teacher A mainly spoke English in front of the whole and personally to learners. When being approached in English, most of the learners tried to answer back in English. The instructions at the beginning of the lesson were written in Norwegian, however, instructions that were provided before each activity were in English. Information and input from Teacher A were spoken in English. Even though some learners whispered in Norwegian to each other, most of them spoke English during the oral activities.

4.1.2 Teacher B

Teacher B's classroom had 21 learners present during the observation. The learners were seated individually in the classroom. This English lesson was planned to be 60 minutes, but the observation lasted 90 minutes due to 30 minutes of reading and start-up incorporated into the

English lesson. According to the teacher, the whole school starts every day with 15 minutes of reading no matter subject. The lesson plan, including dates and plans for the day, was written on the board in English before the learners entered the classroom and Teacher B started the lesson by informing about the lesson's content. The observed lesson was divided into five parts, with the first part focusing on reading comprehension. Teacher B went through the day before moving on to an activity involving the English spelling relay race. During this activity, the learners were divided into teams and handed several cards with familiar words used during the last period. One by one they ran through the hallway to a teammate and spelt a word, if they got it correctly, they switched, and another teammate spelt a new word. The teams competed against each other to finish first, but Teacher B stopped the activity when two teams remained, and later explained the avoidance of a losing team. The fourth part of the lesson consisted of a pair activity where the learners searched around in the hallways to find answers to the questions about Australia. When they had answered all the questions, they moved on to the last part which included board games. The board game included irregular verbs and Australia-related topics. The lesson was based on an overall competition where they lost points if they spoke Norwegian during the lesson. This resulted in the learners reminding each other to speak English during activities. The lesson ended with Teacher B asking which questions they thought were difficult or easy and throwing a ball to the speaker. This created engagement and many learners wanted to receive the ball and speak.

The first category *activity setup* involved several subcategories. The activities facilitated individual work, group/pair work, and practised learned language. The main individual work appeared at the beginning of the lesson when the learners had an individual reading session. Due to the active learning, three activities involved group work. The spelling relay race was based on teams and communication, while the board games consisted of groups interacting together. The learners were divided into pairs when searching for questions about Australia in the hallway, resulting in collaboration and discussion to find the answer. The observed lesson had an overall focus on practising the learned language because they based the lesson on practising previous knowledge and did not introduce a new language.

Interaction played an important part in the observed activities; among them were subcategories such as active feedback provided, learner-learner and teacher-learner communication, and the learners spoke in front of the class at the end of the lesson. The activities facilitated the teacher and learners to provide active feedback, with a focus on the spelling relay race where they told each other if they got the spelling correct or if not, what they needed to improve to get it right.

Due to a large amount of interaction and collaboration in groups or pairs, the activities provided learner-learner communication. Certain activities such as throwing the ball and the paired task provided teacher-learner communication because the learners were interacting directly with Teacher B in either conversation or to reassure that they had answered correctly. When the learners received the ball at the end of the lesson, they spoke while the other learners listened, practising speaking in front of the class.

Teacher B did not introduce any new topics during the observed lesson, except when informing about the forthcoming *topic* they would start working on the following period. The learners had been working on learning about Australia and irregular verbs for the past three to four weeks before the observed lesson and kept working on these familiar topics during data collection. Regarding the subcategories, Teacher B provided activities that focused on familiar topics, culture, and language learning related to oral skills. The board game activity included irregular verbs and Australia-related questions and themes. Questions throughout the lesson included cultural elements about Australia, as well as interesting and unique elements like animals and fun facts. In addition, the learners practised irregular verbs and oral skills through discussions.

In terms of the category *scaffolding*, Teacher B provided vocabulary and mainly spoke English. This also applied to the learners. Through feedback and explanation of difficult words, the teacher provided vocabulary. Instructions were mainly in English, with few exceptions. Teacher B explained the board game rules to each group in English and made sure they understood the instructions. Even though some learners spoke Norwegian between activities, the main communication involved speaking English. It was observed that certain learners scaffolded each other by providing words and vocabulary if others struggled to explain. The classroom had English posters on the wall, including the lesson plan and date and plan of the day. The pairings usually consisted of boys together and girls together.

4.1.3 Teacher C

17 learners were present when the observation took place. Teacher C had a classroom structure distinct from the two other teachers. This classroom had four table groupings consisting of four to five learners seated around each table grouping. This English lesson lasted 45 minutes, which was shorter than the two former observed lessons, resulting in fewer data collected from this observation. This English lesson began with clear instructions in both Norwegian and English and ended with the teacher asking if someone wanted to repeat the information given. They

then proceeded to 10 minutes of reading from a booklet the teacher handed out to each learner. This booklet consisted of different texts that varied in length, content, and difficulty. The learners could choose which text they wanted to read. During the reading, they were instructed to write down keywords from the text because they were expected to retell their text to the seated groups. The learners took turns elaborating and retelling their text. The following activity involved board games where the seated groups played together. The lesson ended with the game "Would you rather" where the learners discussed dilemmas together.

Concerning *activity setup*, the subcategories involved in this observation included individual work, group work, the practice of learned language, and producing new language. The reading and writing task at the beginning of the lesson involved individual work and preparation. The following retelling activity included group work in the form of listening and performing in front of a small group. The board game and "Would you rather" were based on group work and oral communication. Teacher C facilitated the practice of a learned language through the retelling of a text and self-written words. At the same time, the learners produced a new language without input to communicate their thoughts and interact during the board game.

Regarding the category *interaction*, certain teaching strategies such as active feedback, teacher-learner and learner-learner communication, discussion in groups before answering questions, and speaking in front of the class were identified during data collection. Concerning feedback, recognition from Teacher C and positive responses to learners speaking and retelling what they had read were incorporated actively. Teacher C moved actively around the classroom and interacted directly with the learners during the activities. Learner-learner communication was central during the oral activities, and the learners were engaged when interacting with each other, especially during the board game and "Would you rather". The learners discussed dilemmas in groups before answering while the class was listening. Further, certain learners spoke in front of the class when Teacher C asked if someone wanted to elaborate on instructions that were given or ask questions. This class was a seemingly orally active group, and they were responsive and engaged when being spoken to. The dynamic between teacher and learners was flexible and provided interactions.

There was no specific *topic* recognised by the researcher during observation, however, it was elaborated in the interview that the intention was reading comprehension and development of oral skills through different activities. The learners were accordingly familiar with the booklet, and it contained several texts that could interest them. In other words, Teacher C did not

introduce new topics in this lesson but worked on familiar and predictable topics and themes. This topic focused on literature based on the booklet, and English oral skills through retelling, board games, and "Would you rather".

In terms of the category *scaffolding*, Teacher C mainly spoke Norwegian but responded in English. The learners switched between English and Norwegian, but Norwegian dominated at times. Even though the teacher did not provide the learners with specific vocabulary or sentence structures, the reading activity acted as a scaffold through self-written keywords and choice of text. During the retelling, the learners spoke English, but tend to speak Norwegian during the board game activity.

4.2 Interview

Analysing data from the interviews resulted in three main codes that occurred in all three interviews. These codes were named "How teachers recognise FLSA", "Factors influencing FLSA", and "Teachers' classroom practices". These codes had several subcodes which are listed in Table 3 in section 3.3 to provide an overview. The following section is structured into three codes and elaborated in the same order as Table 3. Relevant citations from the three teachers are included in each code.

Additionally, it was essential to ask the three teachers about their experience in meeting learners with FLSA before investigating their perceptions and reported practices. According to Teacher A, most of their learners had FLSA to some degree when they started 6th grade; "there were some chaotic conditions that arose which I think affected the learners negatively in terms of feeling safe enough to say things. It has improved now in 7th grade, but there are still some with FLSA". Teacher B had a similar experience with their class: "It was a very rough learning environment, there was a lot of nasty comments, learners undermining each other, and very few learners were active in class. It increased all the way". Teacher B reported having at least one learner with strong FLSA which could be categorised as selective mutism. On the other hand, Teacher C did reportedly not have a problem with a rough environment in their current classroom; "what I notice about this class is that it is open to everything. They are used to us talking about a lot and no one harasses each other". Teacher C reported having two learners with FLSA among their 7th graders.

