The Effect of Role-Playing on Students' Foreign Language Anxiety and Oral Participation

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Abstract

This thesis explores the effect of role-playing on foreign language anxiety and oral participation. Data was collected through a mixed-methods approach involving observation, interview, and survey. The study investigates the attitudes, opinions, and practices of English students and teachers in a lower secondary school in Agder. Findings reveal that while teachers have differing opinions and attitudes toward role-playing to alleviate foreign language anxiety, most participants believe role-playing is an excellent way to enhance oral performance. Findings show that students speak more during role-playing games and activities. In addition, students with positive experiences with role-playing seem to benefit from role-playing. They appear to overcome some of the obstacles they face in their language learning, such as anxiety, nervousness or speaking apprehensions.

Previous research predominantly focuses on university students. This thesis contributes to previous research by presenting findings from younger students from Norway. Comparing the results from this study with other research might present implications for how we educate and teach in schools across Norway.

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1.0   Introduction

Norwegian society is influenced more than before by an increasingly globalizing world. Therefore, having a language that allows communication between different people from different countries is becoming more important. The English language is considered a lingua franca and English is spoken in most parts of the world. Because of this, students need to know the language to communicate with people from other parts of the world. Speaking English is essential for students from Norway since few countries can communicate in Norwegian, and English is important for travel, social media, and gaming. In addition to this, English is also practical in many work environments.

The English language is defined as a second language in the Norwegian curriculum; however, it does not have status as an official language in Norway. Informally, English has a status between a foreign and a second language (Horverak et al., 2022, p. 35). This thesis will refer to English as a foreign language, not a second language. The reason for referring to English as a foreign language is because of the immigration Norway has seen in recent years. Many students in Norwegian schools have mixed backgrounds or have immigrated to Norway. This will often lead to students having two languages at home - Norwegian and the language of their birth country. English will, therefore, become their third or foreign language. Using English as a foreign language will, therefore, include more people than English as a second language.

1.1   Background

Foreign language anxiety is an issue for some students in Norwegian schools. Students struggle with speaking in front of others and often find ways to avoid speaking their foreign language. Some researchers argue that students struggling with foreign language learning might suffer from specific foreign language anxiety (Alias & Rashid, 2018; Awan et al., 2010; Horverak et al., 2022; Horwitz et al., 1986; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013). At the same time, other researchers claim that there might not be a specific anxiety but rather a general anxiety that prevents students from participating in their language learning (Aida, 1994; Bashosh et al., 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Young, 1990). Examining whether specific language anxiety exists in Norwegian schools can help many students through their education, in addition to helping teachers adapt their lessons accordingly.

There are many skills needed for students to speak well in any language. According to Maley and Duff (1982), many of these skills are given little attention during students' education. Skills like sensitivity to tone, anticipation, adaptability, and appropriateness are not taught to students through textbooks and other class materials. Communicating organically and realistically with others might become more challenging for students to master (p. 7). Educational materials, such as textbooks, often display expressionless people with no conflict or surprises. Educational materials rarely address how identity impacts our language. The language used in textbooks is not affected by age, gender, social status, or geographical location (Basaran et al., 2015; Cunico, 2005; Salies, 1995). Our differences, however, matter when we are communicating with others. We adapt to the listener and change our language so it is appropriate to the specific situation. Maley and Duff (1982) also argue that the physical environment, roles, moods, and attitudes affect communication. None of this is extensively covered in standard learning materials.

Using drama techniques might help students feel less anxious and uncomfortable speaking English, making them better speakers. Research shows that role-playing games can help students in university with their oral English (Akyüz & Tanış, 2020; Basaran et al., 2015; Bessadet, 2022; Celik, 2019; Cunico, 2005; Lo et al., 2021; Maley & Duff, 1982). A study by Sağlamel and Kayaoğlu (2013) shows that drama activities can be beneficial for students struggling with emotions such as anxiety, nervousness, and stress. Role-playing is one possible way to lessen negative emotions towards speaking in the classroom, and it is also mentioned in the curriculum. The English subject curriculum states that students in Norwegian schools must "explore and use pronunciation patterns and words and expressions in play, song and role-play" (Ministry of Education, 2019, my translation). Teachers are responsible for students and their learning and must follow the curriculum's aims. This means that teachers should introduce students to role-playing as an exercise.

1.2   Aim of the study

This project aims to investigate the effect of role-playing on students' foreign language anxiety. There is a general agreement that students should use their target language as much as possible when learning the language. However, some students choose not to speak because they fear making mistakes, being laughed at, or being uncomfortable. The challenges some students face in their language learning might make them reluctant to speak or participate in their language class. The same challenges also push teachers to produce

alternative ways of teaching English. This study will investigate drama techniques, more specifically role-playing, to understand if this can affect students' experience with foreign language learning and how they affect oral performance.

The topics addressed in this study might benefit teachers and students across Norway. As mentioned above, the current study aims to investigate whether drama techniques, such as role-playing, can decrease foreign language anxiety and enhance oral performance. In addition, this study might contribute to more knowledge about foreign language anxiety among students in schools across Norway and provide knowledge about how to prevent this.

1.3   Research questions

The basis for this thesis is two research questions (RQs) to help investigate the topic of role-playing and foreign language anxiety.

RQ1: Can drama help students produce oral English with greater ease and comfort?
RQ2: Can drama be used to enhance oral performance in the EFL classroom?

A mixed methods methodology was chosen to address these two research questions. A mixed-method approach involves using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a study. The qualitative methods were nonparticipant observation and interviews with a teacher, two teacher-students, and two groups of lower secondary school students. The quantitative method for this thesis was a survey sent to teachers across Norway. The information from all methods will help clarify the relationship between role-playing and foreign language anxiety.

The main findings indicate that students benefit from role-playing games and activities. First, findings show that students speak more during role-playing than they usually do. Furthermore, role-playing appears to help alleviate students' foreign language anxiety. Findings seem to indicate that students with a positive experience with role-playing might overcome some of their previous speaking apprehension. Some students seem to experience decreased levels of foreign language anxiety and are less afraid to speak in front of people after the role-playing game.

1.4   Definitions

This thesis centers around drama and foreign language anxiety. Drama is a comprehensive term that encompasses much. For this reason, defining what is meant when using the term 'drama' is necessary. There are several definitions of drama. For instance, some researchers define it as "various oral activities that include creativity" (Akyüz & Tanış, 2020, p. 147), while others define it as "the spontaneous, creative simulation of real-life activities, in which the whole class participates" (Salies, 1995, p. 4). One drama technique that is commonly used is role-playing. Role-playing refers to an activity where students take on the role of a fictitious person (Celik, 2019, p. 115). Students must talk and behave the way they imagine the person would talk and behave.

When referring to drama in this thesis, the focus will be on role-playing in different varieties. Role-playing has different forms; throughout the text, both role-playing games and activities are mentioned. Role-playing games are where students, or players, interact with each other to navigate a story or event. Students can change the story's outcome through their words and choices during the game. Role-playing activities are activities where students act out a scenario, usually with spontaneous interactions and conversations, without relying on scripts to guide them. Examples of activities like this include mock interviews, speed dating, improvisation, or imitation of someone or something. Even though role-playing activities are usually spontaneous without scripts, they can also be Reader's Theatre. Reader's Theatre is where students use only verbal communication to perform a script. Another role-playing activity is mime, where students only use their non-verbal communication.

Figure 1 – Examples of drama techniques that can be used for educational purposes.

The role-playing game that will receive the most attention is called Reacting to the Past. This role-playing game is a cooperative learning exercise meant to engage students in learning about historical events. Two groups of lower secondary students in a school in Agder performed one of the Reacting to the Past role-playing games called 'From Fjords to Prairies.' The teacher, teacher-students, and students of these classes became the participants in this activity. Students assume roles with a description and a historical context during a game. Students must then negotiate and debate the relevant topic (Barnard College, 2024). The students participating in this study debated whether it was wise and beneficial to emigrate to the United States or stay in Norway. The game aims to help students understand the complexity of past events and grow more empathetic toward others by putting themselves in someone else's shoes.

2.0   Theoretical framework

2.1   Introduction

The following chapter investigates theories and research surrounding drama and foreign language anxiety. Most research on drama and foreign language anxiety focuses on higher education students, but it can also be relevant to younger students. This chapter will also explain how drama relates to language learning. Furthermore, it will examine the English curriculum to determine how the curriculum addresses role-playing and foreign language anxiety. Finally, there is a section on cooperative learning and how it relates to role-playing games and activities.

Different methods were used to procure sources for this paper. Some sources were obtained through different search engines, namely the university's library search engine and Google Scholar. Search words and phrases were, for instance, "second language anxiety," "foreign language anxiety," "drama and foreign language anxiety," "drama and language learning," and "role-playing and second language anxiety." Other sources were found through snowball sampling. This sampling occurs when participants or literature provide additional sources to the relevant research (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 243). Specifically, the researcher found sources from the bibliography of other studies to further investigate the relationship between role-playing and foreign language anxiety.

2.2 Previous research

A recent study from Norway and Poland by Horverak et al. (2022) shows that students benefitted from a five-step method designed to alleviate foreign language anxiety. The five-step method aimed to have students identify what they deemed essential in addition to the obstacles they faced during their language learning process. After identifying facilitating and debilitating aspects of language learning, possible solutions were discussed in class. The method allows students to become more responsible in their learning and help each other (Horverak et al., 2022, p. 35). Results from this study also show that anxiety occurs among students at all levels of proficiency. However, the level of anxiety increases at the more advanced levels. Higher levels of anxiety are, according to Horverak et al. (2022), a result of higher expectations among students with high proficiency. For instance, English students in Norway are generally more anxious than Spanish students. Higher levels of anxiety among English students can be attributed to the fact that English is similar to a second language in Norway and, therefore, more expectations of higher proficiency. There is little expectation of high proficiency in Spanish and, therefore, less pressure to perform at a high level.

Students had more agency and autonomy over their learning process through the five-step method. Students set goals for their learning and improve these during the learning process. The obstacle for most students was anxiety. To improve their learning and overcome obstacles, most students expressed that they wanted to speak more and be more active (Horverak et al., 2022, p. 44). After students had used the method, they experienced decreased levels of anxiety and increased levels of agency (Horverak et al., 2022, p. 47). The method helped students take responsibility for their learning, which, in the process, might have lessened their anxiety.

Many researchers have investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and foreign language learning. Most researchers argue that foreign language anxiety is unique to the foreign language classroom (Alamer & Almulhim, 2021; Alias & Rashid, 2018; Awan et al., 2010; Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz et al., 1986). Although the predominant view among researchers is that language anxiety is a specific anxiety related to the language classroom, some researchers explore the possibility that foreign language anxiety is not its own specific thing but rather a general anxiety students experience. These researchers have found that some parts of foreign language anxiety are specific, and other parts are manifestations of general anxiety (Aida, 1994; Bashosh et al., 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

2.2.1 Specific language anxiety or general anxiety

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) found, using a test that measures foreign language anxiety, that students are more anxious in the foreign language class than in other classes. Therefore, foreign language anxiety is unique to the language classroom and distinct from other anxieties (p. 130). This view is supported by other researchers, who believe that foreign language anxiety is situational anxiety related to the foreign language classroom (Alias & Rashid, 2018; Awan et al., 2010; Horverak et al., 2022; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013). Whereas a specific anxiety will only happen in specific situations, general anxiety can occur in multiple situations and settings. For instance, if a student is anxious to speak in a foreign language classroom and is comfortable speaking elsewhere, it can be assumed that they suffer from foreign language anxiety. However, if a student is anxious to speak in all classes, they do not suffer from foreign language anxiety but rather a general anxiety of speaking in front of others.

