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**CONTENT BASED TEACHING OF ENGLISH ON THIRD GRADERS
IN THE KORTEPOHJA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY**

A Pro Gradu Thesis

by

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ABSTRAKTI

HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA
ENGLANNIN KIELEN LAITOS

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Viime vuosina mielenkiinto kommunikatiiviseen kielenopetukseen on lisääntynyt. Pyrkimyksenä on ollut löytää opetusmenetelmiä, jotka painottavat luonnollisia kielenkäyttötilanteita paremmin kuin perinteinen kielenopetus. Koululaitoksemme vieraiden kielenopetusta on arvosteltu, sillä se ei ole ottanut tarpeeksi huomioon lisääntyneen kansainvälistymisen vaatimia kommunikatiivisia taitoja.

Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää, onko kommunikaatioon perustuvasta englantipainotteisesta opetuksesta hyötyä. Materiaali koostuu pääosin peruskoulun ala-asteen oppilaiden haastatteluista sekä vanhemmille ja opettajille tehdyistä kyselyistä. Tutkimuksen taustana ovat kielikylpyopetus ja sen sovellukset sekä yksilöllisten erojen vaikutus oppimiseen. Koska kyseessä on tapaustutkimus, tutkielma on pääosin kuvaileva.

Tutkielmassa verrataan englantipainotteisen ja tavallisen luokan oppilaiden kokemuksia ja käsityksiä englannin opiskelusta. Tutkielma jakautuu viiteen teema-alueeseen, jotka tulivat ilmi haastatteluissa. Teema-alueisiin lukeutuvat asenteet englantipainotteiseen opetukseen, englannin kielen tärkeys, kieliminä, englannin kielen käyttäminen sekä englannin kieleen liittyvät harrastukset.

Tulokset osoittavat, että luokkien välillä ei ole merkittäviä eroja eri teema-alueilla. Englantipainotteinen opetus ei siis näytä takaavan myönteisempiä asenteita kieleen tai kielenpuhujiin kuin normaaliopetus. Suuria eroja ei myöskään ilmene oppilaiden käsityksissä itsestään kielenkäyttäjinä. Molempien luokkien oppilaat ovat käyttäneet englantia koulun ulkopuolella lähes yhtä paljon eikä harrastustenkkaan osalta ole havaittavissa suuria eroja. Joissakin teema-alueissa normaaliluokka näyttää jopa saavuttavan parempia tuloksia kuin englantipainotteinen luokka. Näistä vain suuntaa-antavista tutkimustuloksista huolimatta englantipainotteinen opetusmenetelmä tarjoaa lapselle mahdollisuuden oppia vierasta kieltä mahdollisimman luonnollisessa oppimisympäristössä.

Asiasanat: age. content based teaching. immersion. individual learner differences. second language acquisition

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1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays communicative skills are emphasized in second language teaching on all grade levels. The most promising new language teaching method has proved to be immersion education. In Finland, internationalization and, thus, the necessity of knowing many languages have set increasing demands on traditional language teaching, which does not appear to meet these demands. Therefore, the Finnish authorities have also searched for new language teaching methods.

The research on immersion education programmes in Canada proved that this approach is successful in providing the pupils a native-like proficiency in their second language. As a consequence, immersion programmes have been adopted outside the borders of Canada. In Finland, immersion principles following the Canadian model are mainly applied to teaching Swedish and English. These programmes emphasize meaningful communication rather than form, in other words, explicit instruction of grammar. Many language programmes implemented in Finland cannot, however, be considered as immersion, since they follow the approach only partly. For example, the exposure to the second language is usually significantly less than in the Canadian immersion alternatives, which are dealt with in Chapter 2. The content based teaching experiment examined in the present study is an example of such a programme, which adapts some principles of immersion education.

The present study was conducted in the Kortepohja elementary school where English is used as a medium of instruction and in the daily routines approximately 25 percent of the time. The programme is based on the concept of immersion in a flexible manner, that is, English is used in appropriate connections, and both the linguistic aspects and the subject matter are taken into consideration. The present writers found this new

approach worth studying because of its experimental nature and its reported success in second language teaching.

The present writers' aim was to compare the pupils' experiences in both the content based teaching class and the regular class. The focus was on individual differences among ten informants selected from these classes. The students' attitudes, motivations, and some personality factors were examined. It was hypothesized that the pupils in the content based teaching class would convey more positive attitudes towards studying English and towards its speakers. The present writers also supposed that the pupils in the content based teaching class would have a more positive self-concept as English learners than the pupils in the regular class. In addition, it was assumed that the pupils in the content based teaching class would be more willing to use English on their own initiative than their peers in the regular class.

The method used in the present study is descriptive. The data was collected qualitatively by interviewing five informants in the content based teaching class and five informants in the regular class, all of whom were described as high-achievers by their teachers. Furthermore, the parents gave information in questionnaires and the teachers in interviews. The procedure of the present study is dealt with in Chapter 5, and the informants are presented in Chapter 6. Before the procedure and the results of the present study are discussed, literature concerning immersion education and the effects of individual learner differences on immersion education will be reviewed.

2 IMMERSION EDUCATION

Nowadays communicative skills are emphasized in the language curricula of elementary school foreign language programmes. As Curtain (1991:323) observes, "the emphasis has shifted the focus of instruction from language analysis with a focus on form, to language use with a focus on function." Languages are being used in meaningful contexts, even at the beginning levels of language learning. Classes are conducted in the target language and elements of instruction are more integrated. (Curtain 1991:323.) This trend in elementary school foreign language teaching has also been noticed in Finland. Although communicative skills have been emphasized in the language curriculum in Finland, the results have not been good enough. Traditional teaching does not seem to provide necessary skills for children to learn to communicate in a foreign language. After twelve years of study, students do not necessarily have satisfactory communicative skills.

The Commission for the Development of Language Teaching, which was set up by the Ministry of Education, emphasizes the importance for Finns to know many cultures and languages. Increasing international contacts both in commerce and in the private sector make language proficiency essential for both the individual and Finnish society. The Commission, therefore, suggests that because the formal teaching of languages does not seem to be enough, schools should also consider providing content instruction in foreign languages. Recent development in the teaching of languages show that language should not only be considered as a target but also as a medium of instruction. (OPM 1989:47, Komiteanmietintö 1992:16.) In Finland the programmes implemented follow the Canadian model. Immersion programme alternatives in Canada have been found efficient in providing children sufficient communicative skills. In the next section these programme alternatives will be introduced.

2.1 Immersion programme alternatives

According to Genesee (1987:1), a language programme is considered immersion if at least 50 percent of instruction during a given academic year is provided through the second language. Jasper (1995:6), however, believes that language education can be regarded as immersion only if students are completely immersed in an environment where second language is the language of both life and study. If defined like this, English immersion programmes in Finland are extremely rare. Although Jasper is open to the possibility that schools where all activities are conducted in English exist, he sees it more likely that at least some activities are in Finnish. Moreover, Jasper points out that it is almost certain that children themselves form a Finnish speaking community inside the school. (Jasper 1995:6-7.)

Immersion education can be divided into different alternatives in terms of the time of beginning and the amount of target language used in education. The first immersion alternative is early total immersion. In these programmes, the main variation involves the grade level on which the instruction of the native language, in the Canadian case English, begins. It may happen in the second, third, or fourth grade. To begin with, all the instruction is, however, conducted in the target language and later the first language (mother tongue) is introduced in the curriculum. Another variation is the amount of instruction in English once it is introduced. In the second immersion alternative, the early partial immersion programme, less than 100 percent of curricular instruction during the primary grades is presented in the second language. In the most common type in Canada, 50 percent of the curriculum is taught in English and the other 50 percent in French. In early total immersion, all the instruction is in the target language, as mentioned above. (Genesee 1987:20-22.)

Genesee (1987:21-22) defines the third immersion programme alternative, the late immersion programme, in the following way: "In late immersion programs intensive use of the second language is postponed until the end of elementary school." In these immersion alternatives the curriculum is usually the same as that in the regular programme. The fourth immersion alternative presented here is delayed immersion. In this programme alternative, the use of the second language as a major medium of instruction is postponed until the fourth or fifth grade.

The two types of immersion education described above, that is, late and delayed immersion, differ from the other two alternatives, early total and early partial immersion. First language literacy precedes training in second language literacy, which is not the case in the early immersion alternatives. There are, furthermore, other programmes in which the second language is used as a medium of instruction, but in less than 50 percent of the curriculum during any school year. However, these programs are regarded as enriched second language programs, not immersion. (Genesee 1987:19-22.) This is the case in the programme examined in the present study. The teachers use English as a medium of instruction and in all the daily routines approximately 25 percent of the time. The teachers emphasize that although the programme cannot be considered immersion, it is based on the concept of immersion. (Fakhimzadeh 1993:13.)

2.2 The history and some results of immersion education in Canada

The roots of immersion education are in the province of Quebec in Canada. The first immersion programme, the St. Lambert programme, begun in 1965. It was based on the research on second language acquisition. Intensive exposure to the target language through meaningful

communication with a native speaker, as well as starting at young age, were the essential features in the pioneer programme. Anglophone parents considered traditional language teaching ineffective and actively searched for new alternatives. They were worried about French becoming more important as a language of communication and commerce in Quebec, and realized that to know English alone was not enough to maintain social and economic success in the province. (Lambert and Tucker 1972:1-7, Genesee 1987:5-11.) With many researchers, the parents shared the view that young children are better second language learners than older students, because they have fewer attitudes and prejudices that interfere with learning and more time to learn. (See Genesee 1987, Kieltenopetuksen kehittämistoimikunnan mietintö 1992, Arnau 1994.) These factors, that is, the influence of attitudes and age on second language acquisition in general and especially on immersion education, will be examined later in the present study.

The first immersion programme instituted was an early immersion programme. Genesee (1987:26) divides this type of immersion in three different phases:

- 1) a monolingual phase (usually kindergarten to the second or third grade), when all curricular instruction is presented in the second language; 2) a bilingual phase (usually from the second or third grade to the end of elementary school), when both the first and a second languages are jointly used for curricular instruction; and 3) follow-up phase (usually during secondary school), when selected courses are offered in the second language in order to maintain and further develop the students' second language proficiency.

The early total immersion described above is the oldest, the most popular, and therefore, the most studied of the existing immersion alternatives. The research on all the Canadian immersion programmes has typically been focused on comparing the performance of students in immersion programmes to that of students in regular programmes.

However, comparisons have also been made on the performance of students enrolled in different immersion alternatives. Students' attainment of high levels of functional proficiency in a second language at no cost to their academic or first language development usually determines the success of immersion programmes (Genesee 1987:17).

Early total immersion is usually considered the most successful of all immersion alternatives. Early total immersion students have been reported to perform as well as their French peers on comprehension tests, both in reading and listening. However, Genesee (1987:46) points out that the tests in questions evaluate the "comprehension of school-type language". He validly questions whether the students could perform as well in more colloquial forms of French. Students are also less likely to acquire native-like skills in speaking or writing in French. Notwithstanding the linguistic weaknesses, early total immersion students demonstrate high levels of functional proficiency in French. However, some deficits have been detected in their English literacy skills such as reading, spelling, and written vocabulary during the early grades of total immersion when compared to that of children in traditional programmes. This lag in literacy usually disappears within one year of the introduction of English in the curriculum. (Swain and Lapkin 1982:39, Genesee 1987:43-47, Vesterbacka 1989:24-25.)

Students in early partial immersion programmes have been detected to be as successful as their regular programme peers in the subjects taught to them in French. Nevertheless, some results have shown that the students experience difficulty in maintaining the standards in the subjects taught in French, although they do perform in English as well as, or better than, their regular programme peers. (See Swain and Lapkin 1982:65, McLaughlin 1985:69.) Swain and Lapkin (1982) believe that early partial immersion students' academic difficulties might be due to insufficient

second language skills. The students do not have the language skills required to deal with the complex matters taught to them in a second language. (Swain and Lapkin 1982:40, 65-68.)

Early partial immersion is not generally considered as successful as early total immersion. However, Cummins and Swain (1986:46) emphasize that although early partial immersion students do not perform as well as early total immersion students on the same grade level, they appear to perform as well as total immersion students on lower levels, who have had "similar amounts of contact time with French". Furthermore, they do not seem to have similar lags in English language development to those experienced by total immersion students (Genesee 1987:43).

In contrast to both early total and early partial immersion alternatives, some programmes postpone the second language introduction until first language literacy skills are established. In delayed and late immersion alternatives, children have been reported to outperform their peers in regular programmes on tests on French language proficiency (McLaughlin 1985:70). They attain native-like levels of proficiency in comprehension skills and less than native levels in production skills. Furthermore, no lags have been noticed in their English language development. (Genesee 1987:43, 49.) However, research findings suggest that it is likely that a higher than average motivation is a prerequisite in immersion that starts on later grade levels. This is partly because students in late immersion have more difficulties in coping with the challenge of a new language than do early immersion students. (Halpern 1984:29, Sloan 1991:35.)

The vast research on French immersion education in Canada has proved this teaching approach to be very successful in providing majority language children with high levels of proficiency in a second language

(Lambert and Tucker 1972:200-201, Edwards et al. 1984:269-270, Genesee 1987:191). All immersion alternatives have been reported to be successful compared to regular language programmes. However, immersion students in all the alternatives are more likely to demonstrate a native-like proficiency in second language comprehension than in production, although they usually surpass their peers in the control groups in both. In addition, none of the programme alternatives has been shown to result in negative effects to the students' English language development or academic achievement. (Swain and Lapkin 1982:81-85, Genesee 1987:49, 191.)

Nevertheless, the success of the immersion programmes with majority language students does not mean that similar programmes are successful with minority language students (see Genesee 1987:173). Immersion programmes can be regarded as a form of bilingual education for majority language children, the main objective being bilingual proficiency. "Majority language students are children whose first language (mother tongue) is the same as the language used by the school as the medium of instruction" (Shapson 1984:2). Majority language children are members of the dominant sociocultural group. As a result, their participation in the programme and possible assimilation into another linguistic and cultural group is likely to be by choice rather than because of political or economic necessity, which is often the case for minority language students. In addition, because of the dominant position of their language in society, majority language students' first language continues to develop and is maintained even while a second language is learned. (Cummins and Swain 1986:33, Baetens Beardsmore 1986:172.)

The good results of the Canadian immersion models have been detected by language instructors outside the borders of Canada. Different immersion programmes have been introduced, for instance, in Spain, in

the United Kingdom, and in the United States (for overviews of the programmes see Bel Gaya 1994, MacNeil 1994, and Fortune and Jorstad 1996). Immersion alternatives introduced in Finland are dealt with later in the present study.

3 INDIVIDUAL LEARNER DIFFERENCES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN IMMERSION EDUCATION

Individual differences have been shown to affect the acquisition of a second language in immersion education. The differences that are relevant to the present study are reviewed in the following section. The first to be introduced is age, which does not affect children's and adults' second language acquisition in the same way. Social-psychological factors, namely, attitudes and motivation, are the second example of individual learner differences. Attitudes and motivation are affective states that may positively influence language acquisition. Personality is the third individual difference discussed in the following section. There are several personality factors that affect the acquisition of a second language, but only two, self-concept and anxiety, are dealt with in greater detail in the present study. This is because other personality factors are not so clearly developed or visible in children in the third grade.

3.1 The effect of age on immersion education

Although most researchers agree that age is not the most important issue in the field of second language acquisition, it is obviously significant in the studies of children as second language learners. The optimal age of starting a second language has been studied widely. Genesee (1992:210) points out that the focus of research on immersion education

has been on age, especially when the suitability or effectiveness of different immersion alternatives for different learners or learner groups are discussed. Various studies have also compared the differences between children and adults as well as differences between younger and older children as language learners. Investigations of the age issue in immersion education indicate that the comparison here is mainly between the immersion alternatives. Researchers debate which alternative, the early or the late alternatives, is the most successful in providing the children with a good proficiency in English. The results of the studies have led researchers to draw different and contradictory conclusions, and, furthermore, some theories have been criticized.

