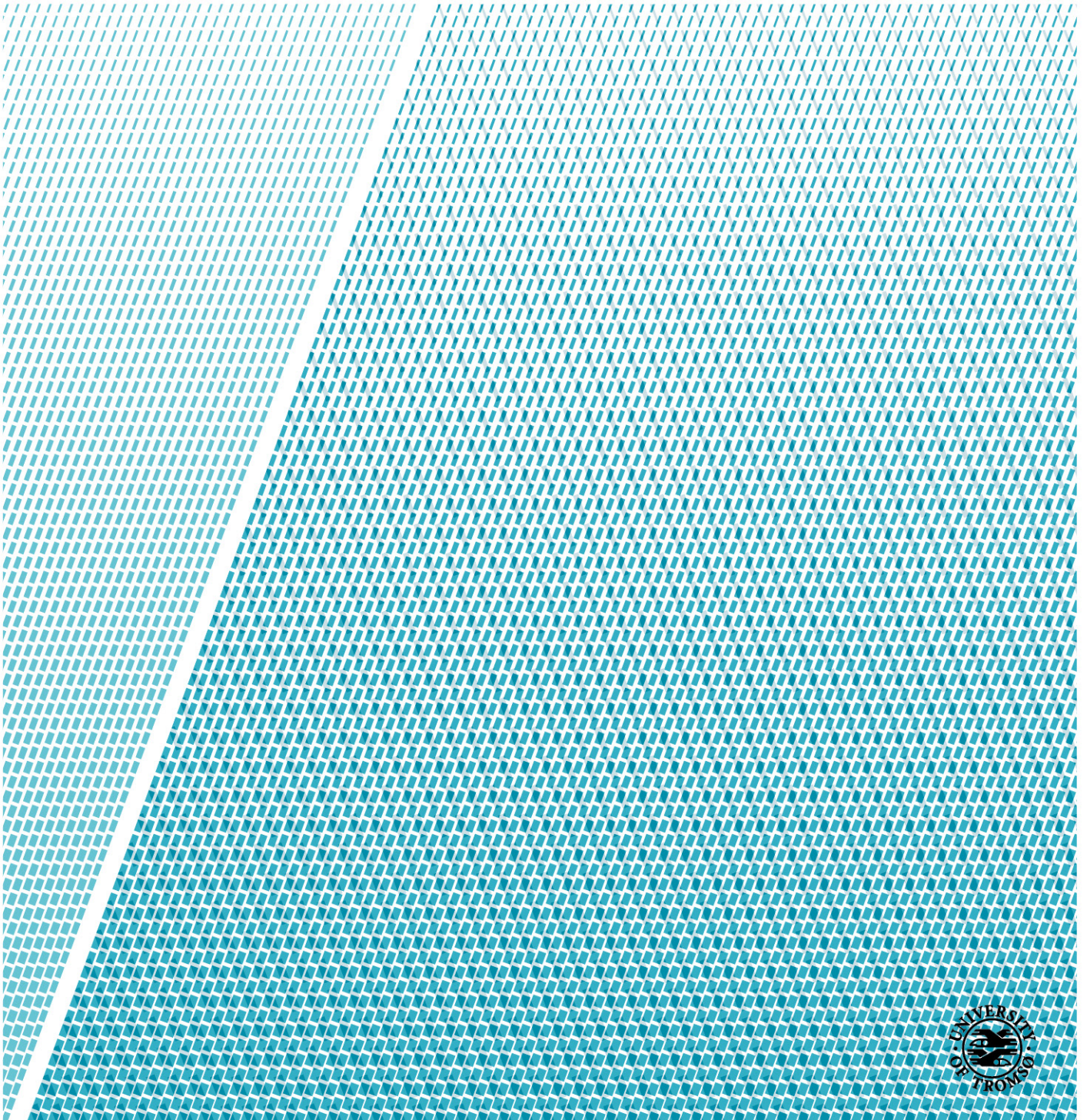


# Adult Refugees in the Norwegian School System

*- An exercise in mental contortionism?*

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*Master's thesis in Pedagogy, May 2017*





## Abstract

### **Are the aims of competence in Social Studies, LK06 applicable to adult refugee learners?**

This thesis aims to answer this research problem by investigating how different discourse perspectives interfere in the production of text in the classroom, and how connotations to topic relevant words affect academic achievement. Basil Bernstein's theory on agent and structure offers the main theoretical framework of which to discuss how power relations and framing of the educational system affects learners' academic success. The cognitive and psychological aspects of identity are explained through Jack Mezirow's concept of transformative learning and George Herbert Mead's theory on "the self". These theoretical concepts are further linked with socialisation theory. The study combines document analysis of the curriculum and criteria of academic achievement with Critical Discourse Analysis of informants' utterances, inspired by Norman Fairclough's framework. Critical Realism forms the scientific orientation of the study, where multi-level analysis discloses how invisible, yet causal powers produce empiric events. A focus group of five refugee learners, individual follow-up interviews of the same informants, and individual interview of the subject teacher have provided new empirics to the analysis.

The study shows that the aims of competence in of the curriculum in Social Studies are unrealistically hard to achieve at higher grades to this specific group of learners. Culturally developed connotations and a strong presence of moral discourse influences the learners' conception of words and the meaning they add to them. Time and space issues affect learners' ability of expression and thereby their access to higher grades. Knowledge considered mundane in the Norwegian educational culture, seems to be esoteric to the informants in this study. This, in combination with a school system that appears weakly framed, but is actually strongly framed by requirements that the learners are not able to identify, makes the acquisition of relevant skills such as critical thinking a hard task to carry out. The Educational Act manifested in LK06 seeks to promote re-socialisation and transformative learning in this specific group of learners, and by that a change of identity, of which the educational facilities do not provide sufficiently. Consequently, the curriculum discriminates learners on the base of cultural background.

## Acknowledgements

I have loved this process more than imagined before hand. Spending these two years striving to obtain the master's degree has been mind-cracking, exhausting at times, sometimes boring, but never like a walk in the park. But it has always been fun, if not at the desk, then for sure in the red sofa with my fellow students. Thank you all for great discussions and happy times in the breaks during long days of study. I would also like to express thankfulness to my family, especially my sister for creating such a conducive home environment these two years. My leaders at "Voksenopplæringa i Tromsø" have been flexible on my schedule. Thank you for helping me land this project within the prescribed time! I also give my regards to Sigrid Randers-Pehrson for proof-reading and well needed linguistic advice.

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# 1 Introduction

During my experience as a teacher of adult immigrants over the last six years, various issues concerning learning have continuously been subject to my observation. All though my own teaching practice has had to do with Norwegian language training as part of the introduction programme or voluntary classes of asylum seekers, issues of basic education training have been a vivid topic among colleagues around lunch hour. This thesis concentrates on adult refugees granted residency in Norway, who have undergone some language training and are now obtaining basic education.

An apparent gap between the frame of reference in this large and diverse group of learners, and the collective conceptual framework of the Norwegian education system has led me to take a scientific interest in this specific group. Misunderstandings due to differences in conceptual understanding frequently appears in any acquaintance among people, more so among different cultural groups. Reynolds and Skilbeck presents an anecdote that illustrates a classic situation of misunderstanding, from the book “Culture and the classroom”:

*“An inspector visited a village school in a rural area. He pinned up a picture of a sheep and asked the class what it was. Nobody could answer. He quickly passed on, but later took a child aside and asked why nobody had been able to answer the question. - Well, Sir, said the child, We couldn't tell whether it was a pure Cheviot or a crossbreed.”* (Reynolds & Skilbeck, 1976, p. 89)

While this anecdote illustrates an inspector somewhat clueless of the context he has walked in to, the issue of concepts has quite a different impact in the reversed situation. In this thesis, adult refugee learners are entering the Norwegian school system. They are supposedly learning within the frames of the national curriculum, and they are assessed by the criteria of academic achievement stated by the Ministry of Education. In these circumstances, conceptual gaps and different frames of reference may have much larger consequences than in the anecdote above.



## 1.1 Presentation of the field of study

Adult refugees that are granted residence in Norway, who lack basic education, have inadequate skills and knowledge or who simply wishes to participate, have the right to basic education in Norway. The Educational Act states that *“Basic education for adults, of §4A-1 shall be in accordance with the national curriculum of “Kunnskapsløftet<sup>1</sup>” (...) The various parts of the national curriculum of “Kunnskapsløftet” applies according to regulations of The Educational Act § 1-2 as far as it is applicable”* (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998, 30.03.17, my translation). Further on, it is stressed that the municipal educational institution cannot state any requirements of level of Norwegian language skills in order to enrol candidates (Ministry of Education and Research).

This paragraph further explains that the training shall follow the aims of competence in the national curriculum, hereby referred to as LK06, but be adjusted to the adult learner. The Educational Act further states that basic education for adults shall consist of the compulsory subjects Norwegian, English and Mathematics, and two of the optional subjects Social Studies, the combined subject Christianity, Religion, and Ethical Education (KRLE) or Science. These subjects are finally assessed by a grade of overall achievement. Obligatory subjects might be examined by draw, either written or orally, while the optional subjects can be examined by draw orally. It can happen that no subjects are drawn for examination, and in such cases the learner’s average is based solely on grades of overall achievement in each subject.

Further on, The Educational Act states that the training shall be offered compressed. There are however no official frames that regulate this time span. The school where I recruited my informants practiced the training over two years, which is not unusual. Frames of lesson distribution among subjects are not regulated, and is thus up to each institution to define. This school organised the subjects in that one obligatory and one optional subject were offered each year along with Norwegian, which span over two years. My informants currently took Norwegian, Mathematics and Social Studies at the time of my fieldwork. Finally, there are no

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<sup>1</sup> ”Kunnskapsløftet”, LK06, is a school reform of 2006 introduced by the Stoltenberg government. LK06 changed the content, organisation and structure of basic education, including higher secondary and adult education. The main aim of the new reform was to ensure basic skills and competence to all learners. Clearly defined aims of competence in every subject is a main difference to the previous Reform -94, along with a promotion of basic skills in all subjects, systematic literacy training from grade one, and a restructuring of higher secondary school (Store Norske Leksikon, 2014).

requirements of a specific level of grades in order to obtain diploma of basic education, thus grade 1 in all subjects qualify for higher secondary education (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998).

### *1.2.1 Background statistics and national reports*

The number of participants in basic education for adults have increased from 3686 from the start of the programme in 2002, to 7468 in 2015/16. 93% of learners in basic education for adults in 2015/16 were immigrants. These learners were inhabitants of 337 of Norway's totally 428 municipalities (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). In 2013, only 50% of those with completed basic education for adults continued to higher secondary education. Of those, 28% quit during the programme, 13% completed but failed and 7% were still in the process after 5 years (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2014). A national study missioned from the Norwegian government reports that it is mainly those with less or unfulfilled education who are at risk of losing out in society. Lacking adequate qualifications is here sketched as a factor creating a downwards spiral, where immigrants are explicitly at risk:

*“Vulnerable work forces, like for instance the weakly qualified, including those with immigrant background, can risk reduced income, higher unemployment, quicker transmission to disability pension, or alternatively larger challenges in getting employed.”*

(Brockmann committee, 2011, p. 15, my translation)

This problem represents a clash with the overall intention of the welfare state, where the common efforts of the population contributes to the national product, which thereby provides security for those who are financially challenged. However, a rise in the number of people who are in need of such benefits, threaten the long term funding and thereby the stability of the same security system (ibid.). It is therefore of great national interest to identify factors that prevent equality, and to offer measures to these issues.

*“A crucial goal in the Nordic model is to create social equalization and good living conditions. This review shows that there still is people or groups in Norway that have continuous low income over several years.”*

(Brockmann committee, 2011, p. 17, my translation)

### *1.2.2 Preparatory Adult Education - the development of a new curriculum*

As a response to the Brockmann report, The Ministry of Education and Research initiated an experiment on a module structured education to make learners qualify to higher secondary school. This experiment, named Preparatory Adult Education, is based on the Government's agenda to stimulate adults who lack competence to complete relevant schooling.

*“The goal of Preparatory Adult Education is a faster transmission to employment or higher secondary education. To achieve this, the content of the training should be relevant to adults compared to their needs, and it should be effective and flexible training courses adapted to adults”*

(Ministry of Education and Research, 2016, p. 1, my translation).

The assignment of developing the new curriculum for module based Preparatory Adult Education is handed to Skills Norway<sup>2</sup> (former VOX). The complete new curriculum should be implemented in adult education centres from 2020 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016). Skills Norway has sketched a milestone plan where development of new curricular content is developed during the last half of 2016 and first half of 2017, pilot tests are planned to be carried out from August 2017 (Vox, 2016).

## 1.2 Presentation of research problem

The large drop-out numbers among adult refugee learners may have several, and complex reasons. The fact that these learners are adult, possibly with children or other dependents, adds a financial aspect to their situation that most adolescents does not have to take into consideration. However, the overall challenges that have been subject to many discussions over lunch at work, has led me to define my point of interest. I shall focus on this overall research problem:

**Are the aims of competence in Social Studies, LK06 applicable to adult refugee learners?**

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<sup>2</sup> Skills Norway is the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning, assigned by the Ministry of Education and Research. The main task is to contribute to improving employability, active citizenship, demonstrating the importance of skills policy and increase participation in education. Formal, non-formal and informal adult education is actively promoted through research, basic skills and integration, among other (Skills Norway, 2016).

This thesis aims to answer this problem by investigating the following research questions:

- *How do adult refugee learners assess the level of difficulty in Social Studies?*
- *In which way does different use of discourse interfere in the production of text in the classroom?*
- *In which way can connotations affect adult refugees' academic achievement in Norwegian basic education?*

Language skills, or lack of such, is perhaps the most obvious challenge for immigrants in managing work and education in their host country. A linguistic approach to this thesis would therefore be a natural choice. A didactic approach would give valuable information of classroom practice. Focusing solely on learning methods and the development of strategies of learning could answer which practice that works and not, and allow us to outline some suggestions for the future. Pure focus on linguistics or didactics might however distract us from the social relations that controls agents' actions, in this case what learners are or are not socially able to express in class. Because I consider the influence of social relations as fundamental in any fora, especially the classroom, I have chosen to give it my absolute attention.

### 1.3 The structure of the thesis

The theoretical frameworks of this thesis is presented in chapter 2. Basil Bernstein represent the structural perspective, while mental, psychological and cognitive issues of learning are accounted for through Jack Mezirow and George Herbert Mead. In chapter 3, I explain the methodological research approach, positioning the thesis in Critical Realism by Critical Discourse Analysis. Previous research on relevant matters are briefly presented in chapter 4, before I pay all attention to my empirical findings and discussion. As many of the interview excerpts relate to several issues at the same time, I have chosen to discuss my findings consecutively. Categories of discussion relate to the theoretical concepts, and conclusions are at last summarized and presented in chapter 6.



## 2 Theoretical perspectives

The topic of applicability of the curriculum to this group of learners open up to a wide range of theoretical viewpoints. It could be discussed with different agendas and with a focus on various theories on socialisation, learning, psychology and pedagogy. Bourdieu's theory of the habitus and doxa and Durkheim's theories on brethren are possible viewpoints. Equally relevant is anthropological perspectives like ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, or taking a didactic approach and looking at learning methods and teaching practices. I have however chosen to keep the focus on structural factors that deeply influences the agents' action space, by a thorough exploration of Basil Bernstein's framework of education. I shall account for Mezirow's perspective of learning and definition of transformative learning, and Knud Illeris' revision of the latter. George Herbert Mead's theory on how the self – in its dual character of "I" and "Me" – is affected by social relations that affect the process of learning. This gives us an insight in the psychological aspect of the thesis along with Anton Hoëm's explanation of socialisation processes. Finally, I have briefly accounted for the skill of critical thinking.

### 2.1 Bernstein's theoretical framework of the school

Basil Bernstein was a British sociologist who throughout his long carrier developed a comprehensive theory on school systems from a view of structuralism. I shall in the following look at how agents are influenced by power relations, social control and internal boundaries, and how this influence learners' opportunities to participate, aspire and gain qualifications through the structure of the educational ladder (Bernstein, 1996). To explain how this comes to work in the case of our informants, I shall build my argument step by step, starting with some basic concepts in Bernstein's theory.

#### *2.1.1 Power, control and boundaries*

Bernstein highlights the distinction between *power* and *control*, in that the difference lies in *boundaries*. He claims that boundaries are created, legitimized and reproduced by power relations. Different categories of groups, discourses and agents have different power relations, and it is in the hotspot between these we find that boundaries are negotiated and renegotiated. Boundaries therefore regulates the relationships between the different groups, discourses or agents, and in that way control social space (Bernstein, 1996). *"From this point of view then, power always operates on the relations between categories. The focus of power from this*

*point of view is on the relations between and, in this way, power establishes legitimate relations of order”* (Bernstein, 1996, p. 19). Control, on the other hand, is described by Bernstein as the establisher of legitimate and appropriate communications to the various categories. This way, control has much to do with socialisation, as it offers frames to form boundary relations of power (ibid.).

The way I interpret this, control is exercised by agents of the society as to what is and is not allowed, appropriate, encouraged or applauded. This creates a framework of which individuals through an inner discussion negotiates whether to stay within, move towards the outskirts of, or perhaps break out of the accepted premises. The nature of the power relations between individuals determines the outcome of these inner negotiations: The stronger power relations between agents relevant to each other, the larger the consequence when the subservient agent is contradicting with the established norm. The stronger need to maintain ones position, membership or recognition in the group, the higher the cost of breaking out.

### *2.1.2 Boundaries as a mark of identity*

Boundaries is a key term in this thesis, and will be a distinct part of the discussion in chapter 5. Therefore, I shall give it wee more attention in this section: The Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth (in Eriksen, 2010) said that the feeling of identity is much more related to boundaries than cultural practice. Certain cultural practices are shared among several ethnic groups, and is therefore not a sufficient measure of identity. Secondly, he was a strong advocate for any individual to define their own ethnic belonging. This opinion is much rooted in the concept of boundaries, as Barth claims they are the reason for an individual to claim a certain heritage or belonging (Eriksen, 2010). *”If they say they are A, in contrast to another cognate category B (...) they declare their allegiance to the shared culture of A’s”* (Barth in Eriksen, 2010, p. 45). Combining the two explanations of boundaries from Bernstein and Barth, we can say that power relations that influence one’s conception of roles and the following expectations from society, are manifested in internal boundaries that keep the individual under some degree of social control. However, it is crucial here to point out that Bernstein did not limit control as only a mean of reproduction, but also included its potential to change (Bernstein, 1996, p. 19).

### 2.1.3 Classification and framing

Continuing in Bernstein's footsteps, we shall look at classification and framing. Classification in this term is meant as a defining factor of both power relations and control (Bernstein, 1996). Speaking about classification requires a division into categories. Bernstein explains series of categories as a way of organising items within a certain field. In this thesis, we shall concentrate on discourse, which Bernstein also uses as an example (ibid.). He categorises different academic discourses, like subjects in school. In this thesis, the term "discourse" includes the historical line a conversation relates to, and the agenda that is attached to it. Characteristics of such discourses can be religion, moral, academic relations, political relations, culture, critical thinking, philosophy and so on. For now, we shall focus on Bernstein's concept of categories. A category can only be a category provided that there is another category different from the first:

*"In other words, A can only be A if it can effectively insulate itself from B. In this sense, there is no A if there is no relationship between A and something else. The meaning of A is only understandable in relation to other categories in the set; in fact, to all the categories in the set"* (Bernstein, 1996, p. 20).