4.2.1 How teachers recognise FLSA

In terms of how the three teachers recognise FLSA in their classroom, two subcodes were identified throughout the interviews: behavioural patterns and body language. It was consistent

among all three interviews that detecting a behaviour pattern is essential when recognising and determining if a learner has developed FLSA. This requires that the teacher has known the learners over a period, which was established by Teacher A, who conveyed that "if I have followed a class for a long time, I can see a difference in the learners, and if there is an occurrence of FLSA". Further, Teacher A focused on the impact age could have on learners and how they change their behaviour after reaching a certain age. Teacher A stated that "I think that something happens with learners in 6th and 7th grade. They change a lot and many reach puberty, which affects many of them". During the interview, they claimed that "when the learners are younger, they usually raise their hands during the lesson and want to be heard. That tends to decrease when they reach 5th to 7th grade, this is common for all subjects". Teacher C reported recognising learners with FLSA if the specific learner showed behavioural patterns, such as having a speaking barrier or being afraid to speak in English lessons but did not have these patterns in other contexts. Further, Teacher A described how they recognise FLSA in the English subject: "They fear that others could hear their voice out loud. There is an insecurity that they might say something wrong or not do the exact right thing." This did not have to be a problem in other subjects or among peers, whereas, in a context where they must speak English, they became silent or had physical reactions.

In addition to examining learners' changes with age, another behavioural pattern specified in the interviews was adjustments in typical personality traits. The teachers were asked to identify how they see a difference between learners with FLSA and introverted learners. Teacher A suggested that "FLSA is a state that occurs while introverted is a personality trait. There is a certain difference between these two". Accordingly, introverted learners are generally quieter, but do not necessarily have a fear of speaking. On the other hand, learners with FLSA tend to act differently from other learners while being silent when it comes to speaking English. Moreover, Teacher C reported on recognising learners with FLSA; "I think they are social with their peers and adults and have no problems speaking, but when it comes to the subject, or they have to read something out loud, it becomes difficult". In essence, the teachers reflected on how vocabulary and certain situations determine ways to recognise FLSA among learners.

Teacher B provided another interesting perspective on behavioural patterns: "Most of the learners with FLSA are very academically strong in most subjects […] They are proficient in English, but they are not the ones who raise their hand and answer questions". This perception was not reported by the other teachers. However, Teacher A mentioned a learner in their 7th

grade with English as their first language and spoke English fluently, but still never said anything during English lessons.

Analysed data showed that body language had an impact on recognising learners' FLSA. This was highly relevant to be aware of when encountering learners. Teacher B shared thoughts on their beliefs around recognising a learner with FLSA during a lesson; "I think it comes down to body language. Someone insecure tends to lean more towards the desk and tries to avoid eye contact with you, they often pretend to be working when they are not." This was supported by Teacher A, who described learners that tried to hide when being approached. Further, Teacher B claimed that "they never raise their hand, never ask for help and they try to be invisible" as a description of reactions learners with FLSA tend to have during a lesson. They compared these traits to learners without FLSA to easier recognise anxiety, such as "they can sit comfortably in their chair and choose not to participate. This learner has a steady glance and follows along, and there is a difference in body language". Comparing body language and physical reactions was reportedly used as a strategy to recognise learners with FLSA.

4.2.2 Factors influencing FLSA

Four main subcodes were discovered when investigating factors influencing FLSA during data analysis. These subcodes involved the importance of having professionally qualified teachers, classroom environment, relations between teacher and learner, and the presence of native speakers or learners speaking fluently.

The first factor that, according to Teacher B, could have a direct impact on FLSA was professionally qualified English teachers. In other words, teachers who are specialised in the English subject could help prevent the development of FLSA. Teacher B explicitly expressed worry about this issue:

> "One of the things I'm a little worried about is that I don't think we have enough qualified English teachers in the primary school. We have many people who have English in first grade, where they only have half an hour a week, and then it increases a little, but in 7th grade, we have two 60 minutes classes. This leads to my experience that English is given a lower priority in primary school, and thus the English teaching is not as good as it should be in the first years. I believe that if we have professionally qualified teachers in English in primary school, it will lead to the English teaching becoming more targeted than it might be, which means that you will use the methods that you need to limit FLSA".

Two reasons were specified regarding why professionally qualified English teachers could have an impact on increasing or reducing FLSA. The first was the teachers' choice of methods when teaching English to learners. Teacher A provided an example of a typical method that is not beneficial for learners, especially learners with FLSA, that involved traditional teaching where the teacher addresses specific learners in front of the class. Further, teacher A explained this in the following way: "When the teacher asks something, three learners answer […] The learners who talk, they are mostly learners who love to answer things. While the other learners become less active as a result". This method of teaching was also recognised by Teacher B who said that "it probably happens when we have traditional lessons the whole class. Then those who perhaps do not feel so safe will probably not raise their hand and participate". Teacher A had a similar reflection and stated how it was not beneficial for learners with FLSA because they would not start to speak in front of the whole class.

A second reason pointed out to why a professionally qualified English teacher could influence FLSA, was how to motivate learners to speak the FL they are learning. Teacher B stated that "what I think can lead to if you have more specialised teachers in English in the primary school is that you will feel more confident about what you are learning" and exemplified this with phonology learning and their experiences with learners struggling to pronounce certain letters. One of the issues concerned with teaching learners correct pronunciation at an early age and its connection to confidence was addressed by Teacher B; "if you know you are saying it wrong and then you might hear it from others, then you get nervous to speak again. So having a qualified teacher who focuses on these things helps you pronounce things correctly".

All three teachers reported on establishing the classroom environment as a factor influencing FLSA among learners. It emerged through the interviews that two aspects of the classroom environment were particularly important, predictable frameworks and how learners feel among classmates and teachers. According to Teacher B, a predictable framework was essential to establish before working on improving the classroom environment; "to have a safe learning environment, children must know what is expected of them and what they can expect from you". Teacher A pointed out that "it is about trying to create that security around them in the class environment and the social environment so that everyone can feel it" and this was exemplified by Teacher C, who specified that the seating structure in the classroom affected learners with FLSA. This referred to how classroom arrangements and groupings had an impact on the predictable framework.

The teachers experienced insecurity and trust among learners as factors influencing FLSA. Teacher A pointed out that when learners reach a certain age close to secondary school, preconditions change and insecurity becomes a bigger issue affecting the classroom environment; "the social environment in the class is changing, now they come in with TikTok and things like that too. They become more insecure". This was also mentioned by Teacher C who linked classroom environment and insecurity closely together by commenting that class environment influences FLSA if learners "fear that they might get some comments". This link between classroom environment and insecurity was reflected in both Teacher A and B using words like confident and safe among learners, such as "that they feel confident that no one will say anything to them if they say something wrong and that they are confident that no one will laugh at them", as told by Teacher A. In the opinion of Teacher B, "You often see those who have FLSA, that the safer they feel, the more they participate in class" and Teacher A stressed the importance of a safe classroom environment. In essence, the key elements of how the classroom environment influenced FLSA were a predictable framework, and that the learners feel comfortable around each other and the teacher in the classroom. Teacher B summarised this while presenting a transition to the next factor influencing FLSA:

> "Creating a good learning environment is number one, and having good relationships with each learner is number two. And then you can focus on the subjects. No one is going to raise their hand if they do not feel safe with teachers and learners".

Another factor influencing FLSA was the relations between the teacher and learners. All three teachers reported usually receiving their new class when the learners reach fifth grade, which signifies they must establish a new relationship with every learner in that classroom. This was supported by Teacher B who reflected on how relation and amount of time spent with the learners affect the use of teaching methods; "I notice a difference between the class I have and the other class. I can't do the same English teaching with those I only teach in English […] they don't get to practice their oral skills as much". Teacher B drew a connection between the relation with the learners and the number of activities that practice oral skills.

Teacher A also provided thoughts concerning how practising is important in FL learning and how practice can contribute to reduced FLSA. They focused on making their learners understand that the current English lessons were a place for practice, not evaluation or real life. Reportedly, it is easier to practice with someone one trusts and has a relationship with. Teacher A continued the reflection on how the teacher can support learners by "not being so self-

congratulatory; you must be able to laugh at yourself and show that you can make mistakes". Teacher A kept the focus on how the teachers' attitude and belief in learners affect their confidence by reporting that "you must have faith that they can do it. Everyone can practice […] We must accept that we are different and have faith that we can learn more". According to Teacher B, "We have to make them see that they are sitting on a very high level of competence". Even though Teacher B approached this thought differently, they still based on the same foundation as Teacher A's reflection about increasing the learners' belief in themselves and as a teacher, one should believe that every learner can practice achievement.

The last identified factor influencing FLSA among some learners was classmates who spoke fluently or were native speakers. The three teachers were divided in their views concerning learners who spoke English fluently and their influence on learners with FLSA. According to Teacher B, they had many learners who spoke English fluently, and they noticed that during traditional blackboard teaching, "then those who perhaps do not feel so safe will probably not raise their hand and participate. Because they believe they are not as good". Teacher A shared a similar experience; "while learners I have had before in the old class I had before, there were some who spoke English completely fluently […] In that class it affected some learners and increased FLSA". On the other hand, Teacher C had a positive approach to fluent English-speaking learners in their classroom by giving an example; "a girl in my class is very good at English and I can hardly give her difficult enough texts. She is a good friend with a learner with FLSA in the English subject". When asked how that affected the learner with FLSA they answered "She is comfortable with the fluent speaking learner who functions as an amplifier for her. I notice that when they are together, she pushes her a little, within reason, and it's fine. It is only positive". In essence, two teachers shared the same experience, and one teacher had encountered that trust and good relations with fluent speakers affected learners with FLSA positively.