It is commonly considered that children are more successful language learners than adolescents or adults. This belief has led to different hypotheses of an optimal age for learning languages. For example, Eric Lenneberg (1967) has argued in his critical period hypothesis that there is a biologically based period for complete mastery of a second language. This period extends from early infancy until puberty at around age 12. Lenneberg has hypothesized that language acquisition must occur within this period, because then the structure of the brain is more specialised for language acquisition. The dominant hemisphere of the brain becomes more receptive for language, until at age 12 all language functions take place in that hemisphere, and the brain has reached its adult values. Therefore, a person who is 12 years old can be considered an adult according to this theory on the biological development of the brain. After this age, the brain loses its plasticity and reorganizational capacities necessary for language acquisition. Lenneberg's theory is partly supported by Ellis (1994:489) who states that research on naturalistic learning situations, immersion included, provides evidence that younger is better. The theory has also been criticized or adapted by other

researchers (see Bongaerts et al. 1995:31, Johnson and Newport 1995:77-79,110, Singleton 1995:4).

The question of age in second language acquisition has mainly focused on differences between child and adult second language learning. It is also relevant to the issue of immersion. Nevertheless, it must be noted that according to researchers, individuals older than 12 are considered as adults, which is based on Lenneberg's theory on brain development mentioned above. However, since a 12-year-old person's social-psychological maturity is closer to a child's than adult's, the present writers consider it more accurate to call them adolescents than adults. Some other researchers as, for example, Lightbown and Spada (1993), have used similar classification in their studies. In immersion education, those who have started the programme around this age attend either late or delayed immersion programme alternatives. In other words, when discussing differences between child and adult learners in the present study, pupils in early and late or delayed immersion education are compared.

The amount of research on the age issue is enormous, and the researchers have come to different conclusions. However, they have reached agreement on some aspects of child-adolescent differences. First, adolescents are at an initial advantage in the rate of learning, especially in grammar. (Ellis 1994:491-492.) Singleton (1995:13) concludes that adolescents progress more rapidly than children in acquiring vocabulary. Moreover, their early morphological and syntactic development progresses faster than children's (Gass and Selinker 1994:244). This is also supported by research on early and late immersion. Harley (1986) concludes that older students in late immersion acquire greater overall control of the French verb system than younger ones in early immersion after the same amount of instruction.

Nonetheless, adolescents will eventually be overtaken by children who are exposed to second language mainly in naturalistic settings, such as immersion (Ellis 1994:491-492, Singleton 1995:13). However, Ellis (1994:489) argues that the immersion students' high levels of attainment is due to the amount of instruction received in a second language rather than starting age.

Another agreement on child-adolescent differences suggests that only children are able to acquire a native-like accent in informal learning situations, such as immersion education (Gass and Selinker 1994:245). Because children have more time and acquire the sound system more successfully, McLaughlin (1985:247) proposes that it is best to start second language learning as early as possible, for example in an immersion programme. Similarly, Singleton (1989:107) claims that unless exposure to a second language begins in the childhood, it is not possible to acquire a native-like accent. However, Genesee (1987:43-47) points out that when immersion children are compared to the native speakers of French, they do not attain the same level of proficiency in speaking and writing. Yet, they outperform the students in regular programmes in both areas.

Research on child-adolescent differences also indicates that child learners are more likely to acquire native-like grammatical competence. The critical period for learning grammar is around 15 years, which is later than for pronunciation. In all, children reach higher levels of attainment in grammar and pronunciation than adolescents. (Ellis 1994:491-492.) On the other hand, contrary results have been found in research on immersion. Some researchers have criticized immersion education by suggesting that in these programmes children do not learn proper French; rather, they develop a pidginized form of the language (McLaughlin 1985:137).

One of the characteristics of immersion education is that children are seen as more successful second language learners than adolescents. For this reason, the explanations below are also relevant to immersion and, thus, to the present study. First, the social-psychological explanation consists of arguments that adolescents may be more inhibited and self-conscious and that their identity as speakers of their mother tongue is more firmly established than that of the children. Adolescents do not have the open mental state necessary for language acquisition, which makes them unwilling to adopt a new language. In addition, adolescents may have negative attitudes towards the speakers of a second language, and they are less able to identify themselves with other groups. Children's negative attitudes are not fully formed yet and, thus, children are not affected by such attitudes. Likewise, according to Broughton et al. (1980:172), children who have no prejudices against foreign languages learn to think in English more readily than older beginners and, therefore, the language becomes a part of their thinking and talking from the very start. The social-psychological factors, namely, attitudes and motivation, in immersion education will be discussed later in the present study. (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:163-164, Gass and Selinker 1994:245.)

The second explanation why children learn languages more readily than adolescents concerns cognitive reasons. Adolescents' greater cognitive abilities, that is, the formal operational thinkers' ability to construct abstract hypotheses, may disable them from naturally acquiring languages. In other words, adolescents are not able to acquire a second language in the same natural way as they acquired their mother tongue as children, free from abstract thinking. This concept of learning second languages naturally is one of the basic principles of immersion programmes. Languages are regarded as a medium of instruction, not as a goal. On the other hand, Lightbown and Spada (1993:21) emphasize that even though children have the advantage of learning languages

naturally, they do not have the cognitive maturity, metalinguistic awareness, or world knowledge which adolescents have. (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:163-164, Gass and Selinker 1994:245.)

Most immersion programmes deal with children at the concrete stages of cognitive development and, therefore, it is essential for the success of foreign language programmes in elementary school that concrete experiences and intensive use of visuals and physical activity are used in class. In many immersion classes the teacher, for example, uses pictures and pantomime to aid comprehension. (Curtain 1991:323-325.) However, Wiss (1989:517-528) points out in her study that children whose cognitive and linguistic skills are not developed adequately in order to meet the demands of bilingual immersion environment experience difficulties in these programmes. Wiss uses such terms as developmentally immature and developmentally young when discussing the cases. According to her, problems emerge when the linguistic demands of the academic setting exceed the cognitive and linguistic development of the child.

The third explanation for children being more successful second language learners is that some neurological changes prevent adolescents from using their brains in the same way as children do when learning a language. For instance, Lenneberg's (1967) critical period hypothesis discussed above is a theory that studies a loss of plasticity or flexibility by the brain. The fourth explanation is that children are exposed to better and larger amount of input than adolescents. Children appear to receive much more concrete here-and-now language than adolescents, especially where immersion children are concerned. The input gives children clearer samples of a language and, therefore, helps them to learn syntax and get better data about a language. (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:163-164, Gass and Selinker 1994:245.)

Children are enthusiastic learners. They do not have the inhibitions typical of adults or adolescents. Dunn (1983:3) points out that children are willing to use language, are not afraid to experiment with sounds, and do not worry about mistakes. Thus, she claims, children need a programme rich in meaningful and real-life activities in which communication occurs naturally. Immersion is an example of such a programme. One reason for its success is that starting a language early leads to a basic grounding in a language, which then makes it possible for a language to be used in a practical way for other school subjects. The early start also provides more time for learning as well as prevents negative motivation, which adolescents learning a second language may have. (Halpern 1984:27.) On the other hand, Singleton (1989:263) argues that unless factors such as learning materials, teacher commitment, and public attitudes towards a foreign language are favourable, learning a second language at primary school may be a negative experience.

3.2 The effects of social-psychological factors on immersion education

Social-psychological factors that affect second language acquisition in immersion education can be divided into two major concepts, attitudes and motivation. Both are closely related to second language acquisition and, therefore, have been studied abundantly. In short, attitudes influence children's language attainment which, on the other hand, is connected to their motivation to learn. According to Luhtala and Tuominen (1996:102), attitudes and motivation are positive among children in the content based teaching class in grade 3. The results of their study suggest that children are highly motivated to both going to school in general and learning a second language. Equally, children's attitudes towards the target

language and its speakers are positive, and no negative stereotypes can be detected.

3.2.1 Attitudes

Research has shown that participants in immersion programmes tend to express more positive attitudes towards the target language culture and its members than their peers in control groups during the early years of immersion education. However, some changes in their attitudes have been detected in the later years of immersion education. It has been suggested that this is due to the lack of contact with the target language group and the general sociopolitical climate between the language groups. (Genesee 1987:193.)

Attitudes towards the target language and its speakers have been shown to affect the desire to learn the language and thus influence the language proficiency. Therefore, the present writers consider it necessary to define the concept of attitude. To quote Oskamp (1991:19), "an attitude can be defined as a readiness to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular class of objects". An attitude is a summary of a person's evaluative and emotional beliefs about an object. It is also the result of his or her past experiences, and it determines with the present stimulus situation the person's behavioural responses. (Oskamp 1991:12-15.) Oskamp (1991:80) also states that attitudes and beliefs form a system where the parts are connected with each other. This system differs with each individual whose life and past experiences are unique. Likewise, psychological, social, and environmental factors are different with everybody.

Since attitudes are an important factor in successful immersion education, it is relevant to the present study to examine how they are developed. Attitudes, like other aspects of development of cognition and affect, develop in childhood and are the result of parents' and peers' attitudes, contacts with different people, and other experiences. A child's perception of self, of others, and of his or her own culture are based on these attitudes. (Brown 1994:168.) Oskamp (1991:32) also lists factors that affect attitude formation. First, the most fundamental factor in attitude formation is direct personal experience, either in salient incidents or in repeated exposure over time. Second, parents' influence is especially significant in a child's early attitudes. For example, Oskamp (1991:161) argues, the attitudes towards foreigners and other countries have often come directly from parents. Correspondently, MacFarlane and Wesche (1995:262) found out in their study that family attitudes are at least an equally important factor in attitude formation as immersion programme. Third, the school and especially peer and reference groups become more important as a child grows older. Gardner (1985:7), for instance, points out that attitudes towards the course or the teacher, who in many cases is the only model of the language user, are important because they are associated with the language and the language material. Finally, the mass media not only provide information but also form attitudes, particularly on new issues of which no attitudes existed before.

Positive attitudes help people to understand other people in different cultures. However, stereotypes may be formed because people tend to be close-minded about the differences between cultures. Stereotypical and negative attitudes have been detected in the immersion students in Canada as well as the students in the present study. Thus, stereotypes are examined briefly in this section. Stereotypes are images or beliefs that an individual has about most members of a particular social group. Stereotypes are simple, evaluative, resistant to change, and often

inaccurate. They may be derived from explicit teaching by parents, peers, or teachers, from incidental learning particularly from the mass media, or from illusory correlations of traits with a given social group. (Oskamp 1991:30, Brown 1994:166.) Oskamp (1991:346) mentions a study in which it was concluded that the stereotyping process starts in children's early conceptions of their own group, and that between the ages of 6 and 14 children start increasingly to develop stereotyped views of foreign people. At ages 10 and 14 children use a larger range of evaluative categories. Descriptive statements change from physical characteristics, clothing, and language to a greater emphasis on personality traits, habits, political and religious characteristics, and material possessions. However, Luhtala and Tuominen (1996) found no stereotypes in the informants in their study on immersion children of age 9-10.

Research on attitudes indicates that attitudes towards learning a second language and attitudes towards the second language community affect proficiency in the language learning in immersion. These attitudes are independent of intelligence and language aptitude but relate to factors in the environment or subject characteristics such as age or sex. (Gardner 1985:60.) It has also been shown that negative attitudes towards the people who speak a second language or towards the second language itself affect success in learning a language from school age on up. Negative attitudes may decrease motivation, and because of decreased input and interaction, may lead to unsuccessful attainment of second language proficiency. (Brown 1994:63, 169.)

Mantle-Bromley (1995:372-373) has also concluded in her study that "attitudes towards the teacher, the class, the language, speakers of the language, and cultures of the language have all been found statistically significant in their relationship with both students' achievement and their intentions to continue language study". The results of her study also show

that many young children enter their first language class with misconceptions about language learning that may hinder their progress and persistence in studying languages. Furthermore, it has been reported that children who transfer out of immersion programmes usually have low levels of academic achievement and second language proficiency. However, affective, attitudinal, and motivational characteristics seem to be more important predictors of programme departure. In her study, Bruck (1985) mentions that these transfer children seem to have behaviour problems and that they are less interested in school and in learning of a second language. According to her, the attitudes and motivations of transfer children do not appear to be specific to the second language learning situation, but may reflect more stable personality characteristics. (Bruck 1985:58-60, see also Genesee 1987:83-85.)

Many studies have been conducted concerning immersion students' attitudes towards a target language, its speakers and culture as well as learning of the target language. The results have shown as mentioned above that immersion students' attitudes are generally more positive than non-immersion students' attitudes. Immersion students initially express much more positive attitudes than their regular programme peers. However, there is little evidence that these attitudes are strongly held or enduring. In other words, the researchers have found out that in later years of the programme the attitudes of the immersion students and their peers in the regular programme are more alike than in the beginning. According to Genesee (1987:106), this is due to the lack of contact between the learner and the members of the target language group. (Genesee 1987, MacFarlane and Wesche 1995, Van der Keilen 1995.) Nevertheless, Swain and Lapkin (1982:75-76) report that when asked directly, the immersion students had more positive attitudes towards the target language group than their peers in the regular programme.

On the other hand, some studies of the regular programme on attitudes have come to different conclusions. For example, Hermann (1980) has studied 750 German children learning English as a foreign language and has found out that those children who have been studying English for five years show a significantly higher level of positive attitudes towards the target culture than a group who have just started to study English. Moreover, the lower-proficiency learners show significantly more prejudice than the higher-proficiency group. Thus, Hermann (1980:249) hypothesizes that "the mere satisfaction [a learner] derives from his achievement of the learning task may influence his attitude to the ethnolinguistic group in question and even result in a change of such attitude".

3.2.2 Motivation

One of the distinguishing features of immersion education is that language is learned through its use rather than through explicit instruction. Language is used in meaningful, purposeful social and academic contexts. Content provides both a motivational and a cognitive basis for language learning. If the student regards the content as interesting and of some value to him or her, it seems worth learning. Language learning may even become incidental to learning about the content. (Snow et al. 1989:202, Brinton et al. 1989:5.) Children acquire language simultaneously with the knowledge of the world. Met (1991:282) emphasizes that "children's intrinsic motivation to make sense of the world and to communicate with significant others about it provides the impetus and vehicle for language acquisition". Extensive research on the success of immersion education supports this belief (see Lambert and Tucker 1972, Genesee 1987).

Motivation is one of the main determinants of second language learning achievement and, therefore, has caused a considerable amount of research investigating the nature and role of motivation in language learning process. Likewise, researchers studying immersion education have found motivation to be an important factor in acquiring a target language. According to Gardner (1985:50), motivation involves four aspects, a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to achieve the goal of learning a language, and favourable attitudes towards the activity of learning a language. In other words, motivation to learn a second language consists of a desire to learn a language and a pleasure experienced in this activity. Brown (1994:153), on the other hand, points out that motivation, like self-esteem, can be global, situational, or task-oriented. He also states that learners can be either intrinsically motivated, that is, they learn for their own self-perceived needs and goals, or extrinsically motivated which means that learners pursue a goal to receive an external reward from someone else.

Maehr and Archer (1987:86-87) have also described five identifiable patterns of behaviour typical to motivation. The choice of direction for action is the first indicator of motivation. Persistence, namely, a person concentrating attention on the same task or event for extended periods of time, is the second behavioural pattern of motivation. The third pattern is continuing motivation that refers to a return to a previously encountered task without external constraint to do so. Activity level is the fourth behavioural pattern that forms the basis for motivation. The final example of the motivational patterns is variation in performance. If variation in performance cannot be explained in terms of competence, skills, or physiological factors, then a motivational inference may be drawn.

The study of motivation in second language acquisition became a distinguished research topic after Gardner and Lambert (1972) published their pioneering work on motivation. They found that successful second language learning was dependent upon a learner's affective predisposition towards the target linguistic-cultural group. A learner's identification with the target language speakers gives a long-term motivation that Gardner and Lambert named integrative motivation. Clearly different is the second motivation, instrumental motivation, where a learner's interest in learning a foreign language is based on the pragmatic, utilitarian benefits of language proficiency, such as a better job or a higher salary. Such a learner has a goal in learning a language but does not consider it important to become a competent second language user. He or she is not interested in the culture or the speakers of the target language like an integratively motivated learner.

