

University of Jyväskylä

**HOW CLIL-CLASSROOM STUDENTS SEE THEMSELVES AS
LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

By

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2011

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA	Laitos – Department KIELTEN LAITOS
Tekijä – Author HEIDI KOVANEN	
Työn nimi – Title HOW CLIL-STUDENTS SEE THEMSELVES AS LEARNERS OF ENGLISH	
Oppiaine – Subject ENGLANTI	Työn laji – Level PRO GRADU-TUTKIELMA
Aika – Month and year Kesäkuu	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 70+ 3 liitettä
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena oli tutkia vieraskielistä opetusta saavien oppilaiden näkemyksiä englannin kielestä. Haastattelututkimukseen osallistui 6 IB-lukiolaista Jyväskylästä. Tavoitteena oli selvittää miten ja milloin oppilaat käyttävät englannin kieltä ja minkälaisia merkityksiä kielellä on heidän arjessaan. Haastattelu toteutettiin ryhmähaastatteluna ja nauhoitettiin analyysiä varten. Nauhoitteet litteroitiin ja analysoitiin sisällönanalyysin keinoin.</p> <p>Vieraskielisessä opetuksessa kieli toimii opetuksen välineenä muita aineita opiskellessa. Tutkimuksen pohjana käytettiin aiempaa tutkimusta CLIL-opetuksesta sekä tutkimustuloksia englannin kielen merkityksestä ja roolista Suomessa.</p> <p>Tutkimus on luonteeltaan laadullinen eikä pyri laajaan yleistettävään tietoon. CLIL opetuksesta on suomessa vielä vähän tutkimustuloksia, erityisesti kielen merkityksestä ja käytöstä CLIL-oppijalle. Tutkimuksen mukaan haastateltavat kokivat suhteensa englannin kieleen varsin merkitykselliseksi ja näkivät sen etuna tulevaisuudessa. Englannin kielen rooli korostui erityisesti jatko-opintoja ja tulevaisuuden uraa ajatellen. Haastateltaville oli luontevaa käyttää englantia jokapäiväisissä tilanteissa oman äidinkielen rinnalla. Vaikka haastateltavat eivät kokeneet itseään vielä monikieliseksi, oli englantia vahvasti edustettuna heidän toiminnassaan ja arjessaan.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING, CLIL, ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, LANGUAGE LEARNER IDENTITY,	

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1. INTRODUCTION

There are over 1.5 billion speakers of English in the world today. It has become a truly universally used language. It is beyond doubt the language of commerce, tourism and science in modern society. It is the tool of communication between people from all over the world. Economical and cultural globalization has strengthened the role of English as a world language. Different factors, such as historical, political and economical, have contributed to the spread of the language (Crystal 2003). This spread can be seen as an ongoing process that is constantly changing. People who use English as a second or a foreign language have now outnumbered the native-speakers and the ownership of the language seems to be worldwide. As it has been accepted as the language of technology and business around the world, more people speak the language as a second or foreign language. In Finland as well, English is present in different domains of the society. It has become the “unofficial” second language of international communication and business.

English is studied in schools around the world, often as a compulsory subject. For example in Scandinavia, foreign language planning policy has relied heavily on English being the first foreign language to be studied. For example in Finland, over 92% of children choose to study English as their first foreign language in schools. (SUKOL 2009) Even though more languages are being introduced in the syllabus, English remains predominantly the most desired choice.

The English Language has spread widely around the world and to know English has been seen as a necessity in Finland as well. The teaching of English at school starts at an early age and many years are used to study and master the language. Previously English was only a subject in school, a foreign language that was studied. The emphasis was more e.g. on grammar, reading and translation. In schools today, there are more choices as to the methods and means of language teaching have increased and changed form. Today’s foreign language planning in Finland is taken seriously and the need to have proficiency in foreign languages, especially in English, is

recognized on a national level. Different approaches to complement traditional language teaching have also emerged. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is one example. In CLIL, a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction and the foreign language, e.g. English is the target language through which subject content is taught. Teaching in a foreign language has gained considerable interest both in Europe and in Finland over the past two decades. It has had a central role in European foreign language policies and several EU-countries have become involved. Thus CLIL has been as one possible way to unite European language teaching and create better opportunities for students in a mobilizing Europe. For a strong political and economical Europe, language proficiency has been seen as a key factor.

CLIL classrooms are a relatively new phenomenon in Finnish schools. Teaching through a foreign language reached Finland in the 1980s and became a popular choice in foreign language education in the 1990s. In CLIL a foreign language is used as a tool for teaching and learning. Both the target language and the actual subject content are equally emphasized. This method is now used in all school levels from elementary schools to upper secondary schools.

The present study examines what meanings the CLIL-students give to the English language and how that may affect the way they view themselves as language learners. The goal of the present study was thus to analyse how CLIL-students see themselves as English language learners. Is it just a tool for learning, is it a foreign language or is it possible they view themselves as bilingual/multilingual?

Previous research has focused more on the aspects of language proficiency and only few studies have been conducted on the language learner identity. In light of this, the focus of the present study was to concentrate on the students as CLIL-learners. The aim was to find out what it actually means for students in CLIL-classrooms to study subjects in English and use the language in their everyday studies. The material was gathered through a group interview with 6 IB- school students in Jyväskylä. The study represents the views and opinions of those 6 participants and is thus a case study, the results of which are not to be generalized.

The present study is organized in the following chapters. After introduction, chapter 2 deals with the spread of English in Finland from a cultural and educational point of view. The topic is expanded to cover foreign language education in Finland, with a focus point in English. Future prospects of language teaching and the English language itself in Finland are also discussed. Chapter 4 introduces the core of the present study. In Chapter 4, CLIL is discussed as a phenomenon and as a Finnish teaching method. The research on CLIL is also introduced. The concept of language identity is discussed in chapter 5 to further develop the theoretical framework of the present study. Chapter 6 presents the research questions and the methods of analysis. In chapter 7 the findings of the present study are presented and analysed. Chapter 8 briefly summarizes the findings and discusses it with regard to possible future studies on the topic.

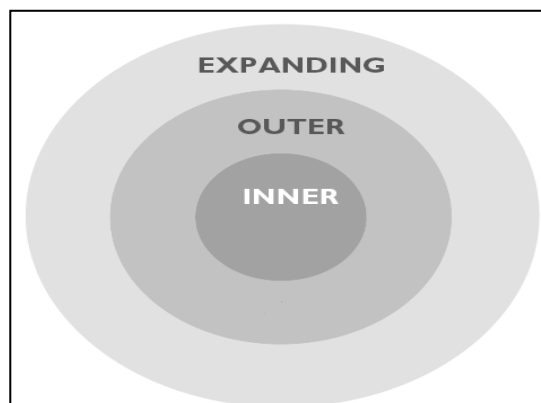
2. FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN FINLAND

2.1 The Position of English in Finland

Previously, English-speaking people were easier to divide according to their location around the world. The native speakers were seen as the “owners” of the language as English often was also the official language of the country. In Kachru’s model, the English-speakers around the world were divided into three circles. The *inner circle* represents the native speakers of English, the *outer circle* those who use English as a second language and the *expanding circle* includes people who learn and speak English as a foreign language. Finland would have been seen as a country where English was a foreign language learnt in school and used to communicate with foreigners. Using Kachru’s model of the three circles of English to describe this division, demonstrated in the figure 1 below, Finland would have been placed in the *expanding circle* of that model. Kachru’s model has been widely used before to describe the speakers of English but as the division of speakers is no longer simple and clear, the model has become outdated. (Graddol 2006). It is more difficult to place a single nation or people to a specific circle as more and more people live abroad and are using a foreign language in different domains of the society.

Today, Finland as a non-Anglophone country has experienced a great socio-cultural change with the spread of English into all levels of the society. In order to understand the present situation in Finland, the historical process needs to be discussed in more detail.

Figure 1. The three circles of English (Kachru as quoted in Graddol 2000: 10)



After World War II, particularly in the 1960s Finland started to look west and relate itself more to the Anglo-American culture, distancing itself from its former rulers Sweden and Russia. English had gradually become a world language after the Second World War, due to the political power of the United States. There was a huge explosion in popular culture and western values which again gave English its modern characteristic. Television brought American TV-shows to Finnish homes and English pop music began to dominate the music industry. In Finland, People were moving from the countryside to the cities and the economy began to prosper. However, until the 1980s, English was still considered a foreign language, a tool for communicating with the foreigners. English quickly replaced German and French and as the most popular foreign language to study in schools.

Today, the importance of English is acknowledged throughout Finland. Being a member of the European Union has opened the borders and made Finland politically and economically more internationally dependent. The number of foreigners living in Finland is five times it was twenty years ago. In 2009, there were 155, 705 foreigners living in Finland, the biggest groups coming from the neighbouring countries of Russia, Sweden and Estonia. (Statistics Finland 2009). Although the number of other nationalities in Finland is in the minority, with 8.7% of the population, it has nonetheless created a need for English to be used as a common language.

The rapid changes in IT technology with the indisputable role of the internet have strengthened the position of English in Finland. It has become the lingua franca of business and professional life. (Louhiala-Salminen 2002) English is used as a second language in popular media, and television and film industry still use subtitles in English-speaking films and TV-series. (Sajavaara 2004).

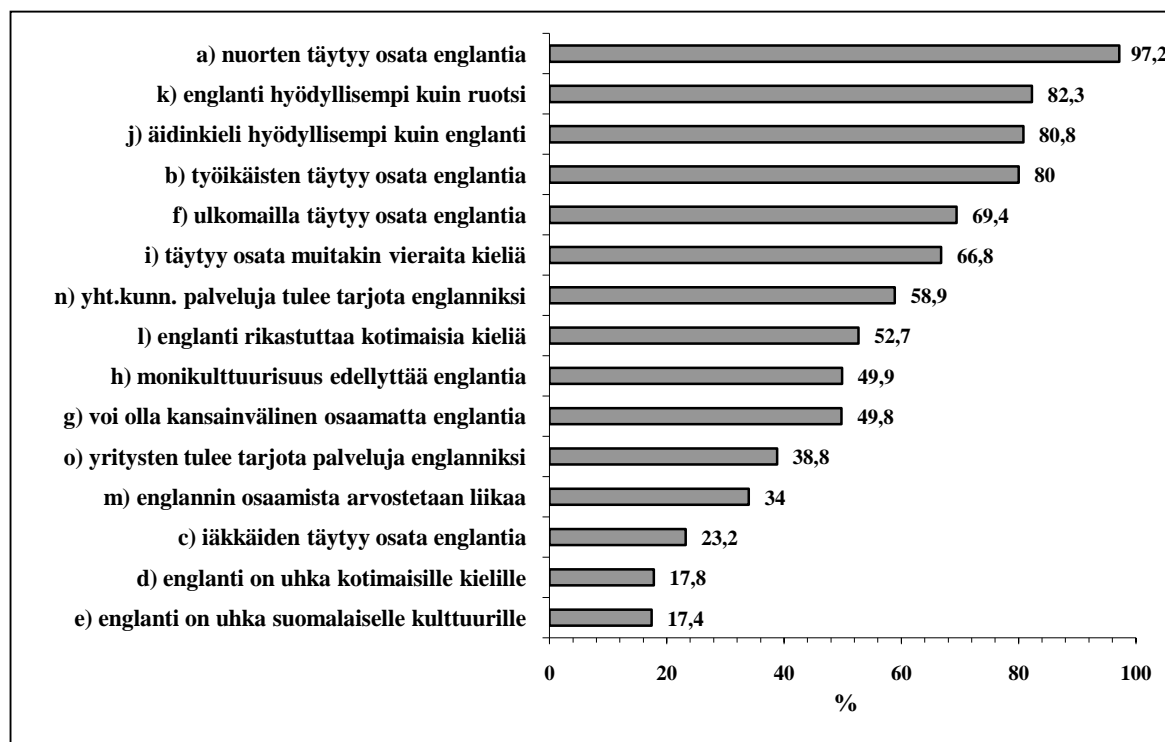
And it is not the industries that recognize the central role of English in Finland. According to the National survey conducted in 2007 (Leppänen et al 2009) English is seen as an important language in Finland by Finns themselves. The large-scale national survey with 1,495 responses covered Finn's attitudes and perceptions of English language in Finland. The responses reveal the overall positive and pragmatic image of English in Finland. English was seen as a resource in the international world and as an important asset for future employment. Finns also considered their own language skills in English relatively good. In general, the proficiency in English was highest among younger generations and those living in the cities. It was those respondents who also felt most positive about the language. The survey also revealed that there is also a minority in Finland who have a very specific and clear role with English. To those respondents, English was linked to a complete life-style and was used frequently.

