

**TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUNICATIVE TASKS IN
TEACHING EFL**

Master's thesis

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>1970-luvulta lähtien kielenopetuksessa huomio on entistä enemmän kiinnittynyt suullisen vuorovaikutuksen merkitykseen ja kommunikatiiviseen kompetenssiin. Kielten oppimisen tärkeimmäksi tavoitteeksi on noussut kyky olla vuorovaikutuksessa – niin suullisessa kuin kirjallisessakin – muiden ihmisten kanssa, ja kunkin kulttuurin sosiaalisten sääntöjen mukaisesti. Niinpä myös suullista kielitaitoa on alettu tutkia entistä enemmän (ks. esim. Tergujeff 2013; Hietala 2013).</p> <p>Tämän Pro Gradu -tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää, millaisia asenteita suomalaisilla englannin opettajilla on kommunikatiivisia harjoituksia kohtaan. Kysymystä lähestyttiin useasta näkökulmasta, joihin kuuluivat opettajien raportoima käyttöihteys, arviointi hyvän kommunikatiivisen harjoituksen ominaisuuksista, harjoitusten käyttömahdollisuudet sekä opettajien raportoima osallistuminen harjoitusten aikana. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys muodostuu Communicative Language Teaching ja Task-Based Teaching -metodologioista sekä aiemmista kommunikatiivista kompetenssia koskevista tutkimuksista.</p> <p>Tutkimus tapahtui kyselyllä, jota jaettiin Suomen Englanninopettajat Ry:n sähköpostilistalla ja Facebook-sivulla. Pääasiassa kvantitatiivinen aineisto muodostui 67 vastaajasta, joiden vastauksista huomiota kiinnitettiin jakaumiin sekä keskiarvoihin. Lisäksi käytettiin ristiintaulukointia, jolla selvitettiin taustakysymysten suhdetta vastauksissa nähtäviin ilmiöihin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa saatiin selville, että lähes kaikki vastaajat raportoivat käyttävänsä suullisia harjoituksia usein opetuksessa. Harjoitusten tärkeimpänä ominaisuutena pidettiin selkeitä ohjeita, ja vastaajat käyttivät suullisia harjoituksia monipuolisissa konteksteissa. Tulevissa tutkimuksissa huomiota kannattaa kiinnittää syvällisempään analyysiin esimerkiksi haastatteluilla sekä vertailuun muiden kielten kanssa.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

For a major part of its history, language teaching has been focused on teaching written language (see e.g. Brown & Yule 1983; Nunan 1989). Until the 1970s language teaching was almost exclusively centered around teaching written forms of language (McDonough and Shaw 2003), and even after the rise of the communicative method to prominence, spoken interaction has in many places been overshadowed by written language. This is in stark contrast with the fact that the main goal of teaching and learning foreign languages is successful communication and interaction with others, both in written forms and orally (Nunan 1991:39; Tergujeff 2013).

As noted by Salo-Lee (1991:1) spoken communication is the basis of social interaction in the modern world, both in informal contexts and in the business world as well. Rickheit, Strohner and Vorweg (2010:15) even go as far as to say that skills of spoken communication are a fundamentally imperative part of an individual's opportunities to accomplish their ambitions in social life. While this should mean that oral communicative skills are a central part of foreign language teaching, this is not always the case. Formal contexts of language learning are often criticized for focusing on syntax, grammar and vocabulary at the expense of skills necessary for fluent and understandable communication that is socially and culturally acceptable. Those skills include e.g. knowledge of the social and cultural rules of the target language, pronunciation and communication strategies, with which speakers make up for disruptions and inadequate language skills.

Although spoken skills are still often neglected and excessive focus is given to flawlessness in terms of syntax, the importance of proficiency with communicative abilities has been on the rise in foreign language teaching (see e.g. McDonough and Shaw 2003:21-27; Littlewood 2010). This development started in the 1970s with the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a methodology of language

teaching that emphasizes the importance of communicative competence as a goal in learning foreign languages (Hall 2011:93-94). CLT rose to prominence as the dominant methodology in language teaching during the last decades of the 20th century, and although new methodologies, such as Task-Based Teaching (TBT), have since gained footing in the field of language teaching, the influence of CLT can still very much be found in current curricula and teaching materials (Hall 2011:93; McDonough and Shaw 2003:40-41).

The present study aimed to discover how teachers of English in Finland generally view communicative tasks as an activity during their lessons, how they believe communicative tasks can be used and what makes a communicative task useful in their opinion. An online questionnaire was chosen as the method of data gathering on grounds of practicality, as it allows the researcher to gather and analyze large amounts of data with a manageable workload and within a reasonably short period of time.

The study consists of a total of 6 sections. In the next section I will first take a look at some of the important aspects of communicative tasks in foreign language learning and teaching, which serve as a groundwork to the study. In the third section the role of communicative tasks in today's language teaching is examined more closely, as well as how they developed in the final decades of the 20th century to the state they are in, following which the research design is described. Subsequently, I will introduce and discuss the findings from the questionnaire, thoroughly examining the results of each part of the survey in order. Finally, the sixth section concludes the paper.

2 ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATIVE TASKS CONSIDERED IN THE STUDY

2.1 Key concepts

In this section I will begin examining the important aspects that form a foundation to the study with the introduction and definition of some key concepts, some of which can be quite ambiguous even among scholars. One such concept is the concept of *attitudes*.

2.1.1 Attitudes

The concept of attitudes is a fairly complicated one, and it is often defined and measured in varying ways within different disciplines. The concept is ambiguous in everyday language use and there does not appear to be an inclusive, widely accepted definition. To better understand the concept, I will first briefly explain three historical definitions introduced by Garrett (2010:19-20).

Thurstone (1931, as cited by Garrett 2010:19) defined attitudes as a response for or against an object of psychological nature. Thurstone's early definition had an emphasis on having an emotional reaction to something. Two decades later Allport (1954, as cited by Garrett 2010:19) stated that attitudes mean learned inclinations to react with particular thoughts, feelings and behavior when encountering specific people or objects. This definition included the idea that attitudes do not only influence the way a person feels, but their thoughts and actions as well. Moreover, Allport's definition was significant in that it suggested that attitudes are learned, as opposed to Thurstone, whose definition did not say anything as to how attitudes are formed. This definition by Allport put emphasis on the upbringing of individuals in the development of attitudes. Almost another two decades later Sarnoff (1970, as cited by Garrett 2010:20) defined the concept as a disposition to respond to a class of objects in a way that can be either favorable or unfavorable, or something in between. Sarnoff's description added to the

previous definitions that attitudes can be either positive or negative, ranging on a spectrum between two extremes. It also increased emphasis on attitudes concerning entire categories and not only specific individuals or items.

More recently Ester, Braun and Mohler (2006:8) have defined attitudes as “beliefs about specific objects or situations.” They add that attitudes can be positive or negative, and depend on a person’s values. In my opinion this definition seems to omit the much earlier idea from Allport (1954, as cited by Garrett 2010:19), of where and how attitudes show: Allport argued that attitudes influence both feelings and thoughts, as well as perhaps most importantly behavior. Another more recent definition by Smith (2005:106) does include Allport’s argument, as Smith states that attitudes are evaluative dispositions, usually influencing the thinking, feelings and actions of a person. Smith (2005:107) also broadens this definition, arguing that essentially attitudes mean “standing in relation to other beings.” In other words, attitudes require encountering an object and having a relation to it. Smith (2005:107) also argues that if an object has no relevance, there is no need for an evaluative disposition – a person cannot have an attitude toward something that is in no way significant to them. While it is certainly inclusive, Smith’s broadening of the definition seems slightly vague without much explanation of what is meant.

In this study the concept of attitudes is understood through a combination of Ester, Braun and Mohler’s (2006:8) definition and Smith’s (2005:107) definition, both influenced heavily by the three historically significant definitions examined at the start of the section. Attitudes are considered in this study to be views and opinions concerning particular types of objects or situations, as stated by Ester, Braun and Mohler (2006:8), while they can also be beliefs about people, as included in Allport’s definition (1954, as cited by Garrett 2010:19). Attitudes are by nature evaluative, and they influence a person’s thoughts, emotions and behavior, as described by Smith (2005:107). Furthermore, the object of an attitude has to have some kind of relevance or

significance to validate the existence of attitudes toward them (Smith 2005:107).

2.1.2 English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Next I will discuss the decision to address English as a foreign language rather than a second language in this study. Learners of English in Finland mostly have considerably more exposure to the language than any other foreign language taught in Finnish schools, as English has become more and more widely used through advertising, video games, the internet etc. In most cases, English is also the second language children learn, starting from the second grade of primary education (Tilastokeskus 2017b). Therefore, some choose to address English as a second language. Others (e.g. Numminen and Piri 1998:7) talk about two national languages in Finland, Finnish and Swedish, and view all other languages as foreign languages. This view better represents my own opinion on the matter, and I will next provide additional reasoning for addressing English as a foreign language within the context of the Finnish educational system.

Elomaa (2009:19) proposes that a factor for differentiation between a second and foreign language could be whether they are discussed in the context of formal learning or informal language acquisition. She explains that a foreign language could be seen as one that is only learned in a formal context, while a second language would only be acquired in its natural context of usage. Therefore, all languages that are learned in schools can be argued to be foreign languages to learners, while only a language acquired in an authentic context, e.g. when living abroad, could be seen as a second language. In the field of language learning there are other factors as well that encourage addressing English as a foreign language to Finnish language learners. Arguably more importantly than the context of language learning, the content of learning English is essentially foreign to Finnish-speakers. In terms of typology, English, a Germanic language, has little in common with the Finnic language of Finnish (see Alanen 2000:187 on Finnish and Swedish). The structures of the two languages are vastly dissimilar and

large portions of their lexicons have quite different etymologies. This means that English is demonstrably more foreign to Finnish-speakers, than to speakers of other Germanic languages, such as Swedish (Alanen *ibid.*).

In this discussion the National Core Curriculum (NCC) should not be ignored, as it is considered a notably authoritative document on issues regarding education in Finland. The NCC (2014:549) states that in addition to the first language, the syllabus has to include two other languages: a second national language (either Swedish or Finnish) and a foreign language or Sami language. Furthermore, Swedish is classified in section 15.4.2 of the NCC (2014:549) under the title “Second national language”, whereas English is addressed later on in section 15.4.3 (2014:594) under “Foreign languages”. The NCC does address English as a separate case to other foreign languages, acknowledging its status as a global lingua franca (NCC 2014:596) and setting specific objectives of instruction in English, while other foreign languages are not singled out in the section, but rather grouped together. Still, English appears under the heading “Foreign languages” and therefore it can be argued that the NCC only considers Swedish or Finnish a second language in Finnish education, while all other languages are considered foreign languages. The one exception to this argument is Sami, which is not categorized under either concept in the NCC, but treated as a separate case. This precedent is also followed in this paper. In addition to the reasoning discussed above, the concept of English as a foreign language (EFL) was chosen in this paper also to avoid possible ambiguities, as Swedish is in many other contexts, both every day and official, considered the second ‘official’ language in Finland.

2.1.3 Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Teaching

In this section I will introduce two prominent methodologies of language teaching. The methodologies are discussed together, as Richards (2001:223) suggests that the approach of Task-Based Teaching (TBT) is quite closely related to the earlier approach

to language teaching, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Developed in the 1970s, by the end of the 20th century CLT had become the main approach in teaching English as a foreign language (Hall 2011:93). Hall (2011:93-94) explains that the CLT approach shifted language teaching from solely focusing on linguistic competence to the inclusion of communicative competence. Definitions of different types of competences with regard to language learning will be more closely examined in section 3.1. This shift in language teaching meant that grammatical correctness by itself was not seen as sufficient anymore, but language learners were now expected to have competence in actually using language in authentic situations and in different contexts, as well as with a variety of people, who may have different levels of understanding with regard to foreign language speaking.

Richards (2001:161) introduces four typical features of the communicative view of language present in the methodology of CLT. First, he explains that language is seen as a system for conveying meaning. Second, enabling interaction is its most important role. Third, language has a format, where its functional uses are demonstrated. Finally, the fundamental units of language are more than grammatical features – characteristically they are functional and convey communicative meaning. Based on these features, Richards (2001:223) presents a few examples of teaching activities that reflect the CLT approach. These examples include activities that involve real communication, activities where language is used to perform meaningful tasks as well as activities where the usage of language is relevant to learners. Therefore, exemplary classroom tasks reflecting the methodology of CLT would be e.g. problem-solving and role-play activities.

Gómez-Rodríguez (2010) also discusses the characterizing features of the CLT methodology. He states that language learners advance their communication skills best in genuine contexts, as contextualization is a requirement for language use. This argument is supported by Byram (1997:22), who argues that language contains culture

when used in context. Gómez-Rodríguez (2010) further explains the principles of CLT, stating that the contents of learning and teaching a language are seen as being based on social and communicative functions, not solely grammatical structures. Similarly to Richards (2001:223) he also describes role-playing, problem-solving, dramatization and simulation as typical CLT tasks, continuing that both materials and activities should be authentic in CLT to simulate real-life language use. Finally, Gómez-Rodríguez (2010) states that mistakes are an important part of learning in CLT, as language is produced by an individual, which often happens through attempts and failures.