In summary, regarding factors influencing FLSA, four main factors were identified: support from professionally qualified English teachers, classroom environment, relations between teachers and learners, and the presence of native speakers or fluent-speaking learners.

4.2.3 Teachers' classroom practices
Data analysis determined 10 subcodes to be essential in teachers' reported classroom practices. These subcodes involve teaching strategies that could prevent or reduce FLSA among 7th grade EFL learners.

One of the teaching strategies all three teachers reported employing was scaffolding through establishing close cooperation with parents. All three teachers mentioned that cooperation with parents had an impact on scaffolding learners with FLSA. Teacher B pointed out that scaffolding these learners "goes through communication with the home, with parents, how we support, and how we build in school-home communication". Moreover, Teacher B reported difficulty in scaffolding learners if they have a distant relation to those learners' parents. Both Teachers A and C reported that communication with parents helped the learners in terms of how the learners practised and worked with FLSA at home. According to Teacher C, "If there is someone who has problems with it, I talk to the parents a little more about it, about what it's a good idea to practice at home. They often must practice a bit at home too". Teacher A mentioned how they use development meetings to discuss with learners how they could practice reading aloud in the English subject and further stated that learners with FLSA often pronounce correctly and are not struggling with learning English as a language. In terms of communication with parents, all three teachers reported that practising speaking English in a safe environment at home helped reduce FLSA.

Listening to one's voice was mentioned as a teaching strategy to reduce FLSA among learners. According to Teachers A and C, making individual compromises or agreements with learners about the amount of speaking and oral engagement they should try to achieve during English lessons functioned as scaffolding. Teacher A stated that "I try to make deals with everyone. I want everyone to hear their voice during an English lesson. That's why I use a lot of reading aloud in pairs or talking together in pairs". Further, Teacher A elaborated on this by explaining how they communicate their expectations from the learners and talk to them about the aim behind methods. Teacher A conveyed how they tell their learners that they would not pressure anyone to speak in front of everyone, but they expect the learners to practice speaking with their learning partners. They reported that they made agreements with learners that do not engage in oral activities. Teacher C shared their experience with a learner with FLSA and how they scaffolded that learner to reduce FLSA; "the first thing she did was to practice at home and hear her voice in front of her parents and she read aloud there and spoke aloud. We had an agreement on that". In summary, according to Teachers A and C, making individual agreements with the concerned learners and their parents could support them in reducing FLSA.

The teachers shared similar thoughts on how reading English texts aloud could prevent or reduce FLSA among learners. Teacher C argued that to reduce FLSA, it was important to start

with low expectations and manageable tasks; "you should not come up with your own words, you should start with a text that is just there, then you can expand it a little, and then you can say a sentence or two that you come up with yourself". Teacher A referred to the same strategy and added "They have tasks from the books and each time they also have to say something about what they have read to their learning partner that day. Then they must come up with the words themselves and the sentences themselves". This strategy was supported by Teacher B who stated that taking notes while reading texts supported learners with FLSA. When asked about the purpose of reading aloud, Teacher A reported that hearing one's own and others' voices could contribute to reading words correctly and added that confidence could increase if one experiences a feeling of mastery. Teacher C claimed that "I have been very careful that when they have to practice performing, we start small with them only having to read directly, that it was enough to just read the text" and reported on using reading aloud as a strategy to help learners get used to presentations.

During the interviews, teachers also reported on routines as ways of scaffolding learners with FLSA. According to Teacher A, they established a routine in their 7th grade where they read to each other in pairs every Thursday. Reportedly, this had an impact on reducing FLSA where Teacher A stated that "I think that contributes to the fact that those who find it difficult have dared to use their voice a little because reading aloud is safer than making sentences with their own words". Teacher B specified that they end every Monday's lesson with an oral activity and plan for active learning every Wednesday because it resulted in a safe and predictable routine. Correspondingly, Teacher C focused on predictability for learners with FLSA by stating that "it is very important that they get the intro so that it is predictable. They know there will be an explanation […] it is incredibly important that it is predictable and that they know what to do". In summary, all three teachers included routines, structures, and predictable English lessons as important to reduce FLSA.

Group work was a central topic discussed by all three teachers, with different perceptions on how group work affected learners with FLSA and their classroom practices. Teacher B referred to the observed lesson and reported that "if you have a class with many learners with FLSA, you have to have activities that make them speak English in safe groups, and that's what we did today". Teacher A shared the same perspective on using group work as a strategy to help learners speak more in the classroom; "I use a lot of reading aloud in pairs or talking together in pairs. This creates more oral activity than speaking in front of a whole class, then it will be

the same three or four who answer each time". However, Teacher C had a different experience with their current 7th graders:

> "I have asked them what works least at school. Then it is fairly unison that it is group work because there are always some free passengers, and there are always some who feel they must do more work. It has been like this for years. Group work is quite difficult. They are occasionally assigned roles, but they don't like that either. But when it comes to the oral impression, they think it's much nicer. From time to time, they get role plays and they think it's fun".

Teacher C described difficulty with group work among learners in their classroom. However, role play or interacting activities were easier for the learners to engage in. Teacher B described interacting activities as a part of active learning in groups; "I use a lot of groups in education, a lot of station activities, a lot of change of activity and a lot of active learning. Lots of board games, lots of memory, which makes it safer in large groups".

The teachers were asked if they used songs as a strategy to reduce or prevent FLSA among their learners. All three teachers reported on using songs, however, the amount differed between them. Teacher A stated that "the previous class, they sang every morning. They sang song lyrics from "kor arti" from when they were in the third grade, that has something to say. They became very good at English as a result". Teacher C reported on singing in 7th grade, but to a smaller degree because they start to analyse song texts instead as the learners got older. They explained this by switching the focus from rhythm to the meaning behind the text. Using more topic-related poems and song lyrics was suggested as the learners got older. Teacher B stated a similar perspective on using songs for other purposes than just practising pronunciation and use of voice, but to engage learners in interesting topics. Examples like using songs to learn irregular verbs, pronunciation, about topics, and using their voice camouflaged in a crowd were mentioned throughout the interviews. Even though the aim behind using songs changed as the learners got older, the teachers were in unison in their opinion on the importance of using songs regularly to prevent FLSA.

When asked if they had experience with any specific strategies or activities that created oral engagement, Teacher B stated "Board games are super positive, especially in English. You can have board games about anything. There are board games about all grammar, Wh-words, and prepositions of time and place. There are board games on Google about everything". This statement was followed up on if this engaged learners with FLSA too, and accordingly it did;

"even the learner with selective mutism participates in board games". Additionally, Teacher C had similar experiences with board games and was positive about using them during English lessons. They compared board games to topic cards, which are cards learners draw and retrieve instructions and specific topics to discuss. Both board games and topic cards reportedly have the same functions related to oral communication; "it becomes harmless when they roll dice and move with a theme. It usually goes well; they think it's nice. Much easier than if I use topic cards. It seems that is more difficult, even though it's the same topics". Furthermore, Teacher A listed several games and ice breakers they had positive experiences with the English subject, such as "House burglar", "Simon says", "Ansgar marching", and sing along songs and stated that "they thought things like that were great fun, but we still had to work a lot so that they dared to speak and participate orally". Furthermore, Teacher A reported their learners to be orally active and have a high language learning outcome from these types of games and songs. Lastly, Teacher C presented that "I think that during an English lesson, it is important to use the language, not just read it, so then we have a sequence where they have to speak it" and referred to a frequently used sequence during the English lessons where the learners can choose between certain games that challenge them to speak more English, for example, role-play. All three teachers shared the same perception of games being useful tool to reduce and prevent FLSA.

All three teachers referred to incorporating familiar or learner-chosen topics as a strategy to engage learners with FLSA in speaking activities. Teacher B claimed that "exciting topics make you participate much more. Fortunately, English has become such that you can use the students' area of interest for language learning to a greater extent". Teacher A pointed out that they work on several topics at the same time. Accordingly, this would help engage learners with FLSA as they would find certain topics more interesting than others. When asked about the choice of topics, Teacher C stated that "it can be very different, if you find a catchy task, not typically write about a summer day or when you were in the mountains, but slightly more engaging texts or use of imagination". This was supported by Teacher B, who reflected on how to focus on an interesting topic instead of focusing on language learning and presentations. Teacher C referred to examples like watching short film clips and having them come up with the rest of the story or trying to figure out what was going on to engage them in speaking and changing the focus from presenting thoughts to communicating thoughts. Moreover, Teacher A presented an example where the learners got to choose books they wanted to read aloud, which created engagement in speaking.

