DEVELOPING STRATEGIC COMPETENCE IN ORAL INTERACTION IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

A classroom study

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Abstract

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The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language can be studied by analysing a large amount of results (from the national tests, for example) over a long period of time. It can also be studied from the teacher's point of view by conducting deep-level anthropological research. In this thesis, however, it is the learning in classrooms of English as a foreign language that is examined. More specifically, the development of the usage of strategic competences in oral interaction is studied. The purpose of this study is to explore the qualitative differences in the pupils' abilities to use strategic competence whilst interacting orally in English as a foreign language, particularly in the sense of adapting language to suit interlocutor and situation.

In order to be able to fulfil this purpose, classroom-level studies on learning need to be done. Two learning studies informed by variation theory have been used in this thesis. The learning study approach is an iterative research method that combines design experiment with the Japanese teaching development method, lesson study. In a learning study an object of learning is focused on and through the use of variation theory, critical aspects of the learning of this object of learning are identified. A lesson is jointly designed by researcher and teachers in a research group, taught and analysed afterwards in terms of the intended, enacted and lived object of learning. The lesson is revised and taught again by another teacher in the research group. In the learning studies used in this thesis, three cycles have been used. By analysing the learning in terms of changes in ways of interacting and results of pre-, post- and delayed post-tests, conclusions can be made regarding the purpose of the thesis.

In the first of the two learning studies, pupils in year 8 (13-14 years old) participated. The object of learning was usage of phrases to adapt language to interlocutor and situation when asking for directions. In the second learning study, pupils from the first year of college (16-17 years old) participated and the object of learning was usage of phrases to create and maintain a good conversation among peers. The results showed that it was crucial for the pupils to identify the characteristics of the interlocutor in order to be able to adapt their language. This meant that it was not enough for the pupils to think about their own language; they also needed to consider the person spoken to. A second result was that it became important to consider the direction of the communication. Is the direction mainly from me as a speaker to the interlocutor or is it to me from the interlocutor? Depending on the direction, different kinds of phrases were needed: phrases for invitation or phrases to refer to others' opinions.

A result from both learning studies, and a result that is also in line with previous research, is that the use of strategic competence can be taught. It is not something that it is better to acquire through natural conversation and that it is not possible to explicitly teach. It is therefore suggested in this thesis that the use of strategic competence in oral interaction should be explicitly taught.

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> She said you came to the place where they buried her. Asked her a question? She said the answer is... 'Every day.' What did you ask?

> Do... Do I make her proud? (from "The Sixth Sense" directed by M. Night Shyamalan)

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father.

Gothenburg, June 2014

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is not easy. According to a report from *The Swedish National Agency for Education*[1] (Skolverket, 2004) half of the pupils interviewed found the subject English to be "rather hard" or "very hard". The same study also showed that many pupils considered English to be important and/or useful. The aspect of English that made it interesting for the pupils was often that they got the chance to learn how to communicate and interact with other people. Interestingly enough, in a report published in 2012 (Skolverket, 2012) and which was based on the results from a study where the knowledge of English among pupils from 15 European countries was compared, Swedish school children came out on top. The pupils were between 13-15 years old and were tested on their writing, reading and listening skills. Swedish pupils were the best at reading and listening and came in second place (Malta being number one) when it came to writing. All the tests were assessed in line with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001). Comparing performances from pupils in different countries, all with different curricula, is of course problematic, which makes the results regarding the position of Swedish pupils slightly questionable. What is worth noting in the report is the fact that even though Swedish school children were good at using English, their Spanish was rather poor. In the survey, the pupils were also interviewed regarding a variety of issues, among them motivation for learning foreign languages. It turned out that English was considered very useful whereas Spanish was not. It seems as though the motivation for learning English is one factor that makes Swedish pupils successful at learning English compared to pupils from other countries and compared to learning other languages, but they still find English hard. The need to learn English may also be greater than the need to learn, for example Spanish. Pupils may, at any rate, feel a greater need for English. The motivation for Swedish school pupils to learn English is, for the most part, that they get a chance to communicate with other people (Skolverket, 2012).

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[1] The English name will be used in the text. The Swedish *Skolverket* is used in the reference list.

The notion of oral communication strategies has been the object of several studies (for a detailed account see Nakatani, 2010 p. 116ff). The current curricula (Skolverket, 2011a; Skolverket 2011b) also stress communicative skills as being of the utmost importance when it comes to learning English as a foreign language in Sweden. Why is it then that Swedish pupils often have a view of what it means to speak English well that focuses on formal qualities? Why should it be that they sometimes find it very hard and embarrassing to interact orally in English with one another? In a recent study it has been reported that Swedish school children enjoy interacting in English during lessons, but sometimes they feel restricted by their lack of linguistic accuracy, in the sense that they are nervous about using incorrect grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (Ahlquist, 2012). In a report from *The Swedish Schools Inspectorate*[2] (Skolinspektionen, 2011) it is argued that not only is there a major discrepancy among different schools regarding language learning, there are also notable differences in the same school depending on which classroom you are in. Many teachers claim that they would like to be more cooperative in their planning and teaching, but that they do not get or take the chance. There seems to be a lack of awareness of the importance of oral interaction among the pupils and this may perhaps be due to a lack of ability among the teachers to jointly plan and share their experiences in teaching oral interaction. Communicative language competence[3] is composed of several parts and one of them is linguistic competence. This ability might be the part that the pupils in Ahlquist's study are restricted by and if English is taught with a heavy focus on linguistic competence, pupils are likely to consider this competence to be the most important. This is an example of how close the relationship is between what is taught and what is learnt and this relationship relates to one of the questions in this thesis. If the notion of communicative language competence among pupils needs to be broadened, teachers' notions of it must be broadened too. This thesis will provide examples of teaching oral strategic competence as well as an analysis of what pupils need to discern in order to increase their oral strategic competence in interaction.

The notion of being able to use language in an oral interactive sense will be further explained and defined in the following paragraph. Broadly speaking, a

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2. *The Swedish Schools Inspectorate* (Skolinspektionen) is the state authority that inspects schools and teaching. *The Swedish National Agency for Education* (Skolverket) is responsible for curricula, comments on curricula, the construction of national tests and the evaluation of schools.
3 See Chapter 3

separation between speaking as an act in itself (giving a speech) and speaking as taking part in a conversation can be made (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, 2001). The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* stresses the communicative role of language in contemporary language learning. This is also stressed (as was shown in the previous paragraph) in the Swedish curricula and syllabuses for English as a foreign language (Skolverket, 2011a; Skolverket 2011b). Tornberg (2009) argues that the focus on communication in the syllabuses is a logical consequence of a general view of language as being something that is used for communicating across borders. In western society, where it is more important than ever to relate inter-culturally and to understand people from other parts of the world, communication may be focused upon at the expense of other language competencies. The communicative focus must not be understood to mean that language aspects such as grammatical correctness, cultural awareness, discourse competence, pragmatic competence etc. are not important and can be ignored. The communicative focus is an overarching theme for the *CEFR* and the Swedish curriculum and syllabus for English as a foreign language (Skolverket, 2011a; Skolverket 2011b). The focus of the research here is the interactive part of mastering the oral skills of a language, i.e. taking part in a conversation (see the *CEFR*, 2001). As was mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are more elements involved in communicative language ability, but in this thesis the strategic competence in oral interaction in English as a foreign language will be the focus.

Problem area and formulation

Drawing from the research (Ahlquist, 2012) and the reports (Skolverket, 2004 and Skolinspektionen, 2011) mentioned, the interactive oral element of the subject English will be studied. Both Ahlquist and the reports from the Swedish National Agency for Education and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate show that Swedish pupils enjoy interacting orally in English, but they sometimes feel embarrassed, because they feel a need to speak in a linguistically correct way. According to a previous phenomenography-inspired pilot study (Selin, manuscript, see Appendix 1), pupils' views of what it meant to speak and to interact well orally in English did not resonate entirely with research on communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972). In Selin's pilot study, six pupils were asked what they

considered speaking and interacting well in English as a foreign language meant. Through a phenomenographic analysis (Marton & Booth, 1997), four qualitatively different categories of pupils' perceptions could be detected. They considered speaking and interacting well to mean either (1) using correct grammar, (2) using a pronunciation close to that of a native speaker, (3) having a wide vocabulary or (4) adapting language according to interlocutor and situation. However, there was only one utterance from one of the pupils that belonged to the last category. The pupils tended to focus on what Canale and Swain (1980) would term grammatical competence and what Bachman (1990) would term organisational competence, and leave out strategic competence. This implies that the pupils have, for some reason (perhaps previous teaching?), received a value-laden view of the meaning of interacting well, or have not had the opportunity to become aware of what strategic competence entails. Furthermore it has often been said by teachers of English that the teaching of oral interaction is awkward and as Ahlquist (2012) has shown, pupils sometimes feel this way too. It is therefore important that a thorough study on the learning of strategic competence in oral interaction be done.

The object of research in this text is thus the learning of strategic competence in oral interaction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the classroom. In doing this an exploration of the qualities of this specific kind of learning will be undertaken. Since the pupils may tend to focus on linguistic aspects of the interaction, one may presume that they do not adapt their language in the same way as they do when they interact in their mother tongue. Brown (1994) argues that learning a certain style and a certain register, both of which phenomena are elements of strategic competence, is "no simple problem for the second language user" (p. 239). It is furthermore argued that learning these strategic features of communicative competence is so difficult that some EFL-learners in the United States were surprised at the level of informality used by their professors. This is an indication that the professors were using such informal language that the learners associated it with language used with friends and family (ibid.). Visitors to London can verify that native speakers in the streets and in settings such as the pub sometimes find the average Swedish visitor's attempts to sound like "Mr Brown" in the English book (i.e. using RP) either amusing or provocative (see Bachman (1990, p.95) for a similar discussion). These examples show that as a learner of EFL, you need to develop the strategic competence in oral

interaction to adapt your spoken English to a range of levels, from a more formal language to a more informal one.

Second and foreign language learning

Several of the texts that are referred to in this thesis make no distinction between foreign language (FL) and second language (L2) learning, e.g. Ellis (2012), Mitchell and Myles (2006), Brown (1994). Neither Gass and Mackey (2012) nor Selinker (1972) distinguish between the two. In some of these texts, however, a distinction can be seen by analysing the material used. In some research the term "first other language" is used. In this thesis, the teaching of English in Swedish schools will be referred to as foreign language teaching. The distinction used is based on the definition that second language teaching occurs when you are in the country where the language has a dominant position and foreign language teaching occurs predominantly in a classroom in a country where the language is not used officially outside of the classroom. Second language learning of English in this sense is done in Great Britain (or another country where English is used as a first language) by immigrants. Foreign language teaching of English is done in countries such as Sweden to school pupils at various levels. The term L2 is also at times used to refer to the phenomenon of using English as a lingua franca among people in the same country who do not have the same mother tongue. An example is the situation in India where there are more than 200 different languages used. Here English is used in the daily lives of people within the country (Barber et al., 2009). Hall and Verplaetse (2000) further describe the difference by using the learner's motivation for learning. The foreign language learner might very well be motivated to learn the target language in order to become fluent or as near to sounding like a native speaker as possible, but the motivational factor might just as well be passing a course or getting a certain grade. This is not the situation for the second language learner, who has a different kind of immediate need to learn the language. The latter distinction may explain the fact that many feel that the teaching of English in Swedish schools is moving towards the definition of English as being close to a second language, judging from the results from Skolverket (2012), as the Swedish pupils were very motivated to learn English, considering it to be useful and to be something that it is necessary to master.

The third version of the abbreviations that can be found in literature regarding learning English is English as a *lingua franca*, ELF (e.g. Murray, 2012). According to this model of learning English, most people using English are neither native speakers nor do they interact with native speakers. This definition of or type of *lingua franca* is similar to, but not quite the same *lingua franca* that was described in the previous paragraph, i.e. an interlanguage for people in the same country. This *lingua franca* is used by people from different countries and with different mother tongues. English is spoken by people in order to make themselves understood abroad because English is the common language, not because the interlocutor is a native speaker. According to Murray (ibid.), the research interest has so far mostly been on phonology, due to the fact that phonology is a much more closed system than the study of real-life interactions. To a certain extent it would make sense to say that the English that Swedish school children are learning is a type of *lingua franca* since English is primarily used as a common language for Swedish people who are communicating with other people who are not Swedish speakers. The phrase as such is not used in the syllabus for English but it is suggested in the phrase "where English occupies a central position" (Skolverket, 2009, p. 13) in the former syllabus Lpo94. This phrase was replaced by "where English is used" (Skolverket 2011a, p. 37) in the new syllabus to illustrate the areas in which Swedish pupils should have a cultural understanding of everyday life. On the other hand, from another point of view, the Swedish syllabus does not take an ELF-perspective. Murray (2012) describes a "let-it-pass" strategy in ELF. He is referring to the notion of ELF-learners not considering uncertainties in syntax, morphology, phrasing, idiom and lexical choice in language but only using English in a practical, information-based way. This is not something that can be seen in the Swedish syllabus for English. The notion of English as a *lingua franca* deals mostly with the use of English and not with the fundamentals of learning it. In this thesis, English is regarded as a foreign language in Swedish schools.

Strategic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistics

The term "strategic competence" will be used relatively often in this text (see Chapter 3). Initially however, it needs to be stated briefly how strategic competence relates to pragmatics and sociolinguistics in this thesis. According

to Bachman (1990), "pragmatic competence" includes sociolinguistic competence and illocutionary competence (such as saying "it's cold in here", meaning "please shut the window"). Strategic competence is, on the other hand, according to Bachman, the use of communication strategies. The term "pragmatics" refers to how meaning in an utterance partly relates to the context in which it is uttered but also partly to knowledge that is shared among the interlocutors. Sociolinguistics is the study of the different language varieties used by people due to their age, gender, education, class or ethnicity. It is important to stress that "strategic competence", "pragmatics" and "sociolinguistics" are terms that are used slightly differently by different authors. There are no strict definitions that are universally used. In this text, Bachman's definitions will be used.

Littlewood (1981) argues that the strategic competence of knowing and mastering the situation when a certain expression is more suitable than another is multi-layered. It could for example be a question of being able to choose the right expression from many alternatives in a particular situation. Littlewood gives an example involving a situation where dinner is going to be served. A short "Ready?" at the door signals linguistic and situational shared features, whereas the slightly more formal "Would you like to come and eat now?" signals another type of situation, i.e. where the guests are not close friends or are from other social groupings (e.g. a business dinner). Littlewood suggests that as learners progress, a greater understanding of the social significance of different language forms needs to be learnt. He further points out that an overly formal use of complete sentences and careful pronunciation may hinder the learner's development towards a more informal level of acquaintance with new contacts. Finally Littlewood states that EFL-learners sometimes misuse dictionaries so that a socially acceptable version in the first language becomes linguistically correct but pragmatically incorrect in English. An example offered is the Russian way of answering yes/no questions with "of course", which in English could be interpreted as being quite rude, i.e. meaning that it was an unnecessary question to ask. The ability to master language features such as these must be learned.

Murray (2012) argues that in using English as a *lingua franca* (ELF), the mastery of pragmatics becomes different from the mastery of pragmatics in situations where English is a foreign or second language, i.e. when you are speaking to a native speaker. Referring to previous studies in the growing field of ELF, Murray suggests that the English used among non-native speakers

differs pragmatically from the language used when a native speaker is involved. Murray uses the term "let-it-pass principle" (p. 321f) to describe the ability he wants to instil in ELF-learners. This would help them to disregard the inability of other speakers of ELF to follow pragmatic rules by providing the learners with strategic competence to keep the conversations running and efficient. The interesting part of this is that some of the strategic competences that are traditionally connected to pragmatics, such as repair initiation, requests for information and reformulation, are not found to be used to a very large extent. Murray's solution is to opt for other competences, i.e. "awareness-raising activities" (p. 322ff). From the point of view of this thesis, this means that strategic competences that are not being used are strategic competences that need to be taught. It further strengthens the idea that pragmatic competence can and should be taught, through the teaching of strategic competence, since this is something that EFL-learners do not master on their own. Learners in Sweden for example, are usually not in a context where they are offered opportunities to learn strategic competence.

Kasper and Schmidt (1996) were among the first to carry out and compile studies that investigated learning pragmatic competence as opposed to describing pragmatic competence. Their separation of the learning of pragmatics and describing the use of pragmatics can be traced to psycholinguistics (see Chapter 2).

The research overview presented in Kasper and Schmidt (1996) is mainly from an adult learner's perspective, but it nonetheless contains elements that are relevant to this thesis. One is the suggestion that the learning of pragmatics is not easier for children than it is for adults. Other areas of second and foreign language learning are sometimes considered to be easier for children, often attributed to a so-called "critical age period". If you have passed beyond this period (often cited as somewhere around the age of 12) before you start learning a new language it will be more or less impossible to learn the target language fully. This is often referred to in discussions about language learning, especially regarding pronunciation (for a more detailed discussion see Lightbown & Spada, 2013, pp. 92-96)[4]. The learning of pragmatics in a foreign or second language is not thought to be affected by this critical period, according to Kasper and Schmidt (1996). A second

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4 The notion of a critical age period is slightly controversial. Cook (2008, p.147ff) shows that it can be argued that the learner's age is not necessarily decisive. For Cook, however, language proficiency is often synonymous with grammatical correctness.

relevant point made by Kasper and Schmidt (1996) is that instruction seems to be important for the learning of pragmatics, i.e. it is not learned automatically through regular communicative activities in the classroom. Again one may need to be aware of the theoretical ground for this research, psycholinguistics. What is meant is that the kind of strategic competence input needed may be hard to acquire only through oral exercises with peers in a classroom. This disclaimer about psycholinguistics refers to the knowledge view represented in this theory compared to the knowledge view in sociocultural theory. In sociocultural theory, broadly speaking, it is the interaction with mediating tools (e.g. other people) that is necessary for learning. In psycholinguistic theories, the mediation (and thereby the interaction) is not as heavily emphasised.

In a thorough presentation of the various parts of interaction that need to be considered when assessing speaking, Luoma (2004) describes the importance of elements like the sound of speech, spoken grammar (as opposed to written), spoken register (again as opposed to written) and the difference between talking as chatting and as informing. The fact that speaking is often a dualistic activity, in the sense that it involves more than one person and that the characteristics and behaviour of the interlocutor influence the speaker, is stressed, but also described as a problem when it comes to assessment. There are, for example, descriptors in the *CEFR* (p. 26-28) of qualities in oral interaction, but the notion of strategic competence in oral interaction is not emphasised there. The quality descriptors focus to a high degree on a one-way communication.

Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the qualitative differences in pupils' abilities to use strategic competence while interacting orally in English as a foreign language, particularly in the sense of adapting language to suit interlocutor and situation. Mixed methods (classroom observations, oral tests, written self-evaluations by pupils) following the learning-study process have been used to collect data. The result describes some Swedish pupils' usage of spoken English in the classroom with regard to: (1) how they adapt their oral language to interlocutor and situation and (2) what it is crucial for them to discern in order to increase their strategic competence in oral interaction. The study is conducted in a classroom setting and the pupils discuss familiar

topics. The pupils have to some extent taken on roles (e.g. visualising themselves as older, younger and/or in other surroundings) in the lessons. The research questions posed are: (1) In what ways are relationships between the content of the oral communication, the context and the participants discerned by the pupils? (2) What patterns of variation in the teachers' treatment of the content increase the pupils' use of strategic competence in oral interaction to a higher degree? (3) In what ways do minor adjustments of the teachers' treatment of aspects of the content affect the pupils' opportunities to discern the object of learning? (4) What critical aspects must be discerned by the pupils in order for them to adjust their oral communication of the content to context and person?

Chapter 2. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES

In this chapter, three approaches to foreign language learning will be presented. They are presented in order to put "communicative language competence" (as used by Bachman, 1990) in perspective and to compare the linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to foreign language acquisition and learning. The reasons for choosing these three approaches are (1) that they have been very influential and (2) to see what the approach to foreign language learning used in this thesis means. The main point being made is that to analyse and describe foreign language learning with regard to trategic competence in oral interaction, a cognitivist approach to foreign language learning is not enough. Nor is a general sociocultural approach sufficient because learning needs to be analysed more explicitly. This is what the theory behind the communicative language approach offers.

A linguistic and cognitive approach

Linguistic research is interested in structuring languages, identifying what they have in common and how they differ from each other. An influential theory is the universal grammar outlined by Chomsky (in Mitchell & Myles, 2004). According to this theory the human brain has a set of principles and parameters that govern how languages are constructed. These parameters also explain why languages are similar or dissimilar to one another. Knowledge of a language would then mean the mastery of the parameters and principles that constitute that language. The language acquisition device (LAD) makes a blueprint that helps the learner to structure the messy input of fragmentary (and often incorrect) input to create a mental vision of what this language looks like. It is important to state here that the linguistic theory of universal grammar is mainly interested in what is called the competence of a language and not the performance. Performance would be what actually comes out of the mouth of the speaker while language competence refers to the language

the speaker is theoretically able to use and learn without specific teaching involved.

The universal grammar model was refined by Selinker (1972), who suggested that the most important and interesting part of second language learning that could be described by research was the interlanguage system, i.e. the language that learners used while they were learning. Specific occurrences, such as fossilizations of errors, are especially interesting since, according to Selinker's research, very few second language learners managed to master their target language fully. Selinker argued that those who did, approximately 5 %, did not do so due to teaching, but because they had been able to, in one way or another, reactivate their latent language structure. The latent language structure is similar to Chomsky's LAD.

The cognitive approach to the question of whether a language is learnt or acquired is that a foreign language is learnt. Foreign language learning is, broadly speaking, one kind of learning among others (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The cognitive approach known as processing is interested in the way the human brain works with and processes information. Here a distinction is made between controlled and automatized processing, which are believed to involve the short-term and the long-term memory respectively. Learning is what takes place when the information is processed by the long-term memory and thus automatized, as opposed to processed by the short-term memory and controlled.

Another cognitive theory of second language learning that has been both influential and much debated is Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis. In this theory of language acquisition and learning, Krashen claims that both terms (i.e. acquisition and learning) are valid, but that only acquisition generates fluency. The output (i.e. speaking and writing) that a second language learner produces is thought to be altered and corrected by what Krashen calls a "monitor", which is a consequence of conscious learning. Acquisition, which is believed to cause fluency, is a subconscious and intuitive process. The claim is that only acquisition can cause fluent second language performance and what is really important is the nature of the input. The input should, according to the input hypothesis, ideally be at a level just a bit beyond the learner's current level. If the current level is *i*, the ideal input level would be *i+1*.

The input hypothesis and its division of conscious and subconscious processes was criticised by McLaughlin (1987). McLaughlin instead made a distinction both between controlled and automatic information processing

and between focal and peripheral attention to formal properties of language. The controlled processes are temporary and the automatic processes are more permanent. What is important, and sets this apart from Krashen's input hypothesis and monitor model, is that these controlled and automatic processes can be the result of focal or peripheral attention to the learning.

McLaughlin's attention and processing model was refined by Schmidt (1990). He believed that conscious awareness in terms of noticing and paying attention to a specific form or item was crucial for language learning to occur. The task must make the learner notice what is supposed to be learnt. The term "notice" is defined by Schmidt to be the level of information processing where you are focally aware of what you are doing. For instance while reading a newspaper article that you are focally aware of, you notice the content of what you are reading. The style, register and grammar of the text are not focused on, but are still perceived. Noticing is a private experience that can be verbally explained, but does not have to be explained to be valid. There are also certain things that you might notice, but cannot explain verbally, that are still valid observations. One example offered by Schmidt is the regional accent of a speaker. You may be perfectly able to notice it, but not to explain it in phonetic terms.

Robinson (1995) further stressed the conscious awareness of the learner when he argued that differences in performance in explicit and implicit learning experiments could not be related to activating conscious and unconscious systems. The difference was due to the processing demands that the tasks entailed. These processes are very much consciously regulated.

As can be seen, the noticing hypothesis stresses conscious and subconscious awareness as well as focal and peripheral attention to an object of learning. What needs to be explored and researched is therefore how to bring about this focal awareness so that the object of learning can in fact be noticed. Mackey (2006) reports on a study where interactional feedback was used to make the learners notice what was supposed to be learned. In the study, plurals, questions and past tense forms were objects of learning and there was also a strong focus on identifying instances of noticing among the learners. Stimulated recalls on videotapes as well as learning journals and questionnaires were used. The results showed that the interactional feedback was successful in relation to one of the three objects of learning (the questions), but not so much in relation to the other two objects. This result

was analysed and explained as being related to the learners' reports about what they were noticing.

Another way of making learners aware of their language use is to use metacognitive strategies. Just like conscious awareness in noticing theory, the importance of metacognitive strategies when learning a second or foreign language is stressed by Wenden (1998). By using ideas about metacognitive strategies and learning in general, Wenden argues that learners' knowledge about their own learning assists them in learning a language too. Two factors are deemed especially important. It is crucial that it is not only the learners' linguistic competence that is assessed, but also their meta-knowledge, i.e. their own ideas about what it means to learn a language. In this way it is possible for teachers and learners to understand why a certain area of language learning is easier than another. The second important factor is that metacognitive strategies help learners to become more autonomous. If they have well-developed metacognitive skills, learners are able to articulate what is known and what is not yet known and also to find alternative ways to learn a language.

Limitations of linguistic and cognitive approaches

The object of research in this thesis is oral communication and thus learning and usage of strategic competence in learning oral interaction. A foreign language learning approach that explains learning in the way that the linguistic approach does is not sufficient in this context. If the teaching that needs to be done in order for pupils to learn the usage of strategic competence was centred around activating latent language structures, the interactional part of oral communication would be secondary. A similar argument concerning interaction can be raised about why a cognitive approach, such as noticing theory, does not include all the necessary tools to answer the research questions in this thesis. Noticing theory is interested in language learning, as opposed to acquisition, but the learning is explained only on an individual level. In this theory, language learning is something that occurs predominantly inside an individual, and not in the interaction between speaker and interlocutor. The idea of learning as interaction between speaker and interlocutor, on the other hand, is crucial for this thesis.