Another popular methodology of language teaching, Task-Based Teaching (TBT), was developed on the basis of the communicative view of language and CLT (Hall 2011:94). The primary features of Task-Based Teaching can be compiled to include the following (Ellis 2003:9-10):

- The primary focus is on meaning
- Real-world language use is involved
- A task can involve any of the four language skills
- A task engages cognitive processes
- There is a clearly defined communicative outcome

The list shows how Task-Based Teaching draws from the ideas developed earlier for Communicative Language Teaching, and adds to them especially with the inclusion of the concept *task*. As can be seen by comparing the lists of features of CLT (Richards 2001:161) and TBT (Ellis 2003:9-10), both approaches to foreign language teaching emphasize the function of language in conveying meaning. This emphasis shows in the preference of teaching activities that include “real-world language use”, i.e. the use of language to achieve a goal outside the context of learning features of a language. In addition, it is advised in both approaches to use instances of language that are in some way relevant to the learner.

2.1.4 Communicative tasks

In the previous subsection two approaches to foreign language teaching were examined: Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Teaching. It was argued that the critical difference between the two approaches derives from the usage of the concept of *task*. In this subsection I will define what is understood with the concept in this study with regard to communicative activities in the classroom, and examine the difference between task and *exercise* more closely.

Long (1985:89) defines task broadly as an activity done for personal reasons or to please others, with the motivation being either the result of the task or some kind of compensation. That is to say, doing the dishes, picking up trash on the street and going to work are all tasks. Long's definition has been criticized for being non-linguistic, since it takes advantage of examples that require no language use (Nunan 1989:5). Ellis (2003:2) agrees with the previous sentiment, arguing that since the main aim of foreign language teaching is for learners to gain competence in language use, it is counter-productive to demonstrate task with activities that require no language use. Ellis (2003:3) goes on to state that tasks most importantly involve conveying meanings. This supports Nunan's (1989:10) argument that tasks in classrooms require comprehension, manipulation, production or interaction in the target language while learners are primarily focused on meaning. While there is an objective in tasks, there is no predetermined answer. Therefore, the defining characteristics of tasks as introduced by Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2001) are the use of target language to reach an objective and a focus on meaning rather than form in the use of the target language. Tasks are similar activities to ones that learners might encounter in real life, such as negotiating meanings and problem-solving.

To make a distinction between task and exercise, Ellis (2003:3) suggests that while tasks require focus on conveying meanings, exercises are focused on form. Furthermore, Ellis

(2003:3-5) argues, that tasks and exercises are different in the kind of meaning that is involved. He explains that tasks are focused on pragmatic meaning, i.e. the context of language use, whereas exercises are concerned with semantic meaning, i.e. what certain linguistic forms convey regardless of context. According to Widdowson (1998) the key difference is that a task aims at developing language skills, whereas an exercise has language skills as a prerequisite, and therefore in exercises there is a predetermined correct answer required from the learners. A typical exercise would therefore be a fill-in-the-gap textbook activity.

2.1.5 Fluency

An essential concept in CLT, and any discussion of communication and interaction, is *fluency*. Usually speaking happens quite spontaneously and there is little time for consideration. When reading or writing one can spend as much time as needed to understand or properly formulate each sentence. In oral interaction, however, one has to constantly plan their speech in real time, in addition to trying to understand what others are saying in real time. Of course, spoken communication and written communication are different to a large degree in e.g. the types of assistance that is available. In written communication one might typically use dictionaries etc., whereas in spoken communication help is often offered by other people. The problem with stopping to hesitate and consider, and interruptions to the interaction is that they take away from the fluency of communication, interfering with its efficiency. On the other hand speaking too fast and carelessly can lead to incomprehensible structures and interfere with the efficiency of communication anyway. Thus, there is a debate to be had in foreign language teaching of whether the focus of oral skills should be on fluency or grammatical accuracy (see e.g. Folse 2006 and Bygate 2001).

Although fluency is sometimes viewed simply as the pace at which a foreign language speaker is able to generate language, Thornbury (2005:6-8) asserts that the concept is not

quite that simple, detailing additional elements of fluency. He explains that pauses in particular are a crucial factor for fluency, since both their frequency and placing, as well as how they are filled all play a part in the perception of a speaker's fluency. Thus, a fluent speaker would in general avoid excessive pausing, position them in natural places and fill them with filler sounds, such as *umm* and *ah*, or filler words, such as *you know*, *like* and *basically*.

There are some basic principles in how fluency in a foreign language can be practised. (Nation and Newton 2009:152-153). Importantly, when working on fluency, the subject of discussion needs to be familiar to drive the communication forward, and linguistic resources that are required in the tasks, such as vocabulary and structures, need to be well enough known to the learners that they do not stumble due to morphological or syntactic inadequacies. Furthermore, activities where fluency is practised should be focused on meaning, as emphasized in the methodologies of CLT and TBT. There should be a reason for the learners to attempt to succeed in the communication and focus on what they are trying to achieve with language, rather than what they are saying. It is often also helpful to put some type of stress on the learners to try to interact with each other at a faster pace than they are used to, such as a time limit.

2.1.6 Language skills

Although it is quite difficult, and oftentimes not very sensible, to differentiate between different skills in authentic language use, language teaching has traditionally focused on four separate skills of language use: reading and listening comprehension along with written and spoken production. In modern language teaching a fifth skill, grammaring is sometimes added, which means the skills to make use of appropriate grammar structures in a meaningful and accurate way. As grammar is certainly a crucial part of foreign language teaching, it will be considered a language skill in the present study. In addition, other types of skills will also be included, specifically vocabulary, cultural

skills, communication strategies and pronunciation, as these can be seen as essential parts of learning and teaching foreign languages, while none of the four traditional skills properly describe these aspects.

Vocabulary is an area of language teaching that, although not traditionally included in the four skills, is usually taught and moreover tested as a separate entity. This is the case even more so with regard to pronunciation, which is often included as a completely separate area in coursebooks. Understanding of the target culture is also viewed in this study as a separate language skill, because, as Byram (1997:22) argues, language used in a context always includes and is directed by cultural and social rules. The ninth and final language skill as perceived in this study is communication strategies, which is included as it is an important part of Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence, discussed in more detail in section 3.1 of this study. While other parts of Canale and Swain's model are adequately included in the skills mentioned above, communication strategies, or strategic competence, as in Canale and Swain's model, cannot properly be placed in any previous category of skills. In the present study communication strategies are understood as the verbal and nonverbal methods that language speakers use to compensate for inadequate skills with regard to e.g. grammar.

2.2 Guidelines for foreign language teaching

Two important official documents affect and direct language teaching in Finland: the National Core Curriculum (NCC) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the latter of which also having an impact on language teaching in other member states of the European Union (Harjanne 2006:15-16). These documents are the most important guidelines on foreign language teaching in Finland. In this section I will review the contents of the documents concerning communication and oral skills, in order to discover the significance that is officially given to communicative

activities in foreign language teaching in Finland.

2.2.1 National Core Curriculum

The prevailing NCC has been in use since the fall of 2016, although the previous NCC is still in effect on eighth and ninth grades for the most part. The NCC describes the goals and main contents of all subjects, as well as a variety of principles and values that form a foundation for local curricula and teaching. On learning theory the NCC (2014:26) declares the following:

The National Core Curriculum is based on a conception of learning that sees the pupils as active actors. They learn to set goals and to solve problems both independently and together with others. Learning is an inseparable part of an individual's growth as a human being and the building of a decent life for the community. Language, physical elements and the use of different senses are essential for thinking and learning. ... Learning takes place in interaction with other pupils, the teachers and other adults, and various communities and learning environments.

The learning theory discussed in the NCC emphasizes the active role of the learner. Moreover, some of the ideas introduced in the NCC are quite similar to those of task-based teaching, discussed in section 2.1.3 of this paper, such as the involved role of learners as problem-solvers individually and in cooperation. It is also mentioned that learning happens in interaction with peers and teachers, as well as other adults.

In explaining the function of basic education, it is said in the NCC (2014:30), that basic education in Finland should accumulate social capital. This is explained to mean connections between people, interaction and trust. In addition, basic education has a cultural function in developing a diverse cultural understanding and appreciation of learners' own cultural heritage as well as that of others. The importance of interaction in not only the learners' native language, but in foreign languages as well is asserted in the NCC (2014:35), as seen in the following quote:

In the school community, the pupils experience the significance of interaction for their personal development. They develop their social skills and learn to express themselves in different ways and present and perform publicly in various situations. Education supports the pupils' development as versatile and skillful users of language, both in their mother tongue and in other languages. They are encouraged to use even limited language skills to interact and express themselves.

Quite clearly there is an understanding of language in the NCC that is very similar to the methodologies of CLT and TBT, discussed in greater detail in section 2.1.3 of this paper. The NCC emphasizes the importance of interaction both in terms of its conception of learning in general (NCC 2014:26-27) and more specifically with relation to language learning and teaching (NCC 2014:216). Enabling interaction is cited as the primary function of language as viewed in the methodology of CLT by both Richards (2001:161) and Gómez-Rodríguez (2010). Other characteristics of CLT and TBT are also visible in the NCC, such as learning language through trial and error, the active role of learners and cooperation with others to reach a defined goal.

2.2.2 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The CEFR is a document written by the European Council, aimed to provide a foundation for member states of the European Union for the design of language syllabuses, curricula, exams and coursebooks (CEFR 2001:1). It acts alongside the National Core Curriculum as an authoritative document on how languages are taught in Finland. The CEFR explicitly explains what language learners in European countries are expected to learn, with the aim of using languages for purposes of communication. In addition, the document also examines the knowledge and skills that improve the effectiveness of communication (CEFR 2001:1). The framework is a comprehensive and substantial document, which is why only what is applicable in this study will be discussed here, and the entire document will not be summarized.

There are three fundamental objectives set in the CEFR (2001:1): first, it increases

transparency between different syllabuses in Europe through setting shared goals. This supports collaboration in language teaching, and lowers the barriers of differing education systems. Second, as it puts commonly accepted criteria of language learning into place, it allows for better mobility between European countries. Third, it helps language teaching to better correspond to the requirements and expectations of the learners, as it gives organizers of education a possibility to evaluate their methods as well as coordinating their work.

The understanding of language learning that the CEFR (2001:9) describes can be seen as both action-orientated and holistic. An action-orientated method means that learners are expected to become users of language, and therefore the same system can be used to evaluate the proficiency of both learners and users, while a holistic view considers that in addition to linguistic resources, the society requires emotional, cognitive and volitional ones from learners of languages (CEFR 2001:43).

Knowledge and skills in languages are explained in the CEFR (2001:9-10) as a range of competences, which include both general and specifically communicative language competences. While communicative language competences enable individuals to operate with linguistic means, general competences are in no way specific to language. Instead, they can be applied for different types of tasks, not excluding linguistic purposes. Communicative competence is examined more closely in section 3.1 of this paper.

Simply put, the language scales introduced in the CEFR (2001:24) categorize learners and users of languages into three groups: basic users, independent users and proficient users, marked by the letters A, B and C respectively. These categories are then separated into two sublevels, and each sublevel is given a short written description, that explains what skills learner are required to showcase in order to be evaluated to have reached that level. The evaluation scale is demonstrated in table 1.

Table 1. Common Reference Levels: global scale (CEFR 2001:24)

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Looking at table 1, one can see how much emphasis the CEFR puts on communicative skills, i.e. speaking and listening. Even at the lowest level, A1, the learner of a language is expected to be able to e.g. participate in a simple spoken conversation with sufficient help, introduce themselves and other people and discuss basic personal details. The level of expectation rises through the levels, but communicative skills are clearly visible on each level up to C2, where the learner is expected to express themselves with spontaneity, fluency and precision. The way the CEFR stresses interaction is similar to

the NCC, and both display a close relation to the methodology of CLT. The CEFR has also clearly been influenced by another language teaching methodology, TBT, as is evident in table 1. In the description of level A2, it is stated the learner “can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information”, illustrating the appreciation of tasks as a fundamental concept in language learning.

Entirely independent of the skills of speaking and listening, there are scales of evaluation for interactive activities and strategies of spoken interaction in the CEFR (2001:73-81) as well. The scales provided include e.g. overall spoken interaction, informal discussion and goal-oriented cooperation. Table 2 shows the scale of evaluation for overall spoken interaction.

Table 2. Scale of evaluation for overall spoken interaction (CEFR 2001:74)

C2	Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and re-structure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.
C1	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.
B2	Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.
B1	Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field. Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music etc. Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current

	events).
A2	<p>Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.</p>
A1	Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

The spoken interaction scale in table 2 emphasizes interaction and tasks, as defined in section 2.1.4. This is especially evident in the description of level B1, which states that the learner or user is expected to be able to “communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters” and “exchange, check and confirm information”. The prominence of interaction in this evaluation scale is naturally explained by the curious decision to separate oral production and interaction into entirely independent scales. Admittedly, the two can be seen as distinct activities, where competence in one does not guarantee that in the other. Still, as has already been argued in this paper, the most important goal in teaching foreign languages is strengthening the learner’s ability to express themselves in oral interaction with other people, where oral production is very closely tied to interaction.

The CEFR systematically categorizes language into isolated units, creating some undeniable issues, as it completely foregoes the complicated and layered structure of language as a whole. One such issue is that communicative interaction is not a simple, one-dimensional activity that can be examined looking at just one aspect of it. The entirety of an individual is involved in composing meanings, including verbal aspects such as tone, pace etc. and non-verbal aspects, such as posture and gestures. All of the components that the CEFR divides into several tables, actually happen in synergy, functioning together to make everyone’s style of communication specific to that person.