The three stages of language learning are output, processing, and input. According to Awan et al. (2010, p. 34), the most anxiety-provoking stages are processing and output. Input involves all the information students hear and see, for instance, from the teacher. Processing refers to the internal processing that occurs when new information is presented. Output refers to the retrieval of knowledge and involves the actual response of the student (Awan et al., 2010, p. 34; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 255). Communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation are three types of anxiety that affect students in the foreign language classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) agree with Horwitz, Horwitz, and Copes' (1986) findings on communication apprehension; however, they disagree that test anxiety is unique to the foreign language classroom. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) claim that communicative anxiety can interfere with students' retrieval of knowledge. They also argue that test anxiety is a general problem that is not restricted to the language classroom. Aida (1994) argues that test anxiety may occur because of deficits in students' study or language skills (p. 157). Students might not know how to process and organize the information and lesson material because their attention is divided between the task and worrying about others' perceptions. Bashosh et al. (2013) describe shyness as a personality trait that may affect students' interactions and life situations (p. 2036). Therefore, this trait is not situation-based and is a part of a broader general anxiety. Young (1990) found in her investigation of students' perspectives on anxiety

and speaking that speaking a foreign language is not the source of students' anxiety. Students fear exposure, meaning they will be anxious when they have to perform in any way in front of others (Young, 1990). These findings support the idea that foreign language anxiety is not foreign language specific but related to general anxiety among students (p. 546).

2.2.2 Facilitating or debilitating?

There is a disagreement among some researchers about whether anxiety is facilitating or debilitating to students when they are learning a foreign language. Facilitating anxiety is, according to Aida (1994), anxiety that leads to improved performance, and debilitating anxiety is anxiety that leads to impaired performance (p. 551). Trang (2013) claims that anxiety can be both facilitating and debilitating depending on its degree. For some students, anxiety played a role in warning them to pay attention and study so they could pass the test (pp.235-236). Students with work ambitions who needed to do well in a foreign language were pushed by the anxiety to perform well. In addition, students without a degree of anxiety may think they are doing well in their foreign language class and, therefore, choose not to study, making no progress (Trang et al., 2013, p. 234). Other researchers believe anxiety is debilitating to students. Students report that they "freeze" when they have to speak, forget things in test situations, and overstudy; however, they still perform poorly. In extreme cases of anxiety, students skip class and avoid studying (Horwitz et al., 1986, pp. 126-127).

2.2.3 Drama and language learning

Many voices within educational research claim that drama activities can benefit students' language learning. Using drama techniques as a language learning method can help students with many linguistic and other skills.

Drama techniques in language learning can take many forms. Drama consists of several techniques that combine speaking, listening, thinking, exploration, and use of the environment. It is a multi-sensory tool that historically has been expressed through dancing, dressing up in costumes and masks, and storytelling (Bessadet, 2022, p. 527). In addition, drama is a way for students to learn by doing (Celik, 2019, p. 112). "I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand" (Salies, 1995, p. 12) is a quotation popularly attributed to the Chinese philosopher Confucius. The quotation illustrates the importance of learning through experiences. Students can experience different perspectives and better

understand events and people by exploring both the theoretical and practical sides of the target language.

As mentioned earlier, textbooks and class material are generally filled with emotionless texts where the characters do not disagree, and factors like age, gender, social status, or geographical location do not affect the language. Several researchers claim that drama is how to reintroduce emotions into the language (Cunico, 2005; Maley & Duff, 1982; Salies, 1995). According to Cunico (2005), drama exposes students to conflict and difficult situations. For instance, role-playing activities can help students navigate through difficult emotions or topics. Using role-playing, removing the demanding situations to a fictitious world can make the problematic situations distant enough for students to deal with them (Cunico, 2005, p. 27). In addition to the language differences between different ages, genders, and social groups, there are also differences between cultures. The way we use language will change depending on our culture because cultures have different ways of living.

Communication is about more than vocabulary. It is also about body language, intonation, stress, adaptability, and appropriateness. Students must practice using their body language, intonation, and stress to convey emotions (Salies, 1995, p. 6). Role-playing can be one option for students to be better communicators. According to Salies (1995), role-playing can also be a way for students to understand how our language adapts to the roles we take on. Those roles change throughout the day and can be, for instance, student, teacher, mother, or customer. Role-playing imitates the natural situations students will find themselves in in real life and is a way for them to practice appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication.

Even though there are many positive sides to drama techniques in language learning, some opposing sides also need to be addressed. First, the unpredictable nature of role-playing without a script can be daunting for many students. There is no way of knowing what will come next, which can be frightening for some. Secondly, role-playing can be time-consuming. Some role-playing games or activities require time to implement and perform, which must be considered before doing one. Additionally, some students find performing in front of others stressful or anxiety-provoking. Making students comfortable and confident in their roles can take time. Finally, classes often have students with different levels of proficiency. Choosing a role-playing activity that suits everyone can become a difficult task.

Previous research on drama and language learning shows that students generally have positive experiences with the method. Several researchers claim that drama strengthens students' motivation (Celik, 2019; Maley & Duff, 1982) and that students are generally pleased working with drama techniques. According to Maley and Duff (1982), the increase in motivation can be attributed to the active part students play in their learning, alleviating some of the boredom that generally comes with the learning process. Students also express that they can overcome some of the psychological barriers they usually experience. They are more likely to intervene in discussions and teamwork, more confident in their language learning, and less hesitant to speak (Basaran et al., 2015; Bessadet, 2022). Even though a few students articulate adverse reactions toward role-playing and drama techniques in the article by Akyüz and Tanış (2020), most students are pleased with the method, which is supported by the findings of Basaran, Bekler, and Kepenek (2015), where students also had positive experiences with drama techniques for language learning purposes.

Teachers who want to use role-play as a method could benefit from some advice. Bessadet (2022) argues that a critical element to a successful role-play is for the teacher to choose a text based on the interests and linguistic competence of the students. In addition, there should be a focus on the cooperative part of role-playing. Students collaborate and create together, all valid contributors (Cunico, 2005; Salies, 1995). The apprehension to speak might decrease if the teacher can maintain a friendly, supportive environment for students to learn (Bessadet, 2022; Horverak et al., 2022). Furthermore, according to Salies (1995), role-play should only be interrupted when students ask for help. Teachers should not stop role-playing to correct errors.

2.2.4   Drama and foreign language anxiety

In this study, 'drama' is a term used to describe all activities that involve portraying and imitating people, characters, or situations through role-playing or acting. There is a disagreement as to how drama affects foreign language anxiety. Some researchers claim that drama increases the feelings of anxiety among students. Horwitz et al. (1986) and Awan et al. (2010) claim that output and processing are the most anxiety-provoking stages in language learning, which are the critical features of role-playing activities. According to Young (1990), the most anxiety-provoking activity that students can participate in is role-playing. Students tend to freeze up in role-playing situations where they must perform in front of others (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 126).

Other researchers believe that drama can benefit students and decrease anxiety among students, increasing students' motivation and confidence (Boudreault, 2010; Drew & Pedersen, 2010; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013; Stern, 1980). Kaplan (2023) found in his study that teacher-students with moderate foreign language anxiety reported less anxiety after a theatre and drama practices course. The difference was statistically significant, with 33.13 reporting anxiety before the course and 25.97 after the course (p. 88). Lo et al. (2021) argues that Readers Theatre, a drama activity where students only rely on verbal communication, decreased foreign language learning anxiety. Students' levels of stress fluctuated at different stages of Readers Theatre; however, when examining the control group and the experimental group, they found that there was a decrease in anxiety among students in the experimental group and not in the control group. A study of lower-secondary students in Norway found that students felt more confident using their foreign language during and after Readers Theatre (Drew & Pedersen, 2010, p. 12). It was a good way for students to practice oral English (p. 17).

2.2.5 Commonly used methods

Previous research on foreign language anxiety and language learning has investigated students using primarily questionnaires. One often-used test is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), created by Horwitz et al. (1986). The scale measures individuals' level of anxiety specific to the foreign language classroom. FLCAS is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," with a neutral answer in the middle, "neither agree nor disagree." It comprises 33 items measuring three types of language use: input, output, and processing. Each alternative is given a numerical value from one to five. "Strongly disagree" is one, "neither agree nor disagree" is three, and "strongly agree" is five (Aida, 1994, p. 158). The numerical values are reversed on the few negatively loaded items. Finally, all subjects' scores are determined by summing the answers. The final scores will be between 33 and 165, depending on how much anxiety the subject experiences. A high FLCA score means high anxiety, and a low score means low anxiety.

Figure 2 – An overview of the 33 items in the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. Information retrieved from Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) research on Foreign language classroom anxiety.

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

Another commonly used method that is often used in addition to the questionnaire or test mentioned above is the interview. Interviews are often used to gain more profound knowledge (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2022, p. 117). The interviewees are often students; however, researchers may also select teachers. The participants may elaborate on their answers and give more information to researchers. Previous research predominantly uses semi-structured interviews that allow follow-up questions and clarification questions.

2.3 Pedagogical theory

The education system consists of numerous pedagogical theories. Our beliefs about the acquisition of knowledge and the theories we follow and we believe to be true justify the practices used in classrooms worldwide (Gergen, 2001, p. 115). The large question facing teachers is how students acquire knowledge and how we can help students acquire the knowledge they need to function in this world. Constructivism is one pedagogical theory. It highlights the importance of experience and interaction as essential to learning (Jonassen, 1991, p. 10). Through experience and interaction, students create meaning and knowledge about the world (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2022, p. 51). According to Jonassen (1991), the goal is to make the learning process more meaningful and realistic for students.

Theorists within the constructivist school of thought believe that the receiver constructs knowledge. The thought that it is up to the receiver to construct the knowledge suggests that the knowledge provided by the teacher might not be the same knowledge

constructed by the students (Jonassen, 1991, p. 12). Gergen (2001) is one researcher who believes that the receiver, or student, constructs knowledge. He claims that information has no meaning until students give them that privilege (p. 119). Furthermore, students will always select differently. They will construct knowledge subjectively since the meaning of symbols and language is subjective (von Glasersfeld, 1988, p. 5). In addition, constructivists believe that the social reality changes and, therefore, there can be no constant. The 'correct' answer might be different tomorrow (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2022, p. 49). Students cannot agree upon a constant reality that is always the same.

2.3.1 Prominent voices of constructivism

Three prominent voices within the constructivist theory are Jean Piaget, John Dewey, and Lev Vygotsky. Even though they are all part of the constructivist theory, they have differing opinions. Piaget's leading theory involves cognitive accommodation and cognitive assimilation (Gergen, 2001, p. 117). Even though these two terms are closely tied to Piaget, several other researchers have provided definitions for them. From a cognitive development perspective, assimilation involves integrating knowledge into existing cognitive structures. Accommodation refers to a process where the cognitive structures must be adapted for the information to take hold (Hanfstingl et al., 2022, p. 329).

'Learning by doing' is a phrase popularly associated with John Dewey. In his work, Experience and Education (1938), Dewey stresses the importance of experience as a part of the learning process. According to him, students thrive best through meaningful learning relevant to their interests and lives. Furthermore, students' experiences are moving forces (Dewey, 1938, p. 38), which means that experiences are a way to set the learning processes in motion for students to continue their development. As a final point, he expresses that "everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had" (Dewey, 1938, p. 27). The meaning of this quote entails that the outcome or the result of the experience depends on the values and nature of the experience. For example, students working on a role-playing game will have an experience doing that game. The quality of the experience is dependent on the preparation and implementation of the role-playing game. Learning will occur if the quality of the experience is good, and students have prepared well. If the quality is poor, learning will likely not happen to the same extent.

