

**“IT’S NOT ENOUGH TO KNOW THE THEORY IF YOU CAN’T
PLAY THE INSTRUMENT”:** English teacher students’ views on
teaching English in Finland

Master’s thesis
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Tämän pro gradu –tutkielman tarkoituksena on tarkastella englannin opettajaopiskelijoiden näkemyksiä englannin opettamisen tapoja ja tavoitteita. Kielen opettamista säädetään ja määritellään kansallisissa opetussuunnitelmissa, joita uudistetaan noin kymmenen vuoden välein. Englanti on Suomessa eniten opiskeltu vieras kieli ja tavoitteet englannin opettamiselle ovat korkeat. Suomessa opiskelijat yltyvät kirjallisissa taidoissa korkeisiin tavoitteisiin, mutta taidot kommunikoinnissa koetaan jäävän tavoitteista.</p> <p>Tutkimus on luonteeltaan laadullinen ja tavoitteena oli selvittää kuinka englannin opettajaopiskelijat kokevat englannin opettamisen tavoitteiden asettelun sekä niihin yltyäminen. Tutkimuksen kannalta erityisen mielenkiintoista oli selvittää opettajaopiskelijoiden omaa kielikäsitystä ja millaisia tavoitteita he englannin opettamiselle asettavat.</p> <p>Tutkielman aineisto koostuu ryhmähaastattelusta, jossa oli viisi osallistujaa. Aineiston analyysimenetelmänä käytettiin sisällön analyysiä ja keskiössä oli haastateltavien omat kokemukset kielen opiskelijoina, sekä tulevina opettajina. Haastattelu oli jaettu kahteen osaan. Ensimmäisessä osiossa tarkasteltiin haastateltavien omia koulukokemuksia. Toinen osa keskittyi haastateltavien havaintoihin nykyisestä kielenopetuksesta, sekä ajatuksista siitä, kuinka he haluaisivat englannin opetusta tulevaisuudessa toteuttaa.</p> <p>Tutkimustulokset osoittavat, että kommunikaatio nousee tavoitteissa keskeisimmäksi taidoksi opettajaopiskelijoiden mielestä. Suullisen kielitaidon opettaminen koetaan haasteelliseksi. Opiskelijoiden välinen kuilu taitotasossa yläkoulussa ja lukiossa koetaan huolestuttavaksi ja haastateltavat haluaisivat löytää keinoja jokaisen opiskelijan motivoimiseen kielten opiskeluun. Keskeisenä tavoitteena on löytää jokaiselle into opiskella itseään varten, omat tavoitteet ja lähtötaso huomioiden. Opetuksessa tulisi huomioida opiskelijoiden mielenkiinnon kohteet sekä koulun ulkopuolinen englannin kielen käyttö.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

The English language has been very dear to me since the time I was four. I find the language and its varieties interesting, as well as the culture - especially on the British Isles. In addition to language and culture, the history of the English speaking world is something that I have studied with great interest. To me English represents knowledge, skills, freedom, studies, work and friendship. It is a big part of my life and it allows me to do more things than what I would have been able to do with my native language Finnish. Learning English has never been a burden to me, as the language has been a part of my life since I was four years old. From this perspective, I have sometimes wondered what is there not to like about English and how can it be so difficult to some people, as English is all around us and we have almost unlimited access to the language. However, I too have studied languages that have not been that easy for me to learn, namely Swedish and German. The biggest difference between learning these languages was that as a child I attended a nursery and pre-school that used the immersion approach to learning English. In school I continued to study some subjects in English in a CLIL class. The experience with Swedish and German was quite opposite, as they were taught in a very traditional manner. It was not that I did not want to learn these languages or was not interested, but the teaching methods and subjects were uninteresting to me – and I could not figure out how grammar works in real communicational situations. And to be fair, I should have put in more effort to learn the languages, but did not as there were so many other things going on in the world of a teenager. This experience with language learning has affected the way I think of learning and teaching, and it also gave me the idea for this study. For me, English is an important language in all aspects of life, but is my point of view too greatly affected by my past? Not everyone is interested in learning English, and could it be that not everyone needs it to the extent that I would like to think? The way I see English has definitely had a role in the way I have approached this study. However, as an English teacher this has also given me the spark to share the interest and excitement towards the language to my students. From this perspective, it was interesting for me to find out how other English teacher students have come to study their chosen future occupation and what they think the goals for teaching English are. In addition, it would be interesting to know how they plan to reach these goals.

Teachers should have an in-depth understanding of the subject they teach and why they teach it. The present study aims to investigate how future language teachers perceive their chosen subject, namely what is the need for a classroom full of learners to know the things we teach? How will it

benefit them? The study was divided into three different categories to figure out how teaching of English in Finland has been experienced by the interview participants. The three categories are moments in time - the past, the present and the future. The time perspective is also interesting because it might reveal how the interviewees have seen English and teaching in different times of their life. Moreover, it is interesting to find out if the interviewees have perceived change in language teaching over time.

In the beginning of the study chapter 2 will shortly discuss the English language and how it became to be one of the biggest languages in the world. The overview of global English explains how the language got its position as a world language. Chapter 3 deals with the English language in Finland. While Finland was never a part of the Commonwealth countries, other reasons such as the political and financial changes in the world led into the present situation where English is the most studied language in Finland (Statistics Finland 2013). Teaching in Finland is regulated by the official frameworks, goals and national curricula. They are important because they give our teachers the guidelines on what to teach. Official goals and learning environments are discussed in chapter 4, however, the voice of the teacher students and their thoughts are at the focus this study. Teachers make their own interpretations of the guidelines and act them out the way they see it best. How a teacher understands the purpose of language teaching is what ultimately shows in their language classes. In order to capture the thoughts of the future English teachers, data was collected in a group interview. The present study is a qualitative study and the chosen analysis method is content analysis, because what the interviewees say is what reveals the most interesting results for the present study.

Chapter 6 will talk over the results and the views of the teacher students how they feel about language teaching in Finland. The chapter is divided into sections dealing with the past, present and future. In section 6.2 the past is what the interviewees remember from their own school times. It dates back into the 1990's when the interviewees were in elementary school. Thinking about the past gives us information on how the interviewees remember English was taught in their schooldays. The way one learns a language moulds their thoughts on what language teaching is. Language teaching at its best can lead into a life-long love for language learning. However, the interviewees had had experiences with language learning that were not that good, and that can be used as a benefit in their future teaching too – at least you know what did not work and you do not want to use that in your teaching. In addition to this, the past gives the study a point of comparison, as it is interesting to see how English teaching in schools have changed in ten to twenty years.

The present time in this study dates back to the year 2010 when the interview was done. The interviewees discuss their experiences of their practical teacher training periods and what they noticed in schools. Also, the study aims to portray the use of English in modern Finland, trying to figure out the purposes English is used for. The latter part of the study aims to find out ways how English could be made motivational to all learners, in order to make the differences in skill levels smaller. The interviewees have ideas of how they want to be as teachers and what methods to use, drawing from their experience as learners themselves and also from the university studies. In their minds, the culture in schools needs to change before the pupils can be brave enough to practice communication freely. Communication is seen as one of the main goals of learning languages, both in the core curricula and by the future teachers.

The interview was done in 2010. The situation in Finland has changed in that time as the new core curricula for basic education and upper secondary school have just been published. New ways of using English have emerged, as developments especially in social media has made the global communication even more accessible for everyone. The role of the English language is by no standards decreasing in Finland – on the contrary it seems like the need to know English is only growing. This study aims to find out ways to answer that need from the point of view of English teacher students of the University of Jyväskylä.

2 ENGLISH GLOBALLY

To understand why English is such an important language in Finland it is necessary to review how it became one of the most influential languages globally. English is one of the biggest languages in the world with Mandarin and Spanish. It is spoken on every continent and has been addressed to be the global lingua franca, or, a common language around the world (Svartvik and Leech 2006: 6, Kirkpatrick 2007: 155). Originally from a small island on the edge of Europe, it is now a language that has an immense number of speakers globally.

According to the Ethnologue statistics (<http://www.ethnologue.com/statistics/size>) the English language is the third biggest language in the world, based on the amount of first language (L1) speakers. The biggest language is Chinese with its different variations, and the second biggest is Spanish. The Ethnologue statistics show that English is estimated to have around 335 million L1

speakers in 101 countries. Only by these numbers alone it can be understood how widely spread the language is. However, languages are not only spoken by first language speakers who have acquired them by growing up with the languages. The amount of language speakers is multiplied substantially by people who have learnt the language as their second or foreign language. Moreover, despite the fact that English has only the third biggest number of L1 speakers in the world, Svartvik and Leech (2006: 1) explain that what gives English its special status as a global lingua franca is its unrivalled position as a means of international communication. Svartvik and Leech (2006: 1) continue to point out that English is a language that is used in communication across national borders, whereas most other languages are used within the countries. Today, English is a big language in business and the most commonly taught foreign language all over the world, with the amount of non-native English speakers outnumbering native speakers. This is a unique situation in language history, as it can be estimated that about a quarter of the world's population know at least some English (Svartvik and Leech 2006: 1). These numbers are astonishing, and the spread of originally a small language is quite fascinating.

2.1 WORLD ENGLISHES: KACHRU'S SPEAKER CIRCLE MODEL

American linguist Braj Kachru (Kachru 1983: 212) explains the spread of the English language by naming three different categories: native speakers, non-native speakers and foreign language speakers. His model is often referred to when explaining the situation of world Englishes. The model presents a circle with three different layers; the *inner circle*, the *outer* or *extended circle* and the *expanding* or *extending circle*. The following division is based on Kachru's three circle model and is adopted from Crystal (2003: 60)

- **The inner circle** refers to traditional bases of English, where it is the primary language and spoken by native speakers: it includes the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.
- **The outer or extended circle** involves the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become part of a country's chief institutions, and plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting: it includes Singapore, India, Malawi and over fifty other territories. These countries have often been affected by colonialism.

- **The expanding or extending circle** involves those nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, though they do not have a history of colonization by members of the inner circle, nor have they given English any special administrative status. In these areas, English is taught as a foreign language.

Crystal (2003: 60) points out that the expanding circle is still a growing group of countries and areas. From the point of view of the current study, the expanding circle is the one that is of most interest. The interesting issues are why and how is English a part of these countries, and how is it taught in schools?

The interesting question is how did a small language from a small island called England gain such a dominant status globally? A language that evolved in the British Isles from different Celtic languages, and slowly evolved through time to what it is now. According to Yule (2003: 218-223) and Svartvik and Leech (2006) English is a mixture of different invader languages, like Latin, German, Danish and Norman French. By definition, it is a part of the Indo-European language family and belongs to the Germanic languages (Svartvik and Leech 2006: 14). Svartvik and Leech (2006: 2) point out, that English did not become a world language because of its beauty or being easy to learn, in fact the pronunciation of English words is not always logical at all and the grammar and enormous vocabulary are not as learner-friendly as is generally assumed. Regardless, there is a demand for English among language learners around the world. English is often considered as a language that unites young people through culture and media, scholars need English to function in the academic world, the common language of business and world politics is English, and it is also a useful language to learn for tourists because it is so widely used. The basic function for all languages is communication, and English has become the common means of communication globally.

The global use of English has been studied by many, including David Crystal. Even though English has gained a position as one of the most widely spoken languages, Crystal (2002: 10) reminds us that if one quarter of the world speaks or knows some English, it means that three quarters do not. This is to remind us that even though English is a big language, the thought that everyone at least understands it everywhere in the world is misled. However, from a European point of view, it sometimes seems like English is the only global language there is, as it has such a prestige role in the Western world.

The spread of the English language did not just happen after television and music media became more popular in the 1980's. The history of Europe and the whole world has led to the current language situation, as the European countries spread their languages and culture to countries they colonized. Crystal (2002: 1) estimates that from the times of Queen Elizabeth I in 1558-1603 to the beginnings of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II in 1952 the number of English speakers in the world had increased almost fiftyfold - starting from between five to seven million and ending up to an estimate of 250 million L1 speakers. In addition to the L1 speakers another 100 million had learnt it as a foreign language. Nowadays, in the 2010's, the number is even bigger. The political situation of the 16th and the 17th centuries are probably the focal points of the beginnings of the spread of the English language, and the most interesting starting point considering the current study. Before the reign of Elizabeth I, the English language had already spread across the British Isles as Leith (2002: 180) shows in his article. Colonies beyond the British Isles were first established in the sixteenth century as Leith (2002: 181) continues, one of the reasons for the first colonies was economic: companies ran by capitalist entrepreneurs were granted a monopoly over a certain commodity by the monarch, who was able to profit in taxing collected in trading. Social reasons were important too, and people from England moved to live and work in the colonies overseas. Colonization was a Europe-wide phenomenon and there were rivalries between Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and Germany, as well as England (Leith: 2002: 181). The colonies and new land areas were gained overseas for example in America, India, Africa and the South-Pacific. The British Empire grew to a strong world power with colonies on four continents. Imposing politic and economic power in its colonies made English the official language of the countries and that is a reminder of the colonial times still visible around the world.

It could be argued that for the British being able to settle in North America has probably been one of the biggest reasons the English language is such a large language in modern times. The first expeditions to the New World were made in the late 16th century, as Crystal (2003: 31) recognises, but it was not until the early 1600's that permanent settlements were established. Slowly gaining more land and spreading from coast to coast, English is now spoken everywhere across the United States, including Canada. Of course, languages like Spanish in America and French in Canada are also spoken by numerous speakers, French being the other official language in Canada. However, it is fair to say that English is still clearly the biggest language in North America. It was not only English speaking settlers and later immigrants that came to North America, but English became to be the most commonly spoken language because of the natural assimilation that happened (Crystal

2003: 35). This development has proved out to be one of the biggest reasons English has become the lingua franca of the world.

Hence the English language spread as a by-product of colonization and is now spoken as an official language and native tongue around the world; the USA, Canada, the British Isles, India, Australia, Singapore, and so on. But this alone is not enough to explain why English has become the most widely taught foreign language in schools world-wide, including in Finland. Svartvik and Leech (2006: 6) suggest that the status of the United States as the leading economic, military and scientific power of the twentieth century is another very notable reason for the English language's status as the leading global language. Moreover, after World War Two the English language was the major language of the Allies which made the language even more powerful, which resulted in the decline of German. It has become the language of scholars, politics and business, which is a major encouragement to study the language around the world. There is a communicative purpose for the language in the professional world. In addition to these reasons, there are other contributing factors as well for the success of the English language, as Svartvik and Leech (2006: 7) point out. According to Svartvik and Leech (2006: 7), there is a need for a common language in international communication as a result of modern technology that allows us to communicate world-wide; telephone, radio, television, computers and the internet. Media is everywhere, and even though every country has their own local media in their native languages, the language of global media and advertising is English. The internet, likewise, is full of websites and information in different languages, but the biggest global networks function in English. Svartvik and Leech (2006: 7) conclude that American English is the biggest language in the world of information technology.

Svartvik and Leech (2006: 7) argue that the reason why English is nowadays a significant language in business and communication globally, is because of its practicality. They demonstrate how English can be the chosen lingua franca in countries or groups of countries that have several native languages because it is felt to be a neutral ground. In the global economy, many multi-nationals have adopted English as their workplace vernacular. Svartvik and Leech (2006: 7) continue to point out that half of all Russian business is said to be conducted in English, and the European Union has chosen English to be the working language because of practical reasons. All the reasons listed above have resulted in English being the most popular foreign language to study in schools in the EU. According to Svartvik and Leech (2006: 7) nine out of ten students choose to study English, which shows the proportions of the situation. Thus, it could be suggested that the amount of speakers of English in Europe, as well as globally, is not going to reduce in the near future. It is a

global phenomenon that also includes Finland. Referring to Kachru's speaker circle model (1992), Finland is a part of the expanding circle. English does not have an official status or institutionalized role in the Finnish society, but it is regarded as the most popular foreign language studied in the country (Statistics Finland 2013). English is regarded to be so important that nearly every student in the Finnish schooling system studies the language. English is nowadays present in Finland on all areas of life. What English means to the Finnish citizens and future English teachers will be more closely examined later in the study.

3 ENGLISH IN FINLAND

Finland is officially a bilingual country in the Fennoscandian region in Northern Europe. It has two national languages, Finnish and Swedish. In addition to these two Sami is recognised as a regional language. The status of these languages can be explained by the history of the country, as Finland has been ruled by Sweden and Swedish has been the language of the nobility, administration and education. Three different Sami languages are spoken by the Sami people who live in the northern parts of Finland, as well as the neighbouring countries. However, the most widely spoken foreign language in Finland is English. The significant role of English as the most widely studied and used foreign language in Finland is interesting.

The status of the English language in Finland has not always been this notable. Leppänen et al. (2009: 15) explain that even in the 1960-80's English was regarded as a language that was studied so that one could communicate with foreigners. Nowadays, Leppänen et al. continue, English has become a necessity in the society, as it is being used in many international relations and even inside the Finnish borders in situations where people could use their native language. Kaikkonen and Kohonen (2000: 7) argue that language teaching in the globalising world has become a way for the individual to learn international communication and intercultural learning. Sajavaara (2006: 224-225) lists reasons why foreign languages have become so important in Finland. These are international agreements, joining the European Union and business and trade across borders, as well as the change in the job markets (Sajavaara 2006: 224-225). For instance, the study by Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 19) reveals that some large companies in Finland, for example Nokia and Nordea, have chosen to use English as their language for internal matters. These companies are multi-national, employing people from different countries, so the language choice can be explained

by its practicality. This shows that being able to work in English may nowadays be essential in some workplaces. It could be argued that the importance of the language in the job markets reflects on language choices in schools, as students want to study languages that will benefit them in the future.

English has become the most widely studied foreign language in Finland. Statistics Finland (<https://www.tilastokeskus.fi>) is the state office in Finland that collects data on the current trends among the citizens. In the year 2013 a study was conducted on the subject choices of Finnish students in comprehensive schools. The results show, that in 2012 66.3% of the students on grades 1-6 studied English as a foreign language. The number seems relatively small, but can be explained by the fact that often students do not begin to study a foreign language before the third grade. The second most studied language on grades 1-6 was Swedish with only 4.6% which shows the enormous distinction in language choices. The same statistics also show subject studies for 7-9 grades in the same year, where English is still number one with 99.4%. This means that nearly every student studies English in Finland, which again shows the status and importance the language has gained in our country. In comparison, the second most studied languages were Swedish and German, with Swedish studied by 92.2% and German by 10.5% of the students. The number of students studying Swedish, however, can be explained by the fact that it is a compulsory subject for students with Finnish as their first language. Sajavaara (2006: 224) mentions in his study that 92% of people living in Finland have Finnish as their mother tongue, which is in line with the number of people studying Swedish in Finnish schools. This shows that the language choice is not done by the students, rather it is given to them by the education system.

Statistics Finland has done a similar study about the language choices of the completers of upper secondary general school education in 2011 and 2013. These studies reveal that in 2011 99.6% of the completers studied English as a compulsory or elective subject. In the year 2013 the number was 99.7%. A similar study was not made of students in vocational school, but judging by these numbers, it could be said that nearly every Finnish student is in contact with the English language, as most of the Finnish youth studies it. Moreover, Penttinen and Kyyrönen (2005: 389) show in their study that 93% of Finnish students regard studying the English language as important, as they believe they will need English skills in the future. Thus, it could be concluded that the majority of Finnish people will be able to at least understand some English. The statistics show that almost all students in Finland come into contact with the English language in schools, but the formal school environment is not the only place where English is present in Finland.

There has been made a number of studies in the recent years about English use and language contact in Finland (Taalas et al. 2007, Leppänen et al. 2008, Leppänen et al. 2009, Kalaja et al. 2011). English is not a native language of the Finnish people, nor is it one of the biggest immigrant languages (Maahanmuuttovirasto 2013). Other factors make for its success story in Finland, reasons that are quite common in other countries too where English is being studied as a foreign language. Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 16) explain that the situation is a sum of many factors. According to them there has been a structural change in the society and its modernisation, urbanisation and globalisation. Changes in the international trade and business have had a big effect. In addition, the internationalisation of the working life, intercultural connections and meeting of cultures, efficient language teaching as well as the new communication possibilities offered by information technology have all been influencing the developed situation (Leppänen and Nikula 2008:16). Popular culture has had a big influence from the 1950's and 1960's onwards, ad music, television and movies have been easy to access for all. English is now, according to Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 17) a part of everyday life for many Finns, in their work places and free time alike. The most recent developments in social media and in the availability of movies and other entertainment have brought English into the mobile devices and homes of nearly all people.