Integrative and instrumental motivations are also present in children's second language learning in immersion education. A warm and supportive environment that encourages a child to develop an integrative motivation towards language study greatly affects second language acquisition. (Gardner 1985:122-123.) Parents influence their children's motivation to learn a second language. Parents convey messages of the importance of language study, their expectations concerning performance, and their own feelings about the target language culture and its speakers to their children. Those parents who encourage their children towards instrumental value of language study believe that they give the most support to their children. However, it is the parents who value the ideas of integrative motivation, as, for example, having positive attitudes towards foreign people and language learning, that promote cultural values. (Gardner 1985:122-123.)

Debate on the superiority of motivational orientations is continuous. In the earlier research, for example Gardner and Lambert (1972), integrative motivation was seen as a more powerful predictor of successful language learning in formal learning situations than instrumental motivation. However, in later studies researchers have found instrumental motivation to be more important for learner success. This is the case especially in situations where a second language is valued practically, and frequent use of a language is available and necessary (Dulay et al. 1982:48). An example of such a situation is immersion education. Many researchers have found out that immersion children have more integrative and instrumental motivation towards learning a second language than the children in regular programmes (Van der Keilen 1995:296). However, Krueger and Ryan (1993:6) conclude in their study on an immersion programme at the university level that instrumental rather than integrative motivation lead to successful second language acquisition. Similarly, Lukmani (1972:272) demonstrated that among Marathi-speaking Indian students learning English in India, those with higher instrumental motivation, for instance to use English for career advancement, scored higher in tests of English proficiency than those with integrative motivation.

Studies indicate that both instrumental motivation and integrative motivation facilitate second language learning, as mentioned above. Other students besides the intellectually gifted can learn a second language in school by means of positive attitudes and motivations. (Genesee 1987:82, Gardner and MacIntyre 1991:57.) Similar results have been found in some studies on immersion education as well. In her study, Bruck (1985:55) concludes that immersion children who are poor achievers and transfer out of the programme usually have more negative attitudes towards school and learning of the second language than do poor achievers who continue in the programme. However, a major

dispute about motivation and second language learning is whether motivation predicts success or success predicts motivation. For example, Gardner (1985) claims that motivation leads to success in language learning, whereas Strong (1984) argues that the more successful a learner has been in language learning, the more motivated he or she will be to learn more. Similarly, Hermann (1980), who was mentioned earlier in the discussion on attitudes, suggests that success causes motivation. She has developed the resultative hypothesis, which claims that learners who do well are more likely to become motivated and to be active in class.

3.3 The effects of personality factors on immersion education

Several studies suggest that personality factors are important predictors of success in second language acquisition in all language learning situations immersion education included. Each individual has personal characteristics that may be either useful or harmful to his or her language learning. Personality, like other individual differences, affects a person's rate of learning as well as the ultimate level of second language achievement. Examples of such personality traits are self-concept and anxiety that, which are described below.

The present writers want to emphasize that some personality factors are not particularly relevant to the present study because of the young age of the informants. These factors have not developed yet in the informants and thus cannot be the focus of the present study. Among these personality factors is language aptitude, namely, a special ability involved in language learning, which has been found to be one of the best predictors of second language learning (Ellis 1994:522). Furthermore, other personality factors are cognitive style, i.e., a preferred way in which

learners process information or approach a task, and empathy, that is, an ability to put oneself in another's place (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:189, 192). In addition, extroversion and introversion as personality constructs may also be important factors in second language acquisition. Some evidence suggests that extroverted learners may benefit in language situations associated with basic interpersonal communication skills and that they may be more likely to participate in oral communication (Ellis 1994:523). However, some studies have found either a negative association or no relationship at all (see Ely 1986:2).

3.3.1 Self-concept

Burns (1982:29) has defined self-concept as "the sum total of the views that a person has of himself and consists of beliefs, evaluations, and behavioural tendencies". In other words, self-concept is each individual's attitude towards the self. An individual's self-concept is considered to be the core of his or her personality, partly because it determines an individual's behaviour, maintains mental balance, provides a set of expectancies, and interprets experiences. (Burns 1982:9-14, Aho 1996:11-12.)

The sensitive period for forming the self-concept is around age 5-12. Thus, it is relevant to the present study to examine the notion of self-concept and its effect on the informants, because they are 9-10 years old. There are several reasons why this age is important for children's formation of self-concept. For example, children's cognitive stage of development makes it possible for them to evaluate themselves realistically, and relationships with teachers and peers become important, which provide children with an opportunity to compare themselves to others and receive systematic feedback of their behaviour. Children in the

third grade are especially sensitive to criticism and have a strong need to please others. Studies suggest that children at this age have either an average or a positive self-concept, which in general appears to be stable during the third school year. (Aho 1996:28-30, 58-60.) Similarly, Luhtala and Tuominen (1996:99) conclude in their study on children in the content based teaching class that children in grade 3 have a very positive self-concept. They have good self-esteem and are content with themselves and their lives.

Self-concept can be divided into three levels. At the highest level is the global self-concept, that is, the individuals' overall self-assessment. At the mediate level is the specific self-concept which is the individuals' perception of themselves in different life contexts. At the lowest level is the evaluation individuals give themselves on specific tasks. Self-concept also has three components: the actual self, the ideal self, and self-esteem. The first one, the actual self, consists of individuals' beliefs and knowledge of what they are really like. The ideal self reflects individuals' ideas of what kind of persons they would like to be. Finally, self-esteem, which is the most important component since it reflects the relationship and balance between the actual self and the ideal self, is individuals' notion of their worth, dignity, and competence. These self-notions have been developed in interaction with other people, for instance, with family, teachers, and peers. In addition to the above three components, self-concept also consists of various inhibitions that are defences between self and other people. They can be described as the reverse or negative side of attitudes towards self. The inhibitions and defences occur especially in situations where self-esteem and self-confidence may be low, such as speaking in a foreign language. (Laine and Pihko 1991:10-14.)

Immersion students' notion of themselves as language learners and their self-concept and self-esteem are important factors in successful second language acquisition. Language learning requires the ability and courage to deal with the unknown, to tolerate ambiguity, to take risks, to appear childish, and to make a fool of oneself when making mistakes. Individuals whose self-concept is balanced are able to meet these demands better. When they make mistakes, they are not daunted by the possibility of being laughed at. Equally, learners with high self-esteem are less likely to feel threatened or anxious in unpredictable and unfamiliar situations, such as the early stage of second language learning. (Kohonen 1992:23.) Further, the learning situations where the new language is used to teach contents, as, for example, immersion education or content based teaching, are demanding for learners with high anxiety levels (Kohonen 1994:62-63).

Learners' notions of themselves as foreign language learners form their foreign language self-concept. The core of the foreign language self-concept is formed by individuals' beliefs about their language abilities, values, and ideals. Inhibitions and defences, on the other hand, protect the vulnerable core. In school, the foreign language self-concept is part of the academic self-concept, that is, learners' notions of themselves as students in general. The foreign language self-concept also affects a learner's motivation. A learner's self-esteem, which is linked to the foreign language self-concept, as well as the inhibitions regulating his or her behaviour reflect first on a learner's motivation and then on language learning. (Laine and Pihko 1991:23, 29.) For example, Luhtala and Tuominen (1996:101) have concluded in their study on children attending the third grade in content based teaching that their foreign language self-concept is surprisingly positive. Those with high foreign language self-concept also have positive view of themselves as well as high self-

esteem, which influence their self-confidence. This leads to active participation in a foreign language situation.

Like the general self-concept, the foreign language self-concept can be defined in terms of three components that are the actual self, the ideal self, and self-esteem. These components appear at three levels, namely, a general level, a specific level, and a task level. A general level describes persons' notion of themselves as foreign language learners. A specific level, on the other hand, deals with a self-concept in a certain foreign language such as English. If a learner is learning only one foreign language, a task level is similar to a specific level. Inhibitions occur at all levels of the foreign language self-concept. For example, at the general level they can emerge in the forms of dissatisfaction, anxiousness, or alienation. At a specific level, when a certain foreign language is concerned, it may be difficult for a learner to adopt a language and its culture. Inhibitions can also emerge as negative feelings towards the language teacher or sensitivity to classmates' evaluation. At a task level, inhibitions can occur in language skills such as pronunciation, a fear of failure, or a fear to perform in a target language. (Laine and Pihko 1991:20-24.) In her study on French immersion children, Bruck (1985:55) comes to the conclusion that immersion children's dislike of the second language and their negative attitudes towards school are part of their general affective reactions to school and learning. It appears that the children her study experience inhibitions both at general and specific level.

3.3.2 Anxiety

In immersion programmes, majority language children learn the target language in a language programme where all the students are unilingual and do not know the language beforehand. Demanding situations such as studying in a foreign language may cause anxiety in a learner. Therefore, researchers stress the importance of providing the students with a safe learning environment and an initial listening period during which the children are not expected to respond in the target language. Faerch and his colleagues (1984) point out the affective advantages of immersion approach. The anxiety and pressure associated with beginning to speak a foreign language disappears, if children are not forced to communicate in the language when they are not ready for it. (Faerch 1984:261, see also Curtain 1991:324.)

Whereas positive language attitudes and motivation positively influence second language acquisition, evidence from various research show that anxiety impairs second language acquisition in immersion. Horwitz et al. (1986:125) have defined anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system". Thus, anxiety can negatively influence attitudes, motivation, and performance. Motivation is related to anxiety in that if a learner is not anxious at all, he or she is not motivated to make any effort, and if a learner is highly motivated but does not succeed in language learning, his or her anxiety increases (Gass and Selinker 1994:258). Correspondingly, studies suggest that favourable experiences and increased achievement reduce anxiety (MacIntyre and Gardner 1991:111).

Bruck (1985:55) concludes in her study that immersion children who are poor achievers and have negative attitudes towards school also experience more anxiety than poor achieving children who have positive attitudes. She also states, for example, that children with anxiety had more difficulty talking to the teacher. However, according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991:95), the few studies on the role of anxiety among children seem to show that second language learning anxiety is more usual among adults than among children. Luhtala and Tuominen (1996:103) found similar results in their study on children in grade 3. Their informants in content based teaching class had hardly any inhibitions or anxiety concerning second language acquisition.

Anxiety can be experienced at different levels. The deepest, or global, level is trait anxiety which means that a person is likely to become anxious in any situation. At a momentary, or situational level, state anxiety is related to a certain event or act. As an alternative to state anxiety, some researchers have adopted the concept of situation specific anxiety which can be seen as trait anxiety in a given context such as public speaking, writing examinations, or participating in a classroom. The research on anxiety suggests that anxiety in a language learning context has the situational nature of state anxiety. (MacIntyre and Gardner 1991, Brown 1994:141-142.)

There are many kinds of activities that may cause anxiety in a second language classroom. The most difficult situations for a learner are speaking and listening. Bruck's (1985:55) study mentioned above supports this. For instance, some dislike interacting with others or performing in front of others, or some are unable to discriminate the sounds and structures as well as understand the content of a target language. Moreover, second language anxiety frequently shows up in testing situations, which may lead to overstudying. Students become

anxious about errors they make and try to compensate for it by studying even more. Frustration occurs when they do not succeed any better in their studying despite their effort. (Horwitz et al. 1986:126.)

Foreign language anxiety has three components: communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. First, communication apprehension is a learner's inability to express thoughts and ideas. It is anxiety or fear to communicate with other people. Communication apprehension emerges in situations that require speaking in groups or in public, or listening to or learning a spoken message. Second, test-anxiety involves worry over evaluation in forms of frequent testing and examinations. It stems from a fear of failure, which may lead to unrealistic demands or enormous pressure. Fear of negative evaluation is the third component of foreign language anxiety. Evaluation refers to both the academic and personal evaluations of students based on their performance and competence in a target language. Nevertheless, foreign language anxiety is not only the combination of these three fears but also a complex of self-perceptions, feelings, beliefs, and behaviours in a language classroom. (Horwitz et al. 1986:127-128, MacIntyre and Gardner 1991:104-105.)

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991:110) have suggested a model of the development and maintenance of foreign language anxiety. At the beginning of language learning, motivation and language aptitude are the most important factors in predicting success. After early language experience, the kind of anxiety aroused would probably be state anxiety which is based on trait anxiety, test anxiety, communication apprehension, or novelty anxiety. After several experiences with the second language, a learner forms emotions and attitudes about learning a new language. If the experiences are negative, foreign language anxiety may start to develop. Repeated negative experiences lead to

regular foreign language anxiety, which causes a learner to expect to be anxious and to perform poorly. Thus, negative emotions and poor performance reinforce the expectations of anxiety and failure. Bruck (1985:55) has come to the same conclusion in her study on immersion children who have negative attitudes and experience difficulties in immersion education. However, some studies have been conducted on immersion students' anxiety compared to the anxiety of those in regular programmes. The results have generally favoured immersion students, namely, their anxiety level is significantly lower than their peers'. (Van der Keilen 1995:296.)

4 IMMERSION EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Traditional language programmes in Finland have not been successful in providing children sufficient communicative skills and, therefore, new approaches to language teaching have been searched for. The Canadian immersion programme alternatives produce functionally bilingual students without harming their first language development or academic achievement. The positive results of these programmes have influenced the Finnish authorities, as well. The Commission for the Development of Language Teaching emphasizes that in the field of language didactics the existing theoretical knowledge and the experience from different pilot projects should be utilized more fully (Komiteamietintö 1992:16). Teaching through a medium of a second language is now regarded as a viable alternative. The Commission recommends that more possibilities should be offered for children to attend classes conducted fully or partially in a second language. Furthermore, the importance of using materials in a second or foreign language, and teaching other subjects in a non-native language are stressed. (See also OPM 1989, Peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman perusteet 1996:71.) The most recent trend in

language teaching is to use the target language as a medium to learn some other subject matter in the same way as the native language is used. (Komiteanmietintö 1992:6-8.)

4.1 Immersion programmes implemented in Finland

Most researchers have a positive attitude towards using a foreign language as a medium of instruction. However, some researchers have expressed opposite views on the matter. Curtis (1997) claims that students who receive their education via English will acquire different views of the world than students in regular programmes. According to him, it is unlikely that these students will acquire same behaviour patterns, values, and attitudes as pupils educated monolingually in Finnish. (Curtis 1997:13.) In addition, Jasper (1995:6-8) states that studying in a foreign language is more difficult than in a native language, because children have to combine the learning of new concepts with those of learning a language. Therefore, he emphasizes the necessity of studying the new approach in detail. (See also OPM 1989:47.) Furthermore, Lempinen (1994) criticizes curricular instruction in a foreign language. According to her, it is not possible to learn abstract subjects or the nuances of a foreign language in such instruction. She believes that all the attention is paid to the basic learning of a language and, therefore, the language is not rich enough and the content taught is not as complete as it is in a regular programme. (Lempinen 1997:25.)

The first immersion education programmes in Finland were developed in Vaasa in 1987. The results of these programmes have been positive, and immersion education has started elsewhere in Finland as well. The immersion programme implemented in Vaasa is an early total Swedish immersion programme. The programme starts in kindergarten at the age

of six. During the first two years, the instruction is totally in Swedish and by grade 6 the amount of instruction in Swedish is between 40 and 60 percent of the curriculum. (Vesterbacka 1991b:9.) According to Vesterbacka (1991a), children in the immersion programmes in Vaasa do not experience any difficulties in their first and second language development. In addition, there does not appear to be a similar lag in their first language development to that reported in the Canadian immersion programmes. (Vesterbacka 1991a:161.) Besides Vaasa, positive results of early total Swedish immersion have been reported, for example, in Espoo (see Valtonen 1996:9).

Cummins (1995) compares the results of the programmes in Vaasa to those in Canada. He suggests that part of the reason for immersion being even more successful in Finland than in Canada is the possibility for children to have more extensive contact with Swedish. Children in the Swedish immersion programmes have more interpersonal contacts, such as Swedish-speaking friends and free-time activities, than children in the French immersion in Canada. It has also been reported that the Swedish immersion children read more books and watch more television programmes in the second language than do the children in the Canadian immersion programmes. In addition, Grandell (1994) points out that the success of the Swedish immersion may be due to the difference between the languages. Because French and English are more alike than Swedish and Finnish, it is more likely that participants in the French immersion programmes mix up the languages than do children in the Swedish immersion programmes. (Grandell 1994:109.) Furthermore, Cummins states that pupil-centered pedagogy is characteristic of the Swedish immersion programmes in Finland, whereas in Canada the programmes have been teacher-centered. He sees this as one possible reason why there is a minimal dropout in the Swedish immersion programmes

compared to the significant dropout in French immersion. (Mård 1994:82-84, Cummins 1995:13-14.)