This quote explains quite clearly that a religious discourse, for instance, only can be defined and categorised as religious, if there are other discourses that are defined as a-religious. Thus, if there is no secularity, all discourses must have a religious aspect to them, but it will not be relevant to mention. If there is no "religion B", there is no point in discussing the actuality of "religion A".

This quote is especially interesting because it positions Bernstein's theory in to structuralism, which is a crucial point in this thesis and the overall theory of science I orient from. I shall explain this thoroughly in chapter 3.1. Bernstein mentions insulation in the quote above. Insulation from other categories is a vital point: this is, according to his theory, where power becomes evidential. Bernstein claims that power preserves insulation from other categories, preserves space between categories, preserves regions of silence and preserves dislocations (Bernstein, 1996, 2003). These structures, though, are not visible or noticeable unless in compromising situations. *Attempts to change degrees of insulation reveal the power relations on which the classification is based and which it reproduces*" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 21).



Bernstein divides classification into a weaker and a stronger degree, where weak classification gives weak insulation. This happens in less specialized sets of categories. Strong classification gives strong insulation, in unique sets of categories. In any case, they represent power relations lying underneath (Bernstein, 1996). In the professional world, for instance, the title nurse is reserved to those holding a bachelor's degree in nursing. Classification is thereby strong. Practically, nurses are authorised to carry out specific procedures that assistants are not. They are given legal responsibility and therefore their tasks during a working day are different from that of the assistant. There is strong insulation between the two categories. In the private sphere, one can say that a father is a father due to his donation of sperm, but also due to his paternal role towards his children. In some cultures, his paternal role is distinctively different from the maternal role. He is expected to carry out certain tasks in the household. Classification is then strong. These tasks are not applicable for others than him, because others have another set of tasks to carry out, that he cannot do. Insulation is therefore also strong. In other cultures, however, where classification is weak, the father might not be biological, but still be the main male role model in the house. His duties might overlap with the mother, as they might take turns, or they might divide tasks according to personal skills and interests rather than gender. Thereby, insulation is weak.

#### *2.1.4 Classification*

We shall dwell upon the topic of weaker and stronger classification, to see how strength of classification may influence the development or reproduction of social groups, social structures and the relation between structures. Briefly explained, Bernstein claims that strong classification of discourse keeps specific sets of knowledge marginalized. This, in turn, can lead to dislocation in transmission of knowledge. He explains the reasons to be formative transmission methods, where local knowledge leads to the operation of simpler operations. Later this can, if the learner copes well, develop into general principles of more abstract nature (Bernstein, 1996). This hierarchy of learning directly leads to unequal distribution of knowledge and therefore also power, favouring those who function well under the given premises. Bernstein's main focus here was the difference between working class and middle class children. As we shall see later, this theory can be just as relevant in cases of gender, majority versus minority and ethnic belonging.

The winners within this strongly classified system, are the few who are coming to produce the discourse, and thereby obtain more control of their operations and the structures that regulate them – though perhaps not as much now, than in the future (ibid.). According to Bernstein, this production of discourse is characterized by disorder; incoherence; the possibility of the unthinkable. Implicit, the power to change the order of discourse, to evolve the discourse itself and to create new discourse is in the hands of this small group of high-achievers. Comparing strong and weak classification, Bernstein clearly states that where strong classification makes people keep things apart, weak classification brings people together in their operations (ibid.).

### *2.1.5 Framing*

As explained above, but put into clearer words, *classification* determines *who* can speak in certain fora, *who* we are recognised as in that circumstance; it gives us the voice. *Framing* then, is the controlling factor on *what* we can say with that given voice (Bernstein, 1996, p. 27; 2003). When control regulates relationships within relations, it is framing that comes to work.

*“Framing is about who controls what. What follows can be described as the internal logic of the pedagogic practice. Framing refers to the nature of the control over*

- *the selection of the communication;*
- *its sequencing (what comes first, what comes second);*
- *its pacing (the rate of expected acquisition);*
- *the criteria; and*
- *the control over the social base which makes this transmission possible.”*

(Bernstein, 1996, p. 27).

Like classification, we shall see that also framing comes in weaker and stronger degrees. Weaker framing gives individuals more apparent control. We are able to decide more freely what to say and when – although perhaps not consciously or actively. Stronger framing reduces this individual control, and we find ourselves more steered by our position within the category because of power relations between us and other individuals (Bernstein, 1996). Further on he suggests that weaker or stronger framing can vary over the different elements mentioned above (ibid.). One might feel comfortable communicating freely over a wide range

of topics, but not in all situations. One might be able to address certain sensitive topics at a high pace, whilst other topics must remain unspoken.

Framing becomes apparent as a regulator of *social* and *discursive* order (Bernstein, 1996, p. 27; 2003). These are systems of rules that control relations. Social order here refers to the internal hierarchy within a social group, meaning the relation between individuals with different status. Discursive order refers to the selection of topics of conversation, the sequence of these, the pacing in which they occur, and the criteria of knowledge that are given within the respective discourse (ibid.). Thus, discursive order can be which discourses can happen, and where and when they can take place. It could be which conversations should be carried out first and second, the order in which they build on each other. It could be how often they occur or how much they are allowed to come forward. It could lastly be how much, and what knowledge an individual must have in order to participate. According to Bernstein, social order is the *regulative discourse* (ibid.), meaning that social order in micro is based on this type of discourse. It regulates individuals' opportunities to express and produce text. "Text" here and throughout this thesis refer to any utterance, verbal event or expression of meaning, for instance images, art or demonstration. Lastly, he calls discursive order the *instructional discourse* (ibid.), meaning the rules on how these individuals can produce text, in which shape or form, and when.

The whole point in explaining Bernstein's concepts of boundaries, control, power relations and classification is to see how these, through framing in weaker or stronger degrees, control pedagogic discourse. Bernstein emphasises that regulative discourse dominates instructional discourse, but with one exception: weak framing over the instructional discourse, gives weak framing over the regulative discourse (Bernstein, 1996). "*In general, where framing is strong, we shall have a visible pedagogic practice. Here, the rules of regulative and instructional discourse are implicit, and largely unknown to the acquirer*" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 28). This would reversely mean that where framing is weak, pedagogic practice is invisible, and the rules of regulative and instructional discourse are explicit and known to the acquirer.

Bernstein explains this clearer by stating that "*While visible pedagogics correspond to a school practice of authority, invisible pedagogics correspond to progressive, learner centred practice (...)*" (Bernstein, Chouliaraki, Bayer, & Gregersen, 2001, p. 35, my translation). In this, authority controlled school practice have strong framing, and because rules are immanent, learners take them for granted. Learner centred school practice has weaker

framing, rules are transcendent, and learners are able to discuss them. This relationship between the regulative and instructional discourse forms the pedagogic device (Bernstein, 1996), and thus becomes object of my analysis and discussion in chapter 5.3.

### *2.1.6 Framing and the Norwegian school system*

We shall, as mentioned, focus on discourse in this thesis. As explained in chapter 2.1.2, different subjects in school constitute different discourses. A key point to Bernstein, that I shall discuss later, is the difference in strength of classification of subjects in school (Bernstein, 1996). According to his theory, subjects can be more or less strongly classified, and also have stronger or weaker internal classification of “self” and “other”. Bernstein spoke for a change of the British school system, with a development of a new sociology of pedagogy. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the timetables, subjects, topics and overall discourses in schools were strongly classified with strong insulation. Subjects were kept apart, subject matters were concrete and instrumental. In the second half of the century, especially towards the end, insulation between subjects weakened, a closer dialogue between and among subjects slowly established, and subject matters became more expressive (Singh, P and Luke, A in Bernstein, 1996).

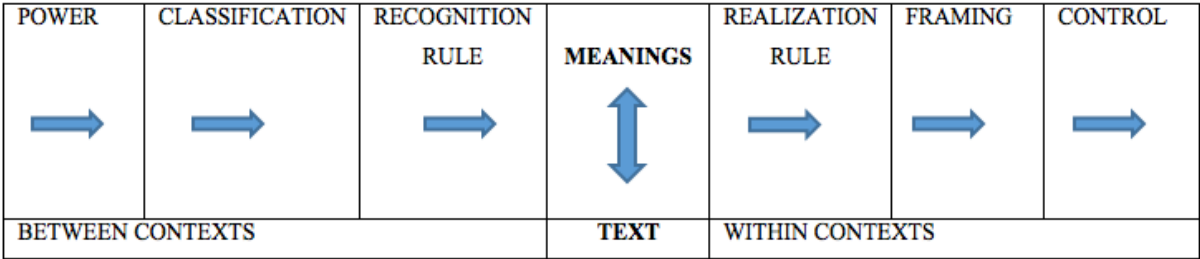
This development has been current in Norway as well, for more than the last two decades (Hoëm & Beck, 2010). The general section of the national curricula LK06, states some general goals of education. This general section was first introduced in the national curriculum Reform -94, it was kept throughout the national curriculum L97 and is still a continued section of LK06 (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006a). In one of the seven domains, of which the general section consists, “the generally educated human”, interdisciplinary approaches is highlighted: *“To provide overview and coherence, it is therefore also important to plan and cooperate across subjects, so that the relevance of the subjects appear and a more wholesome understanding develops”* (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006a, p. 14, my translation). Furthermore, the subject Social Studies as it is today, includes four main areas of focus where three of them traditionally have been taught as separate subjects: History, Geography and Social Studies. The last area of focus is “The explorer”, which is an overall module that are integrated in every activity of the above mentioned. The aim of this area of focus is to stimulate learning and development, critical thinking, discussion and intermediation (The Norwegian Directorate for Education

and Training, 2006b). Consequently, learners are expected to develop appropriate skills and cognitive abilities to combine and make sense of a variety of discourses at the same time. This exact point is a key issue in chapter 5.1, relating to moral discourse and critical thinking, and 5.5.4, relating to cognitive capacity, language barriers and revision of concepts.

*2.1.7 Recognition and realization*

Learning, in Bernstein’s perspective, is a process of several steps: Recognition, passive realisation and active realisation. We shall here focus on the learner, the acquirer of knowledge. Recognition of the learning content is about identifying content as familiar, meaningful and relevant (Bernstein, 1996). Basically, the thought “I have seen this before. I know something about this”, is recognition of content. After recognizing a content, the learner can realize it by thought, by understanding it, and by being able to put meaning together into words. This stage is called passive realization. Even if a content is recognized and realized as understood, the learner must select adequate meanings and produce text according to them, what we call active realization (Bernstein, 1996). Active realization thus becomes evident only in clear expressions. How power, classification, framing and control all influence recognition and realisation, is shown in the model 1:

*Model 1: Conditions of production of text*



(Bernstein, 1996, p. 31)

From this model, we can see that power relations determine classification, which can be of weak or strong degree. A learner is classified as a learner, and is by that in the position of acquiring knowledge facilitated by, presented by, or transmitted by a teacher. If the learner is in possession of the recognition rule for a given subject, content or discourse, she can recognize the content. If she is in possession of the realization rule, she is able to make meaning from that. Framing accompanied with the respective control determines whether or not she can realize the content passively or actively. In the last case she will be able to produce text. If framing and control is strong, her ability to produce text depends on the

nature of the content – if it is appropriate or not within the social context she belongs. If framing and control is weak, she might be able to produce text regardless of this. I will emphasise on *might*, and refer to Bernstein (Bernstein, 1996) as stated in chapter 2.1.4, that weak framing gives individuals more *apparent* control. This leads us straight in to distributive rules, the thinkable and the unthinkable.

### *2.1.8 Knowledge, thinking and distribution*

Which concepts that to each of us is mentally available, is constructed through the socialisation process. Bernstein called this the thinkable and the unthinkable. He argues that any society can be divided in two classes of knowledge: the *mundane* and the *esoteric*<sup>3</sup> (Bernstein, 1996). The mundane is knowledge of earthly and trivial kind. Let us say that mundane knowledge is knowledge that we all, as a group have adopted as the ruling truth. The second class of knowledge, the esoteric, is a hidden, often mystical knowledge reserved for the initiated. An important point here is that these classes are relative to each other, and to time and space. A certain content of knowledge can travel between these two classes in time. What used to be esoteric – the fact that the earth is round and circles around the sun, is now considered mundane. Reversed, what used to be mundane in certain areas of Northern Norway– the idea that shamans can stop blood by the power of thought, is now considered esoteric, only supported by the initiated, those who believe in such.

Bernstein noted that classification of knowledge could also differ in space. In Norway today, Darwin’s theory of evolution is considered mundane. Despite a few missing links, the common perception is that species develop due to shifting conditions, while in certain developing countries, this knowledge is esoteric. Reversed, herbs and natural remedies as means to heal HIV is mundane in some cultures, while the effect of antiretroviral therapy is esoteric. By this, we can see the difference between the thinkable (mundane) and unthinkable (esoteric), and how this can vary within cultural groups in time and among cultural groups in space. After identifying these two classes of knowledge, we shall briefly look at how social groups organize themselves related to this.

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<sup>3</sup> The “mundane/thinkable” here includes the culturally immanent, where cultural values are taken for granted for the initiated. The “esoteric/unthinkable” includes the culturally transcendent, what is outside our cultural comprehension of reality at a given time.

*“Under these conditions, there is a potential discursive “gap”, “space”, which can become the site of alternative possibilities, for alternative realizations of the relation between the material and the immaterial. This potential “gap”, “space”, the site of the “unthinkable”, the “impossible”, can be beneficial and dangerous at one hand and the same time. It is the meeting point of order and disorder, of coherence and incoherence; it is the crucial site of the “yet to be thought”. In a fundamental sense this potentiality is a potentiality of language itself. Any distribution of power attempts to regulate the realization of that potential, in the interests of the social ordering it creates, maintains, and legitimates. In “simple” societies this regulation is effected by the religious system and by the cosmologies to which it gives access and controls”*

(Bernstein, 2003, p. 182)

The relationship between distribution of power, knowledge and forms of consciousness is, according to Bernstein, regulated by the principles of the distributive rules. The essence in this distribution is the thinkable and the unthinkable. A main concept here is, strongly classified, that the thinkable is institutionalized by those who reproduce this knowledge, and the unthinkable is institutionalized by those who produce knowledge (Bernstein, 2003).

## 2.2 Connotations and learning

LK06<sup>4</sup>, the general section clearly states how common concepts and frames of references are the vital part of a well functioning society, as a democratic cornerstone. It enables individuals to take active part in society, and it decreases social and economical indifference:

***“Common understanding in a specialized society:***

*It is a central thought of enlightenment that such frames of reference and interpretation must be joint for the people – must be a part of the general education – if not to create differences in competence that can turn out in undemocratic manipulation and social indifference. (...) Without overall frames of references, it is harder for normal people – not specialists – to take part in decision making that deeply influence their lives”*

(The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006a, p. 14, my translation).

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<sup>4</sup> See chapter 1.1

Connotations are added meaning to a word, that go beyond the dictionary meaning (Henriksen, 2012, p. 14). All words have a denotative meaning – the literal meaning. A cup is literally a container with a handle, sized to a normal portion of drink. A snake is literally a reptile with no limbs and skin covered in scales. Many words have additional connotative meanings – a snake can also mean someone with hidden intentions, someone that always gets it their way despite obstacles, not always using the most morally accepted means. This connotative meaning has a clear negative undertone. However, in the context of working for a common cause, the connotation could hold a positive undertone. A snake could be someone you would like to join your rugby team, or perhaps function as your attorney.

Garza-Cuarón, Ray and Borad (1991) give a thorough explanation of the concept of connotations, its historical development and how the term is most frequently used among scholars today. Historically, Port-Royal logicians spoke of a confusion created from the tension between ideas and words (Garza-Cuarón, Rey, & Broad, 1991). *“For the logician, the sign refers to an object and is thus only one idea (or one set of ideas); however, in every day speech, the idea signified by a word attracts other, “accessory” ideas”* (Garza-Cuarón et al., 1991, p. 55). In this, the Port-Royalists included gestures, tone of voice and body language as complimentary signs that could transform the meaning of words. These accessory ideas are what we today refer to as connotations:

*“By this we mean, for example, those additional meanings that arise in a given speech situation, written context, period, style, ideology, personal history, and so on; in other words, any occasional usage of a word that goes beyond its defined meaning as an isolated item.”*

(Garza-Cuarón et al., 1991, p. 56)

Embedded in this lies a common understanding between those involved in each specific communicative event. Looking at context, time period, ideology, it is agreeable that these factors are facilitated by one’s culture. People develop connotations to words through experience of contexts where specific words are used. Association alone is therefore not the correct synonym, because a connotation is linked to a group’s common association. The common set of connotations enables us to understand each other when speaking metaphorically, using irony or sarcasm, and to pick up the intentions behind utterances.



Cultural context thus plays an important role in establishing connotations to words. We can therefore assume that people with the same cultural experience share connotations of words that might differ from other cultural groups' connotations. Differences might occur between different parts of society – between experienced academics and freshmen, between youth and elders, high income- and low income families, religious and seculars, minorities and majorities, and, relevant to this thesis, between different ethnic groups.

Example: the adjective “*fat*”, when used to describe a human body has the connotations unhealthy, unattractive and lazy in most of the western world. Move to Sudan and you will find connotations as healthy, strong, rich. A story about a fat, middle-aged man, pounding and rubbing his big, round belly while moaning low, might give the western listener expectations of health issues or psychological issues, perhaps suspecting the story to develop into a case of cardiac arrest or diabetes. Not only is overweight in the western world connected to health issues, but it also represents low self control and the possibility of low self esteem. Perhaps the over weight relates to a compulsive eating disorder as a symptom of emotional stress. For a Sudanese, however, the assumption might be that this character is a wealthy person with all assets to live a long, or at least happy life. However – with broadened focus on health issues, nutrition and physical exercise, Sudanese people may change their connotations. A well educated individual's connotations might differ from the elders' in a village. This leads us into the topic of learning.

### 2.3 Learning – Mezirow's perspective

The American sociologist Jack Mezirow states that learning as a process happens as new imprints are interpreted by and old set of expectations. From already established concepts, the learner investigates, fills gaps and search for explanations to incomplete knowledge (Mezirow, 1991). The old set of expectations are crucial in this process because they help the learner organize new information, sort out and discard what is irrelevant, and helps understand the information that comes across. For this process to lead to learning, it needs to be remembered (ibid.). He explains an incomplete learning process this way: “*If an interpretation is not remembered, it implies thinking, but not learning*” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12). The last part of the learning process is action. If new information can lead the learner to reconsider the previous interpretations, the learning process is complete. Action can take

place in different forms, such as “*making a decision, making an association, revising a point of view, reframing or resolving a problem, modifying an attitude, or producing a change in behaviour*” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12).

### 2.3.1 Transformative learning

When learning leads us to build new expectations to potential new learning, Mezirow uses the term transformative learning. Rising one level up from ordinary learning, transformative learning is manifested in action by a change of practice. When an individual develops new understanding and new truths instead of adopting truths from others, he or she strives to achieve more control over their lives as socially responsible, clear-minded decision makers (Illeris, 2001). However, Mezirow’s theory on transformative learning has been object to discussions and critique around the academic world.