The third prominent constructivist theorist is Lev Vygotsky. Like the other two, he focused on experience and interaction as cornerstones of learning. One of Vygotsky's (1978) well-known theories, called the zone of proximal development, was originally created to consider children's learning capabilities. A term commonly used in the theory of the zone of proximal development is scaffolding. It involves collaboration and interaction between students, as well as guidance from peers and teachers to maximize their learning potential. The aim is for students to help each other excel in their learning and act as scaffolding for each other. The relationship between teacher-student and student-student becomes essential for the educational process (Gergen, 2001, p. 123).

2.3.2 Constructivism and drama

Basaran (2015) argues that the use of drama is justified through constructivism because of the experimental and social dimensions of language learning. Role-playing allows students to deconstruct and reconstruct historical and real-world events. Gergen (2001) illustrates that life is similar to a series of jazz concerts, with an endless supply of new situations and people that students must improvise alongside. In his article, Jonassen (1991) argues that teachers should establish authentic environments that utilize the context relevant to the learning experience. Role-playing fits well within the framework of constructivism, considering the focus put on interaction and experience. Furthermore, the emphasis on improvisation and authenticity mentioned above should be taken into account.

2.3.3 Krashen's affective filter

Krashen's input hypothesis is a well-known pedagogical model. In this hypothesis, he highlights the affective filter as a barrier preventing learners from acquiring language (Krashen, 1985, p. 3). For learning to take place, students must have a low affective filter. Students will be motivated, calm, confident, and relaxed when experiencing a low affective filter. What can contribute to a low affective filter for one student can create the opposite for another (Krashen, 1985, p. 44). Krashen also highlights the output filter. The output filter differs from the affective filter because instead of preventing the knowledge from being acquired, it prevents the knowledge the individual already knows from being used (Krashen, 1985, p. 45). Students with a high output filter will struggle with presenting their knowledge or producing output.

2.4   Curriculum in English

The Curriculum in English provides guidelines for what knowledge and abilities students should have after their time in primary and lower secondary school. The subject of English helps students develop their cultural understanding, communication skills, and identity. In addition, English is a subject where students will encounter different cultures, further curiosity and engagement, and explore new ways of interpreting the world (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 2). The English curriculum also supplies teachers with competence aims related to the English subject. Many competence aims are relevant to all types of role-playing activities. On the other hand, some are more relevant for more advanced role-playing, with written and improvised text. This study will focus on the competence aims for year ten and elaborate on the relevance of role-playing for that particular age group.

2.4.1   Competence aims after year 10

Some competence aims can be related to general role-playing and drama activities for students of all levels of proficiency. There are also some competence aims that are geared toward students with higher levels of proficiency in English. Most aims relevant to role-playing are related to communication. Students should be able to "use key patterns of pronunciation in communication" and "listen to and understand words and expressions in variants of English" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 8). In addition, students should be able to "express [themselves] with fluency and coherence with a varied vocabulary and idiomatic expressions adapted to the purpose, recipient and situation" and "ask questions and follow up input when talking about various topics adapted to different purposes, recipients and situations" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 9). During role-playing, students will both speak and listen to each other. Some competence aims relate to grammar, and student's ability to reflect and explore are also relevant to role-playing. Students need to possess a degree of grammatical knowledge to communicate with others. The aims related to this are to "use knowledge of word classes and syntax in working on one's own oral and written texts," "explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and Norway," and "explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 9).

The aims listed above are relevant to several types of role-playing activities. However, some role-playing games are more advanced and require more knowledge to execute. One such role-playing game is Reacting to the Past, where students are assigned a character with specific beliefs and goals. Students must communicate, cooperate, and compete to achieve their goals (Barnard College, 2024). Students are expected to write speeches and debate an issue during Reacting to the Past, which requires students to possess some literary skills in addition to communication skills. Examples of competence aims for more advanced role-playing are; "follow [the] rules for spelling, word inflection, syntax, and text structure" and "write formal and informal texts, including multimedia texts with structure and coherence that describe, narrate and reflect, and are adapted to the purpose, recipient and situation" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 9).

2.4.2 Core elements, basic skills, and interdisciplinary work

The English curriculum also includes core elements and basic skills. The core elements are communication, language learning, and working with texts in English. Communication and language learning involves learning pronunciation and vocabulary, so students have choices and possibilities in their interactions. Furthermore, English will help students to create meaning and explore language (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 2). Students are also expected to work with texts in English. Text can be oral or written, printed or digital, factual or fictional, historical or contemporary (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 3). Through various texts, students will get insight into people's ways of thinking and living worldwide.

Students are also expected to practice some basic skills throughout their education. The basic skills for English are reading, writing, oral and digital skills. These skills are meant to help students create meaning, present information, express opinions and ideas, reflect on the various contents of text and speech, and adapt the language to the purpose, receiver, and situation (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 4). Role-playing can help meet the core elements and basic skills students should become proficient in during their education.

Many drama techniques are transferable to several other subjects, which makes interdisciplinary work possible. In addition to English, it is possible to use history, arts and crafts, and Norwegian classes to work with and practice role-playing. Using several classes allows for in-depth learning and can help students learn more in a shorter amount of time.

Students can work on the pronunciation and performance of the role-play in English classes. Depending on the role-play, Norwegian or History classes can study the historical background of the role-playing event. Costumes, props, or stage material might be created in arts and crafts. Another possible way to use several subjects is to choose role-playing games relevant to the interdisciplinary topics of health and life skills and democracy and citizenship. These are common denominators and might make role-playing across subjects easier.

2.5   Cooperative learning

There are several ways for students to learn. Role-playing activities are a part of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning involves working in groups or teams to achieve a common goal. There are five elements of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, appropriate use of collaborative skills, and group processing (Casey & Quennerstedt, 2020; Felder & Brent, 2007). Positive interdependence means all team members rely on each other to achieve goals. What one member does affects the entire group. Individual accountability means that all team members are responsible for their share of the work. Face-to-face promotive interaction means that even though some work is individual, some work must be done interactively. Working with individual and joint work simultaneously requires team members to provide feedback, reasoning, teaching, and encouragement during the process. Appropriate use of collaborative skills refers to the skills in leadership, conflict management, and communication students are encouraged to practice. The fifth and final element is group processing, which means that the groups set goals, assess them throughout the process, and identify changes that should be made to function better in the future (Felder & Brent, 2007, p. 2). All five must be present for a process to be called cooperative learning.

There are some positive sides to cooperative learning. One positive aspect is that students learn from people who are more proficient in English and know more about the language. Students get to practice pronunciation and refine their language through interactions with other students (Foushee et al., 2023, p. 254). Cooperative learning also benefits students who would otherwise struggle with their language learning independently. These students can discuss and work together with other students to solve problems. Furthermore, it is a way for students to learn that everyone depends on one another (Igel & Urquhart, 2012, p. 18). Casey and Quennerstedt (2020) argue in their article that cooperative learning can help students connect the past to the present and the future. Seeing the connections between past, present,

and future is an essential skill for students since it makes them better suited to reflect on and assess the situations in which they find themselves.

Even though there are many positive sides to cooperative learning, some challenges with the technique also need attention. For instance, some students might not do the work that is required of them. The presence of some students opting out of work can lead to resentment among the other students and reluctance toward group work when some students do not pull their weight. In cases of written work, students might not think of creating a coherent piece of work and only slam together sections that do not fit perfectly (Felder & Brent, 2007, p. 2). Furthermore, problems can occur when there are many members per group. According to Igel and Urqhart (2012), larger groups tend to have more loafers than smaller groups. They argue that it is less noticeable in large groups when students choose not to participate in the work. Students, therefore, tend to slack when there are other people to pull their load for them.

Keeping the positive and negative sides of cooperative learning in mind is essential to make the experience as successful as possible. The adverse outcomes can be prevented when teachers are aware of the pitfalls. For instance, teachers must be observant and register what students do throughout the process. When students receive grades on their work, teachers must adjust the average group grade to the individuals (Felder & Brent, 2007, p. 3). This way, students are rewarded for their work, not what other students do. It is a way to correct injustices.

Role-playing activities are a part of cooperative learning. All elements of cooperative learning mentioned above are relevant to role-playing games. Some of the skills that students acquire through role-playing as cooperative learning are collaboration and communication skills. Students are required to interact and work together to achieve shared goals. Also, students must collaborate to find solutions and make decisions for their characters. Students need to be good communicators for role-playing games to be successful. Both verbal and non-verbal communication is an integral part of role-playing and cooperative learning. Feedback and reflection skills are other aspects of role-playing, as is cooperative learning. During the process and after the role-playing game, students share their thoughts and observations, discuss, and give feedback to make future experiences even better. Furthermore, role-playing can be considered cooperative learning because all students must contribute to create a role-playing game, meaning that all students are active participants. Everyone depends on each

other to have a positive experience, and all contributions impact the overall outcome of the role-playing activity.

3.0 Methodology

This study investigates the relationship between drama activities and foreign language anxiety. It will examine some of the anxiety triggers experienced by students and investigate if drama activities can decrease these feelings and enhance students' oral performance. In addition, this study aspires to add knowledge to the field of education and teaching. The participants for the qualitative part of this study were one English teacher, two student-teachers, and two groups of 10th-grade students. There were approximately 50 students altogether. All participants worked or attended a lower secondary school in Agder, Norway. Of the approximately 50 students who were observed, seven agreed to be interviewed. All participants signed consent forms to include their answers in the study.

The first part of the study was an observation of the post-mortem sessions of two different classes who had finished a role-playing game. The second part of the study comprised four different interviews: a one-on-one interview with a teacher and three focus group interviews, one with teacher-students and two with 10th-grade students. The third and last part of the study includes the analysis of results from a survey distributed to teachers across Norway.

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were considered for this study. Quantitative approaches, such as tests and surveys, are types of data collection that are analysed quantitatively and comparable across different groups (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 457). These are often used to collect large amounts of data. On the other hand, qualitative approaches such as observation and interviews provide more profound knowledge about relevant topics and are often used in educational research. As mentioned above, the qualitative data in this study comprises a one-on-one interview, three focus group interviews, and observations of two different classes. The quantitative data consists of a survey. Using more than one method helps to shed light on the complex phenomenon of foreign language anxiety and the effect that drama activities can have on it.

In the following section, I introduce the qualitative and quantitative methods chosen in detail and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each method, in addition to the validity

of the result and credibility of the research. Furthermore, I will describe the ethical considerations I weighed before conducting this study.

3.1 Qualitative data

3.1.1 Observation

Observation is a commonly used method in educational research. Through observation, researchers gather first-hand information from participants and gain a sense of the places serving as research sites (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 248). The observation for this study was of two 10th-grade classes in a school in Agder. The school is somewhat large, with nearly 500 students, and is located in an urban area. There is a diverse student group attending the school. Each class consisted of approximately 25 students. One class was in a small classroom and was quiet. The quiet class consisted of 23 students in total, 14 boys and nine girls. The other class was in a more extensive classroom and was loud and engaged. This class consisted of 29 students in total, 16 boys and 13 girls.