3.1 HOW AND WHERE IS ENGLISH USED IN FINLAND?

English is everywhere, or so it seems. As already mentioned above, the English language is a considerable part of the Finnish education system, and it has found its way to working life as well. But what is interesting also from the perspective of the current study is where else is the language present? School especially is a formal environment to learn and practice a language, but the language is a part of the Finnish life in informal environments too. Informal environments mean places outside of formal language settings, like schools, and the terms formal and informal learning will be defined more comprehensively in chapter 4.

The amount of people encountering English in our daily lives is of course dependant on many factors. To young people in bigger cities English might be a part of their everyday lives, literally. However, it should be kept in mind that this is not the case for everyone in Finland, and it should not be expected that everyone understands, let alone is able to speak English. Leppänen et al. (2009: 45) present a chart based on their studies showing the distribution and occurrence of foreign

languages in the surroundings of the respondents. Keeping in mind the just reported figures from Statistics Finland about subject choices in schools and the nearly 100% attendance to English studies, it is somewhat surprising to hear that only 79.6% report to come into contact with English in their surroundings (Leppänen et al. 2009). According to the researchers, this can be explained by the fact that older people, especially in the rural areas, might not have any contact with foreign languages. The older generations may not have studied English in their school years (Leppänen and Nikula 2008: 18) and modern communication technology and media are more widely used by the younger people. Also, the rural areas of Finland are mostly inhabited by native Finns, so coming into contact with foreign languages can be a rare occasion. Therefore, we should bear in mind that even though English seems to be everywhere and to everyone, it still is not. On the contrary there are the younger urban generations to whom English is almost as their second native language. Of course, in reality the distinction between different groups as English users is not this straightforward as presented, but English use and age, as well as demographics are interrelated. People are aware of the situation, and according to Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 66) older people are not even expected to know English. In their study there is a question about attitudes towards English use and usefulness. The study shows that young people and people of working age are expected to know English, but only 23.2% think it is useful for elderly people to have English skills. It could be suggested that these attitudes reveal English is still seen as a language of study and work, as well as media and popular culture - things that are more commonly linked to younger generations.

As the purpose of studying English in Finland is of interest for the current study, it is worth finding out what situations the language is used in. The study of Leppänen et al. (2009: 92-93) shows that English is mostly used on free time. The results for a question concerning English use and its frequency are shown in their study, and the respondents could only select one option to the question what is the context they use English most often in. Half of the respondents use English on their free time (51.5%), 26.8% use it at work, 12.3% mention school and 9.4% report never to use English. Leppänen et al. (2009: 92-93) examine the answers more closely and explain that for younger people, school is the most commonly mentioned context for using English, as it is the environment where formal English education is given. However, the amount of English used in informal contexts, meaning free time or even work, is interesting from the perspective of the current study. These answers reveal the reality of the language situation in Finland and the need to study English, as well as how and where people use the language. Studying a language is for a purpose, which usually is communicative in some way - to receive and respond to information from the world

around us. The current study is interested in finding out how future English teachers see the purpose of studying English for their future students.

According to Leppänen et al. (2009: 94), music and television are notable sources of English audio input for Finnish people. In their study, 85% of the respondents report to listen to music with English lyrics at least once a week. According to Ala-Kyyny (2012) listening to music in English has positive influences on pronunciation, listening comprehension and learning new vocabulary and phrases. Similarly, English television and movies are an important media to hear English from; 88% watch movies or television programmes in English with subtitles, and 24.5% without subtitles. This happens weekly according to the Leppänen et al. (2008: 94) study, so the percentages could be even higher if the respondents had been asked about their use of media once in two weeks or even monthly. In addition to movies, TV and music, English radio programmes were listened to weekly by 9.1%. This shows that understanding English has an entertainment value, as well as cultural and informational importance. Kalaja, Alanen, Palviainen and Dufva (2011) have also studied the use of English on L2 learners' free time. The most important resources that were mentioned (Kalaja et al. 2011: 53) were television, movies, music, radio, internet, books, magazines and other people. As it can be seen, media is an important source for language input but contact with other people was mentioned too. What Kalaja et al. (2011: 55) found out was that there is a variety of contexts for L2 learners to learn outside of school, but a lot also depends on the learner and their perception and willingness to use the language.

The study conducted by Leppänen et al. (2009: 96) was also interested in Finnish people's reading habits. The question was about reading texts in English, and what kind of reading the respondents do at least once a month. The distribution of answers were 1) the internet 56.4% 2) manuals etc. 48% 3) email 43.3% 4) non-fiction books 30.5% 5) magazines 25.4% 6) newspapers 13.2% 7) novels 12.2% and 8) comics 9.7%. The results show that the reading habits are diverse, and it could be assumed that age and demographics has an effect on an individual level. What is interesting to see is that texts in English are widely available in Finland. The same study by Leppänen et al. (2009: 97-99) shows that reading and listening to English is generally more common than producing written or spoken output. Again, the frequency of speaking and writing in English varies notably between individuals. People who have non-Finnish speaking friends or family, or work in an environment where English is the working language use English daily, whereas some people never have to use English after they finish their basic education. It is easier to avoid situations where it is necessary to speak or write English, compared to hearing or reading it.

The reasons for using English in Finland are diverse. Using English can be a choice, but sometimes we encounter situations where it is inevitable to use a foreign language. Leppänen et al. (2009:108) were interested in the reasons why English is used in Finland, and the three main reasons were to get information, recreational use or for communication. A portion of the respondents claim to use English because they have no choice, because it is required at work or because of studies (Leppänen et al. 2009:108). Learning English does benefit the Finnish people in their free time, as it enables us to understand the world around us better, and it makes it possible for us to get information on things we are interested in. It is a means of entertaining ourselves, communicating with friends, but English has become a part of the Finnish working life and education as well. According to Sajavaara (2006: 224), the importance of mastering one's mother tongue and foreign languages has become more significant among educated people. They will inevitably be working in professions where communication, both written and verbal, will be crucially important (Sajavaara 2006: 224). It is good to master at least moderate skills in English, as we can never know what the future has in store for us - we might not be overly excited about studying foreign languages, but the future job markets will appreciate people who are able to work in other languages too than their own. Johansson et al. (2011: 16) present results of a study made in 2009 by the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK, Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto), showing that almost 90% of employers and recruiting companies value employees who are able to carry their work in English, in addition to their mother tongue. Johansson et al. (2011: 16) continue by saying that the significance of English has grown compared to earlier studies. Other significant languages in the Finnish job markets are Swedish, Russian and German. However, the language requirements vary regionally and they also depend on the trade or line of work as well, as Johansson et al. (2011:17) remark, but also remind us that the reality of using foreign languages at work is quite monolingual with English.

English is a part of the Finnish working life and education, as has been shown above. English language surrounds us on our free-time too, and the presence of the English media has been discussed briefly. In addition to this, English language has become a notable means of communication and the language of information in hobbies and other free-time activities.

3.2 NATIONAL CORE CURRICULA AND THEIR GOALS

Teaching in Finnish schools is regulated by the national core curricula that have been determined by the Finnish National Board of Education. The curricula define the key values of the schooling system, which include the values and goals of teaching, goals, contents, assessment and ways of studying for separate subjects (Luukka et al. 2008: 53, Rasinen 2006: 82-83). These regulations have been adapted for each separate level of education. From the perspective of the current study, the most interesting ones are the National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education Intended for Young People (2003) which will be referred to as LOPS, and the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004) referred to as POPS in this study. These documents were in use in schools when the interview was done. New core curricula were put into use in 2016 and the changes to the LOPS 2003 and POPS 2004 will be discussed in chapter 7. In addition to the national core curricula, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages has brought new criteria for language testing and assessment (Huttunen 2005: 56). The CEFR or Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Eurooppalainen viitekehys 2003) is not in the legislation or bound by law, as the core curricula are. Rather, it is a framework or a guide for European countries to develop language teaching, testing and assessment into a more unified system in Europe, with a common guideline to describe achievements of the language learners (CEFR 2003: 8). The Common European Framework is established by the Council of Europe.

These documents that guide language teaching are useful for teachers and students alike. They describe the language skill levels and goals of language teaching for different grades in schools, which also give the guidelines for assessment. Having the national POPS and LOPS therefore unifies the language teaching in Finland and the idea is that all students will get the same level of teaching and skills no matter where they complete their education. They set the standards in Finland. Of course, how the actual teaching is carried out in schools is greatly dependent on the teacher and how they follow the curriculum. Teachers have the right to choose the material and methods of teaching they use.

The national curricula and the Common European Framework are products of their time and are revised when necessary. Language teaching combines the current theories of psychology and linguistics and therefore it is under a constant change as the understanding of humanities, social sciences and education develops (Kaikkonen 2005: 46). The national core curricula that were in use at the time of this study were from the years 2003 and 2004. Before that, the previous POPS and

LOPS were both released in 1994. The new POPS and LOPS were revised in the years 2014 and 2015, so the time span for one curriculum is approximately a decade. What is interesting from a language teacher's point of view is that they also show the values of that time and what is seen important in language education.

The POPS 2004 is aimed for basic education, which means children between 7-15 years of age. Most often the studying of the first foreign language begins on the third grade, but it is not uncommon to start already earlier too. The basis for learning foreign languages in basic education is that the teaching will provide students the abilities to function in communicative situations in foreign languages (POPS 2004: 136). This is defined in the first sentence in the text for foreign languages. Therefore, communicative competence is highlighted as one of the main goals in language teaching. Furthermore, according to POPS (2004: 136), the goals of foreign language teaching is to get the students accustomed to use their competence in foreign languages, and to teach them to understand and appreciate the other cultures and their ways of living. In addition to these, the student will also recognize that it takes long-term studying and diversified practice in order to communicate in a foreign language. Foreign languages are classified as cultural and skills subjects in the curriculum (POPS 2004: 136.) Basic education will build the foundation for learning new languages and equip the student with skills and technique to study languages. The goals are manifold but according to the text in the curriculum, the main emphasis is on communication. Kaikkonen and Kohonen (2000: 8) note that the main emphasis has shifted from examining language as linguistic structures and forms towards learning communicational competence.

The academic education for young people in Finland is provided by general upper secondary schools and is regulated by LOPS. Students in general upper secondary schools are approximately between the ages of 15-19, and are expected to have adequate knowledge on how to study foreign languages. However, as the LOPS (2003: 101) emphasizes, language studying skills will be improved and reinforced throughout the studies.

The shift from basic education to general upper secondary school means a shift in the level of skills required from the students, as the subjects are studied more in depth. Communication and learning communicative skills are highlighted in the curriculum for basic education. In general upper secondary school the emphasis becomes more specific and profound, as the basis for language learning has been constructed in the earlier school years. Communication is still the main priority, but attention is now shifted towards intercultural communication. As the section for foreign

languages in LOPS (2003: 100) begins, studying foreign languages improves the students' skills on intercultural communication, giving them skills and knowledge to use the language and provides them the opportunity to develop appreciation and understanding for the cultures of the studied languages. LOPS (2003: 100) emphasizes intercultural communication skills and appreciation for the cultures and people who speak the languages. Moreover, it is stated in the text that when studying cultures of the language areas, the main focus is on the multicultural Europe, the European identity and its many languages. Even though English is the third biggest language in the world as seen before, the curricula have defined the main context to be Europe – maybe this is because it is seen as being closer to the students' experience. Moreover, the European Union was formally established in 1993 and the early 2000's could be seen as the high years of the Union, with the banknotes that replaced many of the national currencies – the core curricula are always a product of their time. In addition to skills for intercultural communication, students will continue to develop their studying skills so that they can study languages independently. Students will realize that learning to communicate in a language, they are required to work hard and practice communicational situations (LOPS 2003: 100).

Communicational skills were highly emphasized in both of the national curricula. This suggests that a considerable amount of time was given to practicing communicational situations in schools. Communication can mean numerous things (Alanen et. al 2006: 121). In its most simple form, communication happens when there is interaction or transaction (Yule 2003: 6) between at least two humans; the exchange of thoughts, emotions or information. Communication is easily comprehended as a spoken form of interaction, but it could also be other. LOPS 2003 and POPS 2004 have tables of language proficiency scales to give a framework for assessment and evaluation. These tables are based on the CEFR and are made to unify language skill assessment throughout Europe. The tables consist of four different skills that can all be seen as communicational skills - listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension and writing. For communication to be successful, the student needs to master different skills, which are for example linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences (CEFR 2003: 33). Being able to fluently use a language requires more than just putting different words together. For the words to work, one needs to master the grammar, be able to use the right style, understand context and so on. This places challenges for traditional language teaching in schools and inside classrooms. Classroom teaching provides the students with knowledge of the language and skills to use it, but is it enough to make them fluent foreign language speakers?

4 LEARNING LANGUAGES - FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Some researchers distinguish two different ways to become a language user, by learning and by acquiring a language. Learning refers to conscious studying, while acquisition refers to a spontaneous process in which language is acquired by byproduct of other activities. First languages are always acquired naturally. Yule (2003: 175) describes the first language acquisition process as being fast, usually happening without overt instruction and giving the child a communicating system that develops in interaction with other people. Communication is the key, as Yule (2003: 177) emphasizes, as a language is not something innate, but can be activated in communicative surroundings. Acquisition can be defined as “the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations” (Yule 2003: 191). Second languages can be acquired as well, but the most common way is by learning it purposely by studying. Yule (2003: 191) explains that the term learning applies to a “conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of a language.” Yule (2003: 191) continues that learning related activities have traditionally happened in schools through language teaching, and tend to result in knowledge about the language. Moreover, according to Yule (2003: 191), those who learn a second language tend not to develop the proficiency of those who have acquired a language as their first language, or by another acquiring experience like living abroad or other longer-term social interaction via the language. For this reason it is justified to study language teaching and how it could be made to resemble the acquiring process more. Understanding learning and acquiring is helpful in reviewing formal and informal learning, which could be seen as nearly synonymous terms, but might be used in different contexts.

4.1 FORMAL LEARNING

Formal learning is something familiar to everyone living in Finland from the age of seven onwards. Formal education, as the name indicates, is what happens in schools, in formal surroundings. Dib (1987) defines formal education to be a systematic and organized education model, which is structured and administrated by laws and norms, and it happens in institutions with a teacher and students. According to Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973, as quoted by Sagulin 2005: 16) formal learning happens in hierarchically formed institutions from elementary schools to universities. In addition to these definitions, Colletta (1994: 2364) describe formal education to be a systematic

way of transferring knowledge, skills and attitudes to the next generations and it has a specific format and requirements.

Formal learning happens in schools, in language classes. Even though different kinds of learning happen in school, acquiring a language usually refers to learning outside of school from one's surroundings. These two words are used to refer to these different ways of learning languages in this study. The ways of working in a classroom are pedagogical choices made by the teacher in order to work with languages and learn about the languages and the cultures. Moreover, LOPS and POPS also note that the main goal is to learn to communicate in that language. The curricula set the framework for studying, but ultimately the choices of how to study and what material to use is made by the teachers. LOPS and POPS do not state that teachers are obliged to use a textbook and a workbook in classes, but as Luukka et al. (2008) show in their study, the majority of teachers use textbooks. Furthermore, Luukka et al. (2008: 67) show that 70% of foreign language teachers think that textbooks have a significant role on language learning goals. This shows that study books have a significant role in foreign language teaching. In their study Luukka et al. (2008: 64-65) argue that study books have a great power in language teaching, as the study books are made to be consistent with the curricula and could offer a comprehensive study package for foreign language classes. On the other hand, it could also be argued that languages cannot be learnt from books alone, and the power of the publishers grows notable as they make the choices on what to include in the materials and what to omit (Luukka et al. 64-65). However, as already mentioned, the teachers have the freedom to decide what material to use and how, planning foreign language lessons according to their best understanding of language learning. Moreover, it would be useful for language teachers and other language experts to stop every now and again to the very basic question of "what is language?" Dufva (2006: 40) raises the question in her study, which is the most relevant question when considering the how and why of language teaching. The way language teachers see this question forms the way in which they teach.

Duly, languages can be taught and learnt in plentiful ways. Study books are widely used in schools as shown above. Books can offer structure and various topics to discuss in classes, but are they enough on their own? The study of Luukka et al. (2008) was set to find out what are the ways of teaching languages in Finland, comparing the points of views of teachers and their students. The most frequently used materials, according to the teachers, are text books, exercise books, hand-outs, overhead projector transparencies and the listening material of the study books (Luukka et al. 2008: 95). This shows how foreign language teaching relies on study book publishers, as hand-outs and

transparencies (or other projected material) often belong to the study material made by the publishers of the books. While there is a definite dominance of the formal teaching materials, teachers also sometimes use other material such as movies, music, the internet, games, newspapers and so on (Luukka et al. 2008: 95). Comparing to how the students experience the same question (Luukka et al. 2008: 97) it seems like the dominance of formal teaching materials is even greater than what the teachers report. This could be explained by the fact that teachers have wanted to give answers that look better, or students have wanted to emphasize the formal material to underline the possible non-motivational approach of language teachers. Either way, formal material is what structures the majority of language learning. This is, however, something to bear in mind especially when the same study (Luukka et al. 2008: 80) shows that students do not agree that teachers succeed in motivating them, and likewise teachers agree that it is difficult to motivate students. For teachers the challenge is to find material that motivates students. Moreover, as Kauppinen et al. (2008: 202) and Vaarala and Jalkanen (2011: 124) suggest in their study, as the way people read is changing, it poses new challenges for L2 teachers. According to them, it should be noticed that it is easier nowadays for the learners to get a hold of texts that interest them, and this can play a factor in changing the roles of the teachers and learners. Finding significance in texts that are used for teaching in English classes can help the learners to engage in learning. Vaarala and Jalkanen (2011: 129) argue, that if the learner struggles with a text that has no significance of reference to their lives, it will be difficult to understand why even bother to try. Therefore, teachers could plan their lessons more to meet the learners' interests when possible.

Could motivation be the key for successfully learning languages? Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) who have studied second language learning and motivation think so. Also Rasinen (2006: 34) discusses motivation, and suggests it can be found in the importance of the subject to the learner, interest and suitable challenge. But how is it possible to bring motivation into classroom learning if teachers find it difficult to motivate their students, and the majority of students do not find teachers motivating? Sullo (2007: 7-8) describes the differences between internal and external motivation. External motivation, or doing something because the teacher says so and resulting in reward or punishment will not likely give the expected results. Rather, Sullo (2007: 8) would use internal control psychology. Sullo (2007: 8) suggests that it is natural for humans to find motivation through a need for belonging, power and competence, freedom and fun. This could be translated into language learning as being able to communicate with a group that is appealing to the student, being able to function in a language and finding motivation to learn a language through something that interests the student. It is about finding subjective experience or reason to learn a language. Internal

motivation is easily awakened when working with something one is interested in. From this point of view, it makes sense to view the world of the language in a larger picture than just inside the classroom walls. Learning happens in informal contexts when learners are engaged in activities that interest them. Formal and informal learning could be used to support each other and to awake one's internal motivation to learn more.

4.2 INFORMAL LEARNING

Informal learning is closer to acquiring a language than deliberately learning it in formal setting and from purposely made learning material. Jarvis (2012: 8) suggests that while learning does happen in formal education, the terms education and learning should not be synonymous. Learning happens everywhere and teachers are not necessarily needed for learning to happen. Sagulin (2005: 17) concludes that the possibilities for learning are all around us - in addition to schools and institutions we learn in social contacts with family and friends, within our hobbies, the media, through consumerism, for example. Jarvis (1987: 16-17) and Tuomisto (1998: 43) argue that people learn through experiences. Informal learning can therefore be seen as life-long learning, as we continue to learn through our whole lives. Learning is not restricted to academic knowledge only, but as Sagulin (2005: 17) lists, learning includes attitudes, values, skills, knowledge about everyday life and influences people get from their surroundings. Sallila and Vaherva (1998: 8-9) argue that the significance of informal learning should be realized more in schools, as people collect knowledge and experiences in different contexts, which means that they learn what they need to know by active doing. This should be recognized and organized better especially in adult education, but could be useful for teaching in primary and upper secondary education as well. Traditionally, schools have been seen as the central contexts for learning in Finland, but learning outside of schools is as valuable and should be noticed in institutions that either plan or provide education. (Sallila and Vaherva 1998: 9.) According to Elinikäisen oppimisen komitea (The committee for Life-Long Learning 1997: 2) in their publication *Oppimisen ilo*, it is important to realize different learning environments that provide people the skills and knowledge they need to be able to meet the demands of the changing professional lives, as well as the changes that happen in the society. Recognition should be given to skills and knowledge gained from informal learning experiences in addition to formal education (see also Nyysölä 2003). The Committee for Life-Long Learning suggests this should be possible in schools and in work alike, which in turn would make informal learning beneficial to individuals, motivational and more appreciated. Moreover, as Aittola, Jokinen

and Laine (1994: 472) suggest, many significant learning processes happen in the free time of the students. The reason for this, as Aittola et al. (1994: 472) argue, is that school is unable to notice the fast-paced changes in youth culture and culture.