The need for clarification of the term, has lead Danish professor Knud Illeris to include the term “identity” to his definition of transformative learning: “*The concept transformative learning includes all learning that means changes in the identity of the learner*” (Illeris, 2013, my translation). Illeris differentiates between identity in adults and in young learners, stating that adults often include their profession, education, condition of family life and socio-cultural belonging in the view of their own identity. These factors are often accomplished or become manifested later in life, and are presented as relatively stable, where as the child is in continuous development of their identity. A well established identity can only persist by the protection of an identity defence. These are psychological barriers that protect how we view our selves, whenever this perception is under influence or is threatened (Illeris, 2001). “*Such an identity defence comes to show in adults in learning- and educational contexts where adjustment, re-education or personal development are intended*” (Illeris, 2001, pp. 94-95, my translation).

Defence of identity plays out in two different ways, according to Illeris: Psychological *defence* is standby and ready to conquer and deal with influencing forces. We shall, however concentrate on the second version, psychological *resistance*. When an individual is under strong influence or exposed to changes, psychological resistance might occur as a reaction to these changes (ibid.). During childhood and adolescence, individuals can show an active resistance towards parents’ or teachers’ attempts of correcting behaviour. In any child, this

resistance is an important part of forming their own opinions, building their character and developing values.

When the child reaches adulthood, these opinions and values come to show as identity defence and active resistance whenever the individual is exposed to contradicting statements or compromising situations. Thus, we can say that active resistance leads the individual in confrontation (ibid.). Passive resistance, on the contrary, works as a preventive mean, when adults avoid exposing themselves to situations that require change. This can come to show through quitting their newly acquired job, avoiding social situations that contradict with the standing values or opinions, or simply lingering in safe environments where one is surrounded by like-minded. Berliner and Berthelsen highlight that when such passive resistance is identified within a safe environment, with the support from trusted mentors, it becomes possible for the individual to work on confronting themselves with this resistance, and by that allow new and evolving learning-processes to happen (ibid.). Likewise, it is implied that environments that do not accommodate and consider sensitive processes, might have the opposite effect: hindering adults to evolve from this stage (Tollefsen, 2015a).

## 2.4 The I, The Me and The Significant Other

Before continuing exploring Bernstein's concepts, we shall take a small dip into George Herbert Mead's theory of the self. This becomes relevant as we speak about boundaries and negotiation, which practically can be described as an inner conversation. Mead distinguished between an unconscious, subjective self and a conscious, objective self: The I and The Me. He explains the relationship between the two as a process of two phases, where The I in the first phase is acting and reacting. Then the objective self, the Me is able to reflect on these actions.

*“It is only after we have said the word we are saying that we recognize ourselves as the person that has said it, as this particular self that says this particular thing; it is only after we have done the thing that we are going to do that we are aware of what we are doing”*

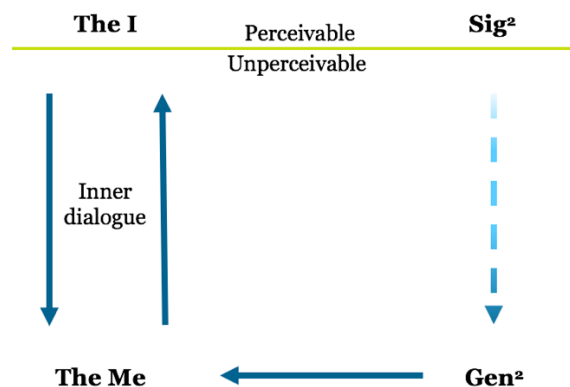
(Mead & Morris, 1934, p. 203).

This process is not merely of chronologic order, but happens as a continuous dialogue between the two. We can determine to do an act, expect that we will carry out something. But Mead's point is still that it is through action we realise ourselves (Mead & Morris, 1934).

According to Imsen, a fundamental element in this theory is that the conversation between The I and The Me is closely linked to our social surroundings. The objective Me is only able to reflect on the actions of the I because of reactions from others, specifically those that are close to us or those who represent some kind of ideal. Mead called these people The *Significant others* (Imsen, 2005). However, Mead claims that in the process of inner dialogue, it is not the significant others who directly interfere with The Me, but The Me's interpretations, expectations and assumptions of how The Significant other would think of the act, that colours the dialogue between The I and The Me. Mead called this interpretation The *Generalized others*. These conceptions differ between individuals, and is often developed differently in various social, ethnic or cultural groups (Schiefloe, 2011). By that, we can say that the concept of The Generalized others is a mental construction, arisen from the interpretation of who we conceive as The Significant others.

In model 2 below, I have illustrated this internal conversation and the relationship between The I; The Me; The Significant and The Generalized others. The horizontal line below The I and The Significant others (Sig<sup>2</sup>) distinguishes between what is perceivable and unperceivable. The Me and The Generalised others (Gen<sup>2</sup>) are phenomena from the conscious but unperceivable. The Generalised others are, as mentioned, a mental construction that influences the inner dialogue initiated by The Me. This model goes well in hand with the theory of ontological depth that I shall explain in chapter 3.1.2.

Model 2: Inner dialogue



From this model we can make a thought example from a crowded room:

Peter, or more specifically “Peter The I” cracks a joke based on a sensitive piece of information about someone not present in the room. The act triggers some reactions from significant people in connection to either Peter or the object of the joke. These reactions are not conceived objectively by “Peter the I”, but are rather transformed into a generalised other as “Peter The Me” interprets these reactions. He is then able to reflect on the appropriateness of the joke and whether or not the reactions came out of his inappropriateness or their up tightness, or perhaps a misconception of his sense of humour. All Peter’s interpretations of reactions, or lack of reactions, contributes to a base of expectations. Thus, Peter builds a foundation for the inner dialogue between “Peter The I” and “Peter The Me”, that will take part in controlling Peters future acts, or lack of acts, and his own reflection of those. In the future, all we can sense, see and measure, are the actual acts. Peter’s inner dialogue along with his conceptions of society’s expectations to him, are all hidden underneath the surface.

## 2.5 Socialisation and the acquisition of language

Language, norms and rules are common denominators to all societies (Hoëm & Beck, 2010). Children mainly develop their language abilities through the socialisation process within the family. Childhood and adolescence years are also spent to acquire skills and knowledge relevant to survive and function within the respective society, some of which are facilitated within the family or in interaction with other significant members of the community. This type of socialisation has an informal character. Throughout childhood, most developed societies also offer formal socialisation through the institution of schooling or other forms of official or organized training (Hoëm & Beck, 2010). In Norway today, schooling is not only embedded in the Constitution, but it is also highly supported by parents and caretakers as a crucial part of a child’s upbringing and cognitive development.

### 2.5.1 *The nature of socialisation*

The Norwegian sociologist and professor Anton Hoëm defines some general conditions to this socialisation process: “(...) *our surroundings are the rooms of where socialisation takes place, and that our surroundings therefore is the entirety that our identity and knowledge develops in relation to*” (Hoëm & Beck, 2010, p. 33, my translation). By this, Hoëm states that the knowledge, language and skills – that all are denominators of our identity – at all times are developed and acquired with reference to the surroundings we find ourselves in.

Because these surroundings are the whole and entire premise provider as to what is possible to learn, we can implicitly say that it is impossible to acquire skills, words, concepts or knowledge that have not been spoken for in one way or the other. I would like to argue that this statement shows that it is impossible to know of something, or use words to explain something that you have never been introduced to or known the existence of.

On the other hand, Hoëm mentions as a general condition, that the socialisation process changes as the combination of units in the community changes. A change in the total set of surroundings give a change in socialisation. *“As the socialisation process keeps on changing, the product of the process, namely identity, constantly keeps changing”* (Hoëm & Beck, 2010, p. 33, my translation). In total, Hoëm speaks of five processes that sum up the socialisation process:

- General socialisation: The development of the personal identity at micro-level, or the development of the cultural identity of the society.
- Reinforcing socialisation: Blooming and cultivation of cultural elements.
- De-socialisation: Distancing from one’s own culture.
- Re-socialisation: Start-up of new culture. It is worth mentioning de- and re-socialisation may be one or two separate processes, as they might occur at the same time or separately. If one of the processes occur, it will result in new identity. However, a process might start but remain incomplete, and will thus result in a weakening of already existing cultural identity, and a truncated or incomplete identity.
- Shielded socialisation: At micro- or macro-level, groups, individuals or organisations might resist change and re-socialisation. This can happen if re-socialisation due to influence is unpleasant or contradicting to strong beliefs or norms. Instead, one seeks to make a shield towards this influence, because it is not possible to get away from it. Shielded socialisation often gives unintended results, as it creates social “islands” that will have difficulties communicating with the outside world (Hoëm & Beck, 2010, my translation).

Hoëm used the terms de- and re-socialisation in the context of the assimilation of the Sami people. I will stress that this thesis refer to the terms descriptively, hence referring to the change in socialisation that happens when an individual is exposed to changes in social environment.

Last in this chapter, I will highlight two important factors of the intentional course of socialisation, and I will present this with formal socialisation in mind. Identifying the intention of the socialisation provides the learner with knowledge of where we are moving, what the goal is and what there is to achieve by reaching it. Providing a safe environment - Hoëm stresses this especially related to formal socialisation such as the school – provides the learner with security, contentment, space and sufficient time to complete the process (Hoëm & Beck, 2010).

## 2.6 Critical thinking

There are various definitions and outlooks on the skill of critical thinking. Generally, it revolves around being able to question prevailing conceptions. Wade and Tarvis defines it as an ability to take up well-supported reasons to make objective judgements, disregarding emotion and anecdote (Finn, 2011).

*”Critical thinkers are able to look for flaws in arguments and to resist claims that have no support. They realize that criticizing an argument is not the same as criticizing the person making it, and they are willing to engage in vigorous debate about the validity of an idea. Critical thinking, however, is not merely negative thinking. It includes the ability to be creative and constructive, the ability to come up with alternative explanations for events, think of implications of research findings, and apply new knowledge to social and personal problems”*

(Wade and Tavis in Finn, 2011, p. 2)

We shall keep this definition on critical thinking in mind when discussing the empirical findings in chapter 5.

## 3 Methodology

The aim of science is to provide new knowledge that can increase our understanding of reality. The nature of the research approach determines both the type of information that the produced data provides, and which conclusions we are able to draw from it. Qualitative research methods give us in depth information that can assist in explaining reasons behind observed phenomena in society (Kvale, Brinkmann, Anderssen, & Rygge, 2015; Thagaard, 2013). This chapter explains the thesis' theoretical approach to science and reality, and the chosen research methods. Further on, a presentation on methods of analysis and the processing of the produced empirical material is accounted for. Lastly, ethical perspectives in relation to this specific thesis are addressed.

### 3.1 Critical realism

During the last half of the nineteen seventies, the English philosopher Roy Bhaskar developed a new position within theory of science. In the previous years, positivism had been the ruling perspective, but Bhaskar had several objections to this perspective (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2005). Based on these fundamental objections, Bhaskar developed the theory of critical realism, and formed the theoretical landscape of understanding science from which my thesis orients from.

#### *3.1.1 What is real? Ontology and epistemology*

The aim of science is to investigate reality. Hence, it is necessary to define what reality is – a question of ontology. Empiricists claim that reality consist of what can be sensed, (Koch, 2009). “Esse est percipi” – what is perceived, is (Kran, 2016). Logical positivists support this understanding by claiming that the reality exist by our knowledge of it. It is a social construction that depend on man's investigations (Pedersen, 2009). On the contrary, critical realists, lead by Roy Bhaskar argue that reality exists regardless of our knowledge.

Positivists use perception as a criterion to acknowledge science, but a critical realist must also include processes of causality to their definition of what is real. If one phenomenon cause another phenomenon, it must be real, whether or not we are able to perceive it directly (R. Bhaskar, 2002). Thus, a critical realist can acknowledge a magnetic field as real even if it is



unperceivable, because it has a causal effect on metal. The criterion to say that a phenomenon actually is real, is causality. The meaning of the term causality in critical realism will be addressed in chapter 3.1.3.

Once our view on reality is well established, it is relevant to discuss the topic of our knowledge about reality and how we can obtain such knowledge. The question of epistemology arises. *“Epistemology in classical terms aim to disclose what it really mean to acknowledge something, and what the reasoning behind our acknowledgement is”* (Koch, 2009, p. 82, my translation). Critical realism advocates that the aim of science is to get as close to the truth as possible (Koch, 2009). They accept that knowledge is socially produced, and therefore exist in the view of its time. Thus, knowledge is both fallible and mutable at all times. Critical realists are therefore ontological realists and epistemological relativists (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2005).

A critical realist differentiates between the transitive and intransitive dimension. Hereby we have knowledge of reality, which is the epistemological content, and the reality that actually exist, the ontological content. The intransitive dimension is at all times the object of our investigation, which we carry out based on our already existing knowledge, the transitive dimension (R. B. D. Bhaskar, 2006). The intransitive dimension is deep, stratified and in an open system that is differentiated in domains (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2005). I will explain these domains further in chapter 3.1.2.

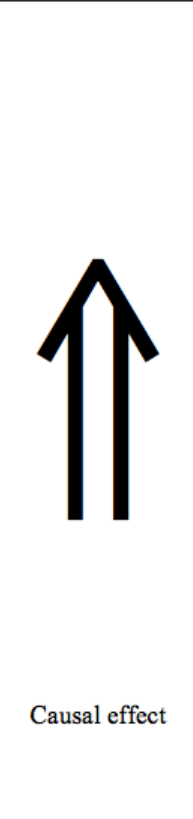
Since it is assumed that reality exist regardless of our knowledge, our knowledge is constantly changed and modified as we disclose further aspects of reality. This implies that the truth about reality exists, and a critical realist will therefore oppose to the idea that reality is a complete social construction. Still, it is accepted that our interpretation and understanding of it is coloured by our social viewpoint, our assumptions, and at any time, the existing knowledge. This leads us into the core of this thesis: Based on the statements above, we can not assume that a word applied by two different people holds the same connotations, or that the respective individuals relate the word to identical concepts. Instead, agents develop their concepts within, and as a result of, the social environment the agent operates in. Because language is a social product, it is culture.

Empiricists will however claim that there are no underlying explanations to events and concepts – until they are actually perceived. As a researcher, I cannot perceive certain events directly. As explained in the example of “Peter the I” and “Peter the Me” in chapter 2.4, I cannot perceive neither my informants’ conception of the significant other’s reactions, nor their inner dialogue that controls what they will or will not express. I can only perceive the words or the use of terminology, and how my informant applies it in a conversation or a text. Still, I assume that there are reasons and explanations behind the concept, not yet disclosed. Concepts and connotations are real even if they are not directly perceivable, because they exist in thought. If thought is real, then concepts and connotations must also be real in the sense that they do appear in our minds. They relate to real phenomena and are connected to words we communicate through language. And so it becomes my clear agenda to initiate conversations in interviews that can reveal signs of these unperceivable processes.

### *3.1.2 Ontological depth, exemplified*

Bhaskar advocates that agents are influenced by social structures. He also defines the purpose of science as disclosing the mechanisms that form these structures, in order to promote emancipation (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2005). When investigating the ontological depth of the phenomena we are interested in, we can reveal structures that can help explaining our actions. This will help free us in decision-making processes and in turn develop society. In the view of social studies in basic education, knowledge and consciousness of these structures help us grow into whole members of society, as stated in the general section of the national curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006a).

The concept of ontological depth is about three domains. The empirical domain is what can be observed and experienced; what can be proven through our senses. The actual domain are actions and events that come with the empirical phenomenon. The real domain are the mechanisms that make actions and events happen, that in turn are shown through the empirical domain (R. Bhaskar, 2002; Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2005). Model 3 offers a concrete example on the ontological depth of a phenomenon, and how this can be understood:

<p><b>The empirical domain</b> <i>Observed and experienced</i></p>	<p>The pupil say "I am married"</p>	<p>Can be interpreted as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A formality</li> <li>➤ A certain status</li> <li>➤ A certain role, etc.</li> </ul>		<p>The researcher must, regardless of the agent's awareness of the underlying domains...</p>
<p><b>The actual domain</b> <i>Actions and events</i></p>	<p>Marriage involves certain rights and duties.</p>	<p>More or less freedom or responsibility of actions, financial   responsibility or freedom, care and/or custody, etc.</p>		
<p><b>The real domain</b> <i>Mechanisms</i></p>	<p>These rights and duties are executed within the social structure. They mirror the values and ethical guidelines of what is considered a well-functioning society.</p>	<p>Organize private life in moral frames, build structures for starting a family, sexual health and security. Influenced by socioeconomic conditions such as tax provision, law of inheritance, etc.</p>		<p>... seek to reveal all three domains, in order to find causes to the observed.</p>

(Tollefsen, 2016)

To explain this model, I will use two very different examples:

Karina, 35 years old, Norway: Karina is in the empirically domain married. She wears a ring, she went through a ceremony with her partner, and this is documented by a legal contract and approved by law. More importantly in this case, through the verbal expression "I am married". In the actual domain, her lifestyle has remained the same as before the wedding. She lives with her partner as before, her partner brought a child from a previous relationship into their home, of whom she functions as a caretaker on a practical level. In the real domain, this marriage has some legal and economic benefits. This gives Karina financial security over the couple's common assets, and also gives her status as next of kin to her partner. The Norwegian church's policy is that two adults should be joined in matrimony in order to live together, even if this is not widely practiced among its members. It might be so that this marriage framework is of moral value to Karina, and that this is also a reason for her to marry. It might just as likely be so that Karina does not hold these moral viewpoints, but has a different, perhaps romantic reasoning for her choice of marrying. She could have a civil

wedding. It is also relevant to mention that the law of marriage allows her partner to be of either gender.

Ameneh, 35 years old, Afghanistan: Ameneh is in the empirically domain married, she has, like Karina, participated in a ceremony that has resulted in a formal document, or documented by the confirmation of witnesses. She, like Karina, says the words “I am married”. Looking at the actual domain, in Ameneh’s case, the marriage is a formality that changes certain aspects of her daily life. She changes location, moves away from her family and has now specific obligations towards both her husband and his family, and there are now certain expectations to her from various parts of society. She is able, and expected to get pregnant and build a family within frames that are both religiously and morally accepted. She might use certain symbolic attire, and might have the right and duties to participate in specific social contexts. In the real domain, all these events and actions are caused by structural conditions that are mirroring the society’s moral and ethical guidelines.

Regardless of Karina’s and Ameneh’s awareness of these structures, a critical realist researcher must take into consideration that these structures influence their actions. The difference between Karina and Ameneh becomes interesting if they are placed into each others’ world.