The aim was to collect information about how students felt about role-playing as an activity in English lessons and whether it benefited students' oral performance. There are several definitions of "role-playing games" (Zagal & Deterding, 2018). The definition depends on the form of games one is describing. A general definition of "role-playing games" can be a process where individuals achieve goals and progress according to rules, acting out and immersing themselves in a role and creating an exciting story or simulating a world (Zagal & Deterding, 2018, p. 2). The role-playing game relevant to this study was called 'From Fjords to Prairies' and was about Norwegian emigration to America. Students were divided into four groups: stayers, goers, leaning stay, and leaning go. Through speeches and debate, students had to convince others to their side. The observation lasted for one session of two hours, one hour per class. During the observation of a post-mortem session, students worked on a letter to their character explaining how they felt playing the game and being that person.

There are several advantages to observation as a method. Firstly, observation allows for the recording of information as it happens in the classroom. Secondly, studying students' actual behaviour in the classroom is possible. Finally, it makes it possible to study students who have difficulty expressing themselves (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 248). Foreign language anxiety happens in the classroom at specific times and might make it difficult for

students to express themselves. Observation is, therefore, an excellent tool to use when investigating this phenomenon. However, there are also disadvantages to this method. For instance, the research is limited to specific times and places that might be difficult to access. In addition, it may be difficult for researchers to develop rapport with study participants (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 248).

For every study using observation, the researcher must be aware of their role as an observer. There are three possible roles. One of them is participant observer, which means that the researcher records information while participating in the activities on the research site (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 248). Another role is that of a nonparticipant observer, which means that the researcher records information without participating in the activities at the research site. The researcher is an outsider who sits strategically in the classroom to watch and record information for the study. The last is a changing observation role, which means the researcher adapts their role to the situation. For instance, at first, the researcher has a nonparticipant role and becomes increasingly involved in the activities as time passes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 249). This study used a nonparticipant observer role. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), this role might be preferable when the researcher is unfamiliar with the participants or the research site.

3.1.2 Interview

Another commonly used method in educational research is the interview. The interview is a crucial part of the data collection to answer the research question because it gives insight into how students and teachers feel and think about English lessons and what triggers anxiety and nervousness among students. There are three types of interview styles that researchers can choose from, namely structured, semi-structured, and non-structured interviews. All interviews conducted in this study were semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview involves an interview guide (Appendix A); however, the interviewer can change the order of the questions. The interviewer can ask additional or clarifying questions to understand participants' thoughts and perspectives during the interview (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2022, p. 121). A school in Agder agreed to be a part of the study. Students from two classes received consent forms to participate in the study. The selection of participants was an opportunistic sampling (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 243), where students volunteered to participate in the research. Few students were willing to participate, which meant that every student who expressed interest became a part of the study.

In addition to the choices above, the interviewer must also decide between a one-on-one or a focus group interview. A one-on-one interview is data collection where the interviewer asks questions and records answers from one participant. This method is ideal for participants who are comfortable sharing thoughts and ideas and do not hesitate to express themselves (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 252). This study conducted a one-on-one interview with the teacher who implemented the role-playing game with students in the 10th grade. A focus group interview involves data collection from a group of people, usually four to six people. This method is proper when participants are comfortable around each other and their interactions provide the best information (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 252). Three focus group interviews were conducted for this study: one student-teacher group with two participants and two student groups with seven participants in total (Appendix A).

According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019, p. 252), interviews have both advantages and disadvantages in qualitative research. Some advantages are that it can provide helpful information that cannot be obtained by observing participants, such as their feelings and thoughts. Interviews can also elicit specific information through the questions asked. One disadvantage of the interview is that the information is filtered through the eyes of the interviewer. Another can be the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer can affect the answers through their body language or small talk. Also, focus group interviews can make the transcription harder because of the similar voices on the recording (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 253).

3.2   Quantitative data

3.2.1   Survey

Several survey designs have been used in qualitative research. This study uses a cross-sectional survey (Appendix B). This type of survey measures attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices among a group at one point. Practices refer to actual behavior, while attitudes, beliefs, and opinions refer to how individuals think about different topics (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 430). This study uses a web-based survey created at SurveyXact.com. SurveyXact allows anonymity for all participants. The survey is a multiple-choice questionnaire with four alternatives: agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and disagree. In addition, there are two open-ended questions at the end of the survey where participants can elaborate on their answers if they want to. These last questions are optional and do not

require an answer from the participant. The survey was distributed to teachers in Norway on multiple Facebook groups.

According to Postholm and Jacobsen (2022), web-based surveys have several advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that they are low-cost to produce and distribute. Another is that they allow for complexity. Online surveys provide the option to give participants different questions based on their previous answers, which can tailor the survey to make it more relevant. In addition, there is little interviewer effect. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the survey allows for anonymity because their answers cannot be traced back to them, and they can hide behind the screen. Postholm and Jacobsen (2022) also present some disadvantages with this method. Representativeness might suffer since there is little control over who will answer the survey. Also, even though web-based questionnaires are quick to produce and distribute in theory, an issue that can occur is that participants wait to answer, forget, or push it off, which might lead to many dropouts. Some misunderstandings might also occur because of the lack of interaction between participants and the researcher.

3.3   Research reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are essential to consider when conducting research. Reliability refers to the instruments used for data collection. For these to be reliable, the testing must be clear and consistent (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 188). Additionally, participants must be comfortable, honest, and well-rested. Validity refers to the results or scores provided by the instruments. To ascertain validity, the researcher can examine scores and instruments of previous studies. It is also essential that the instruments measure what they are supposed to (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 190). This study uses a mixed-method approach involving observation, interviews, and a survey. Using a mixed method is a way of securing validity and reliability. It is possible to provide different perspectives on the same topic through multiple methods.

The results of this study are not generalizable. The sample size for the interviews was small. In addition, this study investigates attitudes and practices among students and teachers, which are not the same for all individuals across the country. Also, some biases can affect the study. One is desirability bias among participants, which means presenting ideas in a way perceived as socially acceptable but not representative of one's actual beliefs (Bergen & Labonté, 2020, p. 783). Another is response bias, meaning the responses do not represent the

general population. For instance, the respondents are overly optimistic (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 445). Furthermore, the answers provided through interviews and observations may be coloured by the researcher's interpretations (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2022, p. 128). Even though this study is not generalizable to all students and schools in Norway, all material used for it is added to the appendices to make the research transparent, which also makes it possible to recreate the study if anyone desires.

3.4   Ethical considerations

There are potential ethical issues with all methods, including the ones chosen for this study. Some ethical issues are general and are worth considering in all research, such as informed consent, data access, and confidentiality (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 265). Before conducting this study, all individuals received a consent form (see Appendix C). This form explained the background and aim of the study, in addition to what was expected of participants and what would happen to the data collected during and after the study. Students read the form and were provided with an oral presentation of the study. After the information had been presented, the students who wanted to participate handed in a signed form. Participants could, at any time, withdraw their consent and be excluded from the study, which would result in the deletion of all data about the individual. Survey instruments and data collected were destroyed after the study. All study participants could request access to the data material by contacting the researcher. Furthermore, after collecting data, each participant was assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. No one should be recognizable in publication.

4.0   Results

The results presented in this chapter were collected through observations, interviews, and a survey. All data was collected in Norwegian. The survey questions and answers were translated into English. Interviews were transcribed and then translated into English for this paper. Collected results aimed to answer the two research questions:

> *RQ1: Can drama help students produce oral English with greater ease and comfort?*
> *RQ2: Can drama be used to enhance oral performance in the EFL classroom?*

4.1 Observation results

Observation is one data collection method used in this study. The observation took place at a lower secondary school in Agder, Norway. It is an urban school close to the city, with approximately 500 students. Two 10th-grade classes were selected for observation through the researcher's network. There was a significant difference between the two classes. The first group was an outgoing and engaged class. It consisted of 16 boys and 13 girls, in total 29 students. The second group was more reclusive and quieter. This group consisted of 14 boys and nine girls, in total 23 students. The students had three 45-minute lessons in English every week. Students had six weeks of preparation for the role-playing game, including learning about the historical event and relevant knowledge about that period, writing speeches, and group discussions.

Students in both classes performed a role-playing game called "From Fjords to Prairies" a couple of weeks before the observation. Students also drew a picture of their characters and wrote bullet points to describe them. The observation was of a post-mortem session. The assignment was for students to write a letter to their character, explaining what they thought about the role-playing game and the experience they had playing the character. The teachers leading the class had no prominent role in the post-mortem session. They took on an observer role; still, they walked around the classroom to help students with the assignment and answer any questions that might arise. Students worked individually and with little help from others.

The outgoing and engaged group was the first to be observed. The observation consisted of the researcher walking around the classroom, looking at and reading some of the students' letters. Some students walked around the classroom to talk to others, while others were engaged in the writing. There was much noise during the writing, and many students spoke about topics other than the assignment. From what could be read from the letters, most of the students in the first group expressed enjoyment about role-playing in their letters. Many students were also interested in the characters they played and wanted to know more about them. Some wondered about what happened to them after the game ended.

The quieter class was the second class observed in this study. Due to some interruptions caused by the fire alarm, the observation time was cut by half for this group. Even though there was little time to observe, it was still possible to obtain some information.

Although some students expressed positive attitudes toward the role-playing game, more students in this group expressed negative feelings toward the game. Still, many students were interested in their character and their journey. In many ways, students in this group resembled the first in that they were interested in their characters. They did, however, express more negative feelings toward role-playing as an activity.

4.4   Interview results

Interviews made it possible to obtain more information and contextualize the information gained during the observations. A teacher was interviewed in order to learn about the project from the teacher perspective on role-playing and language learning, in addition to foreign language anxiety. The individual interviewed had been a teacher of English for 19 years and had been working with role-playing for the last 5-6 years. Two teacher-students were also asked to share their thoughts on role-playing and language learning. Both teacher-students had English as one of their subjects and would go on to teach English after their finished degree. Finally, seven students agreed to share their opinions on role-playing in the classroom and their experiences with the method. Of the seven students who participated in the interview, one was a boy, and the other six were girls.

4.4.1   Speaking in general

All participants in the study answered questions about oral participation in class. The answers provided were both positive and negative. The teacher did not elaborate on the oral participation of the class in general. However, they did explain that "some classes are quiet no matter what teaching methods or pedagogical tasks are used." They emphasised that the degree of participation varies much between groups and individuals. The teacher-students claimed that "some students were quite reserved, and facing the role-play, they were even more anxious about speaking," indicating that students were reluctant to speak from the beginning. They further elaborated that some students seemed uncomfortable with "being in the spotlight" and seemed to have a "fear of embarrassing themselves." The teacher-students attributed the reluctance to speak to the Law of Jante, a code that tells people not to show off and brag about themselves.

Students had mixed views about speaking aloud in class. All students voiced some negative feelings toward speaking. They mentioned that one can feel awkward and

embarrassed when speaking in front of many people. Student nr. 7 said, "you're afraid of being laughed at if you have a weird English accent. People might laugh or find it awkward if I say something wrong". Furthermore, student nr. 3 claimed that it was difficult to speak English in the classroom "when asked about something you don't know or asked something spontaneously." Student nr. 2 added "that [she] found it scary to speak English when [she] hardly knew anything. [She] struggled a lot with just trying to speak a little". Student nr. 6 explained that "speaking in front of the teacher" was difficult.

Even though students highlighted their anxiety about speaking, they also noted some positive aspects of speaking English in an educational setting. Student nr. 3 mentioned that playing games made it easier to speak and learn. Student nr. 2 said that "when you feel like there's nothing scary, and it is okay to make mistakes, and when you are with people you feel comfortable with," it is easier to speak. They all agreed it was not as scary to speak when they had fun. Student nr. 6 explained that speaking could be fun but challenging. Student nr. 2 elaborated that playing a game could make speaking English "fun instead of just boring, scary, and difficult."