This issue has already been discussed in section 2.1.6 of the present study, where it was argued that although it is rarely sensible to divide language into different components, this has traditionally been done in language teaching, and is done in modern times as well, as practicing language as a whole is often seen as impractical. This division of language teaching into different subskills is also done in the present study, in order to more precisely examine the use and purposes of communicative tasks in language teaching.

In this section I have examined some aspects of language learning and teaching that are viewed as an important foundation of knowledge to the present study. I have explained what is understood with some key concepts in the study, and I have discussed two of the most important documents that influence how language learning and teaching is viewed and organized in the Finnish education system. In the next section I will move on to examine communicative tasks in foreign language teaching more closely.

3 COMMUNICATIVE TASKS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In this section communicative tasks and the communicative approach to language teaching will be discussed in further detail. I will first review how the concept of *communicative competence* rose to prominence as a central idea in foreign language teaching, and how the methodology of CLT shaped foreign language teaching from the 1970s onwards. Following that, I will discuss the position of CLT and the communicative approach in foreign language teaching today, and how they still influence many aspects of teaching.

3.1 A brief history of the communicative approach to language teaching

Chomsky (1965) categorized language into *competence* and *performance*, where competence means theoretical knowledge of the forms and structures of language, i.e. vocabulary and grammar, while performance means practical utilization of competence, i.e. the use of language. Chomsky's categorization is widely criticized for entirely omitting the sociocultural level of language (see e.g. Hymes 1972, Campbell and Wales 1970).

Hymes (1972), focusing on the acquisition of first language, coined the concept of communicative competence, with which he means the knowledge of what to say to whom in a social context, as well as when and how. Hymes (1972:281) defined language as a means of interaction with a list of four questions, arguing against Chomsky's categorization between competence and performance:

1. Whether or not something is formally achievable.
2. Whether or not it can be achieved with the means of application that are available.
3. Whether or not it is socially acceptable in its context.

4. Whether or not it is in reality carried out, and what consequences it may have.

In Hymes' model, competence as defined by Chomsky is the first step, followed by two steps of sociocultural appropriateness, and performance as defined by Chomsky is only the last step. Hymes also replaced Chomsky's idea of an "ideal speaker-listener", instead looking at the actual speaker-listener in interaction. This model was eventually transitioned to teaching foreign languages, and was a stepping stone in the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (Byram 1997).

In the early 1980s Hymes' concept of communicative competence was developed further by Canale and Swain (1980), who divided it into three subcategories: grammatical competence, strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence. In this model each subcategory describes a part of the entire concept of communicative competence, and the parts operating together form a person's total communicative competence. Later Canale (1983) also added a fourth subcategory, discourse competence. Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence is depicted in figure 1.

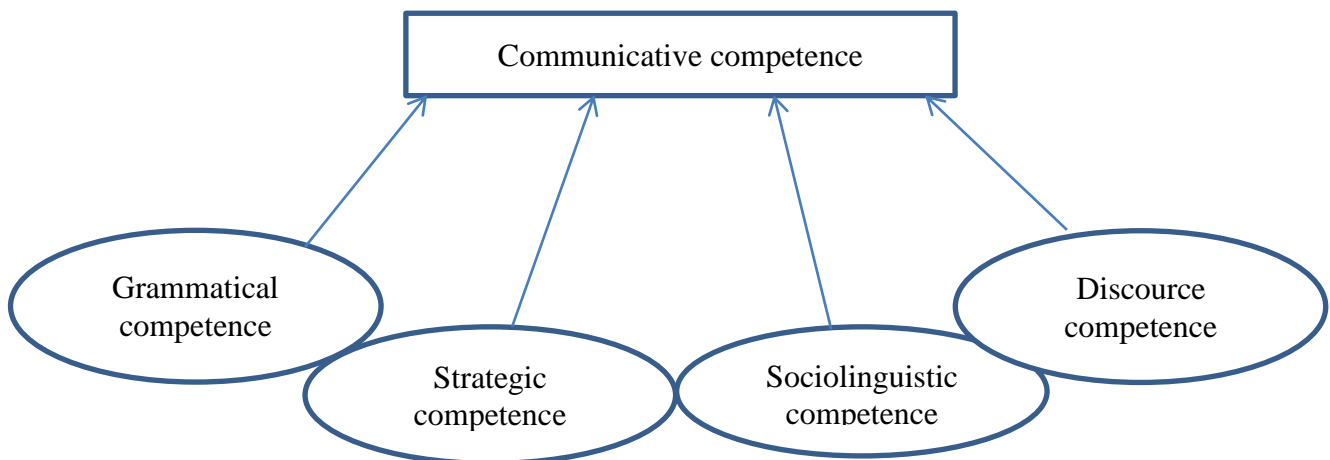


Figure 1: The model of communicative competence as described by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983)

In Canale and Swain's (1980) model communicative competence is comprised of different, equally important competences, all of which contribute to a language speaker's actual communicative competence. Grammatical competence was for a long time the main focus of language teaching, and is still an important factor, despite the rise of the communicative approach. Grammatical competence in this model includes lexical items, morphology, semantics and syntax as well as phonology. Strategic competence is defined as the methods, both verbal and nonverbal, that language speakers use in interaction with others to make up for disruptions in communication, resulting from inadequate grammatical competence, or just fluctuating performance. Sociolinguistic competence refers to knowledge and awareness of the social and cultural rules that regulate language use. Discourse competence, added later by Canale (1983), means the capability to produce both cohesive and coherent text and speech. The model illustrates the different factors that are required in speaking foreign languages. It is usually not enough to be educated in the grammar of the target language. Efficient interaction also requires the ability to negotiate meanings and use language within the norms of the culture of the target language.

Since the 1970s the methodology of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become the preferred approach of foreign language teaching (Gómez-Rodríguez 2010). According to McDonough and Shaw (2003:15), modern teaching of English as a foreign language has been shaped the most by CLT. They point out that CLT emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to criticism of the dominant foreign language teaching approach of the 50s and 60s. Before the development of CLT foreign language teaching was largely focused on precise grammar or formally correct and written language use. These ideas were overturned in and ever since the 1970s with the emergence of CLT, which focused heavily on the capability to communicate and interact both in an efficient and socially acceptable way (McDonaugh and Shaw 2003:16-17).

Littlewood (2010:x), however, voices opinions against CLT as the prominent and

preferable approach to language teaching. He argues that the idea of communicative competence as the ultimate goal in foreign language learning was nothing new in the 1970s, and asserts that this goal was a great influence on earlier foreign language teaching methodologies, such as situational language teaching and the audio-lingual method. Furthermore, he states that the CLT approach only has a right to the label 'communicative', as the consequences of communicative competence as a goal have been studied more categorically since the 1970s. Still, Littlewood does acknowledge, that a communicative approach allows for a wider point of view of language, in that it brings communicative functions alongside the structures of language to consideration. Therefore, Littlewood suggests combining the two views of language: the communicative approach as a newer, functional view and the traditional focus on grammar and vocabulary as a structural view.

3.2 Communicative tasks in today's foreign language teaching

In the previous section I briefly examined the emergence of the communicative approach to language teaching in the 1970s with the methodology of Communicative Language Teaching, and the development of the concepts such as competence and performance, first introduced by Chomsky (1965). This section looks at the position that the communicative approach has today in language teaching, and how CLT has affected the teaching of foreign languages in recent years.

According to McDonough and Shaw (2003:21-27), the methodology of Communicative Language Teaching has had a wide range of consequences in modern foreign language teaching. These consequences include a focus on what the functions or practical applications of language are, considering contexts and roles in communicative tasks, shifting from a focus on the accuracy of language to the appropriateness of it, and taking into account the actual relationship of the structures and functions of language, such as in the case of rhetorical questions. ("Why don't we..." is often a suggestion, not

a question.) McDonough and Shaw (2003:40-41) suggest that foreign language teaching in the present day is deeply rooted in the communicative approach, and that e.g. current textbooks do not have an approach that is in any way new in comparison to the communicative approach. Instead, the ideas of CLT can easily be found in modern teaching materials, although they may be organized and emphasized in a different way (McDonough and Shaw 2003:42).

Dufva and Mäntylä's (2017:102-110) discussion on how the teaching of oral skills has evolved in Finnish foreign language coursebooks seems to at least partially support McDonough and Shaw's (2003:42) argument that CLT is still evident in modern teaching materials. Dufva and Mäntylä (2017:110) describe a currently widely used series of secondary school EFL coursebooks in Finland, *ProFiles*, stating that the books have a broader understanding of speaking than some of its predecessors. For instance, in *ProFiles* the learner is instructed to make use of eye contact and nodding, and to show that they understand a speaker as tolerance of silence is oftentimes lower in English-speaking countries compared to Finland. This already shows that *ProFiles* makes an attempt to take the social and cultural rules of language use into account, which are seen as an important part of teaching communication in CLT (Gómez-Rodríguez 2010). Dufva and Mäntylä (ibid.) also explain that topics of discussion in *ProFiles* are more familiar to the learners than the ones found in books from the 1980s, and continue to state that *ProFiles* includes guidance on the different functions that speaking can have, such as expressing one's opinion and showing interest. Furthermore, they suggest that the books have role-playing activities, which are a prime example of CLT according to both Richards (2001:223) and Gómez-Rodríguez (2010).

Dufva and Mäntylä (2017:110) do still criticize how oral skills are presented and practised in *ProFiles*. They report that, similarly to older coursebooks, the currently used *ProFiles* also includes 'dialogue'-exercises with lines readily provided either already in English, or to be translated from Finnish. Dufva and Mäntylä carry on to argue that

pronunciation is not specifically paid attention to in the books, and the communication presented in oral skills exercises is not realistic, as the participants to conversations are instructed to take turns to say lines. In actual interaction this is of course not the case, as people talk over, interrupt and support each other.

The problem with pronunciation being overlooked in teaching materials as an important aspect of language learning has been suggested by others, too. Derwing and Munro (2005) also suggest that this is a troublesome trend in language teaching, while Tergujeff (2013:10) proposes that this might be a downside of CLT, which focuses on interaction at the cost of teaching more theoretical aspects of communication, such as pronunciation. However, Tergujeff asserts that pronunciation is the factor that gives a listener the first impression of a speaker's language skills, and it plays an essential part in any spoken communication, and especially how easily a speaker is understood. This shows that not only do the positive aspects of CLT still heavily influence language teaching, but some of its weaknesses can also be found in current teaching materials.

Dufva and Mäntylä (2017:111-112) also discuss current and future trends in teaching materials in Finland with regard to oral skills. They acknowledge that technological advancements have already influenced language teaching, and may play a crucial part in how oral skills are taught in the future. However, they warn against blindly focusing on technology in evolving both language teaching and teaching materials, as developing these requires expertise in terms of linguistics and pedagogy. According to Dufva and Mäntylä (2017:112), currently the hot trends of language teaching include learners' active role, collaborative learning, and including games and play in teaching. In addition, Dufva and Mäntylä mention drama, role-plays and contests as activities that have long been used in language teaching, and expect for instance the social media to gain a foothold in language teaching.

Altogether there seems to be a consensus that CLT has not only had a great impact on

more recent language teaching methodologies, but many of its principles are still quite evident in how languages are taught. These principles show in ways that are often seen as very positive, but some negative effects of CLT can also be found, as is the case with the apparent lack of practising pronunciation.

Although there has been some research in recent years into communicative tasks in foreign language learning and teaching, and teachers' attitudes have been investigated in a few areas, most prominently with regard to inclusion and differentiation (see e.g. Saloviita 2015), research on teachers' attitudes on communicative tasks in foreign language teaching has been scarce. In addition, for the most part research into attitudes in the teaching and learning context is greatly focused on learners' attitudes, how they can be influenced and how they affect learning (see e.g. Heinzmann 2013; Kaski 2009; Portolés Falomir 2015). Research on what effects teacher attitudes can have in language learning has been few and far between. Thus, this study examines the attitudes of teachers with regard to communicative tasks, and will hopefully also inspire further research into teachers, and how their thoughts, beliefs and attitudes affect learning.

Lundberg and Levin (2003:29-30) researched preservice primary school teachers' attitudes with regard to how teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classrooms changed during several courses of their teacher education program. They conducted a presurvey and a postsurvey on 44 participants with a year of teacher training in between, and asked the participants in both surveys to evaluate their willingness to teach children with disabilities in inclusion settings, how effectively they think they could teach in such settings and what their general beliefs are regarding inclusion. Lundberg and Levin (2003:30) found that there was a significant increase in willingness to teach inclusion classrooms during the year of teacher training, as in the presurvey 19 out of 44 participants had stated that they would take a job teaching such a classroom, but in the postsurvey 32 out of 44 were willing to teach an inclusion classroom. Two primary reasons were found to have affected this increase:

first, research into the disabilities they would encounter in inclusion settings by the teacher trainees was cited as a significant factor in the increase of willingness to include disabled children in classroom. Second, observing inclusion classrooms and doing internships in such settings was also cited as a factor influencing the teacher trainees' evaluation of inclusion classrooms. Lundeberg and Levin's (2003:29-30) findings suggest that familiarity played a big part in the attitudes that the preservice teachers had toward the inclusion of disabled children in their classes. Moreover, simply researching and preparing seemed to affect the respondents attitudes positively. These findings encourage experimentation in teaching, as experience and familiarity seem to play a big part in willingness to take more responsibility.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Method of data collection

The goal in this study was to gain a general impression of how teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Finland see the usefulness and preferable features of communicative tasks in foreign language teaching. Instead of researching individual teachers' opinions, ideas and teaching styles, the target was to find information that could be generalized. Thus, the method of an online survey was chosen, and the study became largely quantitative, albeit with some qualitative data included too.