In terms of digital tools, the teachers were asked if they used any specific tools to scaffold learners with FLSA. Teacher C stated that they used a lot of digital tools to create oral engagement and exemplified digital tools like Kahoot, games, image support, film clips, and sound recording learning platforms. Regarding sound recording learning platforms, Teacher C reported that the learners can delete the recording and try again, which reduces the pressure of presenting. Digital tools like Kahoot were mentioned by the other teachers as well. Teacher B reported using Lingdys, a Google Chrome extension that scaffolds learners in writing and reading. According to Teacher A, they used a lot of "kor arti" and YouTube when singing, but also to listen to audiobooks and dialects. Teacher A stated that they created texts and poems based on books they had read and listened to digital programs reading aloud before they read it aloud together, which let learners with FLSA blend in the crowd. Accordingly, this created engagement and let the learners practice speaking and pronunciation at the same time as learners with FLSA. Considering listening to authentic audio, all three teachers stated similar reflections on the use of authentic audio in language learning, affecting learners with FLSA positively.

The last essential strategy was the teachers' focus on how to scaffold learners to be able to present. They agreed that performing presentations is unavoidable, but there were certain strategies to help learners get one step closer to being able to speak in front of a peer group. According to Teacher B, it is possible to prevent some FLSA by starting early with performance acquaintance; "if you wait with presentations or oral performances or just oral speech until 6th or 7th grade, that anxiety has set in, and many learners find it scary". Teacher A stated that many learners find it difficult to deal with presentations, including learners with FLSA. Teacher C reported that presentations demanded practice and that they start by giving the learners detailed instructions on how to present; "we also talk about it at school. Often when they must perform a presentation, it is good to have a template on how to do it". The teachers shared the same view on the importance of starting the process carefully and not exposing the learners too much in the beginning. Teachers B and C agreed that practising presentations at a very low level were important to prevent FLSA. It was then easier to increase expectations and the number of peers. The last point made concerning oral presentations was the importance of smooth transitions when preparing learners to speak in front of a peer. According to Teacher C, "Being a little too careful at first is better because then you can rather develop it little by little. Throwing yourself out there without them noticing it too much, like performing, because that's what they fear the most at school" and reported on how they usually start by letting

learners read shortly in front of other learners before they read while standing at their desk. When ready, they proceeded to stand in front of the class.

Data analysis determined 10 subcodes to be essential in teachers' reported classroom practices. These subcodes were strategies to prevent and reduce FLSA, such as creating a safe classroom environment, reading aloud, introducing games and songs, using digital tools, incorporating group work in oral activities, using interesting or familiar topics, establishing routines, and adapting learners gradually to presentations.

5. Discussion

The present chapter aims to discuss the findings of previous research and new revelations about the research questions of the thesis. In consonance with the chosen research questions, the discussion was chosen to be divided into discussing research question 1 before moving on to research question 2. The chapter then moves on to limitations and suggestions for future research before ending with implications for teaching. In the attempt of answering research question 1, the researcher chose to focus on findings from the present study involving how teachers recognise FLSA among learners and factors influencing FLSA along with relevant prior findings from Chapter 2. This section is structured after identifying subcodes from data analysis, such as behavioural patterns, body language, having professionally qualified teachers, classroom environment, relations between teacher and learner, and the presence of native speakers or learners speaking fluently. To answer research question 2, it was decided to focus on teachers' classroom practices regarding reducing and preventing FLSA. This section includes reported practices from prior and present findings, including teaching strategies observed during data collection. The structure of this section involves subcodes from data analysis related to classroom practices and teaching strategies, including presentations and preparations, listening to one's voice and reading aloud, cooperation with parents, including group work, incorporating familiar or interesting topics in oral activities, predictable routines, using songs, games, and digital tools.

The research questions chosen for this study are:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety in the English subject in the Norwegian 7th grade EFL Classroom?

2. What are teachers' (reported) practices to prevent and reduce foreign language speaking anxiety in the Norwegian 7th grade EFL Classroom?

5.1 Research question 1

Tran and Moni (2015) argue that teachers should help learners work on managing FLSA and focus less on reduction. This contradicts other previous discoveries (Akkakoson, 2016; Azarfam & Baki, 2012; Bashori et al., 2021; Mills et al., 2006; Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi, 2022; Riasati, 2018) that emphasise strategies to reduce FLSA in language learning settings, which can make learners more prepared to handle anxiety-provoking situations like presentations, performances, and testing situations. The teachers from the present study stated

certain factors influencing FLSA such as a safe classroom environment, good relations between learners, self-confidence, and recognising learners with FLSA. According to Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128), the teacher's role is to understand learners' needs and facilitate an appropriate learning environment for each learner. It is then easier for the teacher to scaffold learners in learning how to handle stressful situations.

Most previous studies related to FLSA involve university students or learners above the age of 16. It is worth considering that there is a potential difference in the perspectives of teachers working with older learners compared to findings in the present study regarding 7th grade learners. In conclusion, the present study can contribute to teaching methods, practices and perceptions benefiting learners with FLSA, in addition to functioning as an anxiety-preventive approach for teachers to equip learners with feelings of mastery and enjoy FL learning.

Investigating behavioural patterns in English-speaking contexts compared to Norwegian-speaking contexts or other subjects often requires that teachers know and understand their learners, preferably over an extended period. Current findings reveal that the teachers believe that the learning environment changes when learners reach a certain age due to factors like puberty and self-awareness. Looking at behavioural patterns, it was stated as important that teachers can differ between an introverted learner and an anxious learner. In a study conducted by He (2013), it was concluded that some learners just have an anxious personality and were nervous regardless of their English-speaking situation. This contradicts the teachers' perceptions in the present study, who reflect on introverted behaviour as a personality trait and FLSA as a condition that occurs. Further, it was pointed out that introverted learners did not necessarily fear speaking an FL even though they could be less orally engaged than others. On the other hand, it was noted that learners with FLSA tend to have no trouble interacting with others outside of the English-speaking classroom.

While prior findings (Burden, 2004; Tran & Moni, 2015) have suggested that a lack of competence in oral skills and proficiency might lead to FLSA, the latest discoveries imply that this is rarely the case. It was pointed out by the teachers that many learners with FLSA were academically strong and very proficient in English, which indicated that lack of oral skills is often not the reason behind learners' refusal to speak during English lessons during an anxiety-provoking situation. As a result of this, teachers cannot rely entirely on the connection between low proficiency and language anxiety and should include other observations such as body language and learners' behaviour in English-speaking contexts.

When investigating teachers' perceptions of FLSA during the interviews, body language was one of the highlighted factors pointed out to identify learners experiencing FLSA. Present results reveal that the teachers searched for specific physical changes to recognise anxiety among their learners, such as avoidance of eye contact, attitude, and posture during English lessons. Accordingly, they pointed out that silent learners never asked for help, tried to be invisible or hide, or had reactions during oral activities that signalised evidence of FLSA. In agreement with the present evidence, previous research on teachers' perspectives (Azarfam & Baki, 2012) reported that observed learners had reduced interaction and changed body language in anxiety-provoking situations. This can be linked to prior findings (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Pawlak et al., 2011) who argue that learners with FLSA often encounter physical changes such as raised heart rate, sweat and tension, and cognitive changes such as apprehension, memory loss and less proficiency. It can be suggested that from a teacher's perspective, observing learners' body language when exposed to an anxiety-provoking situation or oral activity can benefit teachers when trying to identify FLSA among their learners and initiate strategies to avoid further escalation of FLSA.

Present results reveal that comparing learners' oral engagement during English lessons to oral engagement in other subjects or outside the classroom can help the teacher in identifying learners with FLSA. One teacher referred to FLSA as a barrier limiting them only to English lessons, not in other contexts. According to Tran and Moni (2015), anxiety can result in negativity and result in unwillingness to speak, which can often not be the case in native language-speaking situations. It is perceived as suitable to observe learners from a broader perspective than only focusing on occurrences during English lessons.

Current findings indicate that from teachers' perceptions, professionally qualified English teachers have a profound effect on reducing FLSA. It was argued that the English subject is not given the necessary priority it requires. The choice of teaching methods was mentioned several times because educated English teachers might incorporate strategies and methods to reduce FLSA. Teachers' experience in teaching education, life as a language learner and a professional career affect their perceptions and practices (Li, 2020, p. 6). In a study conducted by Azarfam and Baki (2012), their implications express that perceptions from experienced teachers tend to be accurate and correct when recognising FLSA among learners because they can meet their learners' needs. Thus, it is important to prioritise professionally qualified teachers in the English subject. As previous research (Tran & Moni, 2015) suggests, improving learners' proficiency can lead to reduced anxiety due to self-efficacy and confidence in the FL.