In the next chapter a learning approach that considers interaction to be central to learning will be presented. Since the linguistic and cognitive

approaches were not fully suitable for the object of research in this thesis, then the sociocultural approach might be.

A sociocultural approach

Vygotskij's theory, i.e. the sociocultural perspective on learning (Vygotskij, 1978), appeared in the early eighties in the western world. In this theory, language was given an important role (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). It was through language that attention could be directed and language was viewed as a mediating tool. Having a sociocultural perspective on language learning itself was then a logical consequence of Vygotskij's theories. What the theory stresses is social activity, i.e. that it is the activity itself that constitutes learning, whereas the cognitivist would consider interaction (as well as input or output) to be merely one factor that contributes to the individual's learning.

The important part of the sociocultural perspective for this thesis is the interplay between man and his surroundings i.e. between human beings. From the dialectic point-of-view in sociocultural theory stems the presupposition that each and every one of us creates our own understanding; an understanding that is then individual depending on how we have positioned ourselves in relation to our surroundings. An important part of the acquisition of culture and the creation of new knowledge is the mediating artefacts (Cole & Wertsch, 1996). These artefacts can be material, such as an axe, but also immaterial such as the language used. The terms mediating and artefacts are thus critical for the sociocultural perspective. Another critical term is social interaction, which Kozulin et al. (2003) consider to be one of the cornerstones in Vygotskij's reasoning about learning and development. This is another example of the way learning is considered to be a process that is developed in interplay (between humans). Knowledge and learning are created in interplay between humans or between humans and artefacts, mediated through cultural artefacts. Temporarily needing assistance to do something is considered to mean that you are in the proximal zone of development (Vygotskij, 1978). According to this, learning and development in the interplay with others precede individual development (Vygotskij, 1934/1963). Great emphasis is placed on tools or artefacts as carriers of knowledge. "In short, because what we call mind works through artefacts. It cannot be unconditionally bounded by the head nor even by the body" (Cole & Wertsch, 1996, p. 3).

A particular kind of sociocultural theory is the activity theory of learning that was originally outlined by A. N. Leontiev (Rückriem, 2009). According to this theory an action is governed by the sociocultural setting in which it takes place. There is then a subject (a student) and an object (something that this student wants to learn or a goal s/he wants to achieve). The actions taken by this subject to reach the object are operationalized. The operations depend on the conditions under which the actions are performed. These conditions might change, and then the actions change due to operational change. The desired object becomes routine and unfocused when it is learnt but it is in focus while it is still being learnt. If the conditions change it might be focused upon again (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The activity theory of learning was transferred to a specific foreign language theory of learning by A. A. Leontiev (the son of A. N.) Central to the younger Leontiev's theories were the notions of speech acts, operations and utterances (Robbins, 1997). The development of all these notions are also influenced by environmental facets such as dominant motivation, reflexivity and probability forecasting. Within the specific speech act, the goal of the act and the conditions of the act were separated (ibid).

Ellis (2012) argues that there are six important parts of sociocultural language learning and development. (1) Learning originates in a joint enterprise which serves to co-construct language knowledge. (2) This enterprise has to be collaborative. (3) The relation does not have to be that of an expert-novice, it could also be a novice-novice one. (4) Learning shows when learners shift in internalization from an inter-mental to an intra-mental plane. (5) Variability (in terms of accuracy) is natural in the developmental process. (6) Learning is not only evident in the correct/incorrect use of target language forms, but also in terms of assistance needed or independence in language usage.

When the specific language learning of strategic competence in language is focused on, Ellis (2012) differentiates the sociocultural aspect of language learning from a cognitivist one in the way that new learning can be seen. According to Ellis, "use is acquisition and acquisition is use" (p. 238). What this means is that you cannot separate the process from the product. From the cognitive perspective you do not consider the interaction as providing the learning, but rather as providing the learner with input, which is then processed. Learning comes out of that. The learner does not learn in the interaction, but from it. In the sociocultural approach, in contrast, the

interaction is much more intertwined with the learning. Ellis shows the differences in perspectives on language learning in the two theories in the following way. In the sociocultural perspective a language learner moves through five qualitative changes in her or his language use.

(1) The learner is unable to use a specific form even with assistance.

(2) With substantial assistance, the learner can use a specific form that s/he could not use before.

(3) The learner can then use the form in a similar situation with less assistance.

(4) The learner can use the form in a similar context or situation without assistance.

(5) The learner can use the form in different situations and on different occasions without any assistance.

In the cognitive perspective, which is not interested in describing language as communication but as performance, learning is measured in relation to a target-language norm and it can be shown through three developmental steps.

(a) The learning emerges and the learner shows that s/he can use a specific target language form that s/he could not use previously.

(b) The use of the form becomes more accurate and it is more often correct than not.

(c) The learner shows that s/he has moved from an early transitional stage to a later one. This is preferably shown through the use of pre- and post-tests and delayed post-tests.

One of the weaknesses in the sociocultural perspective on whether language learning has taken place, according to Ellis, has been that it has not been shown that the specific feature of language use that is learned is new. There do not appear to have been any pre-tests to show that any specific language feature is a new item learnt and not an item that has been previously or at least partially internalized before.

In the learning studies outlined further on in this text, variation theory is combined with a sociocultural theory of learning. The sociocultural perspective on learning is useful in the early stages of the learning studies, in the outlining of the objects of learning (in the learning study sense of the term "object"). It is also used to analyse and explain in which situations the ability to use strategic competence is needed.

Limitations of the sociocultural approach

The sociocultural approach to foreign language learning is interested in how interaction promotes language learning For this thesis it may not be detailed enough. The object of research in this thesis is not interaction in general or learning through interaction, it is the learning of language use in interacting and thereby the learning and using of strategic competence.

Previous research on strategic competence

Historical perspective on strategic competence

In a Swedish research project entitled STRIMS (Ahlström et al., 1997), an acronym that in Swedish means "strategies for learning modern foreign languages", pupils' learning strategies are studied. In STRIMS, the term "strategies" is mainly used for the pupils' cognition, and the results from this project are typically the ways pupils reason about their language learning and in what way or ways there are common learning strategies connected to the learning of English, German, Spanish and French. The outcomes presented in Ahlström et al. (1997) often intend to generalise across languages and also across age groups (the pupils in the English part of the project range from approximately 10 to 17 years). The outcomes also tend to be heavily focused on pupils' self reports about their language with few references to other research. The research that is conducted in STRIMS is one of the earliest examples of research on learner strategies in Sweden, but due to the interpretation of the term "strategies", the research is not really relevant to this thesis.

The various articles in Faerch and Kasper (1983) describe strategies used by foreign and second language learners in interlanguage production. Communication strategies are defined and analysed, but the research in the articles is not very focused on the learning of these strategies. The three main sections are "Communication strategies defined", "Empirical studies of communication strategies" and "Problems in analysing communication strategies".

Recent research on strategic competence

Mitchell and Myles (2004) report that there is empirical evidence that foreign language users vary their language in the same way that first language users do. They vary their language according to the level of formality and they also vary their language according to gender if they are aware of the need to do so. Ellis (in Mitchell & Myles, 2004) uses a threefold division of how foreign language learners vary their language. Systematic variation is due to linguistic context, (i.e. the first language of the user), psycholinguistic context (i.e. processing constraints) and sociolinguistic context. Hence Ellis claims that it can be observed that variation in foreign language speakers' language actually exists. If Ellis is correct in his assumptions, it means that it would be possible to teach someone how to vary language according to context and interlocutor.

A further claim for foreign language users varying their language according to, among other things, interlocutor is presented by Preston (1989). In a study of doctors speaking a foreign language, it appeared that they varied their language according to the person that they spoke to. This variation was mostly realised in both technical and cognitive-affective language use. The doctors also varied their language depending on whether they were speaking to patients or to other doctors. This can be seen as support for the claim that foreign language users are able to vary their language, and as has been said previously, if variation exists, it should be possible to teach the ability to vary one's language.

The teaching of strategic competence has been studied by Kasper and Rose (2002), and they argue that the development of what they call pragmatic competence (i.e. what Bachman calls strategic competence) among foreign language learners goes through five qualitatively different stages. In the first stage, the speaker would be very context dependent and express herself in single words while in the last stage she would be able to use mitigations, supportive statements and polite phrases. According to Lightbown and Spada (2013), it is possible to explicitly teach strategic competence in the classroom since a communicative approach to language teaching enables grammatically incorrect language usage to be accepted, in an ongoing learning process. Using a language teaching approach where everything uttered in a classroom had to be correct, it would be hard to develop strategic competence since there would be no point of departure.

Kasper and Rose (2002) also demonstrate through a meta-analysis that (1) it is possible to explicitly teach strategic aspects of foreign language. The studies that they refer to have learning targets or abilities that the pupils are supposed to develop, such as use of compliments, formal/informal language and interactional markers in conversations. It is shown in the same text that (2) explicit instruction is more favourable than mere exposure to the target language and learning target. In an overview of the teaching of strategic aspects of a foreign language, Kasper (2001) claims that it seems that explicit teaching is more effective than implicit teaching when it comes to the learning of pragmatic competence.

Nakatani (2005) studied Japanese EFL-learners' learning of oral strategic competences through the use of meta-cognitive activities. The learners were asked to consider situations where they had to use certain strategies and also to evaluate their usage of strategies during previous lessons. By having a control group it was shown that learners who were actively taught strategies such as modified interaction and modified output were more successful in the post-tests. In these post-tests, the quality of the interaction was assessed using a multiple-method approach, including analysis of strategy use and number of words in each utterance. Even though this study focused primarily on the learner and in what way reflections on her or his own learning improved learning, Nakatani shows that active teaching helped in improving the learner's awareness of the interlocutor. This is shown by the fact that the output produced by the learners in the research group could be seen to be modified according to interlocutor. In order to understand the learning of strategic competence it is therefore important to analyse interaction in more detail, which it is possible to do using the theory behind the communicative language approach.

The notion of formulaic sequences of a foreign language and their importance in helping learners to improve their language skills, including becoming more fluent, and sounding more like a native speaker, are described by Khodadady and Shamsaee (2012) and Boers et al. (2006). It could be argued that this is more connected to being fluent than to being able to use a strategic competence in oral interaction, but when adapting one's language it helps to have a set list of words and expressions to structure utterances. The term "formulaic sequence" is defined as being a sequence of words that is stored and retrieved whole from memory (Boers et al., 2006). Khodadady and

Shamsaee (2012) point out that the use of these preset language chunks helps the language learner to gain time to think.

The research in this thesis is on learning to use strategic competence in oral interaction and to some extent it is similar to the research that was presented in the previous chapter. What is added is a further stress on learning strategic competence in the classroom and the teaching strategies (patterns of variation) that seem to be most efficient in keeping a firm focus on the object of learning. The teaching of oral interaction may at times be experienced as hard to control and the learning in the classroom may at times shift from the planned content to something else, a process which will be described and analysed.

Chapter 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter the theory that is used in this thesis and the assumptions behind the Communicative Language Approach (CLA) will be presented. Since the previous chapter was on theories of foreign language learning, this chapter will present the action-oriented theory that is behind CLA, an approach to teaching, learning and assessing foreign language that is used in this thesis. The presentation of CLA will be followed by a description of variation theory, the theory of learning that has been used in the planning, enacting, analysis and revisions of the lessons.

Communicative Language Approach to teaching, testing and assessing language

"Competence" is, according to the action-oriented approach presented in the *CEFR* (2001), the "sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions" (p.9). Competence can be general, but of special interest here is the communicative competence that enables a person to use linguistic means to perform actions. Action-oriented theory claims that persons performing actions are social beings who have tasks to accomplish. Language and language learning is thereby aimed at empowering human beings to perform these tasks. It is thus also possible to assess the tasks, actions, competencies and strategies that are used at different levels and which are related to each other. The means of assessing competencies can, for example, be seen in the explicit assessment grid that is presented in the *CEFR*. Tornberg (2009) shows that this view can be traced back in time to ideas of human liberation and human empowerment. She also states that action-oriented theory (and the CLA) presented in the *CEFR* has been influential for the teaching of foreign languages in Europe.

An early attempt to separate a specific communicative competence was made by Hymes (1972). He criticised the traditional linguistic way of separating competence and performance and claimed that the latter was not

examined in a satisfactory way. Communicative competence would, according to Hymes, deal with the actual language, language in use (as opposed to linguistic competence which would deal with language performed in an ideal situation). The four aspects of communicative competence would show: whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible, whether (and to what degree) something is feasible, whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate and whether (and to what degree) something is done. By relating these four aspects to cultural anthropology, Hymes shows how this way of regarding language and language use resonates with other studies that are related to cultural historical activity studies. They are related in the sense that language learning is the result of interplay between man and his surroundings and also between human beings using language as a mediating artefact. The last of the four aspects, i.e. whether something is done, is Hymes' way of saying that the traditional view held by linguists was theoretically based. They were not interested in actual language use.

Canale and Swain (1980) on the other hand speak of three main competences that together make up communicative language ability. The y define grammatical competence as the knowledge of lexical items and rules of syntax, morphology, sentence semantics and phonology. Strategic competence would be non-verbal and verbal parts of communicative language use, primarily aimed at restoring communication when it has broken down. Sociolinguistic competence would be part of communicative language use and made up of two sets of rules, sociocultural and discursive. Thus, Canale and Swain regard appropriateness to be the key factor in sociolinguistic competence. To what extent is it appropriate to use a certain expression and in relation to which situation would contextual factors such as topic, role of participant, setting and norms of participation affect the communication?

The communicative approach to language teaching should not be interpreted as meaning that something should be replaced in the more traditional teaching of second or foreign languages or that there are certain parts of normal language teaching that do not apply. CLA is not in opposition to any previous approaches. The fear of this dichotomy was described by Littlewood (1984). CLA (Littlewood uses the term "communicative function") is described as one end of a spectrum with a conceptual meaning of language learning and teaching at the other end. The communicative approach to language teaching and learning is at its very extreme the natural approach to language learning, i.e. where nothing is explicitly taught and language is

acquired. The conceptual meaning at the other extreme is then the teaching of grammar, structures and vocabulary. Littlewood argues that what it all should add up to is "creative language use" and depending on the approach taken, this is achieved in different ways. It is stressed that a communicative approach to teaching needs to include part-skills in its teaching (compare to the action-oriented approach presented in the *CEFR*). This part-skills teaching will then not be any more realistic than question-and-answer practices in a conceptual teaching approach. Littlewood also says that there are part-skills that must be explicitly taught to widen the scope of communicative language ability. It is interesting to compare this with the arguments for explicit teaching of pragmatics by Kasper and Rose (2002). What is important when using, for example, drills, corrections or explicit teaching of grammar, is to never lose the idea of the bigger picture of where this conceptual teaching and learning should fit in. This will be, according to Littlewood (1984), "creative language use": a means to an end.

The theories behind communicative language competence were used by Bachman (1990) because of the need to assess communicative language ability. The reasons for a new model for assessment were twofold. It was argued by Bachman that some of the aspects of a communicative language competence described by Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980) could not be found empirically. Secondly Bachman argued that his model related the knowledge of grammatical rules to the knowledge of how language is used to achieve certain communicative goals and also to the recognition of language as a dynamic process. In short, the communicative language competences outlined by Bachman stress the dynamic nature of language and communication in a way that had not been done previously.

Bachman's (1990) model, just like the ones presented by Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980), is made up of different language competences. It was shown at the beginning of this chapter how this way of structuring competences can be traced back to an action-oriented approach to language teaching and learning (*CEFR*, 2001). As was mentioned previously, the dynamic nature and internal relationships between these competences (and their underlying functions and components) are stressed. Bachman defines three main competences: language competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms. Language competence includes organisational and pragmatic competence where the first is grammatical and textual competence and the latter illocutionary and sociolinguistic

competence. Strategic competence is separated from language competence in the sense that strategic competence also includes the ability to relate language competence to the context and discourse that the language is used in. This is an example of the inclusive nature of Bachman's framework: strategic competence includes language competence and it adds something more. Interestingly enough, sociolinguistic competence is here seen as a language competence and not a strategic competence. This means that for Bachman, strategic competence includes knowing what to say in a specific situation, and also relating that to knowledge of the interlocutor, as well as actually communicating.

As can be seen in the previous paragraphs, research on CLA is hard to summarize since different researchers define it in different ways and they also include different elements in the term "strategic competence". In this thesis, it is the pupils' learning of strategic competence in oral interaction that is studied. In line with Bachman's (1990) definition of strategic competence, both the sociolinguistic competence of adapting oral interaction and the capacity to relate that competence to knowledge of the context and discourse in which the communication takes place will be studied. Bachman (1990) does not focus on developing language skills or teaching language, but rather on describing and analysing communicative language competence. This might have been a problem if this thesis had used the theories behind Bachman's model for the study, i.e. the planning of the lessons. However, the main theory for the planning of the lessons is variation theory, and the terms related to CLA are those used by Bachman (1990). This is fruitful as a way of understanding foreign language learning and teaching specifically, as compared to the more general theory of learning in variation theory.

Phenomenography and variation theory

According to phenomenography, learning is seeing something in a qualitatively new way. Originally, phenomenography was used to describe the various ways in which a certain conception could be understood. Marton and Booth (1997) argue that to experience is to experience something and when you do that, some parts of the experienced object are discerned at the expense of the others. When you are aware of something, it is in relation to something else. In the next step of phenomenography, the act of learning is explained. Bowden (2006) describes this as the new phenomenography and the answer

to critics who argued that phenomenography had no theory of learning, but was only a methodology (for describing conceptions of an object). The new theory of learning, also explained by Marton and Booth (1997), was that to see things in a new way, to learn, you need to be aware of the critical aspects of the particular object of learning. In order for these critical aspects to be discerned, they must be varied against an invariant background of other features in the object of learning. This was then the founding idea for variation theory.

The result in a phenomenographic study is categories of description. When something (e.g. students' views on the term "price", conceptions of death or fundamental terms in physics) has been explored, all utterances are grouped together in different categories that are logically related and are often hierarchically ordered. These are known as categories of description and they are qualitatively different ways of discerning a conception and always remain on a collective level. What is discerned is never the totality of the object just as ways of experiencing are never the totality of what is experienced (Marton & Booth, 1997). The categories of description should resemble the informants' conceptions as faithfully as possible (Sandberg, 2006). The closer the researcher is to the informants' understanding of an aspect of reality, the better learning, teaching and other kinds of human action within society can be understood (ibid, p. 130). Even though it may not be possible to generalise the results, in terms of how many informants experience something in this way, the variation in how an object of learning can be experienced can be generalised (Marton & Booth, 1997).

Essential terms in phenomenography and variation theory

One of the core concepts in a phenomenographic and variation theory study is the notion of awareness of a **conception** and the way this term is related to the non-dualistic ontological stance that phenomenography takes (Uljens, 2006). This non-dualistic ontological stance says that there is no idealistic world that the world people experience would be a copy of. The world people experience is constituted of the joint impressions and thoughts of all people who live in it (Marton, 1981). According to Marton and Pong (2005), a conception has a referential aspect and a structural aspect. The referential aspect is what a conception could mean when all subjects' observations are

put together, and the structural aspect is the combination of discerned and focused features that one informant observes. In nature, these aspects are intertwined. To grasp these aspects in an utterance in a phenomenographic interview, you understand referential aspects by interpreting what a person is saying and the structural aspects can be found by looking for linguistic markers such as singular/plural. The referential and structural aspects are intertwined, but only discernible when a specific object is in focus. They cannot be seen when people are speaking about learning in general or in abstract notions. The conceptions that can be identified in a study are put together and form qualitatively different categories of description (Marton, 1981), which are the major outcomes of a phenomenographic study. One example of a specific conception in a specific phenomenographic study might help in explaining this. In a phenomenographic study of high school students' (in Hong Kong) view on a proposed VAT tax, the categories of description showed that there were qualitatively different ways of regarding the proposed tax in terms of who will pay for it in the end and in what way it will affect the general economic market of Hong Kong (Lo et al., 2004). Conception 1 in this phenomenographic study meant that the students understood that the suggested tax would be fully borne by the buyers and that the tax would be related to the demand side of the market. This is the referential aspect of that conception. The structural aspect would be that an interviewed student would focus on the demand conditions of the market, and differences among the utterances in this conception could be things such as the quality of the goods.

The notion of **variation** in a phenomenographic study relates to the aim of describing the variation among the total number of (or at least the total number of relevant) ways of being aware of a specific object (Marton & Booth, 1997). In a phenomenographic analysis, these conceptions are ordered in different categories of description. The second face of variation (Pang, 2003), which arrived later, is the variation within an aspect that needs to be experienced in order for this particular aspect to appear for the observer. This means a shift from phenomenography being a methodological concern ("how can different ways of experiencing be described") to a theoretical concern relating to learning ("why are things experienced differently and how can this difference be described").

Variation theory uses the second notion of variation to explain and argue for why learning takes place and what constitutes better learning. Firstly, it must be stated what variation means in this context. Here it refers to the

varying ways in which it is made possible for the learner to discern the critical aspects of a certain object of learning or ability to master a certain skill (Marton et al., 2004). This variation is considered to appear within a **space of variation** and may be discernible for the learner in three forms of **patterns of variation.** The first is contrast, which means that to be able to understand what something is, you must be able to compare it to what it is not. For instance to grasp what a verb is, you must contrast it with, for example, nouns and adjectives. Verbs are here contrasted within a dimension of variation that could be called word classes. The second pattern is generalisation and this means that to fully understand what a verb is, you need to see different kinds of verbs e.g. transitive/intransitive, auxiliaries and main verbs, and so on. You would then focus on the quality of the verbs and make sure that irrelevant features such as which letters they are made up of are put aside. The dimension of variation is now different kinds of verbs. Finally, a pattern of fusion must be introduced to the pupils to enable them to handle several critical aspects at the same time. To recognise a verb you would actually have to take many notions into consideration simultaneously. You would need to see the meaning of the word, the conjugation pattern and its syntactic function among other things. It is argued, however, that seeing these critical aspects as separate, but functioning together, is more powerful when it comes to learning what a verb is than only seeing a verb as one global phenomenon.

These patterns of variation make what is supposed to be learnt, an object of learning, discernible. The reason that it has become discernible for the learner is that its critical aspects, the parts of it that the learner must discern but has not previously discerned, have simultaneously been varied and remained invariant.

The terms "variation" and "variation in teaching" are problematic since they have an everyday meaning that is different from the meaning in phenomenography and variation theory. The most common understanding of "variation in teaching" would probably be varying outer settings i.e. individual vs. group work, reading vs. watching a film or having the pupils find information on their own vs. providing them with ready-made texts. This is not what is meant by variation in phenomenography and variation theory. It is rather the aspects of the object of learning that should vary. They may actually do so when you vary the outer settings (when you group pupils these aspects are actually rather likely to vary) but these are still two different kinds of variation (Marton et al., 2004).

Learning is defined by Marton and Booth (1997) as becoming aware of the world in a qualitatively new way. Being aware is then explained as being conscious of some critical features of an object while the other features of it make up the background. The study object of a variation theory study is narrowed down to an **object of learning**. This object of learning is then realised in different ways in the classroom and these ways are separated into three types (Marton et al., 2004; Lo, 2012). The **intended object of learning** is what a teacher plans and intends her or his pupils to learn. This space of learning, which is similar to the learning that a teacher makes possible by creating variation that it is possible for the pupils to discern, is seen from the teacher's point of view. What is seen from the researcher's point of view is the **enacted object of learning** and this is, according to Marton et al. (2004) what matters when it comes to what it is possible to learn in school. Other parts of the school world such as curriculum and the teacher's intentions are communicated through the enacted object of learning since that is what actually happens in the classroom. However, all the things that it is possible to learn in a particular situation are seldom understood and made sense of by the pupils, and what they carry with them when the lesson ends and beyond in life is called the **lived object of learning**. By seeing the relation between the different kinds of objects of learning, it is possible to understand learning in terms of the learning that is made possible and what is then actually learnt as a result of the teaching: that is, not in terms of cause and effect, but in terms of learning. This is analogous to the non-dualistic stance explained previously. Learning should be understood from the second-hand perspective of the learners and not from the first-hand perspective of the teachers.

Previous studies in English as a foreign language guided by variation theory

There are some learning studies reported where the objects of learning are taken from the school subject English as a foreign language. Even though they do not specifically deal with oral interaction, they are interesting for this thesis. The examples in this section will be taken from some Swedish studies (Holmqvist & Mattison, 2009; Holmqvist & Lindgren, 2009), some Chinese studies (some of the studies referred to in Lo, 2012) and also some learning studies carried out in Hong Kong (Lo & Ko, 2002; Mok et al., 2002 and other studies referred to in Lo, 2012).

Several of the learning studies reported have had linguistic competence, especially some kind of grammar, as their object of learning. Holmqvist and Lindgren (2009) studied the suffix –s, which can be used to indicate plural, genitive or third person singular form of the verb. A similar object of learning can be found in Lo and Ko (2002). Interestingly enough, they have some common ground in that they all seem to come up with critical aspects where, in order to discern the object of learning, the pupils need to have a joint focus on form and meaning. The results in Holmqvist and Lindgren (2009) show that the pupils needed to simultaneously discern the grammatical rule (third person singular -s, plural -s, genitive -'s) and the lexical meaning of the words in the sentences to use the object of learning (-s suffix) correctly. What is interesting is that the group of pupils in Holmqvist and Mattisson's (2009) study who were taught the use of the verb *to have* contrasted with the verb *to be,* had better results in the prolonged post-test. This result indicates that this group of pupils had learned something that they could apply to new situations in a more elaborate way than their peers. It also indicates that learning continued after the learning study lessons. This is referred to by the authors as "generative learning" (Holmqvist, Gustavsson & Wernberg, 2007).

Lo and Ko (2002) offer another version of a verb-agreement study and the results can be analysed in the same way as in Holmqvist and Mattison (2009). The results showed that pupils needed to have a simultaneous focus on form and meaning to produce correct sentences. In Lo and Ko's (2002) study, this result can be detected in the (not so successful) lesson where the pupils were not offered a focus on grammatical form, but mainly on meaning. Consequently the post-tests showed that the group with low focus on form or meaning also had lower results. A similar result can be found in Mok et al. (2002), where it can be seen that a specific focus on the most relevant meaning and form of plural also led to a better result on the post tests when the teachers wanted to teach the use of the indefinite pronoun *some* and the generic plural (as in *cow – cows*).

