Speaking in the EFL classroom
A qualitative study of how four compulsory school teachers view the role of oral proficiency

Author: Sofie Olsson
Supervisor: Spela Mezek
Examiner: Charlotte Hommerberg
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Abstract

Research shows that oral proficiency is a big part of communicative competence, and therefore highly relevant for EFL teachers in today’s society. This study aims to investigate what types of activities four EFL teachers in secondary school in Sweden prefer to use in order to practice and assess their students’ oral proficiency. This study further seeks to give an insight in what the four teachers focus on when assessing their students’ oral proficiency. The method used for this study was qualitative, semi-structured interviews with four EFL teachers of different secondary schools in south of Sweden. Furthermore, the data was later coded and analysed with inspiration of the Grounded theory methodology. The results of this study showed that the four teachers used different oral activities very often in their teaching, especially different kinds of discussions. The oral activities were often connected to other projects and assignments that included other skills such as reading and writing. Therefore, the oral proficiency activities were only said to be clearly planned and assessed once or twice per term. Moreover, the four teachers main focus when assessing the students’ oral proficiency seemed to be phenomena like fluency, clearness, adaption to purpose and strategy-usage.

Keywords

EFL teaching, oral proficiency, oral production, interaction, communicative competence, assessment of oral proficiency, oral proficiency teaching
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1 Introduction

In the globalised world of today, where English constantly functions as a lingua franca, it becomes more and more important to possess a high level of communicative skills in English. Therefore, it is important that schools and education of today support and highlight these communicative skills in all their meaning.

Even though English is not an official language in Sweden, Swedes tend to be very good at English. According to the Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), which is the world’s largest ranking of countries by English skills, Sweden is now in second place out of 80 different countries that do not have English as a first language (L1). As much as 70.4% of the Swedish test-takers of EF EPI showed “Very high proficiency in English”, which is the highest level of proficiency within the survey (EF 2017). Similarly, the European Survey of Language Competences (ESLC) shows that Swedish students in ninth grade are, impressively, at the top of proficiency in English together with Malta, which has English as an official language (National Agency for Education 2011a, “ESLC”). However, there is an issue with these extensive surveys: none of them include oral proficiency in their data-collections. EF EPI and ESLC only test people’s listening, reading and writing skills.

In all Swedish secondary schools, national tests are carried out in English, every year in ninth grade. This is one of the more extensive tests, if not the only one, that actually has oral proficiency in English as a main part of the test. The results of this test for the school year of 2016/2017 show that far fewer students failed the oral test than the tests in writing, reading and listening. They also show that many more students got the highest grade on the oral test than in the writing, reading and listening tests (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2017). What this perhaps means is that Swedish students are better at speaking English than they are in writing and reading it. As I mentioned earlier, oral proficiency was not tested in EF EPI, nor in ESLC. Perhaps, the results of those tests would look very different for many of the countries participating, if oral proficiency had been tested.

Oral proficiency is an interesting and important area of investigation since it has been left out of big surveys like EF EPI and ESLC even though oral proficiency is a big part of communicative competence. Oral proficiency is clearly stated in the Swedish syllabi for EFL teaching, and further divided into two knowledge requirements: oral production and oral
interaction (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 38). Perhaps this could be one of the reasons for Swedish people showing outstanding results in English proficiency, both in school and later in life. Moreover, in 2010 a survey was made in Sweden to map and investigate Foreign Language (FL) teachers’ conceptions of student assessment principles and procedures. Amongst many things, the results of the survey showed that ‘classroom observation of oral communication’ was the most common assessment activity (Apelgren & Oscarson 2011, 7). However, their survey did not, qualitatively, show what types of oral communication activities were carried out in the classroom, how the teachers assessed those activities, and why they did so. This is where this study seeks to fill a gap by looking at oral proficiency from a close and detailed perspective of four English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. This study can be of relevance for in-service teachers and future teachers of the EFL classroom because the findings in a qualitative study like this might be enlightening to those teachers, and further give them new insights and perspectives on oral proficiency in the EFL classroom.

1.1 Aim and research questions

This study aims to investigate what type of activities four EFL teachers of lower secondary school in Sweden prefer to use in order to develop the students’ oral proficiency, and also how such activities are assessed. Thereby, this study seeks to give an insight in how EFL teachers view the role of oral proficiency in the EFL classroom.

Research questions:

1. When it comes to oral proficiency, what types of activities do EFL teachers in lower secondary school in Sweden use, and what are the reasons for doing so?
2. What do EFL teachers in lower secondary school in Sweden focus on when assessing students’ oral proficiency, and what are their thoughts on oral proficiency assessment?

2 Literature review

In this section, theoretical concepts and previous research, relevant for this study, are explained and presented. The concepts are communicative competence, oral proficiency, oral proficiency teaching and assessment of oral proficiency.
2.1 Communicative competence
The concept of communicative competence is relevant for this study since oral proficiency is part of the all-round communicative skills which the syllabi of English say all students should develop and achieve (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 32). In addition, the current Swedish syllabi of English are highly inspired by communicative competence, and many of its components such as pronunciation, adaption to context, reformulation and questioning concern oral proficiency specifically. The founder of communicative competence is said to be the linguist D. H. Hymes. Hymes argued for the need of a theory which included both linguistic competence, a previous concept invented by N. Chomsky which was used widely within linguistic research, but also socio-cultural dimensions (Hymes 1971, 270-71). Later, the theory of communicative competence was elaborated by many scholars and it turned into a famous concept and notion, especially within language teaching.

Within language teaching communicative competence can be described as consisting of three main parts: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence (Johnson & Johnson 1998, 66). Grammatical competence includes areas like pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and morphology. Like the name indicates, grammatical competence has to do with grammar and to know the structure of a certain language. Sociolinguistic competence, sometimes divided into ‘sociocultural competence’ and ‘discourse competence’, concerns areas like how the language is used in different contexts and what is appropriate to say in certain situations. This competence also includes the ability to put together words and sentences into coherent and cohesive texts, both orally and in writing. In other words, sociolinguistic competence is the ability to interact in different situations such as with people of different cultural backgrounds or with different power relations etc., and to get those interactions as fluent and coherent as possible. Finally, the strategic competence refers to the ability to use communicative strategies such as reformulation, questioning and body language (Johnson & Johnson 1998, 63-7). That is to say, strategic competence is needed when we cannot find the right words or need to explain something more thoroughly.