For a language to achieve global status it needs to be recognized in every country. (Crystal 2003:3). There are different ways this can happen. One way for the recognition is to make the language a priority in the country's foreign language teaching, as has been the case in many European countries, especially in Scandinavia. It is not only in education however that English is dominating the field. As mentioned earlier, the importance of English is present in different fields of society such as information technologies and professional contexts. As Leppänen et al (2009) point out, English seem to be shifting from a foreign language to a second language in Finland.

English as a global language evokes a lot of discussion and debate. Concerns are raised about English overpowering other languages and monopolizing cultures and minority languages. House (2003), in her discussion on the topic of English and

multilingualism states that the matter needs to be viewed from a national context as well. From the Finnish perspective, English appears to have a strong role in Finnish society but not a threatening one. (Leppänen et al 2009:66-67) According to the national survey on Finns' attitudes towards English, less than one fifth of the respondents saw English as a threat to Finnish culture and languages. (Figure 2) Interestingly, over half of the respondents felt that English has a positive and enriching effect on Finnish. 80% of the respondents felt that people in the working life had to know English. English was also seen as a "must" for young people, with 97.2 % of respondents agreeing with the statement "*young people must be able to use English*". The strong position of English among the youth has become reality in Finland. The youth culture is in constant exposure with English and switching from Finnish to English is not uncommon.

Figure 2 The significance of English in Finland



(Source: Leppänen et al (2009:66) Kansallinen kyselytutkimus englanninkielen käytöstä suomessa)

However, the study did reveal that the small minority who hadn't studied English had no significant use for the language. Those were generally older people living in the countryside. It has been argued that the growing need to use and master English in Finland will widen the gap between those who can and those who cannot. As this chapter has mainly emphasised the powerful and positive position of English in Finland, it is good to remember that the case is not so for everyone.

Foreign language education became available to every Finnish child in the 1960s when the decision to include one compulsory foreign language into the national curriculum was made. Foreign language learning in Finland had previously been a privilege for the "upper classes". It was decided that all pupils in comprehensive school were to study at least two languages, Swedish, the second official language in Finland, being one of them for Finnish speakers and Finnish for the Swedish-speaking students.

Today, each pupil in comprehensive school is required to study at least one foreign language in addition to Swedish or Finnish. The list of foreign language choices can vary depending on the municipality but in principle, there are several languages to choose from. Pupils can choose their first, A-1 language freely, although the vast majority chooses English as their first foreign language. In 2009, 90, 2 % of 3rd grade students chose English as their A-1 language. After English, the most popular foreign language choices were German (1,3 %) and French (0, 8%). (The Federation of foreign language teachers in Finland. SUKOL 2009)

Table 1

Kieli (suluissa muutos vuoteen 2006 verrattuna)	%*
Englanti	90,2 (-0,8)
Suomi	5,4 (0,2)
Saksa	1,3 (+0,2)
Ruotsi	0,9 (-0,2)
Ranska	0,8 (+0,1)
Venäjä	0,2 (0,0)

* %-osuudet laskettu 3. vuosiluokan oppilasmäärästä.

(Source:: OPH: WERA-raportointipalvelu ja Koulutuksen määrälliset indikaattorit 2010)

The central role of English in schools has caused great deal of discussion and debate. It has been feared that the strong role of English will be a threat to the minority languages. Schools have in fact had to evaluate their foreign language planning policies and make adjustments. Hannu Laaksola raises his concern in the editorial of *Opettaja* (Opettaja (48). The Magazine for Finnish Teacher). According to Laaksola, schools should offer more frequently more other languages beyond English. According to him, mastering more than one foreign language would give Finland its competitive edge and be an asset in the job market. Even SUKOL, the federation of foreign language teachers in Finland is campaigning to promote the importance of other foreign languages. Despite the concerns, it should be noted that compulsory education in Finland does offer the possibility to study more than one foreign language. Pupils may choose another, the so-called A-2 language in the 5th grade and a third one, B-2 or B-3 language in secondary school. (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2004, POPS 2004) So hypothetically, a student finishing compulsory school may have studied three or more foreign languages in school. When compared with European standards, this is quite impressive.

2.2 Recent Changes in Language Policy

Considering Finland's somewhat isolated position in Europe where Finnish is rarely used, it has been sensible to "offer an extensive foreign language program". (Sajavaara et al.1993). For Finnish people, it seemed natural that other languages are needed to communicate with other nations. As the Indo-European languages dominate the European language scene, Finnish remains in the minority. Finnish shares similarities only with Hungarian and Estonian, the two Finno-Ugric languages in Europe. In Finland, society's needs have heavily affected our foreign language policies. Proficiency in foreign languages is seen from the point of view of economical wealth, commerce and industry. Language skills are needed to maintain contacts with other nations and to promote our nation's welfare. Other factors, such as individual motivation or language learner's personality have previously had quite a small role in the foreign language planning. (Sajavaara et al. 1993) Looking at the

views expressed by the scholars today, the old trend seems to be changing. Foreign language planning is now commonly based on European standards. The European council has taken an active role in uniting European language policies and the effects can be seen also in Finnish language education. Concrete examples include the use of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and The European Language Portfolio.

The CEFR “provides a basis for mutually recognized qualifications in languages thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility in Europe”. (www.coe.int/lang). The European Language Portfolio can be seen as a passport where the student’s linguistic and cultural skills are recorded. Its pedagogical function aims at motivating the student to learn and seek intercultural experiences. Both models have been adapted to the foreign language planning in Finland. The Finnish National Board of Education has stated in their latest report the goals for foreign language planning. There it is claimed that language learning should be a life-long process at all educational levels from children to adults. Also foreign language planning should recognize the need for diversity in languages. Although Finns are more fluent in languages than ever before, there are challenges to overcome. English is dominating the field in foreign language teaching and lesser studied languages are losing their position. Language diversity is emphasised but schools and municipalities fail to achieve it. Smaller towns and villages cannot offer the same variety as bigger cities. The choices of A2 and A3 languages may be very limited but the problem is not always the lack of financing. Schools have the possibility to plan their curriculums differently. It is important for the parents and teachers to set a positive example that encourages the students to study languages in school.

3 CLIL (CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING)

3.1 Teaching in a Foreign Language: General

The following section covers the terminology around foreign language teaching and describes some of the changes in it over the years. It is good to remember that there are students from different linguistic backgrounds, who have been studying in a foreign language for centuries and have therefore been participating in bilingual education in some form or another.

Although teaching through a foreign language has been used for centuries, often in bilingual environments, it was the birth of Immersion Education that has affected most to the development of contemporary foreign language teaching. Immersion education was first developed in Canada in the 1960s. In the Canadian immersion model, French was used as a target language in an English-speaking area or vice versa. The aim was to introduce a target language to the curriculum early on with the belief that a native language will develop without formal teaching. Immersion education can be roughly divided into three different categories in terms of the amount of the target language used and the time of the beginning of the studies. In *early total immersion*, the target language is taught as early as in kindergarten and the native language is gradually introduced into the curriculum. In *early partial immersion*, c.50% of the instruction is given in the target language, starting from kindergarten. In *late immersion*, the target language isn't used until the end of elementary school. (Cummins 1995:8) For the majority of pupils,

The aim in immersion is to become functionally bilingual, meaning they will become fluent and have a proficiency to use the language in everyday situations. Due to this, immersion needs to be viewed as other ways of teaching in a foreign language and shouldn't be used as a synonym for any type of teaching happening through a foreign language. (Marsh et al 1997)

. Over the past decades different terms have been used when talking about teaching in a foreign language. Because of the complex nature of foreign language education, the terms used have also been somewhat problematic. Previously, the term *bilingual education* was used as an umbrella term to refer to different ways of using non-native languages for instruction. This term would often be associated with teaching bilingual students or language minority groups. Later the term *mainstream bilingual education* was being used, which more appropriately described and emphasized the language learning process of non-natives and also referred to situations where the foreign language was both a tool and a subject itself. (Marsh 1999) Today, the widely accepted term in the field of foreign language education in Europe for situations in which language is a tool for teaching is *Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)*. The term has also been accepted as an umbrella term also in the field of education in Finland. (Nikula 2005: 28) As a term, it is useful because it is broad enough to cover different types of foreign language teaching. In the present study, the term CLIL will be used to refer to teaching in the foreign language.

3.2 What is Content and Language Integrated Learning?

In Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a foreign language is used as a tool in teaching. The goal is to offer greater variety in language use and make it an instrumental part of learning. The idea of CLIL is to teach/learn a foreign language through meaningful ways by using the target language in specific situations and/or subjects. CLIL, as opposed to immersion, does not give emphasis either to *language* teaching and learning or to *content* teaching and learning, but sees them as equally important. (Marsh, Marshland 1999: 20)

One of the key pro-CLIL arguments has been that it promotes the naturalistic role of language learning and thus challenging the formal foreign language instruction. (Dalton-Puffer & Smit. 2007: 8) Also, as different content, such as geography or history is taught using a target language, it makes the learning process meaningful

for the learner. Language is not distanced from the real-world. From a language learning point of view, in CLIL classes, the learners have much more exposure to the target language than in traditional classroom. As mentioned in the previous section, foreign language education is a difficult term to define and is open to interpretations. Even though CLIL as a term is widely recognized in Finland, other terms are being used as well. Teaching in a foreign language is sometimes referred as extended language instruction or language enhanced content instruction. (Virtala 2002: 19)

As a phenomenon, CLIL is multi-dimensional with focus points on different layers of the society. In a European context, CLIL is related not only to educational purposes but to culture and international environment as well. (Profiling European classrooms-project, Marsh, Malhers & Hartiala 1999) In the EU-platforms, scholars have discussed the position of CLIL from a socio-political point of view as well. European mobility, globalization and the transformation of European societies all have served as a motivation to offer CLIL education, especially in English. (Dalton-Puffer 2007)

The European commission has outlined the benefits of CLIL in its agenda of 2004-2006. There it is stated that CLIL has a lot to offer for the European language planning platform and for the goals it tries to achieve. CLIL is seen to give the student an authentic opportunity to instantly use the language rather than mechanically studying it for later use. It is also helpful in building the students' self-confidence as a foreign language user. (Euroopan Commission report, Agenda 2004-2006)

Hence, CLIL is offered extensively in Europe but again, is heavily context-based and can be executed differently. This concern is discussed by several European scholars in the literature on CLIL There should be specific guidelines built to support CLIL on a national context. There is also variety in the use of CLIL, ranging from occasional "language showers", to full scale CLIL Classrooms, where practically all the content is taught in a foreign language. The goals can vary as well. Schools might be aiming at bilingualism or simply just to encourage the students to use a foreign language in communication. (Hartiala 2000) Even on a national level, it is difficult to evaluate foreign language teaching practices because of the great variety.

Researchers in Finland have raised their concern on this topic as well. It is pointed out that in order for foreign language teaching to keep the usual good standards in Finland, the national curriculum should create a unified agenda for CLIL. (Virtala 2002) That would enable schools and municipalities to follow the given guidelines which in turn would benefit CLIL teaching as a whole. It is argued that more financing should be given in order for CLIL teachers to maintain their expertise both as a language teacher and a content teacher. It is a challenge to provide enough training for future CLIL-teachers so that they will have the tools to teach in a foreign language.

Because of the fragmented nature of CLIL education, different projects that would unite CLIL education in Europe have been developed. An example of that is CLIL Matrix, an online tool for CLIL teachers to raise awareness and get training in CLIL-teaching. (). CLIL MATRIX is a four dimensional framework created by the European Council that centres on the core elements in CLIL: content, language, integration and learning. These elements then include four parameters: culture, communication, cognition and community; which together create a total of 16 indicators around CLIL. (Table 1). By clicking on each box, the user gets information about CLIL practices and guidelines as well as related questions. The user can examine some or all areas surrounding CLIL. It is important to answer the questions given in each box. By doing so, the user can position itself with respect to CLIL expertise. In short, each box can be also viewed as a check point for teachers and schools to evaluate how CLIL is executed in their classrooms.

The list of questions in CLIL Matrix helps the teacher to evaluate herself as a CLIL teacher. The teacher can for example examine the use of the target language in a classroom. The questions range from the richness of the target language to student communication and interaction in the target language. (CLIL Matrix) The following table shows a few example question statements related to CLIL-classroom and communication. The user is asked to choose the appropriate response for each question. The set of questions work as a self-evaluation for the user. After answering, the user is given an evaluation and further instructions.