The examples in Lo (2012) are to some extent objects of learning that are primarily linguistic and deal with vocabulary. Again, they could be analysed in terms of a simultaneous understanding of form and meaning. The pupils who struggled with vocabulary and the use of grammatical suffixes, performed better when they were told to look for other words surrounding the one they did not know.

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The research in this thesis continues the variation theory tradition of studying foreign language learning. What is added is a new kind of object of learning, namely oral interaction and learning and usage of strategic competences. It is important for the development of variation theory to have this new object of learning and it is also important for the research on learning oral interaction to use a method that analyses learning in as much detail as the learning study method does. The studies that have been described in this chapter were all analysed on an individual level. This means that the learning among the pupils was analysed by means of individual pre- and post-tests. In this thesis individual pre- and post-tests were used in the first learning study, but not in the second. In the second learning study the learning was analysed on a group level, partly because it was not possible to determine which pupil was speaking and partly because it was as interesting to see patterns of variation and to focus on the object of learning as it was to analyse individual learning. This is a focus that has not been used in previous studies in English as a foreign language that were guided by variation theory.

Chapter 4. METHODOLOGY

In this part of the text the specific method used in this thesis will be described. The learning study model will be explained through descriptions of the methods it has originated from. The quality discussion will relate the learning study model to discussions on generalizability in the qualitative research tradition.

The learning study model

The learning study is an iterative model of planning, performing, assessing and evaluating teaching and learning that takes its basic structure from the Japanese lesson study model (Ming & Lo, 2012). In this model (lesson study) a group of teachers plan, carry out and evaluate a restricted amount of content from the curriculum with the assumption that when this is done collectively it will enhance the possibilities of benefitting both pupils and fellow teacher colleagues. What the learning study model adds to this is a theoretical framework for learning, often variation theory (Marton & Booth, 1997). The use of the theoretical framework helps to explain why the aspects of a certain content, the so-called intended object of learning, have to be varied in order for the pupils to learn it. This means that the learning study is a lesson study with a theory systematising the analyses of when, why and how learning takes place.

Using the learning study as a research method for developing and analysing learning and teaching practice is founded on two main ideas (Ming & Lo, 2012): firstly the fact that there is a strong focus on the object of learning and secondly the fact that a theoretical framework of learning is applied throughout the process. Together with the basic structure for a lesson study (Morris & Hiebert, 2011) the learning study model may become successful both as a means of improving schools and as a research method. This basic structure means that first an area of teaching is decided upon and in that area a certain content, i.e. the object of learning, crystallises both through interviews with pupils and through experiences among the teachers. After a pre-test has been carried out, a lesson or a series of lessons is planned to teach

the intended object of learning, and when the lesson is over a post-test is used to analyse the pupils' development during the lesson. This post-test is complemented by an analysis of the action in the classroom, performed by the teachers in the group. The learning study is always carried out by a group of teachers sharing the same subject and teaching pupils of the same age. Based on the results of analysis, a second lesson is planned and performed in another class in the same grade, again with pre- and post-tests and analysis afterwards. The adjustment to the lesson should make the object of learning appear in a different way. One should keep in mind that the method of teaching, e.g. group work, individual work, pen and paper or watching a film is not relevant. It is the way the aspects of the object of learning are varied that matters, as well as the mediating tools that are used to open up these dimensions of variation for the pupils. The cycle is performed a third time before the findings are presented in a report and thereby communicated to other teachers, both at the same school and at other schools.

The assumption behind the learning study as a means of improving research methods for developing teaching practice is that to fully understand the very intricate world of learning, one needs to look at a very limited part of it. A learning study therefore takes a small part of a complex world and examines it closely. Morris and Hiebert (2011) argue that this is the way to scientifically improve knowledge building and the theoretical framework that surrounds it. The most limited part ought to be one single object of learning and that is exactly what is studied in the learning study. The learning study is also a model for applying variation theory and its framework to hands-on research in the classroom. Since variation theory is grounded in phenomenography, it brings phenomenography into the classroom as well.

The learning study model was originally (Pang & Marton, 2003) described as a fusion of the Japanese tradition of the lesson study (Lewis, 2000) and design experiment as it is described by Brown (1992) and Cobb et al. (2002). Pang and Marton (2003) consider the lesson study model to be more focused on teaching practices than arranging for learning. A learning study therefore "aims to build innovative learning environments and to conduct research studies of the theoretically grounded innovations. Secondly, it aims to pool teachers' valuable experiences in one or a series of research lessons to improve teaching and learning" (Pang & Marton, 2003, p. 179). The design experiment part of the learning study can be seen in the theoretically-grounded innovations that are transformed into research lessons. When these are put

together, this fusion makes the learning study theoretically grounded in a way that the lesson study is not, though the lessons study still has its origins in an authentic problem experienced by the teachers.

Lewis (2000) argues that a lesson study focuses on bridging the gap between teachers' ideals for the pupils and the abilities they have now. This last part of the description of the lesson study and thereby the learning study is reminiscent of action research, as described by Elliot (1991). Elliot's version of action research always starts with the need for a group of teachers to better understand their practice. This search for a better understanding is then an impetus for repeated interventions on parts of the practice. Action research is (just like many other research approaches) a widespread phenomenon that is used in many contexts. The researcher-led action research interventions described by Carr and Kemmis (1986) are in many ways the opposite of the participant-led action research interventions described by Elliot.

One final term that needs to be mentioned in this introductory part of the method chapter is the "teacher as researcher" as coined by Stenhouse (1981). Stenhouse argues that the teacher is the ideal researcher, since she is at the heart of the classroom, where the classroom can either be regarded as a laboratory in which to conduct experiments or a room for naturalistic observations where the teacher is a participant observer. It can be seen here that the fusion between teacher-led actions (i.e. lesson study) and theory-testing actions (i.e. design experiment) mentioned initially runs through the whole of this introduction and it will continue to be relevant throughout the thesis.

The following parts of this chapter will describe what the learning study model means in this thesis. The learning studies are used to create empirical material for the research project that aims to answer the research questions: (1) In what ways are relationships between the content of the oral communication, the context and the participants discerned by the pupils? (2) What patterns of variation in the teachers' treatment of the content increase the pupils' use of strategic competence in oral interaction to a higher degree? (3) In what ways do minor adjustments of the teachers' treatment of aspects of the content affect the pupils' opportunities to discern the object of learning? (4) What critical aspects must be discerned by the pupils in order to adjust their oral communication of the content to context and person?

The learning studies are also to some extent used to experiment with the teaching of strategic competence in oral interaction. Since some of the

research questions (especially Questions 2 and 3) are focused on specific parts of the treatment of the object of learning, the learning studies are experimental scenes where the teaching of these parts, as well as the relationship between teaching and learning of a specific object of learning, are scrutinised. Variation theory offers a way to analyse this relationship, and even though variation theory has not been used previously to analyse the learning of strategic competence in oral communication in a foreign language, it has been used to analyse other kinds of learning, both in foreign-language learning and in other subjects.

The learning studies in this thesis are theory-oriented in the sense that variation theory is used, together with a theory of communicative language approach to language learning, throughout the different parts of the intervention. Variation theory is used in the planning, in the teaching and in the analyses afterwards. This is what unites these learning studies with design experiments (Brown, 1992; Cobb et al., 2002) where the testing of theories is one of four characteristics (the others being the developing of theories, an interventionist nature and an iterative design). For the learning studies used in this thesis, the testing of variation theory is second to the idea of applying a theory to make a stronger claim for learning, to support the planning and to understand the results of the interventions better. Design experiments are theory-oriented in the sense that they test theories as well as generating them, whereas learning studies use the theory and thereby further develop it.

According to Lo et al. (2004), the cycle of a learning study comprises at least six steps and the third of these is the designing of a lesson or a series of lessons to teach the object of learning that you want the pupils to develop. In this case it is the ability to use strategic competence in oral interaction in English as a foreign language and the lesson that will be outlined here will focus on the strategic part of adapting the language for different situations. This means that both structuring utterances in oral interaction and choice of words in these utterances will be treated as a strategic competence, since both refer to variation according to the person you are speaking to or the context you are in.

All of the previously-mentioned examples of learning studies in the school subject English lead to the interesting conclusion that a simultaneous focus on form and meaning is a common critical aspect. One of the fundamental ideas of the phenomenographic approach is that learning must always have an object and depending on the object, the learning will be qualitatively different.

However, one might perhaps say that regardless of the object of learning within the school subject English, you need to have a simultaneous focus on some form and some meaning.

To a certain extent, some pupils' conceptions of what it means to interact well while speaking English as a foreign language have been detected through the phenomenographic pilot study referred to earlier (Selin, manuscript, see Appendix 1). It is important to consider the teachers' views on what it means to interact well, or at least what pupils have to know in order to be able to vary their language while interacting. In this group, the views expressed by the teachers with regard to the object of learning were that the quality of interaction is constituted by vocabulary, fluency and variation according to interlocutor and situation.

As a further complement to the basic structure for a learning study, the different steps in the two learning studies that were used in this thesis will be presented. These two learning studies, which will be referred to as LS1 and LS2, were carried out over three months and the following steps were taken.

1. Defining the object of learning in discussions with the teachers in the research groups. Pupils' views on the object of learning came from older interviews with pupils of the same age (analysed in a phenomenographic pilot study) for LS1. For LS2, the pupils' views came from an on-line discussion with pupils of the same age as the ones that participated in the study.
2. Design of pre- and post-tests.
3. Design of first lesson.
4. Design of pre- and post-tests.
5. Implementation of the first lesson (A) in the first group of pupils (A) (the pupils are pre-tested, the intervention is videotaped, and the students are given a post-test). All pupils are also audio-recorded.
6. The research group analyses the enacted object of learning and the results of the tests in light of the videotaped lesson.
7. The lesson is further developed to better suit the object of learning and the second lesson (B) is implemented in the second group of pupils (B).
8. The results of the second lesson are analysed and a third design is made for the third research lesson (C) in the third group of pupils (C). In LS2 this lesson was designed in two ways and implemented in two groups of pupils without analysis between the lessons. It thereby became a lesson 2C.1 and a lesson 2C.2.

9. The whole cycle is analysed to find out which pattern of variation seemed to make the object of learning become most discernible for the pupils.

Generalizability, validity and reliability

In this section a discussion will follow on generalizability, validity and reliability. First these notions will be related to Cohen et al. (2011) and the learning studies that have been conducted, after which other perspectives on validity and generalizability in qualitative research will be discussed in relation to the learning studies conducted.

Internal validity, according to Cohen et al. (2011), means that the findings must describe the phenomena being researched. This validity can be addressed using multiple researchers, participant researchers, peer examination of data and mechanical means of recording, storing and retrieving data. All of these apply to the research in this thesis since there are multiple researchers in the sense that there are different teachers doing the learning study lessons. The researcher participates and the data in the form of the recorded lessons is examined together with all teachers involved in the study. It is important to add here that the teachers involved have been introduced to variation theory. This introduction to variation theory is part of the learning study model, and as can be seen here it contributes to the validity and reliability of the research project.

Content validity addresses the questions of whether the content used in the lessons are representative of the wider issue under investigation and whether the parts used are addressed in depth and breadth. Since references have been made to the syllabus for English and the National Curriculum (Skolverket, 2011a; Skolverket 2011b) it can be shown that the content used in the lessons is representative of the notion of interacting that is commonly held in Swedish schools. The Swedish Syllabus for English is also influenced by the *CEFR* (2001), which indicates that the content of the lessons is not only valid from a Swedish perspective. That the notion of communication is wider than speaking grammatically correctly and having a pronunciation close to that of a native speaker is shown in the theoretical background. This is also considered in the planning of the lessons. In the National Swedish Curriculum it is stated that:

> Through teaching, pupils should be given the opportunity to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills involve understanding spoken and written English, being able to formulate one's thinking and interact with others in the spoken and written language, and the ability to adapt use of language to different situations, purposes and recipients. Communication skills also cover confidence in using the language and the ability to use different strategies to support communication and solve problems when language skills by themselves are not sufficient. (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 32)

Cohen et al. (2011) argue that the issue of reliability as it is understood in quantitative research (replicability over time, instruments, groups of respondents and also consistency) is to a large extent answered by the issues of validity. It should include fidelity to real life, the in-depth descriptions, the honesty and the specificity that have been described in the validity sections of this text. This is the rationale for discussing these types of reliability together; they are intertwined in the type of research that has been done.

Another perspective on the issue of validity, reliability and generalizability is offered by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) when they say that in a postmodern world that has moved beyond the positivist striving for a dual world where all knowledge can be objectively observed and stated, validity and reliability are shown in a different way compared to the way they are shown in a positivist tradition. Since the creation of knowledge lies in its communication and application, validity and reliability lie in craftsman's skills in the researcher, in the passing on of the results and the actions taken (due to the results) and also in the finding of similar results in a replica study.

Larsson (2009) argues for a discussion of generalizability in qualitative research paradigms that starts in the Aristotelian phronesis of exercising wise judgement. Wise judgement should be exercised by the reader when she tries to relate the results in a study to the context that she is in, but wise judgement should also be exercised by the researcher when arguing for generalizability. Larsson offers five ways of arguing for generalizability in qualitative studies (two of which say that it is unnecessary) and, wisely judged, one of them will be used here. It is argued that "[g]eneralization is about the potential use of a piece of research" (Larsson, 2009, p. 34) and this is what is done here. Whether the results presented here are generalizable to other contexts must be judged by the reader, but the author must obviously do the utmost to be as clear as possible. The possibility of other pupils learning to adapt their language and develop their strategic competence in oral interaction could be assessed by other practitioners if this capability and learning are described well

enough. How this ability (and in the longer perspective, the learning of it) is constituted could also be assessed by other practitioners if this capability and learning are described well enough. It is claimed in this thesis that since the lessons in the learning studies have been described in such detail with transcribed excerpts from pupils and teachers, the results in terms of development of capability are generalizable. The content of the lessons has been decided on in line with the National Curriculum (Skolverket, 2011a; Skolverket, 2011b) and thereby also to a certain extent the *CEFR* (2001) and variation theory has been related to other established theories of language learning. However the researcher should not leave the responsibility of judging the generalizability of these results to the reading practitioners. These are often not as well read in the subject as the researcher and they are, at times, not as familiar with the reading of academic texts as the researcher is. The answer to this potential criticism is that the research model is at a teacher, i.e. practitioner, level. The research is also conducted with teachers and their perspectives have been taken into account in discussions so that the finished text is, to a certain extent, reader- and interpreter-friendly, even for a practitioner.

A further discussion on generalisation that starts in the Aristotelian phronesis is done by Stake (2006, pp. 88-90). Stake describes how the use of several case studies can be synthesised into a grand discussion about an over-arching theme and this can be related to the two learning studies that are used in this thesis to answer several research questions. It is argued by Stake that the results and generalisations made by the researcher from multiple case studies show the readers how conclusions can be made. In this way it is more likely that the reader can come to her or his own conclusions and apply the results from case studies to situations that are relevant to her or him. It is further argued by Stake that the use of a multiple case study analysis especially promotes complex conclusions.

To sum up, the internal validity in this thesis comes from the fact that several teachers have been involved in the planning, performing and evaluation of the lessons in both learning studies. The discussion on specific qualitative research validity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Larsson, 2009; Stake, 2006) in this chapter shows that the research in this thesis is valid due to the fact that it has been described well enough to enable replication of the lessons in other classrooms with similar results. It is further argued that since it has

been shown that two case studies (Stake, 2006) can be synthesised, it is possible for researchers to come to a complex conclusion.

Ethical considerations

According to Cohen et al. (2011), there are some ethical dilemmas that must be considered in a research project. They are presented in the following section along with some concluding comments on how they are addressed.

The privacy of the informants must be considered. Privacy can be related to three perspectives: sensitivity of information, observation setting and dissemination of information. To some extent the information that the informants share about themselves is not very sensitive. They are not supposed to speak about sensitive issues such as religion or sexuality, but on the other hand they are sharing information about their abilities to speak English and thereby the academic qualities connected to this. This might be very sensitive for some pupils (and their families). The setting being observed is a very public one, but at the same time according to Swedish law the school is not a public space; not everyone has the right to be there (as opposed to, for example, a train station). A certain amount of care must therefore be taken, as the dissemination of the findings will be public. This means that anybody who wants to will be able to read about the results and it means that anonymity and confidentiality must be taken into account.

In addition, since the ethics of a research study are connected to the laws and regulations of the country in which the study is conducted, the advice in *God Forskningssed [Suitable Practice of Research]* (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011) will be considered. The relevant parts here are that good scientific practice means knowing and mastering the method/s you are using. It also means that you should follow the general laws in society when it comes to issues such as discrimination and accepting gifts from participants. Finally it says that specific categories of researchers may have specific ethical codes, but teachers are not mentioned (*Yrkesetiska kodexar*).

To address the issues that have come up in the discussion of ethical considerations, the informants (i.e. the pupils and their families) have been asked to sign a consent form where they accept that the information collected through observation and recording is to be used in research. If there was any pupil who did not want to participate, s/he could join another group of pupils

during that particular lesson and would not be part of the research[5]. Names and/or other personal information are not used in the text. It has not been possible to be totally confidential about the school since the research is to some extent done in the school where the researcher works. The name of the school is not mentioned, since it is not relevant to the research. It is, on the other hand, relevant to the research (see the discussion on validity and reliability) to describe the demographic setting of the school in as much detail as possible.

Implementations of the learning study processes

The learning study model has been used in three cycles for each study (although the third lesson in LS2 was enacted in two groups of pupils by two different teachers without any analysis between the lessons), in an iterative process where the participating teachers and the researcher have collaboratively planned, enacted, analysed and revised the lessons. The use of learning studies for empirical material means that what is researched is the participating teachers' interpretations of strategic competence. It could be argued that some of the objects of learning are not ideal examples of strategic competence, but the objects of learning in these studies are the ones that the teachers chose.

The first study was implemented during the autumn term of 2012 and the second during the spring term of 2013. The contexts of each study will be described in detail in the following sections.

Table 1 General overview of the learning studies

	LS1	LS2
School	School A	School B
Teachers	6	9
Students	29	78
Number of lessons	3	4

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5. None of the participants, nor their families, declined to take part in the research lessons.

Context of Learning Study 1

In the first learning study used in this thesis there are 29 pupils in total. It was carried out during the autumn term of 2012 and will be referred to here as LS1. The pupils come from three different classes from the same school. All of the pupils are in school year 8, which means that they are 14-15 years old. The school where LS1 was carried out is situated in the southwestern part of Sweden, in the rural part of the municipality and where the main city has approximately 100 000 inhabitants. The catchment area for the school consists of three small villages where the inhabitants mainly live in self-contained houses. The participants in LS1 will be presented in the following table. The groups of pupils for each lesson are described in terms of number of pupils and their gender.

Table 2 *Participants: LS1*

	Number of girls	Number of boys	Total number of pupils
Lesson 1A	3	7	10
Lesson 1B	4	5	9
Lesson 1C	5	5	10

The teaching of English in Swedish schools is to a large extent about developing and improving language skills among the pupils. In other subjects (e.g. Science), teachers tend to be more inclined to go through different areas in the subject field, but this is not the case in English. This means that it is not possible to specify at what particular age level Swedish school pupils, at least not the ones in this study, start communicating orally and need to use strategic competence. In the syllabus for English (Skolverket, 2011a), using strategic competence in oral communication is not considered to be a central component of language learning for school years 4-6, but in school years 7-9 the pupils are supposed to learn how to adapt language for different purposes. The general opinion in the research group (the five teachers and the researcher) in LS1 is that pupils in school year 8 generally know that they should adapt their language according to interlocutor and situation, but they do not know how to do it, and most importantly they do not do it when they interact in English. It is one thing to know that you should do it and another thing to actually do it.

To make the reading and understanding of LS1 easier for the reader, a figure explaining the different steps will follow.

| 1. Defining the object of learning. | → | 2. Design of first lesson. | → | 3. Design of pre- and post-tests. |

| 4. Implementation of Lesson A. Pre- and post-tests | → | 5. Analysis of Lesson A. | → | 6. Planning of the second lesson, based on the results from lesson |

| 7. Implementation of Lesson B in a new group of pupils. Pre- and post-tests | → | 8. Analysis of Lesson B. | → | 9. Planning of the third lesson, based on the results from Lessons A and B |

| 10. Implementation of Lesson C in a new group of pupils. Pre- and post-tests | → | 11. Analysis of Lesson C. | → | 12. Final analysis of entire learning study |

Figure 1. Design of LS1

The discussions in the research group preceding the planning of the lessons that evaluated the lived learning of the lessons and that decided the change/s for the coming lesson, were audio-recorded using a computer. The lessons were filmed with a fixed camera at the back of the classroom, placed there in order for all pupils to be visible at the same time. Digital voice recorders were placed on each table where the pupils were seated, which made it possible to detect every pupil's voice. In the analysis after each lesson, the teacher who usually teaches the group helped to determine which pupil said what in the conversation. Since the camera could not catch everybody's face, it was necessary for the voices to be recognised by a teacher who knew the pupils.

The pupils were seated in groups of three with each group at a separate table. Since there were between 9 and 10 pupils in each lesson, there was one group of four or two pairs during some of the lessons. If there was a group of four, two of the pupils acted as peers and if there were pairs, the teacher took one of the roles (interacting with two groups simultaneously). The design of the groups was done by the teacher who taught the lesson. The key idea behind the design was that the group should consist of pupils who were not disinclined to interact with one another.

Directly before the start of each lesson (when the pupils entered the classroom), a pre-test (see Appendix 3) was carried out to see to what extent the pupils already knew how to – practically - adapt their language. A post-test (see Appendix 4) - similar but not identical to the pre-test - was held directly before the pupils walked out of the lesson. A delayed post-test, using the original pre-test, was held 6 weeks after the lesson. In the tests the pupils performed a role play where each pupil had to ask for different things s/he did not have and when they asked they had to first pose the question to a peer acting as a peer and when s/he could not help, the question had to be directed to a peer acting as an older person. The tests were analysed on an individual level. The research group wanted to see whether the pupil who was speaking used a different register and a more formal vocabulary level to address somebody acting as an older person, compared to how the pupil addressed a person acting as a peer. If the pupil did this, the researchers marked yes in the yes/no dichotomy presented in Table 10.

It could be argued that it is hard to assess oral tests like the ones that are used as pre-, post- and delayed post-tests in this thesis. Oral tests have not been part of national tests and evaluations of various kinds to the same extent as written tests or listening and reading comprehensions (Skolverket, 2004). Oral competence is not mentioned in the national evaluation from 2003 (Skolverket, 2004) and one might suspect that this is because oral competence is considered to be hard to assess and/or not considered to be as important as abilities connected to written texts (Skolverket, 2004). To make the assessment of oral interaction easier for the research group it was decided that the analysis of the pre-, post- and delayed post-tests should focus on finding specific key words. The research group in LS1 listened for evidence of usage of strategic phrases such as "excuse me" and "please" and in LS2 the research group listened for evidence of phrases for inviting others into the conversation, references to previously-expressed opinions and variation in

phrases used for giving opinions. Detecting whether a pupil says "please" or not in speaking is not any harder than analysing whether a pupil is using correct verb forms when writing.

In the following excerpt, an example of the analysis will be presented. Pupil 3 is here adapting vocabulary according to the interlocutor. Since the phrase "excuse me" is used to address the (supposedly unknown and older) shop assistant, it is considered to be an example of adapting language.

> Excerpt 1:
>
> Pupil 3 [acting as a 15-year-old]: Where is the batteries?
>
> Pupil 4 [acting as a another 15-year-old]: No, I don't know where the batteries are, but maybe you could ask her.
>
> Pupil 3: **Excuse me**, do you know where the batteries are? [question posed to the pupil acting as a shop assistant]

Context of Learning Study 2

The second learning study (LS2) was conducted during the first part of the spring term of 2013. The school is a Swedish college and the study programmes offered at this school are typically theoretical ones such as the Natural Science Programme[6] and the Social Science Programme[7]. There is also an Aesthetic Programme,[8] where arts such as dance and acting are focused on. The school building is old and the hallways and rooms are spacious, which give this school an academic aura. This college is situated in the same geographical area (in the same municipality) as the secondary school where LS1 was conducted. However, the college is in the central part of the main city of the municipality. The college also has a much wider catchment area than the secondary school, which means that the pupils are more demographically representative of the municipality. The school is, as was mentioned previously, old and historic and has a reputation for having a certain spirit. Many pupils in this school have had older siblings and also parents who have studied here and since the study programmes prepare students for university education it could be assumed that the average level of

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[6] In Swedish *Naturvetenskapsprogrammet*
[7] In Swedish *Samhällsvetenskapsprogrammet*
[8] In Swedish *Estetprogrammet*

education of the parents is higher than that of parents of pupils at other colleges in the municipality that are newer or vocationally oriented.

This table describes the participants in LS2.

Table 3 *Participants: LS2*

	Number of girls	Number of boys	Total number of pupils
Lesson 2A	17	7	24
Lesson 2B	15	1	16
Lesson 2C.1	13	3	16
Lesson 2C.2	8	14	22

The outline of LS2 is not exactly the same as that of LS1. After the second lesson, the teachers and the researcher in the research group could not agree on what should be changed for the third and last lesson. Therefore two versions of it were planned and enacted in parallel, without analysis between them.