2.1.1 Communicative competence and the syllabus
If we look at the syllabus for English through the lens of communicative competence, we can see that the three main parts of communicative competence are included in the syllabus for English in year 7-9.
In the core content of the syllabus, under *Speaking, writing and discussing – production and interaction*, language phenomena such as “pronunciation, intonation and fixed language expressions, grammatical structures and sentence structures” (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 35) are stated. These can all be seen as part of the grammatical competence, and also connected to oral proficiency. However, when it comes to the knowledge requirements, teachers are supposed to assess how “varied”, “clear” and “coherent” the students’ oral and written production and interaction is. That is to say, words like pronunciation and intonation are not mentioned in the knowledge requirements but are expected to be included within those bigger and vaguer terms. Moreover, oral and written proficiency are stated within the same knowledge requirement in the EFL syllabi which might give teachers and learners the idea that writing and speaking English have the exact same criteria (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 38).

When it comes to the sociolinguistic competence the core content of the syllabus states the teaching should cover “[d]ifferent ways of working on personal communications to vary, clarify, specify and adapt them for different purposes” (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 35). This has to do with how English can be used differently in different contexts such as when you are applying for a job in e.g. England versus when you are making small talk in a bar in New York etc. In the knowledge requirements the sociolinguistic competence appears where it says that the student should be able to express themselves with “adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation” (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 38). The syllabus also states that the student should be able to discuss different phenomena “in a balanced way”, “clearly” and “coherently” (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 38), which also has to do with the sociolinguistic competence since it refers to the ability to keep a text, or interaction, fluent and clearly structured.

The strategic competence seems to be the most prominent one within the syllabus. Both in the core content and in the knowledge requirements different language strategies are mentioned. The knowledge requirements say that the student should be able to choose and apply strategies to “solve problems and improve their interaction and take it forward in a constructive way” (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 38). These strategies can be things like reformulations, follow-up questions, taking initiatives, concluding etc. (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 35).

As we can see, the three main parts of communicative competence are easily found in the syllabus for English in year 7-9. Moreover, the parts that were discussed are all related to oral
proficiency. To further understand what is meant by oral proficiency and how it connects to communicative competence and the syllabus, oral proficiency is discussed in more detail in following sections.

2.2 Oral proficiency
The sound of speech, or oral production, within a language is highly meaningful to us humans. On the basis of what we hear, we make judgements about a person’s personality, status and attitudes etc. (Luoma 2004, 9). Moreover, when we speak we are constantly trying to create an image of ourselves to others, sometimes unconsciously. The meaning of a person’s oral production does not only depend on what is said, but also how it is said. Things like speed, pausing, variation in pitch, volume and intonation create a texture to our oral production and enhances what we are actually saying (Luoma 2004, 10). Therefore, it is important to consider all aspects of oral proficiency, and not only things like pronunciation and fluency, when teaching and assessing it in the EFL classroom.

As mentioned in the introduction, the syllabus for English in Sweden divides oral proficiency into oral production and oral interaction. The main difference between the two is of course that oral interaction has to involve at least two people and oral production does not. Our oral production is everything that comes out of person’s mouth. Oral interaction is the oral production but in interaction with other people. However, oral interaction can be several things and cover several types of communication (Oliver & Philp 2014, 3). Oliver and Philp define oral interaction like this: “Oral interaction is the spoken language that takes place between two or more people and […] is the type of speaking and listening that occurs in real time in communicative exchanges” (2014, 5). That is to say, oral interaction is a collaborative phenomenon which does not only concern speaking, but also listening to others. It can moreover include responses that are non-verbal such as gestures and nods, and still classify as oral interaction (Oliver & Philp 2014, 6).

Language is also closely bound to identity and adolescents tend to be somewhat unwilling to use the target language amongst their classmates. Oliver and Philp point out that there is research showing children in primary school are much more positive to speaking a target language than adolescents (2014, 108). A study conducted in Canada regarding the teaching of French as a foreign language reported that students in high school feel they can only speak
like teenagers in their first language, and that the teaching lacks the type of vernacular language the students want to learn (Oliver & Philp 2014, 108).

Another reason some students feel uncomfortable or resistant to speaking the target language in the classroom could be what Horwitz et al. (1986) call foreign language classroom anxiety. Students who experience this type of anxiety tend to avoid communication in the classroom, especially the more spontaneous type such as answering questions in the target language or interacting in role-plays etc. (Horwitz et al. 1986, 125-6). Moreover, the anxiety is especially common in testing situations where students report that they often know a certain grammar point or the right words but tend to “freeze” or forget them in the moment of testing because of nervousness. This might have to do with the fact that in oral activities, many linguistic aspects must be remembered and coordinated simultaneously (Horwitz et al. 1986, 126).

Horwitz et al. (1986, 131) further stress the importance, for teachers, to consider foreign language anxiety a possible reason for students’ poor performance on oral activities before considering it merely lack of ability or poor motivation. If foreign language anxiety is acknowledged, teachers can work on making the learning context less stressful or teach the students how to cope with anxiety-inducing situations which in turn might be life changing for some students since such strategies can make them prosper in our communicative society (Horwitz et al. 1986, 131-2). This might be an interesting issue to look for in the interviews of this study since we can get a deeper insight into how, if at all, EFL teachers in Sweden deal with students who are struggling with anxiety or are unwilling to speak in the classroom.

Oliver and Philp claim that there are less instructions on how to teach oral interaction in the FL classroom than there is on other skills such as reading and writing (2014, 9, 126). Perhaps, this is due to the fact that we all interact many times on a daily basis and therefore think that we have a general understanding of what oral interaction means and “should” involve etc. However, it is important to engage the students in different interaction activities of the target language since we naturally learn a language by using it (Oliver and Philp 2014, 123-4).

When interacting with others, students practice both their fluency and strategic competence since oral interaction most often is spontaneous and forces the students to use their current knowledge and also negotiate for meaning when needed. Moreover, in oral interaction students get instant feedback in the form of a response from the person they are talking to, and
this is helpful for their language learning since it enables the students to notice problems in both their own and others’ oral production (Oliver and Philp 2014, 126-7).

In comparison to Sweden where students show great results in English proficiency tests and so on, a study was conducted in China in 2010 to investigate which challenges and difficulties EFL teachers at university level in China encounter when it comes to oral proficiency (Chen & Goh 2011). In recent years, communicative competence has been highlighted as the main goal within EFL teaching in China, as in Sweden, due to the fact that Chinese university students have shown really poor results up until now, particularly in speaking and listening skills (Chen & Goh 2011, 334). The fact that the study concerns university level of EFL teaching does not make it irrelevant for this study since English is not a compulsory subject in China until you start college. However, English is offered as a core subject already in secondary school. That is to say, EFL teaching at university level in China might be quite similar to the EFL teaching in secondary school in Sweden, at least when it comes to the students’ proficiency level. Furthermore, the study involved 706 EFL teachers from different parts of China in questionnaires, interviews and case studies (Chen & Goh 2011, 335).