Table 2 Example questions from CLIL MATRIX

1. <u><i>I achieve richness of target language communication in my classroom</i></u>	<i>Very much</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>not much</i>	<i>hardly at all</i>
2. <u><i>The methods I use in the classroom lead to interactional classroom communication</i></u>	<i>Very much</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>not much</i>	<i>hardly at all</i>
3. <u><i>The amount of time given to student group/pair work in my teaching is generally</i></u>	<i>Very much</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>not much</i>	<i>hardly at all</i>
4. <u><i>In my CLIL classroom, I use the target language</i></u>	<i>Very much</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>not much</i>	<i>hardly at all</i>
5. <u><i>In my classroom, when my students communicate, they use the target language</i></u>	<i>Very much</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>not much</i>	<i>hardly at all</i>

(<http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/CLILmatrix/EN/qMain.html>)

This topic of target language proficiency has been a concern in the European discussion on CLIL. (Marsh 1999) Even in Finland, there is not a set language proficiency criteria for a CLIL teacher. A CLIL teacher is expected to have qualifications in the subject itself with “adequate language skills in the target language”. (Finnish Board of Education 1998) CLIL MATRIX is introduced in this section as a European network that tries to create common standards for CLIL. In Finland, a similar network, *The CLIL-network*, funded by the National Board of Education exists as well. It was launched between the years 2005-2007 with a goal to create common principles in CLIL teaching in Finland. In CLIL- network, the user can find both theoretical and practical information about CLIL teaching in Finland. It introduces the whole concept behind CLIL, both abroad and in Finland. There are sections on legislation and language planning policies as well as information packages for CLIL-teachers. In the future, the network hopes to operate as a material bank for teachers and schools. The shortage of good teaching materials has been a concern raised by CLIL-teachers. (Hartiala 2000) According to CLIL-network (2010), this far it has been the parents and CLIL-teachers who have actively tried to find materials and books to use in CLIL-classes.

The CLIL Matrix and the CLIL-network both serve as a good example on how steps to improve the quality of CLIL have been taken. Having a set of mutual standards and goals helps to ensure equality in teaching in a foreign language. It would be unfortunate if schools and municipalities were to dismiss CLIL as an option due to lack of information and materials. It seems that in Finland today the pressure is on the teacher training programme. It is costly for the schools to send their teachers to get more training while on the job. Researchers on language planning are suggesting that teachers should be given enough qualifications during their teacher training to be able to work as qualified CLIL-teachers. In Finland today, there are only a couple of university programmes where you can directly qualify as a CLIL-teacher. *The Juliet programme* (the Jyväskylä University Language Integration and English Teaching Programme) in the University of Jyväskylä is designed as a minor subject in which future teachers can qualify as CLIL-classroom teachers in an elementary school level.

3.3 CLIL in Finland

Inspired by the success of the Canadian immersion model, Finland developed its first immersion programme in a kindergarten in Vaasa in 1987. Since then, several models of foreign language teaching have been introduced to the curriculum in Finland, ranging from “language showers” to total content and language integration. For the purpose of the present study, the following section examines CLIL in Finland, focusing on the national context and execution of CLIL.

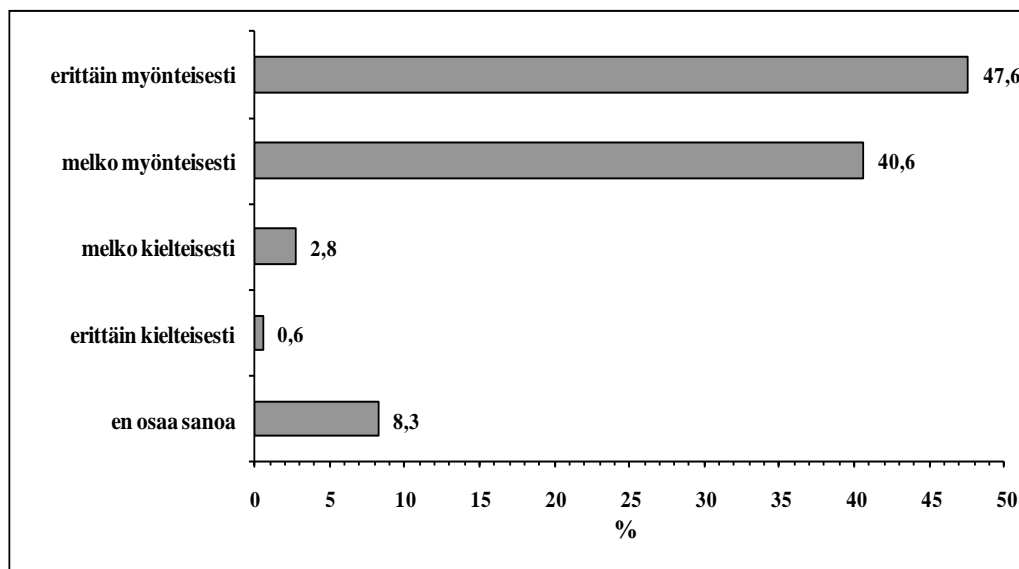
CLIL is a relatively new approach in Finnish education. The phenomenon reached Finland in the 1980s and teaching through a foreign language became the national goal of development in the 1990s. (Järvinen et al 1999). This and the changes in school legislation in Finland made CLIL a possible and popular choice both in comprehensive schools and upper secondary schools. According to Nikula&Marsh (1996: 23), in 1996 an estimated 8.4%-23.3% of elementary schools offered CLIL

instruction in some form, the highest percentage being in schools that had over 500 students. In Finland today, 25 cities, spread throughout the country, offer CLIL teaching. (CLIL network 2010) The choices beyond comprehensive school include kindergartens, preschools and upper secondary schools. (CLIL- network 2010).

In 1992, the Commission for the development of language teaching included CLIL in their report: “A plan for improving the quality of language teaching using innovative ideas such as immersion teaching and content based language teaching.” (Finnish Board of Education .Committee report 1992:16.). In 2004, for the first time, teaching content through a foreign language was included in the national curriculum in Finland. In the national curriculum, it is emphasised that students studying in CLIL classrooms should reach the level of understanding in the subjects as those studying under the national programme. The central goal in CLIL is to give the student stronger language proficiency than in a traditional language classroom. The Finnish Ministry of Education also states on its website that the power of decision making and executing CLIL is left to the school. It is the job of the school to organize the lesson structure and language choices. (www.oph.fi)

Overall, CLIL-teaching in Finland has a positive image among students and parents. Figure 3 shows how Finns perceive foreign language education in Finland. Nearly half, 47, 6 per cent have a very positive attitude towards teaching in a foreign language and 40, 6 per cent see as quite positive.

Figure 3 Finns' perceptions on teaching in a foreign language in Finland



(Source: Leppänen et al (2009:59) Kansallinen kyselytutkimus englanninkielen käytöstä suomessa)

CLIL classrooms and CLIL teaching practices can vary, depending on the school's own interests. In many cases, CLIL-classes are offered to everyone in their age group. However, according to the survey conducted by Nikula&Marsh (1996: 67), the fact that there isn't a clear selection criterion can become a problem in the classroom. The student groups are extremely heterogeneous making the students' language abilities also very different. Finding suitable criteria for the selection is a task on its own. Should the students be selected based on their language skills, their bilingual background or simply by looking at the personality and affective factors? In upper secondary schools, the applicants must take part in an entrance exam as was the case for the research participants of the present study as well.

CLIL-classrooms became part of the school environment in Finland in the 90s with a huge success. However, entering the 21st century, the interest in CLIL started to fade. Lehti et al (2006) estimate that this trend is a combination of different factors. Municipalities were struggling economically and there was a shortage of teaching materials and other resources. The Finnish National Board of Education (1999) added stricter requirements for CLIL teachers concerning their language expertise. But although the number of schools offering some form of CLIL teaching has now

gone down (Nikula 2005), it still is a popular alternative for many students in Finland. It has also been seen that also small municipalities are becoming involved with CLIL, as it previously was more restricted to bigger cities and in the south-west regions in Finland. (Pihko 2010: 16) Overall, schools are now more involved in the process of making CLIL a reasonable alternative. Teachers are given opportunities to get more training and over the past 15 years, more teaching materials have become available, easing the workload of CLIL teachers.

In comprehensive school and upper secondary school the most popular target language is English but other languages such as Swedish, German and French are used as well. In kindergartens, Swedish is a popular choice for the so called “language showers”, especially in cities and areas where there are more Swedish-speaking people. The subjects of teaching can also vary: biology, mathematics, physics and history being popular ones in secondary school. (Nikula 1996).

In the city of Jyväskylä, the location of this study, CLIL teaching is offered in all levels of schooling. Kortepohja kindergarten in Jyväskylä offers CLIL for children between the ages of 3-6. The idea is to familiarize the children with English with the help of a native speaker. The hours spent using the foreign language can vary, depending on the topic and content. Ideally, these pre-school CLIL- years provide a pathway for the learner to continue in a CLIL-classroom in Kortepohja elementary school. There the student would be able to study in a CLIL-classroom the whole six years of basic education. For the remaining three years of compulsory education, the student could then continue in Viitaniemi secondary school, a school in which the CLIL method is also used. After comprehensive school, the student may apply to Jyväskylä Lyseo upper secondary school that offers the IB-diploma programme; (see section 3.4) In short, it is possible for the student in Jyväskylä to participate in CLIL teaching throughout the compulsory education and continue their studies in upper secondary school. According to CLIL network (2010) in Finland, similar educational paths can be found in other cities in Finland as well.

3.4 Research on CLIL

Teaching in a foreign language has been an interest in the field of language research for over 20 years now. The studies conducted both in Europe and Finland are numerous. The trend doesn't seem to be fading as more studies and books are being published on the issue.

According to Dalton-Puffer & Smit (2007: 12), the research on foreign language teaching has been done on both macro and micro level. On macro level, the interest has been on the institutions and foreign language planning which has also dominated the research field. On micro level, the focus has primarily been on learning results. For the purpose of the present study, the following section focuses on the CLIL research done in Finland, with a short overall look of the situation in Europe. In "*CLIL initiatives for the millenium, a report on the CEILINK think tank*" (1999), the authors discuss the future prospects and areas of improvement related to CLIL. A lot of attention is paid on the fact that CLIL is still lacking a unified front. There is a lot of variety in European countries on how CLIL is executed which makes it difficult to compare results and get general information. The concerns regarding CLIL in a European context include sufficient teaching materials, teacher training and teacher qualifications. It is also emphasised that more research is needed. Research should be done on the linguistic development of the CLIL student in contrast to the student in a traditional language classroom. Pihko's (2007) has raised similar aspects on the affective learning results in CLIL classrooms in her article.

Most of the research done on CLIL in Finland has focused on language skills and the overall benefits or problems of CLIL education in relation to language proficiency. There have been studies on the development of the target language (Järvinen 1999), on motivation (Seikkula-Leino 2002) and on classroom interaction. (Nikula 2005) In her study, Pihko (2007) suggests that research should in fact focus more on the subjective and affective learning results in CLIL education. Motivation, anxiety and self-image are all factors that should be linked to foreign language learning processes. In her latest study, Pihko (2010) has chosen CLIL-classroom students and their opinions on CLIL as a focus point.

There have also been national surveys on CLIL education in Finland. Nikula&Marsh (1996, 1997) have conducted studies on how CLIL is executed in schools in Finland. The interest has been on how CLIL-classes have been organized and how the schools and teachers have experienced teaching in a foreign language. CLIL-classroom teachers have also been a focus point in the field of research (Hartiala 2000).

Overall, the results of the studies suggest that CLIL education has proved to be mostly successful, also in Finnish context. But as Nikula (2007) points out in her article: “at this point the existing research allows careful generalizations and general outlines”. It has been argued that the learning outcomes and linguistic benefits are in favour of CLIL. CLIL-students tend to have better receptive skills, (reading and writing skills) and a more positive attitude of themselves as language users. (Pihko 2007). CLIL has been shown to favour language courage as well. (Dalton-Puffer&Smit 2007). There have even been positive results on the cognitive development of the student, when foreign language teaching has been started at an early age.

The outcomes of CLIL can be examined from a society’s point of view. There is no denying of the fact that the world is indeed an international one. Teaching in a foreign language can be seen as a positive addition to that as well. Not only does it help students in Finland to become more international and create international contacts, it also opens educational opportunities for foreigners wishing to study in Finland. (Virtala 2002) For a small country, such as Finland, maintaining cultural contacts will work for its advantage.