### *3.1.3 Bhaskar’s view on causality*

An Empiricist’s view on causality becomes inapplicable when introducing critical realism (R. Bhaskar, 2002). As we have seen, empiricists claim that if a phenomenon is perceivable, it has causal power. When Bhaskar included non-perceivable phenomena to his ontology, he synchronously rejected the traditional view on causality. Paul Lewis gives an account for Bhaskar’s argument of causality:

*“Critical realists contend that the existence of social structures is a necessary condition for intentional human agency, arguing that activities like speaking, driving on public roads, cashing cheques, giving lectures, and so forth, would be impossible in the absence of social structures such as (respectively) rules of grammar, the highway code, banking systems, teacher-student relationships, and so on.”*

(Lewis, 2000, p. 251)

Bhaskar did evidently believe that social structures have a cause on the actions of the agent – thus he claimed that the agent would not act in that manner without being under the influence of the same structures. These structures are built and established by previous generations. Principally, agents are limited by structures established before their time, and structures that agents are changing, influence the lives of the following generations (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2005). Therefore, structures as causal evidence must be identified by other characteristics or criteria than perception alone. Bhaskar included the following aspects to his concept of causality:

- Multideterminism: Reasons behind a phenomenon can consist of several factors.
- Prediction is impossible: The society is an open system influenced by an incontrollable number of factors. It is impossible and purposeless to predict effects by inherent orderliness.
- The thought and idea has causal effect. Unconscious processes can lead to action that is perceivable.
- Reasons are tendencies. They do not necessarily have to be manifested in action.
- Reason = cause. Agents have reasons to act. Not all causes are necessarily well-reasoned, but all reasons have causes. Ergo: reasons cause action. (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2005; Tollefsen, 2016)

### 3.2 Selection of informants

My thesis relates to adult immigrants taking up basic education in Norway. My main informants are therefore representatives of this group. It could be of great interest to do a quantitative study on connotations to key words in civic education. This approach would ideally produce data that could enable me to make generalised conclusions to the population. However, it would not allow me to follow up with in depth questions and get explanations to data that come across as somewhat blurred. Another option was triangulating the study where specific words used in qualitative interviews formed the basis to a questionnaire on connotations connected to these words, with a selection of relevant pupils, and a control group of young 10<sup>th</sup> graders. That study could also be done reversed by doing a quantitative exploration of connotations, and then do a qualitative interview of a focus group, to answer

the “why’s and how’s”. Still, this method required ample time and it would be quite challenging to recruit enough informants of similar backgrounds, for the sake of reliability.

Paul Martin Opdal claims that agents are not necessarily aware of the content of concepts relating to words they use. He states that word, concept and phenomenon are not equivalent (Opdal, 2008). This is relevant information when selecting research topic, group and method. Considering Opdal’s statements, merely interviewing the informants about their concepts is not a sufficient method to disclose concept content. It was therefore necessary to do a field study by observing teaching sessions and class discussions on real topics relevant to the curriculum. This observation formed the background of my interviews, where my informants were able to discuss in depth issues concerning the overall topic taught in class. In preparation to this, I looked over the topics in the lesson plan previous to the observation, and studied the aims of competence in the curriculum.

### *3.2.1 Composition of focus groups*

When selecting participants to a study, there are discussions whether it is advisable to use pre-existing or purpose-constructed groups. Michael Bloor argue that pre-existing groups can add value to the study (Bloor, 2001). There are several benefits to gain from approaching pre-existing groups in terms of easier recruitment and also to ensure that the participants feel a sense of belonging or responsibility to actually attend the discussion. However, more important is that pre-existing groups facilitate the possibility of naturally occurred data, which is of specific interest for this thesis. Bloor emphasizes this convenient factor, quoting Kitzinger who explain that “*Above all, it is useful to work with pre-existing groups because they provide one of the social contexts within which ideas are formed and decisions made*” (Bloor, 2001, p. 22). As much as it is natural to approach a class of pupils in the case of this thesis, I will continue to discuss how this factor comes to play in my research.

Bloor explains how a group of people with already established relationships can catalyse discussions, add pressure to one another and bring to the table subtopics that might be of great value to the researcher.

*“Research participants who belong to pre-existing social groups may bring to the interaction comments about shared experiences and events and may challenge any discrepancies between expressed beliefs and actual behaviour and generally promote discussion and debate.”*

(Bloor, 2001, p. 22)

In this thesis, where the aim is to disclose the understanding behind concepts used in social studies in basic education, it is of vital significance to set words connected to concepts on trial. As a researcher I have only limited knowledge of different ways to turn, how to challenge the informants in order to dig deeper. In the interviews I had to rely on their ability to give me hints or even clear directions, or to help me reveal different understandings of a word used. Moreover, informants could complement each other in cases where they represent different layers of understanding of the structures behind the social phenomenon we were discussing. My aim is to disclose the ontological depth of a phenomenon; thus the group interaction process is of crucial value to the project. Moreover, the language barriers that occurred when interviewing informants in their second language were reduced because of the opportunity to help one another in translation or assist others in finding the correct terms.

### *3.2.2 Dealing with disadvantages*

Pre-existing groups might also have a limiting effect on informants' freedom of expression. Ethnic or religious boundaries amongst group members might restrain informants when it comes to sharing sensitive information. *“Some pre-existing social groups, may not, for example, be very supportive of individual difference or eccentricity outside the group setting. Other groups may find particular topics of high sensitivity”* (Bloor, 2001, p. 26). In the suspicion of such an event, I have recruited the same informants to individual interviews. This allowed them to bring forward information that might otherwise be held back. Moreover, it gave the informants time to reflect and associate without feeling that they were getting off track from the group conversation. Another reason to do follow-up interviews individually was to see whether a change of environment or context would affect the informants' statements.

Thagaard stresses that the relationship between informant and interviewer cannot be completely neutral (Thagaard, 2013). My group interview took place in the informants' lunchroom at school. Even if the door was closed and the environment was cosy and relaxing,

it was still on the school premises, and we could hear the voices of other classes through the thin walls. This was arguably a reminder of the school context, and consequently, the continuous struggle of achievement could possibly colour their statements. This is relevant, not because there was a point in itself to speak non-academically, but because I would like the informants to speak their true opinions and not what they would assume that I would like to hear. This would evidently be an issue more or less regardless of context, but minimizing the factors that could amplify it was still needed. Individual interviews were therefore held in the informants' own homes. The two situations have allowed various utterances to come across, and in cases where they were repeated, my interpretations of them have been reinforced. Yet it is up to me to analyse and discuss the structures that control and regulate these utterances. The individual interviews have given me valuable information about the informants' concepts and connotations.

### *3.2.3 The final method body*

The research process eventually looked like this:

- 1. Preparatory document analysis:** Explore relevant aims of competence in the national curriculum, of which are taught during my time of observation. Explore "Criteria of academic achievement" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016)
- 2. Observation in the classroom:** Open observation in a class of adult basic school education pupils, during Social Studies lessons, at a learning centre for adults somewhere in Norway. Continuous analysis of the conversation between and among learners and teacher.
- 3. Semi structured interviews of focus group:** Interviews with 5 learners, mixed genders and nationalities, based on topics discussed in class (Appendix A).
- 4. Semi-structured interview:** Interview with subject teacher in Social Studies based on the teacher's experience in teaching and assessing the subject (Appendix A).
- 5. Preliminary CDA:** Analysing highlights of the group discussion.
- 6. Semi structured interview:** Individual interviews with learners from the focus group, where the aim was to go deeper into findings from the preliminary analysis. Interviews took place in the informant's homes. One informant did not attend individual interview due to private obligations (Appendix A).
- 7. CDA of findings:** An overall Critical Discourse Analysis of all data collected.



### 3.3 The qualitative research interview

Steinar Kvale (2015) points out that in a qualitative interview, the researcher herself becomes the research instrument.

#### 3.3.1 Ten criteria of qualification

By defining ten criteria of qualification, Kvale explains how the interviewer can determine the quality of the research: *Knowledge, structure, clarity, friendliness, sensitivity, openness, control, critical, retention and interpretation* (Kvale et al., 2015).

*Knowledge* about the field of study enables the researcher to follow the essential parts of the conversation. *Structural* skills are useful to keep the interview on track, for the sake of the research, but also for the informant. *Clarity* of language, fluency in formulation and use of jargon creates good communication. A *friendly* approach to the informant and the situation creates a relaxing atmosphere where the informant can speak freely and open up to talking about loaded topics. A *sensitive* interviewer knows when to dig deeper and when to respect the informant's boundaries. *Openness* in the interview process allows new and possible valuable insights come forward in the conversation. A sense of *control* is useful to keep the conversation on track. *Retention* helps the interviewer to measure and relate new information with already existing knowledge. Continuous, *critical* assessment of what is being said enables the interviewer to judge and possibly follow up statements by asking critical questions. *Interpreting* along the way makes sure that the interviewer can analyse and verify her interpretations continuously (Kvale et al., 2015; Tollefsen, 2015b).

#### 3.3.2 Reliability and validity

The above mentioned criteria of qualification are all relevant in the question of reliability in any qualitative study based on interviews. Cases of weak reliability and validity are direct result of errors in the research process, including the analysis and discussion of the interpreted data. "*Reliability relates to the consistency and trustworthiness of the research results. Reliability is often treated in association with the question of whether a result can be reproduced at other times by other researchers*" (Kvale et al., 2015, p. 276, my translation). Looking at the criteria of qualification in light of reliability, we understand that the production and development of data is a process where reliability is highly relevant. Tove Thaaagard gives

account for the relationship between the researcher and informant. She states that the empirical body is created in the events of this relationship, and that data is produced as a result of this interaction (Thagaard, 2013). This draws us into the discussion of reliability, whether another researcher would come to the same conclusions using the same method. Critical realism acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed. Thagaard stresses that the researcher must discuss and give reason to her influence and how this affects the data (Thagaard, 2013). It is therefore important to consider my role as interviewer during the collection of data, and to give account for the process of the analysis and further development of my findings.

Validity comes in as an important barometer of whether or not the interpretations of the findings are valid, if they can be used to explain or describe the actual reality it was intending (Thagaard, 2013). According to Seale, internal validity relates to the interpretations of the actual content, whilst external validity relates to the transmission to other fields outside the research project (Seale in Thagaard, 2013). I will argue that reliability and validity are closely related in that reliability forms the premises of valid conclusions. Reliability can be illustrated as the sum of all factors that influence the constructional framework of a building, and validity as the appropriateness and safety of all activities that are taking place in that building. Considering the validity of the interpretations depends on the reliability of the research process. We cannot in the same manner say that reliability depends on validity. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that weak validity may be a significant indicator of poor reliability. By that, we can conclude that the question of reliability is fundamental in the evaluation of validity in research (Tollefsen, 2015b).

In this specific thesis, reliability in the production of data and validity of analysis results are especially crucial points because of language barriers and due to the fact that the presented results are my own conclusions based on interpretation and analysis. I will continue to give account for the research process and thus answer to reliability issues and the internal validity in chapter 3.4. and 3.5. If the reader considers the reliability of this study to be trustworthy, and accepts the internal validity of the results, I will raise two final questions that can answer to the external validity:

1. Are learners affected by the power of social structures, as accounted for in chapter 2 and 4?
2. Are the use of words and common conceptual understanding also relevant in other fields?

If the reader gives positive answers to both questions, the external validity must also be strong. In that case, the external relevance of the thesis is equally reinforced.

### 3.4 Critical Discourse Analysis

*"Critical discourse analysis is a problem-oriented and transdisciplinary set of theories and methods that have been widely used in educational research"* (Rogers, Collins, & Fairclough, 2011, p. 1). Language as a power resource becomes the objective in critical discourse analysis, hereby referred to as CDA (Bryman, 2008). The aim of CDA is to study the empirical evidence of relations between discourse and social and cultural domains to which discourse relates. Still, within the field of CDA, there are several different comprehensions as to how this should take place. This thesis relates to Norman Fairclough's framework. Where discourse in general is conceived as both constitutional and constituted, Fairclough's framework also includes discourse as a way of which social practice is reproduced and changed (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). This implies that social structures are manifested through discourse, but also that discourse can break with social structures, and thereby represent elements of change. Not only do such clashes between discourses and structures create change, they also reveal the underlying structures. However, social relations, power relations, identities and knowledge are also under influence of other structures and social practices than discourse (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). *"Fairclough understands social structure as social relations of both discursive and non-discursive elements"* (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 65).

When investigating discourse, Fairclough refers to Halliday's multifunctional approach to language, which concentrates on two dimensions of discourse: *the communicative event* and *the order of discourse*. The communicative event includes the following aspects:

- *"Analysis of the discourses and genres which are articulated in the production and the consumption of text (the level of discursive practice);"*

- *Analysis of the linguistic structure (the level of the text); and*
- *Considerations about whether the discursive practice reproduces or, instead, restructures the existing order of discourse and about what consequences this has for the broader social practice (the level of social practice). ”*

(Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 69)

The level of discursive practice here refers to what type of discourse the communicative event belongs under, both thematically and of the relation between producer and consumer of text. On the last level of social practice, we are looking at the content of what is being said, and by that identifying the function this utterance has in its communicative outreach. It could bring forward historical, legal, political, professional or personal information, or state an opinion, an expression of support or opposition to previous discourse content. In any case, it will either be expressions of reproduction or restructuration, or somewhere in the tension between these.

The second bullet point above, the level of the text, will not be relevant in this thesis. In conversations with me, my informants are speaking their second or third language - Norwegian, which is only moderately developed. This implies that the choice of words or how to phrase a certain utterance is not necessarily conscious, more believably unconscious, or simply a result of a narrow vocabulary in their second language. It will be hard to argue the reliability and validity of an analysis based on an analysis of the linguistic structure in their utterances. I choose therefore to focus on the level of discursive practice and the level of social practice in the communicative events from my interviews.

Fairclough explains orders of discourse as a mediator of social practices. “*Orders of discourse comprised genres, discourses, and styles or ‘ways of interacting’, ‘ways of representing’, and ‘ways of being’*” (Fairclough in Rogers et al., 2011, p. 119). We can also say that the order of a discourse relates to how previous discourse within certain fields colour the production of new discursive events. For instance, an utterance on the topic of freedom of speech, builds on the person’s knowledge of historical events on the matter; Martin Luther King’s famous speech “I have a dream”; regulative laws and rights; personal encounters with the dilemma; ruling conceptions among one’s significant others, and so forth. All of these previous conversations form the base to the conversation today, it influences one’s opinions, one’s thoughts on the matter, and possibly one’s values. Moreover, orders of discourse mediate practices of teaching and learning in particular networks. By that, social practices

control “*the selection of certain structural possibilities and the exclusion of others, and the retention of these selections over time in particular areas of social life*” (Fairclough in Rogers et al., 2011, p. 120)

### *3.4.1 Fairclough’s three-dimensional model*

Text gives insight in linguistic aspects of discourse. However, Fairclough argues that lingering in the text dimension results in a superficial understanding of structures and how agents operate within them. He calls for an interdisciplinary perspective where the textual analysis is combined with social analysis. The important momentum is the fact that “*(...) social practices are shaped by social structures and power relations and that people are often not aware of these processes*” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 66). Using CDA in Fairclough’s tradition means to focus on the following three dimensions:

- **Text**, as it is written, said or shown.
- **Discursive practice**, production and consumption of text. In my thesis, the level of discursive practice
- **Social practice**, the fact that people utter certain views, and the phenomena these utterances refer to (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002)

Analysing text and analysing discursive practice is somewhat related in the sense that text is produced and consumed by discursive practice. Meaning, previous discourses form a base of which new conversations can relate to. When producing text, we draw on experience, knowledge and impulses from previous discourses, and these previous discourses also help us interpret text we come across as text consumers. Nevertheless, discursive practice also relates to social practice and text as a mediator. “*(...) people use language to produce and consume texts – that texts shape and are shaped by social practice*” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 69). I consider Fairclough’s framework for CDA is an adequate method of exploring and disclosing the ontological depth of my informants’ utterances, as explained in my presentation of critical realism.

### *3.4.2 CDA as research method*

Analysing the interviews, I organized excerpts of the interviews in topics, to identify similar or contrasting statements. Then I systematically worked through each excerpt of interest,

translated the text into English, and set them up in a template based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). I split the template into four columns: **Text**, translation, **discursive practice** and **social practice**, and colour coded the excerpts.

Model 4: Similar statements

Topic 2: CHILDREN (Recruitment process through childbirth)

	Text	Text – English translation	Discursive practice	Social practice
1.	<p>M1: Det første tanken kan være for eksempel at barn... er et lite menneske som, som kommer til verden. Nå. Det er sånn... ja... jeg tror.</p> <p>I: Mmm. Hva synes du om det?</p> <p>M1: Ja, jeg... jeg synes... det er viktig for mennesker for å rekruttere og øke, eller å... hvis vi sier det er viktig for at mennesker skal overleve... videre (leve videre).</p>	<p>M1: The first thought can be for example that children... is a small human who, who comes into the world. Now. It is like that... yes... I think.</p> <p>I: Mmm. What do you think about that?</p> <p>M1: Yes, I... I think... it is important for humans to recruit and increase, or to... if we say it is important for humans to survive... further (live on).</p>	<p>Reproduction discourse: - About the functions behind childbirth to society.</p>	<p>Conditions of the institution of reproduction:</p> <p>The informant looks first and foremost at children as bearers of the responsibility to sustain humanity. Humans must make sure that their respective societies continues and increases.</p>

Model 5: Contrasting statements

3.	<p>I: (Om en muslim kan gi barnet sitt et kristent navn) Kan du gjøre det?</p> <p>M1: Det er... det er ingen som nekter. Men... vi, selv om... det er noen er religiøse og noen er tradisjonelle (navn). Og vi har ikke noen som heter 'Peter' i Somalia.</p> <p>I: Nei...?</p> <p>M1: Det er derfor. Og det er mange som sier: Hvor henter du det fra, det navn?</p> <p>I: Hva tror du folk ville si? Hva tror du folk ville tenke?</p> <p>M1: Eh... når noen... folk er forskjellige, men noen kan mene at jeg hentet fra</p>	<p>I: (About whether a Muslim can give his child a Christian name) Can you do that?</p> <p>M1: There are... no one who denies. But... we, even if... there are some are religious and some are traditional (names). And we do not have anyone named 'Peter' in Somalia.</p> <p>I: No...?</p> <p>M1: That's why. And there are many who are saying: Where do you get that from, that name?</p> <p>I: What do you think people would say? What do you think people would think?</p> <p>M1: Eh... when some... people are different.</p>	<p>Cultural/religious discourse: - About the need to link a child's name either to religion or cultural belonging, to maintain religious or cultural acceptance.</p> <p>Moral discourse: - About other's assessments of one's actions and values</p>	<p>Conditions of the religious institution:</p> <p>Names are a symbol of belonging, values and a mean of discrimination from other groups that are different from ones own. The informant is aware of the expectations to him following specific guidelines in choosing a name, how the name sends signals of the informant's values and moral viewpoint.</p>
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Model 6: Loaded statements, contrasting

6.	<p>I: (...) Så dere sier at barn gir dere veldig mye. Hva tror dere at de som ikke har barn får i livet, som ikke barn kan gi? Hva får de? Dere som får barn, dere fyller livet deres med barn. Hva fyller de andre livet sitt med? Hva kan de gjøre, hva er verdtifullt for de i livet?</p> <p>K1: For de andre, de har ikke barn, jeg synes... noen mann hater damer, også noen damer også hater mann. Sånn er det. Noen også tenker det er vanskelig å... barn i verden... eh... Det er vanskelig også hvis har uten jobb. Noen også hvis drikker øl og noen skal barna skal hente, man passer ikke på barna. Hele dagen, hele tida man drikker. Jeg synes om noen. Jeg skal høre fra andre også...</p>	<p>I: (...) So you say that children add (value) a lot to you. What do you think those who do not have children get in life, that children can not give? What do they get? You who have children, you fill your lives with children. What do others fill their lives with? What can they do, what is of value to them in life?</p> <p>K1: For the others, they don't have children, I think... some man hates women, also some women hates man. It is like that. Some also think it is difficult to... children in the world... eh... It is difficult also if have no job. Some also if drink beer and some are picking up the children, you don't look after the children. The whole day you drink. I think about someone. I shall hear from others too.</p>	<p>Moral discourse: - About reasons to stay off the beaten path.</p>	<p>Conditions of the moral institution:</p> <p>The informant reflects over different reasons not to have children by mentioning that there might be structural circumstances like unemployment or uncertain outlooks for the future. Still, the most adhering conception of reasons not to have children is moral decay like hating the opposite sex (homosexuality) or alcohol abuse.</p>
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Organizing the excerpts like this enabled me to collect specific, concurring statements to use as examples in chapter 5.