4.4.2 Role-playing

The focus of all interviews was role-playing. All participants shared their thoughts on role-playing as a method for teaching English. Answers provided a nuanced picture of the method and its impact on students' language learning and foreign language anxiety. All participants offered both facilitating and debilitating aspects of role-playing.

When participants were asked about activities that make learning English harder, most answered "role-playing," or activities where many students must work together. When participants were asked about students' reactions to role-playing, most participants answered "awkward," "strange," "stressful," and "challenging." The teacher-students noticed a difference between the two classes, explaining that in the more reserved group, they had to help them along more. They observed that students in the reserved group "were a bit apprehensive about the whole concept" and seemed more anxious when faced with a role-playing game. Furthermore, some students seemed to "struggle to immerse themselves in the roles, preferring to stay quiet instead of saying something, especially in the quieter class." Students also expressed feelings of stress, fear, and nervousness when performing the role-

playing game. Student nr. 2 said, "it made it quite scary in the long run that I sat there dreading having to give that speech and all."

Even though most students report their experiences with role-playing as challenging and scary, most also expressed positive feelings toward the role-playing game. Both students, nr. 2 and 5, found role-playing exciting. Most students found role-playing a fun and different way of learning, where they could "live in someone else's time." Student nr. 7 expressed that what they had learned became worthwhile and meaningful. Student nr. 1 said that "it wasn't as big of a deal as I thought it would be," referring to the role-playing game. Several students felt that playing a role-playing game later would improve their experience because they knew what to expect.

There are many positives to role-playing, according to the teacher and teacher-students. As mentioned above, the teacher is somewhat invisible, which gives students more freedom in what they can say. The teacher also highlights that role-playing makes it possible to "delve deep into the topic." They explained that students did not want to stop, expressed enjoyment, and "some students were very satisfied with their effort." The teacher further claimed that students learned more and that "the positive impact [was] evident in the students' feedback." According to the teacher-students, role-playing is a good resource for teachers. They stressed that role-playing is learning through practice and practical play, with varying levels of responsibility.

4.4.3 Effect of role-playing on speaking

All participants addressed the effects of role-playing on oral English. Several of the students expressed that role-playing had a positive effect on their oral participation in class. When asked whether role-playing made them more orally active in class, all students answered "yes." Student nr. 3 claimed that she had "prepared well," which helped her be more orally active. Role-playing affected them in different ways. Students nr. 6 and 7 felt their pronunciation improved during and after the role-playing game. Student nr. 1 "became better at arguing" in addition to being "less afraid [of speaking] aloud in front of the class."

According to the teacher and teacher-students, there was a change in oral performance among students. They "became very engaged," "wanted to continue because some might not

have said what they wanted," and they got to "talk more freely and passionately." The teacher stressed the importance of preparation and practice.

> The more you practice, the less intimidating it becomes, making speaking easier later. We saw this with students who wouldn't speak otherwise; once they were allowed to bring a script they had created themselves, everyone had something to say, and that's enjoyable. They became engaged when they saw others doing it and wanted to join in.

The teacher-students also observed changes in students' oral participation. They said the speeches were "a way to push students who might not be so orally active." They point out one student who sat quietly most of the time but then started contributing. "It turned out he had some excellent point to make." In addition, they noticed that the verbal class, even though loud, was engaged in meaningful discussion during the role-playing. They also mentioned that students put on a mask when role-playing. Students who might not talk much otherwise spoke more because they had a role.

4.4.4 Effects of role-playing on foreign language anxiety

The interviews did not address foreign language anxiety directly; however, all participants touched on the issue. The teacher explained that students were more likely to participate orally during the role-playing game because there were "no right or wrong answers, which made them more confident in expressing their thoughts." Also, the teachers are somewhat invisible during the game and do not have a prominent voice, which she argued could help students feel more comfortable with the role-playing. The teacher-students argued that role-playing provided "a mask" for students to hide behind.

Students also touched on the issue of foreign language anxiety. Students claimed that making mistakes and speaking in front of others was scary and uncomfortable. However, several students said they became more comfortable during the role-playing game. Role-playing allowed student nr. 5 to step out of their comfort zone. Student nr. 1 explained that she "became better at arguing and perhaps less afraid to speak aloud in front of the class." Student nr. 7 said, "once I started speaking, I realized it was not so bad, " and added, "I spoke more during the role-play than I normally do so that I might speak more now." Also, student nr. 6 claimed that role-playing had a positive effect on their anxiety or nervousness, saying, "yes, it had some effect on how scary it felt speaking."

4.5   Survey results

A cross-sectional survey was distributed to teachers across Norway. The survey aimed to collect information about teachers' attitudes and opinions about role-playing and foreign language anxiety among students. The survey was distributed on Facebook in a closed group for Norwegian teachers. Of the 59 teachers who responded, 32 answered that they taught English, meaning that 45% of respondents did not. Most respondents, 66%, had taught English for 0-5 years. Nine respondents answered that they had taught English for more than 10 years; three teachers with more than 21 years of experience were among them. Fifty percent of respondents had at least 4 years of higher education.

The figures below show the results collected through the online survey. Each question was multiple-choice with four alternative answers ranging from agree to disagree. The colours shown in the figures correspond to an answer. Red means agree, yellow means somewhat agree, light green means somewhat disagree, and dark green means disagree. The numbers correspond to percentages. The percentage for each answer is rounded up so that the percentage is approximately 100%. For instance, on the second question in Figure 1, the percentage is 101%, and the third question adds to 99%.
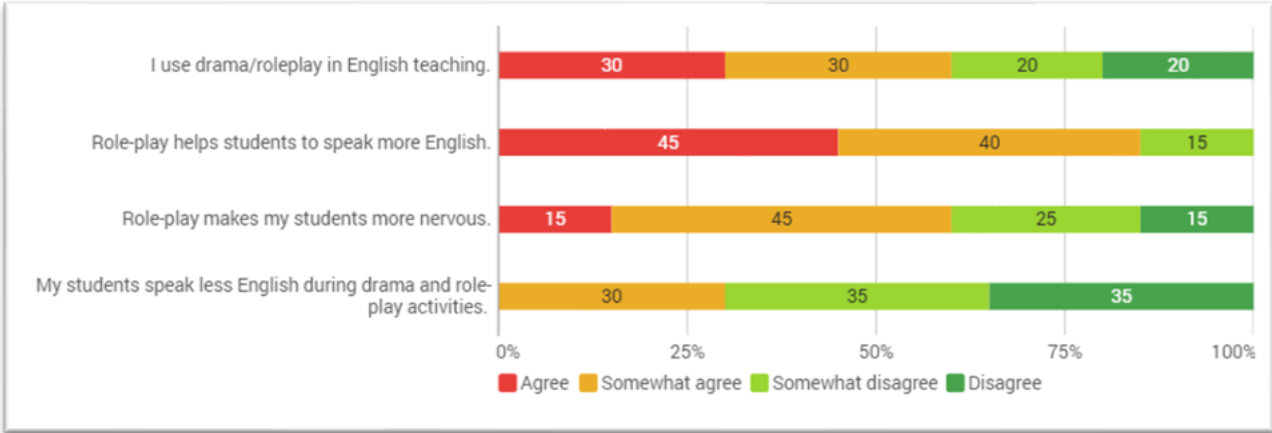
4.5.1   Multiple-choice section

The first issue addressed in the survey was oral participation in speaking in class. Most teachers answer that oral participation makes students more nervous, with only 14% saying they somewhat disagree or disagree. In addition, teachers claim that their students become more nervous when speaking in front of many people, with 41% of teachers agreeing and 56% somewhat agreeing. Only 4% of teachers somewhat disagree that students become more nervous when speaking in front of many people. Teachers are divided on the question of speaking to small versus large groups. On one hand, 48% of teachers answer that students are as nervous speaking in front of small groups as larger groups, on the other 51% of teachers believe students are less nervous speaking to smaller groups. There is also a disagreement on the final question about nervousness about speaking in different subjects. While 51% of teachers answered that students who are nervous about speaking in one subject are not necessarily nervous in all subjects, 48% answered that they believe nervous students are nervous in all subjects.

Figure 3 – Section of questionnaire distributed to teachers across Norway about oral participation among their students.
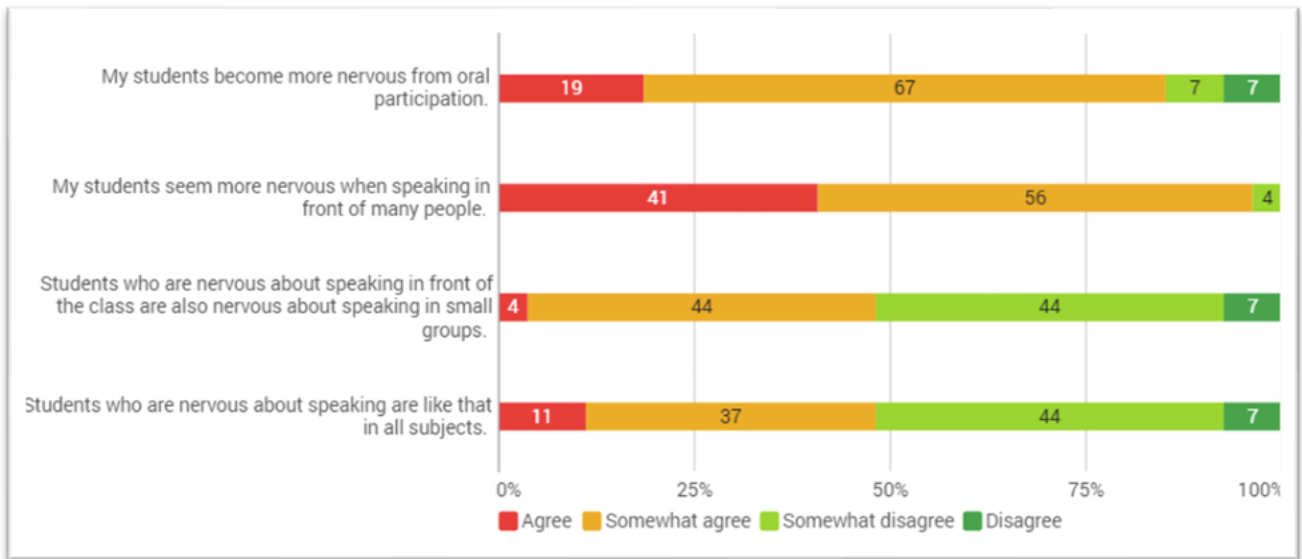

The second issue addressed in the survey was role-playing. Role-playing was defined in the survey's cover letter as; "a process where individuals achieve goals and progress, immerse themselves in a role, and create an exciting story or simulate a world or event." Of all the teachers asked, 30% answer that they use role-playing in their lessons, another 30% somewhat agree to using role-playing, while 40% of teachers do not use role-playing or use it seldom. On the question of whether role-playing helps students speak more English, most teachers agree or somewhat agree. Only 15% of teachers somewhat disagree that students speak more English during role-playing. Of the 60% of teachers claiming that role-playing makes students more nervous, are 45% that somewhat agree. The other 40% claim that role-playing does not make students more nervous, with 25% somewhat disagreeing. The last question about role-playing acts like a control question. It is similar to the second question, which states that role-playing helps students speak more. The final question is more specific, asking about their students' oral participation during role-playing. Few teachers answer that students speak less, with 30% somewhat agreeing. The last 70% of teachers disagree, or somewhat disagree that students speak less during role-playing, with 35% on each alternative.