One of the main findings of the study was that almost two thirds of the teachers experienced their own lack of competence in English as the biggest source of difficulty when dealing with oral activities. They expressed that their inadequate pedagogical knowledge and lack of language competence made them close to incapable of planning efficient oral activities, and assessment of them (Chen & Goh 2011, 336-7). Perhaps this is something Swedish teachers feel as well. Or they may feel the opposite from Chinese teachers: that students in Sweden are surrounded by so much English communication on a daily basis anyway that it is not as important as practicing their reading and writing during the EFL lessons.

The study also showed that many of the teachers had a hard time motivating their students to participate in oral activities (Chen & Goh 2011, 337). This might have to do with foreign language anxiety, as spoken of earlier, but another seemingly crucial point is that oral proficiency is not tested in the final exams, even though it is mentioned in their syllabus, and is thereby not prioritised by the students (Chen & Goh 2011, 338). This might be interesting to compare with the interviews of this study since the knowledge requirements in the Swedish syllabi are quite vague when it comes to oral proficiency. However, the national test of oral
proficiency in English that is carried out in Sweden might make both the students and teachers motivated to work with oral proficiency in the EFL classroom.

2.3 Oral proficiency teaching

In the EFL classroom there are several methods and activities one can use to teach oral proficiency. In this section some basic methodologies, and what their focus is within oral proficiency, are presented.

One way to practice the students’ oral production is through acting. For example, students can act out their own-produced scripts or dialogues or work with famous plays etc. By doing this, the students will practice both their pronunciation and fluency when rehearsing over and over again for the final performance. Besides this type of speaking practice, acting can also help contextualise the language and develop the students’ confidence in speaking the foreign language (Almond 2005, 10-12). Naturally, students will also practice their interaction skills such as gestures, facial expressions and eye contact when engaging in acting.

In addition, acting is quite similar to the “prepared talks” Harmer (2007, 351) speaks of as a very common activity in the EFL classroom where the student holds a small presentation, usually on a topic of their own choice, in front of the class. Harmer (2007, 352) further stresses the importance of presentations involving both active listening and active speaking. That is to say, it is good to give the audience some sort of task such as asking follow-up questions etc. so that all students stay on task and feel involved.

Another way to teach oral proficiency is through discussions. To discuss is the most natural and effective way for students to learn how to speak English as fluently and freely as possible according to Penny Ur (1983, 2). Discussions can look very different and have many different functions such as to inform, persuade, threaten etc., but the main purpose of discussions is for the student to be taken as seriously as possible by the teacher as well as by peers. That is to say, to listen carefully to the one you are interacting with and then to answer in a logical, clear and relevant way gives us the best kind of discussion (Ur 1983, 3). For example, Ur (1983, 40) suggests that pictures are very useful for starting group discussions. The teacher can pick some interesting pictures from magazines or maybe create some pictures where something is happening or portraits of unfamiliar people etc. Each group of students then get a picture
where they either have to describe what is happening or make up some sort of story and information of what is shown in the pictures. This type of activity can give very detailed and deep interpretations of different situations at the same time as the students have to cooperate and discuss their way into the “right” answer or story. One can also switch pictures with different groups and have the students debate whether their stories are the most original and probable ones or not etc. (Ur 1983, 40-4).

Moreover, debate is the best kind of discussion for the students to practice their skills of oratory and dialectics according to Ur (1983, 105). Harmer (2007, 358) also claims that debates give a great opportunity to practice students’ analytical and arguing skills. This might also be a very fun and interesting exercise for students since they are given the opportunity to argue for what they think is important, but within a “safe” classroom environment.

2.4 Assessment of oral proficiency

There seem to be some difficulties when it comes to assessment of oral proficiency, for example which targets to actually focus on. Learners of a foreign language tend to believe that the native speaker pronunciation is the standard and the one to strive for, and so do many teachers (Luoma 2004, 10). However, in the world of today, there are so many different “standards” of English that it would be very difficult to select only one of them as the standard pronunciation for EFL teaching and assessment. Moreover, research shows that very few FL learners achieve a native-like pronunciation in all aspects even though they are fully comprehensible when speaking (Luoma 2004, 10). This might be a problem for EFL teachers in Sweden since the syllabus for secondary school mentions pronunciation in the core content but not what type of pronunciation that should be the standard, nor are there any specific knowledge requirements for pronunciation and intonation etc. (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 35, 38).

Furthermore, there are big differences in assessing written language and spoken language. Unlike written language, speech usually consists of what Luoma calls “idea units” (2004, 12) instead of complete sentences. The idea units are short phrases and clauses with a simpler grammar than written sentences. This is for the listener to understand the words as they are being spoken in real time. For this reason, Luoma argues that assessment of speech should be designed accordingly, with specific requirements related to the grammar of speech, and not on the same terms as written language (2004, 12-3). Oliver and Philp take a similar standpoint,
saying that teachers often assess students’ oral interaction on the characteristics of written language and “correct students’ disfluencies […] even though these are a natural part of oral interaction and not a sign of an incompetent speaker.” (2014, 8-9). This is interesting since the Swedish syllabi for English keep oral and written proficiency within the same knowledge requirements. That is to say, the criteria for speaking and writing look the same (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 35, 38).

Regarding assessment of oral proficiency, there are some studies showing interesting results on this topic. For example, in 2010 a survey was made that included 605 Foreign Language (FL) teachers in Sweden, that is teachers of English and Modern languages, to map and investigate FL teachers’ conceptions of student assessment principles and procedures. The methods used for the survey were a questionnaire, taken by all 605 teachers, and repertory grid interviews with 20 out of the 605 teachers. The interviews were conducted to give more specific, but still quantitative, information on the issues raised in the questionnaire (Apelgren & Oscarson 2011, 4).

The survey showed that ‘classroom observation of oral communication’ was the most common assessment activity, since oral communication is something almost every language lesson covers in some way (Apelgren & Oscarson 2011, 7). However, observation of oral activities was ranked quite low by the teachers regarding importance of different assessment types; it was ranked in 11th and 12th place out of 15 types (Apelgren & Oscarson 2011, 9). Furthermore, the survey showed that written assignments and tests are what the teachers primarily rely on when it comes to assessing their students’ levels of learning, and that ‘free written production’ is the teachers’ primary choice of testing (Apelgren & Oscarson 2011, 10, 13).

One can further see from the result tables that 50 percent of the teachers in the survey experienced oral communication as something hard to assess, but at the same time all teachers considered it high priority. Moreover, 80 percent said oral communication is an important source of assessment for grading (Apelgren & Oscarson 2011, 12).

Consequently, even though the teachers say they do a lot of assessment on oral communication, and that it is an important source of assessment, they seem to end up relying on written assignments when testing the students’ language skills. This somewhat contradicting information about oral communication and assessment is the reason for doing
qualitative interviews with EFL teachers in this study, so that a clearer picture of what the teachers think of oral proficiency assessment can be established.