### 3.5 Ethical reflections

In any research, one can easily encounter several traps that were not the intention of the study. This can affect the reliability and validity of the research process, findings and results, as well as being an unfair treatment of sensitive data. In the following, I will address a few ethical problems that are specifically relevant to my thesis.

#### 3.5.1 Interviewing, transcribing and rephrasing

When interviewing someone in their second (or third or fourth) language, there are multiple problems that would not have occurred, had we had a common mother tongue, or the assistance of professional interpreters. Furthermore, technical issues, blurred speech or poor pronunciation add problems to the transcription process. Lastly, the analysis method I have shown in chapter 3.4.2 adds problems relating to the understanding of what informants say, why they say it and the interpretation of what they really meant to say. A relevant question here is: Would the informant recognize his opinions as I have rephrased them, and still agree? My 6 year's of experience as a Norwegian language teacher for adult refugee learners gave me confidence in understanding my informants, their values and especially their level as Norwegian language users. It enabled me to phrase my questions and follow up their statements in such a way that we could disclose eventual misconceptions and informant's inability to speak clearly and choose the right words. This helped me ensure the quality more than I would have been able to, had I not been an experienced communicator in this field.

Model 7: Rephrasing excerpts

Original transcription	English translation	Rephrased extract
<p>I: Men i Norge har vi sykehjem.  <b>M: Har sykehjem!</b>            I: Trenger vi barn da?  <b>M: Ja!</b>            I: Du kan jo bare flytte på sykehjem, du trenger jo ikke barn da?  <b>M: Nei, neee!</b> For eksempel, hvis elder mann blir syk, men ho, de klarer jobbe i huset. Noen gjøre bra, hvis noen er syk for eksempel, kroppen er litt trøtt, de kan passer barna. De hjelper handle mat, vaske hus. Den var viktig.</p>	<p>I: But in Norway we have nursing homes.  <b>M: Have nursing homes!</b>            I: Do we need children then?  <b>M: Yes!</b>            I: You can just move to a nursing home; you do not need to have children then?  <b>M: No, nooo!</b> For example, if older man gets ill, but she, they can manage to work in the house. Some do good, if someone is ill for example, the body is a bit tired, they can look after children. They help grocery shopping, laundry, clean the house. That was important.</p>	<p><b>“Even if we have nursing homes, when an elderly man gets ill he can still be strong enough to stay at home. If he gets tired, children can then look after him. They can help grocery shopping, doing laundry, clean the house. That is important.”</b></p>

Most statements and utterances in this thesis are edited, compressed or rephrased as explained above. Due to the time span, I have not had my informants validate my interpretations in the aftermath. I do however trust that the continuous follow up questions and summaries of their utterances during the interviews, gives enough validation that my interpretations are reliable. The interview with the subject teacher is not rephrased, as his utterances were complete enough. However, in cases where any of the informants refer to something implicit that does not clearly come across in the quote, it is explained in brackets as exemplified here:

*“Then one should rather go for completely different approaches, and present completely different values (of learning), and be much more operational as to what one would want these people to learn.”*

The project has been approved by NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Appendix B).





## 4 Previous research on relevant issues

Before taking up empirical findings to discussion, I will present some research results regarding culture and curriculum, minority versus majority, and refugee learners' academic success.

### 4.1 Culturally responsive curriculum

The empirical study carried out by Yatta Kanu (Kanu, 2007), shows how adapting the curriculum by introducing culturally relevant topics increase chances of academic success among minority learners. Aboriginal learners have had significant lower performance and drop-out rates were 66% compared to 37% among non-Aboriginals (ibid.). Previous reports suggested that because 90% of teachers in basic education were of majority culture, and that Aboriginal related content in the curriculum as well as teacher training programmes was underrepresented. Based on these items, Kanu carried out a qualitative, comparative study where the aim was to identify whether it was culturally responsive curriculums or macro structural variables that affected these learners' schooling (ibid.). The research questions aimed to identify effective ways of integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum, investigate how such integration affect academic achievement, class attendance and school retention, and which critical elements of instruction that appeared to have an effect on this (Kanu, 2007).

The main theoretical perspective was of the cultural discontinuity hypothesis and macro structural explanations of minority education (Kanu, 2007). The study took up a practical, longitude experiment where two classes were compared after having gone through grade 9 in Social Studies. The class using the traditional curriculum were referred to as the regular classroom. The other class, referred to as the enriched classroom, used a curriculum responsive to Aboriginal culture. This adaptation of the curriculum included demonstrations and illustrations from native culture. Aboriginal content, perspectives and pedagogic strategies such as story telling and Aboriginal literature, small-group work and one-on-one interaction with the teacher were used as means and methods. Minimization of complex language in teaching and tests, and extensive preparation to tests were at focus (ibid.). It is worth mentioning that the subject teacher in the regulative classroom explained the lack of curriculum adaptation by minimal access to Aboriginal relevant teaching aids and material. Nevertheless, even if the subject teacher of the enriched classroom acknowledged this,

problem, he spent an extended amount of time collecting material, acquiring new knowledge and practicing this knowledge in any suitable forum (ibid.).

Results from the study showed that culturally responsive activities resulted in a pass rate of 80% in the enriched classroom as compared to 44% pass rate in the regular classroom. Results were also significantly higher among Aboriginal students in the enriched classroom, where overall scores ranged from 83-61% compared to 60-40% in the regular classroom (ibid.). Furthermore, the study revealed not only higher test scores among Aboriginal learners, but also higher conceptual understanding, higher level thinking and improved self-confidence. Nevertheless, the study did not reveal any improvement on the drop-out rate, suggesting that this could be explained by macro structural reasons such as family economy, logistics or the school's status among Aboriginal families (ibid.).

## 4.2 African refugees in Manitoba

In the research study of 2008, Kanu investigated educational needs and barriers among adolescent refugees in high schools in Manitoba, Canada. The study was justified by this specific group's special features: Special needs relating to their war-affected and disrupted schooling backgrounds; ethnicity and religious background which leads to difficulty in integration; and lastly the high drop-out rate and the possibility of getting involved in high-risk activities often relating to crimes (ibid.).

The data collection included long term class observation, individual and focus group interviews, and results were defined in the three categories. Academic challenges included lack of academic support at home, or absence of important family members; cultural dissonance; acculturation stress; language barriers; academic gaps; fast-paced curriculum; fear and distrust of authority figures; fear of speaking in class; and grade placement based on language ability rather than academic ability (ibid.).

Economic challenges related mostly to financial obligations leading the learners to take part-time jobs that dominated their spare time and prevented them from doing home work and resting for another school day. Teachers reported that such individual cases were linked to poorer academic achievements (ibid.).

Psychosocial challenges related to rehabilitation from severe traumas, and the integration process of adjusting to a new cultural environment without the expense of their own cultural values. Lack of sufficient treatment of trauma resulted in psychosocial stress. The informants also reported psychosocial issues e.g. connected to lack of facilities to pray, or men losing their status due to absence of gender-based hierarchy in their host country. Female students also reported about pressure from families to get circumcised, being married off, wearing religious attire such as hijabs, to mention but a few (ibid.).

On the issue of academic challenges, which is of special interest in this thesis, the study report suggests professional development training of teachers, in order to allow them to:

*“(...) deconstruct their own cultural and intellectual situatedness in the curriculum and pedagogy of formal schooling. Such training will increase teachers’ personal and collective efficacy and may translate into adaptations in curriculum and instructional practices for the benefit of African refugee students”*

(Kanu, 2008, p. 23)

### 4.3 Fish out of water

Dumenden and English (2012) carried out a comparative research project on one refugee student’s and one international student’s experiences in the Australian secondary school. The research oriented from a Bourdieuan perspective and took up Critical Discourse Analysis to look at how pedagogical discourse and academic language facilitated social reproduction (Dumenden & English, 2013). They found examples of specific moments where the students had, what Bourdieu called hysteresis – the fish out of water experience. The habitus of these students represented a mismatch to the Australian pedagogic model and at times left them in limbo in their learning processes. Consequently, this led to alienation from the mainstream school, where the discussion concluded that this eventually could lead to drop-out and further strengthening of the school’s traditional habitus (ibid.).



## 5 Empirical findings and discussion

In the following chapter sequence, I shall present the empirical findings and combine these with theoretical discussions. First follows a presentation on discourse practice and how it works as a framework of our utterances. Then I will look at examples of connotations, how they influence our perception and development of concepts, and how this can play out in the classroom. Further on, framing over the regulative and instructional discourse becomes the centre of attention, before I look at issues of socialisation in relation to Bernstein's theory of the thinkable and unthinkable. In chapter 5.5, I am presenting how the subject teacher reflects on the curriculum in relation to his learners, before closing up with some reflections on the limitations of the findings and following conclusions. Because the findings often offer several items of discussion, this chapter might appear somewhat labyrinth like. Aware of this, I shall guide the reader out of this labyrinth throughout the chapter sequence, and summarise the results of the various discussions in chapter 6.

### 5.1 Difficulties and the discourse

*“Social Studies is not difficult, because we learned a lot of things from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They had log houses that were made without the use of machines. We learned about their means of transport, for instance horse and carriage, and ships. They ate potatoes and fish, that was normal. But some things are difficult, like when Vikings travelled by ship to Germany. They took some women and stole some gold.”*

(Yared, Eritrea. Individual interview)

The informant quoted above has just been asked a rather complex question: Do you find the subject Social Studies difficult? As we can see, Yared clearly states that he does not find it hard or inaccessible. He refers to concrete events in both recent and ancient Norwegian history. In the overall conversation during the interview, Yared is able to compare these historical aspects to the situation in Norway today, and to his home country.

I would like to highlight an issue that this utterance exemplifies: How learners view the degree of difficulty in subjects, presuppose them understanding the expectations and requirements of the subject. It is very tricky for most of us to explain something that we do not understand. Moreover, it becomes completely impossible if we do not know what we are

supposed to know and which skills we are expected to acquire. It is discussable whether any learner is fully aware of the academic requirements before completing a course or subject. However, nine years of previous schooling in the Norwegian ladder gives the learner adequate experience to base this estimate upon. I will therefore argue that refugee learners who take basic school training after few years in Norway has little or no foundation to really understand the scope of these requirements.

Yohannes has another view on the same matter:

*“History is a bit difficult to me. To remember which year things happened and what people did, how they lived, what they ate, those things are not easy. I can remember, but it is just a lot of information. But I will give an example of what is easy: Employment issues and labour conditions. When you start working, he (the employer) has to control things, and if you leave early, he will see it. So if you want to be integrated, you have to plan. When to get up in the morning, when to start work and when to finish. And to be polite and kind. These matters are not difficult for me.”*

(Yohannes, Eritrea. Individual interview.)

Yohannes clearly states that details in the subtopic History can be hard to remember, more due to their abundance than their complexity. He does not find it difficult to learn about norms and rules of the typical Norwegian work place.

These informants’ reflections on the difficulty of topics in Social Studies illustrates very well an issue of discourse that I would like to devote attention to. We can categorize Yared’s and Yohannes’ utterances as fragments of a larger moral discourse. It comes to show in their explanation of what is and is not perceived as difficult. Yared presents the thinkable (Bernstein, 2003) but inappropriate, the known but immoral act, as difficult. His utterance does not show that it is intellectually hard to grasp historical facts, it is rather the *way* he uses the word “difficult”, as something that is difficult to relate to. As if the subject content, in this case the acts of the Vikings, is something he is expected to adopt as morally defensible, yet finds it compromising. Clearly, most of us would have problems defending the morals behind rape, slaughter and robbery, at least at this academic level. At a higher level, a philosophical and psychological discussion can be relevant in order to debate the motives and justifications behind such acts, but perhaps not in 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

I would like to argue that Yohannes does not find norms and rules of the work place difficult to comprehend because he shares these values and finds them morally acceptable. What is considered correct behaviour in a specific setting, is easily graspable, when it doesn't clash with personal values. Because of this, he does not have to negotiate boundaries. He can without compromise refer to these sociological facts from a moral discourse, and he is academically quite right to do so. My point here is to emphasise on how discourse, in this case moral discourse, colours and steers the conversation. Or more relevant in this thesis – how it controls in which way issues are discussed in class and in general school work. Because his values in this case does not clash with the learning content, any potential difficulty Yohannes might have in shifting discourse will not be apparent.

A quote by Hussein illustrates yet another view. He shares Yohannes' opinion that historical details can be hard to remember, but he reasons differently than Yared and Yohannes:

*“The difficult parts can be for example history, because you have to remember a lot. There are a lot of different years where specific things happened. It is important to know of these things because they help us understand so much more. But there is nothing problematic in this subject, I just like to be in this society that I live in now. So it becomes easy and important to me.”*

(Hussein, Somalia. Individual interview)

Hussein has identified that knowledge of historical events is crucial to the overall understanding of society. He is aware that details play a role in the larger picture, and is therefore very motivated to learn. Further on he states that he does not find any topics in the curriculum problematic or compromising, because he values the society he has become part of and finds it important to learn about it.

Hussein's acknowledgement of the importance of history might be the actual reason why he identifies it as difficult. He probably has high expectations towards his own performance in remembering and being able to give correct account for these details. By that we could have argued that also Hussein's utterance belongs under the category of moral discourse. In that event, I would like to point at a difference that separates Hussein from his two Eritrean friends. Yared and Yohannes points at concrete examples of content that they respectively



find or do not find compromising. Hussein, on the other hand, looks at the usability of the subject. Even if he clearly identifies it as important, with the moral discourse this statement is a part of, I believe this utterance shows a willingness that potentially could be of great value to him in his further education and re-socialisation. He looks at the function the subject has to him in his every day life. His estimate of its degree of difficulty has little to do with the actual content – more with his ambitions of grasping it.

Whether or not Hussein will find the learning content difficult in the future is not possible answer at this point. He might have an idea of the level of thinking and the shifting of discourse practice this subject will require in order to reach a high grade. He might also find himself unable to fully explore the mind set Norwegian academia is based on. I will continue to discuss this in chapter 5.4.3, relating it to socialisation.

### *5.1.1 A view or **The** view – reflections on critical thinking*

Bernstein's point in classification is that a category A is A only if it is not B. By that, B has to be a known option. If B is unknown, the nature of A becomes irrelevant, it just simply *is*. If learners are not aware of different discourses, different perspectives and different aims of the conversation, they can not take up different agendas to produce text. Neither is it possible to identify that one is taking a specific point of view different from another, – nor to shift views with the purpose of looking at things differently for a while. If the learner's mere focus is to speak of morally preferable viewpoints, and thereby reproduce those standards, the ability to think critically must be jeopardized. The informants in this thesis seem very well able to give credit to the fact that people have different opinions. It is the possibility to take another person's viewpoint that becomes an obstacle. Yet again, I will argue that this has to do with classification and framing of discourse.

Critical thinking does not necessarily mean to give up one's beliefs or viewpoints. As Wade and Tarvis states, the aim is that these judgements are well-reasoned and objective. A key point here is to be able to separate the agent from the argument, and to set the agenda as a non-moral discourse. To actually open up for the possibility of adopting another view point is a crucial premise here, and we shall pay more attention to this in chapter 5.4.2.

## 5.2 Connotations

During my fieldwork, the processes of the society was a main topic in class. The subject teacher lectured on which processes societies rely on in order to continue, and the recruitment process were one of those that were discussed thoroughly at that given time. Further on into the group interview we picked up on the topic, how recruitment happens through migration and child birth. I will also present a passage of utterances which is taken from a group conversation about roles and expectations.

### 5.2.1 Recruiting to society by childbirth

*“Of course we want children! Only nuns and priests do not have children.”*

(Hussein, Somalia. Group interview.)

*“For me it is very important. If I do not have any children, my generation stops. So I must have children, must get married. When I get old, they can look after me. It is very important, yes.”*

(Yared, Eritrea. Group interview.)

*“My family gave life to me, I give life to children, and it continues. It becomes a big family. I think it is our responsibility as members of the society.”*

(Yohannes, Eritrea. Group interview.)

Hussein makes it clear that having children is a wanted event for all members of society, except those who are living in celibacy. Yared explains children's importance to him personally, and he speaks of children as symbol of social security, they can care for him at his old age. Yohannes points at having children is a social responsibility. It is part of an expected contribution to a long family line.

These three quotes are interesting on the same level but in different ways: Hussein speaks on behalf of the group by using the word “we”. By that, he clearly states that this wish to become parents is expected to be common for all and it is some sort of a given fact. His statement is supported by Yared and Yohannes who reasons similarly on having children as a natural joint in the continuous family line. Yared goes as far as to say that he simply must have children

because of this family. Not only does he need to have children, as a necessary factor to obtain this duty, he has to get married. I shall continue to discuss this, after a presentation of a passage of utterances on roles and power relations.

### 5.2.2 Roles and power relations

*"Hussein: If my wife was also my boss, she would not completely be my boss. I would be sure that I was someone special out of all her employees. I would probably have a better position, sit in her office and assist her.*

*Tigsti: Yes, if I was the leader of my husband, I think that we would cooperate. I would speak to him as to any other, but at home we would talk about work. But at work, we would not talk about home affairs.*

*Hussein: It would not be hard; it would be good.*

*Tigsti: It is normal!*

*Hussein: It is convenient.*

*Yared: It is normal, and you would get more money! (laughing)*

*Hussein: And if my wife is the leader, she will know other leaders who might have openings for me.*

*Mebrahtu: But if she makes decisions and he does not agree... I know of a lady in Asmara, she told her husband to go. She didn't want him. Because she was a leader, she could easily swap. If the wife is the boss, she is above everyone else. That is a problem."*

(Group interview)

As we can clearly read from the passage, the informants are highlighting both advantages and disadvantages of mixing the roles of spouse and employer/employee. Hussein states that it would give him advantages at work, he would be in a better position than his work mates, and possibly be granted more benefits than the rest, due to his status as husband. He also reflects on the career opportunities that might come with such an alliance, by having his wife as a link in to better positions. Tigsti supports this from the other side of the table, by admitting that she would cooperate with her husband on her tasks as a leader, if she were to be above him. She clearly says that she would include him in work related issues, but when it comes to their personal issues, she would keep a professional distance at work.

Yared, quite humoristic, points out the economical benefit of having a wife as the breadwinner, or he might be hinting to an expectations of an allowance of his own. Lastly, Mebrahtu closes up this passage by raising potential issues that might come as a result of the wife holding more power than the husband. He does this by using an example where the wife made decisions without the support of her husband, and where the wife eventually left her husband because she was free to do so. He finally concludes by stating that it becomes a problem when the wife has a higher position in the hierarchy than the man.

### *5.2.3 How connotations come to show*

The agenda behind presenting quotes on the specific topics in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 is not to discuss whether wanting children of ones' own, or whether various attitudes towards ones' spouse, relates to academic achievement. Talking about matters important to my informants offers however an opportunity to disclose values and connotations to words or concepts that might influence their learning.