There is an overabundance of favorable features, which make a survey a very practical and appealing tool for a researcher. As described by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:6) the greatest advantage of a survey is its unrivalled efficiency. It requires a reasonably small amount of time, effort and financial resources from the researcher, whilst enabling the researcher to collect a significant amount of data within a short period of time. Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:195) add that surveys or questionnaires allow for a significant number of questions to be asked from an equally significant amount of people. Hirsjärvi et al. (ibid.) add that the researcher does not need to consume time and effort searching for an appropriate method for analyzing the data, as the methods of analysis are built in to surveys. This argument is also supported by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:6), who continue to state that soundly planned and constructed surveys can be analyzed especially swiftly with modern advancements to technology. Furthermore, Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:6) laud surveys for their flexibility and versatile possibilities: factual information, attitudes and behavioral patterns can all be researched with surveys, and the possibilities are practically limitless as to the variety of topics and people that can be researched.

Surveys and questionnaires do of course have their problems as well. As a

counterargument to the efficiency of surveys Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:195) suggest that in order for a survey to work the way it is intended to, the researcher does need to invest time and effort to it, and have proper knowledge about how to make a survey. They argue that a researcher has no way of knowing whether the respondents properly understand any of the questions or the alternatives for answers in a survey, although in my opinion properly piloting the survey and taking suitable action to feedback received during the piloting should help in making the survey as unambiguous and understandable as possible. This, of course, does not eliminate the fact that just by looking at the responses the researcher cannot know whether the respondents have understood the questions the intended way or not. Furthermore, Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:195) state that the researcher cannot know if the respondents have taken the questionnaire seriously at all. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:6-9) also point out the possibility of ambiguity in a questionnaire. They state that as the respondents answer the questionnaire by themselves, there is a possibility that the respondents misunderstand or interpret questions differently. This is especially problematic as the researcher has no chance of correcting these mistakes – which further emphasizes the importance of properly piloting the questionnaire.

Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:6-9) discuss other possible disadvantages that questionnaires may have as well. They mention that very complex issues cannot really be researched with questionnaires, as the questions have to be somewhat straightforward. Thus, the data received with questionnaires can sometimes be quite simple and undetailed. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:7) also warn that respondents rarely find answering questionnaires pleasant, which leads to variation in how much people invest to a questionnaire in terms of time and concentration. This is where the duration of the questionnaire becomes important, according to Dörnyei and Taguchi (ibid.). A lengthy questionnaire might make respondents fatigued, which leads to imprecise responses.

Another possible difficulty that researchers may have with surveys is that often compared to other methods, surveys may have a mediocre response rate (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009:195). The response rates may also vary greatly, according to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:7), who point out that a great number of people who get the questionnaire is most likely not going to respond, whilst others may neglect returning the questionnaire, fail to give the questionnaire proper attention etc.

Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:8-9) also describe some of the psychological aspects that sometimes play a part in responses to surveys. Most prominently, respondents often have a tendency to choose answers that they view as the desired answer or the most acceptable socially, instead of answering candidly. *Self-deception* may have a similar effect, as respondents may be unable to describe themselves accurately, and thus unconsciously deceive both themselves and the researcher. The *halo effect* can also be significant in responding to questionnaires, as people may have a tendency to generalize their answers if they have a positive overall impression of the topic. They might then give overt praise to more specific questions as they are predisposed to say nothing but positives about things they like. The same phenomenon works the other way as well, as respondent with unfair dislike to a certain issue have a tendency to view all its aspects negatively. Finally, the *acquiescence bias* means that people tend to agree with arguments that they do not fully understand or are undecided on.

Despite the negative aspects and possible shortcomings of surveys, they are often seen as a particularly tempting method of data collection, as was the case in the present study as well. Many of the weaknesses of surveys can be countered with careful planning and especially prudent piloting of the survey. Moreover, as described at the beginning of the present section, surveys also have a great amount of positive aspects, which make them a particularly useful tool in gathering large amounts of quantitative data. These aspects were also crucial in deciding the method of data collection in this study: as the aim of the study was to gain some overall insight into how teachers perceive and

use communicative tasks, quantitative data was seen as the ideal way to approach the issue. Due to limitations of resources it was also decided that collecting data could most practically be done online, where surveys are particularly easy to distribute. Other positive aspects of surveys that also played a part in choosing the method of data collection were their flexibility, as they allow for many different types of questions to be asked, and the relative ease with which the data collected with surveys can be analyzed, as the methods of analysis are readily built into the survey during its design, and technology can be used in the analysis as well. The flexibility of surveys was considered particularly important because the aim was to take a general look at teachers' attitudes and perceptions with regard to several different areas, and thus different types of questions were required.

4.2 The questionnaire

As stated earlier in this section, the main issue that this study focuses on is how EFL teachers see the usefulness and preferable features of communicative tasks in foreign language teaching. To achieve the goals of the study, the following, more specific research questions were formatted:

1. As perceived by EFL teachers, do they employ communicative tasks regularly?
2. How useful do EFL teachers find communicative tasks?
3. On what basis do EFL teachers find communicative tasks effective or ineffective?

The three research questions above were refined to their final form so that they correspond to the underlying purpose of the study, which was to gain an overall understanding of what views and attitudes teachers of EFL in Finland hold on communicative tasks. The first research question is the simplest one, as its purpose was to only gain insight into how often teachers report using communicative tasks in their classes. The other two research questions are slightly more complicated: the second

question concerns the usefulness of communicative tasks, and the intention of this question was to examine the contexts within EFL teaching, in which teachers tend to use communicative tasks or think that their use could be beneficial. The third and final research question was formatted to gain insight into what features make communicative tasks suitable and valuable for EFL classrooms. In other words, the intention of this question was to gain an impression of what EFL teachers perceive as important qualities in communicative tasks.

In formulating these research questions, it was considered imperative that they would – at least for the most part – provide quantitative data, as they were further divided into multiple narrower and more detailed questions in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The aim of the study was not to evaluate the effectiveness or usefulness of communicative tasks, as researching the potency of teaching methods would require a more practical approach, such as classroom observation or testing. In addition, it was expected that the answers to the survey combined with the summary of the theoretical background of this study would provide some insight to the efficacy of communicative tasks.

It was decided that the amount of background information asked in the questionnaire should be kept somewhat limited. This was done on the basis of practicality: the resources or the scope of this study did not allow for examining the significance of factors such as sex, size of school or differences between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the aim of this study was to find an overall understanding of teachers' attitudes toward communicative tasks, rather than drawing conclusions on differences between teachers. Thus, the background section of the questionnaire only included questions about the teachers' teaching experience measured in years, the level of their students and whether they use a coursebook or not as these aspects were expected to have significance in the data. The amount of experience was assumed to have two main effects on the use of communicative tasks in teaching: on the one hand, as an

experienced teacher is most likely to have received their education much earlier than a less experienced one, their education might not have had as much of an emphasis on the communicative approach to language teaching. On the other hand, having more experience in teaching may give courage and make it easier to deviate from the tasks offered by published teaching materials, and try out more creative tasks. This is also connected to how the use of coursebooks was expected to show in the results: teachers, who prepare most of their teaching materials themselves, were expected to use more communicative tasks. The third background question, the level of students, was expected to have a clear effect as an increase in communicative tasks with higher level student, as they are more capable of such tasks.

The questionnaire (found in its entirety in Appendix 1) eventually included 12 questions, 10 of which were closed questions, with two open-ended questions, one for describing how teachers choose communicative tasks for teaching and the other for commenting on the questionnaire or communicative tasks in any way that the respondents wished to. The Finnish answers to these open questions can be found in Appendices 2 and 3. Questions were asked on the themes of background information, selection and frequency of communicative tasks, motivational effects of communicative tasks, teacher participation during the tasks, relevance to different areas of language teaching and characteristics of useful communicative tasks. For the most part, the questions were presented on a Likert scale, with five stages ranging from total opposition to total agreement.

A survey was chosen as the research method due to its advantages in collecting a substantial amount of data within a limited time period and with a manageable work load to the researcher, as discussed previously in section 4.1 of this paper. The survey was made with the online tool Webropol, as it was seen as a pragmatic way to create and distribute the questionnaire. After the completion of the questionnaire, the data collection phase started with piloting the questionnaire. First, the questionnaire was

piloted on a primary school English teacher as well as a teacher trainee majoring in English. After receiving criticism from the two, changes were made to the wording of the questionnaire, the order of the questions and the contents of both questions and alternatives. Next, the questionnaire was piloted once more on another English teacher, who was on maternity leave at the time of piloting. Following her feedback, only minor changes were required to phrasing, and after that the distribution of the questionnaire was started.

The Association of Teachers of English in Finland was contacted via email on February 23rd, 2018 and asked to forward the questionnaire to their mailing list and Facebook-page. With around 2500 members the association is the biggest member of SUKOL, the central pedagogic organization of language teachers in Finland (The Association of Teachers of English in Finland 2018). Any English teacher in Finland can be a member of the Association of Teachers of English in Finland, regardless of the level at which they teach. Thus, the association has members teaching in primary schools, universities and all levels in between. To this survey, however, responses were only received from teachers in primary, middle and secondary schools, as requested in the email sent to The Association of Teachers of English in Finland.

Other than the ones discussed above, no limitations were set – the respondents included a variety of English teachers, presumably with vast heterogeneity with regard to the sizes of schools and classes, tools that are available in teaching etc., although the above factors were not included in the questionnaire, as the scope of the study did not allow researching a variety of background information, nor was it seen as relevant, as the main goal was to gain an overall impression of how teachers view communicative tasks in Finland. The three background items in the questionnaire were chosen as they were expected to be significant and have somewhat clear effects to the issues.

Although initially responses to the questionnaire were very limited, and changes to the

research method were considered, eventually a reasonable amount of responses were received with the help of reminders. The online survey was closed on April 5th, and at that time the questionnaire had 67 responses. According to The Association of Teachers of English in Finland (2018), they have approximately 2500 members, which would mean that the response rate to the survey was around 2.7%. This, however, is not a reliable number for two main reasons. First, responses were requested exclusively from primary, middle and secondary school teachers, and there is no way to estimate how many members from other levels of education the association has. Second, the survey was distributed through the association's Facebook-page, viewable to anyone, and therefore it is not possible to estimate how many English teachers saw the survey on Facebook, and may or may not have answered.

4.3 Methods of analysis

Both closed and open questions were included in the questionnaire, and these were analyzed differently. The data gathered with the two open-ended questions went through an uncomplicated qualitative content analysis, as discussed by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010: 98-99). This content analysis meant that all of the responses were read and any important elements or distinct features were marked, as suggested as the first phase of analyzing open questions in questionnaires by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:99). Based on the notes taken in the first phase, the answers were then categorized in groups based on their most notable features, allowing for comparisons between answers as explained by Dörnyei and Taguchi (*ibid.*). Due to the small amount of open answers received in the questionnaire, the categorization phase proved somewhat unnecessary, as few answers fit in the same category unless the categories were made so broad as to defeat the purpose of the whole process. Furthermore, the few responses received were easily managed with little categorization.

The answers to the open questions were used to illustrate and clarify the quantitative

data of the closed questions, which were analyzed in a more complicated way. As the majority of the closed questions were assessments on a Likert scale, the alternatives were given numerical values of one to five, where one means complete disagreement or the least favorable assessment and five means complete agreement or the most favorable assessment. Based on these numerical values, the mean answers were determined for practical reasons of handling the numbers and objectivity. The background items of teaching experience and level of students were investigated in cross-tabulation with different questions in the survey to examine their impact. The relevance of these tendencies was then verified with a chi-square analysis, as described by Faherty (2008:139).

In practice, the chi-square test is a way to evaluate the statistical significance of the relationship of two factors. In a chi-square test, the relation of the factors is given a P-value, which expresses how statistically significant the result is. The result is more significant the smaller the P-value is. Faherty (*ibid.*) describes the P-value as nearly showing statistical significance if it is below 0.05 and revealing statistical significance if it is below 0.01. In the present study the chi-square test was a tool to judge whether relations that were found through cross-tabulation of the background questions with the other questions in the survey were reliable and statistically significant. In other words, after cross-tabulation of two different factors suggested a dependency between them, the chi-square test was used to understand if this dependency was actually significant, or merely a coincidence.

5 TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUNICATIVE TASKS

In the previous section I discussed the aims of this study and how I set out to achieve those aims. I discussed the method of a survey, used in gathering data, as well as the methods used in analyzing the data. In addition, I described the actual planning and distributing of the survey. In this section, I will thoroughly examine all of the data gathered, going through each part of the survey and presenting the answers given by the respondents.

5.1 Items of background data

At the start of the questionnaire three questions of background information were presented to the respondents. They were asked for how long they had been teaching English, at which level they teach and whether they use a coursebook or not. Although focusing on gaining information that can be generalized, these items of background information were included as they were seen as relevant and possibly important to the results. Alternative factors that could also influence how teachers see communicative tasks in teaching, such as class size and sex, were intentionally disregarded to limit the scope of the study and focus on the overall impression.

The first background question, the length of the respondent's career as English teachers, is illustrated in Figure 2. From the figure it is clear that there were some differences between the amounts of respondents in different groups, most notably when comparing the 16 respondents with 5-10 years of experience to the 7 with over 25 years of experience. Considering the amount of total respondents to the survey and the relatively low numbers in some categories, the decision was made to combine the numbers into three categories of zero to ten years, ten to twenty years and twenty or more years of experience. Thus, there was adequate representation for each category and the numbers could be more reliably compared to other questions in the survey.