3 Method and participants
In the following paragraphs the choice of methods and participants for this study will be explained. Ethical considerations, problems and limitations concerning this study will also be discussed here.

3.1 Participants
The data for this study are the four interviews with EFL teachers of secondary schools in Sweden. Convenience sampling was used to choose the four participants. Consequently, three female teachers and one male teacher agreed to take part in the study. All teachers work in different urban schools in south of Sweden. Moreover, all four teachers turned out to have quite short work experience within the field of EFL teaching. As clarified below, the most experienced teacher had taught English for three years. However, getting the perspective of such newly graduated teachers can be interesting for this study since they are all educated with the focus on the current syllabus and curriculum. Moreover, they probably have their educational knowledge fresh in their minds, so the interviews will show how that effects their perceptions of the syllabus and EFL teaching.

In the transcriptions and henceforward in this essay the four teachers will be referred to as respondents: A, B, C and D. This is both to separate the interviews from one another and to keep the teachers anonymous. Brief presentations of each respondent are offered below.

3.1.1 Respondent A
A is a male teacher who works at a free school and teaches students in year 6-9. He teaches eight classes in total with approximately 23 students in each class. A is a licenced teacher in English and Music and has taught English for about three years.

3.1.2 Respondent B
B is a female teacher who works at a public school and teaches students in year 7-8. She teaches 12 classes in total with 22-26 students in each class. B is a licenced teacher in Art, Swedish as a second language (SSL) and English. B has taught those subjects for one term so far.
3.1.3 Respondent C
C is a female teacher who works at a public school and teaches students in year 7-9. She teaches about 300 students in total with 25 students in each class. C is a licenced teacher in Swedish and English and has taught those subjects for one and a half years.

3.1.4 Respondent D
D is a female teacher who works at a public school and teaches students in year 7-9. She teaches ten classes with approximately 26 students in each class. D is a licenced teacher in English and Art, but has taught only English for two and a half years.

3.2 Interviews
Interviews were chosen as method for this study because of their opportunity to give opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences from real teachers of the EFL classroom in Sweden. Moreover, interviews can give a detailed insight and understanding of what it is like dealing with the complex issue of oral proficiency in the context of the Swedish syllabi and the EFL classroom.

The structure that was chosen for the interviews is what Denscombe would call semi-structured interviews where the interviewer has a list of themes and questions that the interview should cover. However, in semi-structured interviews the respondent is given the liberty of developing their answers and steer the conversation relatively freely. Furthermore, the interview questions should be open and invite to more elaborated responses than just a few words (Denscombe 2014, 186).

For this study, 23 questions were constructed within the following four themes: background, oral proficiency, oral proficiency and assessment, oral proficiency in connection to the syllabus. The complete interview protocol is in Appendix 1. Four semi-structured interviews were carried out with different teachers of English, all teaching in secondary schools in the south of Sweden. One teacher was interviewed in my own home, after working hours, and the others were interviewed at their schools during or after their workday. These different settings could of course have had an effect on the teachers’ responses. The ones that were conducted after working hours felt a bit more relaxed than the others since there was no stress in time, and nor were there any other people surrounding us at the time. However, all interviews lasted about an hour and there were no problems finishing them. All interviews were conducted in
Swedish since it is the teachers’ first language and in which they could express themselves most comfortably and explicitly. Moreover, all interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed.

3.3 Analysis of interviews
As the method for analysing the data of this study an approach of grounded theory was chosen. Transcripts of interviews are the most common type of data associated with grounded theory analysis, mainly because interviews usually contain a large and detailed amount of data which is qualitative. The goal of grounded theory is to create new concepts and theories out of the data investigated. One could say that grounded theory is an inductive approach since you look for patterns or ideas in particular instances in order to develop ideas or theories which apply at a general level (Denscombe 2014:106, 285).

One of the most important things to remember about grounded theory is that the researcher should go into the investigation as open-minded as possible, and therefore not have fixed ideas or hypotheses about the results of the study. Previous research and theories are to be regarded as open to question (Denscombe 2014, 109). To follow that principle, various open-ended interview questions were constructed out of the two research questions of this study to cover as many ideas, thoughts and opinions as possible expressed by the four teachers.

When the interviews were completed and transcribed, so called ‘open coding’ was done to the raw data, i.e. the transcripts. Open coding is when you scrutinize the data in order to create categories in which certain pieces of data have something in common such as similar words or phrases used for describing an issue or a situation etc. Next, the so called ‘axial coding’ was done which means you look for relationships and patterns between the codes you have found during the open coding, and also you try to distinguish which codes are more relevant to your research questions than others. Lastly, the so called ‘selective coding’ was done which refers to finding the key concepts that are vital for the answers to the research questions of the study (Denscombe 2014, 113).

Furthermore, in grounded theory analysis you often talk about ‘constant comparison’ as something very important. Mainly, this refers to the constant comparison of codes and categories that emerge during the process, but also the comparison between the codes found and new data added to the analysis in order to “check” the patterns and concepts discovered
(Denscombe 2014, 114). In this study, the interpretation was made that each interview could work as comparative data for each other. That is to say, no new interviews were conducted during the actual state of analysis; the original data was instead re-evaluated again and again during the coding process.

3.4 Ethical considerations and limitations
When conducting interviews, there are some key principles of research ethics that must be taken into consideration. The first principle is about protecting the participants’ interest. This was done in this study by keeping the four respondents completely anonymous, both in the transcriptions and in this essay. The respondents’ names have not been revealed, nor the names of the schools they are working at. Furthermore, the audio-recorded interview files have not been uploaded anywhere and will be deleted from the recording device as soon as this study is completed (Denscombe 2014, 310-11).

The second principle is about informed consent. This was done by informing the respondents that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to cancel the interview at any point (Denscombe 2014, 312). Moreover, the participants gave me informed consent via e-mail where a brief description of the study was presented to them. This further includes the third principle which is about openness in the conduct of research. The participants got information about the aim and research questions of the study beforehand, and also had the possibility to ask whatever they wanted during and after the interviews (Denscombe 2014, 313). The fourth and last principle is about compliance with the law. This was done by keeping the data of the interviews secure so it cannot be spread by someone else or that the participants’ identities are revealed (Denscombe 2014, 315).