Present findings reveal that the teachers believed qualified English teachers could improve pronunciation and vocabulary from an early age and prevent FLSA. According to Richards and Lockhart (1994, pp. 30–31), the fifth and sixth sources of developed teacher cognition involve implementing recent research and strategies in the classroom. Qualified teachers might be able to use these sources to improve proficiency and willingness to speak, resulting in their learners being more motivated to speak English.

Most prior research (Akkakoson, 2016; Bashori et al., 2021; Crookall & Oxford, 1991; Drew & Sørheim, 2016; Riasati, 2018; Young, 1991) concluded that the classroom environment is one of the main factors influencing learners' oral engagement, including learners with FLSA. Following previous findings, current results indicate that teachers' perceptions of FLSA involve the learning environment as an important factor for anxious learners. The teachers mentioned several environmental factors that could impact the development or reduction of FLSA among learners, such as the classroom structure and groupings, predictable frameworks and transitions, routines, and mutual respect through clear expectations and trust. Accordingly, learners' FLSA should not be treated as a personality trait but should be observed in certain situations, for example in an environmental context. Riasati (2018) supports the teachers' perspectives by arguing that classroom seating structure and organised activities to create opportunities for learners to speak are factors teachers can control and contribute to a more relaxed atmosphere. It was further stated that the classroom environment affected the willingness to speak among learners. In agreement, the present study's teachers acknowledged that a safe learning environment involved reassurance that the learners would not be mocked when making mistakes, but rather supported and scaffolded because no one would want to participate if they do not feel safe in the classroom, especially learners with FLSA.

Further, the investigation of previous research and present discoveries reveal that it can be concluded a general perception of teachers is the repeated belief that teacher-learner and learner-learner relations have a direct impact on learners with FLSA. The teachers reported on receiving new 5th graders, which results in a new project of establishing new relations with each learner after three years. During a phase when learners experience new friendships and insecurities, the process of building confidence and good relations was defined as a long-term goal. According to Young (1991, p. 430), FLSA can be prevented or reduced if teachers encourage learners to stay in the situation instead of avoiding it by addressing the learners' fears and acknowledging occurred feelings. However, doing this requires that each learner trusts and feels safe around the teacher. According to the recent outcomes, the teachers believed

fostering a sense of security among learners could result in them being more willing to speak and practice the language with each other. Further, the duration of time spent on teaching methods and the amount of mutual trust. In Riasati's (2018) study, the relationship between learner and teacher is reported to have an essential impact on willingness to speak. Prior theory (Bandura, 1993; Crookall & Oxford, 1991) provides a perspective on the teacher's role in the classroom, suggesting that positive feedback and encouraging teaching can result in reduced anxiety and an increased feeling of mastery. This is supported by current findings which argue that teachers need to have faith in their learners and believe that they can achieve their goals, increase their language learning, and overcome their anxiety. This perception is similar to Bandura's (1993) definition of self-efficacy. As it was stated by one teacher, the learners possess a high level of competence and proficiency in English and teachers should help them self-recognise this to reduce FLSA.

Current data indicate that it is a common occurrence for learners to feel more insecure and develop FLSA if they have classmates that speak English fluently. This is supported in previous studies (He, 2013; Wörde, 2003) about factors contributing to FLSA. It was reported that learners often struggled to understand native speakers, resulting in increased anxiety. However, the significance of current outcomes lies in the fact that one teacher shed light on fluent-speaking classmates as providing support for learners with FLSA. It was believed that the trusted relationship between the anxious learner and the English fluent-speaking learner was the resolute factor affecting FLSA positively. It is expressed that traditional whole-class teaching harms learners with FLSA, especially the presence of fluent-speaking learners because it creates opportunities for learners to compare themselves to classmates. According to Wörde (2003), some learners felt the teacher compared their language skills to native-speaking classmates. However, it was noted during the interviews that learners with FLSA are often proficient in English which deviates from the previous study that claims "some students believed that the teachers somehow taught to the higher level, or deferred to the native speakers in some way" (Wörde, 2003, p. 6). It seems that the relationship between learners and the way they scaffold and support each other portrays a more significant role than the way the teacher addresses specific learners. The teachers reported giving proficient and native speakers more advanced tasks, which in some settings can be interpreted as special treatment by other learners. The bottom line behind these factors lies in how the teacher facilitates opportunities for learners to scaffold each other in a safe learning environment. Analysis of fresh insights points out that

fluent English-speaking learners can function as amplifiers for other learners' ZPD, especially with anxious learners. This requires that learners trust each other.

To summarise, the present findings have been discussed in relation to previous research and research question 1 regarding teachers' perceptions of FLSA among EFL learners. Teachers have stressed the importance of recognising learners with FLSA, and oral engagement, behavioural patterns and body language in English-speaking contexts are strategies to identify these learners. Concerning factors influencing FLSA, lacking proficiency or oral skills, relations among learners and teachers, the presence of native speakers or fluent-speaking peers, and professionally qualified English teachers have been discussed with prior discoveries.

5.2 Research question 2

The second research question involves teachers' reported practices to prevent and reduce FLSA in Norwegian 7th grade EFL classrooms. Results revealed certain teaching strategies contributing to reducing or preventing FLSA, such as cooperation with parents, practising the use of voice and reading aloud, establishing predictable routines, using group work to initiate oral interaction, using songs, games, and digital tools in EFL learning, incorporating familiar or interesting topics in oral activities, and adapting to performing presentations. Specific strategies and suggestions from a teacher's perspective are discussed in the following paragraphs.

In the present study, the teachers reported that presentations were unbeneficial for learners with FLSA. Prior findings (Akkakoson, 2016; He, 2013; Horwitz et al., 1986; Mak, 2011; Riasati, 2018) argue that many learners with FLSA especially struggle with test anxiety and the fear of being evaluated during oral activities or presentations. Nevertheless, the curriculum in English includes aims about expecting learners to be able to speak and present both after year 7 and year 10 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). In keeping with the prevailing theory and research, present results indicate that there are suggested strategies for teachers to prepare learners in presenting and speaking in front of peers. In this study, FLSA refers to the negative feelings and physical reactions that learners experience when speaking an FL (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). It is important to explore ways to reduce these overwhelming negative feelings, as they can hinder language learning, confidence, and performance during oral activities.

Recent studies (He, 2013; Mak, 2011; Riasati, 2018) argue that learners with FLSA fear making mistakes and having to speak unprepared in front of their classmates. At the same time, previous findings imply that willingness to speak can be increased if learners know that they

answer correctly when being addressed. Implications from the present study argue that incorporating oral activities with suggested scaffolding strategies such as familiar or interesting topics or texts written in preparation for a speaking activity can result in creating willingness to speak among learners and reduce FLSA caused by unfamiliar themes in an FL. It was observed that learners presented in front of each other, which aligns with strategies reported in the interviews. This can be transferred to presentations and performance activities by creating a relaxed atmosphere and scaffolding learners to get one step closer to being able to speak in front of others.

Listening to one's voice and reading aloud were referred to several times by the teachers as strategies to reduce FLSA among learners. The believed reasons behind why these two factors can reduce FLSA are improvement of proficiency and pronunciation, which contribute to confidence, as well as the gradual adaption to speak and present in front of a peer. The teachers reported starting with low expectations and providing manageable tasks, such as reading aloud an extract from a familiar text in pairs or talking about a self-written text in groups. This gradual adaption allows learners to experience self-efficacy and gain a sense of control during an oral activity. Previous research (Bandura, 1993; Mills et al., 2006; Passiatore et al., 2019) indicates that the amount of self-efficacy affects inner feelings and reactions to anxiety-provoking situations. At the same time, previous findings revealed that increased self-efficacy improved performances because learners believe they had the skills to manage the assigned task and reacted positively in anxiety-provoking contexts. As a result of this, reading aloud and practising listening to one's voice can function as a preventive strategy to avoid developing FLSA. Developing confidence through manageable tasks can be achieved by making individual plans with each learner and agreeing on expectations. The teacher can then scaffold the learners by introducing more ambitious tasks when the learners believe they can master the task. The fact that it was observed during data collection that learners with FLSA managed to read aloud and talk to their learning partners through scaffolding from the teachers supports the proposition that this strategy reduces and prevents FLSA. This shows that the teachers' reported practices and their actual classroom practices were aligned.