Figure 4 – Section of questionnaire distributed to teachers across Norway about students' attitudes toward role-playing.

The final issue addressed in the multiple-choice section of the survey was foreign language anxiety among students. The first question was if foreign language anxiety is debilitating to students. None of the teachers disagreed that foreign language anxiety is debilitating to students; however, 15% disagreed somewhat. Most teachers answer that foreign language anxiety is debilitating to students, with 25% of the teachers answering agree, and 60% somewhat agree. Teachers were also asked the opposite: if foreign language anxiety is facilitating to students. Few teachers answer agree with only 5% of teachers, and 25% claim it somewhat is. The teachers who claim it is not facilitating are divided on somewhat disagree and disagree, with 35% on each alternative. The last point was concerning role-playing and foreign language anxiety. Of the teachers asked, 25% answered that role-playing helps students with their foreign language anxiety, while 50% somewhat agreed with the statement. Only 10% claim role-playing does not help students with their foreign language anxiety.

Figure 5 – Section of a questionnaire distributed to teachers across Norway about role-playing and foreign language anxiety among their students.
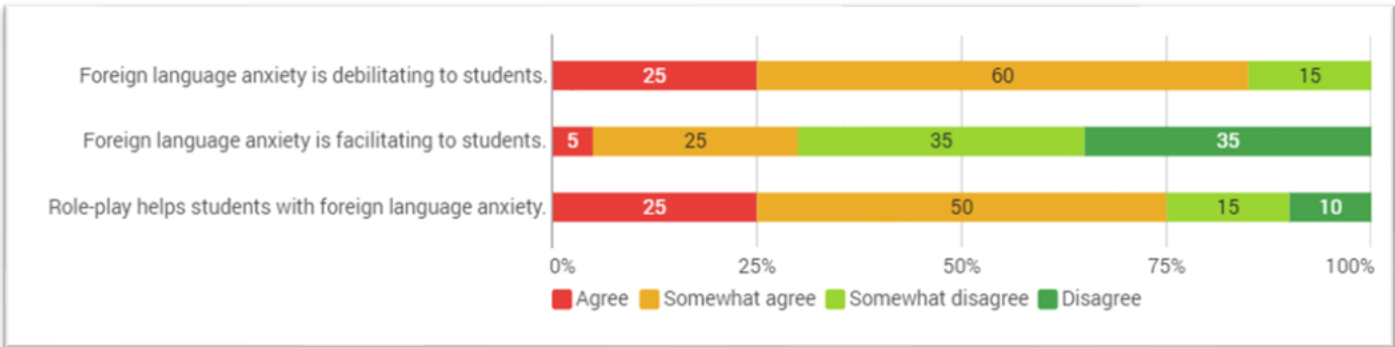
4.5.2 Open-ended questions

Two open-ended questions were attached to the end of the survey. These two questions were voluntary, and teachers could skip them. Teachers were first asked in what way they think role-playing can affect students' oral participation. The teachers who chose to answer had mixed responses to the question. Some teachers had generally positive experiences with role-playing and oral performance among students, saying, "for some, it may be easier to take on a role so that they are not themselves. In the long run, it may also lead to some feeling more confident speaking English." Another teacher added, "they get to practice being in dialogue with others, becoming more confident in hearing the language, so they feel confident that what they hear is correct." Several teachers noted that students are less nervous when lessons are group-based and the groups are small. According to these teachers, students cheer each other on, listen to each other, and become more confident by working together. Two teachers mentioned that role-playing becomes like a game and that "being in character is easier." Also, "play can feel safer and set somewhat different premises." Finally, one teacher explained that students find role-playing fun, which leads them to forget that they are speaking English. That way, they get good practice in oral skills.

Some teachers claimed that role-playing could help students if done right, however not in all cases. Comments from this group of teachers focused on how role-playing could lead to positive and negative outcomes. One teacher writes that "students must understand that they are playing a role. The downside is that it often becomes difficult for them to understand in lower secondary school". Another teacher supports this argument, saying that "they can pretend to be another person, but some may not want to pretend, depending on their personality." Two teachers explained that role-playing "can have a positive effect is students feel secure enough in the situation," and that "having guidelines, good example texts and practicing together, [students] will experience mastery and lower their nervousness." One teacher focused on the facilitation possibilities role-playing presents, explaining that it "may be easier for weaker students to participate by having their lines picked out and therefore tailored in a simple way." Another mentioned puppet theatre as a possible variation of role-playing, for students who do not want to be visible.

There were also teachers claiming that role-playing as a method did not enhance oral participation among students. One teacher argued that "many find role-playing awkward." This teacher also believed that "the most extroverted and fearless can carry [a role-play] out,

but many neither dare nor want to take on a role," and further elaborated that those students were often those who "easily find things embarrassing or difficult or those who dislike attention on themselves." Another teacher alleged that more students "may start to dislike English classes" if role-playing was a more significant part of the subject. The learning environment was also mentioned to be an obstacle for some, causing students to fear standing out from the crowd.

Teachers were also asked if they had anything to add about their experiences with role-playing and/or foreign language anxiety. Four teachers provided some additional thoughts on the issue. Two teachers argue that extramural English influences students' oral participation in class. One teacher claimed it is "easier for the YouTube and gaming guys to join. They are more confident in English". Another teacher argued that "students are less anxious about speaking English now than ten years ago. Many get much oral practice through, for example, gaming". Two teachers have negative attitudes toward role-playing. One teacher claimed that "students have to use more of themselves, and this is experienced as more frightening for many in terms of English oral participation." The second teacher insists that "many students dislike role-playing."

5.0   Discussion

This chapter will discuss the results of the investigations about whether role-playing can help students produce oral English with greater ease and comfort and enhance their oral performance. The discussion will revolve around the research questions and consider previous research, which has been elaborated on above. This research has explored the potential benefits of integrating drama into the language learning experience. By analysing and discussing the data collected through observation, interview, and survey, the aim is to offer a comprehensive look at the role drama plays in students' oral performance and foreign language anxiety.

It seems that the effect of role-playing on foreign language anxiety and oral participation depends on the students in the classroom, the classroom environment, the teacher, and the type of role-playing students perform.

5.1 RQ1: Can drama help students produce oral English with greater ease and comfort?

Can drama help students with their foreign language anxiety? This question is of great value for teachers and students. There are many cases of students who are afraid to speak or anxious to attend their foreign language classes. Students' anxiety can manifest in different ways. For instance, by freezing in class, forgetting information they know in test situations, overstudying, or skipping and avoiding class (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 126). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) theory of communication apprehension was also touched upon during the interviews with students. Communication apprehension can also be referred to as 'stage fright.' Some students voiced their fear of speaking in front of many people, which aligns with the communication apprehension theory.

In many ways, role-playing involves the act of pretending. Students do not have to be themselves and can take on the role of someone else. One teacher-student explained that it is like putting on a mask that students can hide behind. Students answered during the interviews that role-playing made speaking in front of the class less frightening. Without interviewing the students again, there is no way of being sure of why. However, it could be inferred that pretending to be someone else plays a significant role for some students. Students might prefer to put on a mask because language and identity are closely tied (Horverak et al., 2022; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013), which means that a threat to one of these is a threat to the other. It seems that some students might be reluctant to speak because they experience it as a threat to the self.

A question often raised when discussing apprehensions about speaking a foreign language is whether it is specific or general anxiety. Researchers disagree on this issue; some claim that foreign language anxiety is specific anxiety related to the foreign language classroom (Alias & Rashid, 2018; Awan et al., 2010; Horverak et al., 2022; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013), while others argue it might be more general anxiety to speak (Aida, 1994; Bashosh et al., 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Young, 1990). Students were not asked about communication apprehension specifically during the interviews; however, teachers were asked through the survey. There seems to be a divide between teachers on the issue of foreign language anxiety. Based on the survey results, nearly half of the teachers responded that students who are nervous about speaking in English class are nervous in all subjects. The

other half responded that students are not necessarily nervous in all subjects, only in their foreign language class. It appears that the divide between teachers corresponds with the divide between researchers.

Some general conclusions might be drawn when analysing the observations. For instance, students enjoy working with role-playing to various degrees. Some students are excited about the activity, some are indifferent, while others are apprehensive. It can be inferred that students who are usually engaged, eager, and accustomed to a loud environment enjoy working with role-playing activities at a higher rate than students who are withdrawn, apathetic and used to a quieter environment. Although students have varying degrees of comfortableness with role-playing, most were interested in their characters. Students were invested in the characters and story and wondered about the lives they might have led and what happened to them after the role-playing game ended.

The students who agreed to be interviewed seemed favourable to role-playing activities. Most of the students who wanted to be interviewed answered that they were average or at a high level of proficiency. Their proficiency and general attitude toward English as a subject could affect the perceived image of students' general experience with role-playing. The interviewed students might not be representative of the entire student group.

5.1.1 Student experiences

Role-playing as a way to alleviate anxiety is supported by findings from the research by Sağlamel and Kayaoğlu (2013), Lo, Lu, and Cheng (2021), and Kaplan (2023). All studies show that participants benefit from drama techniques. In my study as well, students appear to benefit from role-playing games and activities. It seems that role-playing can alleviate their foreign language anxiety (Boudreault, 2010; Drew & Pedersen, 2010; Lo et al., 2021; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013). Information provided by interviews show that students had positive experiences with role-playing although they were apprehensive about the method in the beginning. When asked about what activities made it harder to speak English, three out of seven students mentioned role-playing as an example. One student said, "activities where you have to speak loudly in front of many people, like role-playing perhaps?" Other students claimed role that role-playing was "challenging" and "scary". Even though several students expressed apprehensions about role-playing beforehand, many found the experience exciting and fun. Of the participating students, five out of seven said that they enjoyed the role-playing

game and that it was exciting and fun. Some students expressed that once they started doing the role-playing and got the hang of it, they found it was not as bad as it seemed. "It wasn't as big [of a deal] as I thought it would be". Several students agreed that they would be less anxious or nervous if they were to perform another role-playing game since they would know what to expect. The findings from the observations and interviews suggest that role-playing games and activities lessen anxiety among students.

Research by Basaran, Bekler, and Kepenek (2015) shows that students might improve their confidence through drama techniques and overcome some of their apprehensions about speaking. These claims are supported by the results gathered from interviews of the students. One student expressed that she "spoke more during the role-play than [she] normally do, so [she] might speak more now". Another became "less afraid to speak aloud in front of the class". This is further supported by Bessadet's study (2022), which shows that students were more likely to speak after role-playing. It seems that students who have a positive experience with role-playing can overcome some of the obstacles they face in their language learning.

Even though several students found the role-playing game exciting and fun, some found it stressful and scary. One student voiced that she was afraid of saying something wrong. The same student did not dare to take the floor and instead sat quietly. Students feeling anxious during role-playing has been documented by several researchers (Awan et al., 2010; Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1990). Being the centre of attention and in the spotlight seems to be the most anxiety-provoking factor of role-playing, in addition to the fear of making mistakes or having a strange accent.

5.1.2 Teacher experiences

There appears to be a divide among the teachers about the effect of role-playing on foreign language anxiety. On one hand, some teachers seem to have negative experiences with role-playing in the classroom. Several teachers claim that students become more nervous during role-playing and that students do not like the activities based on role-playing. The view that students do not like role-playing activities could be because many students become more nervous when speaking in front of others, which is shared by most teachers, according to the data collection. Even though many students were not overjoyed with the idea of role-playing beforehand, most enjoyed the experience and would like to do it again. In this sense, there are contrasting views between teachers and students.