Furthermore, interviewing comes with both advantages and disadvantages. In interviews, the data is based on what people say they do and think. This does not mean it is the actual truth. Sometimes the respondents might say what they think the researcher wants to hear and so on (Denscombe 2014, 202-3). Moreover, one cannot claim that the results of this study can be seen as representative for all EFL teachers in Sweden with only four interviews as a basis. However, as mentioned in the section on grounded theory, it was never the aim of this study to be representative for all EFL teachers. The point is rather to get a detailed perspective and understanding of how four EFL teachers view the role of oral proficiency in their classrooms.
as a basis for further research within the area, and also to highlight the issue of oral proficiency as an important area of investigation.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews like the ones in this study give a great depth of information where the respondents have the possibility to really talk about what they feel is crucial or most important within the area of investigation. This was exactly the kind of data I wanted for my study, and it would not have been possible with another method such as questionnaire or observation.

4 Results and analysis
In this section, the results of this study are presented. The codes and categories created during the final coding-process are shown in different hierarchies in relation to the research questions. Furthermore, authentic examples are shown in the form of quotes from the interviews in order to explain and clarify the hierarchies. All quotes presented below have been translated into English to fit the language and structure of this essay; however, the original quotes can be found in appendix 2.

4.1 Types of activities used to practice and assess oral proficiency (Research question 1.) When it comes to oral proficiency, what types of activities do EFL teachers in secondary school in Sweden use, and what are the reasons for doing so?

Figure 1. Activities used in the Swedish EFL classroom connected to oral proficiency
Above you can see the hierarchy as a result of the coding process for the first research question. All four teachers separated their oral proficiency activities into activities connected to oral production or oral interaction, like the syllabus does. Moreover, all teachers seemed sure of the differences between oral production and oral interaction. For example, respondent A talked about oral production as when you are trying to present an idea or thought so that others can understand, and interaction as more of an instant and spontaneous communication where you have to be flexible and respond to other people. Respondent B had a similar opinion, she said:

(1) Oral production is when they [the students] do a presentation or something like that and oral interaction is when they discuss something together, right? (Respondent B)

Furthermore, all four teachers seemed to agree on oral production as something usually prepared and rehearsed for, and interaction as something more spontaneous and involving more than one person.

4.1.1 Oral production activities
Within oral production, prepared presentations seemed to be the most common activity since all four teachers mentioned it several times. For instance, when asking respondent B whether oral production always concerned performing a speech, the teacher answered:

(2) Well yes, an oral presentation with a PowerPoint or something like that in front of the class. I think of oral production as presentations where you can think “I have prepared and rehearsed for this, now I will do this” (Respondent B)

One can therefore assume that prepared presentations like the ones respondent B mentioned is the only type of activity she uses when it comes to oral production. Furthermore, all four teachers said that oral production activities were activities the students got to prepare for and where they always had the possibility to plan what to say. For example, they could write down a script or a list of key words before doing a presentation. However, not all teachers thought that the presentations had to be done in front of other people. For instance, one teacher said:

(3) It does not really look like that in the knowledge requirements, that it [an oral presentation] really has to be in front of a group, but usually it is the way we do it
because they [the students] are probably going to need that skill later in life
(Respondent C)

One can assume that respondent C wants to prepare the students for a communicative society
where rhetorical skills, amongst others, are of big importance in many professions etc.
Another teacher was pretty much against presentations in front of class since shyness seemed
to be a common problem amongst his students. He said:

(4) I usually let the students work with oral production individually, they record themselves
and I listen to them through that. Otherwise their shyness would inhibit them too much,
and shyness does not have to do with how much someone really knows […] and I think
this is very important, to give all students the possibility to do their best. (Respondent A)

This indicates that respondent A is highly aware of what Horwitz et al. (1986) call foreign
language anxiety and has therefore made sure that oral production can be tested in a less
stressful context, at least in part. However, this was the only teacher that said he was used to
letting the students record themselves instead of having oral presentations in front of other
people. Perhaps this has to do with respondent A being the only one of the participants who
works at a free school, a free school which he said is quite niched in using modern technology
in the teaching.

Moreover, respondent A mentioned another advantage of recording the students’ oral
performances, namely getting stored data of oral activities. This makes it possible to look
back at a student’s oral production and interaction, like we can with written assignments. This
would be beneficial for the assessment of oral proficiency since the problem of forgetting
what the students have said disappears. Owing to this, one could assume that this might be
where the EFL teaching in Sweden is heading: implementing more technology in the teaching
so that the learning context can be less stressful but also stored and easy to access.

Respondent A was also the teacher who mentioned another type of oral production activity,
namely the podcast. Since the students were allowed to write and rehearse complete scripts
before they recorded the final podcast, respondent A thought of the activity as oral production
instead of oral interaction, even though the students did the podcasts together in groups. He
explained it like this:

(5) To me, it is not really oral interaction when they have prepared like that. Oral
interaction has to be a natural reaction to what someone else is saying, and how to
respond to that. If you already have prepared, with e.g. a script, it is not oral interaction, in my opinion. (Respondent A)

This podcast activity can be seen as a modern type of Almond’s (2005) acting method in the way that the students are supposed to make their recorded podcast sound like an actual radio show with real radio hosts and so on, similar to a theatre performance that is. However, the students are missing the opportunity to practice things like keeping eye-contact and making gestures etc. during their podcast. Nevertheless, this seems to be a modern and relevant activity for EFL students of today since most of them probably are used to listening to different podcasts and therefore might feel that the teaching is up-to-date and engaging.

Respondent D talked about an activity which involved reading aloud. The students get to read a part of a story in front of the class or in pairs, depending on the classroom environment. She said:

(6) Sometimes you have messy classes where it would never work having only one person read aloud and everyone else listen actively. In that case, I hand out some stories, like short-stories, to the students in pairs. Then they get to read half the story to one another so that all students have to be both an active listener and an active speaker in order to understand what the story is about. (Respondent D)

Moreover, she explained that the students were never forced to read if they did not want to, but she encouraged them to do so since she thinks it helps improving pronunciation and intonation etc. When reading to each other in pairs like this, the students can help each other with such as pronunciation and the meaning of certain words and phrases. Furthermore, the level of anxiety amongst the students might be reduced since the focus is not on one single student’s performance.

To sum up, the four teachers seemed to think oral production activities such as prepared presentations and reading aloud are useful for practicing the students’ pronunciation and vocabulary, but also their ability to present their own ideas or opinions in a clear and structured way. In other words, in these types of activities the students get the possibility to search for and learn new words and phrases in order to use them accurately in their own oral production.