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┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│ 1. Defining the │      │ 2. Design of    │      │ 3. Design of    │
│    object of    │ ───► │    first lesson.│ ───► │    pre- and     │
│    learning.    │      │                 │      │    post-tests.  │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│ 4.              │      │ 5. Analysis of  │      │ 6. Planning of  │
│ Implementation  │ ───► │    Lesson A.    │ ───► │    the second   │
│ of Lesson A.    │      │                 │      │    lesson,      │
│ Pre- and        │      │                 │      │    based on the │
│ post-tests      │      │                 │      │    results from │
│                 │      │                 │      │    Lesson A.    │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│ 7.              │      │ 8. Analysis of  │      │ 9. Planning of  │
│ Implementation  │ ───► │    Lesson B.    │ ───► │    the third    │
│ of Lesson B in  │      │                 │      │    lesson,      │
│ a new group of  │      │                 │      │    based on the │
│ pupils. Pre-    │      │                 │      │    results from │
│ and post-tests  │      │                 │      │    Lessons A    │
│                 │      │                 │      │    and B        │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│ 10a. Impl. of   │      │ 11a. Analysis   │      │ 12. Final       │
│ Lesson C.1.     │ ───► │    of Lesson    │      │    analysis of  │
│ Pre- and        │      │    C.1          │      │    entire       │
│ post-tests      │      │                 │      │    learning     │
├─────────────────┤      ├─────────────────┤      │    study        │
│ 10b. Impl. of   │      │ 11b. Analysis   │      │                 │
│ Lesson C.2.     │ ───► │    of Lesson    │      │                 │
│ Pre- and        │      │    C.2          │      │                 │
│ post-tests      │      │                 │      │                 │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
```
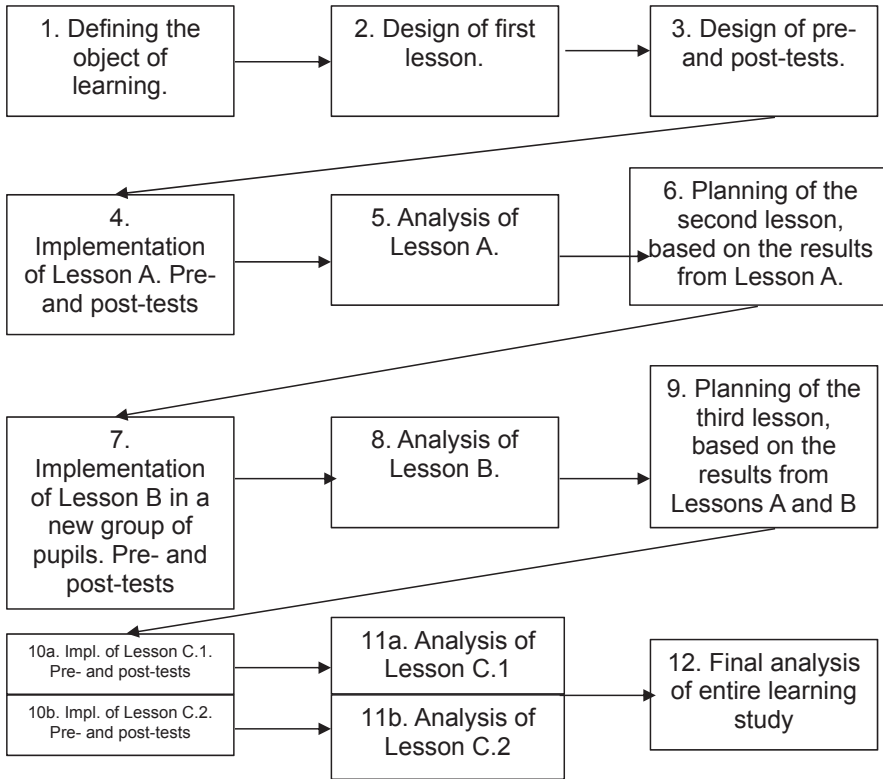
Figure 2. Design of LS2

Just as in LS1, a camera was used for recording the lessons. The discussions in the research group, consisting of eight teachers and one researcher, were again audio-recorded. The individual pupils' voices were recorded on the computers that the pupils use for all their lessons. Every pupil has a personal laptop (provided by the school), which is used during more or less all lessons. The recordings from each group of pupils were sent to the teacher directly after each lesson. Just as in LS1 the pupils also did pre-tests (see Appendix 5) at the beginning of the lessons and post-tests (see Appendix 6) before they left the classroom. These pre-and post-tests were analysed by the research group in the same way as the pre- and post-tests in LS1, but this time it was not possible to separate the individual pupils' voices, which meant that the analysis was made on a group level. To illustrate the way the analysis was carried out, an excerpt from the analysis of pre-and post-test from Group 1 in the second

lesson (Lesson 2B) will follow. In these tests, as can be seen in Table 18 *Result: Lesson 2B*, the group managed to refer to previously-expressed opinions once in the pre-test but not in the post-test. Referring to previously-expressed opinions was one of the critical aspects for the intended object of learning in this lesson. The group also managed to vary phrases for giving opinions, i.e. use more than "I think", in the post-test and also to invite other students into the conversation in the post-test. Neither varying nor invitation could be heard in the pre-tests.

The pupils are seated in groups of four wherever possible. If this is not possible due to the number of pupils, groups of three are arranged. The pupils design the groups themselves. The teachers in the research group argued that this would work since the pupils were 16-17 years old. In the pre-tests (see Appendix 5) and in the post-tests (see Appendix 6), the pupils discussed different topics, aided by pictures that were supposed to enhance the possibility of a good conversation. Topics could be, for example, preferred holiday destinations, spare time activities and environmental issues.

The numbers given to the pupils are not related to how they were seated in the conversation. It simply relates to the order in which they spoke. The first pupil to speak in the conversation is called Pupil 1 and the second Pupil 2 and so on.

> Excerpt 2:
>
> Pupil 1. Yeah, sightseeing is good...if you...because then you have a guide which tells you the most important things about the country
>
> Pupil 2. Don't they only tell you about the good things? They tell people what they want to know.
>
> Pupil 1. It's good for watching the culture...the buildings and then they can tell you some things about the buildings and the history, but not really everything though.
>
> Pupil 3. I think it could be good if you don't know very much about the country.
>
> Pupil 4. Yeah
>
> Pupil 3. If you've never been there before
>
> Pupil 1. Yeah **exactly, but it's also** a fun thing for people to do [relating]
>
> Pupil 2. So maybe it's a more fun way of learning too.

The phrase "Yeah **exactly, but it's also** a fun thing for people to do" is considered to be referring to previously-stated opinions about the advantages of going sightseeing. What this pupil does is not only to express her or his opinion, but also relate it to the others' opinions. The previous speakers had only given their personal opinions without mentioning that they had considered the others' ideas.

> Excerpt 3:
>
> Post-test
>
> Pupil 1. "How can extreme weather like this affect people's lives?"
>
> Pupil 2. You can't really get out of the door when it is so much snow.
>
> [---]
>
> Pupil 2. But if it's too hot then you...I wouldn't say lazy...but you...
>
> Pupil 3. You sweat out all your energy.
>
> Pupil 4. Yeah...**What kind of weather do you mostly like? Do you have a weather you like more?**

This pupil invites the others into the conversation through the use of a question. It can also be seen from the following lines that this invitation is accepted and that the others join the conversation by answering the question. From the first comment from Pupil 3 in the following conversation (Excerpt 3) you could argue that this is an example of referring, but it was decided that to only say "that's true" (or something similar) without following it up with an opinion of one's own was not considered to be referring to other peoples' opinions. This was just agreeing.

> Excerpt 4:
>
> Pupil 3. I think I like too hot more...because then you...
>
> Pupil 4. If you live near a sea or a lake or a pool, then you can just...be there and near the water
>
> Pupil 3. Yeah, that's true
>
> [---]

Pupil 1. I think so too, even if the tsunami isn't that bad, and not many people are dying right there, then there are very many buildings that are there and that are destroyed.

Pupil 2. And it's not economically good for the people, maybe it can take years to make up...

Pupil 1. Do you think so too?

Pupil 4. Yeah, **I agree**

This is an example of using a phrase other than "I think" to express opinion. Ideally the phrase would be continued with "that this is not economically good", but in a natural conversation you do not repeat previously-used words in this manner.

Excerpt 5:

[---]

Pupil 1. It's either water or some powder

Pupil 2. So that the fire would stop

Pupil 3. I think that's a good way. I don't know what else you can do

Pupil 2. **Do you know something to stop fires?**

Just like the example from Excerpt 3, this is an example of inviting other people into the conversation through the use of a question. The use of a question is not considered to be an invitation as such, it has to be a question that is directed towards somebody. In this case (as well as in Excerpt 3) the fact that the question starts with "Do you know..." indicates that an answer is expected. This might be compared to a rhetorical question that you perhaps do not pose in search of a specific answer but because you are just thinking out loud. An imaginary example would be "I was wondering whether...".

The oral part of the National Tests in English 5 was used (see Appendix 7[9]) as a delayed post-test for this learning study. The task in this test is very similar to the task of the post-test. The pupils are supposed to discuss a subject through the use of pictures and statements. Due to rules of

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9. The National Tests cannot, due to confidentiality, be reprinted. Appendix 7 shows the example of an oral proficiency test that can be found at skolverket.se. The actual test that was used for the delayed post-test was the National Test for English at Level 5, 2013.

confidentiality regarding the National Tests in English, the pictures used cannot be reprinted. Instead the examples of non-confidential test material that the Swedish National Agency for Education have published on their website can be seen in Appendix 7. The same argument that was made in the context description of LS1 about oral tests not being hard to assess is also valid in the context description of LS2. It was decided that specific phrases should be listened for and at the research group meetings after each lesson, the assessment was discussed and the teachers helped each other with examples that were considered to be borderline cases or hard to assess.

Chapter 5. ITERATIVE DESIGN AND RESULTS OF THE LEARNING STUDIES

In the following chapters, two learning studies are presented. They are presented with excerpts from the dialogues and conversations that took place in the filmed lessons. A conclusion of results follows after each of the studies. As the design of the lessons is based on the results of both the pre-tests and the analysis of the previous lesson, the designs are the result of a deeper knowledge about what it takes to learn the defined content. For that reason, both traditional results such as scores on tests and the design of the lessons are presented in this section to show the iterative research process and how the results build upon each other in a cumulative way.

Design of Learning Study 1

In this chapter the first learning study is presented. The design of this study has been shown previously, and now the lessons are described. After the description of each lesson, an analysis of the enacted object of learning will follow, together with a presentation of the test results.

Lesson 1A – procedure and results

In the first suggested lesson plan in LS1 the direct object of learning, what is actually taught, is the use of formulaic sequences. The formulaic sequences are phrases such as "Excuse me, where is..." and "Do you know where..., please". The teachers in the research group agreed that the pupils did not, for the most part, need to learn the phrases, but rather to learn to use them in appropriate situations. An object of learning has two aspects and can thereby be separated into a direct and an indirect object. The indirect object of learning, what the pupils are supposed to be able to do with their new knowledge, is the same in both learning studies. It is the ability to adapt language to suit the interlocutor and situation while interacting in English as a foreign language.

The tentative critical aspects, based on what the teachers in the research group from experience suspected that the pupils needed to have the opportunity to discern and what the results from a phenomenography-inspired pilot study (Selin, manuscript, see Appendix 1) showed, for the direct object of learning were: awareness of interlocutor's age, linguistic knowledge and content knowledge. In order for the pupils to understand the object of learning, a lesson design where the critical aspects can be discernable must be made.

All lessons in LS1 will be presented using a similar structure. First the intended object of learning, what the teachers plan to teach, will be presented. After this will come the enacted object of learning, which corresponds to what actually happens in the classroom. Excerpts from the recordings of teacher's and pupils' voices will be used to illustrate this. When the first lesson in LS1 is presented the slides that were used and that the pupils saw will be included. The slides are the same throughout LS1. Finally the lived object of learning will be presented. This is the result of the analysis after the lesson. The focus on the object of learning is analysed, as are the patterns of variation used and the pupils' results. The language used during the lessons is English. If Swedish words are used in the transcribed excerpts, an English translation follows.

The teacher in the first lesson has 10 years of experience in teaching English at seconadary school. He is a qualified teacher and teaches Swedish as well as English. The group of pupils is usually taught English by this teacher. There are 10 pupils in the first lesson. They have one lesson every week in this smaller group while the other half of the class has an ICT-lesson. There are seven boys and three girls and they are divided into two pairs and two triples for the interaction exercises in the lesson. The constitution of the pairs and triples was made by the teacher with the intention that the pupils would end up next to somebody they feel comfortable with, but at the same time to create a mixture of pupils inclined towards interacting and pupils who previously have been rather quiet. The lesson is fifty minutes long.

Intended object of learning

In the first part of the first lesson in the learning study the object of learning is introduced to the pupils as being the ability to adapt one's language to the interlocutor. The pupils are taught the kind of communication strategies known as help-seeking strategies and thereby formulaic sequences like

"Excuse me, where is..." and "Do you know where..., please" are introduced to the pupils.

What the pupils are supposed to see is that depending on the interlocutor's age and background, they need to adapt and change their language. At this point it will probably be obvious for (at least some of) the pupils that this is something that they do themselves when they speak Swedish (or another mother tongue). They do not speak in the same way to their parents as they do to their friends nor do they speak in the same way to people they know as they do to strangers.

When the above-mentioned phrases (the help-seeking strategies) are introduced to the pupils they are asked to take turns to ask for the way to various places, such as the bathroom in a department store or a candy shop in town, and also to ask for specific items in the supermarket. In the first phase Person A is explaining this to an interlocutor, Person B, who should be somebody at approximately the same level of English and the same age as Person A. Person B is instructed to act as if s/he does not know the answer to the request from Person A and therefore Person A must ask another person (a third person at the table), Person C, who is supposed to be acting as an older person and to be somebody that is unknown. The person speaking, Person A, then has to adapt her or his language to suit the new setting and person. Person C is also instructed to act as if s/he does not know the way. The pupils' places around the tables and the order for the requests and answers are illustrated in the following figure.
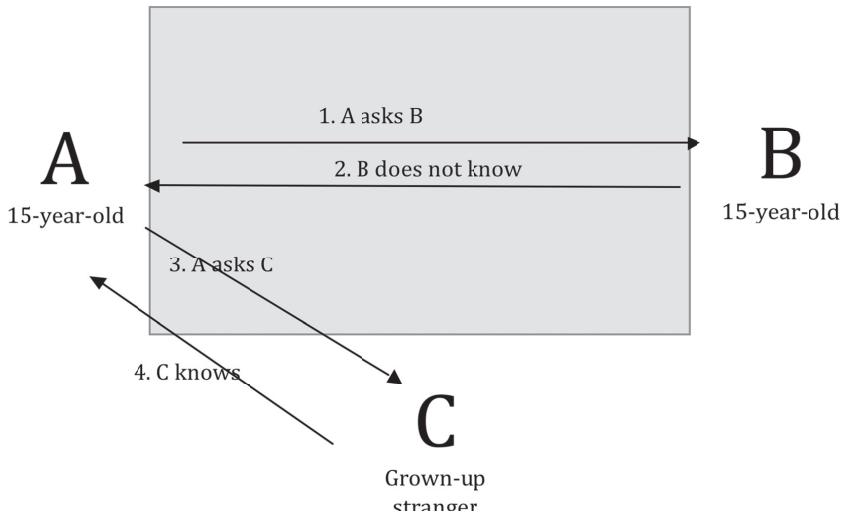
Figure 3. Role play in Learning Study 1

The space of variation that is opened up for the pupils, in order for them to discern the critical aspects of the object of learning, is one of variation according to interlocutor. Since the language structure of the request is similar in each case, the pattern of variation is one of separation. There is only one feature of the critical aspect that is varied, and that is the characteristics of the interlocutor. The critical aspect as such has already been made available to the pupils through the use of contrast when it was exemplified for the pupils that you vary language according to age and background and that you speak differently to different people.

Another option (instead of having the pupils pretend to be different speakers at different times) would be to bring younger children (or adults) into the classroom. This would make the lesson more real, but on the other hand there is a slight risk that new people in the classroom would become a disrupting factor when it comes to the pupils doing what they are supposed to be doing.

In the second part of the lesson, the pupils are paired instead of being in groups of three. First the pupils are introduced to some new communication strategies, paraphrasing and approximation, and two new formulaic sequences which are "What I mean is..." and "looks like...". This time the pupils are told to explain how to get to specific geographical places in the village where the school is situated such as the beach, the church and the supermarket. Person

A asks and Person B answers. Person A is instructed to pretend not to understand initially so that Person B has to paraphrase what s/he just said. There are also conversations where pupils are acting as a shop assistant and a customer. The customer asks for things and the shop assistant needs to point out the locations of these items. The shop assistant therefore needs to use oral strategic competence. What this part of the lesson then adds is a notion of adapting language in order to get around linguistic difficulties when you are speaking to somebody who has a less-developed vocabulary than yourself.

The pattern of variation in the second part of the lesson is also a separation. The interlocutor is this time the same and is thereby kept invariant. The language structure is varied in order to make the interlocutor better understand what the content of the information is. The two parts of the lesson and the patterns of variation (V) and invariation (I) in them can be described like this:

Table 4 *Conditions for the intended object of learning: Lesson 1A*

	Critical aspect to be discerned by the pupils	Sender	Interlocutor	Content
Part 1 of the lesson	Interlocutor's age and whether you know her or him	I	V	I
Part 1 of the lesson	Interlocutor's linguistic knowledge	I	V	V
Part 2 of the lesson	Interlocutor's content knowledge	I	I	V

Enacted object of learning: Lesson 1A

When the pupils have taken their seats and become familiar with the slightly strange situation of having a camera at the back of the classroom and recorders on their tables, they are introduced to an exercise where they are supposed to ask for different items and also to ask for the way to various places. They take turns to be 15-year-olds and grown-ups (according to the notes that are passed around). The pupils seem to understand what they are supposed to do and after a short while they do not show any apparent signs of being disturbed by the recording devices. The pairs (which actually have one

person fewer than is needed to be able to vary their utterances according to interlocutor) are asked to leave out one of the 15-year-olds, and take the parts of one grown-up and one 15-year-old. In a later part of the lesson the missing part is taken by the teacher. The slides that are used for all three lessons in LS1 are presented as *Figures 4-6*.

Take a seat

- You are at a department store
- Person 1 (a 15-year-old girl or boy) asks person 2 (his or her friend) where the nearest bathroom is. Person 2 does not know so person 1 must ask person 3 (someone older who works there) instead. This person knows.

Figure 4. Slide 1

After the initial exercise where all pupils have acted in the three different roles, the teacher explains the notion of varying your language like this:

Excerpt 6:

Teacher: One of, eh, one of the things that you should be able to do in English according to... well according to the course plan and to the grading criteria

Pupil 1 interrupts: speak English on the lessons

Teacher: it is to speak English at the lessons, but it doesn't really say in the course plan that "all pupils should speak English". It's something that we teachers have invented. Because, but here is something that it really says. You should be able to speak in one way to one person and in another way to another person. It is called... it is called to vary your language. And if you think about it... when you speak to a friend in Swedish, you do not speak in the same way when you speak to, like, your grandmother at Sunday dinner. Or do you [Pupil 1]? What's the difference in Swedish?

Pupil 1: *Svär väl inte så*. (Do not swear as much).

Teacher: Perhaps you do not swear that much.

Pupil 1: S*äger inte "fuck off"* (Do not say "fuck off ")

Teacher: You do not say those words, no. If a friend asks you [Pupil 2] what you have done at school today and if, eh, if your aunt – do you know what aunt means? [Pupil 2 shakes her head to show that she does not] your

mother's sister. If your aunt asks the same thing: What have you done in school today? Would you answer in the same way?

Pupil 2: *Nä* (no).

Teacher: Probably not. And this is what it means to vary your language. You speak differently to different persons, and also in different situations.

The teacher here introduces different ways of asking for different items and asking the way and tells the pupils that they should vary their language according to person and situation. Even though the slide shows various items and places, the teacher consistently uses "pencil" as an example.

Ways of asking for things or the way

- The pencil/shop/bathroom/cinema, please?
- Where is the/May I borrow a pencil/shop/ bathroom/cinema, please?
- Excuse me, do you know where the shop/ bathroom/cinema is, please? May I borrow a pencil, please?

Figure 5. Slide 2

The pupils are introduced to new situations and asked to take part in and act out the following:

Vary according to situation and person

- Ask for the time
- Try to loan a book from a class mate
- Try to find batteries in a shop
- All the time: person 1 asks, person 2 is the same age as person 1 and knows her/him and person 3 is an older stranger or a teacher

Figure 6. Slide 3

Here is an example of a conversation:

Excerpt 7:

Pupil 3 [acting as a 15-year-old]: Where is the batteries?

Pupil 4 [acting as another 15-year-old]: No, I don't know where the batteries are, but maybe you could ask her.

Pupil 3: Do you know where the batteries are? [question posed to the pupil acting as a shop assistant]

Pupil 5 [acting as a shop assistant]: Over there.

This conversation is typical of the pupils in this lesson. The pupils ask for things and directions and answer in short sentences. They sometimes help each other with words and expressions in English that are difficult to master. The focus is very much on speaking correctly and also on varying language according to interlocutor. It can be heard that the pupils sometimes correct each other when somebody forgets the interlocutor. The pattern of variation in the first part of the lesson is still a separation since the aspect "age of the interlocutor" is separated in order to show that you address people differently e.g. because of their age. The intended dimension of variation in the second part of the lesson is not opened up though, since the shop assistant is both treated as a social equal by the pupil (there is no extra polite phrase) and also linguistically the word choices are the same. The patterns of variation could therefore be described like this:

Table 5 *Critical aspects of the enacted object of learning: Lesson 1A*

	Social relation	Age	Language knowledge	Content knowledge
Part 1 of the lesson	V	V	I	I
Part 2 of the lesson	I	I	V	I

Results and analysis: Lesson 1A

Lived object of learning

When the pre- and post-tests were analysed, the research team listened for evidence of language that was adapted to suit the interlocutor. The above example (Excerpt 7) would not be regarded as an adaptation since the question about the batteries was not posed with an initial "Excuse me" or with a final "please". If the conversation instead had looked like the example in the context description (Excerpt 1) it would have been considered to be an instance of language adaptation.

All pupils had a chance to act as a 15-year-old asking for things (and were thereby given a chance to adapt language) during the pre- and post-tests. The result from the pre- and post-tests show that none of the pupils varied her or his language in the pre-test and that 9 out of 10 did so in the post-test. In the delayed post-test that was carried out six weeks later during a similar lesson (again a half-class lesson and the same time of the day), 5 pupils out of 10 changed their language according to interlocutor and situation. The delayed post-test was similar to the pre-test used before Lesson 1A. A table showing the results from all three lessons will come after the description of Lesson 1C.

Analysis

In the discussion after Lesson 1A the teachers were pleased with the results of the lived learning in the lesson. The pupils had to a large extent varied their language according to the interlocutor and situation in the post-test. The discussion concerning the enacted learning focused on how much the pupils were introduced to and invited to enter their roles as 15-year-olds, strangers and teachers. It was agreed that one way of varying the critical aspect of keeping a simultaneous focus on interlocutor and structure would be to let the pupils have a more thorough introduction to their roles. The pupils in this study would benefit from identifying more closely with the character they were supposed to play. It was agreed that this would be the change in the lesson plan that would be made from Lesson 1A to Lesson 1B.

Lesson 1B – procedure and results

The pupils in Lesson 1B are from the same school as the pupils in Lesson 1A. They are in the same year, but not from the same class. There are 9 pupils in the lesson, 4 girls and 5 boys. They are grouped by the teacher to form groups where they are at the same time comfortable in each other's company but also well mixed in terms of being more or less good at oral interaction. The teacher of this lesson is a woman with 20 years of experience of teaching at secondary school level. She is a qualified teacher who also teaches German.

The changes that were made from Lesson 1A to 1B make the conditions for the intended object of learning look like this. The changes are indicated with bold text.

Table 6 *Conditions for the intended object of learning: Lesson 1B*

	Critical aspect to be discerned by the pupils	Sender	Interlocutor	Content
Part 1 of the lesson	Interlocutor's age	**V**	V	I
Part 1 of the lesson	Interlocutor's linguistic knowledge	**I**	V	V
Part 2 of the lesson	Interlocutor's content knowledge	**V**	I	V

Enacted object of learning: Lesson 1B

Just as in Lesson 1A, the pupils quickly forget that there is a camera at the back of the room and recorders on the tables. They start the introducing exercises about asking for places and directions. The pupils seem, generally, to be comfortable with interacting in English and they do not show any apparent signs of being shy or disturbed by the camera or recorders. Some of the pupils can be heard changing their voices in more or less serious ways to try to sound like (caricatures of) adults.

The teacher continues the lesson with a discussion with the pupils about different ways of expressing politeness (excuse me, pardon, sorry) and in which situations you would typically use these. The same presentation slides are used in Lesson 1B as were used in Lesson 1A and when the different phrases below the heading "Ways of asking for things or the way" (*Figure 5*) have been presented, a slight change from Lesson 1A may be noted. The teacher does not explicitly say that these are ordered formality-wise and that they should be chosen according to interlocutor and situation.

> Excerpt 8:
>
> Teacher: Now, you have played different roles. One of the roles is a friend or a person who is the same age as you. You talked about it and you talked about it [pointing at two pupils in the classroom]. How do you ask a person who is a friend of yours or the same age?
>
> Pupil 1: [overtly exaggerating] Ey you, can I get that pencil, bi.., *nä* [no].
>
> Teacher: Probably not bitch, but... You use...
>
> Pupil 2: Motherfucker.

Teacher: No. It is important to know when to use those words, because you wouldn't use them while speaking to a friend, would you?

Pupil 3: To my friend

Teacher: A very, very best friend.

[---]

Teacher: The person 3 is a stranger or a grown-up person. What kind of words would you use then?

Pupil 4: I say please and so on.

Pupil 1: You use more sensible words.

Teacher: So, why do you use more sensible words, less rude words? You are polite, aren't you? You say please, thank you, excuse me. Why do you do that?

Pupil 4: Because the person doesn't know who I am and I want to make a good impression.

The pupils are then introduced to the next exercises, similar to the ones in Lesson 1A after the part of the lesson where the teaching of the variation had taken place. The difference in Lesson 1B is that the pupils have not really been explicitly taught that they should vary their language according to situation and interlocutor, rather to change roles. The conversations that follow tend to become about the pupils focusing on getting as much as possible into their roles.

Excerpt 9:

Pupil 5 [acting as a 15-year-old]: [Pupil 4], do you know where the batteries is?

Pupil 4 [also acting as a 15-year-old]: No, I don't know anything.

Pupil 5: No you don't. You're blonde

Pupil 4: No, I don't know that. I'm sorry.

Pupil 5: OK, I can ask this guy. Hello, stranger, do you know where the batteries is?

Pupil 1 [acting as a shop assistant]: Yeah, you just go down there, then you follow the sign that say "cooking stuff". And then you go to the stairs, where you will find some chairs and on these chairs you must stand up and

grab this thing in the ceiling. Then you just fly over the whole thing and
into a cave that we have digged out of the wall, and there the batteries is.

Pupil 5: Thank you.

It is rather obvious that the pupils are enjoying themselves and that they enjoy
speaking English. Pupil 1 in particular is good at expressing himself and takes
up a certain space in the conversation. As can be seen in this conversation,
however, Pupil 5 does not vary his language according to interlocutor when
the location of the batteries is asked for. The patterns of variation have
changed because of the pupils' focus on playing roles and a new aspect has
been introduced in the lesson. This means that the social relations aspect is
kept invariant in both parts of the lesson. The content knowledge aspect is
varied however. The bold text in the table below indicate changes in the
enacted object of learning compared to Lesson 1A.

Table 7 *Critical aspects of the enacted object of learning: Lesson 1B*

	Social relation	Age	Language knowledge	Content knowledge
Part 1 of the lesson	**I**	V	I	I
Part 2 of the lesson	I	I	V	**V**

Results and analysis: Lesson 1B

Lived object of learning

The result from the pre- and post-tests show that 2 of the pupils varied her or
his language in the pre-test and that 6 out of 9 did so in the post-test. In the
delayed post-test that was carried out six weeks after the lesson, 8 out of 9
pupils varied their language according to interlocutor.

Analysis

The discussion and analysis after Lesson 1B centred on opportunities for the
pupils to discern the dimension of variation involving varying one's language
according to interlocutor and situation. It was agreed that the pupils in Lesson
1B had spoken quite a lot. They had entered their roles and acted as 15-year-
olds and adults to a large extent. What was lacking, though, was a focus on the
interlocutors from the pupils' point of view. They did not vary their language

as much as the pupils in Lesson 1A. They talked freely and, at least in some cases, talked at length, but they did not really take situation and interlocutor into consideration. It was agreed among the teachers that this could be because of the fact that, as was intended, there was a stronger focus on the speaker's role this time. It could also be because of the fact that the teacher in Lesson 1B did not explicitly say that the three different ways of asking for items or directions were ordered formality-wise. Neither was it mentioned that they should be used while interacting with different interlocutors, and that the speaker should be the same (kept invariant). This means that the speaker should not play a role, s/he should only speak differently according to whoever s/he was addressing.

Lesson 1C - procedure and results