3.5. IB World Schools

An example of CLIL teaching in secondary school is the IB (International Baccalaureate) school. The IB Diploma Programme was originally created in Switzerland in 1968. It started as educational program for international students preparing for university. Over the decades it has expanded and now includes all

school levels from primary school to upper secondary school. IB schools can be found in 139 countries and there are 17 IB world schools in Finland, 15 of which offer the Diploma Program. (www.ibo.com). The IB diploma is the equivalent of the Finnish matriculation examination and is recognized as such in higher education.

IB Diploma Programme in Finnish upper secondary school consists of three academic years: one pre-IB year and two actual IB years (IB1, IB2). During their pre-IB year, the students are required to study the national courses before entering to the actual diploma programme. During the IB1 and IB2 years, the content is taught in English and the students also study English as a separate subject. This point of “two Englishes in school” is discussed later on chapter 6. The subjects in the IB diploma programme are organized in six modules or groups and students choose their subjects from those modules during the IB years. Even though the content is taught in a foreign language, the IB diploma programme isn't a “language school” as such. The IB organization promotes intercultural awareness and lifelong learning as well as developing the individual learner. The emphasis is also on acquiring knowledge and becoming an independent thinker. (www.ibo.com) The IB diploma programme is designed to prepare the students for higher education.

The structure of the IB curriculum differs from the national curriculum in Finland. The subjects are organized in six groups (see table 2) and the students are required to choose at least one subject from each group. A student may also choose subjects from the national curriculum to complement the diploma. For example in Finland, an IB student may also study the second official language from the national curriculum. An IB student is also required to compose two large-scale written essays and participate in theory-based studies.

In Finland, students must apply to the programme and there is a written entrance examination and an interview for the applicants. The pupils' grades from comprehensive school also affect the final result. The participants of the interview study in Jyväskylä Lyseo, an upper secondary school that offers the IB Diploma programme. At the time of the interview, the participants were studying in their first IB-year. (IB1)

Table 3 The subject structure of the IB diploma programme in Jyväskylä Lyseo:

<p><i>Group 1: Language A1 (best language; Finnish, English self- taught)</i></p> <p><i>Group 2: Language A2 or B (second best language; English, French B, German ab initio)</i></p> <p><i>Group 3: Individuals and Societies (history, psychology, economics)</i></p> <p><i>Group 4: Experimental Sciences (biology, chemistry, physics)</i></p> <p><i>Group 5: Mathematics (HL, SL Methods or Studies)</i></p> <p><i>Group 6: Electives (Drama or possibility to choose another subject from</i></p>

(<http://www.peda.net/veraaja/jkllukiokoulutus/lyseonlukio/ib/studies>)

If compared to the national curriculum of upper secondary schools in Finland, the subject structure and the choices differ. The objectives of general upper secondary education in Finland have been set out in the General Upper Secondary Schools Act from 1998. According to the Finnish National Board of Education, the objective of general upper secondary education is to provide students with the necessary knowledge for further studies and/or working life. Unlike the IB-schools, the general upper secondary school is organized without division to grades and teaching is not tied to year classes. Also, as more than half of each age group in Finland complete the general upper secondary school, it is fair to say that higher education is not accessible to all.

4. LANGUAGE LEARNER IDENTITY

In the following chapter the concept of identity is examined from the point of view of the language learner. The theoretical framework on identity is discussed with a focus on sociocultural theory and second language acquisition theories. For the purpose of the present study, it was necessary to narrow down the scope of the research field on identity. The first section briefly deals with identity in general and the following sections concentrate on the language identity with a focus on language learner identity.

4.1. Identity: General

Although it is impossible to define identity in absolute terms, in contemporary literature identity is seen as individual's understanding of himself in the world around him. Through identity we make sense of who we are. Identity at the same time unites us with others but also separates us. (Hall 1999:22) Hall (1999:22) discusses the concept of identity as a process and an on-going dialogue between the individual and the social reality. This viewpoint allows identity to be examined from a non-essential angle where identity is seen as constantly changing multi-layered phenomenon. Rather than talking about a single identity, an individual may consist of several identities. Even those identities should be viewed as "temporary starters" (Baker 2006: 408), that always have the ability to change form or disappear. The constant negotiation of identities happens on a global, local, social and individual level. The authors of *moniääninen Suomi* (2002) share the view that an individual can have several identities and even mixed identities.

4.2 What Does Language Identity Consist of?

Baker (2006:407) suggests that identity is socially created and claimed through language and through an intentional creation of meanings and understandings. We speak a language or languages and it often identifies our origins, history, membership and culture”. Using Baker’s definition on identity, culture and language can be seen as inter-twining concepts and thus allowing us to view identity from a linguistic point of view. And isn’t in fact through language we make sense of the world and give meanings to the things around us? As Dufva (2002:21) points out in her article: “language can be seen as a possible tool for building an identity.”

When discussing language identity, the relationship between mother tongue and second languages needs to be acknowledged. Rather than having a fixed language identity through one’s mother tongue, second languages may have a significant role on the formation of one’s identity. (Joseph 2004).

Recent sociolinguistic theories on language learner identity share the view that language learning itself is socially constructed where the environment play an important role. People react to their surroundings and construct the world through others. (Lantolf 2000) Communication, interaction and the environment affect the language learning process and therefore shape the language learner’s identity. The present study is based on a socio-cultural perspective. As foreign language learners in a CLIL-environment, the research participants fit the sociocultural language identity profile. Their language identity can be viewed to construct socially with an emphasis on the environment and linguistic interaction.

4.2.1 Language Learner Identity and the Present Study

In the research in applied linguistics, there has been a shift towards studying the individual learner’s experiences. Studies have been aiming at finding out what foreign language learning means for the language learner. Accepting language learning process as a *subjective experience* where the learner is actively involved has

redefined the way language learning is viewed. (Kalaja, Menezes and Barcelos 2008). For the purpose of the present study, identity needs to be examined through language and more appropriately name it as language learner identity. As mentioned in the previous section (see 4.1.), second languages may have an affect on individual's identity formation. Pavlenko&Blackledge (2004) and Lantolf (2000) discuss the aspects of language learner's identity and have questioned the existing metaphor of acquisition in language learning. Second and foreign languages may be used to position oneself into the surrounding world. A set of values are closely linked to languages through culture and individual appreciation. Combining the socio-cultural theories with the language learner's experience research serve as an appropriate theoretical framework for the present study.

5. THE PRESENT STUDY

In this part I will present my own research questions and methods. I will explain the purpose of my study and go over the main research questions.

5.1 Research Questions:

The purpose of my research was to find out how do the IB-school students see themselves as CLIL learners, especially in relation to the English language. The interview was aimed at answering the following research question:

1. What is the role of English in their lives and what kind of meanings they give to it? In addition, I wanted to find when and where they actually use the language.

My objective was also to compare the role of Finnish and English in relation to the students' language use in Finland and in their everyday lives. The interview questions dealt with different themes. Additional research questions are as follows:

2. How do the students see the advantages of CLIL education and future prospects?
3. How do the students see themselves as English learners?
4. How do the students see English a part of their everyday lives and has the role somehow changed?

The aim was to study the conducted interview and analyse the findings. I concentrated on the actual content of the interview with a focus on the previously assigned themes.

5.2 The Data

5.2.1 Research Participants

The six research participants, aged 16-17, studied in an IB-school in Jyväskylä and had studied in the IB diploma programme for one year. The participants were all from the same class and had studied in the IB- diploma programme for one year. The participants were all Finns with Finnish being their mother tongue. The background questionnaire revealed that they shared some similar educational histories and reasons for studying in an IB-school. They all had the mark of “excellent” in English from secondary school. Anni and Elina had studied together in the same CLIL-classroom in comprehensive school. Elina had also lived in the United States as a child. Mikko, Hanna and Tiina had always enjoyed studying English in school and had chosen the IB-school for that reason. Hanna had also lived abroad as a child. One participant, Teemu was already focusing heavily on science studies and that had been his reason for enrolling in an IB-school. It made him a bit different from the group as all the others emphasized English, the language itself as the reason for enrolment. This notion is analysed more in the section on findings. All the names used in the present study are pseudonyms.

Table 4 Research Participants

Name	Sex	Age	Mother Tongue	Additional information
Anni	girl	16	Finnish	CLIL-classroom in comprehensive school
Hanna	girl	16	Finnish	Lived abroad as a child
Tiina	girl	16	Finnish	
Elina	girl	16	Finnish	CLIL-classroom in comprehensive school. Lived abroad as a child
Mikko	boy	16	Finnish	
Teemu	boy	16	Finnish	

Although the group shared similar characteristics, they had developed their own “school self” in the IB-school. As mentioned earlier in section 3.4 the students can plan their curriculum quite freely. The participants study the compulsory subjects as a group and can later choose the subjects that interest them the most. English as a separate subject is studied as well. In the present study, the IB-school as such was not my interest. The purpose of the interview was to find out what motives and meanings the students give to the English language. I also wanted to find out how they saw themselves as language learners and the effect CLIL-learning has had on their language abilities. The role of the IB-school in their lives was an unexpected addition to the findings and was given appropriate room in the analysis process.

5.2.2 Collection of Data

The research data of the present study consist of a background questionnaire and a semi-structured group interview. The background data was collected by using a questionnaire. The background questionnaire was not a primary research method; it was done just to get some basic information before the actual interview and was only used to help organize the interview. In the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) I asked the students about their language learning history with English and whether they had previous experience in foreign language education. I also included questions related to international issues, such as travelling and living abroad.

The group interview was a semi-structured one and lasted about 1.5 hours. It was recorded and then transcribed. The content of the interview was divided into different themes and questions but the participants were also free to discuss any aspects of foreign language education and CLIL. The themes include the role of English in school and in everyday life, their own language abilities and the effect CLIL might have in their future. When it was necessary, I introduced topics that were more closely related to the research questions of the present study.

5.2.3 Semi-Structured Interview

Interview is a commonly used research method in qualitative research. The types of interview can vary from an open interview to a more strictly structured one depending on the goals of the researcher. A *semi-structured interview* falls somewhere in the middle. According to Eskola&Suoranta (1998: 94-98) in semi-structured interview, the research questions for the participants are the same but the order of the answers can vary. A semi-structured interview provides a flexible research environment where the research participant is considered as active being. The research questions are fitted into different themes which gives it a bit of its structured nature. It allows room for interpretation and for analysing the responses in a wider context. The interviewer has the advantage of asking for clarifications and follow up questions. (Hirsjärvi&Hurme 2000:35). The challenge for the researcher is to separate the useful information from the large research data. For the present study a group interview was chosen as a suitable method of collecting data for the following reasons. Firstly, it works as an effective method of gathering information from several people simultaneously. Secondly, the group interacts with each other which expand the scope of the interview. Thirdly, in a group, misunderstandings and forgets are less likely to happen. Fourthly, the group can help each other out, by encouraging and stimulating others. (Eskola&Suoranta 1998: 94). However, a group may have members that dominate the conversation and create a social norm that the whole group decides to follow. Maintaining the research environment can be a challenge for the interviewer as well.

5.3 Methods of Analysis: Qualitative Content Analysis

The research of the present study was a qualitative one and therefore appropriate methods of analysis needed to be chosen accordingly. There are certain advantages in qualitative research that are discussed in more detail by Dörnyei (2007). For one, it is a useful method for making sense of complex situations because of the participant-sensitivity factor. It also answers the “why” questions of the research and therefore

broadens the possible interpretations. In Qualitative study, generalisations are not aimed at.

There are several research fields in qualitative research and the present study is approached from sociolinguistic and discourse-analytic perspective. In sociolinguistics, the interest is in the relationship of languages and people, a suitable field of research for the present study. For the present study, the methods of analysis and the type of data itself define the study as a qualitative one.

Content analysis is a commonly used research analysis method in qualitative research. It can be viewed as a theoretical framework that fits into numerous research analysis procedures. (Tuomi&Sarajärvi 2009: 91). In content analysis, the focus is on the text itself. Through content analysis, the researcher is trying to find what is actually being said in the text. For the present study, the transcribed interview was the text, the target of analysis. Content analysis can be conducted from three perspectives: 1. On the basis of the theoretical background, 2. On the basis of the Data itself, or 3. Combining these two (Tuomi& Sarajärvi 2009). In this research I focused on the data itself and used the responses of the participants in my analysis.