4.1.2 Oral interaction activities
When it comes to oral interaction, it was discussion activities that stood out the most, and which all teachers reported using very often in different ways. Most often discussions seemed
to be used as some kind of starter activity for the students to get activated and familiar with a certain project. For example, respondent B said the following when describing a regular lesson in her EFL classroom:

(7) I could start off by showing a short film […] usually related to real life and current issues etc., and for this I have then prepared some questions which they get to discuss and talk about in pairs or groups. Then we usually bring up some of the questions in full class and discuss together. (Respondent B)

Respondent B further explained that she includes some sort of oral activity in every English lesson such as discussing pictures and guessing games etc. She argued that these activities are extremely important since communication is what it is all about in language teaching. One could say that respondent B takes a similar standpoint to Oliver and Philp (2014), saying we learn a language by using the language in oral interaction. However, one could wonder if that statement is entirely true. Perhaps most students only use the type of language they already know and do not bother to learn anything new in activities like this since none of the teachers mentioned anything about learning new words and phrases in their oral interaction activities. Nevertheless, the students will practice their fluency and contextualising of words when being forced to interact with other people in the classroom.

Another oral interaction activity was the book club. Respondent B, C and D had all worked with this activity quite recently and all of them had pretty much the same structure of the book club. For example, respondent C explained that they had worked with one novel in the class for several weeks where they both read it together and discussed it along the way. Moreover, the students were divided into groups towards the end of the novel and given some suggestions of discussion topics connected to the novel. With these topics they wrote individual texts which they would later discuss within their groups. Respondent C would then listen to one group at a time and by that assess the students’ oral interaction. She described the criteria like this:

(8) The things you are assessing when listening to the different groups are how each student can make themselves intelligible towards one another and how they can reply to other students’ opinions and thoughts, and also how they find strategies to actually say what they are thinking. (Respondent C)

One can assume from this quote that the students’ written texts were only used here as inspiration for further discussion topics, and not as scripts of what to say. Furthermore, the
book club activity seems to be such an activity that Oliver and Philp (2014) would consider to be great for language learning since the students get instant and spontaneous feedback from each other and where they are forced to use different language strategies when they are not being understood. This can therefore make students aware of when they are not being as clear as they think they are etc.

Other activities of oral interaction concerned spontaneous questions and discussions during class. All four teachers said that this was a very common phenomenon in their classrooms for the students to ask questions or simply shout out their opinions on certain matters. Moreover, all teachers expressed that this could be tiring sometimes but that it most of all supported the communicative classroom in a good way. That is to say, all four teachers encouraged their students to talk as much as possible, in English, during class since they feel it helps develop a comfortable classroom climate in which all students dare to let the teacher know if they do not understand and so on. Perhaps this has to do with the fact that the four teachers in this study all graduated quite recently and therefore probably had much focus on communicative language learning in their education, which in turn could explain why they like having such a “communicative” classroom.

In short, all four teachers reported using oral proficiency activities nearly every lesson, especially some kind of discussion activity. However, they all seemed to have about one activity per term that was clearly planned for and assessed. Respondent C mentioned that she considered the other oral activities, such as classroom discussions, as a “bonus” for some students who may not have performed that well in the assessed activities. That is to say, if a student often participated and performed well during spontaneous classroom activities, respondent C would use that in favour for the student when grading them. This seemed to be a common opinion amongst the other respondents as well, especially regarding the different discussion activities.

4.2 The teachers’ thoughts on oral proficiency assessment

(Research question 2.) What do EFL teachers in secondary school in Sweden focus on when assessing students’ oral proficiency, and what are their thoughts on oral proficiency assessment?
In Figure 2 you can see the hierarchy as a result of the coding process for the second research question. Again, all four teachers separated oral proficiency into oral production and oral interaction when talking about assessment of the two. It is relevant to do so since oral proficiency is divided like that in the knowledge requirements of the syllabus, and therefore have slightly different criteria.

All four teachers mentioned pronunciation as something important when assessing the students’ oral production. However, none of them seemed to think of pronunciation varieties as a problem. As mentioned earlier, it might be a problem for teachers to know which type of pronunciation to aim for and have as a standard, especially since the syllabus does not say anything about this (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2011b, 35). Yet, the teachers in this study argued that as long as a student’s pronunciation is easy to understand, it is a good pronunciation. For instance, respondent D said the following:

(9) I do not really care if the students speak with a British or American accent or something like that. The most important thing is that I can understand what the student is saying, without any difficulties. (Respondent D)

However, two of the teachers mentioned that it was important for the students to learn that there are several dialects and accents in the English-speaking world, and that listening to and
working with such variations helps improving their pronunciation. One could argue that the teachers of this study seem to go along with what Luoma (2004) says about pronunciation, that there is really no point in striving for a native-like pronunciation since it is nearly impossible to achieve. For example, respondent A argued that the students’ pronunciation does not have to be “native-like”, instead he is looking for a “clearness” in their language use. It was quite difficult to establish what the teachers actually meant by a “clear” and “easy to understand” pronunciation. Perhaps, the teachers are looking for a native-like pronunciation such as a typical British or American accent when assessing the students even though they are not fully aware of it.

What is more, the teachers seemed to focus mainly on concepts from the knowledge requirements in the syllabus when assessing oral proficiency, which are shown in Figure 2, regarding both oral production and interaction. They usually concretise the concepts for themselves and by that adjust them to a specific activity. Respondent B explained her assessment-procedure regarding an oral presentation activity like this:

(10) Well, I have made a matrix where I have lined up the knowledge requirements, but simplified. For example, I have one section about the content that has to do with what they [the students] are saying, if it is adapted to purpose etc. I also have one section about fluency, to see how varied and coherent they are in their speech and things like that. So I sit with this matrix and tick off their presentation while they are speaking. (Respondent B)

Respondent C did the same thing, that is a self-made matrix with relevant and adjusted concepts. However, she mentioned a quite interesting thing when talking about what she focuses on when instructing the students on an oral production activity:

(11) Well, when the students are planning their oral presentations for example, I think it is quite common that you focus more on the actual situation of speech, like the structure with introduction and a clear ending and adaption to purpose and things like that, and maybe not that much on the actual language use with grammar and pronunciation and so on. (Respondent C)

Consequently, it is hard to say whether these teachers actually adapt the knowledge requirements to oral proficiency activities in a different way than they do with written assignments. Judging from the two quotes above, it looks like the exact same criteria, or matrix, could be used when assessing written assignments. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish whether or not any of the teachers consider the oral phenomena Luoma (2004)
speaks of such as speed, pausing, pitch and volume variation when assessing their students’ oral proficiency, since none of the four teachers mentioned such criteria. However, this is of course not something the teachers can be blamed for. It is rather a change in the design and structure of the syllabus that might be needed. As both Luoma (2004) and Oliver and Philp (2014) argue, it would seem more logical to have different criteria and requirements for oral proficiency and writing proficiency since the structure of oral and written communication usually is completely different. That is to say, we often speak in what Luoma (2004) calls “idea units” instead of complete sentences which means spoken language often has a simpler structure than written language.