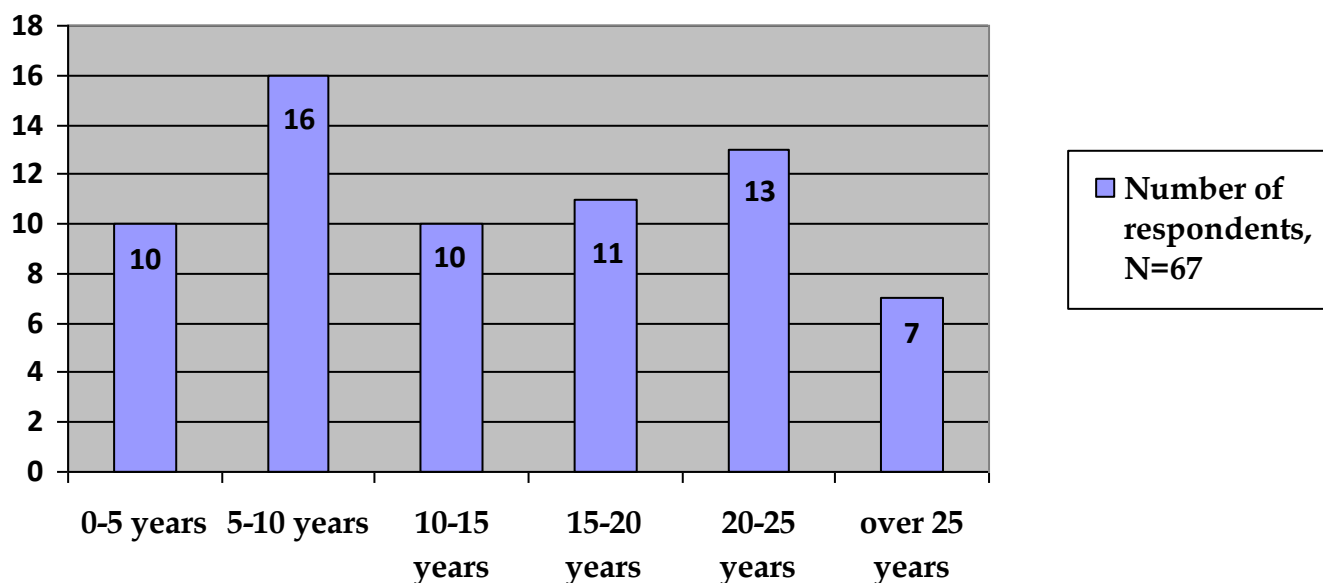


Figure 2. "How long have you been an EFL teacher?"

In the second question respondents were asked about the levels at which they teach English, and these data are shown in figure 3. The question allowed selecting multiple levels, which was the case for ten respondents, eight of whom taught both primary and middle school, while two taught both middle and secondary school. No respondents reported teaching both primary and secondary school, or teaching other levels, which was also offered as a choice despite asking for respondents from the three levels mentioned. Figure 3 illustrates that the number of secondary school teachers was far smaller among the respondents than that of primary and middle school teachers. This may be partially explained by the Finnish Matriculation Examination, which significantly increases secondary school teachers' work load and happened to coincide with the survey's distribution. In addition, this is explained simply by the amount of primary and middle schools in Finland in comparison to secondary schools: in 2016 there were 2339 primary and middle schools and 342 secondary schools (Tilastokeskus 2017a), which leads to a relatively safe assumption that there are also more primary and middle school English teachers.

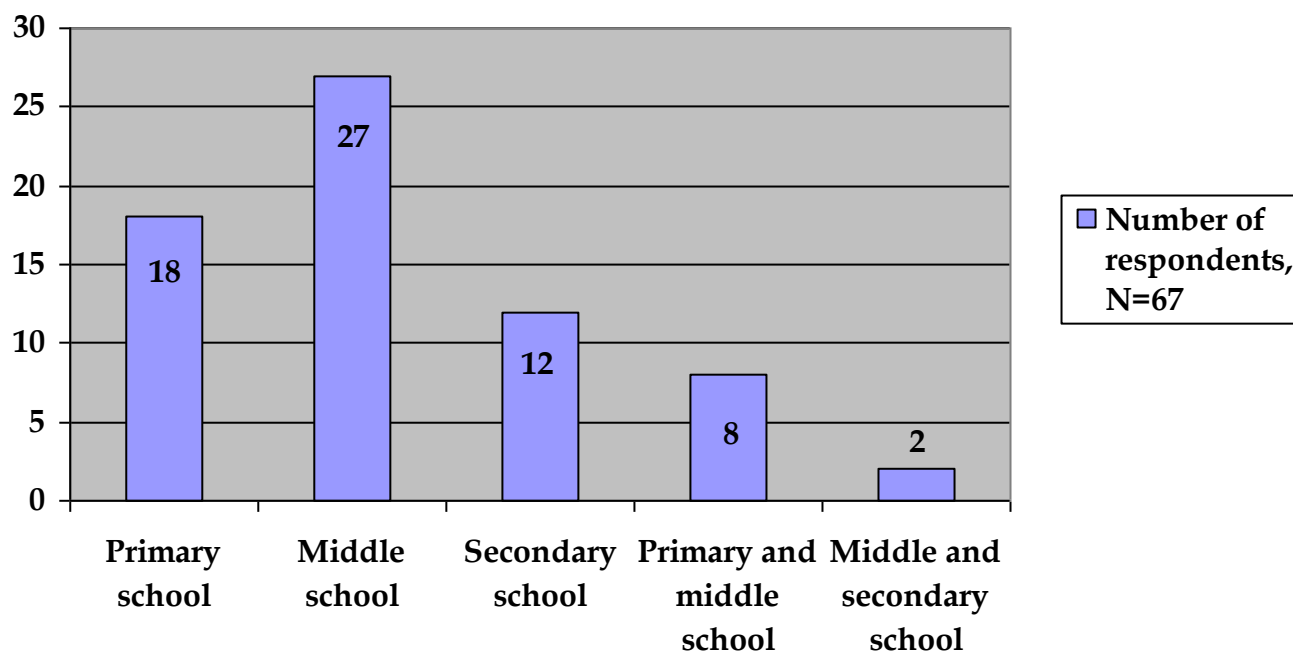


Figure 3. "At what levels do you teach English?"

In the third and final background question respondents were simply asked whether they use a coursebook during their lessons or not. This question was included as it was expected that some respondents would not use coursebooks and instead made their own teaching materials or used other, unpublished materials. In that case, it was hypothesized that teachers who do not use published materials would use more communicative tasks in teaching, as they are perhaps more willing to experiment with the way they teach, and do not feel in any way obligated to use the material provided in coursebooks. It was also hypothesized that few exercises typically found in coursebooks would fit the description of communicative tasks as defined in this paper and in the instructions given to respondents prior to answering the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). Unfortunately, there is no data to neither confirm nor deny these hypotheses, as all respondents reported using coursebooks during their lessons.

5.2 Choosing and using communicative tasks

Following the first three questions, focused on background factors, the next questions in the questionnaire concerned how often teachers use communicative tasks and how they choose the tasks they use. The distribution of answers to the fourth question in the questionnaire are found in Figure 4, where it can be seen that all respondents reported using communicative tasks at least *now and then*, and the vast majority, 83 percent of respondents, reported using them *often* or *on almost every lesson*. These results are not particularly unexpected, and they arguably support McDonough and Shaw's (2003:40-41) assertion that modern language teaching is still very deeply influenced by CLT.

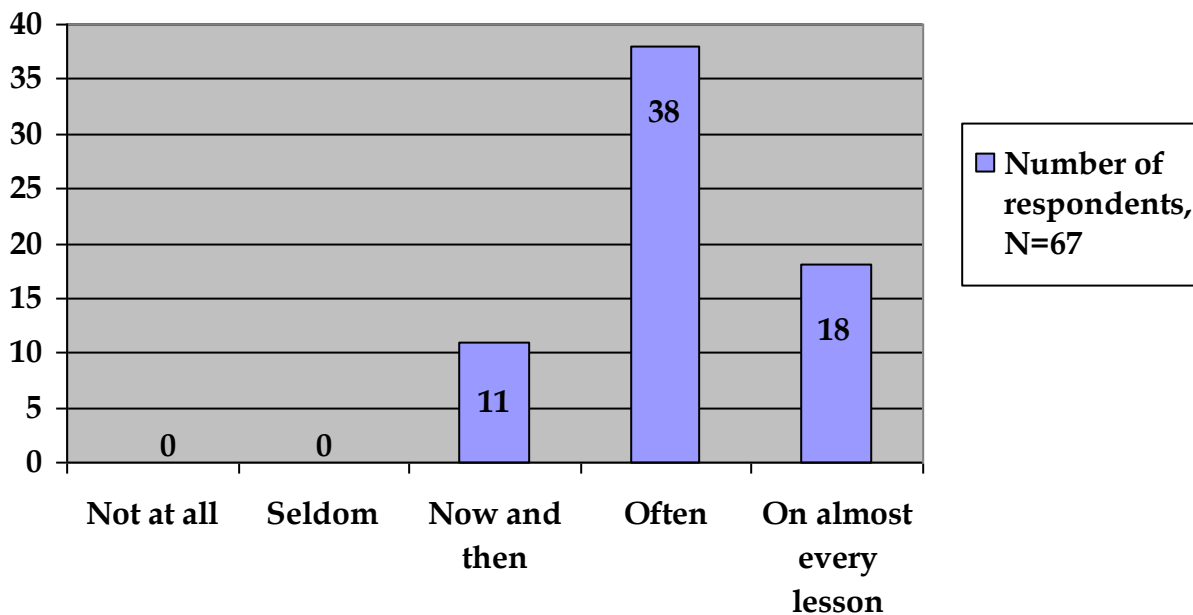


Figure 4. "How often do you use communicative tasks in teaching?"

Cross-tabulation of these answers with answers to the background questions of career length and level of students was used in order to find out if there are any statistically significant correlations, as hypothesized in section 4.2. A higher level of students was expected to show clearly as an increase in the usage of communicative tasks, while the

amount of past teaching experience was hypothesized to have two possible effects: on the one hand a great deal of experience may make it easier to deviate from the tasks of coursebooks and experiment with teaching methods, and on the other hand teachers with less experience likely have a more recent education, which could have emphasized spoken interaction more. Unfortunately, presumably due to the small size of the data, no statistical significance was found with regard to either factor. The cross-tabulation of frequency of using communicative tasks with teaching experience is nevertheless presented in table 3, where the raw figures are presented of how frequently different groups of teaching experience in years use communicative tasks, as well as the percentage the teaching experience group in each category of frequency of communicative tasks.

Table 3. Effects of teaching experience on frequency of using communicative tasks in teaching.

		Length of career as EFL teacher		
		0-10 years	10-20 years	20 or more years
Frequency of using communicative tasks in teaching	Almost every lesson	8 30.8 %	7 33.3 %	3 15.0 %
	Often	15 57.7 %	11 52.4 %	12 60.0 %
	Now and then	3 11.5 %	3 14.2 %	5 25.0 %
P-value = 0.548 (A value of 0.01 or below reveals statistical significance)				

Looking at Table 3, one might start to wonder if there is a relationship between the length of a teacher's career and the frequency at which they employ communicative tasks. 25.0 % of teachers with 20 or more years of experience only use communicative tasks now and then, as perceived by the teachers themselves. For the two other groups of teaching experience, 0-10 years and 10-20 years the proportion of teachers who report

to use communicative tasks only now and then is 11.5 % and 14.2 % respectively. At the other end of the scale, more than 30 % of teachers with 0-10 or 10-20 years of experience report using communicative tasks on almost every lesson, while only 15 % of teachers with 20 or more years of experience report such frequent use of communicative tasks.

Evaluation of the statistical significance of these factors reveals that this appearance of dependency may only be a coincidence. The significance was assessed through the chi-square test, described in section 4.3. As described by Faherty (2008:139-159), the P-value given to the statistical significance nearly shows statistical significance if it is below 0.05 and reveals statistical significance if it is below 0.01. As can be seen in table 3, although the raw numbers may suggest some kind of a relationship between the length of teaching career and frequency of using communicative tasks, the P-value of 0.548 is quite far from the limit of 0.05, and therefore the data cannot be conclusively said to point toward more experienced teachers using communicative tasks less frequently.

Next, the respondents were asked about where they find the communicative tasks they use. Here the alternatives were *I design them myself*, *I use tasks found in coursebooks or teacher's materials*, *I find them online*, *I discuss them with colleagues or friends* and *some other way*, and the respondents could select as many alternatives as they wanted. Somewhat surprisingly only 19 out of 67 respondents – or just below 30 percent – said that they personally design any communicative tasks for their own teaching purposes. On the one hand this might not seem that surprising, as Luukka et al. (2008:95) discovered that 98% of language teachers often employ a textbook in their classrooms and teachers generally rely heavily on textbooks. On the other hand, the question was formatted so that it allowed choosing as many alternatives as the respondents felt necessary, and so allowed selecting the alternative of personally designing tasks if the respondents had ever designed a task for teaching. Thus, below 30 percent could be seen as a low portion of respondents ever designing tasks personally.

Much more predictably all 67 participants reported using communicative tasks found in coursebooks and teacher's materials. 64 percent, or 43 respondents, also reported finding communicative tasks online, while only 12 participants – 18 percent of participants – discuss with colleagues and friends. 7 respondents also chose the alternative *some other way*, three of whom stated that they find communicative tasks in journals and magazines. Two respondents did not specify in what other way they find communicative tasks, one said they find ideas in other published books besides coursebooks and one curiously stated they find communicative tasks in the social media, which other respondents had presumably included in the alternative *I find them online*.