The change from Lesson 1B to Lesson 1C that was agreed upon was that there should again be an introduction to the roles, but the teacher should stress that pupils need to consider the role of the person they are speaking to and not just the roles that they are playing themselves. "When you are a peer you are supposed to act like this, and when you interact with a peer you are supposed to behave like this".

The pupils in Lesson 1C are from the same school as the pupils in Lessons 1A and 1B. They are in the same year, but not from the same class. There are 10 pupils in the lesson, 5 girls and 5 boys. They have been placed in groups of three and four by the teacher to form groups where they are at the same time comfortable in each other's company but also well mixed in terms of being more or less inclined towards oral interaction. The teacher of this lesson is a woman with 18 years of experience of teaching at secondary school level. She is a qualified teacher who also teaches German.

The changes that were made from Lesson 1B to Lesson 1C actually made the intended patterns of variation similar to the ones that can be found in Table 4 *Conditions for the intended object of learning: Lesson 1A.* The bold text refers to planned changes in relation to Lesson 1B.

Table 8 *Conditions for the intended object of learning: Lesson 1C*

	Critical aspect to be discerned by the pupils	Sender	Interlocutor	Content
Part 1 of the lesson	Interlocutor's age	I	V	I
Part 1 of the lesson	Interlocutor's linguistic knowledge	I	V	V
Part 2 of the lesson	Interlocutor's content knowledge	I	I	V

Enacted object of learning: Lesson 1C

The lesson starts in the same way as the previous lessons. The pupils have been informed about the camera and the recorders before they enter the classroom and when the lesson starts there are cards on the tables that say "Person 1", "Person 2" or "Person 3". From the start of the lesson it can be seen that these pupils are not as talkative as the pupils in Lesson 2 were. They carry out their interactions, but nothing more. When they feel that they have finished they sit quietly at their tables.

When the part of the lesson comes where the varying of expressions is explained the teacher starts by asking the pupils if they had varied their language according to interlocutor and situation in the warm-up introduction. A few of the pupils claimed to have done this, which to some extent they had, as can be heard from listening to the recordings. The teacher then points out that "varying one's language" in this situation has a slightly different meaning than it usually has. She is probably referring to written feedback on writing tasks, because the pupils respond that varying means not using the same words. The same presentation slides are used and when the slide with the text "Ways of asking for things or the way" (*Figure 5*) is shown this is what can be heard in the classroom.

Excerpt 10:

Teacher: Do you see the differences with the three sentences? When can I use the first one, "the pencil please"?

Pupil 1: To a friend.

Teacher: Yes, to someone you know. A friend, your brother and sister or your mum or dad, someone with whom you are close to, so to speak. "May I borrow a pencil, please"? Who can you ask that? Now I want someone else to answer [Pupil 1 is eagerly waving his hand again].

Pupil 2: Eh, to an adult.

Teacher: Right, any adult person?

Pupil 2: Someone you know?

Teacher: Yes, and the third one then, "Excuse me, may I borrow a pencil, please"?

Pupil 3: You can say that to someone you don't know. On the street if you meet someone.

Teacher: Yes. When you need to make a note and have something done and you don't have a pencil.

[---]

Teacher: So we have the three levels. To someone you know, a friend, the first one "pencil, please". But "please". Use that. It must be used to show that you are a polite person. "May I borrow a pencil, please" or "Excuse me, may I borrow a pencil, please". This is used when you want someone's attention. This is a way of varying your language according to who you speak to.

The pupils then continue with the same exercises as were used in Lessons 1A and 1B. It can be seen and heard that they are focused on varying language according to situation and interlocutor and just as in the previous lessons, the pupils are keen to help each other with words, phrases and also with which role they are supposed to be playing and which role is being played by the person they are interacting with.

Excerpt 11:

Pupil 1: I can't find the batteries. Do you know where it is?

Pupil 2: No, I don't know either. Ask her.

Pupil 1: Do you know whe... Excuse me, do you know where the batteries is?

Pupil 3: Yeah, it's down this hall and then to the right.

Pupil 1: Thank you.

At the end of the lesson the teacher asks the pupils in what way or ways they varied their language and this time the pupils can tell not only that they did vary their language, but also how they did it. The patterns of variation for this lesson are similar to the ones that were intended for Lesson A. In this lesson, in contrast to in Lesson 1B, the social relationship between the sender and the interlocutor was varied in the first part of the lesson. The patterns therefore look like this:

Table 9 *Critical aspects of the enacted object of learning: Lesson 1C*

	Social relation	Age	Language knowledge	Content knowledge
Part 1 of the lesson	**V**	V	I	I
Part 2 of the lesson	I	I	V	V

Results and analysis: Lesson 1C

Lived object of learning

The result from the pre- and post-tests show that two of the pupils varied their language in the pre-test and that 10 out of 10, all pupils, did so in the post-test. In the delayed post-test, which was carried out six weeks after the lesson, again all the pupils varied their language according to interlocutor.

Analysis

When the pupils were asked to focus on the characteristics of the interlocutor as well as the characteristics of the sender, the object of learning became discernible in a way that it had not during Lesson 1B. It can be seen in the results from both the post-test and the delayed post-test that this is so. It can also be seen in the discussion (Excerpt 10) between the teacher and the pupils that the pupils discern the object of learning in a qualitatively different way.

Results of Learning Study 1 as a whole

As can be seen in the tables describing the intended and lived objects of learning in the lessons (Tables 4–9), the pattern of variation changed during the lessons. It changed from the planning of Lesson 1A to Lesson 1B and back again to Lesson 1C. This shows how difficult it is to enact the lesson you

have planned. The result that stands out to some extent is the result of the post-test from Lesson 1B.

Table 10 *Results of Learning Study 1*

N=29	Pre-test	Post-test	Delayed post-test
Lesson 1A (N=10)	0	9	5
Lesson 1B (N=9)	2	6	8
Lesson 1C (N=10)	1	10	10
Total	**3**	**25**	**23**

The result in Lesson 1B can be explained by changes in the enacted object of learning. Whereas the teachers in Lessons 1A and 1C were detailed and explicit about the three different ways of asking for a pencil and especially about the fact that there were different formality levels involved, the teacher in Lesson 1B was not. She mentioned the different ways of asking and the fact that they should be used on different occasions, but not that they were ordered. This meant that the pupils were not, to the same extent as in Lessons 1A and 1C, given the opportunity to separate the formality level from the information. You could, as a pupil, interpret the instruction as meaning that you should vary your language according to the part you were playing, and not according to the person with whom you were speaking.

The results from the delayed post-tests after the lessons indicate that the pupils in Lessons 1B and 1C were more successful at adapting their language than the pupils in Lesson 1A. The change that was made from Lesson 1A to Lessons 1B and 1C related to the introduction to the roles. The pupils in Lesson 1B were instructed to act according to the role they were supposed to be playing and not specifically to adapt according to the interlocutor. This meant that they adapted according to the role and not to the person they were conversing with. One possible reason that the pupils in Lesson 1B obtained results that were better than (or actually as good as) the results from Lesson 1C) on the delayed post-test could be that in this test they did not have to vary their language according to situation in the same way as they did during the lesson (which was connected to the post-test). The situation in the delayed post-test was stable, only the interlocutor changed whereas in the lesson there was an exercise part (referred to in Table 4 as Part 2 of the lesson) where the interlocutors changed and the situations in which the conversations were supposed to take place also changed, that is the pupils had to pretend that they were interacting not only with different people, but also in different

places (in school and in a shop) for different conversations. The fact that the teacher in Lesson 1C offered her pupils a chance to discern the critical aspect of varying language according to situation as well as the critical aspect of varying language according to interlocutor, meant that the pupils were better at the adaptation. As one pupil in Lesson 1B says, as an answer to why you should be polite: "Because the person doesn't know who I am and I want to make a good impression." This could be understood as the pupil thinking he should vary his language because of the way he wants to be considered, rather than because of the person whom he is addressing. There is a further analysis that can be made and that is simply that the critical aspect of identifying with the character/person you were supposed to play was more important than the aspect of knowing the correct vocabulary and the level of formality. Finally, it is possible that the teacher of Lesson 1B has mentioned or commented on the lesson on one or many occasions during the six weeks that passed between the post-test and the delayed post-test.

Design of Learning Study 2

The lessons that make up LS2 are all in English 5, which means that the pupils are in their first year at this school (and are some months into the second term of that year. In Sweden the school year is divided into an autumn and a spring term). Just as in LS1, it is hard to be specific about the pre-knowledge of the pupils. One of the requirements you have to meet to be able to apply for a national study program at college in Sweden is that you should have at least a grade E in English from year 9 (the last year of compulsory school). As has been explained previously, one of the requirements to meet the demands of an E is to be able to adapt oral language according to interlocutor and situation. In one sense you could argue that all the pupils in LS2 should be able to do this already and do need not to learn it. To a certain extent the teachers in the research group for LS2 agreed with this, but argued that the pupils were not very good at adapting their oral language in conversations according to different situations. The pupils are generally rather good at adapting their oral language according to the interlocutor, but not according to situation. This means that the suspected critical aspects for the object of learning in LS2 became slightly different from the critical aspects in LS1.

College in Sweden is non-compulsory in theory, but almost all pupils continue with their education after the nine years of compulsory school. There are several study programs on offer, some theoretical like the ones at this school and others vocational, but they all have a certain number of core subjects and courses that everybody must take. English is one of the obligatory subjects. The courses can be said to be related to the *CEFR* (2001) and are deemed to be at level 5-7. This means that the pupils are supposed to reach a level of English as a foreign language equivalent to Level 4 in primary and secondary school (school years 1-9). In the curriculum for college, one of the central parts of the course English 5 (which is the one the pupils in the first year of college are in) is to be able to use "strategies to contribute to and actively partake in discussions connected to life in society and at work" [my translation] (Skolverket, 2011b).

Object of learning for Learning Study 2

During the introductory discussions of this learning study, it was decided that the object of learning was to be "to better understand the relation between interlocutor and situation in communication" and usage of phrases in conversations on familiar topics. Some of the first year pupils (i.e. pupils of the same age as the ones in the learning study) had answered questions on what it means to interact well while speaking English as a foreign language. The questions were similar to the questions in the phenomenography-inspired pilot study that preceded LS1 and the answers from the college pupils showed that some areas of interaction were missing. It was therefore decided that three different areas should be focused on and these were the tentative critical aspects of the object of learning. The first of these (1) is phrases to invite others into the discussion such as "How about you?" or "What do you think?". The second (2) is phrases that refer to what a previous speaker has said, such as "I don't agree with you" or "I would also say that". The third (3) is phrases used for introducing your opinion (with an expression other than "I think") such as "In my opinion" or "As far as I'm concerned". The direct object of learning was knowing how to use these phrases, as it was decided that the pupils did not actually need to be taught the phrases as such. The phrases were supposed to be ones they knew, but did not normally use. The indirect object of learning, what the pupils were supposed to be able to do with the different phrases, was to achieve a conversation that was of high

quality and effective in the sense of everybody's voices being heard and also in the sense of involving varied language.

The design of LS2 is similar to the design of LS1 with one exception. Two versions of Lesson C were carried out since the teachers in the research groups could not agree on the changes that should be made. It is important to mention that no analysis was done between Lessons C.1 and C.2. They were planned in parallel.

Lesson 2A - procedure and results

The pupils in Lesson 2A are from a Natural Science Programme class, year one. There are 7 boys and 17 girls, 24 pupils altogether. In the research lesson they are placed in groups of four and this is done according to the "principle of convenience", where the pupils sitting next to each other simply form a group. The recordings are all done on the pupils' computers; the pupils all have personal computers provided by the school. They use these computers on many occasions during the school day, not only for English. The teacher in the lesson is a qualified teacher with 20 years of experience. She also teaches Swedish. The length of all the lessons in LS2 is 80 minutes.

Intended object of learning

During the discussion that preceded Lesson 2A, it was decided that the pupils should be offered a chance to discern the critical aspects, as described above, through the use of role plays and by listening to recorded conversations. The role plays were to be acted out among the pupils in groups of four and in these groups the pupils were to be asked, through instructions on cards, to perform certain actions. These instructions involve phrases such as "During the conversation you can't speak unless somebody invites you", "You must start all sentences with "I think", "When somebody asks you 'What do you think?', you must change the topic" and "Start the conversation and keep on talking for as long as possible". The role-play cards that were made by the teachers in the teaching groups are shown in F*igure 7* below. Each pupil had one card and all cards were used in the group. One pupil had "During the conversation..." another had "You must start..." and so on. The pupils only knew what was on her or his own card.
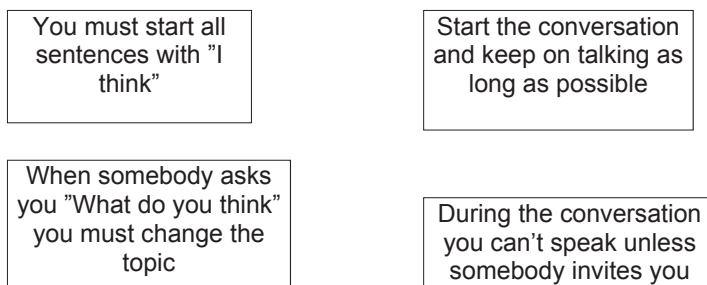
You must start all sentences with "I think"		Start the conversation and keep on talking as long as possible
When somebody asks you "What do you think" you must change the topic		During the conversation you can't speak unless somebody invites you

Figure 7. Role-play 1 cards

This is supposed to lead to a poorly-expanded conversation, which should then be contrasted with a well-expanded conversation model offered to the pupils through the use of a recording from a course book where native speakers perform a very well-organised conversation.

After listening, the phrases and words that have been heard are written on the whiteboard in order for everybody to see them. These lists of words are then an aid for the pupils when they are performing their second role-plays. During these role-plays new cards are used. Written on these three cards are phrases that are supposed to help the pupils to invite others into the conversation, to refer to previous opinions and to use a range of verbs to express their own opinions. These cards and the instructions on them are shown in the following figure.
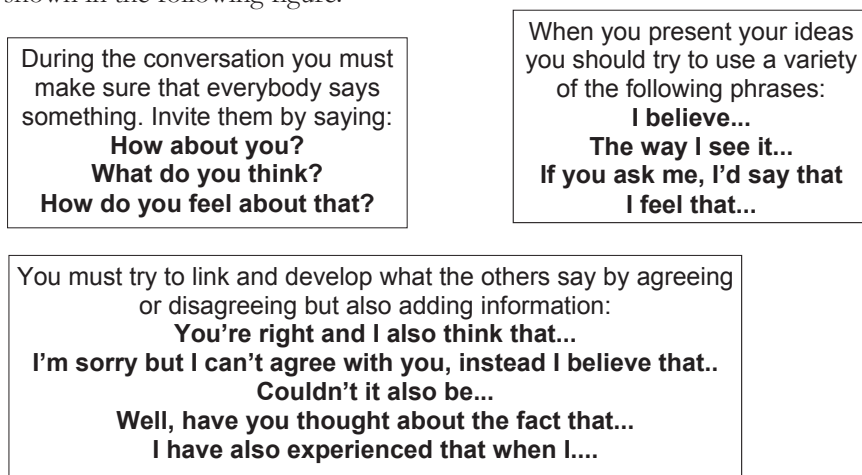
During the conversation you must make sure that everybody says something. Invite them by saying: **How about you? What do you think? How do you feel about that?**	When you present your ideas you should try to use a variety of the following phrases: **I believe... The way I see it... If you ask me, I'd say that I feel that...**

You must try to link and develop what the others say by agreeing or disagreeing but also adding information:
**You're right and I also think that...
I'm sorry but I can't agree with you, instead I believe that..
Couldn't it also be...
Well, have you thought about the fact that...
I have also experienced that when I....**

Figure 8. Role-play 2 cards

The material that is used, apart from the computers that are recording each conversation, are picture sheets (one per group in A4 size) that illustrate the conversation subjects and that are also used in pre-and post-tests[10]. Smaller role-play cards (approximately the size of business cards) are also used and in these, as shown in F*igures 7* and *8*, the pupils are instructed in the first role-play to act "badly" and in the second role-play reminded to invite, refer and use a range of verbs to express opinions. In the first conversation there is a picture sheet that shows different activities relating to the theme of spare time and the pupils are supposed to talk about their preferred way of spending it (on your own, engaging in a hobby, in the company of family etc.). In the second conversation, the topic is music and the pictures illustrate different ways of appreciating music (listening to a live performance, listening to a cd, or listening to a recording on the Internet) and the pupils are supposed to discuss preferred ways of listening to new music.

The intended patterns of variation that this lesson is supposed to include would then be contrasts, where the variation of the features of the critical aspect should contrast the interlocutor's understanding with the content of the sender's utterance. There would also be contrasts that work the other way around so that the sender's utterance is contrasted with the understanding of the interlocutor. Finally a pattern of fusion is created when the second role-play is performed.

Table 11 *Conditions for the intended object of learning: Lesson 2A, Dimension a*

Moments during the lesson	Sender	Interlocutor
To *invite*	I	V
To *refer*	V	I
To use a *variety of phrases*	I	V

The patterns of variation described above are intended to make it possible for the pupils to discern the critical aspects while they are performing the first role-play. Another dimension of variation is created when the pupils listen to the good example, which is a recording of native speakers holding a conversation. The intention is that it should be made possible for the pupils to discern the critical aspects through use of contrasts between their first bad

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[10] See Appendices 5 and 6

role-play and the good example they hear. The intended patterns of variation can be described as follows:

Table 12 *Patterns of variation of the intended object of learning: Lesson 2A, Dimension b*

Critical *aspect* to be discerned	Subject of conversation	Use of a variety of phrases
To *invite*	I	V
To *refer*	I	V
To *use a variety of phrases*	I	V

As can be seen, there are two dimensions of variation planned, one dimension of variation that is made up of one conversation and another dimension of variation that is made up of two conversations. Both of these are dimensions of variation of expanded conversations where communicative strategies are used to a greater or lesser extent or not at all. The first dimension of variation, Dimension a, is within the group of four pupils that are interacting with each other:
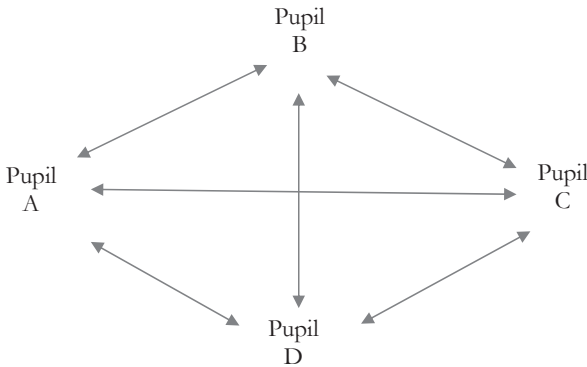

Figure 9. Dimension of variation a

The second dimension of variation is realised when the pupils are listening to the recorded version of a conversation and then compare this conversation to the one they have had. In this dimension of variation the recorded version becomes the expanded example, with effective use of strategic competence, which is contrasted with the less expanded example, with no use of strategic competence, that the pupils carried out earlier during the lesson.

The enacted object of learning: Lesson 2A

The lesson starts out as planned. The pupils do the first role-play and they get to experience the sense of being or not being invited into a conversation. They also get to experience a conversation where no one refers to anyone else's opinions and how a conversation turns out if nobody uses any phrases other than "I think" for expressing her or his opinion. Watching the recorded lesson you can see and hear that the pupils find the situation strange and entertaining. They are laughing and giggling at the (sometimes) exaggerated roles taken on by fellow pupils. After the first role-play the pupils are asked about their experiences and some of them express opinions such as "You need to both listen and talk" and "It got boring [to not be invited into the conversation]". The pattern of variation is *contrast* throughout this part of the lesson, where the pupils' experience from the bad conversation (where they were asked to not invite, not relate and not use a variety of phrases to express opinion) is contrasted with the good example they heard. These comments from the pupils show that a new critical aspect appeared during the lesson that had not been thought about before the lesson. When the pupils contrasted their experiences from the first role-play with the experiences from the second role-play, they discerned the aspect of direction of communication, which became a new critical aspect. The reason they did this is that the direction of communication actually varies depending on which of the three other critical aspects is in focus. When the critical aspect of inviting is in focus the direction of communication is from speaker to interlocutor. When the critical aspect of relating is in focus the direction of communication is from interlocutor to speaker. Finally, when the pupils are trying to use more than one phrase for opinion the direction of communication is both from the speaker to the interlocutor and the interlocutor to the speaker, since the speaker needs to check whether her or his opinion is shared. The pattern of variation here is *fusion*.

The next step in the lesson is that the pupils are asked to prepare to write down (either with pen and paper or using computers) words and phrases for the three critical aspects (inviting, referring and using a variety of phrases for opinion) whilst listening to the previously-described example of a good conversation. After having listened to the conversation and compared their individual suggestions, the pupils are asked to write the phrases on the whiteboard. They are also asked to come up with ideas for phrases that could

be used, but that were not actually used in the conversation that was heard. The whiteboard contains four phrases for invitation (What do you think, Why would you, What's your opinion, Do you agree/disagree), eleven phrases for referring (Interesting point, I agree with you, That's true, That's right, I see what you mean, I couldn't agree more/less, Definitely, The way I see it though, Exactly, Indeed, I don't agree) and fifteen phrases for expressing opinion, apart from "I think" (In my opinion, The way I see it, As far as I'm concerned, In my view, Yes but I think, In my point of view, I would like to add that, I think, Personally, I feel strongly, My main view, The main point, As far as I'm aware, I argue, If you ask me).
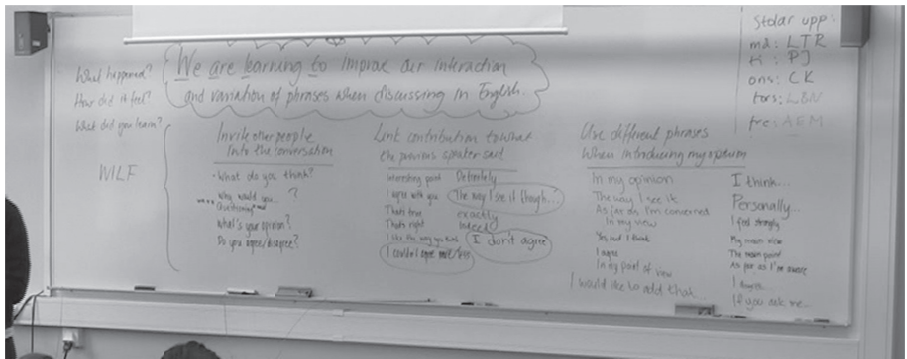

Figure 10. Whiteboard in Lesson 2A

A second role-play was acted out, and this time the pupils were asked, on cards, to refer to what other people had said, to invite others and to use a range of phrases to express their opinion. When the pupils were asked afterwards, they expressed a sense of having had a better conversation. "Everybody was involved" was a comment from one of the pupils.

When the list of phrases appeared on the whiteboard the object of learning during the lesson changed. One of the founding ideas in variation theory, and thereby a learning study informed by variation theory, is that a strong focus should be kept on the object of learning. In this learning study, the object of learning is usage of phrases and it is tacitly suggested that the pupils already know the phrases as such, and just need to learn in what way these phrases should be used. As was explained in the introduction to LS2, the pupils generally know phrases for inviting, referring and expressing opinion. What

they need to learn is how to use them and the object of learning is therefore the usage and contextualisation of these phrases. When the phrases appear on the board, and when the pupils are asked to write as many as possible, the object of learning turns into the learning of (new and more) phrases instead of learning to use these phrases. The changing of the object of learning is also magnified by the fact that there is no second dimension of variation, the dimension of variation referred to as b, in the part of the lesson where the phrases are written on the board, for the reason that no clear contrast is made between the first role play and the good example and the fact that no factor is clearly invariant.

Table 13 *Critical aspects of the enacted object of learning: Lesson 2A.*

	Direction of communication changes	Inviting	Referring	Variety of phrases for opinion
Dimension of variation a, use of relevant strategic competence within group	I	I	I	I
Dimension of variation b, use of relevant strategic competence in group versus recording	V	I	I	I

Results and analysis: Lesson 2A

Lived object of learning: Lesson 2A

The results from the pre- and post-tests are presented on a group level here. It was not possible for the teachers who listened to the recordings afterwards to detect exactly which pupil said what so it has only been possible to say whether phrases were used in each group for inviting, for referring to what others have said and whether phrases other than "I think" were used to express opinion. The three kinds of phrases (for inviting, for referring to other people's opinions and for expressing opinion) are shown in the left column. Since all the tests are assessed on a group level the numbers are low. In Lesson 2A there were 5 groups and each group was tested on three critical aspects. This means that the maximum possible number of "points" was 15

(which would mean that at least one phrase relating to each of the critical aspects was used in each of the groups). The oral part of the national tests in English at level 5 was used as a delayed post-test[11]. This was carried out 6-8 weeks after the research lesson.

Table 14 *Result: Lesson 2A*

N=15	Pre-test	Post-test	Delayed post-test
Inviting	4	4	5
Referring	4	4	5
Opinion variation	2	2	5
Total	10	10	15

Analysis

After analysis by the researcher and discussion within the teacher group it was decided that, since the object of learning changed during Lesson 2A, a stronger focus on the intended object of learning was needed. It is possible that the writing of several phrases on the whiteboard, and the introduction of phrases that were not heard on the recording but that the pupils came up with, contributed to the change of object of learning. Therefore, the teachers agreed that a change that could be made is that the number of phrases written on the board is limited and narrowed down by having the teacher write them down instead of the pupils. The recorded conversation that the pupils listened to was also changed. Rather than listening to a conversation between native speakers, the pupils listened to a recording of year three pupils from the school, where these pupils used the intended phrases. This recording was used as the good example. The change of recordings was done because there was a feeling that the conversation that the pupils in Lesson 2A listened to was almost too perfect and archetypical. If fellow pupils, albeit more proficient English users, modelled the target language it would be more realistic and easier for the year 1 pupils to identify with. These modifications mean that the change in the intended learning for Lesson 2B is that a heavier focus is put on the object of learning since the lists of phrases on the board are narrowed down and since the good example is more realistic for the pupils. The narrowing down of the number of listed phrases means (hopefully) that the

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[11] See Appendix 7.

number of phrases used becomes variant again in the contrast between the recorded conversation and the pupils' first bad conversation (dimension of variation *b*).

A recording of fellow pupils is more realistic in the classroom situation than a recording of native speakers. The object of learning is to see the relation between myself as a speaker, the interlocutor and the context, and when doing so use appropriate phrases, not to learn a list of (more or less new) set phrases.

Lesson 2B - procedure and results

The pupils in Lesson 2B are from a Social-Science class. Again they are from year one, which means that the majority of the pupils are 16-17 years old. There are 15 girls and 1 boy in this class, 16 pupils altogether. This lesson is taught by a qualified teacher with 16 years of teaching experience. She also teaches French.

Table 15 *Conditions for the intended object of learning: Lesson 2B, Dimension of variation* a

Moments during the lesson	Sender	Interlocutor
To *invite*	I	V
To *refer*	V	I
To *use a variety of phrases*	I	V
Direction of communication	V	V

Since a new critical aspect was detected during the first lesson the table is now extended, with one more line. Just as in the descriptions of the lessons in LS1, bold text indicates changes from the previous lesson. There will again, just as in Lesson 2A, be two dimensions of variation during the lesson and the second dimension of variation (*b*) will be similar to dimension of variation *b* in Lesson 2A.

Table 16 *Patterns of variation of the intended object of learning: Lesson 2B, Dimension of variation* b

Critical *aspect* to be discerned	Subject of conversation	Use of a variety of phrases
To *invite*	I	V
To *refer*	I	V
To *use a variety of phrases*	I	V
Direction of communication	V	V

Enacted object of learning: Lesson 2B

The lesson starts out as the first one did. The pupils first do a pre-test and after that they are introduced by the teacher to the three critical aspects of the object of learning: to invite others, to refer what others have said and to use a range of phrases for expressing opinion. Once this is done the first role-play is carried out in the same way as it was in the first lesson. The pupils receive cards with instructions that they are supposed to follow and which make for a not expanded conversation.

Just as in Lesson 1, the pupils are asked to take notes while listening to the expanded example, only this time it is a group of fellow, older, pupils that are speaking. After listening to the conversation, the pupils suggest phrases, which the teacher then writes down on the board. In this lesson, only three suggested phrases for each critical aspect are written on the whiteboard.

When the teacher discusses the pupils' reflections on the recorded conversation, this time a stronger connection is made between the first role-play and the good example and the contrast becomes more discernible.

> Excerpt 12:
>
> Teacher: "If you compare this one to the one you just did, were there any major differences?"