In this context presented in 5.2.1, recruitment processes become relevant in learning about modern society, global population issues, family structures, gender equality and so on.

Yohannes' statement that it is a social responsibility that young people grow up and start their own families indicates a common set of connotations behind the word "child". To my informants, I will suggest that these connotations are positive, strongly linked to duty, social security as an investment in the future, and debt to the forefathers. I will argue that power relations come to show in all three utterances. I shall look at this in two different ways:

Firstly, I will argue that Hussein's utterance "*We want children*" is an expression of reproduced control, consciously or unconsciously. Based on his knowledge of the group members' religious and cultural belonging, and just as likely on previous conversations that have taken place amongst them, Hussein is able to make that statement. Power relations are also strong (among the informants or between informants and significant others outside the classroom). This consequently leads informants to express their agreements. There seems not to be much negotiation of boundaries here, as the informants all answered quickly and without hesitation.

From the excerpt in 5.2.2, I would like to highlight the signs of connotations that comes across, relating to marriage. I have already mentioned that the informants are looking at the scenario of having the wife also be their boss, from two angles. Still, I will argue that these different angles represent a common set of connotations towards the word “wife”. When Hussein sees it as beneficial to have his spouse as his leader, it relates to a set of obligations entailed in their private relationship. He actually states implicit that the role of wife is pervasive in all aspects of life – she continues to be his wife even in environments where she first and foremost has a completely different role towards him. Her obligations towards him are to make sure he has very good working conditions - better than his work mates. She is expected to use her position in a way that is beneficial to him – because of their relation.

The attitude my informants show towards the idea of the wife being the leader, reveals the power relations within marriage. It shows first of all that the relation of marriage is more powerful than the relation of being employer/employee. Tigsti illustrates this very clearly by mentioning that work related issues would be a relevant topic between her and her husband, while personal topics are not relevant between them or any other person at work. Mebrahtu offers however the most clarification of power relations when differentiating explicit between the genders. To him, a wife being the leader can bring problems, if she makes decisions that her husband differs with. This clearly shows his perception that the husband is elevated from the wife, whereas no such issues were a topic in case of a husband being the leader.

When comparing these statements to a common Norwegian’s connotations, one should be careful. It is not irrelevant to take upon the debate of gender inequality and attitudes towards female leaders also in the Norwegian society. We shall however steer clear off that path and look at a thought example from a Norwegian setting in order to show how these connotations most likely would be different. Having a relationship with a work mate in a Norwegian context, it would be expected that the involved parties kept issues of the relation outside the work environment. If this relationship was between two parties with different status, in this case an employer and an employee, it would be even more important to keep work life and private life separate.

This attitude is strongly embedded in The Working Environment Act, and conflicting cases are acted upon by the unions. Eventually, the attitude is indirectly passed on to our children through the talks and practice of adults. Comparing the two examples of ontological depth in

chapter 5.1.2, of Karina and Ameneh, one can easily see how marriage has much fewer practical implications in Karina's life as compared to Ameneh's. Thus, we can say that power relations within the typical Norwegian marriage is generally weak, and opposite in the case of my informants. Furthermore, connotations towards marriage or the role of wife or husband are consequently different. I shall combine these issues of connotations to learning in the next chapter.

These utterances show us classification in a strong degree, where husband and wife are categorized as different identities and belonging to specific social groups. We shall keep in mind Bernstein's point in that strong classification keeps people apart in their cultural practice (Bernstein, 1996). This maintains a strong insulation between categories and by that strengthen the togetherness within the category. Advocating for Barth's statement that boundaries are good indicators of identity, we can conclude that these informants clearly identify themselves as members of a certain group. Relating it to the discussion on having children, my informants place themselves in the group of those who obviously wants to have children. This opposed to "the other groups" that Tigsti talks about in the quote below, when discussing reasons not to have children.

*"Some men hate women, and some women hate men. That is how it is. Some too, find it hard to have children if they do not have a job. And some drink beer and can not look after the children. They are drinking the whole day; how can you look after children? It is difficult. That is what I think."*

(Tigsti, Eritrea. Group interview.)

Tigsti identifies homosexuality, poor financial situation or over-consume of alcohol as reasons not to have children. She questions the ability to offer sufficient parental care among those who drink excessively. When accounting for these "other groups", Tigsti is clearly speaking out of a moral discourse. Even if she is able to identify some practical reasons not to have children, it is the moral aspect that dominates this utterance. Having children within the frames of marriage is part of living a normal, morally decent life. To Tigsti, not having children implies either health issues, psychological issues or moral decay, whilst wanting and having children places you amongst the righteous. In terms of classification, these examples clarify both how the informants distinguish themselves from other categories, but also how the moral discourse keeps being reproduced. This utterance portrays the common

connotations to “child” from a different angle: If you are not performing your social duty, you are most likely a subject of moral decay.

We can compare Tigsti’s reflections with a thought example of a Norwegian learner. Now, it is obvious that the Norwegian learner would be in the age of 14-16, and assumedly be preoccupied with other personal questions than whether to have children or not. Again, the point here is to shed light on connotations as a culturally conditional phenomenon. An appropriate set of explanations of not wanting to have children in a Norwegian contextual understanding would include various factors. These could be personal interests that differ with family life and caring for children, high standards of potential parenting partners, extensive career plans, ethical reflections on population growth, moral concerns with bringing more children to the world instead of offering care to those already born, and so on.

Connotations to the word “child” may in a Norwegian setting also be positive, but instead of being connected to duty, it is connected to choice. Instead of an investment where the outcome is social security, investment here is related to social well-being. Instead of debt to previous generations, it is connected to the personal interest in creating new life and seeing them grow. It is a well reasoned argument to say that these “Norwegian” connotations might just as likely be shared with my informants. It is rather the absence of moral duty and debt in the Norwegian set of connotations that is of interest here.

#### *5.2.4 Implications on learning*

I would like to linger a bit in the presence of these quotes on having or not having children, because they offer an opportunity to explain the effect of connotations. Presumably, a connotation is a result of learning, since it is remembered, and because its positive or negative associations may lead individuals to act or react in certain ways. It is therefore reasonable to claim that adding new connotations to already established words is a way of revising concepts, and even developing new ones. Considering the general section of LK06 (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006a), stating that the education shall provide common frames of reference, I will argue that this is a core goal in overall academic achievement.

This also fits well with Mezirow's theory on learning at the last stage – action (Mezirow, 1991). A case where the learner selects meaning, but is incapable of producing text, I will argue does not meet Mezirow's criteria of learning. A stage of Bernstein's active realization (Bernstein, 1996) definitely does. It is worth mentioning that passive realisation, where the learner does not produce text, could have various explanations that we shall keep in the back of our minds throughout this thesis. It could be that the content is not yet grasped, and that the learner is on a path to a fuller understanding. This is especially relevant due to the timing of the interviews not even half way in to the academic year. Another possibility is that the content is grasped, but power relations within class creates or underpins boundaries that regulate the learners' ability to express themselves. Uncertainty of linguistic skills might also withhold learners from producing text.

Nevertheless, stagnation at the passive stage of realization can arguably be connected directly to the mismatch of connotations. If members of the class constellation, learners and teacher/s, possess different connotations to words used in class, the lack of clarification of these will hinder mutual understanding, and thus lead to further misinterpretations. This statement opens up to a larger discussion of the nature of any social learning environment. In this case, the school is owned by the government, and operates according to law and national curriculums. Curriculums are produced by ministry of education and then interpreted by authors of textbooks, learning aids and materials, and more importantly – the teacher herself. In the event of examination, there is also an external examiner involved, who is responsible of setting the final exam grade. This social chain opens up to a wide range of interpretations, from the political commission to the corresponding result produced within the learner. However, considering connotations as a culturally shared set, one can assume that they most likely are identical or at least similar among members of the same cultural group. Consequently, we can outline one set of connotations to the Norwegian majority culture, and a different set for each cultural group represented in class.

### *5.2.5 Connotations at work – a thought example*

We shall not pay more attention to the school's side of this interpretation chain, but take a closer look at a thought example of connotations and how it can play out in two classes: one standard class of Norwegian 10<sup>th</sup> graders and one class of adult refugees in basic education:



A text book presents demographic statistics on two comparable communities. This includes population numbers over the last 50 years, distribution of gender and age, and statistics of suicide. Community A is growing in population, there is a higher amount of young people than older, distribution of gender are more equal and suicide rates are lower. Community B has a sinking population, more elders than youngsters, more men than women and a slightly higher percentage of suicide. The class is set to do internet research, explore potential explanations and discuss the difference in suicide rates.

Learners with a Norwegian set of connotations towards children might suggest that a sinking population number in community B gives macro-financial consequences. Less municipal income increases chances for local schools to be closed and children to travel longer distances. Poorer educational opportunities in the community forces young people to move. Job opportunities are dominated by traditional men's work, which drives young women to cities to enrol in higher education and then be employed. They conclude that this explains the unequal gender distribution. Men are more likely to commit suicide than women, and the learners concludes that because there are more men present, the general statistics are slightly higher than in community A.

Given the connotations suggested from the quote in chapter 5.2.1, learners in the refugee class might assume that a sinking population has to do with the nature of the individuals in the population. Perhaps they suspect that there are more drinking problems in community B. Perhaps the learners fear a lack of religious guidance available in that society, which leads to moral and religious decay, which again can lead to homosexuality. The overweight of men might also strengthen this suspicion, and the suicide rates might as well be reasoned by the moral decay that homosexuality, to these informants, apparently represents.

These different, tacit assumptions will hinder a mutual understanding between learners and teacher, or among learners of different cultural backgrounds. In class, where the ground frames of reference are rooted in the Norwegian national curriculum, I will argue that this mismatch ultimately can lead to lower academic achievements. This especially, because Norway is a secular country where academic discussions on religious beliefs are strived to be held at an objective level, and not as a rule of conduct – and where divine influences are not acknowledged as a causal effect in science.

It is surely risky business to suggest potential conclusions that these two groups might draw. The fallibility is imminent as long as this thought example is not actually thoroughly researched. This exact point illustrates however the evident risk of making wrong judgements when the set of connotations make up a difference in the conceptual understanding of common words. These reflections naturally lead to the following questions: Is the mere knowledge of various meanings of an already known word, without adding connotations, really learnt? Is it possible to discuss certain topics adequately, lacking knowledge of each others connotations? Based on the discussion so far, and considering both Mezirow's and Bernstein's theories of learning, I will argue that it is not. I will rather suggest that a thorough exploration of connotations is an important key to grasping the content of the curriculum.

### 5.3 Bernstein and framing

We shall focus on framing in this thesis. Both regarding the social background of my informants, but also in discussing the Norwegian school system. As we have seen in chapter 2.1.5, the framing over subject discourse in the Norwegian school tradition has weakened largely over the last few decades. Classroom conduct, teacher-learner relations, learning methods and even the physical environment is today characterized by being less formal. This is inevitably very noticeable to refugee learners who often come from school traditions of the far more formal kind. The learning environment might appear free, less controlled and weakly regulated. The rules of classroom conduct are to a large degree set by learners themselves. Various approaches to school work are considered appropriate, and learning outcomes are discussable.

#### *5.3.1 Framing over the regulative discourse – a critical look on LK06*

The natural assumption here is to say that the framing has weakened. Still, I will argue that this weak framing is apparent in the sense of being noticeable but not necessarily correct upon closer inspection. I would like to emphasise this as an example of Bernstein's statement of the rule that regulative discourse controls instructional discourse. His exception is cases of weak framing over instructional discourse, which automatically gives weak framing over regulative discourse. This would evidently mean that, given that the instructional discourse in Norwegian schools are weak, the regulative discourse must also be weak. I will argue that this is not at all the case, with a brief look at a few topic relevant aims of competence in LK06, followed by the criteria of academic achievement:

*“Geography*

- *Give account to size, structure and growth in populations and discuss population development and migration in modern times, including urbanisation*

*Social Science*

- *Explore what it takes for a society to continue to exist and compare two or more societies*
- *Explain why culture is not congenital, and give account to and analyse cultural variations”*

(The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006b, p. 124, my translation)

These aims of competence seem at first glance to be quite open and with possibilities to be answered with concrete, instrumental knowledge. There are no obvious cultural traps and the aims seem not to interfere with moral or religious beliefs. Overall, one could answer these tasks from an observatory level. However, taking a look at the criteria of academic achievement, and with an ambition of performing to grade 5-6, potential issues start to appear:

*“ASSESSING AND ARGUING*

<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Grades 3-4</i>	<i>Grades 5-6</i>
<i>The learner argues from expectations on cause and effect</i>	<i>The learner argues and assess from and understanding of cause and effect</i>	<i>The learner argues and assess from an understanding of complex relations of cause and effect</i>
<i>The learner accounts for parts of others argumentation and expresses their own opinions.</i>	<i>The learner accounts for main features of others argumentation and reasons for their own opinions</i>	<i>The learner argues objectively on their own and others' views, from various perspectives and different reasons of understanding.</i>
<i>The learner easily finds available information from various sources, and accounts for this information.</i>	<i>The learner finds relevant information from various sources, assesses and applies the information in a useful manner.</i>	<i>The learner finds relevant information from various sources, assesses and applies the information in a critical and nuanced manner.</i>

*Grade 1 reflects that the learner shows lower academic achievement than what is given account for above.”*

(The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016, my translation)

We shall look at the aims of competence one by one:

Discussing population development and migration in modern times, with a complex understanding of cause and effect, requires more than instrumental knowledge. It forces the learner to take historical facts into consideration, and by that combining discourses.

Presenting different views and debating issues of migration from different reasons of understanding, requires the learner to step out of his own context and look critically upon it. I will argue that this is especially challenging for an adult refugee learner, considering my informants' cling to moral discourse. At the same time, it is intrusively relevant because of the same reasons.

Comparing two societies in terms of the processes that need to take place for them to continue, requires basic knowledge of production, recruitment, socialisation, distribution of goods and social control in two or more societies. However, with an understanding of complex relations of cause and effect, it requires for instance an understanding of which implications changes in recruitment has on socialisation. In relevance to the informants as migrants, one could exemplify this by children developing a Norwegian identity as compared to an identity from their country of origin, or how children's identity would hypothetically have developed if there was no immigration.

Explaining why culture is not congenital requires knowledge on how socialisation works, and that children learn language, norms and customs from their families, the community and by being exposed to various social influences. To search and find relevant information on this, and to assess this information critically, requires learners to be aware of the social impact any flow information brings with it. It requires them to reveal that some information channels spread propaganda, and to be able to distinguish reliable from unreliable sources by asking critical questions to the underlying agenda.

Looking at these three examples of the curriculum with criteria of academic achievement in mind, it can be agreed that they are prestigious and difficult even for Norwegian learners. Considering the overall findings so far, I will argue that this does not undermine the essence of this thesis, but rather reinforce it.

### *5.3.2 Framing over the instructional discourse - the classroom*

Peeping into the Norwegian classroom, it is hard to see the strong framing of the instructional discourse in practice. It is here concepts and connotations become relevant. The strong framing in instructional discourse is not visible because it is regulated by invisible, but real phenomena which we can only disclose by investigating the ontological depth. The teachers' *expectation* to the discussions that are to take place in class arise from his concepts of and connotations to key words in the taught topic. These connotations are developed through the socialisation process on various arenas: Through childhood, and presupposed that he is of Norwegian origin and raised here, his connotations will fit well in the Norwegian school context; Further on in his teacher education, through his professional experience in class and in interaction with colleagues and leaders; Last but not least, through his interpretation of his mandate and the governing documents of his work as a civil servant – The Education Act and the national curriculum.

As regards the learner, concepts of, and connotations to key words in the learnt topic are developed in their home culture. These are conditions of framing of the regulative discourse that control realization and production of text. So we have identified a gap between the two agents: The teacher and the learner. The teacher's challenge is to know of this gap, and to facilitate a bridge for the learner to cross. In order to do that, it is vital that the teacher communicate expectations of which knowledge and skills the learner is supposed to acquire, in order to reach the other side of the gap. The learner's challenge is to cross this bridge by acquiring the required knowledge and skills. The learner's boundaries negotiated from the various power relations between the learner and her significant others, is an important factor that controls her ability to cross.

## 5.4 Re-socialisation

I shall in the following present some utterances that illustrate de- and re-socialisation from different perspectives.

### *5.4.1 Re-socialisation – a mental tumble tour*

*"An immigrant is a new person who is coming."*

(Hussein, Somalia. Group interview.)

*"They can work at some vacancies, look after old people."*

(Yared, Eritrea. Group interview.)

*"They can have children again. Then they must get a job, children must go to school. Well, that's it."*

(Yohannes, Eritrea. Group interview.)

A part of the plan during interviews was to get the informants to associate on key words used in class. The aim of this was to help disclose some connotations connected to these words, in this case "*immigrant*". As the quotes above partly show, the informants' associations were very closely linked to the actual duties and practicalities around being a newly arrived immigrant. Hussein is able to explain quite simply what "*immigrant*" means, while Yared and Yohannes points specifically at the urgent need for immigrants to learn the language, to send their children to school, to get employed and to fulfil some needed tasks in the community. Yohannes makes an interesting point on how immigrants can contribute in recruitment to the local society in double terms: being recruited themselves and having children again. These reflections are all well and to the point. However, what is lacking in this passage of answers is the ability to let thoughts run freely, and express them in a traditional brain storm. The informants are all looking for the correct answer to the question, and fail to explore the word just for the sake of exploring.

Constant search for the correct answer is a natural outcome of learners' experience from the original school tradition that has strong framing over the regulative discourse and strong classification in content. Learners that are used to acquire and account for specific knowledge, may have a hard time accepting a key concept of associating: Everything is right and nothing is wrong. Again it appears that the framing over regulative discourse in the Norwegian school setting is weak, hence "*anything goes*". I will, again, beg to differ, and I shall use this exact point as an argument. Associating is a specific skill with clear terms of conditions. When learners are asked to associate, there is a specific aim to that, it is a part of a larger learning process. And so the means of learning in the Norwegian school will make it seem as if the aimed learning outcome is weakly classified and the discourse is weakly framed, while it is actually not the case.

As explained in chapter 2.1.8, Bernstein divides knowledge into two classes: mundane – the thinkable, and esoteric – the unthinkable. A key point here is that these classes are not static, but travel in time and space. By that, what is perceived mundane knowledge to “us” might be esoteric to “them”. What appears to us as weak classifications over subjects in school, and weak framing over the regulative and instructional discourse, may be explained like this:

Let us agree with Bernstein to say that knowledge conveyed in the lower range of the educational system is mainly mundane knowledge, it is about the thinkable. The reason why we conceive it as mundane is because we are socialized in to this way of thinking. Year by year, learners that follow the national curriculum are exposed to and presented to these various concepts and mind sets. Associating, analysing, arguing and critical thinking are required skills in order to comprehend such knowledge, and is thus also developed in the same educational process. Consequently, these skills and knowledge becomes a part of our national, communal and personal identity. With the same reasoning, we can argue that adult refugee learners have gone through the same socialisation process in their home environment before fleeing their countries, and even during their migration. Perhaps this socialisation process is not mainly institutionalized through school. Still, if that is the case, one could argue that the difference in socialisation would be even larger, due to the fact that the informal learning takes own culture for granted.