In Finland, English immersion started in Mänttä in 1991. The programme is an early total immersion alternative. Children are taught in English from the beginning of the first grade. In contrast to the Canadian immersion, the first language instruction is introduced already during the first year of schooling. (Kaskinen 1996:8.) Some researchers (see Jasper 1995:6-7, Lempinen 1997:25) point out that since English is not a second language in Finland, it should not be considered a language of immersion. However, opposite views exist. In Helle's (1994:199) opinion "the immersion language may be any language that is culturally, economically, educationally or politically regarded as important enough to warrant the establishment of immersion classes in a certain area, provided that the language is not a majority language". Nevertheless, she does not deny the importance of having native speakers present in the immediate environment. (Genesee 1987:96, Helle 1994:199-200.)

Most language programmes in Finland cannot, however, be regarded as immersion, since the amount of teaching in a second language is less than 50 percent of the curricular instruction. Räsänen (1993:9) divides the programmes in Finland into content based language teaching (*sisältöpainotteinen kielenopetus*) and foreign language content instruction (*vieraskielinen aineenopetus*). In content based language teaching, the emphasis is on language instruction, the content is regarded as a medium rather than a goal. Conversely, when the main goal is to master the content, and language is used as a medium to achieve this, a language programme can be seen as foreign language content instruction. The teaching experiment examined in the present study is described as content based teaching by the teachers and evaluators. English is used in the curriculum as much as possible to teach subjects

such as Music, Mathematics, and Physical Education (Fakhimzadeh 1994a:98).

Programmes based on the concept of immersion have been implemented in various parts of Finland. For instance, Swedish has been used in some suitable connections to teach grades 1 and 2 in one of the elementary schools in Rovaniemi. The purpose is to increase the amount of Swedish instruction gradually during the elementary grades. (OPM 1990:65.) Furthermore, in the Pello elementary school, English is used as the language of instruction in some parts of the curriculum in the third grade. Asikainen (1993) points out that although English is sometimes used only five minutes per day, it is an essential part of the daily routine. According to the teacher, the children are enthusiastic and willing to do even difficult tasks in English. (Asikainen 1993:11-12.) Similar results have been reported in Nummi elementary school where approximately 25 percent of the curriculum is taught in English. According to the parents, the children participating in the programme use English at home and are enthusiastic about the language. (Leinonen 1994:100.)

4.2 The content based teaching programme in Jyväskylä

The content based teaching experiment examined in the present study started in the Kortepohja elementary school in Jyväskylä in 1991. The participating children are taught in English from the beginning of the first grade. The main principles of the programme have been adopted from immersion education. In Kortepohja, the children are taught partly in English. Fakhimzadeh (1993:13) emphasizes that, even though the teaching experiment in the Kortepohja elementary school cannot be considered immersion, it is based on the concept of immersion, in other words, the focus is on meaningful communication, not on form. According

to the curriculum of the school, English can be used to teach a whole lesson or some appropriate part of it (Kortepohjan koulun OPS 1995:1). The amount of English used is approximately 25 percent of the curriculum. The content based teaching classes, one on each grade level, are taught according to the same curriculum as their peers in the regular classes. (Fakhimzadeh 1994a:98, Fakhimzadeh 1994b:2, Helle 1994:212.)

English is used as a medium of instruction, for instance, in the teaching of Music, Mathematics, and Physical Education. It is introduced with themes that are easy to teach in that language, and the lessons are planned taking both the subject matter and linguistic aspects into consideration. In addition, the language used in the daily routines is English. (Fakhimzadeh 1994a:98, Fakhimzadeh 1994b:2, Helle 1994:212, Kortepohjan koulun OPS 1995:1.) The aim of the programme is to promote fluency and remove anxiety about speaking English (Peruskouluopetusta englanniksi 1993).

In the first grade, the emphasis is on spoken language, because the participating children are not able to read and write. Games, songs, nursery rhymes, and poems are part of the daily curriculum. (Fakhimzadeh 1994a:98, Helle 1994:212, Kortepohjan koulun OPS 1995.) Vesalainen (1995) reports that children in grade 1 are enthusiastic learners of English. They enjoy drawing and acting in a foreign language. Nevertheless, she mentions that some children have motivational problems in the content based teaching. In the second grade, some children start using English words and phrases in their communication. By the third grade, most of them are able to follow the instruction in English and produce some English utterances. (Fakhimzadeh 1994a:99, Vesalainen 1995.)

Children begin the formal learning of English in grade 3. Besides these two formal English lessons, the children continue to attend content based teaching. Räsänen (1994:19) points out that formal language teaching is "particularly important in programmes, which do not have the support of a real, authentic L2 community around them". This is the case in Kortepohja where the second language is in fact a foreign language whose native speakers are not available for authentic input. However, the teachers attempt to provide as much authentic input as possible for the children in the programme. Native speakers from English speaking countries have visited the school, and some subjects have been taught by native speakers of English. (Vesalainen 1995.) In the third grade, English is used to teach different subjects, such as Biology and Religious Education. In the later grades of elementary school, the emphasis is in using English to acquire new information. (Kortepohjan koulun OPS 1995.)

In the fourth grade, pupils are taught in English whenever it is pedagogically possible. Some parts of the subject matter are dealt with in English, whereas others are taught in Finnish. The main underlying principle is that the instruction should be as unilingual as possible. For example, if a theme is taught in English, the possible groupwork should be done in the same language. In some school subjects in the fifth grade, the pupils are taught by content subject teachers and in some others by their own class teacher. However, the amount of English used increases gradually, and pupils are expected to learn to acquire information by using English sources. (Vesalainen 1995.)

The content based language teachers have noticed that children attending their classes are enthusiastic about learning a new language. The children regard content based teaching as a natural way of learning. Furthermore, they seem to be willing to use English outside class as well.

(Fakhimzadeh 1993:13.) Many studies have been conducted in the Kortepohja elementary school on all grade levels. For example, Luhtala and Tuominen (1996) have studied in their thesis the self-concept and social skills of children in the third grade in both the content based teaching and the regular class. Their study reveals that in both the groups the students' self-concept is positive. However, Luhtala and Tuominen detect some differences in the motivation and attitudes between the groups, even though they emphasize that the differences are not very distinct. Pupils in the content based teaching class appear to show more positive attitudes towards language learning. Furthermore, the motivation towards language learning seems to be higher in the content based teaching than it is in the regular programme. (Luhtala and Tuominen 1996:99-100.) In the present study, the informants are of the same age. The results of the present study are dealt with later in this study.

5 PROCEDURE

The main purpose of our descriptive study is to examine applied immersion in the Kortepohja elementary school. The aim of this thesis is to study individual pupils' experiences of this programme. The data used in the present study was collected by using questionnaires, observation, and interviews.

5.1 The choice of method

The age of the informants was an influential factor when choosing the method for the present study. The informants being 10 or 11 years old limited the choice of method, since they were too young to answer a questionnaire. The present writers wanted to have a chance to ask

additional questions in order to get in-depth information. Therefore, we chose interview as our method and, thus, our main source of information.

However, interview as a method has some disadvantages. The size of a sample is limited because interviewing, transcribing, and analysing are time-consuming. In addition, interviewers may negatively affect the informants and the whole interview setting. Some interviewers' personality factors, for example anxiety or a dominating character, may inhibit a successful interaction. (See Brown 1994.) Besides the interviewer, the interviewees' age and personality also have an effect on an interview. The informants' shyness or unwillingness to talk may, for example, be caused by their age or personality. Insufficient interviewing skills, as, for example, poorly constructed questions, may also lead to a failure to communicate and, therefore, an interview does not reach its goal. On the other hand, in an interview it is possible to obtain more insightful information than by using a questionnaire. Interviewing allows an interviewer to present specific questions to different informants with varied backgrounds and interests. Questions are, therefore, more personal, and much more detailed information can be obtained. The young age of the informants in the present study makes it impossible for them to analyse their own attitudes in a form of a questionnaire. In order to reply adequately to the questions, the informants require help, guidance, and additional questions from the interviewers.

5.2 The choice of informants

The selection of our informants started by sending questionnaires to the parents. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to ask the parents if they allow their children to be interviewed. Furthermore, the present writers wanted to find out whether the children had earlier participated in

an applied immersion programme, for instance, at the kindergarten of Kortepohja. Based on the information gathered from the questionnaires, we selected ten informants from two classes. Five of these pupils attended a regular class and had not participated in any applied immersion programme, whereas the rest had taken part in the immersion programme in the Kindergarten of Kortepohja and attended a content based teaching class.

The teachers of these two classes also took part in the selection of the informants. They were asked to categorize the pupils into three groups: the high achievers, the average achievers, and the low achievers. From these categories the present writers chose the category of the high achievers. The main reason was that in the other two categories there were not enough pupils who had participated in applied immersion programmes before elementary school that was one of our selection criteria. Furthermore, the pupils in the categories of the average and the low achievers had other factors to be considered, such as learning disabilities and domestic or behaviour problems. In addition, the purpose was to get an equal number of boys and girls in the same category if possible. Therefore, the high achievers were chosen as the informants in the present study.

5.3 The gathering of data

The data in the present study consists of observations of the pupils, interviews of both the pupils and their teachers, questionnaires, self-evaluations of the content-based teaching class, and the curriculum. However, most of the information was obtained from the interviews. Another important source of the data was observation that gave the present writers additional information about the personality of the

informants. Ten informants were observed in a month's time. The observations were conducted before the interviews so that the present writers would become familiar with the informants and their behaviour in class. Thus, the purpose was to create a relaxed atmosphere for the interviews. The present writers observed the interaction between the pupils as well as between the teacher and the pupils.

In addition, the present writers concentrated on ten informants' behaviour, attendance, and interaction in class. They were observed in English lessons, subject matter lessons, and finally content based teaching lessons that the other class attended. However, the number of lessons observed remained quite small because of different reasons. For instance, school holidays and pupils being absent from lessons postponed observation on several occasions.

Interviews, as mentioned above, are the main source of information in the present study. Before the interviews of the selected informants, the present writers conducted two pilot interviews. The experience helped us to improve the questions as well as our interviewing skills. In interviews we used an outline of different topics as a basis for all interviews. The purpose was not to cover the topics in a particular order but to let the informants talk about them freely and, thus, lead the interview.

Both interviewers were present in all interviews. While one was interviewing, the other one was making notes and checking that all the topics were covered. The reasons for the presence of two persons in the interview setting were explained to the interviewees. Having two interviewers in the situation did not seem to bother the informants. A tape recorder was used in all the interviews, and the necessity of this was also explained to the interviewees. Using a tape recorder was considered necessary, because it would have been impossible to write down the

whole conversation with all its nuances. Afterwards, the tapes were transcribed in detail.

Interviewing the informants proved to be problematic. First, some interviewees turned out to be shy and unwilling to talk. This may be due to the age of the informants or some personality factors, such as self-concept and anxiety. Another problem detected was brief answers, and, moreover, occasionally an interviewee did not talk without persuasion or answered only in the affirmative or negative. The time of the day also affected some informants who were too tired to be interviewed early in the morning or late in the afternoon. In addition, the location of the interviews was not always appropriate. Sometimes the interviews had to be conducted in places where the participants were disturbed by noise or people coming in. This also negatively affected the quality of the tape recordings.

In the present study, information was also obtained from the teachers either in the form of interviews or questionnaires. The teachers were asked to give a brief description of each pupil and categorize him or her as a high achiever, an average achiever, or a low achiever. The information was gathered from both the class teachers and the teachers of English. The teachers provided information to the present writers, for instance, about the curriculum used in the content based teaching classes. Moreover, the informants in the content based teaching class had made self-evaluations, which we were allowed to use in the present study. Self-evaluations consisted of pupils' own views of their learning skills and behaviour. The teacher in the other class has not asked the pupils to evaluate themselves and thus such self-evaluations were not available for the present study.

6 THE PRESENTATION OF INFORMANTS

The main purpose of this study is to examine individual pupils' experiences of the English language, formal English lessons, and content based teaching. This is accomplished by using different sources of information that include self-evaluations, questionnaires for parents and teachers, observations, and interviews. Information used in analysing different areas of the present study is selectively gathered from the sources mentioned above.

Before the analysis, the present writers find it essential to describe the informants, since their personalities have an effect on their participation in the interviews. The description is based on the information gathered from the teachers, interviews, and observations. First, we will describe five pupils in the content based teaching class and after that five pupils in the regular class. All ten informants will be referred to with codes instead of their real names. The content based teaching class is referred to as class C and the informants in it C1, C2, C3, and so on. Likewise, the regular class will be class R with informants R1, R2, R3, and so on. The first two informants in both classes (C1, C2, and R1, R2) are girls, and the rest of the informants are boys.

6.1 Class C

The present writers chose five informants in the content based teaching class. Three of these are boys and two girls. In the following, the informants' character and attendance in class are described. Furthermore, their attitudes towards learning foreign languages and especially English are dealt with.

The teacher of the content based teaching class describes informant C1 as an active extrovert. She takes part in lessons and is interested in learning. According to the teacher, C1 is highly motivated to attend school. The observation carried out by the present writers supports this claim. During the lessons observed, C1 is active and eager to participate in teaching. She finishes her exercises quickly and has time to help other pupils as well. However, sometimes she seems to be tired and absent-minded and does not concentrate on teaching. She admits this herself in her interview and her self-evaluation. Nevertheless, C1 has a positive attitude to school. She mentions that she likes being at school, because she meets her friends there. She also says that she is good at English. According to C1, it is important to study foreign languages at school for the future need, although at the same time she cannot see the use of it at present.

The teacher describes informant C2 as an active extrovert. She takes part in the class activities and is highly motivated to attend school, like informant C1. This description is supported by the observations. C2 participates in lessons and especially in group work. She seems to be an organizer who wants to make sure that the group functions properly. She can be described as a conscientious pupil, which is also affirmed in her self-evaluation. She likes doing exercises properly and asks the class teacher for guidance if necessary. C2 mentions that although she likes English lessons, she sometimes finds them difficult. C2 also states that occasionally she does not like being at school. For example, difficult homework, exercises, or long schooldays affect her negatively. According to her, studying foreign languages is important. She mentions the importance of the English language, because it is spoken in many countries.

According to the teacher, informant C3 is an active extrovert. However, he is not so motivated to school as the informants described above. The observations show that though C3 takes actively part in lessons, he sometimes has difficulties in concentrating on the lessons. Occasionally, his attention is directed to matters other than teaching, as, for instance, talking with his friends or doing exercises. It also seems to be important for C3 to get feedback from the teacher, for example, when the informant corrects homework or a test. His self-evaluation reveals that his self-concept is perhaps more positive than the impression the teacher or the present writers have. For instance, C3 evaluates himself highly in regard to the ability to work with other pupils. C3 states in the interview that he likes to be at school, and he also thinks that it is important to study foreign languages, especially English, so that one can discuss with people abroad.

Pupil C4 differs from the pupils discussed above in the teacher's description. The class teacher considers him an anxious person. On the other hand, he is quite motivated to learn. The present writers regard him as quite active although quiet in class. He seems to have difficulties in concentrating on the lessons, like pupil C3. However, in his self-evaluation he claims that he pays attention to his work in an exemplary manner, which is contrary to the observations. Furthermore, he evaluates himself as excellent in other aspects as well, for instance, working with other pupils. In the interview, pupil C4 says that he sometimes likes school, but he does not seem to be as positive as the first two informants, C1 and C2. He also mentions that English is one of the subjects he should pay more attention to, especially pronunciation. In his opinion, studying foreign languages is important, but he is not able to give any specific reasons for it.