What is perhaps most interesting with these answers, is that only 18 percent of respondents talk to colleagues or friends about the design of communicative tasks. This is in stark contrast with the NCC (2014:59-62), which strongly supports cooperation both between schools and homes, and especially internally in schools. The NCC (2014:61) states that “close cooperation among the staff facilitates the implementation of the school's educational goals” as well as “cooperation is needed in the planning and implementation of multidisciplinary learning modules”. Comparing these statements to the results of the questionnaire seems to indicate that at least with regard to communicative tasks, cooperation among the school staff is somewhat lacking.

An open question was also included here to discover what aspects teachers consider when choosing communicative tasks. The open question was placed here, a few questions before a similar question was asked with closed alternatives in order not to influence the comments that were written down. Answering the open question was not mandatory, which showed as a lack of answers, with many respondents choosing to write their comments in the other voluntary open comment field at the end of the survey. Some interesting points were nevertheless brought up, as shown below:

- (1) It's really important that the classroom is a safe place for open communication. This

applies to both teaching-related issues and external matters. When the student knows they can talk about personal matters openly, this trust gives them courage to talk during lessons, too.

Teacher 1 highlights a personal connection to the students. They state that if students feel like they can talk over personal matters with the teacher, this might encourage an atmosphere during lessons where students have courage to talk. This idea is not directly connected to the planning of communicative tasks, and was therefore not addressed in any way in the questionnaire, but it would certainly make for an interesting subject for further research.

(2) A teacher has to plan games and activities extremely carefully, so that they know what to do in every situation. If something doesn't work, you have to have a 'plan B' and usually also a 'plan C'.

This comment asserts the importance of good preparation of communicative tasks. Teacher 2 states that teachers should be well enough prepared to have secondary and even tertiary plans in the event of something unexpected happening. This idea is perhaps slightly connected to another important factor in planning communicative tasks, giving clear instructions. When the teacher has a clear idea of what should be done during a task, it is likely much easier to convey the task to the students, so that they also know what they are supposed to do, and it is less likely that things do not go to plan. Consequently, if a teacher has not planned the task carefully enough it is more probable that something does go wrong, as the teacher may not be able to adequately instruct the task. Results related to the importance of clear instructions will be discussed further in sections 5.3 and 5.6.

(3) When planning tasks, different types of students and their needs have to be taken into account. Some want to perform, but for others it causes anxiety - and you need to get everyone talking. That's why tasks, where different roles can be taken, are good. Another important thing is that tasks are connected to the topic. What's the use of a task where students talk just for the sake of talking? In communicative tasks, too, you have to practice the vocabulary or grammar etc. that is the topic.

Teacher 3 brings up two main points. First, they call for consideration of different students in the classroom when planning the tasks. They note that not all students are comfortable speaking openly in the classroom, while for others it may be enjoyable to be in the spotlight. They also advocate for tasks, which allow different students to take different roles, with which they are comfortable. Although no examples of such tasks were mentioned by teacher 3, some possible instances are mentioned by Littlewood (2010:22-32). One possibility are tasks where some students have information that others do not, and those without the information must interrogate or investigate for the information, allowing for the 'detectives' to use language somewhat creatively, while 'information holders' mainly need to focus on comprehension, while answering questions concisely. The second point that teacher 3 brings up is the meaningfulness of communicative tasks. They seemingly suggest that just getting students to talk is not beneficial if the contents of talking are not connected to the topic at hand. This statement seems to be contradictory to the guidelines of language teaching – as discussed in section 2.2 of the present study both the NCC and the CEFR emphasize the importance of interaction as a language skill, even with limited competence. The NCC (2014:35) states that students are to “develop social skills and learn to express themselves in different ways and present and perform publicly in various situations.” Furthermore many currently relevant methodologies of language teaching emphasize the importance of the purpose of language use instead of the content. In both CLT Richards (2001:161) and TBT (Ellis 2003:9-10) the focus of language use is on the usage of language in context and for performing certain tasks – not on practicing specific linguistic items.

(4) Encourages to talk, the topic is interesting, 'hooks' the students, versatile language use, you have to have fun!

The comment made by teacher 4 points out that a communicative task should encourage the students to talk. They suggest that an interesting topic, catching the students attention, using language in versatile ways and having fun with the task all

help make it more effective.

5.3 Communicative tasks and motivation for learning

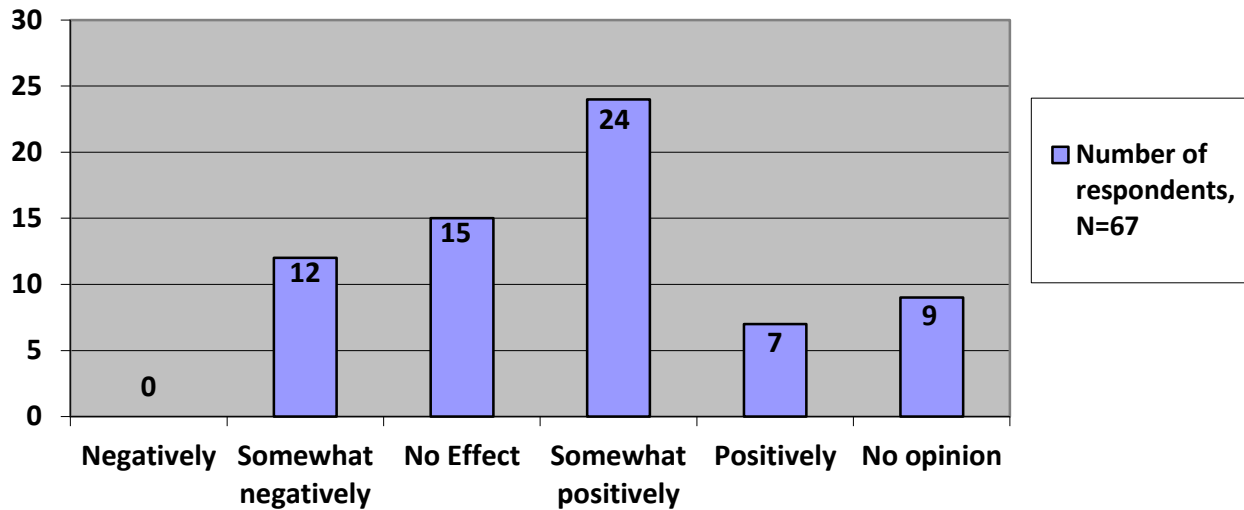


Figure 5. “How would you estimate communicative tasks to generally affect students’ motivation to learn?”

Having focused in the previous part of the questionnaire on how often communicative tasks are used, where they are found and how they are chosen, as well as what features make for a good communicative task, in the next part of the questionnaire the respondents were asked about how they see communicative tasks affecting learners’ motivation. Participants were asked to evaluate how in their view communicative tasks as a learning activity generally affect learners’ motivation. The results, shown above in Figure 5, are not particularly unexpected. 31 respondents, 46 percent, were of the opinion that communicative tasks have a somewhat positive or a positive effect on learners’ motivation. The mean, which was calculated by assigning numerical values of 1 to 5 to the answers, was 3.44 in this question, which shows that on average teachers view communicative tasks as generally at least somewhat positively affecting learning motivation.

The fact that these results are somewhat expected does not mean that they are insignificant. Only 7 respondents chose the most positive alternative for how communicative tasks affect students' motivation, whereas 12 respondents said that communicative tasks have a somewhat negative effect on motivation. This is particularly surprising as in theory one of the greatest strengths of communicative tasks should be an improvement of motivation. This is argued by Littlewood (2010:17), who states that the ultimate goal for learners is to engage in communication with others, and motivation to learn likely to be boosted by seeing the relation of their goal and classroom activities.

The next question on motivation went into more specifics, inquiring about different aspects of communicative tasks that could potentially have an effect on learning motivation during the execution of these tasks. The aspects chosen as possibly significant were based on Nunan's (1989) discussion of different components of tasks in communicative classrooms, as well other aspects of communicative tasks that could be of interest or have an effect, as explored earlier in section 3 of the present study. The distribution of answers and the mean answer to each aspect can be found in table 4 below.

Table 4. "How would you estimate the following aspects of communicative tasks to generally affect students' motivation to learn?" N=67

	Negatively	Somewhat negatively	No effect	Somewhat positively	Positively	No opinion	Mean
Clear instructions	0	0	0	10	57	0	4.85
Current topic	0	0	28	25	12	2	3.75
The topic's relevance to the learner	0	0	11	34	22	0	4.16

Low requirements	3	13	25	16	4	6	3.08
High requirements	16	25	9	15	0	2	2.35
Repetition	1	13	26	17	3	7	3.13
Encouraging environment	0	0	15	35	17	0	4.02
The presence of the teacher	13	15	22	10	7	0	2.75
The availability of clues and help	1	4	29	24	8	1	3.52

The table shows how teachers viewed the importance of these aspects in terms of how they affect learning motivation. It is evident that for the most part the respondents had a tendency to view the aspects as affecting motivation more positively than negatively. High requirements during the task and the presence of the teacher were the only two aspects that had a mean of below 3, and were therefore on average viewed to affect motivation negatively. Neither can be said to be very surprising, although 17 respondents said that the teacher's presence in general has a positive effect on learning motivation. This may be explained by the absence of the teacher giving learners a chance to focus on other, non-related matters.

In general, most factors listed in the question were seen by teachers as ones that affect learners' motivation in at least a somewhat positive way. The alternatives that had the most deviation were the ones that had a mean of below 3 and were thus seen as generally affecting motivation negatively. In addition, a few alternatives, mainly low requirements and repetition had means very close to 3, with few answers to both extremes, and more respondents saying they have no opinion on the matter than on the other alternatives. The answers to these factors were focused in the middle between 2 and 4, standing for *somewhat negatively* and *somewhat positively* respectively. This would

suggest that the respondents may have had some difficulty evaluating students' motivation with regard to these aspects, a statement for which support can be found in the comments to the open question at the end of the survey.

(2) It is difficult to give one answer to students' motivation during communicative tasks because different students always have different motivation and the mood can change a lot during a lesson. Even more difficult is estimating how different parts of tasks affect motivation because they are all happening simultaneously and you can't constantly observe motivation.

The above comment points out the difficulty in estimating different parts of a single task, and how each of those parts affect students' motivation. The comment also suggests that the respondents may have had trouble estimating how the different factors generally affect motivation, as Teacher 2 states that motivation is different for each student and it can change during lessons. Therefore, it should perhaps have been made clearer in the questionnaire, that the purpose in the two questions regarding motivation was to try to give an overall impression of what the motivation is for the majority of students and the majority of time.

Notably, the most important factor affecting motivation of the ones mentioned in the question was by a large margin clear instructions. 57 of 67 respondents said that clear instructions affect learning motivation positively, and the other 10 thought clear instructions have a somewhat positive effect, thus making the mean 4.85. The appreciation of the importance of clear instructions was also evident in some of the remarks made to the open questions, such as the following:

(5) If a task is poorly instructed it might ruin the entire lesson as students do not know what they are supposed to do and more often than not they are too afraid to ask.

Two other factors also stood out, as the topic's relevance to the learner and encouraging environment both had a mean of above 4. These were also addressed in the open comments, as shown in the examples below:

(5) Another important factor is the topic: nothing will kill interest as fast as a topic you have no interest in.

(6) A language classroom has to be a place where students know they are allowed to talk and make mistakes – mistakes are the best way to learn!

Other aspects of importance were also suggested in the open comments that could have an effect on learning motivation and perhaps should have been included in the questionnaire. These comments are found below:

(7) Just the mood of the day can have a great effect on how students see activities.

(2) Then again, a teacher can with their own demeanor and energy influence the students' attitudes to the lessons a lot.

As suggested by the comments, students' attitudes could be influenced by both external factors, as suggested by Teacher 7, and the teacher's demeanor, as suggested by Teacher 2. These factors were not taken into account in the questionnaire, as the aim was to examine communicative tasks in particular.

5.4 Teacher participation during communicative tasks

Following the theme of how communicative tasks affect learning motivation, teacher participation during communicative tasks was examined. No separate question regarding whether or not teachers generally participate or to what extent they do participate was included, because it was seen as redundant, as the question included in the questionnaire already gives insight to these matters. The results to this question, concerning the different roles teachers may take in communicative tasks, are illustrated in figure 6. These roles are based on Nunan's (1989:84-94) description of the roles in communicative classrooms as well as Littlewood's (2010:91-93) chapter on the role of the teacher in CLT.