On the other hand, many teachers seem to have positive experiences with role-playing in the classroom. Several teachers appear to believe in role-playing as a resource to alleviate foreign language anxiety. One aspect of role-playing that some teachers highlight is that the teacher is somewhat invisible, which could lead to students speaking more. Students can express themselves more freely and confidently because they do not have what Celik (2019) describes as a 'fear of authority stress.' Teachers give the impression that students are more likely to speak during role-playing; this could be because there are no right or wrong answers. Students do not have to be afraid of the teacher correcting them.

There seems to be some disagreement about the effect of role-playing on foreign language anxiety among students, teachers, and previous research. When examining the results of the study and the research conducted on the topic previously, it is evident that there is no consensus on the issue. Nevertheless, this study might provide additional insight into what students and teachers in Norway believe about the issue. Even though there are disagreements, there are some indications that role-playing might help students overcome some of their apprehensions to speak through role-playing.

5.2   RQ2: Can drama be used to enhance oral performance in the EFL classroom?

Learning a foreign language is not always easy. It requires hard work from the language learner. For students learning a foreign language, practicing the language and enhancing oral performance is essential to maximise their learning potential. The answers provided through interviews and the survey by both students and teachers suggest that students are generally nervous about oral participation. Teachers and students say that speaking in front of others is anxiety-provoking. Considering the previous research on the issue, the question of whether role-playing can help enhance oral performance might be answered by analysing the data collected for this study.

It appears as though teachers and students generally agree with one another that role-playing helps with oral participation. Most participants seem to believe that role-playing makes students speak more. All students answered during the interviews that they spoke more during the role-playing game than usual. One student said she might continue to speak more in class after the role-playing game. Increased oral participation could be because she experienced that speaking in front of others is not as bad as expected. Students also practiced

their pronunciation, which might make them more confident in their foreign language. Several researchers support the claim that role-playing helps students participate more orally (Akyüz & Tanış, 2020; Basaran et al., 2015; Bessadet, 2022; Celik, 2019; Salies, 1995). These researchers, like the participants in the study, argue that drama techniques influence language performance and make students speak more.

Although most participants and researchers seem to believe that role-playing enhances oral performance among students, some appear to believe the opposite. Some teachers claim that students are nervous about speaking and that role-playing does not help them speak more. Some teachers claim that role-playing makes students speak less. Students speaking less could be because of anxiety among students, apprehensions about speaking, classroom environment, or preparation time. There are many reasons why students choose to opt out of participating.

5.3   Arguments for the use of role-playing

When considering role-playing as a teaching method, exploring its strengths and weaknesses is essential. This section will examine various arguments supporting role-playing in an educational setting. By examining the advantages and disadvantages, the aim is to provide a comprehensive look at the implications of role-playing in a language learning setting.

5.3.1   Learning together

Based on previous research and answers from teachers across Norway, it seems that learning together in a role-playing activity might benefit students. Students can lean on each other and build on each other's knowledge. Cooperative learning, elaborated on above, is a way for students to learn from group work. During the Reacting to the Past game, students worked in factions, which are groups with different convictions. They cooperated to convince others to their side. Learning together is also closely tied to Vygotsky's (1978) thoughts about the zone of proximal development, where students have the potential for learning through the support of one another. Even though learning together appears beneficial theoretically, some students voice their fear of working in larger groups. Group work is daunting for some students and will not necessarily lead to learning for all. Group size might be valuable for teachers considering implementing role-playing in their classrooms.

5.3.2 Motivation

Motivation is a common denominator for all learning. Students should be motivated for them to have the best learning opportunities. Although motivation was not central to the investigations, several participants touched upon the topic. Students explained that the role-playing game was fun, engaging, exciting, and different from the ordinary teacher-led lessons. Furthermore, students argued that role-playing made learning history worthwhile; this might be because they could use their knowledge about history during the role-playing game. From the observations, it could be inferred that students enjoyed working with role-playing. Most students seemed interested in their characters and intrigued by their stories.

The idea that role-playing can increase motivation is supported by researchers (Boudreault, 2010; Celik, 2019; Drew & Pedersen, 2010; Maley & Duff, 1982; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013; Stern, 1980). The increase in motivation is also reflected in the responses of study participants. As mentioned above, they describe role-playing as a fun, exciting, and engaging experience, which could be attributed to the collaborative nature of role-playing. Other researchers highlight increased confidence when using drama techniques (Basaran et al., 2015; Bessadet, 2022; Salies, 1995). Motivation and confidence are closely linked. It could be suggested that an increase in confidence will lead to an increase in motivation or vice versa. Drama might be one way for students to become more motivated and confident in their abilities. Motivation and confidence are two traits also found in Krashen's theory of the affective filter. A low affective filter is commonly associated with motivation, confidence, and relaxation (Krashen, 1985). When students have a low affective filter, they have higher potential for learning.

5.3.3 Realistic communication

When examining the results and research about role-playing and foreign language anxiety, it seems evident that many arguments support the method. Many researchers, teachers, and students appear to agree that role-playing can lead to positive outcomes. For instance, role-playing allows students to engage in realistic communication. Students practice adapting their language to the situation through debates and discussions and by expressing themselves appropriately. As mentioned earlier, role-playing exposes students to authentic and potentially tricky situations with conflict or tension. Although textbooks might be useful in some instances, role-playing can be a way to reintroduce emotions and authentic language

into language learning (Cunico, 2005; Jonassen, 1991; Maley & Duff, 1982; Salies, 1995). Role-playing is also a way for students to practice real-life situations relevant to them. Examples of relevant real-life situations might be ordering at a restaurant, 'dating' or other smaller conversations to get to know another person, or giving directions. These are all potential situations students might experience. Students seemed to find it essential to learn English for travel and studies abroad.

5.3.4 Experience

Students learn through meaningful and relevant experiences (Dewey, 1938). Role-playing is an example of how students can learn through experience. Through role-playing, students can experience various ways of speaking and how language changes to the recipient and situation. In addition, students can experience how intonation and stress are used to convey meaning. Furthermore, it seems that learning through experience might help students overcome their apprehensions about speaking. According to one student, it was not as scary as they first thought once they started speaking during the role-playing game. Another student also claimed that they became less afraid of speaking. The reduced fear of speaking among some students shows that students might have to venture out of their comfort zone to overcome their fears.

5.4 Arguments against the use of role-playing

Although role-playing has many strengths for educational purposes, it is crucial to consider the weaknesses. This section will examine various arguments opposing role-playing in an educational context. By examining both strengths and weaknesses, the aim is to illustrate all possible outcomes that role-playing in the classroom presents.

5.4.1 Time-consuming

The main argument used against role-playing for educational purposes tends to be time. Usually, role-playing games are pretty time-consuming; however, smaller activities can be implemented in a short amount of time. The teacher interviewed for this study emphasised that having enough time is essential for a good role-playing experience. However, having too much time can hurt the process. Furthermore, students have little knowledge about the history surrounding the role-playing event. The teacher claimed that students had too much time for

their role-playing games and that the process was dragged out. Students were left waiting without knowing what to do.

5.4.2   Preparations

Preparations must be made for role-playing games and activities to go smoothly. Several teachers argue that role-playing can benefit students when used correctly, which involves preparation. The role-playing game should be adapted to the class who is playing. There should also be ample time for students to understand their character and learn about the relevant event's history. Furthermore, a good classroom environment where students are accustomed to group exercises and positive reinforcement and feedback might help. Even though there should be enough time for students to prepare, several students said during interviews that they have too much time for their role-playing games. Student nr. 1 and nr. 2 both wanted less preparation time, saying it would cause less stress. Practice is necessary for role-playing activities to be productive. One teacher said role-playing games and activities should be used multiple times. Role-playing more than once helps students understand the process and what is expected of them. They get practice with their speeches and discussions and how role-playing works.

Executing role-playing requires organising. This might be difficult to do well depending on the room, student group and time of day. All students are different, and not all will be equally excited about the idea of role-playing. In addition, not all classrooms are suitable for role-playing. Getting access to a suitable room will help students have a positive role-playing experience. Furthermore, the time of day will affect students' engagement and enjoyment of the role-play. Hunger, fatigue, stress are all feelings that affect students during the school day. Planning the role-play according to when students are most receptive might help the experience.

5.4.3   Potential discomfort

It seems that some teachers are reluctant to use role-playing games and activities as teaching methods because of the potential discomfort to students. Potential discomfort can be nervousness, stress, anxiety, or other negative reactions. Both teachers and students experience feelings similar to these when performing role-playing games or activities. One student said that role-playing was scary, and that they dreaded to give a speech in front of the

class. Also, teachers experience students' apprehension toward role-playing, claiming that students are unwilling or nervous to speak. When examining the results gathered from observations, interviews, and the survey, it seems that teachers believe students are more anxious during role-playing games and activities than they are.

6.0 Conclusion

The increase in globalization today leads to a greater need for English competence among students in Norwegian schools. For students of English in Norwegian schools, foreign language anxiety might become a stumbling block on the journey to becoming proficient English speakers. Many students in Norway struggle with foreign language anxiety. The goal must be to help them produce oral English with greater ease and comfort and enhance their oral performance.

One issue addressed in this study was whether foreign language anxiety is facilitating or debilitating to students. Based on the previous research and information gathered for this study, it could be argued that there is much disagreement on this issue. Researchers and teachers are divided, with some claiming it is facilitating and others claiming it is debilitating to students. There is further disagreement as to the effect that drama and role-playing have on foreign language anxiety and whether it is anxiety-provoking.

Some general conclusions can be drawn based on the investigations of the effect of role-playing on foreign language anxiety. There seems to be a divide among teachers about whether foreign language anxiety is specific or general. The divide is also present among researchers, with some arguing that foreign language anxiety is specifically related to the foreign language classroom and others claiming that some aspects are general anxiety that occurs in other subjects as well. Aside from the divide between teachers and researchers on the nature of foreign language anxiety, teachers and researchers seem to agree with each other mostly. Most teachers believe that students are nervous about speaking in front of others. Interviews with students confirm this, with many saying they are apprehensive about speaking. In addition, many teachers find foreign language anxiety to be debilitating to students. Teachers disagree on whether role-playing makes students more nervous; however, most teachers claim that role-playing helps with foreign language anxiety. Some teachers argue that pretending, taking on a role, and being in character might help lessen anxiety

among students. Findings show that students seem to benefit from role-playing. It seems that students who have a positive experience with role-playing can overcome some of the obstacles they face in their language learning.

Furthermore, some general conclusions can be drawn from the investigations of the effect of role-playing on oral participation. Even though there is some disagreement on the issue of role-playing and foreign language anxiety, the issue of role-playing and oral participation is much more straightforward. Although role-playing seems a daunting task for many, it turned out to be enjoyable for students once they began the activity. Students expressed apprehensions about role-playing beforehand; however, they had positive experiences after the role-playing game. Researchers also report generally positive experiences among students participating in role-playing activities. Findings show that students have a high degree of oral participation during role-playing. All students who participated in the study, as well as most teachers, agreed that role-playing enhanced their oral participation. Students spoke more during role-playing activities than they usually do.