The pupils discuss in the same groups of four that were used for the conversation groups and after a while the teacher presents a summary to the entire class, after speaking to each group and listening in on their discussions.

> Excerpt 13:
>
> Teacher: "Most of you agree to the fact that it turns into a discussion, there is interacting and everybody is invited to speak".

This reference to the previous role-play makes the patterns of variation in the dimension of variation *b* discernible for the pupils in a way that they were not in Lesson 2A. Since the patterns of variation in dimension of variation b are now discernible, the table looks like this:

Table 17 *Critical aspects of the enacted object of learning: Lesson 2B*

	Direction of communication changes	**Inviting**	**Referring**	**Variety of phrases for opinion**
Dimension of variation a, use of relevant strategic competence within group	I	I	I	I
Dimension of variation b, use of relevant strategic competence in group versus recording	V	**V**	**V**	**V**

The rest of the lesson is similar to Lesson 2A. The pupils do their second role-play, and are given cards that tell them to invite others, refer to what others have said and to use a range of phrases to express opinion.

Results and analysis: Lesson 2B

Lived object of learning

As with the results from Lesson 2A, the results can only be presented on a group level. In Lesson 2B there were 4 groups of pupils. This means that the maximum possible number of points was 12. From the table below it can be seen that there were altogether 4 instances of phrase usage relating to the critical aspects in the pre-test. In the post-test there were 9 instances of such phrase usage.

Table 18 *Result: Lesson 2B*

N=12	Pre-test	Post-test	Delayed post-test
Inviting	2	4	3
Referring	1	2	4
Opinion variation	1	3	4
Total	4	9	11

Analysis

In the discussion after Lesson 2B, it was not really agreed what changes were actually made from Lesson 2A to Lesson 2B. Some of the teachers argued that many things were changed, both the recording and the limiting of phrases on the board and therefore it was a bit unclear what should be the basis for Lesson 2C. The researcher thought that the change that should be made was that an even clearer contrast should be made between the treatment of the critical aspects in the first role-play and the expanded example. The teacher in Lesson 2C should try to compare the role play and the expanded example not just in general, but with regard to the three critical aspects, one at a time. "What was the inviting like in your role play? What was it like in the recorded example? What was the referring like in your role-play? What was it like in the recorded example?" etc.

After a discussion, two versions of Lesson C were suggested, one where the limiting of the phrases was kept (Lesson 2C.1) and another (2C.2) where the treatment of the phrases would be as it was in Lesson 2A.

Lesson 2C.1 - procedure and results

The pupils in Lesson 2C.1 are from a Social-Science class. There are 13 girls and 3 boys in the class, 16 pupils altogether. The teacher in the lesson is a qualified teacher with 13 years of experience. She also teaches German.

Table 19 *Conditions for the intended object of learning: Lesson 2C.1, Dimension of variation* a

Moments during the lesson	Sender	Interlocutor
To *invite*	I	V
To *refer*	V	I
To *use a variety of phrases*	I	V
Direction of communication	V	V

There will again, just as in Lesson 2A and 2B, be two dimensions of variation during the lesson and the second dimension of variation (*b*) will be similar to dimension of variation *b* in Lesson 2A and 2B (see Table 16).

Enacted object of learning: Lesson 2C.1

The lesson starts out rather similarly to the other ones. The pupils are given a conversation task that is supposed to function as a pre-test and after that the focus of today's lesson is introduced. Unlike the previous lessons, however, the three different parts of having a conversation are presented as "Phrases for turn taking" (instead of inviting others), "Phrases for interaction" (instead of linking to what the previous speaker said) and "How do you express your opinion" (instead of using different phrases when introducing your opinion). The last one is rather similar, but the first two can be interpreted by the pupils to mean something different from the aspects described in Lessons 2A and 2B.

Again the pupils are introduced to a role-play where they are supposed to act out an unexpanded conversation without use of strategic competences (they are asked on role cards not to invite others, not to refer to what other people have said and not to use more than one phrase to express their opinion). The pupils experience this as being slightly awkward and they seem to get a feeling of having had a bad conversation. According to the plan for the intended object of learning, this unexpanded conversation should be followed up by a good example. This time it is decided that the expanded conversation should be the same as in Lesson 2A, the discussion involving native speakers. Afterwards the pupils are asked to give examples of phrases that could be used.

The pupils do not have many ideas about phrases that can be used, probably because the teacher, without seeming to realise it, has named the parts of the conversation in a way that was not done in Lessons 2A and 2B. The pupils seem to be surprised that they are now not supposed to give examples of phrases that they have prepared, but other kind of phrases. The teacher has to add several phrases herself.

The next part of the lesson is the one where the pupils are supposed to discern the critical aspect by means of a contrast between the unexpanded conversation and the expanded conversation. This contrast does not happen though, but instead the teacher goes directly to the next role-play and offers the pupils a contrast after that. In the second role-play the pupils are again

offered cards with instructions on them, only this time with positive instructions asking them to invite others and to refer to what others have said and use as many different phrases to express their opinions as possible. The effect of waiting with the contrast is that the pupils actually contrast their own performances (from the first role-play to the second role-play) and not the first role-play one with the expaned conversation. Following are some examples of what pupils said when asked about the experienced differences.

"It was easier now and we had a better flow"

"It was easier now because we had a better topic this time"

"We used more English in our discussion"

"We had more freedom"

As can be seen the pupils are not really sure about what to contrast and what is actually the object of learning during the lesson. This makes lesson 2C.1 similar to Lesson 2A in the sense that the critical aspects of the object of learning are not discernible in dimension of variation b for the pupils. Dimension of variation b is not discernible at all during this lesson and that line is therefore taken away in Table 20.

Table 20 *Critical aspects of the enacted object of learning: Lesson 2C.1*

	Direction of communication changes	Inviting	Referring	Variety of phrases for opinion
Dimension of variation a, use of strategic competence within group	I	I	I	I

Results and analysis: Lesson 2C.1

Lived object of learning

The result is again presented on a group level. There were 4 groups, which makes the total possible number of points 12. Here there were altogether 3 instances of phrase usage in the pre-test. In the post-test there were 9 instances of phrase usage.

Table 21 *Result: Lesson 2C.1*

N=12	Pre-test	Post-test	Delayed post-test
Inviting	0	3	4
Referring	1	3	4
Opinion variation	2	3	4
Total	3	9	12

As the two lessons were conducted in parallel, there was no analysis in between them.

Lesson 2C.2 - procedure and results

The pupils in Lesson 2C.2 are in an Aesthetic Programme class. There are 14 girls and 8 boys in Lesson 2C.2. The teacher in the lesson is a qualified teacher with 5 years of experience. She also teaches German.

Table 22 *Conditions for the intended object of learning: Lesson 2C.2, Dimension of variation* a

Moments during the lesson	Sender	Interlocutor
To *invite*	I	V
To *refer*	V	I
To *use a variety of phrases*	I	V
Direction of communication	V	V

There were again, just as in Lesson 2A and 2B, two dimensions of variation during the lesson and the second dimension of variation (*b*) is similar to dimension of variation *b* in Lesson 2A and 2B (see Table 16).

Enacted object of learning: Lesson 2C.2

The lesson starts as the others started. The pupils do their pre-tests and after that they discuss the results from the screening. The teacher explains the three focused areas of today's lesson and the pupils are then given the green cards for the role-play. The pupils seem to find it frustrating, but also amusing, not to allow others into conversations, not to vary phrases for giving opinions and to keep changing topic.

After the first role-play the experiences are summed up as a frustrating and not good conversation. In this lesson (as opposed to Lesson 2C.1), the unexpanded example is provided by a recording of year three pupils discussing approximately the same things as the pupils in the classroom were

discussing during their pre-test. Just as in the previous lessons, the pupils are asked to take notes of phrases in the three focused areas.

Directly after the pupils have listened to the expanded example, the teacher asks the pupils to discuss what was good about this conversation rather than asking them about the phrases that were used. As a result the pupils start contrasting the expanded example with the unexpanded example. "It was good that they invited other people into the conversation. Turn-taking". Examples of phrases are listed after the initial discussion. The moment of contrast is very short, however, as the listing of phrases is very much in focus. The pupils are asked to add to the list on the board and they are asked to read the phrases aloud once the list is finished.

The second role-play, where the pupils are given cards that urge them to vary phrases for giving opinions, inviting others and referring to what others have said, is followed by a question by the teacher. She does not contrast this role-play with the expanded example nor with the unexpanded example. "So, I will ask from each group now and see what you've found, how you found this second one." It seems that the pupils tend to contrast this role-play with the first role-play since they say "It was more fluent" and "It felt more like a discussion this time".

Table 23 *Critical aspects of the enacted object of learning: Lesson 2B*

	Direction of communication changes	Inviting	Referring	Variety of phrases for opinion
Dimension of variation a, use of relevant strategic competence within group	I	I	I	I
Dimension of variation b, use of relevant strategic competence in group versus recording	V	I	I	I

As was described previously, the critical aspects of inviting, relating and using a variety of phrases for giving opinions is not opened up in a second dimension of variation. The quotes from the pupils' comparisons of the second role-play do show though that the critical aspect of realising that the direction of communication changes is discernible.

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Results and analysis: Lesson 2C.2

Lived object of learning

The result is again presented on a group level. There were 6 groups, which made the maximum possible number of points 18, with a total of 8 instances of phrase usage in the pre-test. In the post-test there were 15 instances of phrase usage.

Table 24 *Result: Lesson 2C.2*

N=18	Pre-test	Post-test	Delayed post-test
Inviting	2	6	5
Referring	4	5	6
Opinion variation	2	4	5
Total	8	15	16

Analysis

The two lessons 2C.1 and 2C.2 were planned in parallel and there was therefore no need for an analysis between them (and actually an analysis was not possible since there was not enough time between them). There are, however, interesting parts of both lessons to comment on. In Lesson 2C.1 the second planned dimension of variation (*b*) is not opened up for the pupils since the teacher seems to forget to bring that part of the lesson up and the pupils contrast their first role-play with their second instead. Even so, the pupils in Lesson 2C.1 perform better at the post-test than at the pre-test.

In Lesson 2.C.2 dimension of variation *b* is opened up since the teacher offers the pupils a chance to contrast their role-play with the good example. The contrast does not relate to the phrases that are used, however, but rather to the performance as a whole. This takes away the strict focus on the object of learning, just as in Lesson 2A.

Results of entire Learning Study 2

The results of the post-tests are rather similar in terms of how many groups (compared to possible amount of groups) invited, referred and varied phrases for opinion. The most striking improvement is made by the pupils in Lesson 2B. The National Tests in English as a foreign language were performed 6-8 weeks after the lessons by all the pupils. The oral part of this test, which is a discussion in groups, was used as a delayed post-test and here all groups

invited, referred and varied phrases for opinion with the exception of one group from Lesson 2B (which did not have any instance of invitation) and two groups from Lesson 2C.2 (one that did not invite and one that did not vary phrases for opinion). Taken as a whole, this shows that the learning from the research lessons seems to last. In Table 25 *Total result: Learning Study 2*, all results from the tests for all four lessons have been put together. As has been described previously, the assessment is done at a group level. In this table all three aspects that were tested for have been put together, which means that a lesson where there were five groups can have a maximum of 15 points. Since there were 5 groups in Lesson 2A, 4 groups in Lessons 2B and 2C.1 and finally 6 groups in Lesson 2C.2, the total number is 57 ((5+4+4+6)*3=57). Please note that the numbers of groups are not the same in each lesson, which makes it unfair to compare the results from one lesson with those from another using only figures. The improvements from pre- to post- and delayed post-tests can be compared however.

Table 25 *Total result: Learning Study 2*

N=57	Pre-test	Post-test	Delayed post-test
Lesson 2A (5 groups)	10	10	15
Lesson 2B (4 groups)	4	9	11
Lesson 2C.1 (4 groups)	3	9	12
Lesson 2C.2 (6 groups)	8	15	16
Total	**25**	**43**	**54**

Chapter 6. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results and the analysis from the learning studies will be discussed and related to the purpose of the thesis and its research questions. Previous research will also be related to the research questions, which will be presented and discussed one at a time. The analysis is inspired by the method described by Stake (2006), where a multiple case study model is used. Stake uses the term "theme" in a way that is similar to the way the term "purpose" of the research is used in this thesis, i.e. a problem or issue that needs to be described. The descriptions in Stake (2006) come from case studies and by using several case studies it can be shown how this theme can be understood and realised differently in different cases and contexts. In a similar way, the four research questions will be discussed and related to the two different learning studies.

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. One purpose is to describe how the pupils adapt their oral language to interlocutor and situation and a second is to study what is crucial for them to discern to increase their strategic competence in oral interaction. It has been shown in the descriptions of the lessons that make up the learning studies that the pupils are aware of the fact that you should adapt your oral language in interaction according to the person whom you are addressing. This can be seen in the first learning study, where the pupils agree to the teachers' statements that they adapt in this way in Swedish. They do not interact with grown-ups in the same way as they interact with peers they know. They change vocabulary. This adaptation is not made in English, until they are taught and have discerned the critical aspects of how to do it. This means that they have not yet discerned those elements of an expanded conversation. You might argue then that this is only done during the lesson and is forgotten by the next lesson. The results on the delayed post-tests show that the adaptation is actually a skill that is retained over time by several of the pupils.

Two interesting answers to the question about what needs to be discerned to increase pupils' strategic competence when they are interacting orally in English as a foreign language can be found in the learning studies. In LS1 it seems as though the pupils need to understand the characteristics of the

interlocutor (approximate age, relation to the speaker etc.) to be able to use strategic competences to adapt language to suit situation and context. This may seem obvious, but it is an important aspect to consider when designing a lesson, especially one that involves role-playing. A role-play is rather similar to theatre and in acting, the important qualities to focus on are the ones that your own character has, not the ones your interlocutors have. The pupils in LS1 tended to focus on their own character and not on the character they were addressing (the interlocutor).

The second interesting answer to the question of what is crucial for the pupils to discern comes from LS2. It turned out that a critical aspect for the pupils to discern in order to use strategic competences when interacting orally in English as a foreign language was to be aware of the direction of the communication during a discussion. If the main direction of the communication is supposed to be from me as a speaker towards the interlocutor, I need to use one kind of strategic competence. If the main direction is supposed to be from the interlocutors towards me, I need to use another kind of strategic competence. In the first case, speaker-to-interlocutor, it appeared to be important to focus on the aspect of inviting people to join the conversation. The pupils in LS2 experienced a qualitatively better interaction when more participants were invited. In the reverse situation, interlocutor-to-speaker, it was crucial for the pupils in LS2 to refer to other participants' opinions and statements in order to have a better interaction. These findings may not be seen as groundbreaking, but they contribute to the idea that a teacher cannot simply let pupils interact and let them learn by themselves. This idea will be further developed in the following paragraph.

In the theoretical framework (Chapter 3), a sociocultural perspective on learning is mentioned since it is similar to the ontological foundation of non-dualism for phenomenography and thereby variation theory. The similarities lie in the shared idea that the world is experienced as a joint perception of the people inhabiting it, rather than there being an ideal world and a separate real world, which would only be a pale image of the ideal. Ellis (2012) has a very interesting take on the sociocultural perspective on language learning (from a variation theory point of view). This is particularly interesting from the perspective of learning strategic competence. He argues that learning does not take place in the interaction, but rather from it (Ellis, 2012, p.238). A very good example of this can be found in Lesson 1B, where the teacher

unfortunately forgets some parts of the lesson plan and the pupils are not aware of the fact that they need to adjust their language according to the interlocutor they are addressing. Instead they try to sound as much as possible like the character they are playing. The result is that they have a really good time; they enjoy themselves. But the post-tests and the delayed post-tests show that they do not learn as much as the pupils in the following lesson (1C) where this little mistake is corrected. The pupils do not learn as much in the interaction in 1B as they learn from the interaction in 1C. The difference between these two episodes from a variation theory perspective would be that the pupils in Lesson 1B were not given the opportunity to discern the critical aspect of focusing on the characteristics of the interlocutor rather than the characteristics of the speaker when adjusting language to context.

The assessment of the pupils in the pre-, post- and delayed post-tests in LS2 was done at a group level since it was not possible to detect the individual pupils on the recordings. This meant that a further focus was placed on the object of learning and the dimensions of variation that appeared. In previous learning studies in English as a foreign language (Lo & Ko, 2002; Mok et al, 2002; Holmqvist & Lindgren, 2009; Holmqvist & Mattisson, 2009; Lo, 2012), the assessment of the pupils and therefore the analysis of their learning was done at an individual level, just as in LS1. It can be seen from this study that even if the analysis of pupils' learning is made at a group level, differences from one lesson to another can still be detected. This would actually mean that the learning study model, as it can be used within the subject of English as a foreign language, has been developed. In the previous learning studies in English as a foreign language a common result was that the pupils appeared to need to be given the opportunity to experience meaning and form simultaneously in order to discern the critical aspects of the objects of learning. There was no such meaning and form in the learning studies that have been used for this thesis, but it can be seen that the pupils not only needed to discern the correct phrase or word to use, but they also needed to consider the person to whom they were speaking (LS1) or in what direction the communication was aimed (LS2). Referring back to the phenomenographic analysis (Marton & Booth, 1997) of separating referential and structural aspects of a phenomenon, the correct phrase or word in an utterance would correspond to the structural aspect of the phenomenon, i.e. an expanded conversation. Considering the characteristics of the interlocutor would be the referential aspect of the same phenomenon. This analysis may

also be done in relation to Bachman's (1990) model of assessing strategic competence, which shows that the pupils need to both know how to use their language (the grammatical part of the strategic competence) and at the same time know who they are addressing.

The implications for the teaching of oral interaction are important. It may seem obvious, but there is a certain danger that teaching focuses too much on correctness and forgets to look at what it means to be correct.

In what ways are relationships between the content of the communication, the context and the participants discerned by the pupils?

It can be seen in Lesson 1C (the third lesson in the first learning study presented) that the pupils try to adapt their requests to the interlocutor they are speaking to. The pupils in the previous lessons (1A and 1B) had been adapting language too, but this adaptation had been more about trying to sound like the character they were supposed to play. In Lesson 1C the analysis shows that the pupils adapt according to interlocutor. Using the example of asking for batteries in a shop, this means that the pupils are discerning the relationship between the need for something (content) and the place where this conversation takes place. This is a public place where one meets people one does not know (context) and one therefore needs to be aware of different formality levels that should be adopted when addressing a known peer versus a, probably, older stranger (participant).

It can also be seen in the lessons in LS2 that the pupils adapt language to a greater extent after the lesson than before the lesson in order to invite other people to join in the discussion and to refer to what other people have said. This implies that the pupils manage to discern the relation between a known subject (the content) that they are discussing, in this case preferred holidays, and the fact that they need to relate their planned utterances to what others have said since it is a real life discussion and not a planned speech (context). They finally need to consider not only what the other people have said, but also the fact that others need to be invited in (participants). The examples from LS2 relate to learning that has been made possible for the pupils with regard to the dimension of variation involving one pupil group only (referred to in the text as dimension of variation *a*).

In Kasper and Rose (2002), it is argued that explicit teaching is more effective than implicit teaching when it comes to pupils' learning of strategic competence. This is not to say that it is impossible to learn strategic competence unintentionally (e.g. during oral interaction exercises focusing on other elements such as vocabulary), but rather that it is more effective to have an explicit kind of teaching focusing on what you want your pupils to learn. To use terms from variation theory, it means having a strict focus on the object of learning (Marton & Booth, 1997; Lo, 2012). Since the teaching discussed in the previous paragraph is definitely explicit and the object of learning is in strict focus, this helps to prove the point being made by Kasper and Rose (2002), as well as the theories from variation theory about the object of learning (Marton & Booth, 1997; Lo, 2012). This is also in line with the discussion from Pang & Marton (2013), where it is argued that what you are supposed to learn must be varied against an invariant background. A further comparison can be made with Nakatani (2005), where it was shown that pupils who actually had more conversation time used fewer communication strategies than the pupils who were taught strategies through the use of meta-cognitive activities.

Bachman (1990) uses a model where strategic competence is made up of both grammatical and sociolinguistic competence. The results from both LS1 and LS2 are in line with this. It can be seen that pupils, like the articulate and grammatically rather competent pupil in Lesson B in LS1 (Excerpt 9) did not manage to consider the characteristics of the interlocutor being addressed. Strategic competence is not something that follows from grammatical competence, but rather a separate competence that pupils need explicit teaching to discern.

As has been shown in the previous paragraph, the results from this study can be said to be in line with the findings in earlier research. One marked difference from the results in Kasper and Rose (2002) is that the reported stages that the learners went through cannot be detected. The lack of detectable proof of stages may be due to the fact that the results from this study, and especially this research question, aim at describing the relationship between the content, the context and the participants. This relation is described as it is discerned by the pupils, and therefore the various stages a learner goes through would not be that interesting or important. This is also a difference from earlier research in this area. While there has previously been a

focus on individual learning, in this thesis there is also a focus on describing the relation between the content, the context and the participants.

What patterns of variation in the teachers' treatment of the content increase the pupils' use of strategic competence to a higher degree?

In LS1 as well as LS2 the patterns of variation (Lo, 2012) used during the lessons are mainly contrasts. In the first learning study, either the content was kept invariant while the interlocutor varied or the content varied while the interlocutor was kept invariant to separate the use of strategic competence from interacting in general. This is an example of a contrast, where the pupils are supposed to discern the critical aspect of adapting language. This was the pattern of variation that was intended for Lessons 1A and 1B, but due to unclear instructions from the teachers and misunderstandings on the part of the pupils, these patterns did not really become the enacted patterns of variation. It can be argued that contrasts seem to be the most effective pattern of variation in LS1. In line with the findings in Pang and Marton (2013), it can be seen that the pupils learn more effectively when the enacted object of learning is varied against an invariant background.

In LS2 the contrast in the second dimension of variation (dimension of variation *b*) is mainly between the pupils' experience of having their own conversation and the experience of listening to other people having a conversation where all the elements of a good conversation are taken into consideration. The pupils' conversation was performed with role cards instructing the pupils to not invite others, not refer to previous speakers' opinions and not use a variety of phrases to express opinions. In dimension of variation *a* in LS2 the contrasts were used to separate the sender from the message and also the receiver from the message in order to give the pupils the opportunity to learn that a conversation needs both a sender and a receiver and that a conversation is not possible without one or the other.

The pupils in LS2 were given the opportunity to discern the critical aspects of a good conversation through these contrasts. In the contrasts the use of strategic competence was separated from the general discussion. An interesting comparison between the patterns of variation used in the lessons in LS1 and LS2, being mainly contrasts in both cases, is that the contrasts in the lessons in LS1 are within the small pupil group, consisting of three pupils

whereas the contrasts used in the lessons in LS2 are contrasts within the small pupil group (*a*), but also contrasts comparing the performance of the smaller pupil group with another conversation. The pupils in the lessons in LS1 are comparing and contrasting one of their own utterances with another utterance in the same group but the pupils in the lessons in LS2 are also contrasting their conversation with other people's conversations.

It has been argued by Pang and Marton (2013) that a teaching sequence of fusion, followed by contrast, generalisation and then back to fusion, is favourable in creating opportunities for pupils to discern critical aspects of an object of learning. In the learning studies that provided the empirical material for this thesis, the intention was not to keep to that teaching sequence. The teachers mainly used contrasts to make the critical aspects of the object of learning discernible for the pupils. At the end of the lessons in both studies a sequence of fusion was used when both content and interlocutor varied at the same time. The main difference between the two learning studies was actually the way in which pupils' experiences of strategic competence were contrasted during the lesson. However, the lessons were successful, which shows that this way of using contrasts can also be a useful way of creating dimensions of variation in order to make critical aspects discernible. This means that the learning studies in this thesis may be described as developing the method. As was mentioned previously, the assessment of the pupils' learning was done at an individual level in LS1 and at a group level in LS2.

In what ways do minor adjustments of the teachers' treatment of aspects of the content affect the pupils' opportunities to discern the object of learning?

It can be seen in Lesson 1B in LS1 that what the teacher says (and therefore how the aspects of the content are treated) affects the pupils' chances of discerning the object of learning. When the teacher says that you (as a pupil) should adapt your language and also says that it is important to think about what role you are playing (in the role play during the lesson), the object of learning becomes acting and entering roles instead of adapting language to suit interlocutor. This is an example of a small (unintentional) adjustment that affects the possibility of discerning a critical aspect. An example of a minor

adjustment that had a positive effect from the same learning study, but from Lesson 1C, is when the teacher told the pupils to think about the roles in the role-play, but to consider the role of the person they were speaking to rather than the role they were playing. In this way the interlocutor and sender are separated from the expressions. This is a very small adjustment from Lesson 1B, but the outcome in terms of results from the post-test was positive. More pupils from Lesson 1C than from 1B managed to adapt their language to suit interlocutor.