The teacher's evaluation of informant C5 is more negative than her evaluation of the others. She describes C5 as an anxious and shy person who is rather passive in class. Nevertheless, he is quite motivated to learn. The observation of the present writers supports the teacher's description of C5. He is not willing to participate in classroom activities without the teacher's encouragement. He seems to be uncertain of himself and cannot concentrate on teaching. Even though he is timid where school work is concerned, he is lively in other aspects. For example, he cannot sit still for a long time. The present writers regard C5's self-evaluation as accurate, since he is aware of his weaknesses in class, such as his passiveness. Yet, in the interview, C5 says that he likes to be at school. His attitude towards foreign languages is positive as well. He realizes the importance of knowing languages when meeting foreign people.

6.2 Class R

The pupils in the regular class are described here in the same way as the pupils in the content based teaching class above, that is, their characters, attitudes towards studying foreign languages, and attendance in class are dealt with.

According to the teacher, informant R1 is rather shy, quiet, and reserved. She can be described as an introvert, but is not, however, passive. The teacher states, for example, that R1 likes to act in class. She is a conscientious pupil, who does her work properly. R1 has a positive attitude to school, although she sometimes seems to be a little bored. The present writers' observations support this description. Informant R1 appears to be absent-minded during some lessons and does not pay much attention to teaching. On the other hand, she concentrates on doing

exercises and is occasionally quite active. Informant R1 states that she likes school and mentions English as one of her favourite subjects. R1 realizes the importance of studying English. She says that it is important to be able to speak English when she is abroad.

The teacher of the regular class describes informant R2 as neither active nor passive, that is, she is not an extrovert but cannot be described as an introvert either. She, like R1, is shy and reserved but takes part in the class activities. R2 has a positive attitude to school work but, according to the teacher, does only the required exercises, like informant R1. The observation of the present writers supports the teacher's description of R2. Sometimes she is quite active in class, but most of the time she concentrates on matters other than teaching. Informants R1 and R2 often interact with each other during the lessons, occasionally ignoring the teaching. R2 states that she likes school. She also considers studying foreign languages important especially if she is abroad.

According to the teacher, R3 is an extrovert. He is energetic and lively and takes part in lessons actively. R3 is described as a positive person who is not anxious, and, furthermore, he has a positive attitude towards school. The observations partly support this description. R3 is involved in the class activities, but does not, however, seem to be able to finish his tasks. He does not always concentrate on teaching and, for example, talks to other pupils in class. R3 appears to seek attention from both the teacher and other pupils. Informant R3, nevertheless, seems to have a more negative attitude towards school than the observations and teacher's description show. R3 mentions that he does not always like being at school, since sometimes studying is too demanding for him. R3 does not see the importance of studying foreign languages; according to him, studying languages is fun but not necessarily useful.

Informant R4 is described as an energetic extrovert. He usually participates in the teaching quite actively but, on the other hand, may sometimes be anxious. He appears to enjoy being at school, but is occasionally reluctant to follow the instructions. The present writers noticed that R4 is restless in class, but, on occasion, he is an active pupil. He mentions that he likes to be at school and that his favourite subject is English. Like most informants, R4 thinks that studying foreign languages and especially English is important.

The teacher describes R5 as a pleasant pupil who shows his feelings openly. He is an even-tempered person who enjoys learning and is highly motivated to school. The teacher considers him neither passive nor active. However, the present writers regard him as more active than the teacher describes. For instance, informant R5 is takes part in the lessons more than the other informants. On the other hand, during the lessons he sometimes talks with his neighbour, which seems to disturb his concentration. Informant R5 states that he always enjoys being at school. In his opinion, learning foreign languages is necessary because of travelling abroad. He mentions English as a language of special importance, it being spoken in many countries.

7 THE PRESENT STUDY

The analysis presented here is based on the topics which were dealt with in the interviews, which are the most important data in the present study. The topics consist of the informants' attitude to school, to content based teaching, to the importance of the English language, of the pupils' foreign language self-concept, the informants' contacts with English speaking people, and their special interests in the language, such as reading or listening to music. These topics are the basis for the categorization of the

data. In each category the present writers use various sources of data depending on what kind of information is needed. Each category is divided into subcategories in which the pupils are organized according to the information obtained. For example, the category 'content based teaching' is divided into two subcategories. The idea is to compare individual pupils within their own classes as well as to find out possible differences between the regular class and the content based teaching class. At the end of each section, we will discuss whether the hypothesis of the present study is valid or not. In other words, we will examine whether the pupils in the content based teaching class experience different topics concerning English more positively than the pupils in the regular class.

To support the analysis, the present writers use direct quotations from the informants' interviews. The extracts are first in Finnish and then translated into English by the present writers who have used the following symbols in transcribing the interviews:

I	interviewer
P	pupil
,	a brief pause
...	a longish pause
--	one part of an utterance left out
" "	written as pronounced
(?)	meaning not clear

Furthermore, at the end of each extract there is a code that shows the informant as well as the page and lines from which the quotation is taken.

7.1 Attitudes towards content based teaching

The first category to be covered in the present study is the informants' attitudes towards content based teaching. However, only half of the informants are in class C, in which content based teaching is being used. This section will thus be different from the other sections, because it is not possible here to make many comparisons between the two classes. Nevertheless, the pupils in class R were asked whether they would have liked to attend the content based teaching. The information thus gained will be discussed further in this section. In addition, the present writers will attempt to make some comparisons between the pupils in the two classes. This chapter examines the informants in class C and their opinions of content based teaching. The treatment is divided into two subcategories: 'I chose class C myself' and 'My parents chose class C for me'. The first subcategory consists of the informants who chose the class themselves and the second subcategory those whose parents made the decision for them or those who cannot say whose decision it was.

7.1.1 'I chose class C myself'

This section covers the informants who state that they made the decision to attend content based teaching. The parents also influenced and supported their decisions. Most informants in class C, that is, C1, C2, and C5, are in this category. Informant C1 states that she wanted to go to the content based teaching class. As her reasons she mentions the language itself and her friends. The parents also supported her decision grounding their opinions on the necessity of knowing languages in modern society, the child's ability to learn languages easily, and their own negative experiences as language learners. The parents state that studying in class C has been a positive experience to the child. According to them,

C1 is not afraid to use English. Nonetheless, the interview shows that pupil C1 does not have as positive an attitude towards content based teaching as described above. This can be seen in example (1) below.

- (1) I: opiskelisiks sää sen mieluummin suomexs sitte vai englanniks jos saisit valita
 P: no kyl mä niinku silleen ihan että että jotain vaikka nyt matematiikkaa niin kyl mä siitä sillee niinku ymmärrän niinku iha englanniks sitä mutta niinku esimerkiks ympäristöopissa -- siinä on nii paljo uusia asioita niin en mä sitä se on vähän vaikeempi kuitenkin ja
 I: yhm joo
 P: et kyl mä sen ainaki haluaisin pitää suomexs ja nää loput tulis englanniks

 I: would you prefer studying it in Finnish or in English if you could choose
 P: well something like let's say Mathematics I can understand in English but for example in Environmental Studies -- it has so many new things in it that it is a little bit more difficult so I don't want it
 I: yhm yes
 P: at least I would like to have that in Finnish and the rest could be in English
 (C1, 13:526-532)

As can be seen above, C1 states that especially subjects which give a lot of new information or are difficult should be taught in Finnish. However, she claims that she uses English quite often in class, even though mostly when it is required. C1 feels that content based teaching has helped her somewhat in her present studies of English. According to her, it was easier to start studying English when the language and especially some words were familiar to her. The teacher mentions that informant C1 is highly motivated towards content based teaching and takes eagerly part in the lessons, which the present writers agree with. The present writers noticed that pupil C1 participated in all activities, but sometimes her attention was directed elsewhere. It was not possible to detect any significant differences in her behaviour in the English class and in the other classes.

C3 also decided himself that he wanted to go to the content based teaching class. He explains his choice in example (2) below.

- (2) I: joo halusitko sä itte tähän englantipainotteiseen opetukseen, silloin kun piti valita
 P: joo enemmän mä halusin siihen ku tota ni siihen toiselle luokalle A-luokalle ku kaikki mun kaveritkin melkein kaikki tuli tänne englantipainotteiselle luokalle
 I: yhm, kavereitten takia halusit tulla
 P: no en en mä niitten takia silleen kielen takia halusin ja muutenkin
 I: yhm yhm, minkä takia aatteliksä et siit on hyötyä vai
 P: no joo kyllä siinä enemmän oppii kun on kolme kaks vuotta enemmän aikaa ku tualla toisella luokalla
- I: yes did you want yourself to attend this content based teaching of English when you had to choose
 P: yes I preferred this class to the other class class C because all my friends almost all of them chose this content based teaching class
 I: so you wanted to be in this class because of your friends
 P: well no not because of them but because of the language and otherwise as well
 I: yhm yhm, why did you think it is useful or
 P: well yes you learn more when you have three or two years more time than the other class
 (C3, 10:435-442)

As can be seen above in example (2), C3 is able to give specific reasons for his choice of class. It appears that even before school age he could see the importance of knowing a foreign language. The parents of C3 also wanted their child to attend class C. They think that since English is becoming a more dominant language, it is useful to start studying it early. His parents, as well as C1's and C5's parents, think that it has been a positive experience for the child to be in class C. According to C3's parents, the language, especially the vocabulary, has become familiar to the child who considers English a natural way to communicate. The teacher states that pupil C3 is motivated towards content based teaching, which is also supported by the observations. However, the present writers noticed that C3 sometimes had difficulties in concentrating on teaching. The present writers conclude that informant C3 would prefer subjects to

be taught in Finnish. As his reasons, he mentions that he learns more in Finnish than in English. C3 uses English only when it is required of him. In his opinion, studying English formally is similar to content based teaching of English. However, at the same time he thinks that formal English lessons are more difficult because of new words.

C5, like C1 and C3, states that he wanted himself to attend class C. However, he is not able to give any reasons for this. After further inquiries, he says that his friends and the language itself affected his choice of class. These reasons are the same as those given by informants C1 and C3. In his parents' opinion, it is important for a child to learn to use a foreign language spontaneously. They have noticed that C5 understands English due to content based teaching. Pupil C5's teacher describes him as a little passive towards content based teaching, which is supported by the present writers. The pupil seemed to have difficulties in concentrating on content based teaching, as well as other lessons. In addition, C5 required attention and guidance from the teacher. Pupil C5 states that he likes being in class C. However, sometimes he does not understand the teaching and would, therefore, rather be taught in Finnish, like all informants in class C. Similarly, he also uses English in class, when it is necessary. C5 also believes that content based teaching has had a positive effect on his formal studies of English, and, therefore, he may know English better than pupils in the regular class.

7.1.2 'My parents chose class C for me'

This section deals with informants who do not state that the decision about attending the content based teaching was theirs. Two informants belong to this group: first, C4 who mentions that it was his mother who decided which class to attend and second, C2 who is unable to say who made the final choice.

C2 hesitates whether it was she or her parents that wanted her to attend the content based teaching class. It appears that the parents have influenced their child's choice of class. The parents state that they have positive attitudes towards content based teaching. They believe that it makes language learning easier and has a positive effect on attitudes towards foreign languages. The parents have noticed that C2 has developed an interest in languages because of attending content based teaching. The teacher describes informant C2 as being motivated towards content based teaching. The present writers noticed this as well, since C2 worked conscientiously and enthusiastically in class. The interview shows, however, that the informant has a more negative view of content based teaching than the teacher or the parents believe. She does not admit having any difficulties with English, but she would rather be taught in Finnish. It is not possible to detect any differences here, because C2, as well as informants C1, C3, and C5, prefers subjects taught in Finnish. In addition, C2 mentions that she speaks English in class, if she is certain that her English is correct. It seems that C2's attitude towards English has become more positive since she started formal English lessons.

C4 mentions that it was his mother who wanted him to attend class C. His mother states that content based teaching is a positive way to start studying English earlier. On the one hand, C4 mentions that he likes studying subjects in English but, on the other hand, he admits that

sometimes he would rather be in a regular class. His preference for studying subjects in Finnish rather than in English is similar to that of other informants in class C. Pupil C4 states that he does not use English unless asked to, which is coherent with the other informants' use of English. In C4's opinion, learning English in the first and second grades has affected his present studies of English, but he is not able to give any reasons for this. Moreover, like the other informants, C4 seems to have a more negative attitude towards content based teaching than his parents assume. The teacher and the present writers consider C4 quite passive towards content based teaching. For example, C4 was first active but later became passive in some lessons observed.

To sum up, all the informants in the content based teaching class have rather negative attitudes to studying subject matters in English. The informants' negative attitudes do not seem to be dependent on whose decision the choice of class was. Even informants C1, C3, and C5, who wanted themselves to attend class C, do not prefer to study in English. All informants would rather study some subjects in Finnish for different reasons. They state, for instance, that new or difficult subjects should be taught in Finnish. However, the parents seem to have a more positive view of their children's attitudes to the content based teaching than the children. Furthermore, the teacher's evaluation of individual pupils' motivation to content based teaching is mostly consistent with that of the present writers. However, one exception can be found: the present writers think that pupil C1 is not as interested in studying subjects in English as the teacher assumes. During the lessons observed, informant C1 was not as active as the teacher describes. On the whole, however, the observations support the teacher's evaluation.

7.1.3 Informants in class R

Three informants in class R, R2, R3, and R5, would have wanted to attend content based teaching. R1, however, cannot answer the question, because she spent the first two grades in a school that had no such programme, and one informant, R4, did not want to start studying English in the first grade. He cannot, nevertheless, give any reasons for this. The present writers believe that the willingness of the informants who wanted to participate in content based teaching might be based on their current opinions of English. Those who like learning English at present seem to be willing to participate in content based teaching, while those who dislike learning English are not interested in content based teaching either. In addition, the parents' attitudes towards content based teaching were positive, since most parents would have wanted their child to attend class C. Some reasons were, for example, a child's willingness and capability to learn English, and the status of English in the world.

It is not possible to compare the informants' answers concerning content based teaching. The informants in class R have no knowledge of the programme in practice, whereas the informants in class C have attended the programme for nearly three years. In addition, the information gathered from the informants in class R is based on one hypothetical question, that is, whether they would have wanted to attend content based teaching. Therefore, the present writers can only form a general impression about the informants' attitudes towards content based teaching. The present writers still conclude that the pupils in class C are not as positively oriented to this programme as the present writers assumed. All informants in class C would often prefer being taught in Finnish, especially when new and difficult matters are concerned. Most pupils in the regular class, on the other hand, state that they are willing to study other subjects in English.

7.2 The importance of English

The second section of the analysis deals with the informants' concepts of English. This consists of their attitudes towards the language itself as well as their expectations and opinions of formal language teaching. This section is divided into two. We shall first deal with those informants in whose opinion English is one of the most important subjects, and secondly with the informants who find English a less important subject. Furthermore, individuals as well as classes will be compared at the end of the section. The information used here is based mainly on the interviews but also includes material from the observations and the questionnaires.

7.2.1 'English is one of the most important subjects'

According to C1, English one of the most important subjects taught at school. She would have chosen it, even if it had not been obligatory. She gives the following reasons for this.

(3) P: no mun mielestä se on iha silleen kiva puhua muutaki ku pelkkää suomea ja on sitä iha kiva opiskellakki

P: well I think that it's nice to speak some other language than Finnish and it's nice to study it too
(C1, 3:96-97)

Furthermore, she believes that she is going to need English in the future when travelling, for example. In her opinion, studying English in the formal lessons is easier than she had expected. In all, she finds English lessons enjoyable, and even states that she would like to have more English used in the exercise book. Thus, the present writers assume that informant C1 needs a greater challenge, such as more difficult exercises. In addition, her parents mention that she is more interested in English now than she was before the formal teaching started.

Informant C2 is more hesitant than informant C1 about the importance of studying English. She is not sure whether she would study English, if it were not obligatory. Nevertheless, she regards English as one of the important subjects taught at school. She considers English important rather than pleasant unlike some other subjects, such as Craft and Drawing, which are pleasant but not important. At first, C2 is not sure if she needs English in the future but admits later that English is useful, for example, when a foreigner asks her for advice. She did not have any expectations of English before it started in the third grade but likes English lessons now. However, she mentions some negative aspects, such as difficulties in understanding English.

Like informant C2, informant C3 is hesitant as to whether he would study English voluntarily. However, he considers English an important subject and thinks that he is going to use the language in the future. As examples, he gives being abroad and working. C3 also mentions that he had some expectations of formal English teaching but cannot give any specific examples. Yet, he says that studying English now is what he expected it to be. It appears that he, like many other informants, is unable to analyse his thoughts about studying English. However, he says that he likes to study it, which can be seen in the example below.