Furthermore, respondent A expressed that he does not like having oral and writing skills within the same knowledge requirement because it forces him to compromise the grading in some cases which in turn is difficult for students to understand. He explained it like this:

(12) I would prefer to have the knowledge requirements divided in a different way from how they are right now, it would be better to have them divided and based on different skills instead, skills as in writing, reading, listening and speaking I mean. As it is right now, it easily gets a bit mixed up when I have to explain to a student that he/she performs at a C-level in oral proficiency, but only on an E-level in writing, and therefore gets the grade D in the end. That does not seem right to me. (Respondent A)

Yet, teachers probably would be forced to compromise the grading even if the knowledge requirements were based on the four skills mentioned since the students still could perform differently in different skills. Nevertheless, such a change in the knowledge requirements could make it easier for both teachers and students to understand why a certain grade is given.

Moreover, respondent A mentioned that he felt like the writing skill would weigh heavier in a case where a student performs on different levels in speaking and writing. However, he did not really know why he felt that way. He said that it may be because writing is easier to see. This is interesting since respondent A’s opinion agrees with the results of Apelgren’s and Oscarson’s (2011) survey on FL teachers’ conceptions of assessment procedures. Even though assessment of oral communication was the most common type of assessment the teachers used, they still preferred and relied on written assignments when testing the students’ levels of learning. This could be due to what respondent A said, that written assignments are easier to look at and to compare with others. Perhaps it is more convenient for teachers to read and assess students’ writing than it is to listen to the students’ speech.
On the other hand, all four teachers of this study said it was very easy to assess which level in the knowledge requirements a student is at regarding oral proficiency. They all seemed to agree that as soon as one has listened to some students, especially when they are interacting, one develops a natural capability of deciding which levels of learning the students have attained. Owing to this, the problem of valuing oral proficiency assessment may not have to do with difficulty or convenience, but maybe with security. That is to say, it may seem safer to rely on students’ written performances when assessing and grading since those are easier to store and to look at again and show to others etc. It might also seem easier to show the students, in detail, what kind of mistakes and errors they make in their writing than it is in oral activities.

Another term that all four teachers used to describe what they focus on when assessing students’ oral proficiency was fluency. This is actually not a term that is used in the syllabus for year 7-9. However, it is used in the knowledge requirements in the syllabi for upper secondary school, in English 5, 6 and 7 that is. Respondent B seemed to think that fluency included nearly everything that has to do with oral proficiency, she said the following about assessing fluency:

(13) I focus very much on fluency. That is to say, if they stumble much, if they know what they are talking about, and vocabulary of course, and if they use strategies and things like that. It is pretty much all of that! (Respondent B)

This statement could be seen as covering the three main parts of communicative competence, to some extent at least. She mentions the grammatical competence with “vocabulary”, the sociolinguistic competence with “if they know what they are talking about” and the strategic competence with “if they use strategies”. All four teachers seem to have much focus on communicative competence when assessing oral proficiency in general. That is to say, they do not seem to focus merely on how to speak one particular type of English in one particular context. They rather try to cover as many varieties and contexts as possible in their EFL teaching. For instance, when asking the teachers whether they tend to focus more on certain things than others when assessing oral proficiency, respondent D said the following:

(14) Well, I think I focus quite a lot on how they adjust their language to the purpose of the assignment, because that is something we discuss often during class, like when it is
appropriate to use an academic tone and what is meant by that and so on. (Respondent D)

As Johnson and Johnson (1998) explain, communicative competence covers several areas within language such as grammar, social contexts and language strategies. One can argue that the quote above includes the area of social contexts since usage of an academic tone when speaking refers to language of a certain social context. However, she also said that this type of focus depends on what level the student is at. If a student is at a lower level she said she focuses more on comprehensibility. This type of shift in focus probably has to do with how the knowledge requirements are presented. For example, one can see that the E-level show words like “understandably” regarding oral production, and at the A-level words like “varied” and “coherently” are used instead (Natl. Ag. f. Ed 2011b, 37-8).

Furthermore, the focus on adjustment to purpose that respondent D mentioned is connected to the sociolinguistic competence within communicative competence since it deals with different types of language use in different contexts etc. The focus on comprehensibility might be more connected to the grammatical competence since it has to do with the structure of language and how the grammatical rules makes our speech correct and comprehensible. In other words, communicative competence seems to be highly apparent in the teacher’s focus and thoughts of assessment regarding oral proficiency.

To sum up, all four teachers seemed to have approximately one or two assignments per term that are assessed on the criteria of oral production or oral interaction. When assessing the students’ oral proficiency, all four teachers seem to look mostly for fluency and clearness in the students’ speech. Moreover, the teachers were very focused on terms and concepts that are stated in the knowledge requirements such as adaption to purpose and varied and coherent speech.

5 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to get an insight in how four EFL teachers in lower secondary school in Sweden view the role of oral proficiency. Furthermore, the study sought to investigate what type of activities the four EFL teachers prefer to use when it comes to oral proficiency, and also what they focus on, and why, when assessing such activities.
The aim of the study has been reached to the extent that several oral proficiency activities were presented and discussed. The teachers’ thoughts on assessment of such activities were also presented to some extent, but with much more difficulty determining exactly what the teachers seem to focus on in their assessment of oral proficiency.

The teachers reported using quite similar activities to practice and assess their students’ oral proficiency such as prepared presentations, book clubs and discussions in pairs, groups and full class. The prepared oral presentation activity seemed to be most common when assessing the students’ oral production skills, which seemed to be approximately once a term. Therefore, oral production activities did not seem to be that commonly used. The oral interaction activities were said to be used much more frequently, especially activities which involved discussions. However, the oral interaction activities also seemed to be assessed approximately once a term, and in that case, usually with a group discussion activity.

One can draw the conclusion that oral proficiency activities seem to be used very often in the four teachers’ EFL classrooms, especially oral interaction activities. However, the activities do not seem to be consciously assessed more than one or two times per term, but instead used for practicing the students’ fluency, pronunciation, interaction and ability to put the language into context. Moreover, the oral proficiency activities often seemed to be used to get the students activated and engaged in a certain project that would later involve a writing task. This might make the teachers prioritise assessment of the students’ writings over their speaking since the written assignments are easily stored and accessed. Only one of the teachers mentioned that he usually records the students’ oral production and interaction so that he easily could go back and listen to them several times. If more teachers did so, perhaps oral proficiency would seem more valuable, both amongst students and teachers.