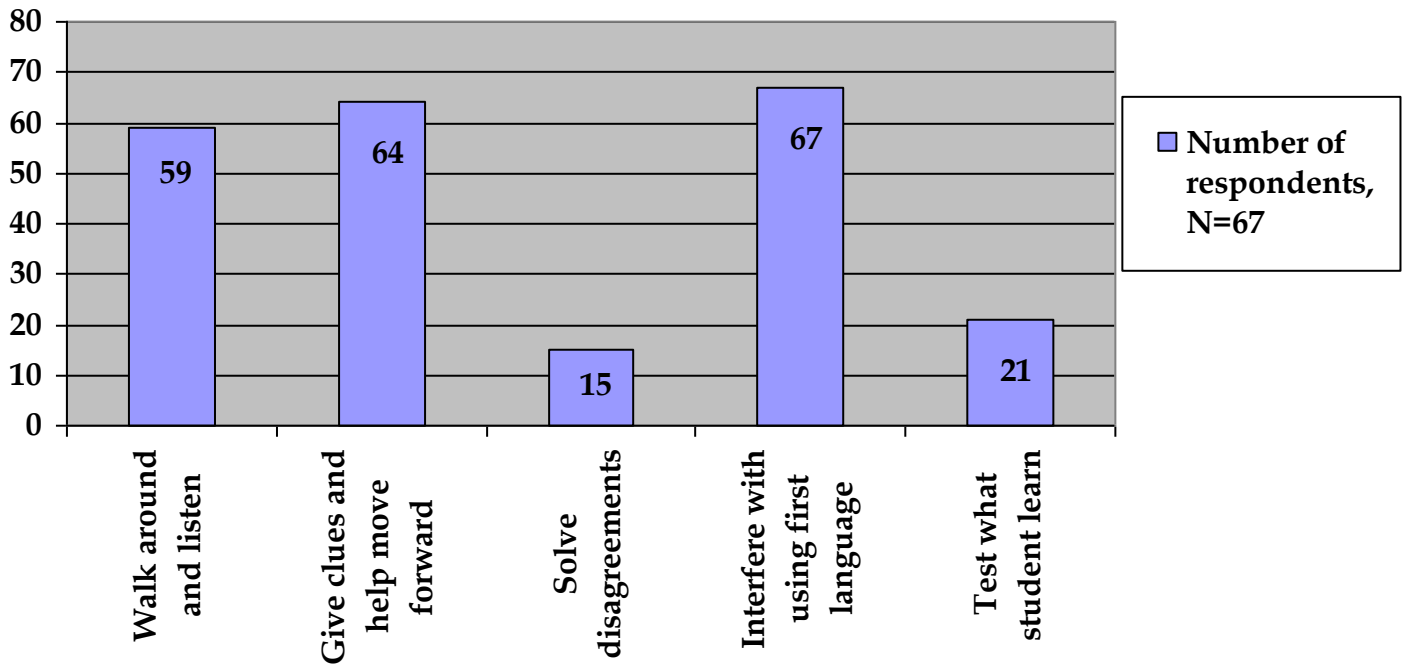


Figure 6. "Do you take part in communicative tasks in the following ways?"

As seen in Figure 6, three ways of teacher participation appear quite straightforward, as the majority of respondents said they do them. The first one, walking around and listening was reported to be done by 59 respondents, or 88 %, which may even appear surprisingly low in comparison to interfering with first language use, which was reported by all 67 respondents. Some explanation was given in the open comments, as seen below:

(6) Sometimes it's smart as a teacher to stay a bit further away when the students are talking to each other, so that they dare throw themselves into the discussion and don't start guessing what the teacher is thinking.

The comment suggests that the teachers, who reported not to walk around the classroom listening, may be choosing to keep distance to the students in order to not frighten them, thus actually hindering the interaction. Nevertheless, those teachers too did report interfering with first language use. The third category that the majority of teachers reported doing was giving clues and helping students move forward in tasks.

Once more, interestingly, more teachers reported to give clues than reported walking around, so presumably they give clues when necessary or asked for by students.

The two actions that were reported to be done significantly less by teachers are perhaps much more interesting for this study than the ones that the majority chose. First, solving disagreements was only selected by 15 out of 67 respondents, that is, only 22 percent of the teachers in this study reported solving disagreements during communicative tasks. Examination of the open comments at the end of the survey reveals a possible gap in credibility with regard to this number, as one respondent notes:

(8) Some parts of the questionnaire were a bit vague. For example, what are “disagreements” in question 9? There must be some overlap here with the previous alternative?

It seems plausible that the responses to the action of solving disagreements may have been distorted by inadequate and unclear wording of the question. Solving disagreement was intended in the questionnaire as having to do with situations where students have an argument concerning either a linguistic issue or any other subject that is preventing them from progressing with the task, as described by Littlewood (2010:19). This meaning may not have been clear to the respondents, an issue with the research method of survey that is discussed by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:6-9), who point out that as the respondents answer the questionnaire by themselves, there is a chance of misunderstanding or misinterpreting the questions. Dörnyei and Taguchi also point out that there is little the researcher can do about this problem other than properly piloting the study. In the case of the present study, the questionnaire was piloted on three people as explained in section 4.2, two of whom are English teachers and the third a teacher trainee. At no point during the piloting of the questionnaire did this issue with the interpretation of solving disagreements come up, although other possible issues with phrasing were given feedback on.

The other action that significantly fewer teachers reported doing was testing what the

students have learned. Only 21 respondents, i.e. 31 percent of respondents, stated that they test their student learning with regard to communicative tasks. This low number seems disproportionate, as the importance of feedback is often emphasized in teaching. Littlewood (2010:90) states that feedback is of particular importance in communicative tasks, as it gives learners information on the level of their performance. A prerequisite for feedback is evaluation of the performance in one way or another. Perhaps one factor explaining the low number of teachers testing what their students have learned is once more the phrasing of the question. Some respondents may have felt that testing has to be in some way official or even graded, instead of what was meant in the questionnaire, which was any activity that gives the teacher some kind of idea of how well the students have performed the task and learned the content. This may be e.g. simply asking whether the task was easy or difficult.

5.5 Suitability of communicative tasks for teaching different language skills

The next topic of the questionnaire concerned how well suited English teachers find communicative tasks for topics concerning different areas of language teaching. These language skills were introduced in section 2.1.6 of the present study. Table 5 shows the distribution of answers to the question on how suitable EFL teachers think communicative tasks are in teaching the 9 language skills mentioned.

Table 5. "How suitable would you say communicative tasks are for teaching the following aspects of language learning?" N=67

	Not at all	Fairly poorly	Not particularly well or poorly	Fairly well	Extremely well	No opinion	Mean
Listening comprehension	0	4	27	25	11	0	3.64
Reading comprehension	41	24	2	0	0	0	1.42

Spoken production	0	0	5	36	26	0	4.31
Written production	46	17	4	0	0	0	1.31
Vocabulary	12	17	25	10	1	2	2.55
Grammar	18	14	17	9	9	0	2.65
Culture	8	17	21	15	5	1	2.88
Communication strategies	0	0	5	29	33	0	4.42
Pronunciation	5	18	15	23	6	0	3.10

Looking at the table, the responses cannot be said to be particularly surprising. Of the four traditional language skills listening comprehension and spoken production have a mean answer of above three, meaning that communicative tasks are seen to suit teaching these skills at least fairly well on average. Reading comprehension and written production have the lowest mean response of all the skills listed here – they are the only ones with a mean of below 2. In general, EFL teachers estimate that communicative tasks do not suit teaching reading comprehension and written production at all. Besides the traditional language skills, five other skills were also included in the questionnaire. Of the five skills, perhaps the most significant one is communication strategies, which received a mean response of 4.42. Interestingly, communication strategies were even given a higher mean response than spoken production, which was expected to be a clear favorite in this question. Instead, the respondents to this survey estimated communicative tasks to be more suitable for teaching communication strategies than for teaching spoken production, although by only a margin of 0.11. The skills of vocabulary, grammar and culture had a mean of below three, but all were within 0.5 in the numerical values of the midpoint, while pronunciation was given a somewhat surprisingly low mean of 3.10, indicating that along with vocabulary, grammar and cultural knowledge, EFL teachers believe that communicative tasks are not a particularly good or bad method for teaching pronunciation, but a fairly average one.

5.6 Features of good communicative tasks

The final topic in the questionnaire concerned the aspects that English teachers consider when planning or selecting communicative tasks. The data show which features teachers think make a communicative task a useful one, and which features are not particularly significant in choosing a task. The distribution of answers is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. "How important do you consider the following aspects when planning or choosing a communicative task?" N=67

	Complete-ly insignificant	Somewhat insignificant	Not insignificant nor important	Somewhat important	Extremely important	No opinion	Mean
Clear instructions	0	0	0	6	61	0	4.91
Current topic	0	6	19	29	10	3	3.67
Sticking to a schedule	2	16	31	13	5	0	3.04
Demanding accurate language use	7	12	19	17	4	8	2.98
Availability of clues and help	0	10	18	23	16	0	3.67
Spontaneity of the task	2	11	31	12	0	11	2.95
Chances to use different communication strategies	1	7	23	21	15	0	3.63
Repetition	12	19	23	10	1	2	2.52

Authentic language	9	16	29	9	0	4	2.60
Opportunities to differentiate	0	11	15	27	13	1	3.64
Environment that encourages talking	0	0	21	31	15	0	3.91

As Table 6 shows, the aspects listed here were for the most part seen as at least somewhat important in the decision-making process and planning of communicative tasks. The most important factor, of the ones listed in the questionnaire, was again clear instructions, a factor which was already discussed in section 5.3. A total of 61 respondents thought clear instructions are extremely important in communicative tasks, and the mean was 4.91. Other factors that teachers considered important in the design of communicative tasks included environment that encourages talking, current topic, availability of clues and help, opportunities for differentiation and chances to use different communication strategies. However, none of these factors had a mean of above 4, illustrating how crucially important the respondents think clear instructions are.

An interesting point in the data is the mean score of the significance of chances for using different communication strategies in communicative tasks, which was 3.63. Although this shows that teachers feel that it is important for communicative tasks to allow the use of different communicative strategies, the number still seems somewhat low in comparison with how suitable teachers think communicative tasks are for teaching communication strategies, discussed in section 5.5 of the present study. In the question regarding suitability communicative strategies had a mean score of 4.42, the highest of any skill mentioned in the question, which appears to indicate that the respondents feel communicative tasks are very well suited for teaching communicative

strategies, but perhaps do not take advantage of this to its full potential.

At the other end it seems apparent in the data that teachers do not value repetition or authentic language material in communicative tasks. Not only did the two have the lowest mean scores with 2.52 and 2.60 respectively, they also had the highest number of responses stating that they are completely insignificant in choosing and planning communicative tasks. The other three factors in the question, sticking to a schedule, demanding accurate language use and spontaneity of the task, were seen as not particularly important, but not unimportant either, with mean scores very close to 3.

5.7 Relationship of teaching experience and perceived suitability of communicative tasks for teaching vocabulary and grammar

Perhaps the most significant results from the questionnaire were found from cross-tabulation of the background questions with the results to the question “how suitable would you say communicative tasks are for teaching the following aspects of language learning”, presented in section 5.5 in Table 5. A few of the language skills mentioned in that question were of particular interest with regard to the distribution of answers, as it seemed like the responses were spread among all alternatives. Table 7 shows the cross-tabulation of teaching experience in years with the evaluation of how suitable communicative tasks are for teaching vocabulary.

Table 7. Effects of teaching experience on how useful communicative tasks are perceived to be for teaching vocabulary.

		Length of career as EFL teacher		
		0-10 years	10-20 years	20 or more years
“How suitable would you say communicative tasks are for	Not at all	1 3.8 %	3 15.0 %	8 42.1 %
	Fairly poorly	3 11.5 %	6 30.0 %	8 42.1 %

teaching vocabulary?"	Not particularly well or poorly	14 53.8 %	8 40.0 %	3 15.8 %
	Fairly well	7 26.9 %	3 15.0 %	0 0.0 %
	Extremely well	1 3.8 %	0 0.0 %	0 0.0 %
P-value = 0.002 (A value of 0.01 or below reveals statistical significance)				

The results shown in Table 7 are quite clear. Teachers with a shorter length of career tend to perceive communicative tasks as more suitable for teaching vocabulary, than teachers who have worked for a longer time. The statistical significance of the relationship of these two factors is validated by the chi-square test (Faherty 2008:139-159), which gave these results a P-value of 0.002. As described by Faherty (ibid.), the value indicates statistically significant results if it is below 0.01 and very significant results if it is below 0.001. The P-value given to these result falls in between the two boundaries, indicating statistical significance.

Another curious language skill in table 5 is grammar, which also divided the respondent's opinions quite a bit. These results were also examined in cross-tabulation with the experience of the teachers, and this cross-tabulation can be found in Table 8.

Table 8. Effects of teaching experience on how useful communicative tasks are perceived to be for teaching grammar.

		Length of career as EFL teacher		
		0-10 years	10-20 years	20 or more years
"How suitable would you say communicative tasks are for teaching	Not at all	1 3.8 %	8 38.1 %	9 45.0 %
	Fairly poorly	6 23.1 %	4 19.0 %	4 20.0 %
	Not	9	3	5

grammar?"	particularly well or poorly	34.6 %	14.3 %	25.0 %
	Fairly well	5 19.2 %	2 9.5 %	2 10.0 %
	Extremely well	5 19.2 %	4 19.0 %	0 0.0 %
P-value = 0.051 (A value of 0.01 or below reveals statistical significance)				

The results here are not as clear cut as in the case of teaching vocabulary, but they are nevertheless interesting. In the data gathered with this questionnaire there certainly is a tendency for teachers with less experience to view communicative tasks as more useful for teaching grammar than more experienced teachers. However, these results do not pass the chi-square test, as the P-value is 0.051. According to Faherty (2008:139-159) the results become nearly significant statistically if the P-value is below 0.05. In the data presented in Table 8 the P-value falls just outside this boundary at 0.051 and therefore the data does not confirm any dependence between the length of teaching career and how useful teachers find communicative tasks for teaching grammar. The very close P-value and interesting raw data do however call for further research into the matter with a larger, more accurate and generalizable sample.