Informal and formal learning are two different ways of learning and do not exclude each other. Both ways provide important skills and knowledge (Sagulin 2005: 18, Sallila and Vaherva 1998: 9), which is why it is worthwhile to discuss the two. Benson (2011: 10) contrasts non-formal and informal learning with formal teaching and learning, which, according to him, are generally understood to take place in educational institutions. He (Benson 2011: 10) defines non-formal learning as classroom or school-based learning out of the learners' interests but do not involve tests or qualifications, whereas informal learning refers more to non-institutional programmes or individual learning projects. Learning languages needs social contacts and a context (Yule 2003: 175-201), therefore making use of informal learning within the framework of formal teaching could be beneficial. After all, bringing the language use closer to the authentic context, making language learning motivational and giving the students functional skills in a foreign language is what the goal of formal teaching should be. Learning languages for a purpose that is meaningful for the students is more motivational and it is easier to commit to working towards language competence, as Kantelinen and Varhimo (2000) found out in their study. Moreover, Ala-Kyyny (2012: 9) studying music as a support for learning languages reports that the students' interests can play a great part in language learning outside classroom. For these reasons, language teachers should reflect on materials and activities done in and out of class, and how learning could be made more meaningful to individual students.

4.3 INFORMAL LEARNING AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Informal learning can happen consciously or unconsciously (Sagulin 2005; Tuomisto 1998). Learning through experiences is unplanned and unconscious because it is not deliberate. For example, learning vocabulary and pronunciation by speaking with other foreign language users can be seen as an unplanned learning experience. However, people can make choices to practice their foreign language skills by communicating, which then would be informal, but conscious learning. Out of classroom learning can be instructed too, as Benson (2011) suggests. Learning outside of classroom does not always refer to some unplanned activity, but it can be supported by decisions and pedagogy from the teacher (Benson 2011: 11-13). Moreover, as Kalaja et al. (2011: 55)

suggest, a lot has to do with the learner's "willingness to exercise their power to act, or agency." Their study show that students can take an active role in learning outside of school which expand the contexts of learning (Kalaja et al 2011: 53). In general, everything we do with foreign languages can be seen as opportunities for us to learn or reinforce an already achieved skill. When using languages voluntarily, people tend to be engaged with subjects that are interesting to them or in situations where they need the language for communication. According to studies (Kantelinen and Varhimo 2000; Penttinen and Kyyrönen 2005), students' interests play a great part in foreign language learning. It could be argued that planning classes and material with the target group in mind would result in better learning outcomes, as the students would be motivated to learn. Furthermore, Kantelinen and Varhimo (2000: 338) who studied adult students learning professional Swedish remind language teachers that the teaching material needs to be of the appropriate difficulty level. A material that is challenging enough gives the students learning experiences, whereas material that is too challenging or too easy only generates feelings of despair or boredom (Kantelinen and Varhimo 2000).

Integrating informal learning to formal teaching could be one answer in making language teaching more motivational to students and making foreign languages a part of their lives as a skill to use, not just a skill to study. Bailly (2011: 129) suggests in her study that even though it seems like school and outside-of-school sometimes seem like two separate worlds and they do not communicate easily, these two contexts should meet on language teaching. As Bailly (2011: 129) continue, there is a correlation between what is learnt in school and how the language is used outside classroom walls. The Committee for Lifelong Learning (Elinikäisen oppimisen komitea 1997: 4) suggests that learning which happens outside of school should be recognized in formal education. Institutions that provide education should motivate students to acquire skills and experiences in their free-time, and the learning could be reflected upon together in class. It is important to notice the process of informal language learning and acknowledge it equally with skills that have been learnt in formal contexts. This could make the students appreciate the informal situations where they use foreign languages. Moreover, students could be encouraged to use studied skills outside of school, and these experiences could also be analyzed together, as suggested by The Committee for Lifelong Learning (1997: 4). This would make formal and informal learning support each other and it might even help the students to realize the skills they have and be motivated to carry on using them on their free time. Ultimately, the goal is to start using the language outside of school.

When discussing informal and formal language learning it should be remembered that there are different ways of learning languages in schools. The most typical way is to attend language classes, where the focus is on foreign languages. However, schools can also have separate curricula for studying in a foreign language. In this case there are foreign language programs or separate courses made available in selected schools in Finland. These are the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs in general upper secondary schools, or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classes that can be taught on all levels of education. These programs do not fulfil the definition of informal learning, as they are offered in formal educational settings. Maybe incidental learning would describe them better. Tuomisto (1998: 49) explains that incidental learning, meaning learning that happens as a byproduct of other activities, has become interesting to education studies. Incidental learning, according to Tuomisto (1998: 30) is the oldest form of learning. Before education became institutionalized, people learned through experiencing and communicating. In a way CLIL and IB teaching can be seen as incidental learning, as the main function of the teaching is not to learn about the language, but learn about different school subjects in a foreign language. The goal is to study different subjects in school and learn languages simultaneously (Jäppinen 2002: 13, Kaikkonen and Kohonen 2000: 7, Mäkinen 2010: 5, Pihko 2007: 20, Rasinen 2006: 33). CLIL teaching is a formal way of learning, but it differs significantly from the traditional language teaching in schools, mainly because of its dual focus on content and language. CLIL is a way of supporting traditional language learning by giving the students opportunities for broader language use and greater input in the foreign language (Korkatti 2009: 17). CLIL and IB programs are an option for students in Finland, but the clear majority takes part in the traditional education. Moreover, these different study programs may only be offered in bigger cities and thus are not available to everybody. These programs have a dialogical approach towards language learning and teaching, and although are not informal learning, they set a good example to how languages can be learnt as a byproduct of other activities. This way the foreign language becomes a natural means of communication, which is a goal in all language teaching.

Communication and how to teach it is one of the hot topics for language teachers. After all, the national core curricula aim for proficient communication in foreign languages, especially English and other languages that are studied as A-languages. Penttinen and Kyyrönen (2005: 391) discuss the demand for communication skills in the core curricula. As already shown above, both POPS and LOPS emphasize communication, but Penttinen and Kyyrönen (2005: 391) argue that schools have not been able to reach the communicative goals in teaching. This is, according to them, because communicative skills are so difficult to assess that the emphasis is still on other skills. Moreover,

language teaching should offer more authentic chances for communication in order to reach the goals in the curricula. Communication drills in study books and material are not authentic and may not be meaningful or motivational for students. Aittola, Jokinen and Laine (1994: 478) and Penttinen and Kyyrönen (2005: 389) claim that language teaching should be brought closer to the life and experiences of the students, and teaching should be closer to the language culture (kielikulttuuri) of the students. From my own experience it is safe to say that students who have studied in a CLIL setting are typically fluent speakers who are not afraid to express themselves in English. Teaching communication could take influences from CLIL classrooms where the main language of instruction and communication is the target language. Sounds overly simple, but the truth is that many language teachers refrain from using the target language when instructing in class. Even small talk with the students and taking interest in them could spark more conversation in English.

The reason why studying traditional formal language teaching is important is that it has gotten a lot of attention in the Finnish media, as well as in publications of language learning. Many believe that school English is too easy for students (Rigatelli 2011 YLE Kouluenglanti jo liian helppoa nuorille) because English has become the language of the youth cultures and media worldwide (Linnakylä 2010: 7-8; Leppänen and Nikula 2008; Luukka et al. 2008) English is a part of the everyday lives of the majority of Finns. However, at the same time, the gap between excellent and poor students has been noticed to broaden (Rigatelli 2011). It seems like the teachers of English are faced with a challenge of how to cater for all levels of students in the classroom but also, how to match the demands of the job markets and society. The expectations seem to grow and studies have shown that the students' command in English is greater than previously (Luukka et al. 2008: 18), but not all students can keep up with the expectations for different reasons. In 2014 after the matriculation examination in spring, the press (Teirikko 2014 YLE) reported that the exam in English was considerably challenging - even for some of the teachers who were interviewed. The matriculation exam is a way of examining how well the students have mastered the given goals in the LOPS, but it is also a way of ranking students based on their level of expertise (Juurakko-Paavola and Takala 2013: 27). The study by Juurakko-Paavola and Takala (2013: 27) show that even to pass the matriculation exam in A1 English, which is the most challenging and most commonly taken level in the English test, the student needs to be on level B1.2 which is already close to the goal level B2.1 in LOPS 2003. The best students achieved the skill level C1.1 (Juurakko-Paavola and Takala 2013: 27), which is higher than expected. Therefore, it is fair to suggest that the students who also use English outside of school reach the best grades, and it also reflects on the grades the students get

who only go to English lessons but are not active with using the language. Moreover, students who wish to achieve the highest grades in the English examination should make an effort with outside-of-school language use. Teachers could also attempt to incorporate informal material into English classes, in order to diversify learning and motivate students.

The interesting question is what kinds of informal material and learning could be used from the point of view of formal English teaching? If motivation is key to successful learning, what are the things teachers could do to motivate students? Surely the pressure of the matriculation exams is not enough for all students, as not everybody studies for the purpose of reaching excellent grades. In this study, the aim is to examine the relationship between language learning, motivation, language testing and real life language use.

5 DATA AND METHODS

The researcher has to make various decisions considering the study and methods. The subject and study questions affect the methods used to collect and analyse data. The main thing to consider when deciding which method to use is what one wants to achieve or find out with the study. What kind of information does the researcher want to gain with the study - general information about a phenomenon from a large amount of respondents, or would individual voice and thoughts be more suitable and informative in this particular study? Planning the study and deciding methods are an essential part of the research process, and they also dictate how the results turn out. Hirsjärvi et al. (2008: 119) explains that the whole process of conducting a study is filled with decisions from the beginning to the point when the study has been completed and the researcher has to decide where and how to publish it. Moreover, Hirsjärvi et al. (2008: 119) continue that the decisions do not necessarily make the study any more or less valuable depending on what has been done, but it should be realised that the decisions do affect how the study turns out and what results it generates. Therefore, one of the most significant stages of the study is careful planning and consideration of what one wants to find out through research.

In this study the focus is on thoughts and opinions of future English teachers. When deciding the study question, emphasis was given to the experiences of the research participants. The goal of the study is to reflect on the situation of English and English teaching in Finland. Furthermore, the study does not aim to present results in numbers or create a specific plan how to revise English

teaching in Finland. The present study is more interested in how the interviewed future English teachers see the situation. Based on their thoughts and experiences, as well as the background theory, there will be some suggestions on possible ways the teaching of English could be updated in the discussion section.

Foreign language teaching is an immense and slowly evolving institution and language teaching cannot change overnight, as argued by Kaikkonen (2005: 47). Language teaching has been criticized for not being able to keep up with the modern global changes (Luukka et al. 2008), which is somewhat justified even in the light of the results of the present study. However, critique and questioning the current trends in education is beneficial for the system as it is a way forward and development. Moreover, according to Kaikkonen (2005: 47), teachers are in an significant role in the process of developing language teaching as the way they understand language and the role of language in our lives is what defines how language is being taught and for what purposes. This perspective gives language teachers authority, but also responsibility in planning and renewing their own teaching methods in order to give students the skills needed in the world today. The backgrounds of the future English teachers are of interest because it affects the relationship with the language.

5.1 AIMS AND THE STUDY QUESTION

The aim of the present study is to explore the situation of the English language in Finland and how it is being taught in our schools as the future English teachers see it. In addition to this, it is interesting to find out how future English teachers perceive how language teaching has changed in their time, and what they think English language teaching should be like. Teaching and studying a language is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves politics, the global situation and changes, national guidelines, teachers and their views of languages teaching and the learner and their motives. This is why there is no simple solution to how to teach languages in order to achieve the best outcomes.

The main research question of the present study is as follows:

How do the English teacher trainees see the goals for teaching English in Finland?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider the following questions:

- a) *Why is English studied in Finland as seen by the interviewees?*
- b) *Have the interviewees noticed a change in English teaching in the past years and which direction should it be taken to in the future?*
- c) *How the interviewees think students could be motivated to meet the set goals for learning?*

The purpose of this study is to answer these questions by interviewing English teacher students of the University of Jyväskylä. The results from the interview are supported by the theoretical framework.

5.2 QUALITATIVE STUDIES

Because the present study is interested in the thoughts and experiences, as well as ideas of the future English teachers, the suitable method is qualitative study. The most typical division in types of study in the academic world is either qualitative or quantitative study. Hirsjärvi et al. (2008: 136) explain that the key characteristics of quantitative study are testing a hypothesis, collecting data that can be analysed numerically, presenting results in charts or in statistics, as well as making conclusions through statistical analysis. Quantitative study is convenient when the object of study is finding out information that reveals something general of the study question, or when the results are better presented in numbers or statistics. A more descriptive method would better serve the intention of the present study, which is the reason I chose to approach the study question using the qualitative study method.

When beginning the research process, what I was interested in studying was the phenomenon of English in Finland, teaching English in Finland and how future English teachers perceive the situation. Thoughts and experiences are subjective, and cannot be predicted. There is no hypothesis to be tested, but rather content to be analyzed. Hirsjärvi et al. (2008: 160) state that in qualitative study, the researcher aims to reveal something that cannot be deduced beforehand, and the results may be somewhat unexpected. There is no hypothesis and the researcher does not aim to prove a point, but rather observe and study the collected data comprehensively. Hirsjärvi et al. (2008: 160) continue, that the method for collecting data should therefore be chosen to serve the purpose of bringing out the voice of the respondents. For example, interviews and longer written responses are suitable methods for this function. In qualitative study the target group is much smaller than in quantitative study - there could only be one respondent whose experiences are the object of study.

5.3 DATA COLLECTION: INTERVIEW

The present study aims to discuss the views and thoughts of individuals as a part of a bigger context, so the most natural way to collect data was an interview. Hirsjärvi et al. (2008: 199) point out that when the object of study is a phenomenon concerning human beings, why not go to the source and ask their thoughts directly? The interview is conducted in an interactive setting, which has its advantages comparing to questionnaires, for example. It could be that the subject area of the study might be something that has not been studied comprehensively, which makes it challenging to predict where the questions lead. An interview gives the researcher an opportunity to make additional questions and ask the interviewees to elaborate or clarify their answers. Moreover, it is possible for the interviewee to raise topics and thoughts that the researcher has not been able to foresee before the interview, thus providing information more extensively than originally expected. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008: 200.) However, Hirsjärvi et al. (2008: 201) remind us that interviews have their flaws or downsides to them too; planning and setting the interview takes time, as well as the interview itself. After the interview, what has been said needs to be transcribed, which is known to take a considerable amount of time because of the care and detail that needs to be put in it. An interview as a means of collecting data is a face-to-face setting, which might have an effect on the reliability

After deciding the research questions, I started to plan how to gather relevant information on the subject. Because the subject of the study is seemingly broad and it is experienced differently by individuals, I decided to interview people and let them tell how they perceive the matter. The study is concerned with teaching English in Finland, and the idea was to compare teaching before and teaching in the future, so I wanted to hear thoughts from people who are relatively young - people who remember how it was to study English in the nineties, but have seen how English is being taught nowadays. In addition to that, I also wanted to find out how they experience the status of the English language in Finland and the Finnish society, and have they witnessed a change over the last 20-or-so years.

Given the topics I wanted to discuss, I decided that students of the University of Jyväskylä, majoring in English and being in the teacher training programme would be the most suitable group. The prerequisite was that all of the interviewees had already completed their practical teacher training. This would ensure for each of them to have some experience and perception on how English is being taught today and what the reality in schools is. I decided to conduct a group

interview because it would give the participants a chance to discuss the matter together, which would possibly generate more thoughts and profound reflection. I do not think that the questions of the study have right or wrong answers, but rather opinions and experiences. As Dufva (2011: 135) describes, a group interview might generate discussion and different points of view on the matter as ideas are discussed. The members of the group can have opposing opinions, or they can support each other - this too brings more depth to the discussion and subject matter. A group interview may also save time, as it is possible to interview several people simultaneously instead of organizing several individual interviews. However, the reserved time needs to be longer for a group interview than individual interviews.

Planning and preparing for the interview is the key to an accomplished research. Determining the research questions and how to get them answered by the means of an interview is essential. Asking the right questions will give the researcher a lot of valuable information, whereas questions that are not well directed will leave the researcher with little to work with. Having a clear idea of what one wants to ask, as well as phrasing the questions clearly, will help the research process and analysis.

The students who I interviewed were found through the email list of English students of the University of Jyväskylä. The prerequisites were that their major was English, and that they had completed their teacher training in the academic year of 2009-2010. The interview was conducted in late April, which means that the training program had just finished, and the students could still recall the experience clearly. Having just completed the training, they would presumably still be very enthusiastic about teaching, as well as have strong opinions on teaching English, which turned out to be a good time to interview them. Five university students took part in the interview. Two of the students were male and three were female. The names of the interviewees have been changed in order to ensure that the persons behind the answers cannot be identified. In this analysis the interviewees are called Minna, Jani, Jarno, Hanna and Ilona.

For the current study, I decided to do a two-part interview. This is because I discussed two different concepts; the first part was about personal experiences studying English in school and how was the situation of the English language in Finland back then. The second part of the interview discusses English teaching now, English in Finland in the year 2010 and how to achieve the kind of proficiency in the language that is expected by formal goals, as well as the context where language is being used. I was also interested to hear what future English teachers think about teaching methods and how to motivate students to learn the language for themselves. Also, the break

between the two parts gave the interviewees some time to rest and gain more energy from the snacks provided in the interview session.

The interview was recorded with a mini-recorder. This way I was able to concentrate on the discussion and leading the interview. Some notes were made during the interview, as I had the questions in front of me on paper with space to make notes if there was something important I wanted to remember later.

After the interview, it was time to transcribe what had been said. It is an important part of the data collecting process, because having the transcript on paper makes the analysis easier. Listening to the recorded data would be burdensome and slow. Having the transcript on paper, it is easier to focus on different sections and review what has been said. Also, making notes is easier, as the researcher can write in the margins of the transcript. The model for the lettering and symbols used for the transcript was taken from the Leppänen et al. (2008: 429-430) study. A rough transcription for the purposes of content analysis was enough.

5.4 DATA ANALYSIS: CONTENT ANALYSIS

When the focus is more on what is being said instead of how people communicate, one suitable method for analysis is content analysis. This is the method chosen for the current study, but as Dufva (2011: 139) and Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 91) remind us, content analysis is quite a broad definition in analysis. This is not to say that there are no rules in analyzing the content, but it fits well with a study where the main goal is to explore the thoughts and ideas of the people who have been interviewed. In this study, the theoretical framework builds the basis for the discussion, and the discussion of the group interview displays the thoughts and experiences of the future English teachers. Discussing experiences is a way of getting information on the subject that is being studied.

Content analysis is an empirically grounded method (Krippendorff 2004: 1). Empirical study, according to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 14), is a process that consists of different stages - the initial study question, researching and reading theoretical studies on the subject to construct a theoretical framework, gathering data and analyzing what has been found, and then finally reporting the study and coming to a conclusion. The stages of the study are all connected, and the nature of the study question defines which methods to use in collecting data and analyzing it. Suitable

methods for collecting data in empirical study are, for example, an interview, survey and observing situations (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2001: 14-15). These methods give the researcher the content they analyze.

There are various ways to carry out content analysis (Krippendorff 2004: 19-12, Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 91-92). Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 91-92) give an example of different stages, which is a model based on the work of Timo Laine, a researcher in the University of Jyväskylä:

1. Decide what is interesting in this data and make a **STRONG DECISION!**
- 2a. Go through the data, separate and mark the things that are included in the subject you are interested in.
- 2b. Everything else is excluded from this study!
- 2c. Collect the things you marked together and separate them from the rest of the data
3. Use for example categories, themes or types for your data
4. Summarize and conclude

With a broad data to analyze it might feel intimidating to start working with the material. With a simple guideline it is easier to proceed. The most important rule is to remember the study questions and what is interesting from the point of view of the present study (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 92). It is impossible to cover all interesting subjects in one study.