Determining whether drama is the answer to eliminating foreign language anxiety among students is impossible. However, it seems to be one way to alleviate some of the discomfort experienced by some students when speaking in the classroom. The effect of role-playing on oral participation and foreign language anxiety seems to depend on the group of students, the classroom environment, the teachers, and the role-playing activity. If done right, role-playing can be a way for students to communicate organically and realistically with one another and practice their adaptability, appropriateness, and sensitivity to tone. All of these skills are essential parts of communication.

6.1 Limitations

Limitations are, according to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), "potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher." Several limitations became apparent during the process of this research.

First, there were some methodological limitations with each method chosen for data collection. The observations were not of a role-playing game and would, therefore, not provide comprehensive insight into the effect of role-playing on students' foreign language anxiety and oral participation. Furthermore, the interviews and survey presented sampling

limitations. There was no way to secure representativeness to the general population since there were few volunteers. There was no way to clear up misunderstandings or correct misinterpretations of the questions and statements for the survey. The second limitation evident in the research was time constraints. Spending as little time in the classroom as possible, observing and interviewing, became essential to avoid taking time away from the 10th graders' exam preparations.

There might be alternative explanations for the results of this study. The data collected through observation needs interpretation by the researcher and might also lead to incorrect assumptions. There might also be issues with social desirability bias (Bergen & Labonté, 2020) and response bias. Which involves adapting answers to fit what seems desirable or makes one appear more impressive. Furthermore, since there was no way to clear up misunderstandings about the survey, the survey answers might present answers that are not representative of the general population.

The findings in this study are not generalisable or representative of all students in Norway. Since the study is based mainly on students' and teachers' attitudes, experiences, and opinions, the results will likely differ in other schools. Different students and different situations require different solutions. Furthermore, the findings are not generalisable because of the scope of the study. Only a few students were interviewed for this study, and only under 60 teachers responded to the survey. Even though the findings are not generalisable, there might be similarities among students at other schools.

6.2 Further research

More research is needed on the effect of role-playing on foreign language anxiety and oral participation among lower secondary students in Norway. The research on this specific topic is scarce. Research about foreign language anxiety and role-playing primarily focuses on university students and might not be directly transferrable to lower secondary students.

Some suggestions that might be beneficial for further research on the issue of role-playing and foreign language anxiety are observing a class before, during, and after a role-playing game. Observing multiple role-playing stages might provide a more comprehensive view of the student's oral participation and foreign language anxiety. In addition, observing more stages will present the opportunity to compare and review this, considering previous

research. Furthermore, looking at younger and 10th-grade students might be advantageous. Studying younger students might clarify the issue further and help answer whether working with role-playing activities can alleviate or eradicate foreign language anxiety among students.

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List of Appendices

All data was collected in Norwegian and translated for this thesis. Therefore, all appendices below are presented in Norwegian.

Appendix A – Interview guide: teacher, teacher-students, students

Appendix B – Survey

Appendix C – Consent form for all participants of the study

Appendix A

Intervju guide lærer

1. Hvor lenge har du vært lærer?
2. Underviser du vanligvis i Engelsk?
   a. Hvis ikke, hvor lenge har du vært engelsklærer?
3. Bruker du rollespill i undervisningen?
   a. Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
4. Hvordan opplevde du elevenes holdninger til rollespill før RTTP?
5. Hvordan opplevde du elevenes holdninger til rollespill etter RTTP?
6. Hvordan opplevde du elevenes muntlige deltakelse før rollespillet?
7. På hvilken måte påvirket rollespillet elevenes muntlige deltakelse?
   a. Hvorfor tror du elevene snakket mer/mindre?
8. Hva tror du påvirket elevenes muntlige deltakelse?
9. Har du noe du vil tilføye?

Intervju guide lærerstudenter

1. Hvilke fag underviser du vanligvis?
2. Hva er Reacting to the past?
3. Hvordan jobber dere med RTTP I klassene?
   a. Hvor lenge?
   b. På hvilken måte?
4. Hvordan opplevde dere elevenes holdninger til rollespill før rollespillet?
5. Hvordan opplevde dere elevenes holdninger til rollespill etter rollespillet?
6. På hvilken måte påvirket rollespillet elevenes muntlige deltakelse?
7. Hva tenker dere påvirket elevenes muntlige deltakelse?
   a. Hvorfor tror dere elevene snakket mer/mindre?
8. Vil dere fortsette og bruke rollespill når dere blir lærere?
   a. Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
8. Har du noe du vil tilføye?

Intervju guide elever

1. Hvordan vil du vurdere dine engelskkunnskaper?
2. Har du familie eller venner som snakker engelsk?
3. Er det viktig for deg å lære å snakke engelsk?
   a. På hvilken måte?
4. Hvilke utfordringer (om noen) har du når du skal lære engelsk?
5. Har du noen gang hatt vanskeligheter med å snakke engelsk i klasserommet?
   a. Hvis ja, når har det vært vanskelig?
6. Har frykt for å gjøre feil eller nervøsitet gjort det vanskelig å lære engelsk?
   a. På hvilken måte?
7. Hvilke aktiviteter gjør det lettere å lære engelsk?
8. Hvilke aktiviteter gjør det vanskeligere å lære engelsk?
9. Hva var dine erfaringer med å spille Reacting to the past?
10. Hadde rollespillet noen påvirkning på din deltakelse i klassen?
    a. Snakket du mer/mindre enn du vanligvis gjør?
11. Hjalp rollespill deg med å snakke engelsk?
    a. Hvis ja, på hvilken måte var det til hjelp?
    b. Hvis nei, på hvilken måte var det ikke til hjelp?
12. Er det noe du vil tilføye om rollespillet eller om engelsk generelt?

Appendix B

Velkommen til denne undersøkelsen!

Jeg er en master student på GLU 5-10. Dette er en undersøkelse i forbindelse med min oppgave om "Role-playing and foreign language anxiety". Rollespill kan defineres som "en prosess der individer oppnår mål og fremskritt, fordyper seg i en rolle og skaper en spennende historie eller simulerer en verden eller hendelse".

Studien vil undersøke hvilken påvirkning rollespill har på elevers fremmedspråksangst og muntlige deltakelse.

Undersøkelsen er anonym og ingen opplysninger eller svar kan spores tilbake til deltakere av undersøkelsen. Når studien er fullført vil all data bli slettet.

Dersom det skulle være noen spørsmål, kan jeg nås på mail:

Takk!

Underviser du i engelsk?

       (1) ◯ Ja   (2) ◯ Nei

Hvor mange år har du undervist i engelsk?

(1) ◯ 0-5   (2) ◯ 6-10   (3) ◯ 11-15   (4) ◯ 16-20   (5) ◯ 21+

Hvor høy utdanning har du i engelsk?

(1) ◯ Ingen høyere utdanning   (2) ◯ Universitet, 3 år   (3) ◯ Universitet, 4 år   (4) ◯ Universitet, 5 år   (5) ◯ Universitet, 5+ år

På hvilke(t) klassetrinn underviser du i engelsk?

(1) ❏ 1. trinn   (2) ❏ 2. trinn   (3) ❏ 3. trinn   (4) ❏ 4. trinn   (5) ❏ 5. trinn   (6) ❏ 6. trinn   (7) ❏ 7. trinn   (8) ❏ 8. trinn   (9) ❏ 9. trinn   (10) ❏ 10. trinn

Kryss av for hvor enig eller uenig du er i påstandene under.

	Enig	Delvis enig	Delvis uenig	Uenig
Mine elever blir mer nervøse av muntlig deltakelse.	(1) ◯	(2) ◯	(3) ◯	(4) ◯
Mine elever virker mer nervøse når de snakker foran mange mennesker.	(1) ◯	(2) ◯	(3) ◯	(4) ◯
Elever som er nervøse for å snakke foran klassen, er også nervøse for å snakke i små grupper.	(1) ◯	(2) ◯	(3) ◯	(4) ◯
Elever som er nervøse for å snakke, er det i alle fag.	(1) ◯	(2) ◯	(3) ◯	(4) ◯

Kryss av for hvor enig eller uenig du er i påstandene under.

	Enig	Delvis enig	Delvis uenig	Uenig
Jeg brukerdrama/rollespill i engelskundervisningen.	(1) ◯	(2) ◯	(3) ◯	(4) ◯
Rollespill hjelper elever til å snakke mer engelsk.	(1) ◯	(2) ◯	(3) ◯	(4) ◯
Rollespill gjør mine elever mer nervøse.	(1) ◯	(2) ◯	(3) ◯	(4) ◯

	Enig	Delvis enig	Delvis uenig	Uenig
Mine elever snakker mindre engelsk under drama og rollespill aktiviteter.	(1) O	(2) O	(3) O	(4) O

Kryss av for hvor enig eller uenig du er i påstandene under.

	Enig	Delvis enig	Delvis uenig	Uenig
Fremmedspråksangst virker svekkende på elever.	(1) O	(2) O	(3) O	(4) O
Fremmedspråksangst virker fremmende på elever.	(1) O	(2) O	(3) O	(4) O
Rollespill hjelper elever med fremmedspråksangst.	(1) O	(2) O	(3) O	(4) O

På hvilken måte tror du rollespill kan påvirke elevers muntlige deltakelse?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Har du noe å tilføye om dine opplevelser med rollespill og/eller foreign language anxiety?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt

Rollespill og språklæring

Bakgrunn og formål

I forbindelse med mine studier ved UiA, fakultetet for lærerutdanning, skal jeg skrive en masteroppgave i Engelsk. Undersøkelsen går ut på dokumentasjon av muntlige intervjuer og observasjon av klasseromsundervisning. Prosjektet skal forsøke å belyse på hvilke måter rollespill kan påvirke språklæring i skolen, og på hvilke måter rollespill kan påvirke muntlig deltakelse i klasserommet. Rollespill innebærer at man spiller en rolle i en tenkt situasjon. De forskjellige rollene har enten replikker som skal sies, eller en beskrivelse av karakteren som sier noe om hvilke holdninger eller tanker karakteren har.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Deltakelse i studien innebærer at elevene deltar i en undervisningsøkt der det brukes rollespill. Jeg skal observere og notere underveis. Etter rollespillet skal jeg intervjue 5-7 av elevene som samtykker til å bli intervjuet. Læreren deres velger ut disse.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg/ditt barn?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og opplysningene kan ikke spores tilbake til enkeltpersoner i sluttrapporten. Deltakelse i forskningen krever samtykke av eleven eller foresatte (dersom elever er under 15 år). Kontaktlærer i gruppen vil få orientering om resultatene av forskningen ved prosjektslutt. Det er kun student og veileder som har tilgang til personopplysninger, og konfidensialiteten ivaretas gjennom anonymisering av alle elevene gjennom pseudonymer.

Deltakere vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes i mai 2024.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er helt frivillig å delta i forskningen. Du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi grunn for dette. Dette kan du gjøre ved sende meg en e-post. Dersom du skulle trekke ditt samtykke, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du ikke samtykker til observasjon, vil det ikke noteres informasjon om deg.

Dine rettigheter

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

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og 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

Dersom du har spørsmål til studien, ta gjerne kontakt med johang18@uia.no. I studentprosjekt må også kontaktopplysninger til veileder/ansvarlig påføres.

Veileder er Susan L. Erdmann, kan kontaktes på e-post susan.erdmann@uia.no.

Personvernombudet ved UiA kan kontaktes på e-post personvernombud@uia.no.

Studien er meldt til SIKT – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør.

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om prosjektet og samtykker til at …...

kan delta/ikke delta i forskningsprosjektet (stryk det som ikke passer)

(Deltakers navn)

Underskrift og dato

………………………………………………………………………………………