6. FINDINGS

In the following section, the findings of my research are presented. I will introduce the results of my analysis and discuss it in relation to the existing research done on CLIL and the role of English in Finland.

In my interview, I focused on three main themes. The first theme deals with the future prospects with English. In the second theme, the students' own language abilities are discussed and analyzed. The final theme centres on language identity and on how the students see themselves as CLIL-classroom students and how they might differ from students in an EFL-classroom. The purpose was not to get factual information about the overall benefits of CLIL but to examine and compare the views and opinions of the participants to the existing work done on CLIL. Since a lot of the research done on CLIL has focused on the problems in didactics and language learning, I felt it appropriate to concentrate on the role of the English language in their lives and the possibilities it may provide for the participants. I hope that my study serves as an example on how language learning goes beyond grammar and structures. The way the language is viewed and felt can contribute to the way it is learned as well. As CLIL still is a fairly new approach in teaching, I also felt that my study was an interesting and hopefully a useful addition to the research done on CLIL.

As I compare my findings to the research data of *Kolmas Kotimainem-lähikuvia englannin kielen käytöstä Suomessa*, a collection of articles that examine how English is used in Finland, (Leppänen et al. 2008) I find many similarities. The strong role of English in Finland today is discussed in many of the articles. English is used differently in specific situations. It can be a tool for communication, it can be used to create social meanings or simple it can serve as the most convenient language at hand. All the research participants in my interview also discussed these aspects and made their own distinctions. One of my goals was to concentrate on the way the participants use English and how it can possibly be linked to CLIL:

The question order of the interview was organized around three main themes. However, as the interview was a semi-structured one, the topics intertwined and sometimes shifted. All the following examples taken from the interview are first given in Finnish and have been translated to English for the benefit of the reader.

6.1 The Role of English in the Students' Future: Studying or Working Abroad

Although the participants formed a rather close group, they had had quite different reasons for enrolling in an IB-school, where the subject content is taught in English. For Anni and Elina, it was natural to apply to an IB-school because they had already studied in a CLIL-class in comprehensive school. Both expressed how they had definitely wanted to continue their studies in English. Teemu on the other hand felt that the IB-school offered him more on the content matter as he wished to focus on science studies in future. Tiina, Hanna and Mikko had a special relationship with English as it had been a pleasant subject in School and that had been the primary reason to apply to an IB-school. In example 1 the emotional relationship with English is illustrated.

Example 1

Hanna: ”no mä tykkäsin ylä-asteella enkusta ihan hirveesti ja siksi vaan halusin hakea ja jatkaa enkulla”

Hanna: ”well I really liked English in secondary school and that’s the reason I applied so I could continue with English”

Also, it was found out that the participants did consider themselves more international because of their involvement in CLIL. English language was seen as an advantage both for the future studies and work. All the participants agreed when asked whether they might consider studying abroad or study in international programmes. In one way or another, English was linked to their future studies. However, the students didn’t want to highlight their international status. Instead, they

talked a lot about the possibilities they might get in their future studies because of CLIL. As one participant put it:

Example 2

Anni: ”musta tuntuu et meillä jotenkin helpompi lähtee ulkomaille, kun on lukenut silleen enkuksi, niin ei oo sitä kynnystä sen kielen kanssa.”

Anni: ”I think it’s easier for us to go abroad, because we’ve studied in English, the threshold is lower for us...”

As seen in example 3, the students see their “internationality” in relative terms.

Example 3

Elina: ”aina kun multa kysytään, en tunne olevani kovin kansainvälinen. mut sit aattelen mun isää, niin tajuu sen eron. se on ehkä miten suhtautuu asiaan. Ehkä IB-kuitenkin auttaa siinä”

Elina: ”When people ask me about international stuff I don’t feel very international but then I think about my dad and I realize the difference...maybe IB-school helps in that”

When the students were asked to think about the benefits of studying in English, the answers were closely related to their future studies and careers. They felt it would help them in the university, even in Finland. English was again seen as a tool to gather information, do research, read articles and literature. They were already quite familiar with the academic world and its requirements. The IB program itself is supposed to promote independent thinking which might be the reason for this. The students also thought it would be easier to study abroad or possibly even make their careers outside Finland.

Example 4

Oppilas B: ”halusin hakee opiskeleen ulkomaille lukion jälkeen”

Student B: ”I would like to study abroad after high school”

The reasons for enrolling in foreign language teaching were closely related to the benefits of English, more specifically because English was their tool of studying. Having self-confidence in one's language ability may help the learner to see it as a resource. For the participants, studying in English might make it easier to go study abroad or at least they had the urge to do it (Example 4). Previous studies have shown that CLIL-students tend to be more confident in using the language than those studying in traditional language classroom. In CLIL-classes, the language use is more active and present which may facilitate the whole process of language learning. The language is the tool for learning and communication rather than an object itself. Anni's point in example 2 above was shared by the other participants in the interview. As CLIL-students it seemed that the threshold to speak the language was lower.

English was already acknowledged as a world language for the participants. All of them stated that studying in English would open more possibilities. Their list of options included university studies abroad, working abroad, or even getting into Finnish university more easily. It is worth mentioning that the participants most importantly emphasized how the actual language itself was a bonus in their education. In Example 5, Mikko discusses this aspect from a pragmatic point of view. The language was given a value in itself because of its global status.

Example 5

Mikko: ”Meitä vaan 5 miljoonaa täällä, maailmassa enemmän ihmisiä, jotka käyttää englantia”. On siis mahdollisuuksia.”

Mikko: “There are only 5 million of us here. In the world, more people use English...there are opportunities.”

The participants discussed a lot about academic future and university studies. This was a surprising addition to the present study. The benefits of English were closely linked to the future studies. All the 6 participants had an aspiration to continue their studies in higher education. English was seen as a necessary language in the university, even in Finland. Here's what Teemu answered when asked about the reasons of enrolling in foreign language teaching:

Example 6

Haastattelija: Miksi halusitte englanninkieliseen IB-kouluun?

Teemu: ”Aattelin ihan yliopistoa. Eikös ne tenttikirjat ja muut ole aika paljon englanniksi Suomessakin?”

Interviewer: Why did you decide to apply IB-school ?

Teemu: “I was thinking of universities. Isn’t a lot the material in English, even in Finland? “

As mentioned earlier in section 3.4, The IB diploma Programme in which the participants studied promotes independent thinking and individual learning strategies. When compared to traditional EFL classroom, the IB-students work more independently and e.g. written tasks often consists of essays. Perhaps it was the school environment made it easier for them to think about their future studies and the benefits of CLIL in regards to higher education. It was surprising to notice how much the participants had already thought about their future studies and whether English would be a part of that or not. University studies were mentioned several times during the interview. English was seen as a tool that might facilitate their studies especially on the university level. The participants were familiar with the fact that a lot of the research material and books are in fact in English. For 16 year old students, that seemed quite mature thinking. An example of the academic role of English can be seen in the following example (example 7).

Example 7

Haastattelija: Mitä etuja sä näät sun tulevaisuudessa et opiskelet englanniksi?

Teemu: ”tietoa löytää paljon enemmän. jos vaikka halua lukea uutta tutkimustulosta.”

The interviewer: How does it help your future that you’re studying in English

Teemu: “You can find more information, for example if you want to read about the latest research..”

Talking about finding information and latest research and linking it to English is an interesting addition to the present study/benefits of studying in English. Previous studies have often discovered that English is an important part in the youth’s communication or in their media awareness but the aspect of educational benefits is

rarely discussed. It would be interesting to study whether EFL-students shared these views. Can the fact that CLIL-students have constant exposure to the language help them to view it more clearly as a future asset? Or is the role of IB-school that affects more strongly? The IB organization does highlight the fact that the IB Diploma Programme prepares the students for university studies. One participant in particular emphasized this point the most. For him, The IB-school was an asset because it gave him the tools to continue his studies in the university and focus primarily on science.

Example 8

Teemu:” meille on sanottu et yliopistossa olisi helpompaa kun on ollut täällä” (IB-lukio ja CLIL-luokka)

Teemu: ”we’ve been told that it’s easier for us in university because we’ve studied here “(IB-school and CLIL-classroom)

Pihko (2010) has studied the opinions of CLIL-students on a general level. The students felt that CLIL-class is a challenging environment and can sometimes be also difficult. The participants of Pihko’s (2010) study also recognized the unique role of the CLIL-class. They felt privileged to be there and felt that the schools also recognized its role. Students in the traditional classroom also thought that CLIL students were “smart” and “eager to study”. Pihko (2010:107) suggests that schools itself sometimes give the CLIL-classes its distinct role as a” better” classroom. The participants of the present study had similar opinions about the CLIL-classroom and its special role.

6.2 The students’ Own Language Skills: IB-Students Versus EFL Students

The participants also emphasized the authentic role of English in their lives. Research shows that language skills seem to be improving when the learning process is happening through natural learning and authentic texts and materials. (Larsen-Freeman 1991). The concept of authenticity and its importance in language learning is relevant in Van Lier’s (1996) theory on language learning. The learning process

and authenticity benefit when the language learner feels the authenticity in language learning. In CLIL, when the actual content is taught in a foreign language, this in fact happens. The students discuss the point of authenticity in their language learning and make their comparisons to EFL classrooms.

Pupils in CLIL-classrooms have shown to have better receptive skills and a more advanced vocabulary. (Nikula&Marsh 1997:87) These research participants also talked about their language skills in the interview and made their own comparisons to the traditional language classroom. They emphasized how it felt natural to speak in English because they had to use it every day. It was interesting to notice how they were ready to evaluate their language skills and the strengths and weaknesses. They listed grammar as a possible weakness since it is not an area that is emphasized in IB School. One student asked the others:

Example 9

Mikko:“eikö ne painota kielioppia normaalilla puolella”
 Mikko:”Don’t they emphasize grammar in the normal [non-CLIL,] classroom?”

The present study does not focus on the affective factors in language learning, but they are nonetheless linked to language learner identity. Pihko (2007:70) has done research on the affective outcomes of CLIL and the results have shown that CLIL learners have a more positive foreign language self-concept. The participants in the present study discussed their own affective factors during the interview. They brought up the topic of motivation and anxiety. On several occasions, the concepts of “easiness” and “natural” were related to the English language. It was ordinary for them to use English and the participants weren’t insecure in using the language.

Example 10

Anni:“ varmaan se kun puhutaan enemmän enkkua niin luonnollisempaa, esim mun kaverit kansallisella ei tykkää puhua enkkua, pelkää et tekee virheitä”

Anni:” probably because we talk more in English...is more natural. For example my friends in the traditional classroom don't like to talk in English, they're afraid of making a mistake”

In the following two examples the participants have indicated what they view as strengths in their language abilities. Receptive skills have in fact been an area that CLIL-students have shown superiority in compared to EFL-students.

Example 11

Tiina:”sanasto melkein kaikilla parempi, tulee aineista sanastoo”

Tiina:”Our vocabulary is better, we get vocabulary from the school subjects”

Example 12

Teemu:”musta tuntuu et me kirjoitetaan paremmin, joudutaan kirjoittaa niin paljon kaikkee esseitä ja muuta, kun ne tekee vaan esim leffa-arvostelua tai muuta.”

Teemu:”I think we are better writers, because we need to write essays and stuff and the others write movie reviews etc.”

The previous examples give some indication on how they saw themselves as language learners and users. In example 11, the aspect of authentic texts in learning is brought up. Tiina estimates that their vocabulary skills are better because of the subject matter. According to the participants, they learn new words every day. In example 12, the comparison between real essays and movie reviews is made. The context of this is that in CLIL-classrooms, there are fewer assignments of out-of-real life. The movie review is a typical example of a written task from traditional foreign language classroom in Finland. The participants therefore affirm the SLA theory on authenticity working as benefit in Language learning. (Larsen-freeman 1991)

It is good to remember that the research participants had strong language skills in English to start with, so they may have been positively oriented towards English. They made the choice to take the entrance examination and wished to complete high school in English. It is therefore wise not to make too clear comparisons between CLIL classes and traditional language classes.

As the research was conducted from the point of view of the CLIL-student, any comparisons made between CLIL-classroom and EFL-classroom is made by the CLIL-student. They are solely their opinions and are used in this study to find out more about the CLIL-student. In the previous section the students evaluate their own language skills and what their strengths might be. There was also discussion about CLIL-students' versus students in EFL-classroom. This section now covers some of the opinions expressed by the interviewees.