Choosing the method for a content analysis is sometimes difficult. The key, according to Krippendorff (2004: 19), is how *content* is defined. Krippendorff continues to explore different ways of defining content, from which the third definition is the most appealing in the light of the current study. This definition realizes content to “*emerge in the process of a researcher analyzing a text relative to a particular context*” (Krippendorff 2004: 19). A text can be read in numerous ways and different information can be emphasized. It is important to realize what information given by the interviewees is relevant to this study and in the given context. The analysis and results should, however, be reliable and valid. This means, according to Krippendorff (2004: 18) that the same data should yield replicable results and findings in the hands of different researchers when applying the same technique. For a study to be valid, it should be open to careful scrutiny and the “resulting claims can be upheld in the face of independently available evidence” (Krippendorff 2004: 18). These methodological requirements are common for all scientific research, and they apply for content analysis as well. A study reports what has been said and should not interpret too much.

Reporting what is being said is an essential part of any study. In addition to reporting, the role of the researcher is to analyze and interpret the content in order to make it relevant to the study question. This makes the analysis more profound than just repeating the data. When we study content, experiences, and people in general, it is important to remember that even though the study is scientifically valid and the researcher is careful when analyzing the text, there is always room for subjectivity. As Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 17) explain it, reality is socially constructed and everyone interprets it from their own point of view. The way people look at things is affected by their background and knowledge they have gained throughout their lives. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 18) continue by reminding us that even though we have to accept the fact that the study will be formed according to the researchers' decisions and interpretations, the main goal is to stay as objective as possible by reporting what has been said by the interviewees. However, no matter how well the researcher manages to duplicate what has been said in the interview, the analysis is still their interpretation. In addition, the content gathered in the interview is always the interviewees' experience and interpretation, which means that their statements are subjective. This defines the current study to be a review of how future English teachers see the situation that is being studied. With the means of content analysis, it is possible to reflect on subjective thoughts and experiences on English teaching in Finland.

6 RESULTS

The outcomes of the interview are discussed in this chapter. The interview was done in two different parts, of which the first concentrates more on how the interviewees learnt English and how they experienced English teaching in their school times. The latter section aims to find out how the interviewed future English teachers see the English teaching and the language environment in Finland in the present time. The aim is to discuss the study questions by contrasting the experiences with the official goals for teaching presented in POPS and LOPS. A short discussion of the latest reforms in the field of education in Finland will also be presented in the end of the study, as the new core curricula have been released and are put into use in 2016 autumn.

6.1 HOW DID THE STUDENTS DESCRIBE THEIR PAST EXPERIENCES

The backgrounds of the interviewed people are of interest in this study. The way one has learnt a language can reflect in their teaching and perception of learning languages. Kaikkonen (2005: 47) argues that the way teachers experience language and what the role of the language in their lives is effects on how the language is being taught. All the interviewees are from Finnish speaking families with Finnish as their mother tongue. The female students who were interviewed for this study had some family abroad; Hanna and Minna had distant family members in Australia and a part of Pilvi's family lived in Canada. However, they had nearly no contact growing up. Only Minna had contact with her Australian family members when she was growing up and speaking English became normal to her at a young age. In the following citation Minna explains a situation she had with her cousin. Thinking back she is amazed how well they were able to communicate in a foreign language even though the history with learning English was only brief. (Example 1)

(1) Eikä siinä ollu mitään ongelmaa ja mä olin opiskellu englantii vaan puol vuotta siinä vaiheessa että, et, silleen...mä oon sitäki ite miettiny et, mä, muistan ku me jossain, leikkikentällä jotain kieppejä vejettiin ja mä tipaahin sielt tangolta ja muuta ja sit me niin, ku, jotenki me sit saatiin asia selvitettyä että mulla ei oo sattunu kuitenkaa, ja siis, (naurua) ihan alkeellisella kielellä koittanu jutella että oli ihan mielenkiintosta. (Minna)

(1) It was never a problem that I had studied English for only half a year at that time, as, well... I have thought about it myself too, I can remember when we were at a playground doing swings and stuff on the horizontal bar and I fell and like, and then we, like, could understand each other that I was not hurt or anything, and so (laughing) had tried to communicate in the most basic language so it was interesting. (Minna)

This example is one of the first memories of having to use English and being successful at it. Maybe the story is still one to remember because Minna had a positive experience with the language and she felt she was able to communicate using a new language. Positive experiences with something you want to learn reinforce your interest to learn more. In addition to this, what was thought to be exceptional in the interview was the ability of children to communicate and function together with only a small basic vocabulary. This is a subject that will be discussed also later in this study, as the interviewees found out that students in schools are not willing to communicate – and even themselves sometimes struggle, as they hold their own expectations so high for themselves.

Having family members living abroad certainly can give more function to a foreign language and increase one's motivation to learn it. Palfreyman (2011: 19) call these people social resources. The language is therefore not only a subject in school, but an actual means of communication. However,

not all of us do have foreign relatives so it is important to find motivation for language learning through other means. Teachers and their attitudes towards language teaching can have a great influence on this.

Most of the interviewees did not mention any significant language contact with English before starting studying the language at school. It is interesting how the interviewed students describe what studying English was like for them when they were in school. The past in this study covers roughly the 1990's when the interviewed students have all attended basic education. All of the interviewees had started studying English in elementary school and all of them continued to general upper secondary school. The completion of the matriculation examination and graduating from general upper secondary education has been in the early 2000's for all of the interviewees. In this perspective, when the past is discussed, it is not a distant time. However, even this time has seen the change of schools in Finland and a shift from one national core curriculum to another. The national core curriculum for basic education was revised in 1994 when the interviewees were in school and the curriculum that they followed in general upper secondary school was LOPS 1994. When compared to the most recent curricula of 2014 and 2015, these documents were fairly simple.

When asked about what studying English was like in elementary school, the recollection of the interviewees differed. For one interviewee English classes had started earlier than normal, when the considered norm is the third grade. Hanna started studying English when she was on the first grade, whereas Pilvi started on the fifth grade. Three of five interviewed began studying English on the third grade which is the norm, according to Statistics Finland (2013).

Hanna said she had started studying English when she was on the first grade. She went to a normal school, but their class was an experimental group that was called the "aquarium class" (akvaarioluokka). Hanna found it difficult to explain what the class was all about, but she thought their teacher was interested in experimenting new ways of teaching and explored new trends. According to Hanna, studying English in the first two years of school was through play and fun and they did not get study books for English until they started the third grade. Hanna's teacher was also their own classroom teacher so they had a lot of English materials in their home class and English was always present. This is how Hanna describes studying English in primary school. (Example 2)

(2) No siis mejän luokanopettaja oli myös meidän englannin opettaja et sinänsä en muista et se englanti ois ollu mitenkään erillinen aine, sitä oli sillon ku oli siellä omassa luokassa ja me

laulettiin aika paljon englanniksi, ja sitten tehtiin jotain, muistan olleeni jossain englannin kielisessä näytelmässä että ehkä semmosia asioita muistaa. (Hanna)

(2) Well our own teacher was also our English teacher so I can't recall English being a separate school subject at all, we had English when we were in our own classroom and we sang a lot in English and we did something, I remember taking part in a play that was in English so maybe these are the sort of things that I can remember. (Hanna)

In a way it seems like their teacher had incorporated some elements of immersion language learning for the first two years. The kind of teaching that was given to the aquarium class students has been experimental and presumably highly modern, interpreting from Hanna's description of the teacher.

Hanna is not able to define what was done differently compared to other peers. This shows that children are able to learn in different receive different ways of teaching as they might have no clear expectations of how for example language teaching should be done. Therefore, it could be suggested that if one of the main functions and goals of language teaching is communication, then communicative ways of learning should be used already from the early stages of language learning. The subject of communicating and speaking emerged in the conversations throughout the interview, and more precisely, the poor skills of the students to communicate in English. The interviewees were keen to solve the issue by starting communicative learning already in the first grades in basic education. Suggestions for the future of English teaching will be discussed more thoroughly in the later parts of this study.

Hanna was not the only one who had vivid memories of the early days of learning English in school. Minna describes one of her teachers as one that could light a spark of interest and fascination towards the English language and culture. (Example 3)

(3) Tää voi olla yks sellanen ihan ensimmäisiä sysäyksiä miks musta on tullu englannin ope ku se on ollu jotenki silleen VAAAAAU että et isona mäki sit käyn tuolla ja silleen että ehkä matkustelun kipinä on sieltä tarttunu ja matkustelun kautta on hakeutunu opiskelemaan kieliä. (Minna)

(3) This could be one of the very first reasons why I became an English teacher as it has been so WOOOOOW that when I am grown up I too will go visit there and maybe the spark towards travelling has been lit there and through travelling I have ended up studying languages. (Minna)

According to Minna her teacher had travelled a lot, especially around Britain. She used to show her classes slides that consisted of pictures of her and her family in different locations and with various tourist attractions. In addition to this, Minna's teacher used to bring foreign visitors who were her

friends to classes. This way, as Minna describes, they were able to get authentic language input and hear the speech of native English speakers. Other materials that were used were for example foreign newspapers and magazines and other materials from ‘the real world’. It seems like the authenticity of these elements were highly important for Minna as a young learner and the key was that the materials were real and not produced for foreign language learners. They allowed Minna and her classmates to see outside the walls of the school building, which made Minna want to learn and see more. This is an example of a highly motivating teacher and teaching methods that have had such a great influence on a student that ultimately they end up becoming teachers in the language themselves.

The teacher Minna was speaking about was her first teacher to teach them English. She has had other teachers too, but according to her they only studied English from the books in secondary school and general upper secondary school. Study books are the most used materials in English teaching, even according to Luukka et al (2008: 67). However, the influence of Minna’s first teacher was so significant that the affection towards the language remained. This shows that teachers can have notable influence on their students.

Minna and Hanna had good memories of their primary school English teachers. The rest of the group did not recall anything special that had motivated or excited them when they were young. Jarno remembers their classroom was a weird shape and Pilvi says their English classes were so boring that in general upper secondary school she under achieved all the time even though she was so good in English that she was later able to reach the highest mark in the English test in the matriculation examinations. She liked English, but the content of the classes did not interest her. The interviewees mostly recall study books and when asked how they used to study vocabulary the answer was learning by heart. The dominance of study books in English teaching in the past is supported by several studies (Kalaja et al. 2011, Kauppinen et al. 2008 and Luukka 2008). The authority of the study books can be explained by the fact that they give structure to teaching and cover the things demanded by the curricula (Kauppinen et al. 2008: 206). All the interviewees recall study books, grammar exercises and fill-in-the-missing-item tasks. The missing recollection of other ways of learning could be due to the interviewees not remembering back to their school days or maybe they really did not have any outstanding learning experiences that would stay in their memories. Moreover, young language learners might not have had the ability to analyse the teaching they received. This being said, as they do have a distinct interest towards the English

language and they have reached an expert level in the language, they must have acquired other meaningful experiences with the language in order for English to become so important to them.

Pilvi speaks for motivating subjects for language classes. As already mentioned, Pilvi under achieved because she found English classes so boring. However, she had later studied English also in folk high school (*kansanopisto*) and it was not until then she started to enjoy her studies. (Example 4)

(4) Mun on pakko sanoo et mulla oli yläasteel ihan hirvittävän tylsää, ehkä vielä lukiossaki, siis englannin opiskelu, mä vasta sitten ku mä olin kansanopistossa niinku, opin tykkäämään koska siel oli niin paljon kaikkee niinku, kirjallisuutta ja kultuuria ja kaikkee niinku millä oli oikeesti mitään mielenkiintoo. (Pilvi)

(4) I have to say that it was terribly boring in upper level of basic education, maybe even in general upper secondary school, studying English was, it wasn't until folk high school where I started liking it because it had so many things like, literature and culture and all those things that are of any interest. (Pilvi)

The subjects were interesting to her as she enjoys literature and studying culture. Compared to other learning materials, the use of literature is a unique way to learn a language because in addition to language, it conveys the authentic culture of the target language (Danielsson 2000: 136). This was almost as a turning point for Pilvi in studying the language. Her conclusion is that when one is interested in the studied subject, the language learning happens almost as a byproduct. Interest towards the subject in order to make learning easier and more efficient has been shown in the study of Rasinen (2006: 34) In addition to this, she says in her later studies English was more of a means to communication and not the target of learning. In the next example she explains her thoughts. (Example 5)

(5) Mä luulen et siinä oli isossa osassa se et niinku, no aiheet ja se ehkä just sekin että kieli oli niinku välineenä ja semmosena niinkun, ilmasukeinona, eikä sellasena että et (.) hhh miten mä nyt sen selittäisin, kun me ei hirveesti sillä kielellä sit niinku tunneilla tehty mitään autenttista varsinkaan. (Pilvi)

(5) I think that it played a big part that, well the subjects and the fact that language is more of an instrument, like a means of communication and expressing one self and not just (sigh), how can I explain this, like we didn't do much with the language in [basic education] class, especially nothing authentic. (Pilvi)

She found this approach useful and motivational for her and wishes to be able to incorporate these elements into her teaching style as well. Learning as a byproduct of other activities shares the same ideology with CLIL teaching (Jäppinen 2002: 13, Mäkinen 2010: 5, Pihko 2007: 20, Rasinen 2006:

33) and can be used in language classes too. In addition to this, using authentic materials, what Pilvi mentioned in Example 5, could potentially be more motivational to students than “didactified” (didaktisoitu) materials, as Kaikkonen (2000: 53) calls unauthentic materials. Kaikkonen (2000: 53) defines authentic materials to be real and genuine products in the language, not made especially for learning. These authentic materials, according to Kaikkonen (2000: 57) could be for example literature, letters from pen pals, movies, news, magazines and encounters between people.

Other things that the research participants remembered, that all of them accept, was that British English was the variant that was mainly used in teaching materials. Jarno had had an experience with a teacher that insisted on British English words, rather than American English. According to Jarno, the teacher had a very distinct British accent and had corrected the students in some occasions when they had used American English words. (Example 6)

(6) *sit esimerkiksi tää mikä on jääny parhaiten mieleen että se kysy että ni, se nostaa roskakoria ja kysy että what is this sitten joku sanoo että trash can ni no, it's a waste paper ba:sket ((hyvin korostettu brittiaksentti)) (Jarno)*

(6) An example that stands out in my memories is when [the teacher] lifted a bin and asked us what it was, and somebody then said it's a trash can. The teacher replied *no, it's a waste paper ba:sket* (in a very stressed British accent) (Jarno)

This is just one experience, but the interviewed group as a whole confirm that school English in the 90's was mainly British English. Even the stories in the chapters happened in England. As Jani puts it, American English was the variant that existed in the outside world, but the emphasis in school teaching was on British English.

In the interview the participants were asked to discuss where they used to encounter English in their surroundings when they were growing up, and where they used the language. Many of them mention cartoons and computer games, even though the computer games were very simple compared to the games of today and the language that was used were usually separate words or short sentences. According to the interviewees, cartoons that they watched in the mornings were often in English, as nowadays most of the cartoons are dubbed over. Especially Jarno credits cartoons and movies for his English skills. He says he used to watch cartoons and movies and he believes the language input was enough for him to become so competent that in general upper secondary school he ended up skipping English courses all together and only took the examinations, as he felt the requirements were so easy for him. Jarno says that when growing up he watched

movies like Star Wars and Jurassic Park and used to recreate scenes with his friend. The language of play was English for them. For Jarno, it was not school or any teacher that lit the spark to learn the language, but it was media and films. The impact of media for language learning should be noticed as people learn from what they find interesting. Even Kalaja et al. (2011: 55-56) found out that some English students regard media to be the most important provider of learning opportunities.

Throughout the interview the theme of finding what interests and inspires you comes up. Could this be a key element for learning new skills, including languages? And if so, how can a teacher utilize this in classrooms of twenty to thirty students? The time used for language learning a week in schools is limited and it may be impossible to find subjects and ways of working that motivate every student. The aim of new teacher could be finding ways to motivate students and making them find out why English is important to them personally. If one understands why they need a skill, they will practice it.

6.2 OBSERVATIONS ON ENGLISH TEACHING IN FINLAND AT PRESENT

Discussing the present time in the interview sees the transformation of the interviewees from being a student to young adults and language professionals. The present time in this study is around the year 2010 when the interview was done. Schools followed POPS 2004 and LOPS 2003 which were already much more detailed than their predecessors. The interviewees have now had experience of language teaching through their practical training and most of their observations are from that point of view. Prior to the experience in different schools they have studied English and pedagogy, which also contributes to their thoughts.

6.2.1 Teaching methods and equipment

The interviewees had been observing Finnish schools during their practical teacher studies. The first thing that Jarno mentions that has changed in schools, comparing to their own school days, was the equipment. The University of Jyväskylä Teacher Training School (Jyväskylän Normaalikoulu) has all the latest gadgets and equipment, which gives the teacher students a safe environment to try new things. The students of the school are privileged to enjoy the latest inventions in the world of classroom appliances. However, it should be kept in mind that the equipment itself does not make teaching effective. New technology requires time and interest from the teachers for it to be

beneficial for teaching and learning. Technology offers skilful teachers new ways of presenting audio-visual material and can make classes more interesting for students. Furthermore, the practice school had new equipment but Jarno continues that when he went to do his field practice in a smaller school, it was back to basics. Old blackboards and overhead projectors are still used in some schools, so the variety in classroom equipment is vast. How classrooms are equipped vary considerably between different schools, which might be seen as an unequal situation between students.

How a classroom is equipped is one of the first things one observes when visiting different schools. However, teaching methods and the styles of different teachers are what make teaching inspiring. The interviewees were asked if they noticed any differences in teaching styles between different teachers, and if they felt it had changed from what they had seen as students. Jarno shared a troubling observation of a teacher he followed in the field practice. (Example 7)

(7) Ku olin siellä kenttäharjoittelussa niin siellä oli tällöinen kohta eläkkeellä oleva opettaja, joka on selkeesti opettanu aina ihan samalla tavalla ja ei siellä nyt ollukaan missään koulussa mitään pürtoheitintä parempaa muttei sekään ollu koskaan käytössä, et se oli silleen pysyny ihan siinä samana mitä niinku se on ollu siellä sillon jo kun mun ikänen serkkuki on siellä ollu, että ei se oo siitä niinku muuttunu. (Jarno)

(7) During my field practice I met this old teacher who was close to retirement, she had clearly always taught exactly in the same way and well, they did not even have anything else in the classrooms than old overhead projectors, but that was never in use either, the teacher had stayed exactly the same over the years as like, from the times my cousin who is my age who went to that school, and nothing had changed. (Jarno)

This statement describes the teaching style that Jarno observed. It seems outdated and it can be detected in the tone of Jarno's voice that he did not find it very inspirational. Experienced teachers may have teaching methods that work brilliantly, and usually this is the case. However, as language is a product of its time and the target audience in basic education is the youth, it could be advisable to refresh ones teaching materials and strategies in order to stay up to date and interesting. Also Penttinen and Kyyrönen (2005: 389) suggest in their study that language should be brought closer to the life and experiences of the students, in order to make teaching more meaningful to the learners.

The interviewees reported they saw a wide range of different teaching styles and teachers in their practical training. As shown in section 3.2, teachers in Finland have the freedom to plan their own teaching quite freely. The example above was only of one classroom and the teaching style represented something that was not interesting to pupils. The interviewees did not give more

examples of teachers that had not updated their teaching, which can be seen as positive finding in general. The interviewees agreed that it was an eye-opening chance to observe and follow different teachers, as they could pick influences from different teaching styles. Pilvi points out that she noticed differences in even how teachers work with the classrooms and what the discipline is like. Some teachers, according to Pilvi, are very permissive and the interaction between teachers and students is seemingly free. Some teachers on the other hand are more demanding with stricter rules. Pilvi also noticed that teachers plan their lessons differently, as some may have lesson plans that are quite precise, whereas others might plan more freely. These observations are meaningful for teacher students, but the differences between teachers may reveal something more elementary. Teachers work through their persona and lessons reflect the person who gives them. As it was already mentioned before in chapter 3.2, the teachers' idea of teaching and understanding of why we learn languages have an effect on what and how is taught in classes. Different styles attract different students. Moreover, different ways of teaching and materials that are used may have a great effect on the motivation of students, as already discussed earlier. Minna concludes in the interview that even though there are differences between teachers and classes can be held in many different ways, what she realised in her practical training was that the learning outcome can be equally as good. There is no one right way of teaching and that is the challenge in a class of 25 pupils – how to make learning English important and interesting for everyone. Hanna mentions that even though she observed that most teachers had routines they repeated in their work, the teachers appeared to be willing to try new teaching methods and ideas too. However, as pointed out by Hanna, during teacher studies the schools one observes are the university teacher training schools which are the most progressive schools in Finland. It seems like in the interviewees thoughts the university teacher training schools are more up to date in their methods and equipment than other schools in Finland. According to the interviewees, study books are used a lot during language classes. This observation is in line with the study of Luukka et al. (2008), which shows that the majority of teachers use textbooks.