All three teachers reported cooperation with the learners' parents as a strategy to reduce and prevent FLSA, especially when it comes to scaffolding learners with FLSA. This created opportunities for the learners to practice speaking in safe areas and receive support from parents. Accordingly, the teachers' scaffolding might not always be enough to reduce FLSA and it is important to communicate with parents to gain a common understanding about the

needs of their child. In an educational context, this approach emphasises what learners can achieve with guidance and support from someone more competent or proficient (Cameron, 2001, p. 6), and by that reach their ZPD. There is little research on this field among 7th graders, but Tran and Moni (2015) argue that the family is an important part of emotional support and scaffolding for learners. The belief is that early collaboration with parents can serve as a preventive measure against FLSA. By engaging in collaborative activities with parents, learners can practice their oral skills and develop a sense of self-efficacy in a secure learning environment before presenting in front of their classmates.

As previous research (Azarfam & Baki, 2012; Crookall & Oxford, 1991; Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi, 2022) suggested collaboration activities to focus on learner-learner interaction such as games to reduce and prevent FLSA, it was not unexpected that all three teachers reported games to be positive for learners with FLSA in their classroom. This is supported by the initiated oral engagement from learners during the board game activities from retrieved observation data. Games seemed to create oral engagement and at the same improve language proficiency as they can be directed and adapted to certain topics and language skills, such as grammar or expansion of vocabulary. There are several possible reasons why using games in language learning should be incorporated in 7th grade classrooms. Prior conclusions have suggested that games lower the bar when it comes to oral interaction because the focus is moved from performing to participating (Azarfam & Baki, 2012, p. 159). Findings from the present study reveal that the teachers experienced their learners having a high learning outcome because they are challenged to use language to make themselves understood in a non-threatening situation. For games to be engaging and completed successfully, it is required that everyone participate and interact together to reach a common goal, no matter if it is a team-based game or an individual game. Using language will function as a tool to reach this goal instead of being a goal itself, which could impact learners with FLSA positively.

Prior conclusions from Burden (2004) have suggested that pair work can lead to increased motivation due to the opportunity to scaffold each other while cooperating to achieve a common aim. Data collected from observation reveal that in two out of three classes learners seated in pairs or groups, in addition to all three classes participated in activities that encouraged learners to cooperate towards the same goal. Group work is a term often mentioned in earlier investigations related to FLSA and was brought up during the interviews due to including group work in the observed lessons. In contrast to previous research (Azarfam & Baki, 2012, p. 159; Crookall & Oxford, 1991, p. 142), the teachers reported some different

perspectives and experiences with how group work functioned in their present 7th grade classes, especially how it affected anxious learners. While two of the teachers reported group and pair work to create more oral activity and function as a safer space for learners with FLSA, the last teacher described negative experiences with initiating group work in general, but it was easier to engage learners during oral activities than other types of activities. Even though Ormrod (2011, p. 436) and Crookall and Oxford (1991, p. 142) argue that learner-learner communications through groups can result in a better learning outcome because the focus is on communicating rather than evaluation, it seems that some requirements need to be established before group work can result in a positive experience for learners with FLSA. It seems that current results suggest that willingness to speak and equal collaboration are two key factors in reducing FLSA through strategies like group work. If learners fear they might be humiliated or if the classroom atmosphere is not facilitated for learners to communicate with each other, group work could increase the feeling of FLSA. However, if learners share the same willingness to speak and motivate each other, present results indicate that group work could function as an area for the ZPD to expand through scaffolding.

In agreement with previous findings, current data support the hypothesis that including familiar or interesting topics during oral activities can reduce FLSA and increase willingness to speak. In compliance with research (Bashori et al., 2021; He, 2013; Riasati, 2018), the three teachers from the present study agreed that certain topics cause learners to initiate oral engagement in speaking situations. Topics or lyrics learners identify with can lead to more effective language learning, reduced FLSA, and create oral engagement (Passiatore et al., 2019, p. 133-134). The teachers suggested that learners could contribute to deciding which topics they should base activities on, and collected data reveals that learners expressed positive attitudes to the new topic they were going to start working on. It was observed, and confirmed in the interviews, that the learners participated in the decision of which book to collectively read and work with. Accordingly, a strategic choice of topic could reduce FLSA and increase the willingness to share thoughts and information one possesses because of genuine interest. Another explanation is possibly the fact that learners increase their self-efficacy if they experience that they are learning about something familiar that they identify with and can provide inputs to, especially related to presentations and oral performances. If an interesting topic can contribute to increased motivation to learn an FL among learners, it could affect the classroom atmosphere positively, and result in reduced FLSA among certain learners.

One reported strategy to reduce FLSA was the teachers' established routines and systematic patterns related to weekly English lessons. The teachers described specific methods to create predictability and reduce unnecessary anxiety among learners. According to Cameron (2001, p. 9), routines facilitate for the teacher to conceive opportunities for scaffolding within a classroom atmosphere without unpleasant surprises. Furthermore, the teachers reported on specific examples of routines in their 7th grade classes such as reading aloud in pairs every Thursday, every Monday ending with an oral activity, active learning every Wednesday, and structured instructions at the beginning of every lesson. Collected data from the observation supported this by showing that the teachers did implement these routines. Learners who struggle with speaking in group settings are more likely to face even more challenges when it comes to speaking in FL classes, where they have limited control over the communication dynamics (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). Therefore, creating a framework and regular patterns help reduce disruptions and distractions that contribute to FLSA, and enable teachers to concentrate on the process of learning. Previous research (Crookall & Oxford, 1991; Ormrod, 2011) suggest that the teacher should establish certain patterns in the classroom to create a more relaxed atmosphere, such as implementing learner-learner communication Yet, using teaching methods that allow learners to interact with each other, for example, scaffolding activities like reading aloud or active learning, specific routines need to be organised.

Previous findings (Passiatore et al., 2019) reveal that incorporating songs as a teaching method can result in reduced FLSA. Even though the amount of using songs varied between the three teachers, they all reported using them actively in their 7th grade classrooms. One teacher reported focusing on song lyrics related to a topic or learners' interest instead, while another teacher reported singing to increase pronunciation and practice using voice. This is supported by Passiatore et al. (2019, p. 133-134) who argue that oral skills can be improved by learners' self-efficacy through engaging teaching methods, such as using songs in the classroom. The significance of current implications sheds light on preventive activities for FLSA in the EFL classroom, as 7th graders are still young. It was conveyed that teachers should continue to use songs in the classroom as learners get older because it is beneficial to anxious learners, language learning and motivation.

Specific digital tools were mentioned, such as Kahoot, games, and Lingdys as scaffolding teaching methods. However, there were not reported any specific digital tools directed towards learners with FLSA. On the other hand, it was reported that audio recording programs can reduce the pressure of presenting because learners can delete and start over again if needed,

which indicates that they can practice pronunciation before submitting or performing the oral task. Previous research (Bashori et al., 2021) discussed if the use of digital tools reduced FLSA. In addition, the latest discoveries imply that digital tools created engagement among learners. In agreement with previous conclusions, current data support the statement that audio recording tools and oral communication with technology reduce FLSA since learners can practice pronunciation in a digital program before performing in front of peers. Similarly, current findings suggest that digital tools can increase willingness to speak an FL.

In summary, the attempt of answering research question 2 included discussing prior evidence and current findings regarding teaching strategies. Strategies such as cooperation with parents, practising the use of voice and reading aloud, establishing predictable routines, using group work to initiate oral interaction, using songs, games, and digital tools in EFL learning, incorporating familiar or interesting topics in oral activities, and adapting to performing presentations could potentially reduce or prevent FLSA among 7th graders.

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

While the current study provides insights into teachers' perceptions and practices related to FLSA among 7th grade EFL learners, several limitations should be noted. A limitation of this study is that the sample size of the collected data was relatively small, which may limit the generalisability of current findings. Even though previous outcomes tend to align with current results, it is to keep in mind that only three teachers participated in this study and that they were asked to provide subjective perspectives and opinions. It could potentially be problematic to generalise specific perceptions and reflections on reported practice because the sample amount is not representative of the majority of Norwegian teachers. Collected data material from observations is also limited due to the small number of observed lessons and time spent in each classroom. Each observed lesson lasted no longer than one English lesson, and three classrooms were visited. In compliance with ethical considerations, the researcher did not receive any personal information about learners that were present during the observation. Hence, it is difficult to make any assumptions or hypotheses about oral engagement among these learners. Having access to such information about learner profiles may have shed a different light on the observation data, but it was not obtained for ethical reasons.