- (4) I: -- miltä englannin opiskelu susta nyt tuntuu ni mitäs sä sanosit
 P: no on se iha hauskaa
 I: yhm onko siinä semmosta tiettyä mikä tekee sen mukavaks sen opiskelun vai
 P: no on siinä semmonen jos ymmärtää ni se on hauskaa

 I: -- how do you feel about studying English now what would you say
 P: well it's pretty fun
 I: yhm is there anything specific that makes it fun to study it or
 P: well there's one thing if you understand it's fun
 (C3, 2:83-87)

It appears that C3 enjoys studying English when he feels that he is successful in it. He also mentions that he would like to have more English lessons in his schedule.

Informant C5 has a positive attitude towards English. He would have started to study it, even if it had not been obligatory, like informant C1. He thinks that English is one of the most important subjects, partly because it is necessary when talking to foreigners. He is confident that he will need English in the future and gives the same reason for this as above. Like C2, C5 is not able to specify his expectations before formal English teaching started, but he admits that it is now more difficult than in the first and second grades. In his parents' opinion, C5 is now more committed to studying English than he was before.

Informant R1 appears to be interested in English. According to her, studying English is fun, and she would study it even if it were optional, like informants C1 and C5 above. As a reason for this, she mentions the importance of the language. Thus, R1 considers English among the most important subjects. Moreover, she states that she is probably going to need her skills of English in the future, which can be seen in example (5) below.

- (5) I: -- nii luuleks sä et sä tarvit tota englannin kieltä joskus tulevaisuudessa
 P: , no ehkä isona jos mä matkustelen Englantiin ja muihi maihi nii
 I: yhm nii sä luulet et siellä vois sitte tarvita
 P: yhm
 I: joo no entäs entäs sit töissä luulet sä et sää töissä tarvisit englantia
 P: no ehkä jos mä meen johonki englanninkieliseen ravintolaan vaikka tarjoilijaks
- I: -- do you think you are going to need English sometimes in the future
 P: well perhaps when I'm older if I travel to England and to other countries

- I: yhm so you think you could use it there
P: yhm
I: yes well how about at work do you think that you'll need English at work
P: well perhaps if I work as a waitress in an English restaurant (R1, 13:546-551)

As can be seen above, informant R1 gives a detailed answer here. She mentions concrete examples, like almost all informants in the present study. Before R1 started English lessons in the third grade, she, like C4, expected it to be more difficult than it now is. At present, she considers studying English fun, because it is easy. Correspondingly, her parents have noticed a change in her attitude; she is now more interested in English than before and wants to learn more.

In R3's opinion, English is among the most important subjects taught at school. Nonetheless, according to him, it is more important to study Mathematics and Finnish than English. Even though informant R3 considers English important, he is unable to say whether he would have studied the language, if he had been given the choice, like C2 and C3. In this respect, he differs from the other informants in his class, because all of them state that they would have started to study English, even if it had been optional. His hesitation may be due to the hypothetical question, which may be difficult for a child to answer. Another cause for his hesitation may be that the optionality of English has not occurred to him before the interview. Informant R3, like C1 and C4, believes that he is going to use English only abroad and not at work. It appears that the informant was indifferent towards studying English in the beginning, and he did not have any expectations of what it would be like. However, he mentions that now he likes to study English. It seems that R3's opinion of English has developed only after he has started to study it.

Informant R4 has a positive view of English. He likes to study it and would have chosen it, even if had not been obligatory, like most informants in class R. He thinks that English is important but not the most important subject, which he states in example (6) below.

- (6) I: -- jos sä vertaat englannin kieltä teijän muihin näihin kouluaineisiin ni onko se tärkeempi tai vähemmän tärke--
 P: no sitä on kyllä vähän hankala sanoo en osaa oikein sanoa, onhan sitä aika tärkeätä enkkua aika silleen on niitä muitakin tärkeitä aineita, esimerkiksi matematiikka ja semmosia
 I: joo, ettet ettei se oo ehkä ihan tärkein aine mutta
 P: yhm, mutta kuitenkin tärkee
- I: -- if you compare English to your other school subjects is it more important or less important --
 P: well it's a bit difficult to say I cannot really say, it is quite important [to study] English there are other subjects that are important, for example Mathematics and like that
 I: yes, so it isn't perhaps the most important subject but
 P: yhm, but important as well

With the other informants dealt within this section, R4 shares the opinion that although English is one of the most important subjects, it is not the most important one. The example above shows that R4 takes time to think about the importance of English. This seems to be typical for him in other parts of the interview as well. Like the other informants in class C and B, pupil R4 thinks that he will need English in the future. As examples, he mentions being abroad and speaking to foreigners. He also believes that he may need English at work. Before he started to study English in the third grade, he, like C4 and R1, thought that it would be more difficult than it has been. He enjoys studying English, especially because he learns new things in the lessons. His parents have also noticed his enthusiasm for the language, and they state that English has become more exciting to him now that he studies it.

7.2.2 'English is a less important subject'

The interview shows that informant C4 considers English less important. Unlike all the other informants in class C and B, informant C4 states that he would not have chosen English, if it had been optional. Because German is more familiar to him than English, he would have preferred to study it. Nevertheless, C4 believes that in the future he is going to use English when travelling, for example, in England. Before starting his English studies in the third grade, he expected it to be more difficult than it proved to be, like R1 and R4 above. C4 likes studying English, which his parents have noticed. They have detected a change in C4's attitude towards English.

In addition, R2 does not consider English to be the most important subject at school but rather of less importance, like informants C4 and R5. However, she would have selected English, whether it had been obligatory or optional. She admits that she will need English in the future, for example, when being abroad or when talking to foreigners. Like informant C1, R2 expected English to be easier than it is. At the same time she mentions, however, that it is not difficult at all and that she likes studying English. Her parents also state that R2 is enthusiastic about her English studies.

R5 regards English as less important, when compared to other subjects. Like many other informants, informant R5 would also have chosen English, even if it had been optional. According to him, it is both fun and important to study it. R5 believes that he is going to need English at least abroad. In addition, he, like many other informants, mentions a concrete situation, such as working at a super market and having a foreign customer. Informant R5 states that he had no expectations before he

started the third grade as to what English would be like. At present, he likes studying English as much as any other subject.

7.2.3 Comparison between classes C and R

The present writers were not able to detect many differences between the informants' attitudes towards the language itself or their expectations and opinions of formal language teaching. It appears that the differences found are mainly between individual pupils and not between the classes, as the present writers had assumed. Furthermore, the information gathered is not always easy to analyse because of the informants' vague answers, which makes comparison difficult and sometimes impossible.

All informants considered English an important subject but not the most important. Some differences between the classes can be detected, though they are not very significant. Most pupils in both classes regard English as one of the most important subjects. All informants believe that English is important in their future as well. Nearly all mention travelling as a most probable situation in which English is needed. After further inquiries, the pupils bring up such examples as talking to foreigners, giving advice, and working. Typical of their age, the informants think about concrete situations, such as working as a waitress. The informants' opinions about the usefulness of English differ to some extent between the individual pupils as well as between the classes. Almost all informants in the content based teaching class mention only one situation in which English is needed, whereas the informants in class R bring up two or three occasions. The result of this comparison is contrary to the present writers' expectations. It was assumed that the informants in class C would have mentioned more situations than the pupils in class R, because the pupils in class C have learned English longer.

Most informants have a positive attitude towards English. More than half of the pupils would have chosen to study English, even if it had been optional. Some informants are not able to answer this hypothetical question, and one informant would rather have chosen another language. Nearly all informants in class R would have studied the language anyway, and only one is not able to give an answer. In the content based teaching class, class C, the opinions diverge more. Only two informants are certain that they would have chosen English, even if it had not been obligatory. The others cannot answer the question or would not have chosen English. Therefore, the present writers conclude that the informants in class R have a somewhat more positive attitude towards English than the informants in class C.

The informants' expectations of formal teaching of English were also examined. Some informants are not able to say what they expected, whereas approximately half of the informants are able to specify their expectations. They consider studying English easier or more difficult than they assumed. It is not possible to detect any significant differences between the classes here, the answers vary only between the individuals. The same tendency can also be noticed in the informants' present opinions about studying English. All informants state that they like to study English but give different reasons for it. As examples, the pupils mention that learning new things and understanding English is fun and that studying English is easy. Some informants also mention that they enjoy games, plays, and exercises, that is, concrete classroom activities.

7.3 The informants' self-concept as language learners

The third section of this analysis deals with the informants' concepts of themselves as language learners. Answers to questions like 'Are you good at English?' or 'Do you think that other pupils are better at English than you?' give some idea of the informants' concept of themselves. In this section, the informants are dealt with in three categories according to their descriptions of themselves as English learners. At the end of this section, the present writers compare the informants in classes C and R and try to find differences between the classes.

7.3.1 'I'm good at English'

In class C, informant C4 is the only pupil who describes himself as a good student of English. He states that in his opinion he takes part in class to some extent. According to him, he knows English as much as the other pupils do. In the interview and in class the present writers get an impression which somewhat differs from the teacher's description of C4. The informant appears to be better at English than the teacher gives him credit for. The teacher considers him a shy pupil who needs more self-confidence in class.

At first, R1 is not able to describe herself as an English learner. Later, she admits that she is good at English but is not among the best in the class. On the other hand, she claims that she has never thought that others are any better at English than she. It appears that informant R1, like some other informants in the present study, is either unable or too cautious to analyse her abilities as an English learner. Informant R1 claims that she actively takes part in class. The teacher describes her as a shy pupil who

tries to attend the lessons actively, while the present writers' observations indicate her to be rather passive and absent-minded in class.

Like R1, R2 believes that she is good at English but does not consider herself to be one of the best. However, at the same time both state that they do not believe that others are any better at English than they. The similar contradiction can be detected in other interviews as well. R2 is active but afraid to take risks when, for example, she is not certain that her answer is correct. The informant seems to know her behaviour in class well, since both the teacher and the present writers agree with her description. The teacher states that R2 needs more courage to show her skills at English. Likewise, the present writers noticed that she was passive and shy in class, like informant R1.

It appears that informant R3 is confident about himself and his skills of English, even though the present writers can only get this information indirectly. R3 claims that he is not 'so terribly good at English' (R3, 3:118). Nevertheless, later he reveals that he is actually good at English mentioning that he had only five wrong answers in the last test. He also considers himself an active pupil in the English lessons, which can be seen in example (7) below.

- (7) I: -- viittaatko sä paljon englannin tunneilla
 P: niin paljon kuin tiedän, ja aika paljon viittaatan
- I: -- do you raise your hand often in the English lessons
 P: as often as I know and I raise my hand pretty often
 (R3, 4:145-147)

Informant R3 refers to his abilities in some other parts of the interview as well. However, he does not directly express his self-concept as an English learner. Example (8) shows his thoughts about himself and other pupils.

- (8) I: joo, no tuleeks sulle joskus semmonen tunne et muut osais [englantia] paremmin kuin sää
 P: no ei yleensä, -- eiku siis ei ei oikeestaan koskaan
- I: yes, well do you sometimes get the feeling that others might know [English] better than you
 P: well not usually, -- I mean that no not really ever
 (R3, 4:169-170)

It can be detected in example (8) above that R3 considers himself at least as good at English as other pupils, if not better. The present writers noticed that informant R3 seems to believe that he knows English well. For instance, he was proud of himself when he knew an answer the others did not and boasted about it in class. The teacher considers R3 a rather enthusiastic pupil who is good at English. This description supports the present writers' impression of R3 and R3's own opinion. He is active in class and good at English but perhaps not as good as he thinks himself.

According to R4, he is 'good enough' at English (R4, 3:125-126). He does not have any problems with the language and is active in class. He does admit, nevertheless, that he got 50/50 in a test and that he is talented at English. Like R3, R4 avoids at first to say that he is good at English but acknowledges it later. He seems to be unwilling to give too positive or too negative an impression of his skills of English. Example (9) shows his cautious description of himself.

- (9) P: -- on siellä mejänkin luokalla parempia ku minä, joitakin ... en nyt menis itteeni kuitenkaan kehumaan mutta sieltä aika hyvästä päästä oon kuitenkin
- P: -- there are some pupils better than I am in our class too, some ... I wouldn't go and brag about myself but however I am among the best
 (R4, 5:184-185)

R4's view of himself seems to be similar to his teacher's opinion of him. She describes R4 as an active pupil who knows English well. The present writers' opinion of R4 does not differ much from the teacher's opinion. R4

attended the teaching actively, though he sometimes concentrated on other matters than school work.

7.3.2 'I'm an average English learner'

Informant C1's concept of herself as a language learner is positive. She describes herself as average, which can be seen in example (10) below.

- (10) I: -- minkälainen englannin opiskelija sä oot
 P: no sellane keskivertane että en mää mikää hirvee hyvä mutta en mää kauheen huonokaan oo
- I: -- how would you describe yourself as a student of English
 P: well sort of an average not that I'm terribly good but I'm not a poor one either
 (C1, 5:178-181)

On the other hand, she considers herself among the best pupils in the class. C1 is the only informant in this category who is of this opinion. The present writers detected a contradiction in her opinion of her English skills. One reason for this might be that she is too modest in evaluating herself only as an average English learner. She avoids saying anything that might describe her either too negatively or positively, like informant R4. This impression is also supported by her teacher. She describes C1 as an active pupil who is good at English and especially understands the language well. The informant herself, nevertheless, mentions in the interview that occasionally she is anxious in class and afraid that others might laugh at her. She also states that sometimes she is not active and has difficulties in concentrating on the teaching, which is supported by the present writers' observation.

Informant C2 appears to have a modest view of herself as an English learner, like C1. The present writers conclude that she finds herself an average student of English. This can be seen in example (11) below.

- (11) I: -- miten sä kuvailisit itsees minkälainen sä oot englannin opiskelijana
 P: no en tiedä en mä kyllä kauheen hyväkään oo että en mä kyllä paljo osaa sitä puhuakaan mutta kyllä mä nyt ainakin vähäsen tiedän siitä, kyllä mä läksyjä ja tehtäviäki osaan tehdä mutta en ehkä ihan kaikkia osaa --
- I: -- how would you describe yourself as an English learner
 P: well I don't know I'm not terribly good either I can't speak it much but I do know at least something about it, I can do homework and exercises but perhaps not everything --
 (C2, 3:118-121)

It can be seen above that, in C2's opinion, she is good at English but does not want to emphasize it. The present writers noticed that this attitude occurred in several places in the interview. It seems that C2, like C1, stresses that she is not very good at English but at the same time that she is not a poor achiever either. However, she admits that sometimes she feels that others know English better than she. This is consistent with her impression of herself as being an average English learner. Informant C2 considers herself active, which is supported by the teacher who describes C2 as an interested but quiet pupil who knows English well. The present writers noticed C2's activity, as she was one of the most active pupils in class.

C3 has a positive view of his skills of English. He describes himself as an average pupil who is not among the best in his class. Like C2, C3 admits that sometimes he feels that other pupils know English better than he. However, he claims that this does not bother him. In his opinion, he usually participates actively in teaching. Contrary to this, his teacher of English describes him as a lazy but also a shy pupil who knows more than he shows in class, which is supported by the observations. C3 takes part in classroom activities with varying enthusiasm, that is, sometimes he attends teaching actively but is occasionally absent-minded.

Unlike other pupils in class R, informant R5 considers himself an average learner of English. He also states that his English skills are similar to those of other pupils. Furthermore, he mentions that he takes actively part in the English lessons. Like C2 and C3, R5 admits that occasionally he feels that others are better at English than he. The teacher's impression of R5 is a positive one. From her point of view, R5 is a very enthusiastic pupil, although he has some difficulties in pronouncing English. Informant R5 admits that this is the reason for the uncertainty of his English skills. The present writers' observations are consistent with the teacher's description; R5 takes enthusiastically part in teaching and other classroom activities.