However, we shall consider that my informants have completed some years of basic education in their home countries. If the knowledge acquired in schools in their home countries are concrete, have right or wrong answers and are strongly framed over the regulative and instructional discourse, it must result in a difference in space between what is considered mundane knowledge “there” and “here”. A natural conclusion then, is to say that knowledge and skills taught in schools in Norway is both mundane and esoteric to these refugee learners. Therefore, we can conclude that refugee learners in Social Studies are partly expected to practice an art none of us are very well acquainted with: thinking the unthinkable. The situation might just as well be reversed, picturing a Norwegian learner in a classroom in Eritrea, expected to give account for the academic benefits of regular prayers. A wee detour in the following chapter demonstrates how the subject teacher looks at this, in relevance to the criteria of academic achievement.

#### 5.4.2 Assessment and the criteria of academic achievement

*“The specific, precise knowledge is probably easier to learn because it is more instrumental. (...) They can learn and memorize, they can retell what the book says and what others mean about that. But for them, personally, it has no importance at all. They place themselves outside of the discussion, and take a kind of observatory position towards something they might not fully comprehend. Some can (comprehend), but others will obtain the role of an observer. Unfortunately.”*

(Subject teacher Rolf, Norway. Individual interview.)

Rolf here discusses the criteria of academic achievement, grade 5-6. He characterises the skill of using specialist terms precisely as easier than the skill of critical assessment of content, sources of information and viewpoints. Reproduction of knowledge and accounting for others' opinions is according to Rolf not a challenge to his learners. He further states that others' opinions are irrelevant to them personally, as some of the learners take an observatory role instead of being active participants of the discussion. Rolf acknowledges that some of his learners do comprehend these opinions, and by that divides his group in to those who merely cope and those who actually comprehend. Lastly, he expresses his dissatisfaction towards this tendency. Before discussing this, I shall present another quote by Rolf, and compare these two:

*“The element of being critical, that is perhaps the hardest thing to get them to grasp. Because in the cultures and societies they come from, the school is probably like, that asking critical questions is not what they do first and foremost. They may not do it at all.”*

(Subject teacher Rolf, Norway. Individual interview.)

Here, he points at critical thinking as a skill not yet developed, because it is not appropriate or relevant skills to have in their home environments. He says that critical thinking may not be practiced or even thought of in the school traditions they grew up with.

The skills Rolf refers to in the first quote can be defined as the acquisition of mundane knowledge, while critical thinking in the last quote is acquisition of esoteric knowledge. When I here speak of *knowledge*, I mean knowledge of the possibility of the unthinkable, and



thereby the possibility of developing suitable skills. I emphasize that we are here referring to mundane or esoteric specifically to the learners, which is not necessarily mundane or esoteric to “us”. As we have seen, these are neither constant nor coinciding sizes.

A timely question now, is whether adult refugee learners in Norwegian basic education are aware of the expectation from the school of thinking the unthinkable. The answer to this may not lie in the empirical material of this thesis, presuming that reality is reduced to what can be sensed, as empiricists would claim. When taking a realist view, we must include non-perceivable phenomena to our picture of reality, as long as it has a causal power. Noticing the lack of evidence of acquiring esoteric knowledge, the lack of critical thinking in situations that require that exact skill, it is arguably an adequate reason to conclude that these learners are not aware of this expectation. However, in order not to lean on prejudices, I will take a look at two hypothetical scenarios, and from there draw some conclusions. If the learners are aware, this offers an opportunity for them to renegotiate boundaries and confront their own mind sets. However, it might be unlikely that his process will happen fast and adequately enough, in time for their final assessments. If they are not aware that they are expected to wander into the land of – to them, the unthinkable, I will argue that the higher range of grades are completely inaccessible to this group of learners.

#### *5.4.3 De- and re-socialisation: A transformation of identity*

We shall pick up Hussein’s utterance from chapter 5.1, where he states that the society he is now a part of is of great value to him and that he finds it important to learn as much as possible about it. Yohannes has also expressed a willingness that goes along with this utterance:

*“I am a different son to my parents now than I was before, because after leaving my home country, I learned more from various situations. They don’t know this, but I have forgotten some things from my home country. It is like I left my old life there. I continue in this new culture and new life.”*

(Yohannes, Eritrea. Individual interview)

In this quote, Yohannes explains quite explicit that he has changed due to his migration. He says he has changed specifically in how he conducts his role as a son, but also generally within his own identity. The reason for this change, he says, is learning from the various

experiences he has had during migration and after coming to Norway. Yohannes also points at a consequence of this change: He has forgotten parts of his old life and how he used to spend his days. When leaving physically, he has also left behind some parts of himself mentally in order to be able to proceed in his new life situation.

As accounted for in chapter 2.5, Hoëm advocates for two factors of the intentional course of socialisation. I would like to apply one of them here: Identifying the intention of the socialisation. Both Yohannes and Hussein have expressed their willingness to change and that this experience of re-location has made them into different people. In the following I will sketch two different explanations and further consequences to the accommodating attitude Hussein and Yohannes show towards intentional de- and re-socialisation.

On the one hand, it could be that Hussein and Yohannes does not find it remotely compromising to bid farewell to particular aspects of their identity, and to take up elements of a new culture. Drawing on the discussion in chapter 5.1, it might be that the cultural aspects they have been exposed to so far has been morally acceptable to them. As Hussein states, he likes this country. All though one can only assume that he is referring to national values, there is no doubt that the equal opportunities and protection is of great value to him due to his status as refugee. In cases like these, Hussein and Yohannes are going through successful re-socialisation in these aspects of life, with the necessary degree of de-socialisation that follows.

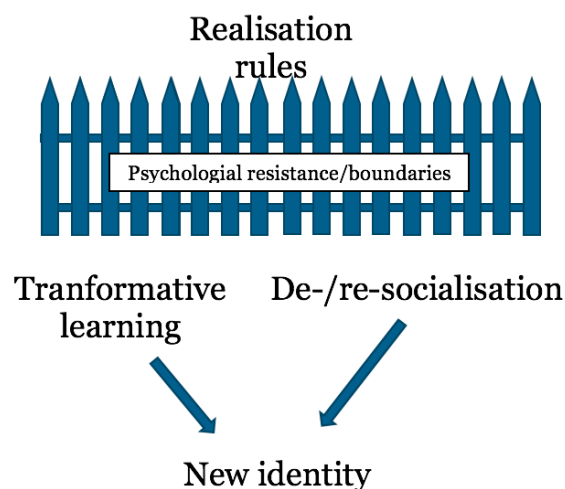
The second scenario I would like to sketch is a case where Hussein and Yohannes have gone through some ground breaking confrontations of their own cultural values, but have not found new equivalents to the forsaken aspects of their previous set of values. In such a case, we are dealing with what Hoëm called de-socialisation resulting in an incomplete identity. Here, it becomes critical that re-socialisation is well facilitated by Hoëm's two factors of successful socialisation, the time factor and the identification of intentions. I shall continue to explain this in chapter 5.5.1. Still, I find it timely to mention here, as Yohannes' quote is clear evidence of the change of identity that can come from re-locating across cultures, and thus being under different types of influences than before.

#### 5.4.4 A question of transformative learning

The quotes from chapter 5.4.1 offers an opportunity to discuss the extent of re-socialisation. It is clear that Yared and Yohannes are very aware of the practical implications of resettling. They point out some practicalities that needs to be sorted out, and they have even identified some good opportunities for them to take up important functions in the Norwegian society, with its special characteristics. It is therefore no doubt that Yared and Yohannes are very well aware of their roles and what roles they preferably would like to take in the future. The question appears in the wake of the discussion above: To which degree do they comprehend the requirements of taking these roles? This depends on one thing: the nature of these requirements.

In a short-term national economical view, the requirements are concrete and largely limited to what Yared and Yohannes have already identified: Get a job, preferably a job that highly qualified Norwegian natives does not want, pay your taxes, send your children to school. However, as we have seen in chapter 5.3.1, the general section of the national curriculum includes a much larger political agenda. As I have already suggested, establishing new connotations is a necessary stage in learning cultural concepts. This, in turn can result in de- and/or re-socialisation by a change of practice. (Mezirow, 1991). When manifesting the Educational Act in LK06 for this specific group of learners, transformative learning consequently becomes the desired outcome. To sum up the issues of the discussion so far, these processes of learning and socialisation can be limited, sabotaged, prevented or restrained by psychological resistance towards negotiating boundaries. This is especially so due to time pressure and lack of secure space:

*Model 8: New identity*



This model illustrates how transformative learning, de- and re-socialisation are possible outcomes of content realisation. Content realisation that does not require negotiation of boundaries and confrontation of psychological resistance, will in this model remain behind the fence, as the learnt content will match already existing identity marks. Transformative learning and de- or re-socialisation are thus not expected outcomes. However, if the content of realisation *does* require negotiation of boundaries and confrontation of psychological resistance, the learner is on a potential path of de- and/or re-socialisation and transformative learning. I will again refer to Barth (in Eriksen, 2010), who highlights boundaries as a much more adequate indicator of identity than cultural practice. This has to do with the fact that cultural practice can be shared among different ethnic groups. I will argue that boundaries are the invisible strings to the identity marks that keeps one connected to the culture of belonging. I claim that psychological resistance is more or less a prevention of negotiating these boundaries. Illeris (2013) suggests that transformative learning leads to a change in identity, and Hoëm (Hoëm & Beck, 2010) equally explains that a change in socialisation leads to change in identity. In cases where the individual is able to confront their own psychological resistance, negotiate boundaries and by that actively realise the content, we can conclude that transformative learning and de-/re-socialisation is taking place. New identity must then be the given outcome.

The discussion of interest in this thesis is whether or not the new identity that Hussein and Yohannes presumably are developing is adequate to the requirements of the curriculum. If the changes in identity are conducive to future learning within this school system, and the new set of identity marks help in approaching esoteric knowledge, Hussein and Yohannes are on a path of academic success. If the changes in identity are not conducive, I will suggest that adult refugee learners are at risk of developing an identity of neither/nor<sup>5</sup> in a way that alienates them from their previous cultural belonging, and at the same time is insufficient to obtain a practice that fits well with “our” way of thinking. Only time can answer to these eventualities.

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<sup>5</sup> This discussion introduces a deeper, philosophical question of cultivation and what it implies. I shall not dig deep into this, but rather mention the span between cultivation and education from two angles:

1. Wisdom and education is not necessarily two coinciding and correlating phenomena.
2. Separating theory from practice, by obtaining certain knowledge while one’s action is submerged in the existing social power. Hellesnes names this state “*halv-daning*”, in English “*half-cultivation*”, and this state is equivalent to my description of a “*neither/nor*”-identity (Hellesnes in Dale, 1992, pp. 79-89).

## 5.5 From the teacher's perspective

Rolf is an experienced teacher at the far end of his professional career. He is now the Social Studies subject teacher of Yohannes, Yared, Hussein, Tigsti and Mebrahtu while they are undergoing basic educational training, but he has also been teaching Social Studies and Norwegian in high school, and over the last two decades he has been teaching Norwegian language to immigrants. In the following, we shall look at his reflections on his learners' academic premises in light of the criteria of academic achievements and psychological resistance.

### 5.5.1 *What's with the adults?*

*“To teach adults to be critical, it is a laborious exercise that takes a long time. And it means that they have to overcome some barriers within themselves and in their way of thinking, their own world. Compared to what Norwegian children do.”*

(Subject teacher Rolf, Norway. Individual interview.)

There are three interesting aspects to Rolf's utterance on the development of critical thinking skills. Firstly, he points out the issue of time and scope. Secondly, he mentions that the process includes some psychological factors. He identifies that the learners are controlled by internal barriers that forms their mind set, or as he puts it, “their own world”. Last but not least, he points out the issue of age.

On this note, I would like to address the difference in young and adult learners. This must be a crucial distinction in this thesis, as it represents a key characteristic of the research issue. As accounted for in chapter 2.3.1, Mezirow talks of an identity defence that comes to show in situations where personal adjustment and re-socialisation takes place, such as during education (Mezirow, 1991). In children and youth, this defence can be played out as an active resistance towards attempted corrections of behaviour. This is often interpreted as disobedience in various ways. I will claim that the prescribed role for adults is that of a well socialised, responsible member of society. To the extent they were allowed to disobey authorities in their home settings while still young, they are now mostly done with playing out this active resistance. What Rolf's utterance gives us a brief idea of, is what Mezirow called passive resistance. Developing critical thinking skills beyond the developmental stage of

adolescence is time consuming and I will underline therefore often goes under the radar of the teacher, if not directly confronted.

Rolf has clearly acknowledged this fact. A diligent effort to continuously follow up situations where passive resistance may play out, can in the long run help learners address this resistance and further evolve from there (Mezirow, 1991). We can here draw on Berliner and Berthelsen who draft a situation of safe surroundings and support from trusted mentors as necessary facilities for this psychological and cognitive development to happen (ibid.). Nevertheless, as Hoëm states, security is not the only factor needed in order to facilitate a successful re-socialisation. Space and sufficient time are crucial characteristics of a conducive learning environment for learners to complete this process (Hoëm & Beck, 2010).

Considering the space factor, organized learning activities normally takes place in the classroom in the company of other class mates. This may contribute to the maintenance of power relations within class, and hereby limit negotiation of boundaries, instead of facilitating it. Adding the time factor, it is arguable that the facilities provided to acquire and develop the needed cognitive skills in order to score high academically, are not at all adequate. In fact, because they are insufficient, there could instead be a risk of learners being subject to shielded socialisation. What in a Norwegian context looks like an objective debate on religious books as research material, might to some of these learners feel like they are pushed to question ruling religious conceptions, in hearing of fellow worshipers. Without ample time to negotiate boundaries and become comfortable with distinguishing between thought examples and individual opinions, the consequential passive resistance may result in creating a shield instead of attempting to reach a level of critical thinking. And so, in a situation where curricular content is in abundance and language barriers are present, the thinkable, operational knowledge becomes a natural priority over the unknown path of the unthinkable. The next chapter seeks to explain this further.

### *5.5.2 The inner dialogue – an issue of boundaries*

*“To question what the teacher says, or generally to question statements from authorities. Or to question what the book says. ‘Cause the book says the truth, right. It is that type of barriers I think the learners have to overcome, and they haven’t carried that set of skills from their home countries. That is why the critical aspect becomes the*

*hardest. (...) If they question the food on the table at home, you know, what will happen? But if they question what happens in school... or they go to church and question what is being preached there, right, what consequences will such things have? Well, if they have asked one critical question like that, they won't ask more. I think a massive part of the issue lies right there."*

(Subject teacher Rolf, Norway. Individual interview.)

Rolf continues to account for reasons as to why critical thinking seems to be hard for his learners. He points at the relationship between common people and authorities, the conception that school books hold the objective truth, and at the end identifies religion as a ruling compass in their lives. At last he highlights the consequences of expressing critical thoughts in various situations as a main explanatory factor of with-holding such thoughts.

Rolf's summary of potential situations where his learners ask critical questions, is quite to the point. Questioning the food on the table might be impolite. Questioning lectures at school might be inappropriate and disrespectful. Questioning content of religious services however, is at best disrespectful and at worst fatal, e.g. for subservient members of religious or cultural groups that performs strong social control by for example honour killings.

We have touched the issue of boundaries and I will now look at how this takes place in practice. Bernstein states that control due to power relations comes to work through the negotiation and maintenance of boundaries (Bernstein, 1996). When Rolf accounts for the difficulty his learners have in questioning ruling conceptions, there is arguably boundaries that keeps them from doing so. I would like to combine this theory of boundaries with Mead's concept of the inner dialogue between the two stages of consciousness: The I and The Me (Mead & Morris, 1934).

I will apply this to an example of a hijab-wearing woman, an adult, refugee learner in basic education, Social Studies. The class is preparing for a week of work experience. They discuss application writing and interviews. The Muslim woman expresses that it is important to dress appropriate for the type of work place where one is applying for placement. She mentions that it might be a good idea to remove the hijab in such a situation, in order to show that she can fit into the environment. For example, she says, if applying for a job in a hair salon, it might be relevant to let clients see how she is able to care for her own hair. She is thereby

suggesting to put religious considerations aside, and by that questioning the general position of her religion. In class, she is in the presence of certain individuals whom she considers to be her significant others.

Our Muslim woman's statement will most likely trigger some reactions from her significant others. The reactions might be active resistance in form of verbal objections, sanctions or even physical punishment. It might even more likely be of passive resistance, by her significant others pulling away from her and avoiding contact. She might experience that she is not considered trustworthy of certain tasks she had before. It might not even be the case that she is directly subject to such type of distrust, but she may have experienced previous episodes or heard stories about sanctions on other disobedient women. From this information, she constructs an expectation as to what may be the reactions to such behaviour – the generalised others. Based on this, she can keep a constant dialog between her conscious self (The Me) and her unconscious self (The I), that will regulate how she acts in the future. Accordingly, Rolf may be quite to the point in his prediction that she will not express these types of compromising statements again.

### 5.5.3 *If you get what I understand?*

*“The language is possibly a part of it – but I think the larger problem is probably that the learners know of the word in their own language, but they do not know what it implies. Let's talk about “democracy” for instance. They know that there is a word called “democracy”. Most of them know that. But when you want them to explain what democracy means in their own language, in their own cultural settings, they become silent because they are not able to give content to the concept. And then it becomes the teachers' damn job to do that. And you have to go about quite carefully when you want to start defining concepts that are considered general knowledge in the society we live in, right. And the children (Norwegian learners in basic education) have heard this a million times, while those who come here at the age of thirty-five may have heard it, but knows nothing of what it really means. So adding content to concepts is a real challenge.”*

(Subject teacher Rolf, Norway. Individual interview.)



The development of conceptual understanding and mismatches of words and concepts is the centre of attention here. Rolf gives account for the fact that knowing a word does not automatically mean that there is a content behind it. Even if he agrees that linguistic skills itself might be part of the cause, he still gives lack of concept content most of the explanatory value. He highlights that because the learners might not have an experience with “democracy” from their own cultures, the word is known but represents a blank – an empty box. Stating that Norwegian children hear of the word, and experience how democracy works in practice in their every day life, he considers it general knowledge in our culture. Lastly, he says it becomes the teachers’ job to help learners develop a conceptual understanding, and points at the complexity of this task.

In chapter 2.5 we have seen that Hoëm points at the social surroundings as premise providers as to which concepts we learn and the nature of the concept content we develop. Stating that the word “democracy” is learnt, there must be some conceptual understanding of it – but it might be inaccurate or irrelevant. Taking into consideration the various democratic models that are implemented throughout the world today, chances are that the learner’s idea of democracy is not matching the Norwegian model. I will therefore argue that this empty concept Rolf is talking about might not at all be empty, but rather consisting of an inapplicable set of ingredients. Hoëm continues to say that a change in social environment also provides changes in socialisation, meaning the opportunity to revisit conceptions. In this case, the teacher’s job is not merely to help adult learners develop content to concepts, and at least not in the simple transmission of suitable content. The task is rather to support a total revision of already existing knowledge, by facilitating re-socialisation.