Furthermore, all four teachers seemed to focus mainly on fluency, clearness, adaption to purpose and strategy-usage when assessing their students’ oral proficiency. All these parts were quite vaguely described by the teachers and therefore quite difficult to analyse in relation to previous research. However, communicative competence seemed quite apparent in the teachers’ thoughts on oral proficiency assessment since they all talked about how important it was for the students to be aware of different varieties of English and that they should learn to adapt to both recipient and context.
The method for this study seemed appropriate in the way that it gives a great amount of data which is highly detailed. Interviews also give a close perspective of the respondents which was interesting to compare and discuss in relation to the research questions of this study. However, if more EFL teachers had been interviewed a clearer and more general result could have been established. It would also have been interesting to see the results of an observational study in relation to the aim of this study so that we could have seen what the oral proficiency teaching looks like in the EFL classroom of the Swedish lower secondary school.

6 References


Tema: Bakgrund
- Hur många elever undervisar du? (Årskurser, gruppstorlek, typ av skola)
- Vad har du för utbildning? (Antal år, lärarlegitimation, antal år inom yrket)
- Talar du engelska eller svenska med eleverna i klassrummet? (Varför?)
- Hur ser en vanlig engelsklektion ut i ditt klassrum? Berätta lite om din senaste lektion.

Tema: Muntlig färdighet
- Vad tycker du, rent allmänt, om elevers muntliga färdighet i engelska i Sverige? (Generella svagheter? Styrkor?)
- Vad innebär muntlig färdighet i engelska för dig?
- Hur viktigt tror du det är att läraren har bra engelska muntligt? Varför?
- Hur undervisar du när eleverna ska träna sin muntliga färdighet? Varför?
- Brukar du koppla ihop muntliga aktiviteter med skriftliga, lyssnande och läsning? Varför / Varför inte?
- Hur ofta tror du att eleverna har muntliga aktiviteter på engelska i ditt klassrum, i förhållande till hur ofta de skriver, lyssnar och läser på engelska?

Tema: Muntlig färdighet och bedömning
- Hur såg den senaste muntliga aktiviteten ut i ditt klassrum? Varför? Hur bedömdes den?
- Hur lätt eller svårt tycker du att det är att bedöma alla elever rättvist i muntlig färdighet? Varför?
- Använder du några hjälpmedel för att bedöma elevernas muntliga färdighet, annat än kunskapskraven? (Vilka? Hur?)
- Till hur stor del tycker du att elevens muntliga färdighet väger in i det slutgiltiga betyget (%) Varför?
- Hur ofta bedömer du elevernas muntliga färdighet? Varför?
- Vid muntliga aktiviteter, hur ofta får eleverna feedback? (Summativ / Formativ?) Hur? Varför?
• Upplever du att eleverna förstår feedbacken och försöker förbättra sin muntliga färdighet efter den? Hur ser du det?

Temat: Muntlig färdighet i förhållande till kursplanen i engelska
(Här visas kursplanen samtidigt)

• Vad tycker du är skillnaden mellan ”muntlig framställning” och ”muntlig interaktion”?
• Hur går du tillväga när du bedömer en elevs muntliga framställning?
• Hur går du tillväga när du bedömer en elevs muntliga interaktion?
• Fokuserar du mer på vissa delar än andra av muntlig färdighet när du bedömer eleverna? (I så fall vilka? Varför?)
• Hur lätt eller svårt tycker du det är att bedöma vilken nivå i kunskapskraven en elev ligger på gällande muntlig färdighet?
• Muntlig färdighet står inom samma kunskapskrav som skriftlig färdighet i kursplanen, t.ex. ”I muntlig och skriftlig framställning kan eleven…”, hur tror du att detta påverkar din bedömning av muntlig färdighet?

7.2 Appendix 2 - Quotes

1. Muntlig framställning är väl om de håller en presentation eller något sådant och muntlig interaktion är väl när dom diskuterar något tillsammans med någon annan? (Respondent B)

2. Nja, men alltså en muntlig presentation, typ en PowerPoint-presentation, inför klassen. Jag ser muntlig framställning som presentationer och redovisningar och sådant där man kan tänka ”nu har jag förberett mig och övat på det här, nu gör jag det här” (Respondent B)

3. Det ser ju inte riktigt ut så i kunskapskraven att det egentligen måste vara inför en grupp, men vanligtvis kanske det är så man gör eftersom dom kommer att behöva kunna det senare i livet förmodligen. (Respondent C)

4. Jag brukar låta eleverna jobba med sin muntliga framställning individuellt, att dom spelar in sig själva och att jag får höra därigenom. Annars blir det såhär att blygheten hämmar dom så mycket, och att man är blyg har inte så mycket att göra med vad man egentligen kan […]
och det tror jag är jätteviktigt, att man ger elever förutsättningar att göra sitt bästa.
(Respondent A)

5. För mig så är det inte riktigt muntlig interaktion på samma sätt när de har förberett sådär, utan den interaktionen måste vara en naturlig reaktion på vad någon annan säger och hur man då ska besvara det. Har man redan förberett med ett manus t.ex. så är det inte muntlig interaktion, tycker jag. (Respondent A)

6. Ibland har man stökiga klasser där det aldrig skulle funka med att bara en person läser högt och alla andra lyssnar aktivt. I det fallet så brukar jag dela ut några historier, typ noveller, till eleverna i par. Sen så läser de halva berättelsen var för varandra så att alla elever måste både lyssna aktivt och prata för att förstå vad berättelsen handlar om. (Respondent D)

7. Det skulle kunna vara så att jag börjar med att visa en kort film […] och de är oftast relaterade till verkliga livet, aktuella ämnen osv. Så har jag gjort lite frågor till filmen och efteråt så har vi såhär att de får diskutera frågorna i par eller i grupp. Sen så brukar vi gå igenom några av frågorna i helklass och diskutera lite tillsammans. (Respondent B)

8. Så det man testar där i grupperna blir ju hur de gör sig förstådda gentemot varandra och hur de kan besvara varandras åsikter och tankar, och hur de hittar strategier för att helt enkelt få fram det dom tänker. (Respondent C)


11. Alltså, när de liksom ska planera sina tal exempelvis så blir det nog lätt mer fokus på själva talsituationen med struktureren, typ inledning och tydligt avslut och anpassning till syfte och så… än vad det blir på själva språket med grammatik och uttal och så. (Respondent C)

12. Jag hade gärna delat in kunskapskraven på ett annat sätt än hur de är nu, det hade varit bättre om det var mer ute efter de olika förmågorna istället, skriva, läsa, lyssna och tala menar jag. Så som det är nu så är det lätt att det blir lite ihop-mixat när jag ska försöka förklara för en elev att den presterar på en C-nivå i muntlig färdighet, men bara på en E-nivå skriftligt, och då får ett D i betyg. För mig så känns inte det riktigt rätt. (Respondent A)


14. Alltså jag tror att jag fokuserar ganska mycket på hur dom anpassar sitt språk till syftet med uppgiften just för att det är något som vi pratar om ofta på lektionerna, som när det är lämpligt att använda en mer akademisk ton och vad som menas med det och så. (Respondent D)