7.3.3 'I'm not good at English'

C5 has some difficulties in describing himself as an English learner but at the same time he seems to have a negative concept of himself. He states that he is not good at English nor very active in class. C5 also feels that the other pupils know English better than he does. In addition, he mentions that he does not understand the teacher's English in class, which may be one reason for his low self-esteem as an English learner. C5 also admits, as mentioned above, that sometimes he is not active in class, which is consistent with the teacher's description. According to her, C5 is timid and often confused in class. In addition, she believes that his passivity is due to his lack of effort rather than his abilities. The teacher's view and the informant's feelings of uncertainty are supported by the observation.

7.3.4 Comparison between classes C and R

The informants' opinions of themselves as English learners have been studied in this section. The present writers have detected differences both between the individual informants and between the classes. In the following, classes C and R are compared in more detail and conclusions are drawn.

Half of the informants in this study regard themselves as good English learners, whereas four pupils consider themselves among the average. Only one informant states that he is not good at English. The present writers conclude that the pupils in class R seem to have a more positive view of themselves as language learners than pupils in class C. The present writers have come to this conclusion, because almost all informants in class R regard themselves as good at English, whereas the number in class C is only one. In both classes, the informants who think that they are good at English do not, however, believe that they are among the best in the class. On the other hand, they regard themselves as good as the others, if not even better. The present writers have detected this contradiction in both classes. Furthermore, there are more informants describing themselves as average in class C than in class R. The only pupil who has a negative view of himself as an English learner is in class C.

These findings are contrary to the present writers' expectations and hypothesis. It was assumed that the informants in the content based teaching class, class C, would have had a more positive self-concept as English learners than pupils in class R. This was, however, not the case. Only one informant in class C considers himself among the good pupils of English. One reason for this might be that the pupils in class C are too critical of their English skills. They have studied it longer, that is, for three

years, and may expect more of themselves than the pupils in class R who have been learning English only for one year.

7.4 The informants' use of English

The fourth section of the present study deals with the informants' use of the English language. The purpose is to find out possible situations in which the informants have used English. The present writers attempt to examine whether informants having many contacts or possibilities to use English, such as foreign acquaintances or holidays abroad, use English more willingly than informants with no contacts with the English language. In addition, the pupils' use of English in the content based teaching class and the regular class is compared. The present writers' hypothesis here is that the informants in class C are more able and ready to use English than pupils in class R. Moreover, it is assumed that the informants in class C have more positive attitudes towards target language speakers. The information used in this section is gathered from the informants and their parents.

First, the informants' use of English and their contacts with foreigners are discussed by studying the data obtained from their parents. Second, information in the interviews is compared to that given by the parents. The reason for this is that the parents' attitudes towards foreign languages and cultures probably affect their children. Therefore, the parents' use of English and their contacts with its speakers are also taken into consideration.

This section is divided into three subsections depending on the situations in which the informants have used English. Some have used English with a foreigner either abroad or in Finland, some at home, and some have not

used English at all. A few informants have used English both with a foreigner and at home. The present writers discuss these informants under the section 'I've spoken English with a foreigner'. The other two subsections are 'I've spoken English at home' and 'I haven't spoken English anywhere but school'. Furthermore, the informants' attitudes towards the speakers of English are briefly studied in this section.

The present writers have divided the informants into the subcategories that are mentioned above according to the informants' use of English. In some cases, the information obtained in the interviews contradicts the information that the parents give. In these cases, the present writers have decided to categorize the informants on the basis of the information the pupils give. This is because the focus of the study is the informants and their opinions of the language and not the parents. Therefore, the present writers find it logical to focus on the information obtained in the interviews. For example, all the parents, except C4's and R3's parents, mention that their children use English at home. However, only four informants state in the interviews that they speak English at home.

7.4.1 'I've spoken English with a foreigner'

C1 states that she has used English abroad and is willing to use it in the future as well. Her parents also like using English especially when travelling or working, which may have affected C1's opinion of English. According to C1's parents, the family has foreign acquaintances, but the informant does not speak English with them. Furthermore, they state that C1 has a positive attitude towards English speakers. C1 has some views of the British and Americans, but these views are concrete and even unrealistic. For example, she believes that Americans 'live in big houses and eat a lot' and that the British 'live in mansions and ride carriages'.

(C1, 12:495-496, 508.) C1 has also noticed some differences between British and American English but cannot give any specific examples.

C4 mentions that he has used English once abroad when buying a post card and states that he is ready to use it in the future. C4's parents do not have many contacts with English in Finland. However, they have been abroad and especially the mother likes using English, for instance, when studying or being abroad, like C1's parents. According to C4's parents, he has a positive view of English speakers. Nevertheless, the informant himself, like C1, has a concrete and stereotypical picture of Americans. He describes them as 'plumper' than the British (C4, 11:449). Moreover, informant C4 considers British and American English different but is unable to specify his claim any further, like C1.

According to R1, she has used English in many situations. She, for example, speaks English to her Chinese neighbour and uses the language at home with her family and friends. R1 has been abroad with her parents and used English there, like C1 and C4. Furthermore, she is not afraid to use it in the future either. The parents of both R1 and C1 mention that they have some foreign acquaintances. Nevertheless, R1's parents state that she does not use English with them. The informant herself, nonetheless, claims having used English with these acquaintances at least on one occasion. Both parents speak several languages in their spare time, and their attitudes, as well as R1's attitude, towards English and its speakers are positive. R1 describes Americans as white, whereas a typical British to her is a white person who is funny (R1, 12:484-491).

Informant R5 mentions that he has spoken English both with a foreigner and at home with his family and friends, like R1. Like almost all informants, R5 is ready to use English when necessary. R5's mother also

likes using English in her spare time. However, his parents do not have any foreign acquaintances, and they have not been abroad. R5 views English and its speakers positively, as do the other informants in this section. He states that 'the British and Americans are ordinary people' (R5, 10:396-401). He, like C1 and C4, is unable to specify the differences between American and British English. It seems that it is easier for the informants to make comparisons between Finnish and English than between the two variants of English.

7.4.2 'I've spoken English at home'

Contrary to informants R1 and R5, who use English both at home and with foreigners, pupils R2 and R4 state that they have used English only at home with their family and friends. R2 has not used English on her trips abroad but is ready to use it when necessary. However, as mentioned above, she uses English at home. According to R2's parents, they do not have any foreign acquaintances, but, nevertheless, R2's mother likes to use English when studying. R2's parents believe that R2 has a positive view towards English speakers. Yet, she does not have any distinct images of the British and Americans. All she says is that Americans 'are happy because they can go to Disneyland' (R2, 7:314). However, she does see some differences between American and British English but is only able to give an example of differences between English and Finnish. According to R2, English is more difficult because words are not pronounced as they are written (R2, 2:62).

R4, like R2, states that he uses English with his friends and that he would not be afraid to use the language abroad either. His family does not seem to have any contacts with foreign language speakers. R4's family has no foreign acquaintances like R2's parents but, unlike them, R4's parents

have not travelled, and they do not like to use English. According to his parents, R4 uses English at home; he uses words, sings songs, and translates words in songs and computer games. His parents think that R4 has a positive view of English speaking people, which the present writers confirm. R4 states that 'all the people in the world are basically the same, only traditions may be different' (R4, 9:398-399). In his opinion, the main difference between American and British English is the words that mean different things.

7.4.3 'I haven't spoken English anywhere but school'

The informants included in this subcategory state that they do not use English anywhere else except at school. Among these informants is pupil C2 who states that she does not use English in her spare time. Although her parents have many contacts with foreign languages, such as English speaking acquaintances, C2 does not use any English. Informant C2 has not been abroad, but she states that she would use English if necessary. Her parents have positive attitudes towards using foreign languages. They mention that C2 also appears to have positive views of English and its speakers, which is supported by the present study. Informant C2 states that some British and Americans differ from the Finnish and some are similar to us. In addition, she mentions that she has noticed some differences in the languages, for example, in words spoken in the Great Britain and the Unites States.

According to C3's parents, they know some foreign people, but the informant does not speak English with them. C3 has been abroad but has not used English with anyone. He also states that he is not ready to speak it either without help from his parents. This is contrary to the situation with C2 who has not been abroad but claims that she would use

the language, if necessary. C3's parents mention that they do not like using English. This may have some effect on the informant's reluctance to use the language. The parents state that C3 has a positive view of English speaking people. However, when the informant was asked about the differences between the British and Americans, he brought up mainly negative aspects. For example, he believes that Americans are 'much crazier' than the British and that there are 'more robberies and especially those concerning children' in the United States than in Great Britain (C3, 8:334-339). He has found some differences between American and British English, such as pronouncing words. He also mentions the same difference between English and Finnish.

Unlike C2 and C3, informant C5's parents do not have any foreign acquaintances with whom the informant could speak English. C5's father likes to use English at work, contrary to C5's mother who does not use any foreign languages. Like C3, C5 has been abroad but has not spoken any English there. C5 mentions that he is reluctant to use English, because he does not know the language well enough. His parents state that C5 has a positive attitude towards English speakers. The present writers conclude that he does not have any distinct images of the British or Americans. She only mentions that Americans are 'polite' (C5, 10:424). It appears that the informant considers it necessary to visit the country before forming an opinion of the people. This could also be the reason for C5's inability to specify any differences between American and British English. However, when comparing Finnish and English, the informant is able to give an example of the differences. He, like R2 and R5, states that English is not pronounced in the same way it is written, as Finnish is (C5, 3:80).

Informant R3 states that he does not use English at home. He is the only informant whose parents agree with their child here. R3 mentions that he

has not spoken English in other connections than school. Like C2, he has not been abroad but, nonetheless, states that he would try to use English there. R3's parents know some foreign language speakers, even though they do not communicate with them in any other language except Finnish. His parents believe that their child has a positive attitude towards English and its speakers. However, R3 is not able to describe the British or Americans. He does seem to understand the differences between American and British English but is unable to give any specific examples.

7.4.4 Comparison between classes C and R

In the following, the present writers compare the informants' use of English in classes C and R. Differences are found both between individuals and classes. First, approximately half of the informants, an equal number in both classes, state that they have used English with a foreigner either abroad or in Finland. Second, two informants, both in class R, state that they use English only at home with their families or friends. The rest of the informants, most in class R, mention that they have not used English anywhere but school.

These findings are contrary to the present writers' expectations. It was assumed that the informants in class C are more able and ready to use English than pupils in class R. However, as mentioned above, these findings do not support this hypothesis. Most informants in class C, but only one in class R, claim that they do not use English at all. Furthermore, no informant in class C mentions using English at home, even though they are more familiar with the language than informants in class R. It is worth noting that two informants in class R say that they use English only at home and, in addition, two state that they use English both at home and with a foreigner. Thus, here the difference between the classes is

notable, since none of the informants in class C and almost all in class R use English at home.

As mentioned earlier, nearly half of the informants, the same number in both classes, have spoken English to a foreigner abroad or in Finland. Therefore, there are no differences between the classes here. This can also be seen in the informants' answers concerning their possible use of English abroad. Only one informant, C5, states that he would not use English at all; according to him, he does not know the language well enough to use it. This is consistent with his self-concept as an English learner, since he regards himself not good at English, as can be seen on page 77. In all, the present writers conclude that speaking with foreigners is demanding and is, therefore, more beneficial to the informants than using English at home. Despite their young age, almost half of the informants have used their language skills with foreigners, which is a positive finding.

The present writers attempted to find out whether the informants in the present study had developed some images of English speakers and whether there were possible differences between the classes. The informants in both classes seem to have some images of English speakers. Only one informant is unable to describe the British and Americans. The views are somewhat unrealistic, stereotypical, and concrete, which is due to the young age of the informants. Contrary to the hypothesis, the present writers conclude that the informants in class C appear to have slightly more stereotypical images of English speakers. Nearly all informants in class C and only a few in class R have concrete or unrealistic views of the British and Americans. Thus, it seems that the content based teaching class does not produce as unprejudiced pupils as the present writers assumed. However, the present writers emphasize

that there were some informants who share the view that people are the same in all countries.

7.5 The informants' hobbies concerning English

The focus of this section of the present study is the informants' use of English in their hobbies, in other words, in five different areas of interest typical of ten-year-old children. These hobbies include reading, listening to music, watching TV, using computers, and writing letters. The informants are categorized according to their use of English in the hobbies. For example, those informants who have read books or magazines in English are considered having used the language in this hobby. Likewise, informants who pay attention to the English words in music or TV programmes have a hobby involving English. Furthermore, writing letters in English or using the language in computer games or programmes are also regarded as hobbies concerning English. The categorization is based on the number of hobbies involving the language. At the end of this section, the differences between the classes are discussed.

7.5.1 The informant with five hobbies involving English

Informant R2 is the only informant in the present study who uses English in all the hobbies examined here. She states that she reads, for example, comics in English. R2 states that she has learned some English words especially from the educational books she reads. In addition, R2 finds English lyrics easy to understand, and she mentions paying attention to the language in English programmes and, thus, learning more about the language, such as new words. Informant R2 has also used educational

computer programmes, with the help of which she, for instance, practises some English words. Furthermore, R2 is ready to use English in correspondence as well. According to her, she has tried to get a pen-friend but has not succeeded in it. To sum up, informant R2 seems to be interested in the English language, although she considers it less important compared to other subjects. However, she uses English in many of her leisure time activities.

7.5.2 The informants with four interests involving English

Three informants, C1, R1, and R4, are dealt with in this section. They report that they use English in four out of five hobbies included in the present study. However, these hobbies are different with each informant. First of the informants, C1, states that she listens to English words in music but does not learn new words. She also mentions that she listens English in TV programmes but at the same time admits that she reads the translations as well. This can be seen in example (12) below.

- (12) I: -- luet sä sen tekstin vai kuunteleks sä sitä kieltä
 P: no ennen kun mä katoin 'Kauniita ja rohkeita' niin siinä on nii helppoo se englanti nii siitä englannistaki mä ymmärsin kyllä aika paljo mut kyl mä sen tekstin aina luen --
 I: sun mielestä se on aika helppoo se englanti siel 'Kauniissa ja rohkeissa'
 P: paitsi et sit ku ne näyttelijät tai ne puhuu niin nopeesti siinä kuitenkin nii ei sitä sit ehi niin kauheen hyvin kuunnella sitä

 I: -- do you read the text or listen to the language
 P: well when I used to watch 'The Bold and the Beautiful' the English language in it is so easy that I could understand it quite well but I always read the text--
 I: so you think that English in 'The Bold and the Beautiful' is quite easy
 P: except the actors or they speak so quickly in [the series] so there is not so much time to listen to it
 (C1, 8-9:335-345)

As can be seen in the extract above, C1 first claims that English in the TV programme is easy to understand but later admits that she is not able to follow the dialogue in the programme. She gives the present writers contradictory information, which seems to be typical of almost all informants in some other sections of the present study as well. C1 also states that she uses English in computer games and programmes and has no trouble with the language. She needs English when using the Internet as well. C1 is the only informant who regularly writes letters in English, and she mentions that 'it is fun to learn how to use the words that you have learned' (C1, 10:416). The present writers find it surprising that a child of this age is able to be in correspondence in English, even though C1 admits that her parents help her. In addition, C1 seems to understand the advantage of using the language in practice.

R1 states that she reads story-books in English and uses the word list in her English text book, if she does not understand all the words. Informant R1 listens to English music like all informants in the present study and mentions, like informant R2, that she has learned some new words. According to R1, she sometimes pays attention to the dialogue in English TV programmes but usually reads the translations, like R2 and C1. Informant R1, as well as C1, does not, however, believe that she has learned any new words while watching TV. Finally, R1 uses English while writing letters and mentions having written letters in English to her Finnish friends.

Like R2, informant R4 reads comics in English but admits that he uses word lists attached to them to help him in translation. R4 mentions in the interview that he listens to English music and especially Bruce Springsteen whose lyrics he claims to understand. In addition, he says that he has learned some new English words from the lyrics. He, like informants C1 and R1, listens to the language in English TV programmes

but has not learned anything new. When using computers, R4 sometimes needs English, for example, in computer games.

7.5.3 The informants with three hobbies involving English

C3 states that he reads books in English and listens to English music. In the lyrics, he both recognizes words and learns new ones, like R1 and R4. When he watches TV, he pays attention to the dialogue, which he explains in the following extract: 'I listen to the language but also read the text so that I know what the word means' (C3, 6:242-243). Therefore, the present writers conclude that he also learns new words from TV, like R2. C3 has not written any letters in English but admits that it would be useful. Example (13) shows his thoughts about being in correspondence in English.