Other observations regarding teaching material or activities that were done in schools to motivate students were pen pals. Pen pals seem like an age-old invention but it still works. Jarno had a group he worked with that had pen pals from France, but the language they used for communication was English. The idea of exchanging letters to hear what your friend has been doing could nowadays be done using emails too, but maybe writing on paper is easier to arrange in classrooms. The interviewees agree that having pen pals is beneficial if the partner is someone you are interested in hearing from. (Example 8)

- (8) *Jani:* *Se on ainaki sit ehkä se et sitä on pakko käyttää sitä englantia kun ei voi tukeutua siihen suomeen enää mitenkään et*
Minna: *Nii ja se on ehkä silleen tavallaan motivointikeino, että*
Hanna: *Mmm, niin kun se kieli tavallaan siirtyy sieltä luokasta sit siihen oikeeseen elämään*
Muut: *((nyökyttelyä, niin....))*
Pilvi: *Ja se on oikee väline*
Jani: *Mmm, nii just*
Pilvi: *et sitä todellaki tarvitsee, niinku, saat sen sun pointin välittymään*
- (8) *Jani:* Well at least you have to use English when you can't rely on Finnish anymore
Minna: Yeah and maybe it's a way to motivate, so
Hanna: Mmm, it's like the language almost like moves from the classroom to real life
Others: ((nodding, agreeing))
Pilvi: And it's a real means [of communication]
Jani: Mmm, that's right
Pilvi: that you really need it, like, to get your meaning accross

Organizing pen pals for a classroom is a doable task and if students are short for ideas on what to write, teachers could also suggest topics that are related to what has been studied or things that have happened during the week.

6.2.2 Excellent in theory but shy in practice

English is the most studied language in Finland, as almost every student studies it throughout their school years (Statistics Finland 2013). The level of expertise, therefore, could be expected to be high. It seems like English is everywhere and one could not completely avoid the language contact even if they tried to. In addition to this, the official goal for learning languages set the bar seemingly high. However, the interviewees are worried of the growing gap between the excellent and the poor students, as they have noticed in their practical teacher training that not everyone can meet the high expectations. The same gap has been discussed by Rigatelli (2011). As it was mentioned before, if one lives in the rural areas of Finland and happen to be a member of the older generations it is possible that you never learnt the English language in formal or informal contexts. The expectations for the younger generations are the opposite – however, Hanna has noticed that not all young people in Finland know how to operate in the language. (Example 9)

(9) *Mut ei kyllä ihan kaikki nuoretkaa, mun mielestä se on vähän harhaluulo et osais, et vaikka osais vähänki niin sit on se kynnys käyttää sitä niin on sit niin kauheen korkee. (Hanna)*

(9) But not all young people do either, I think it's a bit of a misconception that everyone could, and even if they did know at least some [English] then there's the reluctance to use it. (Hanna)

Certainly, being able to use a language is different from being willing to or being brave enough to communicate in it. In addition to practicing skills in theory, learners should also rehearse oral communication skills in order to make speaking feel natural to them.

During the practical teacher training the students got to witness pupils that were equipped with very different skill levels. In the interview they expressed their worries for the students who underachieve or do not meet the given goals. In some cases, the interviewees were even somewhat surprised as they anticipated the pupils would perform better than they did. Minna had held a word test to the class she was teaching and noticed the result was poor. (Example 10)

(10) Mä just taas tässä tarkistin niitä viimeisiä sanakokeita siihen luokkaan, ni, siis varmaan puoleen kirjoitin äffän niihin papereihin, oli vähän silleen että ((puistattaa)) (Minna)

(10) I was just correcting the latest word tests that were held to the class, and, so I think I had to write an F in at least half of the papers, I was just like ((shudders)) (Minna)

Of course, a poor result can be explained by a number of things, and one of them could be that the test was simply too difficult. However, the vocabulary that is tested is always from the text or the chapter that the pupils have been studying. If pupils have not done their part in learning, meaning that they have not studied the given words or become familiar with the text and exercises as they have been supposed to, then the result cannot be good. Minna did not specify which age group she was teaching, but it seems like studying motivation can become a problem when one reaches the higher grades of basic education or secondary education. Indeed, the interviewees pondered whose job is it to make students work. Learning languages requires hard work and it usually does not happen only by watching movies. Pupils have to put in effort, but the teachers have a role as well. Teaching learning skills and making the learning interesting for the pupils are a part of the job of the teachers. However, it should be noted that in order to learn, in addition to motivation, pupils should have cognitive skills that enable them to learn (Bailly 2011: 129). As Kivirauma (2017) mentioned, nowadays classes are highly heterogeneous in what the learners' capabilities to learn are.

One way of motivating students to speak and use oral language skills is using as much English in the class as possible, as Pilvi suggests. Giving instructions and general chitchat in the target language is a way of producing more incidental learning (Tuomisto 1998) in language classes. Pilvi's idea of language teaching is to maximize the language input, but her practical training revealed that the pupils of upper level on basic education did not always agree. (Example 11)

(11) *Kyl mäki luokassa oon huomannu et jotku on ollu ihan että no sanokko saman suomeksi (Pilvi)*

(11) I have also noticed that some students are all like say that again in Finnish (Pilvi)

One of the key skills being practiced in teacher training is how to give instructions in a clear and simple manner. Instructions should be so clear that one they could be given in the target language as well. However, this again is one of the decisions that teachers make for themselves. If a group is not used to English instructions, it takes time to adjust to them. English instructions are a simple way of increasing target language input as Pilvi observed. Furthermore, as English is taught approximately two to three hours a week in basic education, or more precisely, two three times 45 minute classes, the amount of language contact in school is not too extensive (POPS 2014 Appendix 4 Perusopetuksen tuntijako). Therefore all minutes given to language lessons are valuable and could be put into efficient use. Why speak Finnish in an English class unless the subject is grammar, which might in itself be intricate enough so discussing it in one's mother tongue is justifiable. The challenge for the teacher is to find the right balance in everything they do in classrooms, when is the level right to suit the weakest and also the strongest language learners, and everyone else in between.

The differences between learners and their skill levels were a topic of discussion during the interview. Admittedly there have always been differences between learners and their abilities, but the interviewees felt like the gap between the weaker and stronger language learners has grown. (Example 12)

(12) *Minna: Mut voisko se olla että tässä ois silleen, tulossa silleen että ne erot tavallaan kasvaa että et osa on niinku tositosi hyviä ja ne saattaa olla niinku monissa, monilla, monilla osa-alueilla jopa niinku parempia ku opettajat mut että sitten tosiaan niitä huonompiakin on jotenki niinku tullu enemmän jotka ei niinku ymmärrä sit, tai, en tiää.*

Pilvi: Ja sehän siinä on kauheeta et ku siis musta tuntuu et enkussa on hirveen korkeet vaatimustasot nykyään et sieltä just tipahtaa ne kaikki aina

(12) *Minna: But could it be that, like, coming to the point where the gap is getting bigger*

between learners, that there are ones that are really really good and like even better than the teachers, but then there are also pupils that are just lousy and somehow this group is getting bigger, who don't even understand, or, I don't know

Pilvi: And what is the most hardest part in this is that I think the expectations in English are amazingly high nowadays so not everyone can keep up

There are many possible factors that contribute to the perceived growth in the gap in skill levels. On the other hand, as already discussed, English is the language of culture, media and social media and it surrounds us. Opportunities for informal learning are everywhere, and some teenagers seem to absorb every word they hear – even their accent is impeccable. Motivation and interest to actively learn after school play a significant part (Bailly 2011, Kalaja et al 2011). However, group sizes are growing and not all pupils are interested in embracing all the opportunities to learn English, in school or outside it. It is clear that the competence between youngsters that use English daily and the ones who do not is worlds apart from each other. The struggle for teachers is to adapt their teaching to all levels of learners and cater for their needs. This is a challenge, especially when the group could be a mix of pupils with learning disabilities and different backgrounds with learning in general. Kivirauma (2017: 29-30) points out the challenge for modern school, as inclusion brought pupils with learning disabilities and other challenges to the general teaching groups, it is impossible to expect anymore that all pupils could reach the same goals in school subjects in the same time frame. The heterogeneity in classrooms is a challenge that has to be taken into account when planning teaching. Moreover, some teachers at schools have suggested that as the group sizes and heterogeneity grows but teacher resources decrease, it will become more difficult to reach the given goals for the groups in whole. This could be one factor behind the perceived growth in variety in learner skill levels.

As high level of expertise is discussed, Jarno raises the question of different types of people, different kinds of knowledge and skills and whether everyone needs to know English. (Example 13)

(13) No toi on lopulta tommonen just sellanen niinku ikaikanen haave ehkä enemmänki ollu se et kun, ja nykyään vielä enemmän koko ajan puhutaan silleen että miten Suomesta pitää saada hyviä osajia ja blaablaa kaikkee tätä vaikka se tilanne on aina ollu niinku kautta ihmishistorian se että on niitä huonompia jossaki ja on niitä parempia jossaki. Se että jos se pointti on saada niinku kaikista luokista aina että jokainen osais jos niinku englannista puhutaan että käyttää sitä kieltä yhtä hyvin, ni eihän siihen ikinä päästä. Et kyllähän niitä huonoja on ollu aina ja niitä tulee aina olemaan et se justiin että se .hhh tarkoitus niinkun että kaikkien pitäis olla hyviä, koska, jokanen on varmasti hyvä jossakin mutta se että niinkun, ei välttämättä tarvi sitä englantia. (Jarno)

(13) Well that is more like the age-old dream, and nowadays even more so as it is constantly discussed that we need to have professionals in Finland and blaablaa and all that, even though the situation has always been the same that some people are good at some things and others know something else. If the idea is to make every pupil of the class similarly good in English, then, we will never achieve that. There has always been poor pupils and there always will be (sigh), I mean, everybody is good at something and that doesn't have to everyone should be good at English. (Jarno)

The interviewees discuss this thought and in a way agree, because the society needs people with different kinds of knowledge and skills. However, they also agree that teachers cannot simply excuse the pupil from studying, as some students need more time to learn and English is studied on all levels of education in Finland. Different ways of teaching and studying could help the learner forward even if at some point they might struggle with learning. Minna also points out a valid argument of equipping learners with skills they might need in the future, as it is impossible to determine or foresee what will happen later in the lives of the pupils. (Example 14)

(14) *Nii eiku sit vaan, sit vaan mietin sitä että ku sä jotenki sanoit siinä että ku jos joitaki kiinnostaa eri asiat ni pitäiskö niiltä sit tavallaan vaatii vähemmän, et jos ne näkee selvästi et ne ei oo suuntautumassa mihinkään sellaselle alalle et missä ne ei tarvihtis englantia tai jotain, ni mun mielestä se on vähän hass- tai silleen mä en niinku ite lähtis tolle linjalle kuitenkaan että ei niinku vaatis niiltä oppilailta, koska, koska ne on vielä lapsii eihän ne sitä tiiä että mitä, mihin niitten elämä niit vie ja sitte ku ne ei ookaan oppinu jotain ni sit ne onki jossain lirissä ku ne joutuu sitä kieltä käyttämään. (Minna)*

(14) I was just thinking that when you said something along the way of, like, if some pupils are interested in different things that should we demand less of them, like if we could clearly see that they are not planning towards a career where they needed English or something, then, in my mind that sounds a bit funny as I would not choose that path that I would expect less of these pupils, because after all they are still children and they cannot know what will become of their lives and if they hadn't learnt something then they will be in big trouble if they end up needing that skill. (Minna)

Minna brought up an important point that the basic education and upper secondary school aims towards. The task of the school is to provide learners with a set of skills they can use to draw from in later life (Committee for Life-Long Learning 1997). The interviewees agreed on this, however, the problem of different of learners on different levels remain.

A classroom in a school is never a uniform group of language learners, as the pupils' backgrounds, interest, motivation, learning abilities and informal language contacts have a great impact on how individuals develop as language users. However, when looking at an individual learner, one may have varied skill levels in different areas of language proficiency. Competence in a language contains different skills that have also been noticed in the goals set in the core curricula, as well as

the Common European Reference for Languages. These are listening, reading, writing and speaking. A language learner will not master all these different skills unless they are being practiced. Therefore, it is important to assess and notice the abilities of the learners' on the different areas of language proficiency, as well as practice them. It is not uncommon that language learners develop higher skills in understanding and writing, compared to spoken language.

The contradiction in different skills was noticed by the interviewees in their practical training. Students that are good in theory, in written skills and reading, might not be so strong in spoken or oral skills. Moreover, if communication skills are a goal in language learning, pupils fall behind if that area of language use is the most difficult part for them. This is what Jarno had observed in the practice school in general upper secondary school. (Example 15)

(15) Sen näki just lukiolaisissa sen että ni vaikka ne kirjallisesti saattoki tietää juttuja hyvin, mut sitte ku siellä oli yks amerikkalainen siellä tota niiden ryhmässä mukana sitten se kun kun oli niinku kaveri niitten joidenki kanssa ja sitte ku ne siellä jutteli kaikkea muuta aina ennen ja jälkeen tunnin ja tunnin aikana, niin kyllähänse oli aika vähäistä mitä ne pysty oikeesti puhumaan ne niinku suomalaiset. (Jarno)

(15) It could be seen in upper secondary students that even though they were skilful in theory and written exercises, but when they had one American student in their group and like as he was a friend with some of the people and was talking to them always before and after class and even during class, that it was not much that the Finnish students could say to him. (Jarno)

Jani points out that even though the pupils might be highly skilful in theory and they perform well in written tasks, they might not know how to use that knowledge when they speak. Jarno continues by saying that the students do try to communicate, but what they manage to speak is quite simple. According to Penttinen and Kyyrönen (2005: 391) schools have not reached the goal that has been set for communicational skills. The texts and vocabulary the students work with in general upper secondary school are quite complex and demanding, which implies high expectations for communication too. In Jani's words, even if you know the theory of music well does not necessarily make you a skilful musician. (Example 16)

(16) No tuota, semmonen hyvä vertaus mitä itellä ainaki musiikista jääny ni, joku voi osata musiikin teoriaa ihan tosi hyvin mut se ei tarkoita yhtään sitä että osaa niinku soittaa vaikka näin, se on sama vähän että sä voit osata kieliopin tosi hyvin mut ese ei tarkoita et sä osaat puhua tai käyttää sitä sit tositilanteessa. (Jani)

(16) Well, there's a good comparison that I have heard in accordance to music, that you can be excellent in the theory of music but it doesn't mean that you can play the instrument, like,

it's possible you know the grammar in languages but it doesn't mean that you are able to speak it or use it in real life situations. (Jani)

The same could be said of learning languages, as Jani compares the excellent knowledge in theory and on paper, but using the language for communication in real situations might be a whole different story - the skills must be used in practice for them to develop.

Minna had also done a part of her practical teacher training with the same students as the boys in the example above. She noticed that even the students who got straight tens in their exams had difficulties communicating with the American exchange student. She heard the Finnish students discussing about spoken language and the vernacular they had difficulties with. The example illustrates the conversation Minna had heard. (Example 17)

(17) sen kanssa on niin tosi vaikee puhua ku se puhuu jotai puhekielist juttuu ja en minä ymmärrä siitä yhtään mitään (Minna)

(17) It's so difficult to talk to him because he speaks in slang or something and I can't understand a thing (Minna)

It is true that if we spend the majority of our time studying Standard English, it is difficult to follow different dialects and vernacular. It seems important to base one's knowledge on Standard English as that is the foundation for different varieties and also the variety that is used in official contexts. This helps one in studies and professional life, for example. However, it is equally important to become familiar with different varieties, slang and global English, as in the real world Standard English is seldom the variety people speak. Again, if communication is the goal in language teaching, students should get the opportunities to practice it. This being said, it is a challenge for teachers as most of the teaching material is Standard English.

Teaching materials were another topic of discussion in the interview. As shown above, teaching material used to be mainly Standard English. Moreover, the chosen variety was British English, as the interviewees remembered. The only times other variants were heard were alongside with the chapters that dealt with America or Australia. After the chapter was finished, the characters in the teaching materials returned to very English-sounding places like Stratford-on-Avon, as Jarno jokingly comments. The interviewees were asked if the teaching materials nowadays gave a wider selection of varieties. Jani mentions that he has encountered chapters in teaching materials that were

spoken in Indian English, but again it was merely a chapter that discussed India. Jani gives an example of how the chapter was introduced to the learners. (Example 18)

(18) Se oli jännä se opettaja hirveesti sano että mulle niinku ennen sitä kuunteluu et sit painotat niille oppilaille että ”joo tää on niinku eri aksentti nyt että sen takia tää kuulostaa ehkä vähän hassulta ja” (Jani)

(18) It was a bit strange how the teacher told me to emphasize to the pupils before the listening comprehension that “this is a different kind of accent now and that’s why it sounds a bit funny and” (Jani)

How the variants are presented to the learners have an effect on how they perceive them. If different accents are introduced as ‘funny’ we will maintain the idea that everyone should sound the same. Therefore, it seems like different variants belong to distant countries and are not usually met in every day interaction. The interviewees suggest that as students and pupils in schools are not used to different variants, especially if their language contact is limited to school teaching, this might result into raising the bar too high for speaking. In opinion of the interviewees it would be healthy to hear different kinds of accents and dialects, including second language speaker accents. Hanna points out that it is quite probable that after one leaves the Finnish school system they will continue to academic studies or work, and the situations where one uses English is with others who do not speak it as their first language. Therefore the goal might not even have to be Received Pronunciation, but functional skills in English even with a Finnish accent.

Hanna gives an example in the interview about teaching materials she used in her practical training in upper secondary general education. There was a chapter of a famous Finnish footballer Aki Riihilahti. Aki has played in England and Hanna remarks that he speaks good English. The chapter was an interview with Aki Riihilahti, but what irritated Hanna was that the text was read by a native English speaker and not by Aki, or some other Finnish voice actor. (Example 19)

(19) Mä en niinku voinu ymmärtää et miks ei sinne voi laittaa sit jos hänellä oiski nyt suomalainen aksentti mut kuitenkin se et eiks se ois kuitenkin semmonen malli mihin oppilaat vois samaistuu ”okei et tääki on suomalainen et mäki vois puhua englantia” mut sit siellä on kuitenkin aina joku natiivi puhumassa. (Hanna)

(19) I can’t understand why they can’t use him, even though he had a Finnish accent but couldn’t it be like a model with whom the students could relate to ”okay so he is also Finnish so I think I could speak English” but there’s always some native speaker speaking anyways. (Hanna)

As seen in the example, teaching materials strive for Standard English and not necessarily lingua franca. Hanna makes a valid point with giving role models to learners, somebody who they can relate to and therefore maybe build up courage to speak more. Encouraging learners to use language has a lot to do with creating a good and safe environment where to practice. Students should feel it is alright to speak even though their English might still be far from perfect, or, native-like. This should also be acknowledged by the authors of teaching materials. Comparing learner skills to native speaker skills can even make future language professionals shy, let alone young learners in basic education.

One topic of discussion in the interview was insecurity with language skills. Some students feel so timid to speak in the classroom that they start to cry when it is their turn to express something in front of everybody, as Minna had experienced. But, the future English teachers also admit that they sometimes feel insecure. A couple of the interviewees felt that it is sometimes difficult to reveal to native speakers that they were studying to become English teachers. Even though they understand that not even teachers have to acquire native-like skills, they still for some reason expect a lot from themselves. This question of how to relax while speaking will be discussed later in the chapter that deals with how the teachers-to-be see future English teaching.

6.2.3 Where is English used by modern youth?

As discussed in the earlier sections, English is widely studied in Finland – almost every pupil studies English in the Finnish school system (see eg. Statistics Finland 2013, Leppänen et al. 2009). Studying in itself is beneficial, at least from the point of view of teachers and language professional. What is more interesting is to find out *where* are all the skills used? One aim of the interview was to find out where English is used by the youth and how does this show in how they learn languages. Moreover, it would be interesting to find out ways to utilise informal learning in the formal context of schools.