As previous research has indicated, CLIL-students tend to have more self-confidence in their language abilities. The aspect of self-confidence in language learning is present in example 12. According to Tiina in example 14, the reason why CLIL-students might be better in English has a lot to do with the easiness of the language. Being fluent (“you just say it”) allow CLIL-students to use the language more freely.

Example 16 is also an important point from Tiina. The need to change foreign language teaching has had a lot to do with bringing the language closer to the real world, making it a useful asset for the individual. The participants felt that English is an everyday language for them, possibly more than for the EFL students. This again links the authentic and natural role of the language and language learning together.

Example 13

Elina: ”toisaalta tuntuu et ollaan parempia”

Elina: ”On the other hand I think we are better ”

A rather bold statement made by Elina when asked about the differences between CLIL-students and EFL-students. Here it is good to evaluate what is meant by the word “better” in this context. The participants viewed language learning and fluency from their perspective and had already discussed a lot about the benefits of CLIL – classrooms. From CLIL point of view, “better” language skills was closely linked to speaking it fluently, using it more academically in writing, reading books and materials in English and so on. Basically Elina was emphasizing skills that should be quite advanced in CLIL-environment, if compared to the existing research. In her study, Pihko (2010) also noticed that CLIL-students were seen as good and smart by

their peers as well. Students who weren't in a CLIL-classroom thought that CLIL-classrooms are good for those who are good at English and at school in general.

Example 14

Anni: meillä voi silleen venyä asioiden suhteen. [puhuu englannin tunnista]
Anni:” there's more room [talks about English class]

Example 15

Tiina: musta tuntuu meillä on hirveen sujuvaa puhumisen, ei tarte silleen miettiä mitä sanoo, puhuu vaan ja tulee mitä tulee..”
Tiina:”I think we're so fluent with speaking...you don't need to think about what you say...just say what ever and it comes out”

Example 16

Tiina”Englanti on meille ihan käyttökieli” [vertaa suomalaisiin nuoriin koulussa]
Tiina:”English is an everyday language for us” [compares to EFL-classroom students in school]

A fascinating point made by Tiina in example 15, the context which should be examined more closely. What does the student mean by “everyday language” in this context? Tiina compares the language use with EFL-students. By everyday language, she emphasizes the usability of the language. The participants were close to the language. They didn't use it in mechanical exercises that distanced the language from the real world. They had the language at their disposal every day and more importantly in everyday situations.

In the IB diploma programme in Finland, the students are required to study English as a separate subject as well. However, the interview revealed that the subject content differed a lot from the EFL-classroom. The participants felt that studying English in IB-school wasn't so much about studying a foreign language. It had more to do with reading novels and writing essays than with grammar. Surprisingly, all of the participants felt that they could do with a bit more grammar and vocabulary

exercises. They discussed how they could easily form sentences and talk about books and subject content but felt more insecure about their ability to break down sentence structures and word orders and see the grammatical side of the language.

The students were asked what they wanted to study more in English class and here is what some of them said:

Example 17

Elina: ”hirveen vähän oli viime vuonna kielioppia, muuten vaan esim. kirjojen lukemista. Eli kielioppia”
 Elina: “we had so little grammar last year... it was more about reading books etc. So more grammar”

Example 18

Anni: ”en oo koskaan käynyt perusasioita kunnolla, osaan kyllä muodostaa niin kuin lauseet mut tuntuu oudolta mennä vaikeempiin juttuihin kun ei silleen osaa tota kielioppia. en tiiä pitäisikö ib:llä olla enemmän kielioppia.
 Anni: “I have never studied the basics properly. I know how to make sentences but it feels weird to do the more difficult stuff when I can’t do grammar. I don’t know if maybe there should be more grammar in IB-school.”

The two examples above (examples 17 and 18) are an interesting addition to the participants’ language learner profile. On the other hand, the students discuss how they can use the language fluently in everyday situations and probably have better vocabulary than EFL students but then feel that they are lacking in grammar skills. If language skills and foreign language learning is here viewed from a theoretical point, the previous examples are actually rather typical. Grammar and structure form the core in language learning process. Mastering the grammar of a language doesn’t make a language learner fluent as such but it provides the useful tools for further learning. In example 18, Anni talks about “the more difficult stuff” and how it feels strange to learn more when you don’t have the grammar rules to back it up. If there are substantial gaps in some aspects of a foreign language, the learning process can become more difficult. Studies on the benefits and weaknesses of CLIL-students reveal the same thing. (Nikula 2007, Pihko 2010) As there are areas of the language where CLIL-student appears to be doing better, there hasn’t been any significant

improvement in the area of syntax. (Pihko 2010) On the other hand, foreign language students in general often are more fluent speakers and communicators than grammar masters.

According to the survey conducted by Nikula&Marsh (1996:66-67), high schools listed a common problem in mainstream bilingual education that was the student itself. Quite often, the students evaluated their language skills to be far too low than the actual reality and felt shy in using the foreign language. Similar point was brought up in the interview. The participants often underestimated their own language skill level and didn't want to compliment themselves. Although they felt at ease when using English, they also thought they could do better. Having "complete fluency" was a task they were hoping to accomplish sometime in the future. There were several "*but and maybe utterances*" during the interview where the students evaluated their own language skills and language proficiency. (example 19)

Example 19

Hanna: mutta on tosi ärsyttävää kun joitain koulujuttuja just opiskellut ja ne tulee mieleen vaan englanniksi ja sit on sellaista kauheeta sekakieltä.
 Hanna: **but** It's so irritating when you've learned the school stuff in English and you remember them only in English...and then it sounds like "sekakieltä"

In the following example the student discuss which language feels easier.

Example20

Mikko: Suomeksi ehdottomasti..tai mutta kyllä enkuksi kans helppoa monessa tilanteessa.
 Mikko"Speaking in Finnish is **definitely** the easiest and best...**but** then again...using English in many instances is easy as well."

One can see how the student first lists Finnish as the easiest language to use and stresses that with a strong "*definitely*" but then also indicates that English is an easy one as well. If the first part of the statement is viewed separately, it can be seen as a rather traditional view of an EFL learner. Foreign language feels more difficult and

challenging. How the foreign language might be easy in some instances is not discussed that often. Continuing the statement with a “but”, Student 5 rinnastaa the two languages and gives a stronger role to the foreign language. It is interesting to notice that comparing two languages doesn’t necessarily mean an either-or setting. Two languages can represent different meanings and somehow be used in similar situations. A certain language may feel easy in a specific situation whether or not it is a mother tongue.

6.3 Language User Identity: The Role of English in the Students’ Lives

In this section, I will discuss the students’ views on their own language identity, its potentially hybrid elements and their comparisons between themselves and EFL students.

First, the participants had some doubts as to their mother tongue skills and possible language identity. The participants talked a lot about how English and Finnish so easily blend together. It was not uncommon in the school environment and in their free time to replace some words with Finnish and vice versa. The participants felt that English was their primary language in school and that school vocabulary was easier to master and remember in English. They even talked about the fact that it might be more difficult to start to study some subject in Finnish. All the participants clearly indicated that English was the language to use in classroom and in school. They were accustomed to reading and writing in English as well. Using it every day in school makes it also an everyday language in their private life. For the future studies, it would be beneficial to examine “the role” aspect further. How does it reflect on their identity? Does CLIL classroom give them a multilingual identity?

The following examples show how English is a part of their everyday vocabulary in school. The students use code switching practices both in class and with their friends.). Nikula has studied more the CLIL-classroom from interactional perspective and describes the strong use of English as “claiming ownership of the language” (Nikula 2007: 220)

Example 21

Elina: ”olin tosi impressed... hih, siis mikä se on.. vaikuttunut”
 Elina: ”I was so impressed... (Laughter) how do you say it
 Finnish... vaikuttunut”

Example 22

Hanna: ” some extent” siis mikä se on suomeksi. haluisi laittaa enkkua sinne väliin”
 Hanna: ”some extent... what’s that in Finnish... you want to add stuff in English...”

As for their language use in their free time, the answers varied more and had more complex meanings. Leppänen&Nikula (2008) discuss that aspect of languages mixing and how people use a specific language for a specific situation; one creates social meanings and belongingness. During the interview, the participants dealt with this aspect. They talked about *us vs. them*, meaning IB-class and traditional classroom. The IB-students seemed to be a very close group where English served a purpose and they used it in a similar way, especially in the school environment. From a socio- cultural perspective, the school environment formed a socially constructed domain for the participants.

The participants felt that Finnish was usually more natural in their free time but did give examples of instances when they prefer to use English. They mentioned the internet and movies where they preferred to use English. They also pointed out certain individuals with whom it felt more natural to speak in English, even though he/she was a Finn.

Example 23

Haastattelija: ” Kumpaa kieltä käytätte enemmän?”
 Hanna: ” mä ainakin paljon enemmän englantia koulussa. no tunneilla, ja kyllä välitunnillakin käytän englantia”
 Elina: ” no mieti milloin käytät suomee”
 Hanna: ”joillekin kavereille, mut kyl mä puhun kavereille englantia kans”
 Elina: ”mä myös enemmän englantia, joskus englantiin **kyllästyy**”
 Anni2: ”riippuu päivästä ja et kenen kans on. Katin kanssa mielummin englantia, tuntuu **hassulta** puhua suomea”

Interviewer: “Which language do you use more?”

Hanna: “I use English much more in school...well, in class but also during breaks.”

Elina: “think about when you use Finnish...”

Hanna: “with some friends...but then again I use English with friends as well”

Elina: “I also use English more...but sometimes you get bored with English”

Anni: “depends on the day and who you are with. Like with Kati (a Finnish girl) I prefer to use English...it feels funny to speak Finnish”

In the previous example the student used rather vague phrases like “some friends” “depends who you are with”. I asked them to clarify what they meant by it and they explained that all those people were Finns and that English came naturally with them. Here the concept of language choice came into question. The volume of the language use can differ as well. There might be times when the conversation would happen solely in English or in Finnish. At times it might have been possible to use both languages simultaneously.

The previous example shows how the use of the two languages varies and can have strong meanings for the participants. The social role of a language is evident in this example. Different languages can be used depending on the company, context and mood. A language can feel *funny* or it can make you *bored*. Even a specific person can trigger the use of a certain language. Again, there is no clear cut line between the uses of the two languages. People react to their surroundings and that affects how they behave socially. For the present study, the initial assumption was that English would be more restricted to classrooms. However, the participants did use English also in school-related discussions outside the classroom and during breaks. English and the school environment as a whole were linked together. Of course this is understandable because of the sheer volume in which they hear and speak in English. Nonetheless, all the students were Finns and the fact that they choose to speak in English among themselves is noteworthy.

It can also be a challenge for the CLIL-students in Finland to find the balance between the two languages, especially if they choose continue their studies in a Finnish speaking programme. The participants have learned the subject content and

the related vocabulary in English and rarely need to use it Finnish in school. Although the Board of Education has clearly stated in the national curriculum (OPS 2004) that students studying in a foreign language need to achieve the same goals as those in the national programme, it might not always be the case. The same content is learned but it may be restricted to a specific language. The problems the students mentioned include, e.g. lack of vocabulary in Finnish, as shown in example 24.

Example 24

Haastattelija: Onko mitään ongelmia kun opiskelee englanniksi?

Anni: ”me naureskeltiin just mesessä kun siis puhuttiin suomea mut kaikki bilsan termit oli englanniksi, ei tiedä niitä suomeksi. ”

Interviewer: Do you see any problems in studying in English?

Anni: ” we were just recently laughing about this when we were talking on messenger. We were talking in Finnish but all the terminology about biology was used in English...we don't know those in Finnish...”

Another point they mentioned (example 25) is the mixed language or “pidgin language”.

Example 25

Hanna: mutta on tosi ärsyttävää kun joitain koulujuttuja just opiskellut ja ne tulee mieleen vaan englanniksi ja sit on sellaista kauheeta sekakieltä.

Hanna: **but** It's so irritating when you've learned the school stuff in English and you remember them only in English...and then it sounds like ”sekakieltä”

The participants were asked also to compare the two languages, and more importantly how fluent they felt in English. As the students were quite young, it is understandable that it seemed difficult for them to think about their language identity as a concept. However, their answers did reveal something about their language identity. The following examples show how English was seen differently when compared to other foreign languages. For example, as shown in example 26, the students mentioned their “multilingual thinking processes”.

Example 26

Anni:” huomasin ruotsissa kun oli tehtävät ruotsiksi, piti vastata suomeksi niin ajatteli englanniksi. mut ei se silleen haitannut, ei häirinnyt”
 Anni:” I noticed in Swedish class when we had exercises in Swedish that needed to be answered in Finnish...I was thinking them in English...but I didn't mind. It didn't bother me.”