- (13) I: -- haluaisiksä -- kirjoittaa englanniks jonnekin
 P: no en mä oikeen tiiä, jossain mielessä en ja jossain mielessä haluan
 I: niin, missä mielessä sä esimerkiks haluaisit
 P: no siinä ainakin oppis englantia jos toiseltakin tulee (kirjeitä)
 I: yhm no miksei se sitten oliskaan, ei et haluais
 P: no jos menee jotkut sanat ihan päin mäntyä ja sitte ei yhtään tiedä mikä sana on mikäkin

 I: -- would you like to -- write somewhere in English
 P: well I don't really know, in a way I don't and in a way I do
 I: right, in what way would you like to for example
 P: well at least you would learn English if you get [letters] from the other one
 I: yhm well why wouldn't it be, you wouldn't want to
 P: well if some words go wrong and then you don't know what each word means
 (C3, 6:267-273)

Even though C3 understands the usefulness of writing letters in English, he is not enthusiastic about it. Extract (13) above shows that, like R4, C3 is not sure of his abilities to write in English.

Informant C4, like R1 and C3, states that he has read some story-books in English. Like informants R1, R4, and C3, informant C4 also tries to understand English words in music. Likewise, he believes that he has learned some new words. Moreover, he uses English in computer programmes and games and also needs the language when he uses the Internet. Informant C5 also has three hobbies involving English. Like R2, C5 mentions that he has read educational books in English. In addition, he states that his parents have read him story books in English. Like almost all the other informants in this study, C5 listens to music in English. Like R1, R4, C3, and C4, also C5 states that he has learned some new words when listening to music. Informant C5, as well as R4, uses computers only when he plays games. However, he states that it is not easy for him to follow the English instructions of these games.

R3 states that he listens to music in English and sometimes recognizes words. He also mentions that occasionally he pays attention to the language in the programmes, but usually he only reads the text. R3 needs English when using computers only when he plays games, like informants R4 and C5. He agrees with the informants mentioned above that instructions, which are mostly in English, are sometimes difficult to understand. R5 is the fifth informant who has three hobbies concerning English. According to R5, he is interested in reading, for example, comics in English. He mentions that he partly understands the text he reads as well as the lyrics in music and has learned some new words from the songs. Occasionally R3 listens to English in TV programmes. He does not read the translations, although he admits that the language may be difficult.

7.5.4 The informant with one interest involving English

R2 is the only informant who uses English in one interest out of five. This leisure time activity is watching TV. She tries to listen to English in programmes but admits that the language is not easy to understand. She also states that she both reads the text and listens to English to find out if she recognizes any words. She does not read any books in English. Neither does she pay attention to the English words in music nor need the language when using computers. Furthermore, she has not written letters in English in her spare time but is willing to do so. She even mentions that she has read magazines and looked for pen friends who would write her in English.

7.5.5 Comparison between classes C and R

The purpose of the comparison is to find out whether the informants in the content based teaching class, class C, have more hobbies involving English than the pupils in class R, as the present writers have assumed. Furthermore, the five areas of interest are covered here, as the present writers attempt to find out possible differences in these areas between the informants in classes C and R.

As mentioned earlier, the informants are categorized into four groups according to the number of their hobbies concerning English. As many as the majority of the informants belong to the categories of three or four hobbies. Remaining two informants form separate categories of one or five hobbies. The present writers assumed that class C would have had more hobbies involving the English language, which was not reinforced in this study. Contrary to our expectations, pupils in the regular class seem to have more hobbies in which they use English. Most informants

having four or five hobbies involving the language are in class R, and only one is in class C. In the category of three hobbies involving English the difference between the classes is not significant. However, it is worth noting that the only informant who uses English in all five areas of interest is in class R, whereas the only informant using English in one interest is in class C. This is contrary to the expectations of the present writers. However, it is possible that individual differences rather than class have more influence on informants' interests concerning English. In the following, the present writers discuss each area of interest in detail by comparing classes C and R.

Most informants claim that they read either books or comics in English. However, it is worth noting that most of these informants in class R state that they only read comics in English, whereas all informants in class C state that they read books in English. Thus, the present writers conclude that it is the type of reading in English rather than the number of those who read that differs. In addition, the parents' views of their children's reading habits were studied. The views turned out to be contrary to those of the informants. Only three informants and their parents give the same information, whereas seven informants and their parents do not agree with each other. Almost all parents claim that their children do not read anything in English, while their children claim the opposite. One reason for this may be that the parents may only value books, not comics, as reading, whereas the children do not make a similar distinction.

All children in the present study listen to music in English, but the present writers regard only those who state that they pay attention to English words as the ones actively using English. All except one informant, who attends class C, can be considered to listen to music and especially the lyrics, and, thus, no significant differences between the classes can be detected here. However, some pupils pay attention to the lyrics more than

others. The present writers, therefore, conclude that some differences are found between the individual pupils, not between the classes. More than half of the informants, an equal number in both classes, claim that they have learned new words from the lyrics, whereas only one informant, C1, says the opposite. In addition, informant R3 states that he recognizes familiar words rather than learns new ones, while R2 claims that English lyrics are easy to comprehend. To sum up, differences can mainly be detected between the informants and not between the classes.

The third area of interest in the present study is watching television. As the present writers assumed, all informants watch television daily. However, only those informants who claim that they pay attention to English in the programmes are considered here. Thus, the majority of the informants use English when watching television, whereas only a few informants in class C state that they never listen to English in the television programmes. Although most informants pay attention to English in the television programmes, only informants R2 and C3, believe that they have learned some English when watching television. The present writers have come to the conclusion that some differences can be found between the classes, because it is only in class R that all informants pay attention to English in the television programmes.

Those informants who need English when using computers are dealt with in the fourth area of interest. This group includes the informants who use English in computer programmes, games, or the Internet. More than half of the informants mention that they use computers. No differences in the number of informants using computers can be detected between the classes. However, some differences can be found in the way they use computers. Nearly all of these informants, most in class R, state that they only play computer games. However, it is worth mentioning that R2 plays educational computer games, contrary to the other informants, and, thus,

can be regarded as having used English in more demanding contexts than the others. In addition to playing computer games, informants C1 and C4 mention using the Internet. To sum up, the present writers suggest that the informants in class C may use computers in more various ways than the informants in class R.

The last area of interest dealt with here is correspondence. The present writers regard the informants who have written letters in English as the ones using the language in this leisure time activity. The interviews show that only a few informants write or have written letters in English. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that these informants are girls, as the present writers had assumed. Even though these informants have written letters in English, their hobby is somewhat different. One of them writes letters to a German girl, another uses English only when writing to her Finnish friends, and the third has only written one letter to England to get a pen friend without success. As expected, the difference between the sexes was observable in this area of interest. Nearly all girls wrote letters in English, whereas all the boys in both classes were not enthusiastic about correspondence. The present writers emphasize that here it seems to be gender rather than the type of class that influences the informants' interest in writing letters.

Having compared classes C and R in all five areas of interests, the present writers conclude that the differences are not distinct. The findings, however, suggest that the informants in class R claim to use English more frequently in their hobbies than the informants in class C. Nevertheless, the pupils in the content based teaching class claim to use English in more demanding situations than their peers in the regular class. For example, the number of informants who mention reading in English is higher in class R than it is in class C. However, the pupils in class R mostly read comics, whereas all informants in class C read

books. Similarly, the informants in the regular class play computer games, while some informants in the content based teaching class also use the Internet. In addition, more pupils in class R pay attention to English in television programmes, but, after all, they do not report that they have learned any more English than the pupils in class C.

8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The pupils' experiences in the content based teaching class were dealt with in the present study. The main purpose was to examine the pupils' opinions in the content based teaching class in comparison to the views of the informants in the regular class. We hypothesized that children in class C would have more positive attitudes towards studying English as well as towards English speakers. In addition, it was assumed that they would have a more positive self-concept as English learners than pupils in the regular class. It was also presumed that pupils in class C would be more willing to use English on their own initiative than their peers in class R. The present writers, however, emphasize that the small number of the informants, five in class C and five in class R, precludes any significance being attached to the results of the present study. Therefore, any final conclusions about the success of immersion programme cannot be drawn on the basis of this study.

Most pupils in class C made the decision to attend the content based teaching class themselves, whereas a few parents chose the class for their children. In class R, most informants would have chosen the content based teaching class, if given the opportunity. It is worth noting that at present informants in class R have no knowledge of the programme in practice and base their opinions on the English language rather than the programme, whereas the informants in class C have attended it for nearly

three years. Therefore, the present writers are not able to make any comparisons but form only a general impression about the informants' attitudes. It appears that the pupils in class C are less positive towards the programme than their peers in class R. Surprisingly, all children in the content based teaching class would prefer studying some other subjects in Finnish, whereas most children in class R claim that they would rather be taught in English. However, the present writers emphasize that since the informants in class R have no concrete experience of the programme, their opinions are based on assumptions rather than knowledge. In other words, their positive attitudes are particularly directed towards the English language and not so much towards the programme.

The present writers were not able to detect many differences between the classes concerning the attitudes towards studying English. The differences found were between individual pupils rather than classes. These findings do not seem to support the hypothesis that the pupils in the content based teaching class would be more motivated to study English than their peers in class R. However, as presumed, almost all informants share the view that studying English is important. They would have chosen to learn it, had it been optional. Furthermore, the informants' state that they enjoy learning English for different reasons. Nevertheless, contrary to what might be expected, the pupils in class R are able to give more examples of situations where English could be useful than pupils in class C. It appears that here the duration of studying English is not an important factor. However, the effects of immersion education may be visible only after several years of exposure to the language.

The results of the present study indicate that most informants have either a good or an average self-concept. This finding is supported by other studies. For example, Aho (1996) has come to the conclusion that children in grade 3 have either an average or a positive self-concept. She

also states that self-concept is usually stable during the third school year. Similarly, Luhtala and Tuominen (1996) have inferred that the informants in their study have a positive self-concept as well as a positive foreign language self-concept. However, according to them, the pupils in the content based teaching class have a slightly more positive self-concept than the pupils in the regular class. On the other hand, the present writers conclude that the pupils in class C appear to have a less positive self-concept than pupils in class R, which is contrary to the hypothesis of the present study. One reason for this result could be the enthusiasm that the pupils in class R show when they start to learn English. Another reason for this might be that the informants in class C are critical of their English skills. Since they have studied English longer than the pupils in class R, their expectation of themselves may be greater. The present writers thus believe that it is necessary especially in content based teaching class to take into consideration pupils' views of themselves as English learners and to encourage them to use their language skills. Similarly it is important to prevent pupils' fear of negative evaluation resulting from mistakes while using the language. This could be achieved by emphasizing communicative skills rather than grammatical correctness even to a larger extent than is the practice at present.

The present writers hypothesized that the pupils in class C would use English more frequently than the pupils in class R. Contrary to the expectations, it was found out that the pupils in the regular class have used English more often outside school. On the other hand, the results show that the pupils in class C do not avoid using English but, like the pupils in class R, are willing to use English on some occasions. Therefore, it is possible that they have used English more rarely than their peers because of fewer opportunities. Moreover, the present writers conclude that the informants in both classes do not seem to have any inhibitions or anxiety concerning second language acquisition. Luhtala

and Tuominen (1996) found similar results in their thesis. However, other researchers have drawn different conclusions of the use of English from those of the present writers. For instance, Genesee (1987) found out that the immersion students in Canada were more comfortable and confident in using French than their peers in the regular programme. Their use of French was, nonetheless, not self-initiated but restricted to situations where they were expected to respond in French.

The present writers conclude that the informants in both classes do not have distinct images of the target language speakers. The opinions detected are rather concrete, unrealistic, and stereotypical. The young age of the informants may be one reason for this. It seems to be natural for the children of this age to pay attention to concrete and stereotyped characteristics that may be based on television programmes. However, some informants did not express stereotyped attitudes towards English speakers and shared the opinion that all the people are the same. Correspondingly, Luhtala and Tuominen (1996) did not find any stereotypes towards the speakers of English among their informants. Similar results have been found in Canada. For example, Genesee (1987) has inferred in his research that children in immersion programmes tend to express more positive attitudes towards French Canadians than their peers in regular programmes, especially at the initial stages of immersion programme. The positive attitudes do not nevertheless seem to be enduring (Gardner 1985:104).

It was hypothesized that the pupils in the content based teaching class would have more interests concerning English than their peers in the regular programme. This hypothesis was not supported by the results of the present study. Contrary to the expectations, the pupils in class R seem to use English in their interests more frequently than pupils in class C. However, the present writers conclude that pupils in class C use

English in more demanding situations. Furthermore, the small number of informants in the present study must be taken into consideration. Therefore it is possible that individual differences are a more determinant factor here than the class. Other researchers have come to similar conclusions. Genesee (1987) reports no difference between the immersion and regular pupils concerning their hobbies in the French language, such as watching television, listening to radio, or reading books. He points out that it is the personal choice rather than the type of class that affects the use of the language.

The present writers find the content based teaching programme in the Kortepohja elementary school somewhat successful, though not as beneficial as was believed. The pupils in the content based teaching class are successfully taught to use languages as a medium for communication. They seem to realize that learning foreign languages is important, and they also learn to know and eventually understand other nations and cultures. The present writers could detect some weaknesses in the language programme as well. As an example can be mentioned the learning environment that is not as stimulating as it could be. In other words, if the pupils had been given more opportunities to use English with native speakers both at school and outside school, the results of the study might have been different. Ideal for natural language learning would be a surrounding English speaking community which would provide the children the possibility to use the language in practice. However, in Finland this is seldom possible in language programmes in which content is taught through a foreign language such as English and German.

The results of the present study do not appear to support the hypotheses of the present writers. The present study indicates that the content based teaching programme in the Kortepohja elementary school may not be as beneficial to the participants as the present writers assumed. However,

the results of the present study are only suggestive. In order to draw more reliable conclusions, it is necessary to conduct follow-up studies in which a larger sample size is used. In the present study the differences between the pupils in the content based teaching class and the regular class are not significant, and in some areas the regular class would even appear to surpass the content based teaching class. This result may partly be due the informants' grade level. Having recently started to learn English, the pupils in class R may be more enthusiastic about the language, whereas the enthusiasm of the informants in class C has diminished after three years in the programme. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the differences detected are not distinct, which could lend support to the assumption that the pupils in class C have maintained a relatively high level of motivation. The present writers assume that in later grades the difference may either disappear or even favour the pupils attending the content based teaching classes. Therefore, future research could be directed towards studying the pupils in later grades.

There are some limitations to the present study. First, the method chosen did not provide adequate evidence for this study to evaluate the content based teaching programme. The choice of qualitative method, that is, interviewing, narrowed the sample size in the present study. Thus, because of the small number of informants, of which five attend class C and five class R, the present writers considered using quantitative methods purposeless. Similarly, the objective of all informants being at the same proficiency level restricted the sample size significantly and affected the categorization of the informants as well. The informants formed a rather homogeneous group in which the present writers were not able to detect any distinct differences. Second, the age of the informants negatively affected the interviews. The ten-year-old informants in the present study were not capable of abstract thinking and, therefore, of analysing their thoughts in the interview. Thus the information they

were able to give proved to be rather superficial. Third, it seemed to be typical of almost all informants to give the present writers some contradictory information in the interviews. The pupils tended to be cautious to evaluate themselves either too positively or negatively. Instead they avoided expressing any strong claims about themselves.

The sample size of the present study precludes any specific conclusions being drawn about the content based teaching programme. Therefore, the subject requires additional study. In order to evaluate the effects of the programme, it is necessary to examine a larger sample of pupils. Equally, quantitative data in addition to qualitative data would be informative. By using a larger sample and both quantitative and qualitative methods, future researchers are able to make more viable generalizations than the present writers. Moreover, future work might focus on the pupils' proficiency in English. For example, comparisons of the pupils in the content based teaching classes with those in the regular classes could be made regarding their achievement of English. All in all, because content based teaching has become more common at all educational levels, more extensive research is required to find out both the advantages and disadvantages of this new approach.

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