The interviewees started by reflecting on their own use of English in everyday life. Jarno and Jani are both enthusiastic about music, both listening to different sorts as well as avid players themselves. Jani says that if he wants to seek information and browse the internet on the subject, the language that he uses is English. The rest of the interviewees agree that English is the language for finding information on hobbies and other subjects of interest, as it is the language of the World Wide Web. In addition to hobbies, the interviewees agree that English is the language for science

and research, as well as arts. Jyväskylä is a fairly multinational city so the interviewees report to have some communicational situations in English with friends or at work. Minna worked at a grocery store at the time of the interview and she had foreign customers almost daily, as she worked in the area that is known to be inhabited by people of mixed backgrounds. Hanna on the other hand considered English to be the language of emotions for her, because her boyfriend was foreign and the mutual language was English. It is clear that where one uses English differs a lot and is affected by ones surroundings and activities. Therefore, there is no one truth about the English use of the Finnish youth. However, a general picture of where English is used by the younger generations can be drawn.

The interviewees were asked about the youth and if they had noticed where they use English outside of school. The most common answer was the internet and computer games, or, online gaming. Hanna had an example of vocabulary that had not been taught in school. (Example 20)

(20) Mä kirjoitin kirjeitä seiskaluokkalaisilla ja pari poikaa kirjotti sellasta juttua jostain terrosisteista ja pommeista siis tosi niinku hienoo kielt, siis semmosii ettei taatusti oo siellä tunneilla opiskellu mistään tällasist, mitäköhän sanoja siellä nyt sit sattuu olemaan mutta siis mä vähän epäilen että pelaakohan ne sit jotain pelejä, emmää nyt oikein usko et ne mistään uutisistakaan niinku nappailis. (Hanna)

(20) I had my seventh graders write letters and a couple of boys were writing some kind of stuff about terrorists and bombs and like very good vocabulary, I mean they for sure hadn't studied these kinds of things in class, whatever the words were but I suspect that they must play some sorts of games, I can't imagine they had learnt them from the news or anything either. (Hanna)

Spending time with computer games was also one way for the interviewees to learn English, as Jarno shared memories from his childhood. In order to succeed in a game you have to understand the used language, therefore there is a real motivation to learn. The study by Saarenkunnas (2006: 215) concludes when playing computer games, English is in active use by young players and they can learn vocabulary, meaning and even to produce English. The games used to be quite simple and there was not much text in them, as Jarno explained. However, the games nowadays are much more complex and online gaming has brought possibilities for real time communication with people around the world. Therefore possibilities for learning and interaction in English are vast. Learning English has become a byproduct of leisure activities and people who play games a lot use English daily.

Other ways the interviewees suspect their pupils spend time with English are quite common everyday things like listening to music, watching movies, browsing the internet, reading books and some might travel and of course how language is present in our surroundings. Similar findings of English language contact has been made by Leppänen et al. (2008: 94) Pitkänen-Huhta (2008: 341). English is seen nowadays much more in television commercials or other media. In addition to this, Minna mentions that Jyväskylä is fairly international and “there are a lot of foreign people and languages that can be heard in the city area”. How much English or other languages can be heard in one’s surroundings is again related to where one lives, as the bigger cities are more multicultural than the rural areas.

The answers to the question were somewhat vague or uncertain, which shows that the interviewees were not familiar with where English is used by the teenagers. As the interviewees were not yet teachers, but had only done their limited time in practical teacher training, it is understandable that they had not become too familiar with how the pupils spend their free time. However, it could be beneficial for teachers to be aware of the habits of the pupils, regarding where and how they use English outside classrooms. This could support teaching and could give ideas for language lessons.

6.3 WHAT TEACHER STUDENTS THINK OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE FUTURE

Languages and the way we use them change as the whole world changes. Future English teachers cannot simply continue teaching the way they were taught when they were in school, but they need to renew their thoughts and ways how they see teaching. In order to do this, the young teachers need to be aware of the need to learn English in Finland, why and where the younger generations use it and what are the goals or adequate skill level for learning English. This section of the analysis tries to find out answers to these questions, asking the interviewees about their views of future English teaching.

When the interviewees were asked what are the important skills that one needs to learn from English teaching in schools, they were at first somewhat startled. It is not an easy question but deserves some thought, because it could be argued that teachers need to have an idea why they teach and who the target group is. Different kinds of learners need different skills – in general education students learn general skills, whereas adults in working life need more targeted vocabulary (Johansson et al. 2011). In this study the target group is basic education and secondary

education in general schools. After giving the question some thought Hanna breaks the silence by saying “I suppose the goals are written in some framework”. It is good that teachers are aware of the national core curricula and the Common European Framework, as especially the curricula are something they have to base their teaching and assessment on. However, it is not enough to know that the goals are somewhere in the framework texts, as teachers need to know what they teach and how to plan their teaching to meet the given goals. This requires the teachers to reflect on their own action and ways of teaching.

The interviewees all agree that everyone will benefit from basic language skills that will help them in everyday situations. Pilvi mentions it is important to know how to give directions, jokingly, and the interviewees find this funny because asking for directions and giving them is one of the first things that is practiced in language books. However, giving and asking for directions, doing the groceries and buying train tickets belong to a set of basic skills one need when travelling, which is something most people do at least at some point of their lives as Jani reminds the others. Hanna and Minna discuss communicative competence and being able to manage in situations one might not be prepared for. (Example 21)

(21) Niin, siis sillä tavalla että ei mee sormi suuhun lähtee jonnekki et pystyy niinku, jos ei ihan sillä kielellä niin pystyy sitten jotenki tukemaan sitä viestintää sitte, ehkä se viestinnällisyys (Minna)

(21) Well, in the way that you don't get helpless of what to do when you go somewhere, that you are able to, even if it's not in the language then you find a way how to support the communication, well maybe it's communicational skills (Minna)

The interviewees discuss what communicative competence means. According to Jarno it is important to be able to speak freely without being too attached to thinking there is just one correct answer, in which he refers to popular vocabulary or grammar drills where the pupils have to fill in the blanks and know the exact right way of answering. Moreover, Jarno continues that what one should learn is to explain what you mean and find a way to express oneself even though one might be lost for words.

What the interviewees describe in their discussion is communication and the emphasis is on being able to manage communicational situations even though the speaker's vocabulary might not yet be broad. Communicational skills have been set as one of the main goals in foreign language learning

(Alanen et. al 2006: 212). However, when they were asked if communication was the most important thing in English teaching, they hesitated. Minna elaborates as follows. (Example 22)

(22) no siis se viestinnällisyys joo mutta siis, et sä et sä voi olla viestinnällinen jos sulla ei oo tietyn laajuinen sanasto ja sitte, sit et, et kyllähän se kielioppikin tukee sitä viestintää (Minna)

(22) well yes communicational skills, but you can't communicate if you don't have a vocabulary of some sort and that, then, like the grammar supports communication too (Minna)

Minna continues by saying that she does not think the pupils need to have the perfect grammar in order to communicate, but you cannot teach communication without vocabulary and grammar. If one does not know how to use the language, communication is difficult or even impossible. Maybe the question then is how to teach all the different areas of language and what is the adequate amount of grammar and vocabulary. Jaakkola (2000) reflects between accuracy and fluency in her study on communicative language learning. According to Jaakkola (2000: 151) fluency is what is emphasized in communicative language learning and the most important thing is to be able to convey a message to others. However, she (ibid.) continues that in general schools learners who require high skills in language proficiency should also be taken into account. In addition to this, as Jaakkola (2000: 51) concludes, accurate expressions support fluency and communicational efficiency – a balance between accuracy and fluency could be set as a goal for teaching. On a side note, in language immersion groups children are not given separate lessons on grammar or even vocabulary, but they learn to use the language correctly through frequent use in play and activities (Jäppinen 2002, Pihko 2007, Mäkinen 2010).

The interviewees bring out the topic of general upper secondary school and the high expectations for vocabulary. They ask whether it really is necessary to teach all the vocabulary to every student, as the last compulsory courses are very demanding and the subjects might feel somewhat arbitrary. Hanna gives an example. (Example 23)

(23) Vähä jos katoo niinku jotai lukiolaistenki, mitä sanoja niiden pitäis niinku osata ni niit on ihan älytön määrä kaiken maailman, jossain tiedekursseilla maanviljelyyn liittyvää sanastoo et se on ihan käsittämätöntä se sanasto mitä pitäis hallita (Hanna)

(23) If you have a look at the study material of the general upper secondary students, the vocabulary they need to know on science courses, like agriculture and what have you, it's quite unbelievable what kind of vocabulary they need to master (Hanna)

The challenge is to choose the subjects and skills that are relevant to all students, but when we look at the target group of the seventeen-year-olds then maybe agriculture and other very specific vocabulary may not be beneficial for the group as a whole. There is no harm in learning new words, but is it motivational in this time of a student's life? Pilvi suggests that maybe some of the courses could be elective for the ones that are really interested in the language and want to challenge themselves. She reminds the group in the interview that even her, who graduated with the highest mark (*laudatur*) in English struggled with courses during school, as the teaching and subjects were so far from her own interests and needs. The situation could be a lot more difficult to those who struggle even with the basic skills in the language (Vaarala and Jalkanen 2011).

Nowadays general upper secondary schools, as well as vocational schools are struggling with resources and the number of elective courses is being cut down. However, one way of providing more challenge and language studies for the advanced students and those who are willing to study more English would be through elective courses. This way the compulsory courses could be more simple, at least in the course subjects and content. Lack of interest towards English as a language was not considered an issue by the interviewees. According to the interviewees what affect most in motivation are the subject choices and working methods in English classes. The problem could be targeted with elective studies and there could be more courses that are aimed for the students who need more practise and encouragement with basic skills too.

In the previous section 6.2 Jarno's thoughts on the level of expertise were discussed, him saying that we will never achieve a situation that all our students will be excellent, or even good at English. According to him it is like an age old dream to make all students good, but the reality in Jarno's opinion is that we will always have the good and the poor students, and the rest are somewhere in between. Jarno adds that everyone is good at something, but it is not necessarily English. This seems realistic and the challenge for the teachers is to differentiate their classes to suit all learners. The excellent students need more challenge so that studying remains meaningful for them and the poorer students need support and exercises to suit their abilities. However, as the interviewees discuss, it is the job of the school to try to provide all the students with at least some English skills, as everyone studies it and English is one of the biggest languages in the world. The interviewees fear that some student might opt out of language learning if they feel they are struggling too much and English becomes overwhelmingly challenging for them. The national core curriculum does set a seemingly high expectation for pupils in basic education and even more so for students in upper

secondary general school, therefore it would be beneficial to think about the ways of how to make English more interesting to even the students who do not yet meet the goals.

6.3.1 Finding motivation to learn English in the future

English is not the favourite subject of all pupils and students, unlike we would like to think as English teachers. However, it is one of the most studied subjects in schools in Finland. For this reason the goals for learning English are fairly high. Moreover, as Finnish is such a small language on a global scale, it has been argued that every Finn should learn at least another language so that work and travel was easier in the time of globalisation. Knowing English is essential if one wants to study a higher degree after secondary education, as a big part of the study materials in Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences are in English. For these reasons alone it would be foolish not to invest in learning English. However, not everyone takes interest in learning a foreign language as they might find it too challenging or uninteresting. And certainly teenagers do not usually think ahead so much that they could only be motivated by the fact that English will be important to them in later life. For these reasons, English teachers need to think of the ways how to make their teaching more appealing and interesting for all students. It could be an impossible task to make studying interesting for everyone, but that is what teachers should work towards in every school subject. The interviewees were asked for ideas to make learning more motivational and how to bring language learning closer to the target group.

In the section 6.1 about the past the interviewees discussed how they remember English teaching was in their school years. The mostly used teaching material was a study book, and in fact for the majority of the interviewees that was the only teaching material they remembered. It was agreed that study books as the only material was not the most interesting choice. However, when asked what the role of the study books will be in future English teaching, it got strongly backed-up. Jarno's opinion is that it should not be such juxtaposition between study books and other materials, as language teaching needs both. In other words, study books and ready-made teaching material will still have a place in teaching. Minna continues that it is a package and both are needed, to which Jani adds that the different materials complete or supplement each other. All the interviewees agree on this. The study books have the essential vocabulary and grammar exercises that also save the time of the teachers, as they do not have to plan and prepare everything on their own. Moreover, study materials are designed to follow the national core curricula (Luukka et al. 2008). Teaching materials often include audio material and exams prepared ready from the chapters from the books.

Extra materials that have been selected by the teacher provide more insight into the topics and can work as attention catchers for the students who do not find teaching materials interesting. The extra material is often seen as something from ‘the real world’, which the students may find more relevant to them.

It is clear that it was not easy for the interviewees to define what kinds of methods they think they could use as future teachers. Again they reflect on the past, and Jarno mentions that the question is not that simple to answer but at least he knows what did not work for him and he wants to avoid the mistakes his teachers did. So one way of building one’s own teacher identity is to think what the teachers in the past did and what to take on board from teacher training and present schools.

The interviewees draw from experiences they had in their practical teacher training. It was agreed that groups and pupils are different and what works with one group, might not work with every group. It is sometimes difficult to predict what the group takes interest to, so a part of finding motivating ways to teach is trial and error and trying out new methods. Moreover, it is difficult to please everyone and in Hanna’s mind the lesson is successful if nobody feels bad after it. This idea started the following conversation between Hanna and Pilvi. (Example 24)

(24) Hanna: *siis varsinki peruskoulu tai no miks ei lukiossaki ni, ei siel nyt voi ottaa hirveesti itteesä jos kaikki ei tykkää ja sehän se on ihan sula mahottomuus. Mut siis jos, jos lähtis siitä että ei tekis sitä kieltä ainakaan enää yhtään vastenmielisemmäksi kenellekään*

Pilvi: *Nii ja ylipäätään jos kaikki tekee sen mitä on tarkoitus tehdä niin sit se on osaltaan jo onnistuminenki*

Hanna: *Tai ei ainakaan häiritse muita et se on jo, et jos sä et halua tehdä ni älä sit tee mut, mut se ei voi sit viedä muiden [työrauhaa].*

(24) Hanna: well especially in basic education, why not in general upper secondary too, you can’t take it to heart if not everybody enjoys themselves like that’s impossible. It would be a good start if you didn’t make the language any more repulsive to anyone

Pilvi: Yea and at least if everyone is doing what they are supposed to then that’s a success in itself

Hanna: And if you don’t enjoy the exercise and don’t want to participate then fine, but don’t disturb the others

Especially as beginner teachers, what Hanna and Pilvi discuss is simply wise. This is a good thing to keep in mind for the more experienced teachers as well, as it might be impossible to please every student on every single lesson. Working for a longer period of time with a group and getting to know the pupils usually helps, but still the group might surprise you with a completely opposite reaction. For example, Pilvi had worked with a group and knew that they watch the television show CSI. She brought a parody of the show to one class as she had found it funny and thought the top comedians would be fun to watch for the pupils as well. She had even checked with the teacher of the class that the video is alright to show and the teacher found it amusing too. However, according to Pilvi, the group did not understand the video at all and their only comment was “*that’s so stupid.*”

Pilvi had a disappointing reaction to her idea that she thought would catch the attention of the group. On the other hand, Hanna had anticipated that no-one would care about an old letter she brought to class as an example for grade seven pupils. She was taken by surprise as the pupils could not stop staring at the real letter she had received when she was their age. (Example 25)

(25) mä aattelin et niitä ei varmaan hirveesti kiinnosta mut et näytämpä kuitenkin, mut siis se niinku se hiljasuus mikä sinne lankes ku ne kaikki ku tuijotti sitä kirjettä ku mä laitoin sen sinne ELMOLle ja ne luki sitä ja sit ne alko kyselee siitä jotai et ”oliks toi oikeen ja sit mitä sä vastasit sit tohon juttuun” (Hanna)

(25) I thought they might not be that interested in it but I’ll show it anyways, but then the silence that took place in the classroom when they were all just staring at the letter when I showed it on the ELMO [document camera] and they were reading it and then started to ask questions about it, for example like “was that correct and how did you reply that” (Hanna)

These two examples show how difficult it might be to plan interesting and relevant material for language learners. The interviewees interpreted that the intense interest the pupils showed towards the letter was because it was real. Materials that were real sparked Minna’s interest too when she was still in school, as she shared her experiences with her own teacher in the section that discussed teaching in the past. The interviewees suspect that real-life material is what interests pupils, as they find it relevant to them. It could also be that materials that are from ‘the real world’ spark the imagination of the students, as they might not have yet travelled or encountered foreign cultures. It makes one want to learn more, as had happened to Minna too. These are materials that are not produced for learning purposes, but are examples of informal materials that have been brought to a formal context.

Study books have their purpose and place in learning, but not everybody take interest towards artificial texts and exercises. Moreover, using only study books and may not be enough, as Kauppinen et al. (2008: 227) show that the published teaching material rarely leave room for noticing the experiences, observations and awakening of the language awareness of the learners. The interviewees were asked how teachers could encourage pupils to find their own interest and could these things be incorporated in formal learning. One idea was to give pupils the choice what subjects to work with, but the interviewees agreed that the teacher should set the boundaries and rules to classroom activities. The question did not spark a lot of discussion, which could be because the interviewees had not yet had extensive experience of teaching and this was an unfamiliar topic to them. However, as Aittola et al. (1994: 477-478) suggest, in order to motivate students to learn, they should be provided with tasks and topics that they can relate to and that are close to their interests and needs in the future. Hanna gives an example of portfolio work, where students are given the instructions for working and the framework, but the pupils are allowed to choose the subjects for example. The interviewees worried that portfolio work or work with one's own interests could be difficult to some pupils, and that it would be better to give boundaries. Of course, every exercise needs instructions and the pupils need to know what they are expected of. Kohonen (2000: 63) presents the idea behind portfolio work to be material that the learner has collected during the study year for example, that present how their language learning has developed. It showcases how one has studied, achieved skills and the learning process (Kohonen 2000:63). After some discussion, the interviewees came to a conclusion that portfolio is a good tool for learning as it gives students more choice, but the teacher can offer more examples and instruction to those who struggle with their ideas and getting started is difficult.

Understanding what pupils and students are interested is not always easy, but the effort is worth it as the learners are more motivated to work when they can work with something that is close to them. Minna gives an example of a moment from her practical training at the vocational school, where their task was to discuss literature. The students could choose a book they liked and produce something that was presented and then hung on the wall. One student was not interested in literature at all. Minna had offered him the option of choosing a movie, but the student still did not want to co-operate. Minna realised that she had heard that the student likes games, so she suggested the student could tell the story that was behind the game. She understood that games have a script too, similar to movies or novels. The interviewees thought it could be a good guideline to remember – listen to your students, do not be too strict on your own vision and be flexible. In the end, the key is to produce learning through doing and also experiences of succeeding in the task.

One topic of discussion was the motivation of the pupils themselves and how they take responsibility for their own learning. Seems like the teacher students in the interview were a bit confused of what to think about it. On the other hand, they want to become teachers who motivate students and make learning appealing. However, they also call for the learners' own ability to take responsibility for their learning. According to Kaikkonen and Kohonen (2000: 8-9) taking responsibility for one's own learning, being independent and taking an active role in the learning process is what the core curricula in languages strive for. In the interview the female participants found it disturbing how in the practical learning they had met pupils who expect the teachers to do everything for them. Minna had met students who did not do their homework and Hanna had gotten feedback from a ninth grader that the course she taught was no good, as the pupil had not learnt any new words during the course. The interviewees felt like the students were expecting the teacher to pour new words and grammar on them without having to make any effort themselves. The observation the teacher students made was an important one, as learning is a result of many things. The part of the learner cannot be forgotten, as learning takes time, effort and willingness to take part in the activities. The teacher has a big role in motivating the learners, but the learners have an active role too.