It is important to acknowledge that all data material from observations and interviews was collected individually by the researcher, which may have introduced bias or subjective intentions. Even though previous research and theoretical background were used in the process

of designing the interview guide and observation sheet, it is a limitation that the material used to collect data was self-made and relied on the choices of the researcher. This could potentially impact the reliability of collected data and lower the quality of this study. Questions from the interview guide and chosen categories from the observation sheet could lack accuracy due to the limited prior research concerning the present study's research questions. As this is a master's thesis, the researcher has limited knowledge of every aspect related to FLSA, and it is important to keep in mind that imprecisions, errors, and subjective beliefs could occur as well as that some interpretations of the data may have been coloured by the researcher's own beliefs.

The two last limitations of this study are the lack of quantitative research methods included in the present study and the absent perceptions from learners with FLSA. The researcher chose to not include in-depth interviews with learners for two reasons. Firstly, there are conducted a larger number of studies that investigate learners' perceptions of FLSA, and it was decided to investigate the larger research gap concerning teachers' perceptions. The second reason involves the limited time and size of this thesis. Including in-depth interviews and observations of learners would require an extended thesis. A qualitative approach was seen as more appropriate when investigating teachers' perceptions and practice, however, it provides a limited number of perspectives to rely on.

There are certain propositions for future research concerning teachers' perceptions and practices related to FLSA in EFL classrooms. Accordingly, future studies should explore the mechanisms underlying the relationship between teacher cognition, teachers' perceptions, and teachers' practices. The first proposition involves increasing the observed time in the teachers' 7th grade classes. This would provide a more accurate view of the specific teachers' practices and put certain occurrences in context. The researcher sees it as relevant to follow a target class over an extended period to observe changes, such as reduced or increased FLSA among learners and investigate the reason behind these changes. It is also proposed that younger and older learners should be observed to investigate which teaching strategies that could result in preventing or reducing FLSA. Present findings indicate that there are suggested strategies to prevent FLSA from an early age, as well as incorporated teaching methods to reduce FLSA. It is also suggested that observing and interviewing a larger number of teachers is an essential proposition for future research. This would provide a more reliable representation of teachers' perspectives, beliefs, and generalised practices. Moreover, it is seen as relevant to inspect other perspectives provided by experienced teachers. However, the last proposition for future

research would be to focus specifically on which digital tools that can benefit learners with FLSA and how digitalisation affects these learners.

As it is relevant to continue researching this topic, the researcher considers interviewing the three participating teachers again at a later stage to gain input. It is also relevant to observe and interview many learners at a young age and then use the same interview guide as the learners get older to investigate the circumstances around occurrence, development, reduction, and factors influencing FLSA. In addition, it is suggested to investigate other scaffolding strategies to prevent FLSA from a young age. The researcher considers conducting quantitative research methods to supplement retrieved findings from the present study from a larger sample size.

5.4 Implications for teaching

The present study highlights the need for further investigation into the role of preventing FLSA and preparing learners for the assessment and evaluation of oral participation when they reach 8th grade. The present study's findings establish new avenues for future research, particularly around pedagogical practices on reducing and preventing FLSA among Norwegian EFL learners. New revelations indicate that teachers should acknowledge that FLSA is a common phenomenon among learners. FLSA has been discussed a large amount since Horwitz et al. (1986) created a measuring scale for FLSA in their research almost forty years ago. Still, there are no signs of FLSA disappearing or decreasing. Therefore, it is important to be aware of how to identify FLSA among learners and acknowledge their feelings. Considering these results, it is clear to be wary of body language and behavioural changes during English lessons as learners get older. By conducting a needs analysis and understanding what learners struggle with, the teacher can choose appropriate strategies to build confidence, self-efficacy, and willingness to speak and reduce FLSA. It is suggested that teachers should try to be updated on recent research relevant to teaching methods and learners' needs. This way, teachers can focus on preventing FLSA rather than reducing it. For learners to be able to present and perform in an FL, they need to gradually adapt and encounter challenges that are possible to accomplish. Teachers should use suggested strategies e.g., games, pair work, reading aloud etc., to prevent and reduce FLSA among learners to scaffold them in achieving an improved language learning outcome and become confident and proficient FL speakers.

6. Conclusion

This master's thesis set out to study teachers' perceptions and reported practices related to foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) among Norwegian 7th grade learners in the EFL classroom. The present study aimed to answer two research questions. The first research question involved teachers' perceptions of FLSA in the English subject, while the second research question concerned teachers' reported practices to prevent and reduce FLSA among 7th graders. A qualitative data collection method that included both observation and interview was seen as appropriate in the attempt to answer the two research questions. Three teachers were chosen as participants based on their English teaching qualifications, background, and teaching experience. Each teacher was observed during one English lesson and participated in an in-depth interview promptly after observation. The observation sheet was firmly based on prior research relevant to the research questions. Additionally, the observation sheet was developed to observe teaching strategies in the 7th grade English classroom to supplement the teachers' reported practices. The interview guide was developed based on previous research and the aims of the study. The interview guide had three parts, one part provided an overview of the teachers' experience and background, the second part involved questions to investigate the teachers' perceptions of FLSA, and the last part was based on spontaneous questions made from observed data and the observation sheet, along with other reported practices related to reducing and preventing FLSA.

The main results revealed that the three teachers had similar perceptions and teaching strategies when encountering learners with FLSA. Significant findings indicated that to reduce FLSA, teachers need to identify and address this phenomenon, and there are specific methods to recognise these learners. Moreover, results showed that there are several factors influencing the occurrence of FLSA in the EFL classroom. Regarding research question 1, involving teachers' perceptions of FLSA, data analysis revealed two main codes common for all three teachers. These codes concerned how they recognised FLSA and common beliefs about factors influencing FLSA in the EFL classroom. These results were discussed with previous research and the present research question. Regarding recognising FLSA, findings indicated that observing learners' behavioural patterns and body language were reportedly methods used to recognise learners with FLSA. Current findings display that the classroom environment, the presence of native speakers or fluent English speakers in the classroom, the relation between teacher and learners, and teachers' qualifications in English teaching may affect the occurrence of FLSA. Further, the three teachers and prior research were in unison in the viewpoint that for

learners to prepare for handling anxiety-provoking situations such as presentations or being evaluated in oral speaking contexts, teachers had to create a safe classroom environment, build rapport with their learners, facilitate their self-efficacy, as well as be able to recognise learners with FLSA and meet their needs.

Findings suggested several classroom practices and teaching strategies that could prevent or reduce FLSA, as well as gradually adapting learners for future presentations. Regarding the second research question concerning teachers' (reported) practices, analysis of data resulted in 10 teaching strategies provided by the three teachers. This involved cooperation with parents, practising the use of voice, reading aloud, establishing predictable classroom routines, organising group activities, using songs and games, using familiar and interesting topics, digital tools, and presentations. This collection of classroom practices was discussed with prior studies and data collected from the observations to answer the second research question. It was concluded that these specific suggested teaching strategies could contribute to increasing the learners' willingness to speak, oral engagement, and self-efficacy, resulting in the prevention or reduction of FLSA among learners in the Norwegian 7th grade EFL classroom. Presentations and speaking an FL in front of peers are difficult to avoid today, especially when the evaluation and grading of oral performances begin in 8th grade. Consequently, it was considered pertinent to investigate how the teacher can empower learners to effectively handle anxiety-provoking situations.

The present study attempted to contribute to the current research gap through four aspects. The first aspect involved that few previous studies focused on teachers' perspectives and specific classroom practices. The current study set out to investigate the perceptions of English teachers with a wealth of experience to draw on. The second aspect was based on the little research done on FLSA among young learners. Most prior studies investigated university students or learners older than 16 years. Still, FLSA is an occurring phenomenon among young learners as well. The present findings confirmed the applicability of international research conclusions to this unique context and were seen as the third aspect. In addition, this was seen as relevant for the researcher who was soon a fully qualified English teacher. Teaching in general tends to be contextually situated and dependent on location, meaning that the EFL classroom in Norway could encompass significant contrasts and differences to EFL classrooms around the world. Despite there being differences in teaching strategies and teacher cognition, as well as varied learning environments, culture, and learners' levels of English oral skills and proficiency,

teachers in the present study and prior studies from other countries still share similar perceptions and practices toward encountering learners with FLSA.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – E-mail

Hei X!

Jeg går siste år på grunnskolelærer 5-10 og skriver nå master i engelsk. Der skriver jeg en kvalitativ studie om læreres synspunkt og praksis rundt elever med «speaking anxiety» i Engelsk på 7 trinn. Dette er en studie hvor jeg intervjuer lærere og i noen tilfeller observerer en time. Jeg trenger 3-4 lærere som underviser i engelsk på 7 trinn og lurer på om du ønsker å høre om en av lærerne på Eiganes vil stille som kandidat. Kandidatene vil være helt anonyme og det vil ikke være mulig å spore tilbake til skolen. Intervju vil vare estimert 30 minutter. Jeg planlegger å gjennomføre intervjuene i januar. Hvis du/dere ønsker mer informasjon om masteroppgaven, er det bare å ta kontakt. Håper på svar!