In Lesson 2A in LS2 the pupils were asked to write phrases from the second conversation (the example of an expanded conversation) on the whiteboard. These were supposed to be phrases that were used to invite others, relate to their opinions and to express opinions. When the phrases from the recording had all (more or less) been written, the pupils were asked to keep adding suggestions of their own on the whiteboard. This caused the object of learning to change from using phrases to learning new phrases and it was suggested at the research group discussion afterwards that only phrases from the recording, rather than as many phrases as possible, should be written. The continuous writing of phrases on the whiteboard also made it impossible for dimension of variation b (expanded use of strategic competence between group and recording) to be discerned by the pupils. The pupils' focus was on coming up with more phrases, not on comparing the conversations. It is therefore interesting to see the results, i.e. that the pupils in Lesson 2B had 4 instances of phrase usage in the pre-test and 9 in the post-test. The pupils in Lesson 2A had 10 instances at the pre-test and again 10 at the post-test. This is another example of how a small adjustment in the treatment of the content affects the possibility of the pupils discerning the object of learning. The pupils in Lesson 2B seem to show a greater increase in learning than the pupils in Lesson 2A.

In terms of discerning both the referential and the structural aspects (Marton & Booth, 1997) and also both the grammatical and the sociolinguistic part of strategic competence (Bachman, 1990), Lessons 2A and 2B show the effects of treatment of the critical aspects. Since the referential aspect of form was focused on in Lesson 2A at the expense of the structural aspect of use, the pupils did not get the opportunity to discern the critical aspects in the way that was intended. An analysis in line with Bachman (1990) is that grammatical competence was focused on at the expense of sociolinguistic competence.

What critical aspects must be discerned by the pupils in order for them to adjust their communication of the content to context and person?

In the analysis of the lessons in LS1, it was apparent that one critical aspect that had to be discerned by the pupils in order to adjust their communication of the content to context and person, one thing that differed from Lessons 1A and 1B to Lesson 1C, was a simultaneous focus on content, context and person. In Lesson 1A there was a focus on content and context, but not so much on person. The pupils were focusing on what to say (content) and how this should be adapted (context), but not so much on who the different people in the conversation were (the differences between a peer and an older stranger and how each should be addressed). This was much clearer for the pupils in the last lesson of the first learning study, Lesson 1C. In Lesson 1B there was a great focus on content and person, but not on context. The pupils were eager to adjust their communication, but did not know in what way. The results from the lessons in LS1 suggest this, as the pupils in Lesson 1C all adapt their language in the post-test, and also manage to retain this ability in the delayed post-test.

The space of variation in the lessons in dimension of variation b in LS2 was greater, as was discussed in the previous chapter. There was a difference from LS1 to LS2 and an experience that was used when planning for the lessons in the second learning study. The most striking result in LS2 is the result from Lesson 2A. There appears to be no difference in results in the post-test compared to the pre-test. In the other lessons in LS2 there were differences and better results at the post-test as might have been expected. This indicates that there must be something that was done in Lesson 2A and not in the other lessons. It has been described how the object of learning was changed and how it was not made possible for the pupils to discern the second dimension of variation (expanded use of strategic competence between group and recording). This may be a reason for the anomalous result. One may either see it as meaning that knowing many different phrases is not a critical aspect when it comes to discerning this object of learning (using varied language whilst interacting in a discussion). One may alternatively see it as meaning that knowing phrases is one specific ability in the strategic

competence of adapting language and using these phrases is another ability. Since what was analysed in the post-test was whether the pupils used the phrases and not how many phrases they knew (but decided that they did not want to use), the results showed no indications of learning.

A new critical aspect that the teacher group and the researcher had not predicted appeared during Lesson 2A. It became apparent that it was decisive for the pupils to discern the direction of the communication that was in focus for each of the other critical aspects (referring, inviting and being able to use many phrases for giving opinions). The discerning of this new critical aspect actually helped in creating a conversation where the pupils were able to use and develop their strategic competence in oral interaction. The fact that discerning the direction of communication was a new critical aspect is even more evident in Lesson 2C.1, where none of the other critical aspects were actually discernible, while this one was. This might explain why the pupils still managed to get slightly better results in the post-test and delayed post-test than they had in their pre-tests.

Pedagogical implications

To some extent, the entire thesis has pedagogical implications. Different ways of teaching strategic competence have been described in detail and the results have been analysed. The single most important pedagogical implication of the results of this thesis is that oral interaction can be taught. Just as Kasper and Rose (2002) showed, it is rather evident from the results that explicit teaching of strategic competence is effective, leading to learning that lasts.

A second pedagogical implication is that what a teacher does during a lesson matters. Again it may sound obvious, but consider what happened in the lessons where the strict focus on the object of learning was not held. Either the pupils learnt something else or they did not learn at all. As a teacher, it is important to be aware of what you are teaching your pupils and in what way or ways you are trying to make the pupils understand this.

Methodological considerations

In this section the results will be discussed in relation to the method used for generating empirical material, the learning study model. A comparison with other methods used for studying strategic competence will be made.

In Kasper (2001) several studies on pragmatic competence are described. The ones that are based on a psycholinguistic theory often used a method where the learners are exposed to expressions and from this exposure they are supposed to learn that it is more appropriate to use a certain expression or statement than another. It is more or less tacitly implied that what is observed, or noticed (see e.g. Schmidt, 1990; Wenden, 1998) by the learners is also used by them. If a learner is using a more suitable expression than s/he did previously, it is due to the fact that the learner has been exposed to the expression. If the lessons used for the empirical material for this thesis and the analysis of the learning in these lessons had been carried out using this method, the relation between the teaching and the learning could not have been analysed in the way it has been here. The learning in a specific lesson could have been analysed through the use of pre-, post- and delayed post-tests, but the analysis could not have been done in the same depth as it has been done here, where the lessons have been planned and analysed with variation theory. Through the use of variation theory, it has also been possible not only to analyse the relation between what is taught and what is learnt, but also to analyse the relationship between the different learners when it comes to the direction of the communication. Since psycholinguistic theories mainly regard learning as an internal process within one learner, it would not have been possible to analyse the communication from one learner to another and possibly back using only psycholinguistic theories.

In this thesis, the assumptions in variation theory have been used to study learning developed by pupils in a classroom context. The analysis highlights differences in learning that occur in spite of the fact that the theoretical base has been the same in all lessons. The results describe in what ways variation of the aspects of the content affect the learning.

It could be argued that by using a method that does not analyse learning in as much depth as variation theory does, more informants could have been involved in the study. The number of informants is comparatively low in this thesis and the claim for generalizability could possibly be stronger with a greater number of participants. However, since the research questions to a certain extent were qualitative i.e. finding a relation between the taught object of learning and the learnt object of learning, it was considered more suitable to use a smaller number of pupils and to be able to analyse their learning more deeply instead.

Further research

In the introduction (Chapter 1), it was explained that many pupils in Swedish schools tend to have a view on what constitutes good interaction, a view that does not resonate completely with research on communicative language ability and with the Swedish curricula. In this thesis it has been described how teaching of these skills can be designed in secondary school and college. The informants in this study were in school year 8 and in the first year at college. This means that they were either 14-15 years old or 16-17 years old. It would be interesting, and useful, to analyse learning and usage of strategic competences in lower age groups as well. Possible age groups would be pupils in school years 5-6, which would mean that the pupils would be 11-13 years old. The learning studies that were described in previous research (Chapter 3) showed that many of the learning studies conducted in Sweden have had a specific part of grammar as an object of learning, often connected to writing. Most of the studies on pragmatic competence described by Kasper (2001) involved pupils in secondary school. The learning of English as a foreign language starts early, however. The formal learning of English in Sweden starts somewhere between school year 1 and 3, but the informal learning starts even earlier. It would be interesting to study the relation between teaching and learning of oral strategic competence in the early years, especially since it has been shown that explicit teaching is beneficial for this learning (Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002).

Chapter 7. SAMMANFATTNING (Summary in Swedish)

I denna licentiatuppsats studeras svenska elevers förmåga att använda sig av strategisk kompetens när de samtalar på engelska som främmandespråk. Det är två klassrumsstudier som utgör empiri för studien vars syfte är att studera (1) hur elever anpassar muntligt språk till mottagare och situation och (2) vad som är avgörande för eleverna att urskilja för att deras strategiska kompetens i muntlig kommunikation skall förbättras.

Empirin till denna uppsats utgörs av två klassrumsstudier som genomförts i form av learning studies. Learning study är en fusion av den japanska modellen lesson study och design experiment. Det är en iterativ modell där ett lärandeobjekt bestäms gemensamt av forskare och lärare i en forskargrupp. Genom screening och intervjuer av elever och diskussioner i forskargruppen antas tentativa kritiska aspekter för lärandeobjektet. Kritiska aspekter är de delar av lärandeobjektet som eleverna måste urskilja för att förstå det, men som de ännu inte har urskiljt. En lektion planeras och genomförs. Genom bild- och ljudupptagning samt för- och eftertester analyseras lektionen och en ny, reviderad, lektion planeras och genomförs i en ny elevgrupp. Sammanlagt har det genomförts tre lektioner i den första learning studyn och fyra i den andra. Genomgående i planering, genomförande och analys har en teori om lärande, variationsteori, använts för att analysera lärandet och undervisningen under lektionerna. För att avgränsa lärandeobjektet har en sociokulturell teori om lärande använts tillsammans med den teori som ligger bakom modellen för kommunikativt språklärande (Communicative Language Teaching).

I den första studien deltog elever från årskurs 8 och lärandeobjektet var att lära sig att använda fraser för att anpassa sitt språk efter mottagare och situation. Lektionerna designades som rollspel där eleverna omväxlande spelade 14-åringar och vuxna. Resultatet visade att det var avgörande för eleverna att förstå vem de samtalade med. I linje med dels den kommunikativa språkteori som används och även den fenomenografiska analysen av ett fenomen behöver eleverna både veta hur man talar (grammatisk kompetens eller strukturell aspekt av fenomenet) och vem de tilltalar (sociolingvistisk

kompetens eller referentiell aspekt). För att urskilja lärandeobjektet var eleverna tvungna att gå in i mottagarens roll. I den andra studien deltog elever i år 1 från två olika nationella gymnasieprogram (naturvetenskapliga respektive samhällsvetenskapliga programmet). Lärandeobjektet i den andra studien var att lära sig att använda fraser för att skapa och upprätthålla ett samtal med jämnåriga. Lektionerna designades delvis som rollspel där eleverna genom små kort uppmanades att inte bjuda in andra i samtalet, inte säga något om de inte blev tilltalade eller konsekvent byta samtalsämne. Detta mindre utvecklade samtal kontrasterades med ett inspelat exempel där eleverna hörde ett samtal där deltagarna bjöd in, deltog och höll sig till ämnet i samtalet. Resultatet visar att det är avgörande för eleverna att urskilja vilken riktning repliken har i ett samtal. Från mig som sändare mot mottagaren eller tvärtom. Om man som elev kan urskilja detta kan man också skapa och upprätthålla ett samtal. Återigen kan man skilja mellan grammatisk och sociolingvistisk kompetens och strukturell kontra referentiell aspekt.

I denna licentiatuppsats har variationsteorins antagande använts och studerats i en klassrumskontext i relation till det lärande som eleverna utvecklat. Analysen lyfter fram skillnader som uppstår trots samma teoretiska utgångspunkt. Resultaten beskriver på vilket sätt variation av aspekter av innehållet påverkar lärandet.

Ett övergripande resultat från studierna, och ett resultat som även ligger i linje med tidigare forskning, är att användandet av strategiska kompetenser är möjliga att aktivt undervisa om. Genom att skapa lektionssekvenser där kritiska aspekter av innehållet fokuseras genom simultan variation och invariation blir det möjligt för eleverna att urskilja dessa kritiska aspekter, och därmed lära sig att använda strategiska kompetenser när de samtalar på engelska i klassrumsmiljö. Det skulle kunna antas att man lär sig samtalsstrategier genom att bara samtala så mycket som möjligt, men denna studie visar att det är effektivare att aktivt undervisa om specifika fraser och strategier. Denna studies resultat visar även vad i innehållets behandling som är avgörande för att eleverna ska kunna fördjupa sin förståelse.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Pilot study

Per Selin
Learning Study som ansats för praktikutvecklande
ämnesdidaktisk forskning. 7,5 hp
Slutuppgift

What does it mean to speak English well? A phenomenographic analysis of Swedish year 8 pupils' conceptions

Introduction

Learning a foreign language is not easy. According to a report from Skolverket (2005) half of the interviewed pupils then found the subject English to be "rather hard" or "very hard". The same study also found that many pupils considered English important and/or useful. The aspect of English that made it interesting for the pupils was often that you got the chance to learn how to communicate and interact with other people.

The notion of communication strategies have been an object of several studies (for a detailed account see Nakatani, 2010 p.116ff). The current curriculum (Skolverket, 2011) also stresses communicative skills as being the uppermost important ones when it comes to learning English as a foreign language in Sweden. Why is it then that pupils in Sweden often have another view of what it means to speak English well and why could it be that they sometimes find it very hard and embarrassing to speak English to one another (Ahlquist, 2012)? In a report from Skolinspektionen[1] (2011) it is not only argued that there is a major discrepancy among different schools, there are also notable differences in the same school depending on which classroom you are in. Many teachers

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[1]

　　　　Skolinspektionen (The School Inspectorate) is the state authority that scrutinizes schools and teaching. Skolverket (The National Education Agency) is responsible for curriculum, comments on curriculum, the construction of national tests and evaluating schools.

claim that they would want to be more cooperative in their planning and teaching, but they do not get or take the chance.

The notion of being able to use your language in a communicative sense is one that needs a further explanation and definition. Broadly speaking, a separation in between speaking as an act in itself (giving a speech) and speaking as taking part of a conversation can be made (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, 2001). What I intend to study is the latter part of mastering the oral skills of a language. Llurda (2000) discusses the way Chomsky introduced the notion of universal generative grammar as a model for language learning in which the structure for language and language learning lies inherent in the mind and contrasts this (Chomsky's universal grammar) with the sociolinguistic theory of language learning where Canale (referred to in Llurda, 2000) argued that communicative competence comprises four different and separate components: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. Llurda suggests that the communicative language ability can be divided into a communicative proficiency and a language proficiency. In doing this the Chomskyan understanding remains, but is kept for a static and permanent state present in all human beings whereas communicative ability is referred to as the ability to adjust and apply language use to contextualized situations. This way (the latter) of regarding language use and learning resonates well with the ontological stance on learning in phenomenography and variation theory, and also with second and foreign language learning. It will therefor be useful for the learning study that I intend to outline based on this study.

I would like to study what pupils' conceptions of speaking English well are and through the use of a phenomenographic approach and analysis try to come out with an object of learning for a future Learning Study in English. This would have a double effect since it would both treat the ability of speaking English and it would be an example of how it could be possible for teachers to cooperate and study each others' teaching.

This essay will start with an introduction to the pupils and the material that is used in the study. Then a brief presentation of the phenomenographic approach and the theories behind it will follow which will be sequenced by a presentation of the results. After a discussion, a suggestion for a Learning Study will be outlined with a possible object of learning and critical aspects to it.

Material

The pupils in this study are in year 8 which means that they are 14-15 (depending on when in the year they were born) years old. They have not been in the same schools throughout their years, which makes it impossible to state a general amount of years of English teaching that they have had. In Swedish schools you are not stipulating the exact year of introducing a specific subject (Skollag: 2010:800), only the total amount of hours it should be taught from school year 1 to 9 (480). In the primary schools where the pupils in my study have had their first hours of English, the subject is either introduced in year one or three. The total amount of English they have had is still the same when they start school year 7, which is the first of the three years in the school where they are now.

The pupils represent a rather average level of English competence. Two of them had a C and the other five had an E when they got their first grades in English in December 2011. The grading system in Sweden is related to levels of knowledge specified in the curriculum (Skolverket, 2011). The highest grade is A and the lowest passing grade is E. An F is also possible, which means that the pupil has not met the levels of knowledge described in the curriculum. All of the pupils have Swedish as their mother tongue. There are three boys and four girls in the study. These pupils are not taught English by me, but they have been which means that I know them but there is no dependence in between me and them in the sense that they might feel uncomfortable answering questions from a teacher who is later to assess their knowledge and to grade them. The

fact that I know them is positive to me, since it means that they can be rather relaxed in the interview situation.

In the interviews I have started by asking four questions that have all been focusing on the pupil's

conception of what it means to be good at speaking English (see appendix A). The interviews have all been carried out in Swedish, since I wanted the pupils to be able to express their opinions as fully as possible. The first question is meant to lead them into the ability of speaking (as opposed to reading, listening and writing) English. According to Marton & Booth (1997) the questions should over and over lead back to the study object, and that is why I have tried to formulate three different questions where the answers should illustrate the pupil's view. As task number five (after the first four questions), three recordings have been played to the pupils and they have been asked to decide who of the three recorded persons speak English the best. The persons om the recordings are former pupils of mine who are all advanced English users (they all had MVG[2]). They are slightly different when it comes to speaking though. The first person has a pronunciation very close to that of a native speaker (of American English), but he lacks fluency to some extent which makes him pause every now and then. The second person is very talkative and has a great range of vocabulary, but sounds a bit Swedish in his intonation. The third person is not exactly as native speaker-sounding as person 1, but better than person 2 and has a similar vocabulary. He is better though at adjusting and adapting his language and explains difficult expressions thoroughly. The above qualities of the three speakers have been confirmed to me by a native speaker of English (who moved from Britain in adult years) who is also a doctorate student in pedagogical work. As a final part of the interviews I asked each pupils to explain something in English, the Swedish school subject "hemkunskap" (home economics). The reason for doing this was that I had an idea about using the individual pupil's conception of what it meant to be able to speak English well and compare that to an actual speech act, but I

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[2]   The scale for grading has recently changed . The grade MVG (pass with great distinction) was the highest possible in the old scale.

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never used it. However, this question was posed in English to make it slightly more natural for the pupil to answer in English.

The answers that the pupils give will be analysed and the conceptions will be arranged into categories of description. The method for this analysis and explanation of some of the terms will come in the following chapter.

Phenomenography

One question that a researcher always needs to relate to and needs to be sure of before she or he embarks on a journey into new knowledge and findings is the fundamental "What is real?". To put it in very general terms the traditional answer is either a so called dualist or a non-dualist one. The phenomenographical stance is a non-dualist one. Taking this stance means that there is only one reality and that is the one being experienced. Compare this to the Platonic division between the ideal and the sensational world where both exist without affecting each other. To phenomenography, the truth about something lies in the total sum of how it could possibly be experienced. To falsify a theory, a non-dualist would relate this to how well or badly it corresponds to peoples' experiences of the world, and not to how well or badly it corresponds to an external, independent, reality. This means that a scientific world view is not given more accuracy than a folk-lore world view because of its correspondence to "reality" but to the fact that the scientific world view corresponds to a broader spectrum of experiences (Uljens, 2006).

Marton & Booth (1997) describes the above explanation in terms of first-hand and second-hand perspectives. In the first-hand perspective a statement about about the world is contrasted to the world around. Based upon previous statements about this phenomena in the world, the new statement is either "true" or "false", "correct" or "incorrect". From a second-hand perspective though, the statement is studied as such and related to the learner's, or the person's stating it, understanding of it.

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Phenomenography and variation theory wants to take a second-hand perspective to its informers and thereby understand their understanding of the world

According to Marton & Booth (1997) learning always needs to take an object. You can never study learning as such in a phenomenographic approach and this aligns with the previous paragraph's description of what is real. Since the world cannot be divided into separate parts where one of them should be a theoretical one where, e.g., the image of a dog lies, you must accept that the understanding of the noun "dog" lies in the totality of possible dogs that can be thought of among the people in the world. You have to put together poodles and dachshunds and other breeds as well as children's, perhaps naive, view of the concept "dog" with dog-owners', biologists' and breeders' to form a total, hopefully as complex as possible, conception of "dog".

Runesson (2006) points out that the construction of a learning object is mutual in between the object and the person observing it. This is because the person observing changes in the interaction, but also the observed object. Since the object is constituted of the total sum of experiences people may have of it, a changed view leads to the object changing (even though it is a rather slight change). The same reasoning is done by Marton & Booth (1997) when they say that being aware of something is an internal relation in between the observer and the observed. Neither would have been the same without the other. This also means that a statement about an object of learning tells just as much about the object as such as it does about the learning of it. They are intertwined and cannot be separated. This is another way of describing why you cannot separate learning as such and study it. There is not (according to phenomenography and variation theory) anything such as "general knowledge" or "general learning".

According to phenomenography, learning is to see something in a new way. From the start phenomenography was interested in describing the various ways in which a certain conception could be understood. Marton & Booth (1997) put it that to experience is to experience something and when you do that some parts of the experienced object are discerned on behalf of the others. When you are aware of something it is in relation to

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something else. In the next step for phenomenography, the act of learning was explained. Bowden (2006) describes this as the new phenomenography and the answer to critics who argued that phenomenography had no theory of learning, it was only a methodology (for describing peoples' conceptions of an object). The theory, also explained by Marton & Booth (1997), was then that to see things in a new way, to learn, you need to be aware of the critical aspect of the particular object of learning. To discern this critical aspect you need to have that varied among a background of other features in the object of learning. This was then the founding idea for the variation theory.

Finally, some arguments regarding the results of a phenomenographic survey need to be stated. When something (students' view on the term "price", conceptions of death or fundamental terms in physics) has been explored, all utterances are grouped together in different categories that should be logically related and that often are hierarchically ordered. These are known as categories of description and they should be qualitatively different ways of discerning a conception and always remain on a collective level. The discerned is never the totality of the object just like ways of experiencing never is the total of the experienced (Marton & Booth, 1997). The categories of description should resemble the informers' conceptions as faithfully as possible (Sandberg, 2006). The closer the researcher is to the informer's understanding of an aspect of reality, the better learning, teaching and other kinds of human action within society can be understood (Ibid, p.130). Even though the results, in terms of how many informers experience something in this way, may not be possible to generalize, the variation in how an object of learning can be experienced can be generalized (Marton. & Booth, 1997).

Essential terms in phenomenography and variation theory

One of the core terms in a phenomenographic and variation theory study is the notion of **conception** and the way this term is related to the non-dualist stance that was explained in the previous chapter. According to Marton & Pong (2005), a conception has a referential aspect and a structural aspect. The referential aspect is what a

conception could mean when all subjects observing it are put together, and the structural aspect is the combination of discerned and focused features that one informer observes. In nature, these aspects are intertwined. In the variation theory, the structural aspects and their internal relationships are studied. This means that the differences when it comes to critical features between them are studied to separate one from the other. This then relates to the notion of first-order perspectives (referential) and second-order perspectives (structural). To grasp these aspects in an utterance in a phenomenographic interview, you understand referential aspects by interpreting what a person is saying and the structural aspects can be found by looking for linguistic markers such as singular-plural. The referential and structural aspects are intertwined, but only discernible when a specific object is in focus. It cannot be seen when people are speaking about learning in general or in abstract notions. These conceptions that can be identified in a study are put together in and form categories of description (Marton, 1981) which are the major outcomes of a phenomenographic research. One example of a specific conception in a specific phenomenographic study might help in explaining this. For instance conception 1 in the phenomenographic pilot study in the economics example in Lo et al. (2004) meant that the student understood a suggested tax to be fully borne by the buyers and the tax would be related to the demand side of the market. This is the referential aspect of that conception. The structural aspect would be that the interviewed student would focus on the demand conditions of the market and variations among the utterances could be such as the quality of the goods.

The notion of **variation** in a phenomenographic study relates to the aim of describing the variation among the total amount of (or at least the total amount of relevant) ways of being aware of a specific object (Marton & Booth, 1997). The phenomenographer is interested in putting these conceptions into different categories of description. The second face of variation (Pang, 2003), which arrived later, is the variation within an aspect that is needed to be experienced in order for this particular aspect to appear for the observer. This means a shift from phenomenography being a methodological

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concern ("how can different ways of experiencing be described") to a theoretical concern relating to learning ("why are things experienced differently and how can this difference be described").