When conducting the interview, one thing that was expected was to get a lot of discussion and ideas regarding informal learning. The initial thought was that combining informal with formal learning could be a way of motivating learners and bringing the learners' interests to class. Another additional benefit could be that learners would start to comprehend English as a language that is everywhere, not just a school subject as it sometimes might appear that way to some learners (Aittola et al. 1994). However, the interviewees did not discuss informal learning even though leading questions were made towards the subject. When asked directly if they knew what informal learning was, it was revealed that the subject was quite unknown to them. (Example 26)

(26) *Hanna: Sitä että mitä ei tehä koulussa*
Jani: Koulun ulkopuolella ((naurua))
Hanna: Tai mut nii, voishan sitä koulussaki olla
Pilvi: Tai ehkä lähinnä se, tai ehkä jotenkii
Jani: Sitä ei niinku, ei tee tietosesti
Hanna: Sitä ei ite tajuu

(26) *Hanna: It's something you don't do at school*
Jani: Outside of school ((laughter))
Hanna: Or, but like, it could be done in school too
Pilvi: Or maybe more like, or somehow

Jani: You don't like, do it in consciously
 Hanna: You don't realise it yourself

Next the group was asked if informal learning had been discussed in teacher training or language teacher studies at the university. According to Nyysölä (2003: 510) the significance of informal learning has grown lately. Informal learning can be used to support learning in school (eg. Bailly 2011, Benson 2011). The interviewees did not remember that it had been covered at all, nor had they given it thought as a part of language learning and teaching. However, when the discussion continues, the interviewees understand the connection between informal and formal learning and why teachers should be aware of the learning that happens outside of school. The following quote of the discussion is what the interviewees think of informal learning. (Example 27)

(27) Jani: *Se on sitä oikeeta kieltä sitte*
 Hanna: *Ehkä se on nimenomaan niinku sanoja ja vähän et se, en mää usko että kukaan oppii mitäään kielioppiä*
 Pilvi: *Ja semmost relevantimpaa ehkä omaan elämään liittyvämpää*
 Jani: *Kun eihän kukaan tavallaan koulussa opi kieltä, siellä annetaan ne eväät vaan, et se todellinen oppiminen tapahtuu sit koulun ulkopuolella et jos sitä niinku haluaa oppia*

(27) Jani: That's the real language then
 Hanna: Maybe it's especially words and like, and because like, I don't believe that anybody learns stuff like grammar or so
 Pilvi: And it's more relevant to you, things that are useful in your life
 Jani: Because in a way people don't learn language in school, it only provides you the building blocks and the real learning happens outside of school then, if you want to learn

What Jani says could be the key of motivating and making foreign languages useful for learners. According to him, real learning and real language is in the real world, school is only able to give the basic elements for languages. Pilvi also realises a valid point, if informal language use is more relevant to learners, the how could it be utilized in schools in order to bring the classes closer to the needs of the learners? These questions would be interesting to study too.

6.3.2 Drama and problem solving for communication

Informal learning did not generate a lot of discussion, but practicing communication through drama was a subject that the interviewees took interest to. Communicational skills were seen as an important skill for all learners, in fact one of the most important ones. Communication is also emphasized in the national core curricula. Drama in language teaching has been studied by Ropponen (2006) who found that drama is a good way of practicing communication but the lessons

need good planning. Winston (2012) has also studied drama pedagogy and provides practical exercises for drama in language teaching.

Jarno had tried a lot of drama pedagogy with his practical training classes, as the subject was included in his minor studies. Learning through drama is not easy for all students as Jarno and the others discussed, but the reality is that not every method suits for everyone. Jarno had had good results by using drama and the other interviewees seemed to become very interested in it too, as it is a good way of engaging the learners. Jarno says that drama is a good way to motivate learners, as it allows one to take a role and through the role it is easier to practice communication, because the learner does not have to express one's own feelings or opinions. It allows one to pretend to be someone else. Moreover, drama motivates learners to take part in activities because, as Jarno suspects, it is more authentic in a way than ready-made texts and scripts. Also, it is a way of pretending the scenes happen in contexts outside of the classroom walls, which makes it interesting. It gives the learner more freedom, but as Jarno reminds us, not everyone is able to act a role straight away. That is why the activities must be planned in advance and the teacher needs to give the students some choice on how they take part. Jarno says he was amazed of how well the learners did drama exercises, some of them even asked for more drama.

Drama worked well for Jarno and his groups, but not all teachers or learners enjoy acting. Hanna reminds us that no matter what we do in classes as teachers, there is bound to be at least someone who does not enjoy the exercises. As Hanna puts it, the goal is to not make language learning any more repulsive to the learner than it already might be. However, by switching styles and exercises there is a chance that everyone gets to do something to their liking at least sometimes. The interviewees had tried different kinds of drama-like activities that were interesting to the learners. For example, Pilvi had done an exercise with the group where they were not given roles, but a problem they needed to solve. (Example 28)

(28) Ja sitten ne sai niinku sen ympäriltä et ei ollu valmiita vuorosanoja vaan niiden piti sit toimii, toimii tietyl tavalla. Esimerkiks oli taksikuski joka oli tullu suoraan Lontooseen jostain kauempaa ja se ei oikeesti aina itekään tienny että missä mikäki oli ja sit tämmösiä juttuja niin sitte, sitte vaikutti ihan positiivisesti siihen tuottamiseenki että niiden täyty sitten... et se ongelmanratkaisu on kans just toi niinku sama juttu siinä et kuka heitetään autiolta saarelta ulos, et se on niinku hyvä siinä ku se on niinku pähkinä purtavaks ja sit se usein vie mukanaan. (Pilvi)

(28) And they were given a task with no ready scripts or lines but they had to act in a certain way. For example, there was a taxi driver who had come straight to London from somewhere far away and he didn't even know where the places were, and these kinds of things, and it had a positive effect on what the pupils produced because they had to... like problem solving, that's the same, we had an exercise where the group had to decide who is cast out from a desert island, and it's motivating as it provides a problem that it's usually quite compelling. (Pilvi)

Both Pilvi and Jani had found these problem solving exercises to be productive and motivating, as the learners did not have to act a role which might be difficult to some, but they had to solve a problem and come up with solutions in order to stay in the game. Moreover, Jani mentions that as pupils are easily motivated by competition, the problem solving tasks are highly motivating as the participants have to defend themselves in order to stay in the game. In addition to this, sometimes the teacher could take a role, as Jarno and Minna had tried too, and the group could ask questions or give directions. Minna had for example pretended to be a tour guide in London and the class had thought it to be an absolute blast! Guiding or driving a taxi in London also taught the elementary school children about the capital of England, so the exercise combined speaking and culture.

For teaching communication, it seems like every teacher has to find their style and what they are comfortable with themselves. Moreover, the group has to be comfortable together too. The interviewees had worked with groups that are easy to get to participate, but some groups need more encouragement and help. As future English teachers the interviewees felt they need to work with the social aspects of the group to and try to raise team spirit. Jarno had observed a group where the atmosphere was good and relaxed, and he gives full credit for the teacher for creating the mood in the class. Of course, some groups can be more difficult to get to work well together, but it is worth the effort. If all the members of the group feel comfortable in the class then practising conversation exercises and communication is much easier, as the interviewees felt. Many learners feel insecure about their skills and especially pronunciation, and the teacher should pay attention to how the group react to mistakes, for example. Moreover, Hanna reminds the others that as even the teachers sometimes feel insecure with their English, it is no wonder a young learner might feel unwilling to speak in front of others. Hanna shares her trick with the rest of the future teachers. (Example 29)

(29) *Mua on ainaki helpottanu jos se oma opettelu, tai opetuksen suunnittelu se et jos mä suunnittelen varsinki jotain suullist tehtävää ni jos mä oon ensin miettiny et jos mun pitäis tehdä tää saksaks.* (Hanna)

(29) It has helped me a lot when I plan lessons, especially when I plan a spoken exercise that what help would I need if I had to do this in German. (Hanna)

Hanna's tips are the following: think about yourself as a foreign language learner when planning speaking exercises to classes. How do you feel with a new subject, what are the things you would need help with? It is helpful to take the perspective of the learners when planning and keeping in mind the skill level of the members of the group.

On top of the drama and problem solving exercises the interviewees shared different ideas for learning communicational skills. Teachers have been bringing visitors to class in the hopes of communication with a native speaker, but in general the interviewees find this a bit troublesome. Jani shares his experience in a teacher training practise school in the next example. (Example 30)

(30) ja sit siellä oli CLIL-luokan tunti, kutosluokka, että ne niin normaalia enemmän käyttää englantia siellä, mut sinneki tuli sit joku kreikkalainen vieras niin ei kukaan ei avannu suutaan ku sai kysyä! (Jani)

(30) and then there was a lesson for a CLIL class, sixth grade, where they use English more than the average classes. They had a Greek visitor one day and nobody opened their mouths when they had a chance to ask questions! (Jani)

This example shows that even if the pupils were competent enough to ask, they might not think of anything or they might be insecure of their own skills. The interviewees discuss the situation and agree that even if it had been a Finnish speaking visitor, the pupils might not have asked anything. Any exercise that is done in class need planning, and the interviewees suggest that even visitors need to be planned and practiced with the pupils beforehand.

Communication and speaking can be practiced in so many different ways. Using music in language learning is one way. Pilvi suggest using singing in English, as it is easier to find the rhythm and intonation of the foreign language. The study by Ala-Kyyny (2012) supports this. One way to practice communication is by describing words, and this can be done on paper too as Minna and Pilvi had done. They had given a word test to their classes, but instead of giving the words in Finnish and then the learners had to remember the English equivalent, they had to explain what the words were. The interviewees mentioned before that an important communicational skill was to survive with one's English skills and explain what you wanted to say even though you did not know the right word. The word test in which you practice explaining is a good communicational skill exercise, but the interviewees do admit that sometimes it is just easier to do things the traditional

way because scoring exams take a lot of time. This is a dilemma they need to solve when they are teachers as they need to evaluate and assess the learners, but it should not be too time-consuming for the teachers.

6.3.3 Learning is a life-long project

The goals for teaching English, according to the interviewees seem to be communication for everyone, making English meaningful for all learners and realising not everyone needs to be exceptional in their skills, but rather study English for their own needs. Study books still have a role, as do grammar and vocabulary too. What can be noticed from the interviewees that even though they study to become English teachers, they all have a different kind of relationship with the language.

The interviewees feel like matriculation exams at the end of upper secondary general school dictates too much how English is being taught and it should change in the future. The goals and expected skill levels are felt to be even too high, as Pilvi mentions that even teacher students struggle with the matriculation exam questions. The same challenge has been reported by the Finnish media, that interviewed English teachers after the English matriculation exam in 2014 (Teirikko 2014 YLE). The exams are so demanding that students want to fully concentrate on practicing towards them which might be more mechanical skills rather than authentic language skills. The interviewees worry for the good students too, as they might appear good in theory but they freeze when they are put in real communicational situations.

One subject that was repeated in the interview was accent. The interviewees were unsure of how and to what extent learner accent could be corrected. On the other hand they felt like pronunciation should not be corrected much as the teacher could put off the learner and they might stop trying if they felt insecure about it. According to Hanna, she was even given instructions in her practical training not to concentrate on correcting pronunciation too much. Tergujeff (2013) shows in her study that instructing pronunciation is quite narrow in Finnish schools. Her study concludes that pronunciation is practiced mostly by concentrating on words and sounds but not in longer sentences and intonation, for example (Tergujeff 2013). It is understandable that the teacher students are insecure of how to correct the learners, as it has been shown that even the university studies do not instruct future teachers on how to teach pronunciation (Tergujeff 2013: 64). Pronunciation is a part of learning languages and without being able to pronounce clearly no-one will understand you.

Teacher pronunciation was regarded as an important motivator for the learners, and it also functions as an example the learners can mimic. Jarno says learners respect teachers more if they speak well and have an accent that is closer to the target language. Good pronunciation of the teacher was also regarded as a sign of interest towards the language they taught.

The interviewees agreed on the importance of practicing pronunciation, but they felt strongly against setting the goal to native-like speech. It does not come naturally for all and as Hanna reminds us, English as a lingua franca has many forms and usually second language speakers have an accent that might be distinctive to their mother tongue. For some reason Finnish people have always been ashamed of their accents, especially when famous Finnish people are heard speaking in the media. The fact that Finnish people want to hide their accents when speaking English was seen as discouragement. Minna gave an example of her experiences of Spanish and Italian natives who are not afraid to speak English, even though their accents might be even more distinctive than what the Finnish have. The interviewees thought this is a cultural difference, which the teachers should address already from the beginning of language learning. Teachers should encourage children to speak and try things without the fear of failing already from pre-school so that it could be extended to later years of education. We should get rid of the thought that we cannot say anything unless we know we are right, and that is up to all future teachers in every school subject.

Another thing that was discussed was making English more relevant to the learners. As already mentioned, if English is seen as only a school subject it might become discouraging for some learners. However, if English could be made into an interesting subject that learners would want to work with on their free time too, then it would be easier to reach the goals that are set in the national core curricula and common European framework. The Committee for Life-Long Learning (1997: 27) emphasise the joy in learning and wanting to learn more for one's own purposes. Jarno says that if the teacher is able to show the learners what can be done with the language, it might work as a motivator to learn more and to work with the language even if it was not a task given by the teacher. Jarno suggests that if the teachers show their interest towards the language and what they do with it on their free time, it could inspire the learners too. For example, he has shared some songs or plays he has written with the classes. Hanna talks how learners should realise for themselves where they could need English and as they do that, they will want to learn for their own purposes. She gives an example of youth literature, like *Twilight* or *Harry Potter*, that are so interesting to some that they cannot wait for the translated books. The only way to know what will happen is to read them in English. Pilvi continues that people are curious by nature so it should not be an impossible task to

find something interesting for all learners. This could be worked on language classes as it might spark an interest towards learning. The interviewees agree that language teaching should be brought closer to the interests of the learners, but when they are asked if learners should have more power over the subjects discussed in class, they are a bit hesitant. (Example 31)

- (31) *Pilvi:* ((varovaisesti)) j-joo
Minna: Se voi olla yks keino
Pilvi: Tiettyyn pisteeseen asti, ei se mitään pelasta
Jarno: Mut ei se saa olla, nii, ei se silleen voi olla se ainoa ratkasu eikä silleen voi koko ajan tehdä, mut se että niinkun, jossakin suhteessa kyllä varmasti niinku välillä, niinku kaikki muutki keinot
Hanna: Mut yleensä se et niinku tehtäs ja tuotettas enemmän ku silleen niinku että tehtäs aukkotehtäviä ja monivalintoja. Koska se ei oo niinku minkäänlaista niinku ei se oikeeta osaamista oo
- (31) *Pilvi:* ((carefully)) y-yea
Minna: It could be one way
Pilvi: To a certain extent, it won't save anything
Jarno: But it can't be, it shouldn't be the only solution and you can't do it all the time, but in some quantities sometimes, like with any other method
Hanna: But in general if we would just do more and produce more rather than just exercises like multiple choice questions and fill in the missing blanks. Because that is not real language

The reaction was a bit surprising because all through the interview the participants had emphasized the active role of the learner and taking the interests of the learners in account when planning classes. This shows that for teachers it is difficult to give away their power and trust that the lessons will work if learners are given more say. But maybe this is one thing that could be practiced by the future teachers, as meaningfulness creates motivation for students (Vaarala and Jalkanen 2011)

At the end of the interview we discuss the fact that in order to be a teacher that prepares their students for the needs of the future language use, they have to continue developing themselves and their teaching. One of the worst case scenarios that were mentioned about the teachers of the past was the ones with whom it was clear that they had not refreshed their teaching in decades. A teacher that teaches the past is not interesting to the learner, nor can they make language relevant to learners. The interviewees were asked how to stay fresh with their own skills and at the same time convey to the learners that even the teachers are not perfect, but in fact, learners too. Hanna says that the best way to motivate a class for lifelong learning is to admit to them that even the teacher has to practice, and that we will never be fully ready as language learners. Minna continues that being honest to the learners about the teachers' need to practice will set them an example. As

language teachers we need to stay humble and want to learn more, which might give the learners a sense of relief as nobody expects them to be perfect either. Learning could be more fun if it was seen as a process that takes a different time from everyone, and realising we all develop in our own pace. If learning is made too difficult or the learner feels pressured all the time, they will not feel encouraged to learn for their own needs. The ways teachers could maintain and practice their English skills could be for example travelling, making contact with English speaking people in their own countries and basically do whatever the students would do, as discussed by Hanna, Minna and Pilvi. Moreover, these things could keep the teacher interested in the language, which again shows to the groups they teach. A motivated teacher has a motivated group to work with.

7 DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to find out the goals for teaching English and how to meet them, from the point of view of English teacher students of the University of Jyväskylä. The interviewed group consisted of five teacher students who had already completed their practical teacher training. The idea was also to compare English teaching in the 1990's as experienced by the interviewees to teaching of the present, which was the year 2010 when the interview was done. The interviewees were also asked for their views for future English teaching and the needs for develop teaching, in order to better reach the given goals of the national core curricula and matriculation exams. English is not, however, only studied for school or exams so the most interesting question is what do future English teachers think is the purpose we study English for in Finland.

7.1 THE PAST – HOW THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS CAME TO KNOW ENGLISH

The interviewees had had gone through a conventional English language education typical to Finland. Hanna was the only one who had started studying English on the first grade, as she was on a so-called aquarium class. This meant that their teacher tried different experimental ways of teaching that were new, including CLIL teaching. What Hanna's experiences showed us was that a child starting elementary school does not have expectations on what the teaching should be like, and even if their way of learning is different from the others, they will consider it just normal school. Therefore, teachers at the first few grades of elementary school are in the key position of setting the tone for learning. In this study, the interviewees wished for a change in the Finnish schooling culture, so that it would be more open to discussions, trial and error and the atmosphere would be

more allowing and supporting in order for the learners to become less aware of their accents and speaking. The goal for learners would be to be brave enough to communicate regardless of mistakes. Jarno had even had one teacher that had only accepted British variants in vocabulary, which could make the learners even more worried if they answer the questions correctly. Setting a supportive environment for learning, however, is the job of all teachers in every school, not just the elementary teachers.

The past in this study was in the 1990's, when the internet and social media were not a thing yet. The world changes incredibly fast and one of the biggest changes in English teaching comparing to the present of now, 2017, is the material that is made available for schools. In the past, the most used teaching material was study books, as our interviewees recall. Most of the interviewees cannot remember other materials that were used, except for Minna. Minna had a teacher that was so inspiring to her that she credits her for following her footsteps and becoming a teacher herself. Minna had a teacher who had travelled and shared those stories with her classes, accompanied by pictures taken on her trips and souvenirs. These experiences are real and authentic, and in a way they must feel more real to the students too – study books, however good they are, might feel artificial or distant to learners. Authentic materials on the other hand open the doors of the classroom to the real world and might feel accomplishable to young learners – maybe someday I will be the one travelling! The amount of authentic material used in class is solely connected to the teacher's abilities and willingness to travel, gather material and show personal pictures in front of the class. This requires time, money and also a bit of willingness to share a glimpse of one's private life with the student. Based on this experience it could be argued that sharing personal experiences and showing one's personality to the class can built a connection between the learners and the teacher that encourages the learners to study more. If nothing else, at least if they take interest towards stories they will remember the classes as motivating. Sharing one's interest is a valuable tool in teaching, as motivation can be passed on to pupils. If the teacher does not take interest in what they are teaching, it is unlikely that the pupils will do either.

In the 1990's the language environment was different, but mostly because of the absence of social media. English was already the biggest studied language in Finland and the interviewees remember that cartoons were in English and not dubbed into Finnish. In addition to cartoons, the interviewees mentioned movies to having been a big influence in language learning. Pen pals were a frequently used way to spice up language lessons, and the interviewees remember writing to sports idols like Wayne Gretzky.

Pilvi was the only one who remembers disliking English classes in school, as she thought they were so boring that she underachieved because of that – she only started enjoying English classes before going to the university, because the subjects and ways of learning became closer to her interests. This is a big issue in teaching, how can one make lessons and subjects interesting to all learners? The same topic was discussed later in the study frequently. If a student does not take interest to the subjects and language classes feel irrelevant and boring, the results in learning will not be satisfactory.

Chapter 6 aimed to draw a picture of what English teaching was in the nineties, as seen by the interviewed students. It could be said that the interviewees did not remember much. The study book was almost the only teaching material they had and the only way of studying vocabulary was learning it by heart and maybe asking your friends how well they remembered the words. In a way the result was a bit disappointing, but then again is only normal that people do not remember things that are not significant to them. Children go to school for so many years and sit in so many classes it would be difficult to remember everything. Moreover, pupils do not evaluate the classes unless they find the teachers extremely good or downright lousy.