#### *5.5.4 Language barriers versus conceptual understanding*

Both Yohannes and Hussein points at language barriers as factors that complicate their learning:

*“It is hard to understand information from the internet, because there are difficult words, long words. In my home country, school was easier. We learnt more about geography and it was in my mother tongue. My teacher can explain so that I understand – but not everything. And when we have breaks, we speak Tigrinya. So it is hard.”*

(Yohannes, Eritrea. Individual interview)

*“We haven’t had so many topics so far. My teacher said that we have to take more time learning grammaticism, because we have some problems there (general language barriers). And the learners in class are at different levels, of course. So we have to help those who do not understand, and be patient and respectful towards them. So if you understand, you explain to the person next to you, and it is good to help others because you learn much more. It helps you not to forget.”*

(Hussein, Somalia. Individual interview)

Yohannes says that a lot of the information they use at school is taken from research on the internet, and that the language in such articles are harder to comprehend. He compares this situation to his experience from basic school in Eritrea, where teaching and learning aids were in his mother tongue and also of a more instructional type. He finishes by concluding that even if the teacher assists in explaining, it doesn’t cover the whole issue, and because the breaks offer little practice in Norwegian language, the situation does not get better.

Hussein confirms this by stating that their teacher actually has addressed this issue in class. The consequence of this has been that the subject topics in Social Studies have been held back for the sake of working on language itself. Hussein also mentions that the difference in level among learners in the same class adds another challenge, although he benefits from helping and explaining content to his classmates.

I bring forward these quotes to briefly address the issue of language. Naturally, language itself is a barrier when learning in a foreign country. I have previously discussed language connected to the concepts behind words, but my focus here is slightly different. In class, with the given time span and the given scope of the subject content, learners have to distribute their cognitive capacity over several synchronous exercises. Acquiring knowledge is one exercise, actually performing school assignments within a given time is another. Revising and developing conceptual understanding of known or unknown phenomena is the exercise I have been focusing on in this thesis. Continuous translation and code-cracking, combined with perhaps poor reading skills is a fourth exercise that happens simultaneously with these other exercises among this specific group of learners. Had language barriers not been an issue, learners could have spent more cognitive capacity actually working on revising concepts and acquiring critical thinking skills.

I would also like to raise a question relating to connotations - or the lack of such – to newly learnt words. Considering connotations as a leading factor on how we interpret things - whose *meaning* we put into communicated content - absence of connotations must likewise represent a hinder of comprehension. In the event of a learner adding new words to their vocabulary, without having the experiences necessary to build connotations to the word, it must be equally unrealistic to expect this learner to discuss or analyse it from a critical position.

Under the topic of teaching on the socialisation process, Rolf suggests some techniques that can simplify the complex process of revising and developing concept content:

*“Well, if you are capable of visualising it, preferably through images, a big part of the job is done as a teacher, but also regarding the fact that the learners should understand it. And at the same time draw on some of their experience from their home country. How things work there. And then, you might attach this process to the regulatory process, which is an important process to lead the youth and the adults on the right paths, you know... “Lead our youth your way”. It is the case, that child rearing is a part of the regulatory process too, within the family. And then they come to school, and there is a lot of regulating going on in association with socialisation, right? There is no socialisation without regulation being closely attached to it. And then they go out into society and they meet police and the law, right, the regulatory process. And they find this quite exciting to do, really, because when they come and are recruited to a new society, they meet all this, but in a different way than in their home country. So combining the process they meet in Norway to what they have of experience from their home country is quite important, really. Because I think that is a key to understanding what this actually is.”*

(Subject teacher Rolf, Norway. Individual interview.)

Visualisation of what initially are abstract phenomena, combined with comparisons with learners' previous experiences, is here presented as an effective mean towards better conceptualisation. Rolf connects the socialisation process with the regulatory processes and explains how one can draw on concrete examples as a way of explaining how socialisation works. He actually highlights the special situation these learners are in, being migrants, stating that they have had quite specific encounters with some regulatory processes when

arriving this country, that they already have some understanding of from home. Lastly, Rolf identifies this as one of the crucial factors of grasping the learning content.

Yatta Kanu's research on culturally responsive curriculum (Kanu, 2007) show that the idea behind Rolf's teaching strategy is conducive to learning. In Kanu's research, implementing cultural content from the learners' perspectives increased learners' academic success. However, a key feature in Kanu's project included using culturally adequate pedagogic strategies and specific culturally relevant content, which necessarily demands both knowledge of and access to such material. The situation in the adult basic education classroom is evidently that learners are of various nationalities and ethnic belonging. It will therefore be equivalently more work to collect adequate knowledge and material suitable for these different groups of learners. Even more relevant then, is one of the suggestions from Kanu's study on refugee learners' educational needs (Kanu, 2008), to offer teachers professional development training that may translate into adaptations of the curriculum (ibid.). In this event, I would like to suggest that national means are taken to collect relevant information, produce knowledge of various cultural groups and provide teachers with the time and necessary access to professional development training.

#### *5.5.5 An exercise in mental contortionism*

*“Then, when you want to start questioning the democracy critically, it becomes a bold exercise that requires them to be much more than contortionists, really. Contortionists in third degree. (...) As you know, the curriculum is made for Norwegian learners (pupils from the age of 6-16). And really, it is an absurdity that we should push adults from other cultures through a curriculum of that kind. Then one should rather go for completely different approaches, and present completely different values (of learning), and be much more operational as to what one wants... that these people should learn.”*

(Subject teacher Rolf, Norway. Individual interview.)

In this final quote, Rolf explores the complexity of critical thinking. He compares this exercise to a mental flip-flop of flexible turnovers. He states that it is absurd to apply a curriculum developed for Norwegian learners, in this case children, and calls for a revision.

Finally, he says that aims of competence that are more operational towards the actual goal of this specific education for adults, is more desirable.

The Norwegian word for a contortionist is “slangemenneske”, which directly translates to “snake-human”. This word works very well as a figurative on a human body with a snake’s extreme flexibility. Rolf uses the word here as a metaphor on the mental capacity required to perform the re-socialisation to the extent he perceives necessary in order to reach the higher grades. We can quite reasonably assume that his intention in drawing that sort of comparison is to state the unrealistic goals the curriculum represents. By that, he has clearly characterised the curriculum as inapplicable in this context. We have in this overall discussion seen how confronting psychological resistance and overcoming it by negotiating boundaries, lead to transformative learning and re-socialisation, and thus developing new identity. In this process lies the risk of stagnating at de-socialisation, and by that establishing an incomplete identity. The time frame to acquire such a massive scope of skills and knowledge, in combination with a school institution that signals an apparent but misleading weak frame of learning, makes this process too demanding. I therefore stand behind Rolf’s metaphor, and by that conclude that the Norwegian school system is an exercise of mental contortionism to this group of learners.

#### *5.5.6 Reinforcing preconceptions*

In publishing highlights of cultural and cognitive differences, there is a chance of underpinning already existing conceptions of refugees as underachievers. I want to make it very clear that the results of this study show the situation as it was in December, not even half way through the academic year. It was at the time still a long way to go before their final results and the actuality of an examination were due. It is therefore important to note that my informants will have had academic progress, they will have matured and continued to develop concepts since then. Moreover, we can presume that this will happen more progressively in the time period after these investigations were done. Only the informants’ actual academic results, which will not be available until June 2017 - after this thesis is published - will show the truth about this small selection of informants. The results of this thesis can neither be used to generalise nor to prophesy, but are merely meant to show examples of how curriculum LK06 can result in poorer opportunities for this specific group.

## 6 Conclusions

The overall aim of this thesis has been to investigate if the aims of competence in Social Studies, LK06 is applicable to adult refugee learners. To do so, I have analysed a section of the learners own statements on their experience with the subject, and by the help of Critical Discourse Analysis aimed to disclose the ontological depth in their statements. This has shed light on how discourse perspectives interfere with learners' ability to produce text in class, and how connotations affect their conceptual understanding and by that their potential of academic achievement. Finally, I have discussed the challenges in class from the subject teacher's point of view in light of the aims of competence and criteria of academic achievement. I shall in the following summarise the results of my discussion, relating them to the three research questions presented in the introduction chapter 1.2. Finally, I will complete this thesis with a closing discussion and some suggestions of interesting future research ideas.

### *6.1.1 Summary of findings and discussion results*

- *How do adult refugee learners assess the level of difficulty in Social Studies?*

Adult refugee learners are expected to perform under the same requirements as Norwegian learners who have gone through a formal socialisation process within this specific institution. Knowledge, that to the Norwegian learners might be mundane, can be esoteric to adult refugee learners. In that way, this group is expected to think the unthinkable, an expectation of an exercise which they have not, at least not extensively, identified. The Norwegian school environment may appear weakly framed over the instructional discourse, but thorough arguments state that this is actually not so. This results in that the communication of the school's academic expectations towards their learners may at best seem ambiguous, and at worst absent. The informants in this thesis find morally compromising content difficult to handle, whereas knowledge on morally agreeable content were reported as easy to acquire. Furthermore, the learners were unable to identify the scope of the subject, and therefore underestimate what it requires of them as learners.

- *In which way does different use of discourse interfere in the production of text in the classroom?*

The subject discourse in LK06 is weakly classified. The dominance of moral discourse that characterises these learner's utterances, work as a promoter of the thinkable and a barrier against the unthinkable, hindering the "yet to be thought". Learners' connotations keep them within this moral discourse. Weak classification of subjects makes it to harder for adult refugee learners to identify and comprehend expected learning outcomes and thereby adjust their academic efforts and approaches.

- *In which way can connotations affect adult refugees' academic achievement in Norwegian basic education?*

Because connotations to words are culturally conditional, one must assume that the set of connotations to the same words among two cultural groups are not the same. This results in a fundamentally different base to discussions on curriculum related topics. The subject teacher reports challenges in developing critical thinking skills among his learners. Due to the time span which most adult basic education training is offered, there is inadequate time and lack of secure space to renegotiate boundaries in situations that require critical thinking skills. The process of transformative learning that follows with re-socialisation can awaken psychological resistance in learners that are facing a demand of negotiating boundaries. If not carefully attended to, this resistance can potentially lead to shielded socialisation instead of the intended re-socialisation. Expecting adult refugee learners to reach the higher level of academic achievement in such a short time span is thus unrealistic.

### *6.1.2 Answer to research problem*

**A complete answer to the overall research problem is that the aims of competence in Social Studies, LK06 is not adequately applicable to adult refugee learners.**

Therefore, the curriculum is discriminating learners on the base of their cultural background. This leads them to have a poorer educational foundation than Norwegian learners and consequently, they are at larger risk of losing out in the Norwegian educational ladder.

## 6.2 Closing discussion

The empirical findings and the discussion I have presented introduce a larger problem: Because the aims of competence are not comprehensible enough and the criteria of academic achievement of higher grades are inaccessible, the curriculum discriminates on the base of cultural background. It is timely to ask why it is so crucial that every learner is allowed the possibility of higher grades. Isn't it enough for some just to pass? Shouldn't we also applaud other values than academic success in our society? I shall complete this chapter by arguing why the discrimination of the curriculum in combination with The Educational Act is unacceptable, and then suggest some necessary measures.

### *6.2.1 The role of basic education*

Basic education has two functions in society today: Firstly, obtaining general education in order to be able to act freely in society and be a well-qualified participant of the democracy, is a human right and part of The Educational Act (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998; The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006a). Secondly, basic education is the first step in the educational ladder. It qualifies to higher secondary education and by that allows common members of the population a chance to get access to vocational training and/or higher education. Thus, basic education increases the prospects to qualify for employment (Brockmann committee, 2011). I shall look at these two functions in relation to each other, and point at some potential consequences:

I shall first look at the qualification issue, presenting reasons to question the system as it is today. Any learner who completes basic education will automatically qualify to higher secondary education. Consequently, adult refugee learners must compete for higher secondary school admission along with adolescent, and mainly Norwegian learners. These have thus gone through the whole ten years of education, and have, by that, been socialised into this learning culture. A vast amount of cultural content is therefore taken for granted when they enter secondary school. Admission to higher secondary education in Norway is today a right by The Educational Act, but popular secondary school studies are objects of competition based on grades. This implies that if the curriculum in basic education gives adult refugee learners poorer chances of achieving high grades, they are consequently given poorer options in the choice of higher secondary studies.



Furthermore, complete basic school training of adults only requires five subjects whereby two are obligatory and three are optional on the school's part (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). This evidently mean that the end product of basic education of adult refugees only include parts of what their competitors' education includes. Thus, the starting point in higher secondary school becomes more uneven. I will mention briefly that in the setting of higher secondary education, adult refugee learners will attend classes mixing with Norwegian adolescence learners. This might have a positive impact on re-socialisation, as cultures are mixing more than in the traditional adult basic education classroom. However, it also implies that the facilities are less conducive for the teacher to attend to refugees' special needs of analysing general concepts, thorough exploration of connotations and cultural adaptions of learning content.

Lastly, I will highlight education as a crucial mean to enable members of the society to join in decision-making that influences our own lives. Since basic education in Norway only has a criterion of completion and no minimum requirements in terms of grades, the Norwegian state fulfils both its own Educational Act and The Human Rights Act on this matter. However, it is hard to differ in that learners that complete basic education with low grades in all subjects, will likely have a poorer foundation as active citizens in a democracy. Taking part in democratic processes includes the ability to comprehend and discuss relevant issues, agree/disagree, make choices, and for some also become representatives or even establish alternatives, such as political parties or NGO's. Furthermore, adult refugees risk lacking the necessary skills and knowledge needed to support their children's socialisation. Preferably, parents or care givers should support children in developing wider conceptual comprehension of what they need to learn, in order to perform well in school. A general situation where refugees' children lack the needed home support would, I fear, contribute strongly to social reproduction. This, in turn will enlarge the gap between cultural groups in Norway, promote further segregation, and consequently undermine the whole democratic constitution.

### *6.2.2 A glimpse into the future*

When drafting the new, module based curriculum of Preparatory Adult Education, the main question should be: What are the aims of this qualification programme? In the current situation we have a huge dilemma, which is the gap between basic (lower secondary) and higher secondary education. Thus, a simplification of the curriculum for basic education will

simply enlarge this gap and add to the qualification problem this thesis strives to disclose. The aim must therefore be to obtain an appropriate set of skills needed, for instance critical thinking skills, in order to process the flow of information that is available in abundance in various fora. That way, learners are more instrumentally prepared to acquire the required knowledge in a conducive way – in basic education, further on in higher secondary, and potentially in higher education.

### *6.2.3 Future research ideas*

The potential implications of these issues can only be explored with further research. Interesting research questions could be whether the discrimination in basic education curriculum contributes to further social reproduction, analysed for example from Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework. The new, module based curriculum of Preparatory Adult Education is due for pilot tests from August 2017. A longitudinal study of learners undergoing training in the relevant modules qualifying for higher secondary school, would be very interesting to carry out. Whether or not the module based curriculum allows them to adequately develop cognitive skills such as critical thinking, and how this affects their success in higher secondary school, would be obvious research questions to ask.

I would also suggest a thorough quantitative study on adult refugee learners' academic results in order to draw a more complete picture of the scope of the problem I have sketched in this thesis. Lastly, I would like to pick up on my suggestion from chapter 5.5.4. I mentioned that national means should be taken to establish a bank of culturally responsive learning material, offer professional development training on the exact issues of culture differences, connotation influence and boundaries. This would offer an opportunity to do didactic action research by exploring the pedagogic implications and potential benefits of culturally responsive curricular content in the classroom.

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## Appendix A – Interview guide

Both the focus group interview and the individual interviews were conducted semi-structured. Following is a rough guide as to how the interviews were conducted. Follow-up questions were asked continuously and spontaneous topics that came up were encouraged.

### **Adult refugee learners: Focus group interview**

- Can you tell me about what you discussed in class yesterday?
- Can you tell me what the recruitment process is?
- What is the first that comes to mind when I say ... (relevant words that came up in class).
- How do you think different types of recruitment affects the society? E.g. how does a society that has a lot of immigration develop, compared to a society with less immigration?
- Which rites of passage do you have in your culture, and why do you practice these rituals?
- How would society be if we did not practice these rituals?

### **Adult refugee learners: Individual interviews**

- What do you think of the subject Social Studies?
- Which topics are more difficult to comprehend?
- In the group interview, we discussed (specific topics). Do you agree with these statements? Why/why not?
- What does this (specific terms used in the discussion) mean to you?

### **Subject teacher in Social Studies: Individual interview**

- Can you tell me a little bit about your experience as a teacher and examiner of social studies?
- How do you interpret the criteria of academic achievement, and how do you practice this when you are assessing your pupils?
- How did you experience the process of teaching these topics after I conducted my field work?
- To which extent do you perceive these learners' ability to grasp the learning content on a higher level, precisely looking at the grade 5-6?
- How much do you think these issues relate to language barriers?
- Do you find the aims of competence in the curriculum achievable to these learners, and why/how?

## Appendix B - Project approval from NSD



Nils Vidar Vambheim  
Institutt for lærerutdanning og pedagogikk UiT Norges arktiske universitet

9006 TROMSØ

Vår dato: 27.07.2016

Vår ref: 49009 / 3 / HIT

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 21.06.2016. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

49009	<i>Begrepsforståelse i samfunnsfag i grunnskoleopplæring for voksne innvandrere</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>UiT Norges arktiske universitet, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Nils Vidar Vambheim</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Mari Tollefsen</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.05.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Hildur Thorarensen

Kontaktperson: Hildur Thorarensen tlf: 55 58 26 54

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

## Appendix C - Letter of information

### Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt

#### **”Å forstå det du forstår”**

##### Bakgrunn og formål

Jeg, Mari Tollefsen skal gjennomføre et mastergradsstudie i pedagogikk ved Universitetet i Tromsø. Jeg skal undersøke om innholdet i kompetansemålene i Kunnskapsløftet i samfunnsfag etter 10. årstrinn er tilgjengelig og oppnåelig for voksne innvandrerelever i grunnskoleopplæring. Prosjektet har følgende problemstilling:

- *Påvirker ulik begrepsforståelse måloppnåelsen i samfunnsfag?*

Undersøkelsen omfatter spesielt utvalgte personer. Du spørres om å delta fordi du er elev i samfunnsfag, og fordi jeg tror du har kunnskap og meninger om temaet jeg skal undersøke.

##### Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Jeg skal gjennomføre observasjon i klasserommet mens undervisning i samfunnsfag foregår. Basert på observasjonene vil jeg intervjuere elever gruppevis. Både observasjon og intervjuer vil vare over omtrent to dager, høsten 2016. Intervjuene blir tatt opp på bånd slik at jeg lettere kan analysere det i ettertid. Spørsmålene vil omhandle temaer dere jobber med i samfunnsfag den aktuelle perioden. Informasjonen vil registreres i notater og lydopptak.

##### Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Kun student og veileder har tilgang til personopplysninger, og disse skal oppbevares i et låst skap på et låst rom. Navneliste lagres på et annet sted enn andre opplysninger slik at det ikke er mulig å koble disse. Informantene, skolen og skolestedet anonymiseres. Oppgaven vil bli publisert, men deltakeren vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjonen.



Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 01.06.2017. Da slettes alle personopplysninger, notater og lydopptak.

### Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli slettet.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Mari Tollefsen, tlf 97775919, [mto002@post.uit.no](mailto:mto002@post.uit.no). Veileder/daglig ansvarlig er Vidar Vambheim, [vidar.vambheim@uit.no](mailto:vidar.vambheim@uit.no).

Studien er godkjent av Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS.

## Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta (kryss av)

i observasjon	<input type="checkbox"/>
i observasjon og intervju	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)