8.2 Appendix B – Consent form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

Teachers' perception and practices related to foreign language speaking anxiety in the 7th grade EFL classroom?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke læreres oppfatning av snakkevegring og hvilke tiltak som reduserer snakkevegring på 7 trinn. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål
Dette er en masteroppgave tilknyttet grunnskolelærerutdanningen 5-10 trinn med fordypning i faget engelsk. Formålet med dette prosjektet er å undersøke læreres oppfatning og praksis relatert til å forebygge og motvirke snakkevegring i engelskfaget på 7 trinn. Prosjektet gjennomføres via en kvalitativ studie med et utvalg engelsklærere på 7 trinn. Målet mitt er å lære av erfarne lærere og utvikle en større forståelse av snakkevegring og hvilke tiltak som er gunstig i møte med elever med snakkevegring. Masteroppgaven vil bli skrevet på engelsk, men forskningen og innhenting av data vil foregå på norsk i hensyn til deltakerne.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Universitetet i Stavanger er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du er lærer som underviser engelsk i 7 klasse. Tre til fire lærere vil få spørsmål om å delta på intervju. Utvalget vil også få spørsmål om tillatelse til å observere en undervisningstime i klasserommet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?
• Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du deltar i et individuelt intervju. Det vil vare ca. 30 minutter. Intervjuet inneholder spørsmål om din oppfatning av snakkevegring og hvordan du jobber med det i klasserommet. Spørsmålene vil bli fordelt på over tre kategorier. Hvis ønskelig kan du få intervjuguiden tilsendt på forhånd. Det kan forekomme spørsmål som oppstår under observasjon i undervisningstimen. Jeg vil ta lydopptak og notater fra intervjuet. Et lydopptak vil hindre misforståelser og skape mer nøyaktig datainnsamling. Intervjuet vil foregå i januar, men mer nøyaktig tid og sted avtales på dine premisser.
• Du vil få spørsmål der jeg ber om tillatelse til å observere en undervisningstime i ditt klasserom. Her vil det kun bli tatt skriftlige notater og ingen av elevene dine vil bli involvert eller observert i denne timen. Observasjonen baserer seg på at du utfører en aktivitet som har et mål å styrke elever i muntlige ferdigheter. Du velger og utfører aktiviteten selv.

Det er frivillig å delta
Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Det vil ikke påvirke ditt forhold til skolen, kollegaer, elever eller foreldre. Dine elever trenger ikke et samtykkeskjema, men muntlig informasjon i forkant av observasjonen. Dette grunnet observasjonsfokuset vil ikke være på elevene, men på hvordan aktivitetene er satt opp i en undervisningssituasjon.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger
Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Det er kun meg og veileder som vil ha tilgang til dine personopplysninger.
- Navnet og kontaktopplysningene dine blir anonymisert gjennom tallkode. Det er kun jeg som vil vite hvilken tallkode som tilhører deg. Det betyr at lydopptaket fra intervju er eneste materialet som vil inneholde personopplysninger, alt annet vil bli direkte erstattet med tallkode.
- Lydfilene blir lagret på en sikker server på passord beskyttet PC.
- Ingen personopplysninger vil bli publisert. Du vil dermed ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?
Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 01.12.2023. Etter prosjektslutt vil datamaterialet med dine personopplysninger anonymiseres. Lydopptak og annet datamateriale som kan inneholde personopplysninger vil bli permanent slettet etter prosjektslutt. Anonymiserte opplysninger vil ikke slettes, men kunne gjenbrukes til forskning.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?
Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra *[sett inn navn på behandlingsansvarlig institusjon]* har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter
Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:
- Fakultet for utdanningsvitenskap og humaniora / Institutt for grunnskolelærerutdanning, idrett og spesialpedagogikk ved Milica Savic (milica.savic@uis.no) eller Maren Svendsen (250550@uis.no)
- Vårt personvernombud: Rolf Jegervatn (personvernombud@uis.no)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Milica Savic   *Maren Svendsen*
(veileder)   (student)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Teachers' perception and practices related to foreign language speaking anxiety in the 7th grade EFL classroom*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

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

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

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

8.3 Appendix C – Observation sheet

Categories	Subcategories	Checklist	Comments	Notes for the interview
Description				
Activity setup	The activity involves individual work			
	The activity involves group work			
	The activity involves using digital tools			
	The activity provides authentic dialogue (film, audio, TV etc)			
	The activity focuses on practising learned language			
	The activity focuses on producing a new language			
Interaction	The activity provides active feedback (from learners/teachers)			
	The activity provides learner-learner communication			
	The activity provides teacher-learner communication			
	The learners speak in front of the whole class			
	The learners discuss in groups/pairs before answering questions			
Topic	The teacher introduces a new topic			
	They work on a familiar topic			
	The topic focuses on culture or literature			
	The topic focuses on language learning (oral skills)			
Scaffolding	The teacher provides vocabulary			
	The teacher provides sentence structures or phrases			
	The teacher mainly speaks English			
	The teacher mainly speaks Norwegian			
	The learners mainly speak English			
	The learners mainly speak Norwegian			
Additional comments				

8.4 Appendix D – Interview guide in Norwegian

Background questions
1. Hvor lenge har du jobbet som lærer?
2. Hvilke kvalifikasjoner/ utdanninger har du som er relevant for engelskfaget?
3. Hvilken aldersgruppe pleier du å undervise/har du mest erfaring med i engelskfaget?
4. Hvilke klasser underviser du nå?
5. Hvor lenge har du undervist observasjonsklassen i engelsk?

Speaking anxiety:
6. Hvilken erfaring har du knyttet til elever med snakkevegring?
7. Hvordan gjenkjenner du elever med snakkevegring og har de noen fellestrekk?
8. Hvordan ser du forskjell på elever med snakkevegring og introverte elever?
9. Har du elever med snakkevegring i engelsk klasserommet ditt?
10. Har du elever med Engelsk som morsmål eller er snakker tilnærmet flytende i klasserommet ditt, og hvordan påvirker dette elevene med snakkevegring?
11. Snakker du med elevene dine om frykten man kan oppleve for å snakke engelsk?
12. Hvilke faktorer tror du øker/skaper snakkevegring?
13. Hvordan definerer du snakkevegring?
14. Hva tror du kan forhindre snakkevegring?
15. Hva tror du kan redusere snakkevegring?

Teaching practice:
Fra observasjon
16. Hva var formålet med undervisningstimen/aktiviteten?
17. Hvorfor valgte du den type aktivitet/aktiviteter?
18. Stiller spørsmål fra observasjonen som er notert i "notes for interview".
Generelt
19. Fra dine egne erfaringe, hvilke aktiviteter skaper (mest) muntlig engasjement i timen?
20. Engasjerer disse aktivitetene elever med snakkevegring også?
21. Under gruppearbeid, hvem plasserer du elever med snakkevegring sammen med?
22. Gjennom årene du har undervist engelsk, har du utviklet noen tiltak eller strategier for å engasjere elever med snakkevegring?
23. Har du sett eller erfart noen undervisningsmetoder som ikke var gunstig for elever med snakkevegring?
24. Har du erfaringer med bruk av digitale verktøy for å styrke elever muntlig, spesielt elever med snakkevegring?

8.5 Appendix E – Interview guide in English

Background questions:
1. How long have you been working as a teacher?
2. What are your teaching qualifications concerning English teaching?
3. Which age group do you usually teach/have more experience with when teaching English?
4. Which classes do you teach this year?
5. How long have you been teaching English in this observation class?

FLSA:
6. Do you have any experience with learners with FLSA?
7. How do you recognize learners with FLSA, and do they have any features in common?
8. How do you differentiate learners with FLSA from introverted learners?
9. Are there any learners with FLSA in your current English classroom?
10. Are there any learners that have English as a native language or are very proficient in your current classroom, and how does this affect learners with speaking anxiety?
11. Do you talk to your learners about the fear of speaking English?
12. Which factors do you believe cause/increase FLSA?
13. What is your definition of FLSA?
14. What do you think can prevent FLSA?
15. What do you think can reduce FLSA?

Teaching practice:
From observation
16. What was the main purpose of today's lesson/activity?
17. Why did you choose that kind of activity?
18. Asking about observations written down in "notes for interview".
In general
19. From your own experiences, which activities create oral engagement?
20. Do these activities engage learners with FLSA too?
21. During group work, who do you place learners with FLSA with?
22. During the years that you have taught English, have you developed any strategies for engaging learners with FLSA?
23. Were there any strategies that you tried, but did not work out for learners with FLSA?
24. Do you have experience with the use of digital tools to develop oral skills, especially when it comes to learners with FLSA?