Also, the students commented on what they felt as their mother tongue or their nativelikeness.

Example 27

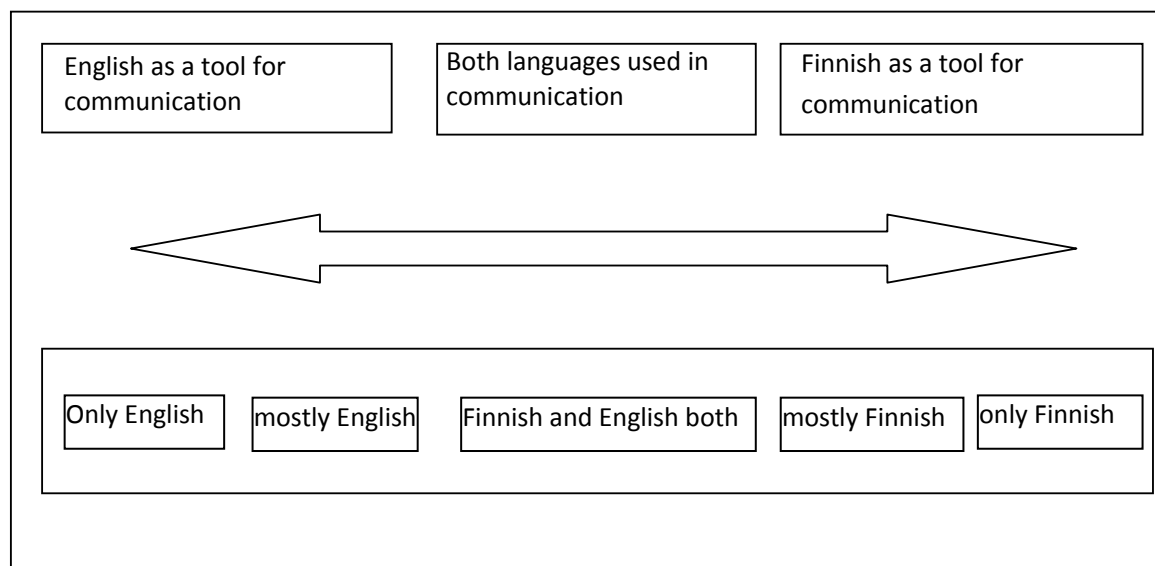
Tiina:” kai mäkin olen yksikielinen mut kun mieltii et mä puhun ruotsia ja ranskaa kans niin en mä koe niitä yhtään niin läheskään ees niin äidinkielimäiseksi..”
 Tiina: “I guess I'm **monolingual but** then when I speak French and Swedish as well, they aren't as mother tongue-like as English...”

Using a language in such a way says a lot about the special nature of the language. It has become more than a foreign language that is studied. In many instances, the students discussed the ways they use English and how it resembled the way they use their mother tongue. One element of the interview was the concept of language learner identity and more precisely, multilingual identity.

One key question of the present study was whether the students saw themselves as multilingual or not. As a research question for this specific interview, the question was a difficult one and perhaps a bit misleading for the participants. In the analyzing process, I discovered that the multilingual aspects were scattered throughout the interview. As a simple yes-no question, it proved to be difficult to answer. When the students were asked directly if they saw themselves as multilingual, 5 out of 6 didn't think so, which is rather surprising considering their study environment. Similar results were found in a National Survey on the English language in Finland, where 84% of the respondents saw themselves as monolinguals (Leppänen et al. 2009:31). These results should however be viewed in the light of how bilingualism and multilingualism has traditionally been regarded. As Nikula&Leppänen discuss in their article (2007): it is understandable for Finns to view multilingualism from a

traditional point of view, given their cultural background. In the present study, this was probably the case. As Finnish teens, it was difficult to for the participants to see themselves anything other than monolinguals. However, as it becomes evident from the examples, that is not quite the case. When comparing the results to the existing research data on multilingual identity, the participants' answers have many similar characteristics.. Language identities can differ and a person may feel more multilingual in a specific group or context. The participants seem to form a socially constructed group where a specific language, English also served a purpose. The authors of *kolmas kotimainen-lähikuvia englannin kielen käytöstä Suomessa* (2008) discuss how English can be heavily context related and the situations where English is used can vary. The book chooses to describe this phenomenon through a concept of linguistic continuum. (Figure 4)

Figure 4



(Source: Leppänen et al (2008:22) *Kolmas kotimainen. Lähikuvia englannin kielen käytöstä Suomessa*)

. This continuum also works well on the context of the research participants. They too switch from one language to another, use them simultaneously or use solely one

language. For the students, the IB-class is a special context and through it they also develop their language learner identities. The participants may view themselves as monolinguals who just use English. However, as CLIL-students in a CLIL-environment, the participants are heavily involved what Nikula (2007) describes as a “bilingual space”.

Example 28

Anni: ”kai mä olen yksikielinen..kuitenkin käytän englantia joka päivä”
Anni: “I guess I’m monolingual...however, I use English every single day”

Example 29

Hanna: ”Tulee turvallinen olo jos pitää puhua englantia”
Hanna: “It feels safe to speak in English”

The previous example shows how emotional factors can affect how a language is viewed. In several occasions during the interview, the participants used the adjectives “*natural*” or “*safe*” when talking about English. If those comments are viewed to the language identity theory put forward by Pavlenko (2006) certain assumptions on multilingual identity can be made. Although the participants didn’t feel ready to be called “multilinguals” as such, their comments and opinions reveal more about their language identity. The qualitative nature of the research data allows room for interpretation and should be seen as subjective views and opinions of the participants. As the interview included only 6 individuals, it should not be seen as a general representation of a foreign language learner. However, it does give more contemporary information on the foreign language learner identity.

Example 30

Interviewer: Do you see yourself as bilingual?
Anni: ”mut tuntuu et mulla potentiaalia tulla kaksikieliseksi henkilöksi..jos mä saisin nyt kummatkin kielet sellaisiksi et pystyisin parantaan niin voisin joskus sanoo itteeni kaksikieliseksi mut en vielä”
Anni:” it feels like I have the potential to become bilingual. If I could improve both languages (Finnish and English) then someday I would call myself bilingual...but not right now”

In the previous example, Anni discusses the possibility of becoming bilingual. Curiously, the prerequisite for that would be that the native language would improve

as well. It seemed that for the participants, the concept of bilingualism meant that you had to be “native-like” in both languages. Latest research has focused more on bilingualism/multilingualism as it appears and manifests itself in society. Leppänen et al.(2009:31) argued in the national survey on Finn’s perceptions on English in Finland that multilingualism in Finland is in fact more evident than people initially think. Pavlenko&Lantolf (2006) suggest that a person may become functionally bilingual either by necessity or by choice. It is through participation how the second language is attached to the person’s life. The constant negotiation of one’s language identity put forward by Pavlenko (2006) is also evident in example 31. For Elina, her sisters had somehow already achieved the bilingual status because of her long stays abroad.

Example 31

Elina: ”mun siskot, niitten vahvempi kieli on englanti ne kokee et ne on englanninkielisiä vaikka ne on täysin suomalaisia. vanhin sisko opiskellut koko ikänsä englanniksi. et kyllä mä voim ymmärtää sen ”
 Elina:”my sisters feel that English is a stronger language...they see themselves as ”English” even though they are from Finland. my oldest sister has studied her whole life in English. So I can understand that.”

For Elina, her sisters’ story was something to be admired. In the interview she goes on how she too wishes to study abroad and master in English the same way. Her older sisters serve as a positive example and a possible motivator . It is quite likely that her sisters’ choices have affected Elina’s interests in English and foreign language teaching. This is an important point to make as people mirror their actions through others and also make choices they see as positive ones in others.

Example 32

Tiina:”suomi on jotenkin niin tylsä kieli”
 Tiina:”Finnish is somehow a boring language”

The statement made in example 32 is an understandable one from a 16-year old whose free time activities are heavily affected by English. As mentioned previously, the free time activities that involved English were numerous for the participants . In many ways, English was also linked to things that are seen as “fun”. Movies, TV-

shows, music, internet and chatting on-line were all examples where the participants used a lot of English. Since English was the fun language used in those activities it therefore made Finnish a language for other “less-fun” activities. Attitudes and perceptions play a role in language learning. (Pihko 2007) How a language is viewed may in fact facilitate the learning process and give new meanings for the language. In example 33, Tiina talks about reading English texts.

Example 33

Tiina: “ne on enkuksi jotenkin kivasti ilmaistu, silleen mielenkiintoisemmin”

Tiina: “huomasitsä kanssa?”

Mikko: “joo..suomeksi jotenkin yksinkertaistettua”

Tiina: ”I like the way it is said in English..it’s more interesting”

Tiina: Did you notice that? [asking student 5]

Student 5: “yeah...in Finnish it’s somehow simplified”

Tiina is making comparisons between reading in Finnish to reading in English. Again, it is the positive side of English that is brought up. “I like the way it is said” seems like a vague phrase but again emphasizes how something related to English has a positive image and feel for the student. For Tiina it is a pleasant experience to read texts and books in English. The participants used the following adjectives to describe English: *colourful*, *interesting* and *versatile*. In both examples (examples 32 and 33), Finnish was given a less-interesting role as a language. Similar issues were mentioned by the other participants. Perhaps the reason that they are used to reading texts and books only in English has made it an interesting language for reading which in contrast makes Finnish a more foreign one. However, there are positive things related to Finnish as well. Finnish was seen as “*emotional*” and “*deeply moving*” and “*endearing*”, all adjectives not often related to school. For the purpose of the present study, the role of Finnish in the participants’ lives is not examined further. The comparison here was made to show that Finnish was also evident in their lives, quite differently and on a more personal level

Quite clearly, the role of a language identity was a complex term for the participants and they were able to give more straightforward answers when the interview questions were narrowed down and kept simpler. As a research theme, the role aspect

of a language was a rather abstract concept and quite understandably a challenging topic for teenagers. In the present study, this should have been taken into account more when planning the interview structure. It helped that the interview was a semi-structured one and therefore the environment was quite free and open.

6.4 Summarizing the Findings: My Life and English

The analyzed interview offered interesting opinions about the students' views and opinions on CLIL. In many aspects, the responses were in keeping with the existing perceptions expressed by scholars. English was seen as a useful resource that would be a huge advantage in the future. The participants used English a lot outside the classroom. It was not only a language in school but a way to communicate online, look for information, watch television and movies.

As for their language skills, the participants had quite a lot of confidence in their ability to understand and speak the language. Fluency was one of the key points made by the participants. Studying in a CLIL-classroom where there was constant exposure to the language gave the participants an advantage if compared to EFL students. The phrase "everyday language" was used when talking about English. Although the participants felt that their language skills were overall rather good, they were able to list some weaknesses as well. Grammar was an area where they felt the most lacking. Grammar, in particular sentence structure and regulations, was something that was studied quite little during lessons. The participants thought they understood the texts and could write well but couldn't remember or know the actual "rules of the language".

One of the main themes of the interview was language identity and more precisely multilingual identity. Rather unexpectedly the participants didn't feel bilingual or multilingual. For the participants, Finnish remained stronger a language and they weren't ready to consider English as strong. Nonetheless, the findings reveal that English was often characterized as important as Finnish and used as frequently. Its

role was meaningful and constant in the participants' lives. Also, English was sometimes chosen over Finnish, even among Finns in situations where it wasn't necessary to use English.

In the analyzing process a new theme emerged that was then analyzed further as also Eskola&Suoranta (2000) suggest. The participants clearly linked English with future studies, more specifically, with academic studies. Here English worked as a resource because it provided better access to latest research literature and European universities. Even university programs in Finland were viewed as English-oriented. Here one needs to remember the fact that the participants were studying in an IB-school which can be viewed as a preparatory school for higher education. In an IB-school, it is quite common for the student to read scientific literature and texts in English. Seeing English as something that would give them some kind of academic advantage is an interesting theme that could do with further studying. As all of the participants felt that they would continue their studies in a university, either in Finland or abroad, it would be fruitful to follow their careers and see where they ended up.

As for the students' international status, it was clear that the potential of English were recognized here is as well. Although the participants didn't consider themselves directly more international, they talked about the readiness to view the world and travel. One participant in particular felt that studying and working abroad would be a dream comes true. She felt secure about going to an English-speaking country to study in a university.