7.2 HOW TEACHER STUDENTS SEE LANGUAGE TEACHING AT PRESENT

In 2010 the variety in classroom equipment and technology used in schools must have been even greater than it is now in 2017, seven years from the interview. That being said, the way classrooms are equipped is still very diverse as the decisions on furniture, technology and teaching materials can be made locally by municipalities, schools and even by single teachers. Classroom equipment, therefore, was noticed as one of the most distinct differences between schools by the interviewees. While the university teacher training school had all the latest gadgets, a rural school Jarno taught in only had blackboards and overhead projectors that were never in use.

It is clear that technology enables more versatile use of multimedia in teaching. Language learners benefit from different kinds of language materials that can be listened and watched, such as videos, pictures, music and discussions. Technology can be used for perceiving language materials, but technology makes interaction possible too. For example, it would be easy to make video and sound connect by using Skype, Google Hangouts or similar chat services. This opportunity could be used for example for interviewing people who live abroad with ready-made questions with the pupils, if

live visitors were difficult to bring to school. Moreover, as pen pals are still used by language classes, video connection would be a great way to ‘meet’ the friendship classes. Skype could also be used for one-on-one conversations between pen pals. This way communication would not be in written form anymore, but spoken, which would again support the goals of communicational skills teaching. As the interviewees said, when speaking to foreigners you cannot rely on switching to your own language, but you have to learn ways of expressing yourself even when you forget the right words.

There is no doubt that technology in classrooms enables more opportunities to learn than classrooms that have no equipment. However, the way teachers utilize the equipment makes more of a difference. In reality, as has been discussed between teachers, the equipment is mostly used for displaying text and simple material, for watching videos and simple things that can be done with a computer and a projector. Expensive equipment is not enough in itself, how it is used and how innovative teachers are is what counts for learners. This means that learning can be fun and efficient with even the basic materials – this was seen in the interview as well, as the most interesting materials were pictures from holidays and old letters. Maybe the key is not the latest trends and gadgets, but authenticity and interesting stories. This being said, experience from working in schools show that learning games that can be played by using mobile phones or tablets are highly compelling for students so technology has given more options for motivational activities for learning that were not in use in the past.

Teaching in the eyes of the interviewees was seen as an activity that is very much dependant on the teachers’ qualities, interests and capabilities. As Luukka et al (2008) mention in their study, teachers have the choice of choosing the material and ways of teaching. This was noticed by the teacher students in their practical teacher training. Teachers in Finland are given the freedom to plan their lessons and choose the material they use freely. Also, Finnish teachers have studied a master’s degree at a university with the subject they teach as the major subject. They are regarded as professionals in their own field. Teachers are required to follow the national curriculum, and the interviewees also refer to the curricula when goals for teaching are discussed. The curricula ensure that the same subjects, content and skills are learnt no matter where one get their education in Finland, but the way these things are taught depends on the teacher. The interviewees noticed differences between teachers and teaching styles, but came to the conclusion that the quality of teaching and the outcome can still be good even if the teachers used different methods in class. This also shows that loyalty inside the profession is high, as teachers do not want to give too much

critique to peers – they trust in the system of highly educated teachers, national core curricula and freedom of choosing how to teach. Moreover, as discussed, because even the pupils are different it is good that the teachers do not all teach in the same way and so the pupils can benefit from different kinds of teaching.

The state of English teaching at present worried the interviewees a bit, as they had noticed the gap between excellent and poor students grown wider. As Pilvi pointed out, the expectations are extremely high especially in upper secondary general school and they admit that some of the exams, especially matriculation exams, had been tricky for even teacher students. English is the most widely studied language in Finland that the pupils begin to study most typically on grade three in basic education. Therefore, it is understandable that the level is high after almost ten years of studying. But for some reason some students fail to reach the level of expertise they are expected to gain and the interviewees worry for them. Motivation was discussed repeatedly in the interview, and the role of the teacher for motivating students. Not everyone will need the high level of language expertise in their future life, but as for any subject in schools that give general education, the students must be equipped with skills that they get by with if they were to end up in academic studies or professional life that require the proficiency. As Minna said in the interview, you never know when you are going to need the English language.

Maybe the most important thing for teachers is not to try to make every student excellent. The research participants did not think the goal for teaching was to make every student reach the highest marks in English, as it is not even possible. In the interview as Pilvi and Hanna discussed, a good starting point would be to get everyone interested and at least not make the English language any more obnoxious for any of the pupils. Teachers can try to motivate and find different ways of getting the class interested. Not everyone finds the joy of learning languages in school, but that is not where language learning ends – pupils could be encouraged to find their own ways of learning and get back to languages when they are more motivated. For example, someone might not be keen on learning English or other languages in school, but they realise in later life that language skills could be useful for travelling, working or even relationships. Having positive experiences in school can lead into better motivation to learn languages even after school. Negative feelings towards language learning may potentially stop someone from ever getting back to languages. It should be understood that languages are not learnt for school and exams, but for life and communication. With this in mind, it is never too late to brush up one's skills or even learn a completely new language in later life.

In 2010 what English was used for by the youth was very similar to what it had been in the interviewees' school days. English has typically been the language of popular culture and literature, as well as hobbies. The interviewees were worried about the growing gap between the excellent and the poor students, but also between the proficiency in written and spoken language. They had noticed that students in Finland are magnificent in written exercises, but as soon as they had to speak they froze. Explanations for this were suggested by the interviewees that included the Finnish school culture which has at least before pointed out all the errors in one's speech, but also the difficulty in understanding other variants than Standard English which is mostly used in teaching materials. Concentrating more on oral communication could be the next thing in language teaching, as the Finns seem to be quite capable with texts and written material.

7.3 THE FUTURE IS NOW

The results of this study show that young English teachers worry for those who do not find interest in learning or cannot keep up with the pace of the rest of the class. Keeping up motivation and teaching communication were seen as the biggest things to address. As the interviewees were in the middle of their studies, I was hopeful to get innovative ideas from them how to improve English teaching to suit the 21st century and the possible new challenges. The interviewees agreed that the atmosphere in the classroom was crucial in order to get all pupils participate in learning activities. Especially learners in their teens can be highly self-conscious and might not want to speak out loud if they are afraid of making mistakes or sounding a bit off. Hanna would even change the study materials, as often the listening exercises are read by a native English speaker even though the character might be Finnish. Finnish pupils should accept their accents and not care about sounding foreign – not everyone will achieve native-like accents and that is not even the goal. The main thing is to be able to communicate in an understandable manner. There are different ways of practicing communicational skills, and the interviewees had tried different things with the classes they had taught – drama education, team work in problem solving and written word tests where the words have to be explained. These activities had been successful, but also raised the conversation of how to assess and grade the performance of the pupils. Indeed, evaluation and assessment are still the factors that rule in school and what dictates teaching.

For already a long time there has been discussion on how to evaluate speech in language learning. Teachers have given spoken exams as a part of language classes and courses, but what learning comes down to especially on general upper secondary schools are the matriculation exams. Even if

teachers realise oral communication is important, the message from the final exams is different – speech is not tested. This leads to students wanting to concentrate in the areas that are tested, and the teachers train their students for the exams. However, the matriculation exams are changing as technology develops. At present, matriculation exams are moving away from pen and paper and the first exams have already been done using computers. The Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland has just published their report on how to revise the matriculation exam. According to their report (*Gaudeamus Igitur – ylioppilastutkinnon kehittäminen 2017: 51-53*) the committee suggests that spoken test will become a part of the exams in the future. This would be done by using new technology like voice recognition and it would evaluate the pronunciation and prosody of the speaker. If the spoken test were to become a part of the matriculation exam, it would most certainly alter the way languages are being taught because then spoken communication would become an important and evaluated skill. For comprehensive language skills and language teaching this would be a good direction to go. However, this will raise a few thoughts too, namely on accents and variation in speech. Will all the Finnish students in the future aim for one style of speech, will it be Received Pronunciation and will these changes to teaching make spoken language more stressful for learners? Or will the matriculation exam spoken part recognize different dialects and variants and if so, could the learners be encouraged to speak freely without having to worry about making mistakes all the time. It will be extremely interesting for English teachers to see how the exams develop and what the consequences for teaching will be.

Initially, when this study was only at the beginning the idea was to research informal learning. However, informal learning proved to be quite unfamiliar to the interviewees. One result of this study is that at the time of the interview in 2010, teacher training in Finland did not notice or utilize informal learning as a part of language learning. In all honesty, this was a disappointment regarding this study, as the idea was to discuss informal learning in a much more depth and detail than what we did. However, as the new national core curricula for basic and upper secondary education have just been released, it is satisfying to notice the official documents paying attention to informal learning. The new core curriculum for basic education (POPS 2014) and core curriculum for general upper secondary school (LOPS 2015) were put into use in the school year 2016-2017. Both of them have a chapter on learning environments – a chapter that was introduced in the core curricula only ten years ago. For example, the POPS 1994 and LOPS 1994 did not have a mention of learning environments at all, which implies that the assumed learning environment was the classrooms and built schools. Ten years later, (LOPS 2003 and POPS 2004) recognized the surroundings of the school but did not go much further. The new POPS 2014 says that learning

happens in schools and in connection with the surrounding community. Different kinds of facilities are being mentioned, such as libraries, museums, nature, sports- and arts facilities and the use of technology opens doors to the whole world. What especially is interesting is that the core curriculum for basic education (POPS 2014: 31) is ready to recognise informal learning, as it states that *when planning and choosing learning environments, it should be noticed that pupils gain knowledge and new skills also outside of school*. The same idea is included in the core curriculum for general upper secondary school (LOPS 2015: 14) as it states that learning happens in the most versatile situations and places, and that learning should be taken outside of the school buildings. However, the most pleasing sentence in the new curricula can be found in basic education in how the English language is being described. POPS 2014 (2014: 348) states that many pupils use English increasingly on their free time. It continues that this knowledge the pupils acquire through informal learning will be taken into account when planning teaching and choosing the subjects for lessons. For the first time, informal learning is noticed in the national core curriculum. If this study was to be made again, the answers to the questions regarding informal learning would possibly be different and teacher students would have had to think about utilizing informal learning as a part of formal learning.

7.4 CONCLUSION

This study took a lot of time to be finished. At some point, it was almost discarded already, but the interesting topic needed to be discussed. The present study presents a continuum in English teaching in Finland, as it looks at what teaching has been in 1990's, 2000's and finally the 2010's. New national core curricula were just published and it is satisfying to notice that they pay more attention to informal learning, life-long learning and finding joy and motivation towards language learning. POPS 2014 and LOPS 2015 represent the ideas I had when I started planning this study and study questions. The expectations for language teaching and learners are still high, as they should be, as English is studied so much in Finland. However, the ways of reaching these goals seem to notice the learner more and focus on joy, motivation, bringing language closer to the lives of the learners and making the English language a true instrument for the individual that they can use in their own contexts. Moreover, even LOPS 2015 mentions that students learn at a different pace and this should be noticed in planning one's teaching. The interviewees worried how to get students motivated and how to notice also the ones that need more time – the thoughts must have been mutual with the committee behind the core curricula, as they are now targeted towards these exact same questions.

Based on this study, it is clear that English is widely studied in Finland and the level of expertise is high. Students in Finland are skilful in English, but it seems like skills in written tasks and exams are higher than in spoken language. The interviewees suggested that one reason for being shy speakers can be found in the Finnish school culture and teaching materials. Students are afraid to make mistakes and the misconception is that one should sound native-like when speaking. Speech and listening comprehension exercises could be done more and the students should be encouraged to speak regardless of mistakes. After all, the national curricula and the interviewed teacher students name communication to be the main reason for studying languages.

It seems like teachers and teaching material publishers have realised that more attention should be given to spoken language and communication. Teachers have begun to test speaking more and the Matriculation Examination Board is keen on developing the matriculation exam in upper secondary school. Surely these changes will have an effect on the way English is being taught. For further study, it would be interesting to study how communication and oral skills are taught in Finnish schools, especially now that it will be tested in the matriculation exams. Moreover, oral exams are often regarded as stressful by students, therefore thought should be given to how to relieve and minimize stress in tests.

When thinking about the reason we study English and the goals that are set by the national core curricula and by future teachers, communication stands out as the most important thing. To communicate, according to the interviewees, one needs to know vocabulary, grammar and have communicational skills that save speakers from situations when one does not know all the right words. Mastering written exercises is not enough, and language should not only be practised in theory. It is necessary to be able to explain what you want to convey, but also as was seen in section 6.3, understanding spoken language is also a necessity. Future language users should be able to understand different kinds of accents and styles of speech and not just Received Pronunciation. In addition to all this, learners should be confident enough to use the language in any situation.

The expectations really are high for learners, and it makes me wonder if this is possible in language teaching in school. Maybe the question should not even be about learning languages in school, because as was shown in this study, school is not the only place to learn. In a way the whole idea of learning languages only in school is outdated, because clearly formal and informal learning are needed. As Jani said, school offers the basic information for language learning but the real language is learnt outside of school. This being said, teachers in Finland have done a great job in providing

the building blocks for learners. It is up to one's own effort and willingness to practice the skills outside of school. The teachers can motivate, give ideas on how and where to practice language and make lesson plans that include all learners in activities. Maybe the goal for future teachers in teaching English could be to provide all learners good experiences with learning and with their own example make student in school want to learn more.

The new national core curricula POPS 2014 and LOPS 2015 emphasize joy in learning, learning in different environments and communication. The curricula see the learner has an active role in their own learning. Learning, according to the curricula, should happen in interaction between the learner, the teacher, the group and the surrounding contexts. LOPS 2015 states good experiences with learning motivate the students to want to learn more, and these goals should be a priority to every teacher. Maybe this is the change in learning and school culture in Finland that the interviewees were talking about.

The present study has discussed English teaching in Finland, considering the thoughts of future English teachers. New national core curricula have just been released and it would be interesting to investigate the topic further. It could be assumed that teacher training in the university has noticed the changes in the new curricula. For future research it would be interesting to see how English teacher trainees understand the new curricula and will it change the way future teachers perceive teaching. Informal learning did not generate a lot of discussion in the present study, but as it is now mentioned in the new core curricula, the topic might be more productive for further study.

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APPENDIX – Framework for the interview

OSIO 1 – OMA KOULUAIKA, ENGLANNIN OPISKELU?

1. Montaako kieltä olet opiskellut? Mitä?
2. Puhuttiinko perheessäsi/lähipiirissäsi muita kieliä kuin suomea? (tämä siksi, että kartoitetaan millaisia kokemuksia ja suhteita vastaajilla on vieraisiin kieliin)
 - Asuitko lapsena/nuorena ulkomailla? Pitempiaikaista oleskelua?
3. Milloin aloitit englannin opiskelun? (alakoulussa? aiemmin? miksi?)
4. Millaista englannin opetus oli kouluaikoinasi? Metodit, materiaalit? mitä teitte? (VARAA paljon aikaa tälle)
5. Millaisia opettajat olivat omana kouluajanasi? (esim. innostiko käyttämään kieltä, millainen tapa tehdä töitä... hyviä ääntämään ja kulttuurin tuntemus?)
6. Kiinnostiko englannin kieli sinua lapsena ja nuorena koulun ulkopuolella? Olitko paljon englannin kanssa tekemisissä vapaa-ajallasi? (Keskustelua avittamaan, jos haastateltavilta ei tule heti ideoita, mainitaan TV, elokuvat, kirjat, netti, matkustelu, musiikki...) (vrt. osio 2 - nykynuoret)
7. Huomasitko lapsena/nuorena että englantia olisi ollut tärkeää koulun ulkopuolella? Missä?
8. Mikä merkitys englannin kielellä sinulle on **nyt**?
 - Miten näet kielen osaamisen tulevaisuuden kannalta? omalla kohdallasi?
 - Mitä tuntemuksia englantia sinussa herättää? (kieli muiden joukossa? tärkeä kommunikoinnin väline? läsnä arjessa?)
9. Opiskelet englantia yliopistossa. Miksi valitsit englannin? Oliko opettajaksi ryhtyminen selvä tavoite? Ts. kumpi on tärkeämpää, englannin vai opettamisen opiskelu?

OSIO 2 – MILLAISTA ENGL. OPETUKSEN TULISI OLLA? + 2010 TILANNE**1. ENGLANNIN KÄYTTÖ**

1.1 Millaisissa tilanteissa nykyään käytät englantia?

1.2 Millaisissa tilanteissa **uskot** yläkouluikäisten käyttävän englantia? (rinnasta osio 1:seen)

1.3 Millaista englannin käyttö on nykyaikana? Suomessa? Maailmalla?

1.4 Millaisen luulet englannin kielen käytön/merkityksen olevan tulevaisuudessa?

-Kuinka kansainvälistyminen vaikuttaa? (*kasvaako merkitys, Lingua Franca? vai vähenee?*)

-Entäs kulttuuri? Jos kieli leviää, leviääkö myös anglo-amerikkalainen kulttuuri?

2. TAVOITTEET

2.1 Mikä on mielestäsi “riittävä” englannin kielen taito, johon kouluopetuksessa tähdätään?

-Eroaako tavoitteet yksilöiden välillä? Ts. tarvitseeko kaikkien tähdätä vaativalle tasolle?
(-----> *voiko koulussa jo tietää kuka tarvitsee englantia ja kuinka paljon?*)

2.2 Millaista englantia kouluissa nykyään opetetaan? Miten? (millaisia taitoja? maailman englannit?)

-----> Mikä tavoite englannin opetuksella mielestäsi on?

-Mikä on tärkeää? Millaiset kielitaidon osa-alueet tärkeimpiä? **ANNA AIKAA!!!**

----->(kielioppi, ääntäminen, sanasto, englannin kielen säännöt, keskustelu...?)

----->pärjäämisen kannalta? kirjoitukset vs. oikea elämä?

-Pystytäänkö mielestäsi koulussa vastaamaan tavoitteeseen? (monipuolinen kielitaito)

HUOM! Anna haastateltaville riittävästi aikaa miettiä ja keskustelun virrata, ei alkuun omia mielipiteitä. Katso mihin suuntaan ajatukset lähtee, älä tarjoa omia mielipiteitä.

(neutraalius!)

3. KIELITIETO / KOMMUNIKAATIO

Jos englannin opetuksen tavoitteena on saada kielestä väline kommunikaatiolle, kuinka siihen voidaan valmistella oppilaita kouluissa?

3.1 Onko teidän mielestänne totta että suomalaiset eivät ole niin valmiita keskustelemaan englanniksi, kuin muun maalaiset? ---> Mistä uskotte tämän johtuvan? (odota, nouseeko keskustelussa esiin ehdotuksia siitä, miten kouluissa voitaisiin valmistaa keskusteluun)

3.2 Voiko keskustelua harjoitella?

3.3 Kaikilla puheharjoituksilla merkitys/järkeä? Puhumista puhumisen vuoksi?

3.4 Keskusteluharjoitusten mahdollisuudet, autenttisuus, siirtykö ulkomaailmaan? (=antaako eväitä keskustella luokkahuoneen ulkopuolella?)

3.5 Vai onko koulun tehtävä kannustaa ja rohkaista, saada oppilaat kokeilemaan mitä kaikkea kielellä voi tehdä jonka kautta saavat varmuutta keskusteluun?

-----> Ulkomaailma opettaa keskusteluun, koulu antaa eväät (sanasto, kielioppi, tavat...)

-----> formaali kohtaa informaalin TÄHÄN VOI VIELÄ PALATA KUN SEUR. OSIOO
KÄSITELTY

4. INFORMAALI JA FORMAALI OPPIMINEN

4.1 Tiedätkö mitä on formaali sekä informaali oppiminen?

4.2 Mitä informaalin (koulun ulkopuolella tapahtuvan) oppimisen mahdollisuuksia oppilaille on? (harrastukset, matkustelu, asuminen ulkomailla, maahanmuuttajat, media...?)

-Kuinka tämä mielestäsi näkyy kouluissa? Opeharjoittelun perusteella?

4.3 Voisiko informaalia oppimista käyttää jotenkin kouluissa englannin opetuksessa hyödyksi? Miten? (KEKSI TÄHÄN OMIA EHDOTUKSIA KESKUSTELUA VIRITTÄMÄÄN)

4.4 Mikä hyöty mielestäsi siitä olisi, että oppilaiden omia taitoja ja mielenkiinnon kohteita tuotaisiin mukaan tunneille? **Voiko siitä olla haittaa?**

-Lisäkysymyksiä, esim. motivointi, oppilaslähtöisyys, ilmapiiri

4.5 Tulisiko mielestäsi oppilaita kannustaa käyttämään englannin kieltä omalla ajalla? Miten? (lukeminen, leffat, matkustelu, kielikoulut, ulkomaalaiset kaverit... rohkaiseminen)