Categories of description concerning pupils' conceptions of speaking English well

The answers given in the interviews were analysed in the same way as Marton & Pong (2005) described their analysis. First an overall meaning was found through close listening and reading of the parts that had been transcribed verbatim. When one specific meaning of the ability of speaking English appeared this meaning formed a unit. The next step was to separate this unit from another unit, that is find the variation between the different conceptions. The step from the first to the second part of the analysis introduced the notion of the structural aspects of the conceptions. In what way or ways can one conception be separated from another. The linguistic markers are studied. Which word is in focus? What part of speaking is in focus? The categories and their aspects will be presented in the following part of the chapter and they will also be visualized in a table (table 1. Conceptions of speaking English well), the design of which is inspired by the tables 1 and 2 in Marton & Pong (2005).

   The first three categories focus on the act of speaking from the speaker's point of view as well as from the listener's point of view. Since it is not possible to know and grasp whether those pupils who only mentioned the sender (and not the recipient) meant that this was the only factor that was important or if they simply did not think about the recipient (or took it for granted that the recipient was her/himself), it was not possible to make this difference a qualitative one. I could of course have asked, but then I would probably get the answer that they meant a listener as well. This would also be a too leading question to ask.

   The first category (A) is however that speaking English well means that you speak clearly in the sense that you are not mumbling. Pupils giving this conception focused on

the realisation of words in the mouth of the speaker and could be quoted as saying that it is not good to "be mumbling" [all quotes have been translated from Swedish into English by me]. Some pupils then add to this a notion of recipient. Often a recipient that is the interviewee her/himself. Structural aspects here are then that they not only mention that you should speak clearly, but also why you should do that. Quotes such as "He was mumbling, so I couldn't hear him" was given. Here is one of the pupils explaining why she thinks that one of the persons on the recording was better than the others.

> Pupil: He was the best because he was the clearest of them. He, sort of, spoke loud and clear, like. It sounded more like English. The second [speaker], he sounded Swedish. The last one [the first speaker mentioned in this quote] took it the most seriously and tried to sound as English as possible. Good vocabulary as well.
> Interviewer: And the first one [of the three persons that the pupil had been listening to]?
> P: It was a bit unclear. A bit mumbling, like, sometimes. He stopped a few times as well. You lost it because it [the speaking rate] was too slow.

For category B the overall meaning, and thereby the referential aspect, is that speaking English well means to have a pronunciation that is as close to the pronunciation of a mother tongue-speaker as possible. Focus among the pupils saying this was a comparison to Americans or Britons (these were the nationalities mentioned). One pupil said that it was important to "sound like you are speaking American or British". Analogical to category A then some pupils included a notion of it being important to not only speak with a good pronunciation because you should sound American or British, but because it was easier to understand then. "I think that the last person speaks best because his pronunciation makes it easier to understand". Here is a pupil explaining and arguing for the different qualities of the recorded voices she has heard.

Pupil: The translator [the third person on the recording that the pupil listened to] actually. I understood almost everything he said. He spoke rather, or actually very, clearly and I like American English. I think he was the best, or that he had the best English.
Interviewer: Who was the second best [out of the three persons]?
P: I actually think that must be the pilot [the first person on the recording, who speaks with a rather heavy American accent].
I: OK, why?
P: Because he was also rather clear. I didn't really understand that much of the actor [the second person on the recording, speaking with a rather neutral geographical dialect, but with a complex vocabulary].

In the same sense of a division in between speaking as an act in itself and a dualistic activity a notion of fluency made out a category. In category C speaking English well was related to the ability of not getting stuck and being able to move on. Even though the pupils did not mention this term frequently, what they are after is similar to the notion of fluency. According to Wood (2009) fluency is a combination of rate of speaking and how often you would have to pause to to find the word or syllable you are looking for. Focus among the the pupils saying this was on vocabulary ("you should practice vocabulary/reading a book" [in order to become better at speaking English]) or grammar ("the correct time [of the verb] so it doesn't sound strange"). When a recipient was included the quote would read "I think he was good because he could explain in detail what he meant". Here are two boys explaining a bit further what it means to speak English well.

Pupil 2
Pupil: I think the translator was best. Because he had a good fluency and he said somewhat...well he said things in a bit more complicated way than the others. Then it was the actor. It was funny to hear him speak. And then he... the pilot, he didn't have that good fluency. He stopped and it seemed like he didn't really understand.

Pupil 6
Interviewer: What does it mean to speak clearly?

Pupil: Focus a lot on the words. Not taking it too quickly, like, more like, take it easy and make the words appear.

I: And why should you be clear?

P: So that those who listens understands.

I: Anything else?

P: No

I: When somebody is good at speaking English, what is it that you are good at?

P: They have a fluency, in the talk. They, well, they have a fluency when they talk, speak very well. The words are, like, well pronounced.

I: If you want to practice your speaking, what would you want to practice then?

P: To speak better? Perhaps you could read a text out loud.

The last category, D, did not have two different kinds of aspects since it by nature includes a sender and a recipient. This category is that speaking English well means that you are able to adapt your language to suit different purposes or use strategies to make yourself understood. This category is only represented with one utterance and that is from a girl who said that it was especially important for a teacher to speak in a way that meant that "everybody understood what they should do" and when doing this not used a too complicated vocabulary. The referential aspect to this category of description would then be that speaking English well contains an ability of adapting and adjusting your language. You can either adapt it to meet the needs of a specific recipient, but also adjust it so that you can get around linguistic problems. The focus among the pupils saying this would be language change. Here is the pupil in a more elaborate version.

Pupil: And... using harder words can also mean that somebody comes across as a better speaker of English.

Interviewer: Varying vocabulary, you mean?

P. Exactly. But that might not be very good if you are a teacher and then everybody would not understand, but...

I: Why wouldn't it be good if you were a teacher?

P: Because then everybody wouldn't know what to do or what the teacher says.
I: So there is a point in speaking so that everybody understands as well?
P: Yes.

Table 1. Conceptions of speaking English well

Conception	Referential aspect	Structural aspect
A	Speaking English well means that you are *articulating* well.	Focus on realisation of words in the mouth.
B	Speaking English well means that you have a native speaker-sounding *pronunciation*.	Focus on comparing and contrasting (to a native speaker).
C	Speaking English well means that you are *fluent*.	Focus on vocabulary and grammar.
D	Speaking English well means that you are able to *adapt* your language to the listener of the utterance.	Focus on the recipient's role or the intended meaning

   According to Marton & Booth (1997) the categories of descriptions should not only be qualitatively different, but also have a logical relation. The most basic quality of speaking ought to be the speaking act in itself, moving the mouth (conception A). Added to this is the notion of pronouncing in a correct way (category B) or one that makes it easy to understand. Another step on the ladder (not necessarily upwards though) would then be to add content and form to the speech acts so that they contain a deepened content and that is what comes in the third category (C). Category D would be the most complex and developed one since it always includes a notion of a recipient and it is the most communicative one. This notion (adapting the language to suit different purposes) is also stressed in the curriculum and the syllabus for English (Skolverket 2011, p.35).

   Since I have been able to cover all utterances given in the interviews I consider these four categories of description to cover the conceptions of speaking English well that could be found in the interviews that I performed. There may be other conceptions and thereby other categories of descriptions, especially if you would ask other parts in

school. Teachers would probably to a larger extent stress the ability of being able to explain and come around semantic problems as an important quality (Nakatani, 2010) of speaking English well and you might guess that older pupils should focus more on this too. Analogical to this younger interviewees would perhaps not bring in a recipient's perspective at all.

Designing a series of lessons to teach the ability of speaking English

According to Lo et al. (2004) the cycle of a Learning Study comprises six steps and the third of them is the designing of a lesson or a series of lessons to teach the object of learning that you want the students to develop. In this case it would be the ability of speaking English and since I have been able to detect what the pupils' conceptions of what it means to speak English well are, and also can compare them to what the curriculum and syllabus for English say, the lessons that I will be outlining here will focus on the ability of adapting the language for different situations. On p. 84f, Marton & Booth (1997) separates the object of learning into having a "how" and a "what" aspect and the former of the two then forms an indirect object of learning by separating also this into an act and an object. The indirect object would then be type of capabilities that the learner is trying to master. The ability of speaking English well and thus being able to adapt the language to suit different situations is the indirect object of learning, the "how" aspect of it. The direct object of learning will be the use of formulaic sequences and communication strategies and these will be further explained in the following paragraph.

The notion of formulaic sequences of a foreign language and its importance for learners' possibilities of both becoming linguistically better and also becoming more fluent and thereby coming across as more native speaker-sounding are being described by Khodadady & Shamsaee (2012) and Boers et al. (2006). It could be argued that this is more connected to category C described in the previous chapter (being fluent), but to be able to adapt your language it would help, I would say, to have a set list of words and

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expressions that fit together and that help you to structure your utterances. The term "formulaic sequence" is defined as being a sequence of words that is stored and retrieved whole from memory (Boers et al., 2006). Khodadady & Shamsaee (2012) points at the fact that the use of these preset language chunks helps the language learner to gain time to think.

According to the variation theory, one feature of an aspect must vary and the others remain stable in the background for this particular aspect to appear for the learner (Pang, 2003). There are four different types of variation patterns that can be used for this purpose and these are described by Marton et al. (2004) as (1) contrast, which means that to be able to understand what something is you must be able to compare to what it is not. The second is generalization and this means that to fully understand what something is you need to see different kinds of it. The third pattern is separation in which you would make sure that only one aspect of the feature is varying while the others are constant. Finally, a pattern of fusion must be introduced to the pupils to make them able to handle several critical features at the same time. Bearing this in mind, and also the notion of hierarchical versus sequential introducing of the features of an object of learning (Cheung, 2011) where it is reported to be beneficial for pupils to be able to see the part-whole relationships, the following lesson series is suggested.

In the first lesson (out of two) the object of learning is introduced as being the ability of adapting one's language to the listener. I want the pupils to be able to handle communication strategies such as time maintaining strategies and time gaining strategies (Nakatani, 2010) and thereby formulaic sequences like "What I am trying to say is..." and "This means that..." are introduced to the pupils. What I specifically want the pupils to master is the ability to express similar content in various ways to thereby adapt their language to the listener.

The teaching of adapting your language should take its departure from a suitable practice. Reading Dewey (1902), the basis of practice would then be similar to the local knowledge that the child brings to school. According to Dewey the primary task for

school is to organize and systematize the knowledge that children bring. Another way of looking at the practice for language learning and the relevance of it is the view that Polanyi (nd) reasons about the need to dwell in a certain environment to be able to learn. There is a further definition of practice, offered by Scribner & Cole (1981), which they used when they described the practice of literacy. In this sense practice is "a recurrent, goal-directed sequence of activities using a particular technology and particular systems of knowledge" (p.236). The term "skills" is used to describe the actions involved in applying this knowledge in particular settings. The technology that my pupils will use may not be that obvious. There will be no use of computers (nor pen and paper), but if you regard technology as systems created by man language itself is a technological system. The pupils will also to some extent make use of technology such as pencils when they write down phrases in the introductory part of the lesson. The knowledge and skills involved in the practice of adapting one´s language are more evident. It will be vocabulary, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic knowledge and thereby skills that will be needed.

The specific basis of practice that I want to create is one where it is possible to learn the capability how to adapt one's language to suit interlocutor and situation. As mentioned previously this piece of knowledge has several parts connected to it, but I will treat it as one piece of teaching in this text; I am not going to specify which basis of practice that is needed for the grammatical competence et cetera. Communication is, in many ways, the exchange of opinions and information. The most obvious start in creating the basis of practice needed is then to form situations where information and opinions must be stated and acquired. I am first and foremost considering the exchange of information in the first part of this teaching. The reason for doing this is that the information part is mentioned before the argumentation part in the curriculum (Skolverket, 2011). It is mentioned first in the content part of the subject English when it comes to communication, but also when it comes to oral production. My experience from teaching English is also that speaking about neutral subjects is, to some extent,

easier than speaking about one's opinions. You might think that your own opinion about something would be something that you have brought to school (in Dewey's sense of meaning "bring to school") and therefore easy to speak about, but remember Ahlquist's (2012) findings that it can sometimes be embarrassing to speak English in class.

Lightbown & Spada (2006) argues that a central part of learning the ability to talk and thus to vary and adapt language is to negotiate for meaning. This negotiation for meaning is what comes more or less naturally when information needs to be clarified in an exchange of meaning in between peers or teacher versus student. You might in many ways then say that negotiation for meaning is a typical example of the basis of practice that I want to form in my teaching of the object adapting one's language. The students obviously need to be taught how to change their language use to suit interlocutor and situation, you cannot expect the adaptation to come about on its own. You cannot at least expect the change to come about in the way most suitable on its own. It is rather likely that a clarification of meaning, i e in its simplest form a repetition, will not be done in exactly the same way the second time as it was done the first time. It will probably be done with a different intonation and volume if not anything else have been changed. What students might need structured teaching to realise is that you can change other parts of your communication too.

The teaching involving negotiation for meaning can be adjusted in several ways and hence the different communicative parts (sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic) are in focus in different times. As I said earlier, I am not intending to isolate these parts, but there may be some situations created when the discourse competence is more important to develop and others where the sociolinguistic one is more important. Allow me to offer an example. The task produced is a communicative situation where one pupil should explain the direction and give walking instructions to a stranger. If this stranger is supposed to be (i e when the other pupil is acting as) someone who has no previous experience of finding his/her way around in the offered setting, the communicative task becomes focused on discourse competence. If the stranger knows his/her way around in

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town, but happens to just not know where the flower shop (or whatever you are giving as example) is, the task focuses sociolinguistic competence if the stranger is supposed to be older. Still, you would always need strategic, grammatical and discourse competence.

In my Learning study it will be explained to the pupils that phrases function as set combination of words that could and should be used when you are conversing and explaining something. In this way the pupils will hopefully see the part-whole relationship in-between the communication strategies and the purpose of adapting your language (even though they will obviously not be able to master these terms as such (communication strategies and adapting your language), but that is not the object of learning). When the above mentioned phrases are introduced to the pupils they will be asked to take turns to explain where to go to find the nearest place to buy apples. In the first round they will be explaining this to a listener that is the one who is in front of them, which should be somebody at approximately the same level of English. What will happen after they have tried this out is that I will ask the person speaking to pretend that the person listening is at a significantly lower level of English so that not only the previously mentioned formulaic sequences will have to be used, but also such as "Do you see?" and "Do you understand?". It will also be explained to the pupils that the one listening is very much invited to say things like "sorry, I did not really understand" and "What did you say" and such to make the speaker repeat the content of the utterance. When the interlocutor has changed, at least in theory, I will tell the pupils that they now need to express themselves in a more elaborate way. In this sense the background is the same. the content is still explaining the nearest place to buy apples, but the way of saying this is changed and a space of learning (Ling & Marton, 2012) has been opened up. According to the variation theory the values of a critical feature of an object of learning must vary and be made discernible for the pupils at the same time as the dimension of variation is discernible (Ibid.). In my learning study I must therefore make sure that the adaptation of the language according to interlocutor (dimension of variation and critical feature) is made discernible at the same time as the values (explaining with different

words, exchanging sentence strategy, referring to things known by the listener etc.). This means that, hopefully, a space of learning will be opened up.

The variation provided in the above example will be a separation. Compared to the previous description of the four different kinds of variation, the pupils have already experienced a contrast, when they are forced to express the same content again. As mentioned earlier, you would not say the same thing in the exact same way when you are forced to repeat it, and thereby a contrast is created. A generalization will be made when the pupils both hear and state utterances. The generalization is supposed to come about when you experience many different kinds of what you are supposed to learn. In my case it is language variation, and when many different variations are experienced you might, as a pupil, learn it. The reason why I am arguing that there will be a separation here is that the pupils will be told that the variation that they must perform to adapt their language must be related to the interlocutor. They cannot just randomly try various variations such as raising their voices, making sure that they have been speaking grammatically correct or speaking more similar to a mother-tongue English speaker. These examples of language variations must be made clear to the pupils on beforehand since the phenomenographic survey that I did showed that the pupils main ideas (their conceptions) of what it meant to speak English well showed that to the pupils speaking English well meant that you were grammatically correct, did not mumble and sounded credible (i e like someone born in an English-speaking country).

Again it is important to say that I cannot expect the pupils to realize by themselves in what way they should vary their language. It has to be explained to them in what ways you could possibly vary the same content. The previously mentioned notion of communication consisting of strategic, discourse and sociolinguistic competence becomes useful. The pupils must be told that you either need to change because of the content of what you are saying, because of the context you are in or because of the differences between yo and the one you are speaking to. Before the conversations start I

will therefore have the pupils suggesting different ways of varying the same utterance and this will provide them with ideas.

Another option (than having the pupils to pretend being different speakers at different times) would be to bring in younger kids to the classroom. This would make the lesson more real, but on the other hand there is a slight risk that the fact that new people in the classroom would become a disturbing factor when it comes to the pupils doing what they are supposed to be doing. Even though the lesson would be "less" for real, the option of bringing in younger pupils is saved for the pre- and post-tests. In the lesson described, patterns of variation will then first be contrast and then generalization to make the learners aware of what adapting your language might be.

In the second lesson a new listener will be introduced to the pupils. The kinds of patterns of variation will first remain the same as in the previous lessons though, but there will be new contrasts and generalizations since this time the listener will first be a peer and afterwards someone with special knowledge in the subject domain. The lesson will be carried out through the use of the subject school food. First the pupils will be introduced to some new communication strategies, paraphrasing and approximation (Nakatani, 2010) and two new formulaic sequences which will be "This is the same as..." and "almost like...". The structure is the same and this time the pupils are told to explain some dishes that they especially like in the school restaurant. The first time the listener is instructed to act like s/he is a fellow pupil, but from another school and in the second round a fellow pupil from the same school (which would be the real situation). What this lesson will then add is a notion of adapting language to also be the ability to come around linguistic difficulties (Skolverket, 2011). The pupils will probably face situations where they want to explain dishes that they do not have the English words for. This means that at the second round of speaking the variation pattern of fusion will appear to the pupils. They will simultaneously have to adapt the language to suit the listener's knowledge, but also to suit their own.

To see whether the designed lesson series has had any effect I need to to carry out pre-tests and post-tests. When the phenomenographic study providing the empirical data for this screening was carried out, I asked the pupils to at the end of the interview describe a school subject in the Swedish school to an imagined non-Swedish listener. This will not be enough material for a pre-test though, since it does not actually assess the object of learning, to be able to adapt one's language. What I will do instead is that I will ask the pupils in a pre- and post-test to describe the way to the church. The church in the village where I will carry out the lessons is situated rather close to the school (which it by the way almost always is in small villages). I will ask them to first describe it to me, and then bring in a younger child. What I want to see is if the pupils change their language and adapt it to better suit the younger kids supposedly lower level of English knowledge. The answers given will have to be transcribed verbatim to see what differences there are in the descriptions (if there are any). In the post-test there will hopefully be more differences. Since you might suspect that language learning takes some time, it would also be interesting to see whether this series of lessons has had any longitudinal impacts and therefor I want to use delayed post-tests as well. These will be performed 6-8 weeks after the lesson series.

What this lesson series will hopefully bring about is not only an improved ability of adapting the language to suit different needs and thereby be better at speaking English for the pupils in the class where the actual lessons are carried out. If the results show that the lesson s are successful (which I of course hope) I will communicate them to the rest of the English teachers at school. This is the final step in the Learning Study cycle that was referred to in the beginning of the text and I sincerely hope that I will be able to contribute to a better English teaching with this suggested series of lessons.

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Appendix A

Questions (frågor)

1. Är det viktigt att kunna prata engelska bra [jämfört med att läsa, skriva och lyssna]? (Is it important to be good at speaking English well [compared to reading, writing and listening]?

2. Vad bör man tänka på när man pratar engelska med någon annan person? (What should you think about when you speak English to somebody?)

3. När någon är duktig på att prata engelska, vad tycker du att hon eller han är duktig på då? (When somebody is good att speaking English, what is it s/he is good at?)

4. Vad skall man öva på om man vill bli bättre på att prata engelska? (What should you practice in order to become better att speaking English)

5. Vem av följande personer tycker du pratar engelska bäst? Rangordna de tre talarna (Who of these three persons speaks English the best? Please rank them)

6. Hur skulle du, slutligen, förklara ämnet hemkunskap på engelska för någon som inte kommer från Sverige och inte kan något om det svenska skolsystemet. (Finally, how would you, in English, explain the subject "hemkunskap" to somebody who is not from Sweden (and does not know anything about the Swedish school).

Appendix 2. Questions for college pupils

1. Vad är man bra på när man är bra på att prata engelska? (What
   are you good at when you are good at speaking English?)
2. Vad är man bra på när man är bra på att diskutera på engelska?
   (What are you good at when you are good at discussing in
   English?)

Appendix 3. Pre-test LS1

Take a seat

- You are at a department store
- Person 1 (a 15-year-old girl or boy) asks person 2 (his or her friend) where the nearest bathroom is. Person 2 does not know so person 1 must ask person 3 (someone older who works there) instead. This person knows.

Appendix 4. Post-test LS1

Vary according to situation and person

- Ask for the time
- Try to loan a book from a class mate
- Try to find batteries in a shop
- All the time: person 1 asks, person 2 is the same age as person 1 and knows her/him and person 3 is an older stranger or a teacher

Appendix 5. Pre-test LS2

Free time
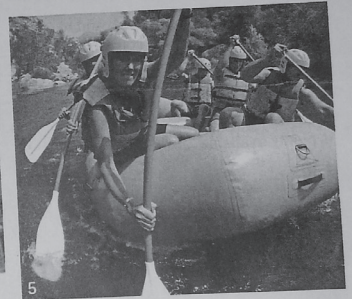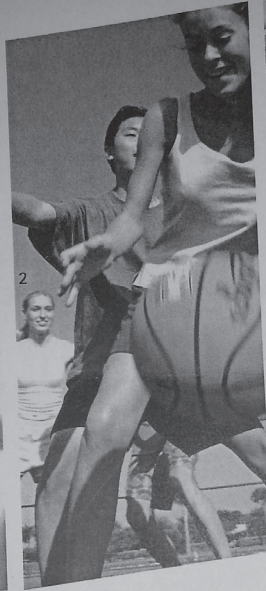
Introduction

1 Work in pairs or small groups. Which of the photographs show activities similar to things you do in your free time?

2 What proportion of your time is free time? How could you increase this?

3 How difficult is it for you to balance work, study and family with free time for yourself?

4 Read the statements below and decide which are true for you. Then, compare your answers in pairs.

a I spend more time doing things I have to do than doing things I want to do.
b If I'm not doing something productive, I feel that I'm wasting my time.
c I can't remember the last time I felt completely rested and ready for the next day.
d If I suddenly find I have extra free time, I don't know how to fill it.
e I can't think of the last time I really enjoyed myself.
f At the end of a typical week I'm too tired to go out and have fun.

Appendix 6. Post-test LS2

- Which of the two do you think would affect more people? Why?
- What safety measures can people take to avoid natural disasters like these?

Appendix 7. Delayed post-test LS2

Right or Wrong?

Part 2 Discussion

*Choose **at least three** of the following statements to discuss with your partner. Give reasons for your opinions. You could give examples from your own experience or from what you have heard.*

1 Driving drunk is as serious a crime as trying to kill someone.

2 Illegal actions by organisations like Greenpeace are OK.

3 Being unfaithful to your wife or husband is a good reason for divorce.

4 Cheating is unfair to your classmates.

5 Using bad language doesn't hurt anybody.

6 Making a fraudulent (false) income tax return is not a very serious crime.

7 Computer sabotage doesn't hurt anyone.

DEVELOPING STRATEGIC COMPETENCE IN ORAL INTERACTION IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
A classroom study

In this thesis it is argued that strategic competence in oral interaction in English as a foreign language can and should be taught. Using iterative classroom studies, so called learning studies, the learning of this strategic competence is described. The term "strategic competence" can be understood and used in various ways. In this thesis it is supposed to be made up of grammatical and sociolinguistic competences.

The learning studies have been carried out in secondary school and college in Sweden and the content in the lessons have mainly been role plays of various kinds. Apart from the result that strategic competence can be taught, it is also argued that pupils need to understand the qualities of the interlocutor to adapt language in a conversation. It is furthermore argued that pupils need to understand the direction of the communication to establish and maintain an expanded conversation.

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