All the students hoped that English would stay in their lives and their future dreams and hopes revealed that as well. An interesting notion of the role of the language is highlighted in the examples 34 and 35. Elina and Mikko both used the phrase "*a part of*" when they talked about English in their lives. Instead of viewing English as an isolated foreign language it was seen as an existing part in their lives and hopefully a remaining part for the future. As English is used as a tool in CLIL classrooms, it is quite natural for the students to view it as tool as well. From a language identity point of view, English could be seen as a building block in their identity construction for

the future.(Pietikäinen et al 2002) Seeing the language as an element in their everyday life shows how significant its role may be. When the participants described the ways they use the language and in which context, it was often with a casual tone. For English to be a means of communicating and maintaining the private life show its unique role in the participants' life. Having fluency in English was linked to the future hopes and dreams. Being able to use a language in a variety of contexts works as a resource that doesn't limit itself to classrooms.

Example 34

Elina:”olisi tosi kiva et enkku olisi osa mun työtä ja se toimisi siinä hyvin.”
 Elina:”It would be nice if English **was a part of my job** and that it would work well in it...”

Example 35

Mikko:”kai mä toivon et jäisi elämään, et olisi hyötyä tulevaisuudessa”
 Mikko:”I guess I wish it would s **be a part of** my life...to be a benefit for the future”

For the participants, life with English was different for them when compared to parents and other friends. As mentioned before, the participants did acknowledge that they were privileged in a way that maybe wasn't possible before. For example, Elina uses the phrase “I see the difference” when he describes his father's communication skills in English (example 36).

Example 36

Haastattelija: ”Onko se iso valtti maailmalla et osaa englantia hyvin?”
 Elina:”Helpottaa se joo esim.kommunikointia. Isä osaa tasan tilata oluen englanniksi, kyllä mä tajuun siinä sen eron.”

Interviewer:” Is it an advantage in the world to be good at English?”
 Elina:” it makes it easier to communicate with others. My dad can order a beer in English and that's it. I can see the difference

It was a source of relief to have good skills in English and therefore be able to communicate more freely in the world. Born in the early 1990s, the participants' world didn't really exist without English. They experienced it differently from their

parents. The English they had experienced was different from their parents. (Example 36) Being able to communicate in English meant more than a few phrases of tourist vocabulary. This is all consistent with the existing trend in Europe and in Finland. Due to the various reasons discussed in chapter two, the shift in the way English is perceived in Finland is happening. (Leppälä et al 2009) It is especially the youth that has the tools and knowledge to benefit from it. Leaving school aside, the youth today uses English on a daily basis, often for constructing their identity as well. It is not enough to only understand English. The youth communicate with foreigners much more profoundly than before.

The relationship the participants had with English wasn't limited to school and future studies. This section has covered the future hopes and dreams of the participants more generally. As examined in examples 34 and 35, the "part" of English the participants wish to take with them is a multidimensional concept. It could be viewed as an already existing element that has molded over the years to fit their needs. None of the participants thought that English would disappear from their lives or that its role would somehow diminish. On the contrary, it was vitally there present in their dreams. The point of this section was to show how strongly a language can influence one's decisions and planning.

7. DISCUSSION

In this section the findings of the present study are discussed and summarized. For the present study, the research participants have been the core of the research. Thematically, the findings have been presented in a way the best describes the views of the participants. How they see themselves as English learners and users has been the key question.

The topics of the interview ranged from future plans to international and multilingual identity. The participants have viewed themselves not only as language learners but as language users and masters. The way the participants have learned English has been linked to the different needs and roles of the language. The fact that the participants are rather good at English is somehow “a given” from the start. How and why they are good at it was a more interesting question. Rather than focusing on the actual language skills and language proficiency, the aim has been towards the meanings and roles of the language. In the present study, the voice was given to the CLIL-classroom student. Rather than focusing on the interaction or language learning situations, the students’ opinions were of interest.

The existing research material has worked as guideline for the present study. On the other hand, the interest was to see how much the present study support the previous studies but also how it might differ. An important part of the study was the aspect of language as a resource. The large-scale national survey on Finns’ perceptions of English served as an inspiration in the analysis process. The language scene is experiencing interesting changes in Finland. Foreign languages are viewed from a new angle as different approaches have emerged in educational field. For a small scale research project, the present study was also conducted from a Finnish perspective. Previous research that involved the European context was used in a wider sense, for example when talking about CLIL as an educational phenomenon.

7.1 Limitations of the Present Study and Future Studies

For the present study, it might have been beneficial to conduct a similar interview with EFL-students. That would have allowed the study to be a more comparative rather than descriptive one. Therefore the reader needs to take into account, that possible comparisons made in the interview are those made subjectively by the participants. Their experiences and opinions need be seen from the perspective of the CLIL-learner. Interview, as a choice of research method also narrows down the sample size and thus does give quite subjective information. The participants of the interview formed a rather homogenous group with very similar educational backgrounds. Also, as “*IB-students*” in a CLIL-classroom, it is safe to presume that all the participants were motivated and quite capable English users to begin with. This fact has been discussed in previous research as well. (Nikula, Seikkola-Leino et al.). However, a qualitative research of this kind has its merits. The present study was conducted from the point of view of the CLIL-learner and therefore an interview is the most effective method. It allowed the research data to be analyzed in regards to the language learner identity.

The present study does fit in the field of CLIL-research. CLIL-learner’s own views as such have not been a focus point in the previous studies. There are still areas in CLIL that need further studying. It would be beneficial to study if CLIL-students actually use their CLIL-education for their benefit. Finding out what they do after they graduate and where they find employment would be an interesting research project. In addition, studying the EFL-learner and CLIL-learner simultaneously would give interesting data on foreign language teaching in Finland.

In the present study, the affective factors of language learning were not discussed in detail. In recent research literature, affective factors and foreign language learning have only recently become an interest. In CLIL-environment, such issues form an interesting area for research. The present study focused on the meanings and roles of English but those were strongly linked to the affective factors as well. For a researcher, it was challenging to try to focus on the opinions of the students and not

concentration too much on the affective factors. Self-confidence and anxiety were issues that the students discussed.

Quite clearly, the role of a language was a complex term for the participants and they were able to give more straightforward answers when the interview questions were narrowed down and kept simpler. As a research theme, the role aspect of a language was a rather abstract concept and quite understandably a challenging topic for teenagers. In the present study, this should have been taken into account more when planning the interview structure. It helped that the interview was a semi-structured one and therefore the environment was quite free and open. On the other hand, a more structured approach might have given more concrete responses. It seemed that the students struggled when they had to evaluate themselves as foreign language learners on a more general level. As mentioned before, the aspect of language identity was the most difficult for the students to discuss. Perhaps the topic could have explained in more detail to help the students understand the concept of language identity.

8. CONCLUSION

Teaching in a foreign language is a new approach to language learning and teaching in Finland. New theories in second language acquisition have given way to new approaches to language learning. Rather than emphasizing just grammar and texts, learning is seen as an active process where a natural like environment can give positive results. CLIL classrooms are a good example of that. Making foreign language a tool rather than just a target can improve learner's language skills and give deeper dimensions to it. CLIL-pupils tend to have more courage to use the foreign language. Their academic skills; writing and reading skills are better than for those studying in the traditional classroom. More importantly, CLIL may offer the change to make foreign language learners more active speakers. The present study supports these views. Although the interview cannot be used to make a general CLIL-learner profile, it gives interesting and positive information on the benefits of CLIL for the participants. English was a natural language for the participants, surprisingly not only in the classroom. When compared to Finnish, the participants could clearly acknowledge the language's potentials in the future. CLIL had given the students more confidence to speak in English and also to use it in different contexts, for example in writing essays or gathering information.

The present study shares the views made by Nikula (2007) on her study on CLIL-classroom interaction. The CLIL-classroom seems to form a bilingual space for the students where Finnish and English are used for specific purposes. The present study also suggests the same thing, that CLIL-students are emerging towards bilingualism, in some form or another. For the research participants, English was a natural element in their lives, a tool for work and private life. It was present outside the classroom as well and it was included in their plans for the future. Rather than seeing the participants as bilinguals, they could be described as people who are constructing their bilingual identity.

English is an instrumental part in the Finnish society. Its role is constantly changing and clear integration to Finnish culture is evident. As previously discussed, recent

studies and surveys concerning the status of English in Finland clearly show that English is here to stay. Finnish youth is quite fluent in English and uses it actively and in many contexts. English has become an everyday language for them, used more and more outside the classroom. It is obvious that English is needed in the international world but it can also be a resource in the society. This was the case for my research participants as well. They already acknowledged the potentials of studying in English. They saw it as a benefit for their future studies and employment. They enjoyed the idea of being able to travel more freely and use the language in authentic environments. It was also seen as a tool when surfing online or “looking for material or information”. There was a wide range of possibilities evident in the results of the interview.

There is still little research done on CLIL classrooms and especially on the affective factors on CLIL. Is CLIL an effective alternative to language teaching? Are there clear benefits when compared to traditional foreign language teaching? It will be interesting to see what changes might happen in traditional language teaching. Is CLIL here to stay and in what way? Schools play an important role in the development on CLIL-classrooms. It requires more research and active participation on the part of the school environment as well. Should the classes be organized differently? Should CLIL be offered to all students or should there be a stricter criterion for selection? Is CLIL for everyone or should it remain as it is? There is a shortage of qualified CLIL-teachers and some schools have been disappointed with the support offered by their local administration. It will be challenge for the future to re-organize foreign language education. As the studies so far have been quite promising, more research is needed to determine the long-term benefits of CLIL in foreign language learning.

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APPENDIX 1

Taustakyselylomake

Nimi:

Ikä:

Milloin aloitit englannin opiskelun koulussa?:

Mikä oli englannin arvosanasi 9.lk:n jälkeen?:

Olitko englanninkielisessä päiväkodissa?:

**Opiskelitko peruskoulussa englannin kielisellä luokalla? Jos kyllä,
kuinka monta vuotta?**

Onko perheesi yksikielinen?:

Oletko oleskellut/asunut pidempiä aikoja ulkomailla?

Background questionnaire

Name:

Age:

When did you start your English studies in school?

**What was your grade in English when you finished comprehensive
school?**

Were you in an English kindergarten?

**Were you in an English school/classroom? If so, for how many
years?**

How many languages is spoken in your family?

Have you been abroad for longer periods of time?

APPENDIX 2

Kysymyksiä IB-lukiolaisille:

1. Näetkö vieraalla kielellä opiskelun vahvuutena? Miksi?
1. Miksi tulitte IB-lukioon ja vieraskieliseen opetukseen?
2. Miten näette kielitaitonne nyt? Verratkaa aiempaan myös.
3. Miten IB eroaa teidän mielestä normaalista lukiosta?
4. Koetteko olevanne valmiimpia tulevaisuuteen?
5. Jatkatteko englannin kielellä opiskelua tulevaisuudessa?
6. Kuinka moni opiskelisi englanniksi?
7. Missä tilanteissa käytät englantia?
8. Puhutteko paljon englantia?
9. Entäs kirjoittaminen, suomi vaan englantia?
10. Kumpi kieli on luonnollisempaa?
11. Miten arvioisit suomen ja englannin suhdetta toisiinsa?
12. Kumpi kieli mieluisampi koulussa ja koulutöissä?
13. Kumpi kieli vahvempi omasta mielestä?
14. Koetteko että englannin kielellä puhuminen helpottuu?
15. Meneekö suomen kieli ja englannin kieli sekaisin?
16. Onko englantia tärkeä valtti maailmassa teidän mielestä?
17. Mitä etuja on että opiskelee vieraalla kielellä?
18. Oletteko kansainvälisempiä kuin muut, tunnetteko valmiutta?

APPENDIX 3

English Translations

Questions for the participants

1. Do you see studying in a foreign language as an advantage? If so, why?
2. Why did you decide to study in a CLIL-classroom?
3. How would you evaluate your language skills? Any changes?
4. How is the IB school different from “normal” high school?
5. Does it prepare you for the future? If so, How?
6. Do you wish to continue your studies in English?
7. In which situations do you use English?
8. Do you speak in English in the classroom? How much?
9. Do you prefer to write in English or in Finnish? Why?
10. Which Language feels more natural?
11. How would you compare English and Finnish?
12. Which language you prefer to use in class or when doing homework?
13. In your opinion, which language is stronger in your life? Why?
14. Do you find that English becomes easier over time?
15. Do you ever mix Finnish and English? How?
16. Why is English so important for you? Or is it?
17. Can you tell me some benefits of “mastering” English?
18. Do you feel more international because of your education? If so, How?