Still, the cross-tabulations presented above are quite interesting. The apparent dependency between length of teaching career and perceived usefulness of communicative tasks for teaching vocabulary as well as the inconclusive data with regard to teaching grammar are something to examine more closely. There are several possible hypotheses as to why less experienced teachers appear to perceive communicative tasks as useful in fields of language teaching, that they are not traditionally associated with. Perhaps the inexperience of teachers means that they have not yet realized the best activities for different language skills, or the best uses of different types of activities, and are using ineffective types of tasks for some language skills. Meanwhile, more experienced teachers may have experimented with different

types of tasks and found the best uses for them. Another hypothesis is that modern teacher training in Finland may encourage teachers to be more open-minded with the types of tasks that are used, and where they are applied. Perhaps the rise of the communicative method of language teaching (see e.g. Gómez-Rodríguez 2010, McDonough and Shaw 2003) has even widened teachers' perception of where communicative tasks could be used. However, the resources and the scope of the present study do not allow for examining this phenomenon in more detail or even verifying it with a larger data sample, not to mention attempting to examine or verify any of the hypotheses presented above.

5.8 Summary of the results

In this section I have presented a detailed examination of the questionnaire, the data received with it and the conclusions that could be drawn from the data. The first part of the questionnaire included background questions to the respondents, which were examined in cross-tabulation with other questions in the questionnaire to find out if there were any dependencies between the length of teaching career or level of students and the other issues examined in the study. A third background question was also included, concerning the use of teaching materials, but it did not prove to be useful, as all respondents reported using coursebooks.

After the background questions, the first actual topic in the survey concerned the choosing and using of communicative tasks in teaching. In response to the first research question presented in section 4.2 it was found that generally EFL teachers perceive themselves employing communicative tasks often or almost on every lesson, with just 16 percent of respondents reporting that they use communicative tasks now and then, and no respondents reporting using them seldom or not at all. A cross-tabulation of the length of teaching career with the frequency of using communicative tasks also appeared to point towards less experienced teachers using communicative tasks more

frequently. However, this hypothesis was not close to passing the chi-square test of independence, and therefore cannot be said to be proven by the data.

In the data collected with questions concerning motivation with regard to communicative tasks some interesting results were found. First, despite Littlewood's (2010:17) argument that one of the most important aspects of communicative tasks is increasing motivation, the respondents were divided on the matter of whether communicative tasks affect motivation positively or negatively. 17.9 percent of the respondents thought communicative tasks generally affect students' motivation somewhat negatively, and 22.4 percent said communicative tasks generally have no effect on students' motivation. The second question on motivation, which went into more details on how different aspects affect learning motivation during communicative tasks, pointed toward clear instructions being by far the most important aspect of communicative tasks with regard to learning motivation.

The respondents were also asked about their participation during communicative tasks. As expected, walking around the classroom, giving clues and interfering with first language use were all reported by the majority of respondents. Solving disagreements and testing what students have learned were reported by surprisingly few respondents, which may have partly been due to trouble interpreting the question and alternatives.

Another topic that the respondents were asked about was how well they think communicative task suit teaching different aspects of language. On the one hand, results were very predictable, but on the other hand some interesting data points rose from the responses. As expected, of the traditional four language skills spoken production and listening comprehension were favored over written production and reading comprehension by the respondents. Additionally, communication strategies were generally viewed as a very suitable language skill to be taught with communicative exercises. In response to the second research question, it was found that

EFL teachers find communicative tasks useful in particular for practicing communication strategies, spoken production and listening comprehension.

Although vocabulary and grammar were on average found not particularly important in terms of what can be taught with communicative tasks, the responses were divided across all five alternatives. A cross-tabulation of these results with teachers' previous career experience showed that teachers with less experience clearly favor communicative tasks for teaching vocabulary in comparison to teachers with more experience, a dependency which was confirmed by a chi-square test as showing statistical significance. Similar results were pointed towards by the data in teaching grammar through communicative tasks, although this cross-tabulation narrowly failed the chi-square test. Nevertheless, the data gathered in the questionnaire points toward less experienced teachers finding communicative tasks more useful than more experienced teachers in areas of language that are not traditionally associated with communicative teaching.

The third research question was addressed in the questionnaire through inquiry about different features of communicative tasks, and how important the respondents thought they are in choosing or planning the tasks. Once again the responses distinctly showed that clear instructions were appreciated the most by the respondents as the biggest factor in making a communicative task effective. This is in line with the earlier question on what affects motivation positively, where, too, the responses favored clear instructions. Other factors that the respondents thought increase the effectiveness of communicative task include an environment that encourages talking, current topic, availability of clues and help, opportunities for differentiation and chances to use different communication strategies.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the previous section the results of the questionnaire were examined in detail, going through each part of the questionnaire and investigating and discussing the data collected. In this section I will move to a more general level, discussing first the implications of this study for language teaching and further research, for which several suggestions emerge from the data and issues discussed in the previous section. After that I will critically examine the present study with regard to its validity and reliability, and discuss the extent to which the results can be generalized. Finally, I will conclude the present study with a concise summary of what was done, what was found and what the results mean.

6.1 Implications for language teaching and further study

The significance of the present study is absolutely not in any revolutionary or irrefutable findings – and this was certainly not the intention of the study. The purpose of the study was not to inspire a revolution of language teaching either and it is far from reasonable to expect any changes in teacher training based on this one study. However, teacher training may be the place where the study is most likely to spark beneficial discussion. Should the study inspire further research into teachers' attitudes to different teaching methods and the effect of those attitudes to teaching, perhaps there would be a place for discussion on these matters in teacher training. As teachers' attitudes and their effect on e.g. the quality of teaching have been inadequately represented in recent research, more attention should perhaps be paid to this important factor in language teaching.

Even if some results, such as whether less experienced teachers use communicative tasks in more imaginative ways or not, are intriguing to an extent, the sample size of the study is too small to draw general conclusions that apply to all EFL teachers and

teaching in Finland. This particular matter is definitely one that could be examined in further research, with a larger sample size that allows for more reliable conclusions and perhaps with the advantages of qualitative data. Qualitative research methods such as interviews could also be taken advantage of to examine teachers' attitudes to communicative tasks or other types of classroom activities in general. Furthermore, future research should perhaps take a more specialized approach toward some of the issues discussed in this study, examining particular areas in more detail, such as what aspects of language communicative tasks could and should be used to teach. To gain an understanding of how communicative tasks are and could be used in EFL teaching, and on which areas of language teaching they are most potent, a more practical approach could also be adopted. In examining these matters more hands-on research methods, such as observational research or language testing, should be taken advantage of. Indeed, perhaps the greatest value of the present study is in the further studies that it could inspire in addition to the tendencies it has reported.

As the study was restricted to English teachers in Finland due to limited resources, it could be a particularly interesting area of research to find out how different teaching methods are viewed by teachers of other languages. In particular, communicative tasks would be of interest, as learners of English on middle and secondary levels usually have much more competence in the target language than learners of other languages, commonly started later in school than English. Thus, teachers of other languages would possibly need to plan the tasks even more carefully, as they cannot rely on learners' communicative competence to the extent that teachers of English sometimes can.

6.2 Limitations of the study

Perhaps the biggest limitation of the study is its sample size. The survey was sent to the mailing list and Facebook-page of The Association of Teachers of English in Finland, the pedagogic organization of English teachers in Finland with over 2500 members.

However, only 67 responses were received, which means it is very difficult to justify any generalizable claims on how teachers view communicative tasks. Even with a larger sample size, one survey would most likely not be adequate for making distinct claims about the general opinion of teachers with regard to communicative tasks. Making such claims would require more comprehensive research with methods that allow for a more detailed, qualitative approach, such as interviews. While some of the tendencies uncovered in this study are undoubtedly of interest and some general trends can be regarded as reliable or at the very least plausible, more research and more detailed approaches need to be taken to examine teachers' attitudes.

Some comments were also made in the open questions that reveal a few issues with the questionnaire and thus with the study as a whole. For instance, a few respondents felt the phrasing of questions was not unambiguous, a well-known problem with questionnaires discussed by e.g. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:6-9). The comments below show this issue.

(8) Some parts of the questionnaire were a bit vague. For example, what are "disagreements" in question 9? There must be some overlap here with the previous alternative?

(9) A problem with your questionnaire was that not all parts were very clear.

(10) I'm not sure I really understood all of the questions.

These comments were only made by a few respondents, but then again not many open answers were given altogether. Fairly obviously interpreting the questions was somewhat of an issue to at least a few of the respondents, which was slightly unexpected as the issues with interpretation that were noticed during the piloting of the survey were promptly rephrased, and no such issues came to light during the piloting on the final volunteer. Still, these issues make it clear that not all parts of the questionnaire were clear enough, and more piloting and polishing of the questionnaire was necessary. After all, as Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010:6-9) note, issues with ambiguity

in surveys can only be corrected before the respondents answer the questions – as questionnaires are filled alone, no negotiation of meaning can happen between the respondent and researcher.

In general with regard to the validity, reliability and generalizability of the study it can be said that the results are for the most part reliable. The quantitative data was analyzed statistically to find the significant results, and the same findings can be made by others. However, the sample size of the study does not allow for great generalizations, and more in-depth methods, along with qualitative ones, could perhaps produce more valid results.

6.3 Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to research the attitudes that EFL teacher in Finland have toward communicative tasks. The frequency of their usage, favorable features and ways in which communicative tasks can be used as perceived by the teachers themselves were of particular interest in the study. The framework of this study consisted of several important features, regulations directing teaching and teaching methodologies that communicative tasks are based on. A questionnaire was selected as the method of data gathering, and it was sent to the Association of Teachers of English in Finland, who distributed the questionnaire through their mailing list and Facebook-page. Overall, 67 teachers responded to the questionnaire, and the answers were analyzed in terms of their distribution and average answers. In addition, cross-tabulation was used to look for dependencies between the background questions of the survey and the other issues examined. Partly because of the small sample size of the study, confirmation of such dependencies was difficult to come by.

The study did find that, for the most part, teachers report using communicative tasks often in teaching. They also report using communicative tasks in somewhat versatile

contexts, and the overwhelmingly agree that the most important part of a communicative task is that it is instructed properly. It was also discovered, that although teachers do actively participate in communicative tasks, a number of teachers do not report testing students in any way during or after the task. Perhaps the most interesting finding of the present study was that there is evidence toward less experienced teachers using communicative tasks to teach language skills such as vocabulary and grammar, which are traditionally not associated with communicative teaching.

The current NCC emphasizes similar aspects to the methodologies of CLT and TBT, such as learning in cooperation, valuing interaction and using foreign languages as tools even with limited competence. The present study has shown that teachers do at least to some extent report these aspects appearing in teaching as well, as most respondents reported using communicative tasks at least often, and in versatile ways. Still, the importance of the present study is not that it has revealed something revolutionary about how language is learned or how it is currently taught in Finland. Instead, the study will hopefully inspire further research into both teachers' attitudes and the use of communicative tasks in language classrooms. Several possibilities to research deeper into these issues have already been presented in this study, which may hopefully lead to much more valuable research or even simply more critical discussion.

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APPENDIX 1. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Teachers' attitudes toward communicative tasks

Hyvä vastaaja,

teen tutkimusta englanninopettajien asenteista suullisia harjoituksia kohtaan ja pyydän teitä vastaamaan kyselyyn, mikäli opetatte englannin kieltä peruskoulussa tai lukiossa. Suullisella harjoituksella tarkoitan tässä tutkimuksessa ja kyselyssä sellaisia harjoituksia, jotka vaativat oppilailta luovaa puheen tuottamista englannin kielellä. Suullisena harjoituksena EN tässä kyselyssä pidä esimerkiksi suullisia käännöslauseita, joissa suomenkielinen lause on annettu valmiiksi, ja oikeiden vastausten määrä on hyvin rajallinen. Sen sijaan suullinen harjoitus voi esimerkiksi olla näytetty asiakaspalvelutilanne, tai mikä tahansa muu harjoitus, jossa oppilailta odotetaan englannin suullista tuottamista siten, että oikeakielisyyttä tärkeämpää on vuorovaikutus ja kommunikatiivisuus.

Pääasiallisena tarkoitukseni ei ole tutkia sitä, millaisia suullisia harjoituksia käytätte ja kuinka usein, joten kyselyyn vastaaminen ei edellytä teiltä suullisten harjoitusten käyttöä opetuksessa. Tavoitteeni on tutkia, kuinka käyttökelpoisina englanninopettajat pitävät suullisia harjoituksia eri ikäluokilla, ja mitkä ominaisuudet tekevät harjoituksesta paremman tai huonomman. Kyselyssä ei ole oikeita tai väriä vastauksia.

Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie aikaa noin 5 minuuttia. Vastausten pohjalta kirjoitettava Pro Gradu -tutkielma julkaistaan Jyväskylän yliopiston julkaisuarkistossa (<https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/>), johon se tulee vapaasti luettavaksi kesän tai viimeistään syksyn aikana. Suuret kiitokset vastauksistanne!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Joona Hietala

joona.m.hietala@student.jyu.fi

1. Kauanko olette työskennellyt englanninopettajana?

- 0-5 vuotta
- 5-10 vuotta
- 10-15 vuotta
- 15-20 vuotta
- 20-25 vuotta
- Yli 25 vuotta

2. Millä luokka-asteilla opetatte englantia?

- 2.-6. luokka
 7.-9. luokka
 Lukio
 Muu, mikä?
-

3. Onko oppitunneillanne käytössä oppikirja?

- Ei
 Kyllä

4. Kuinka usein käytätte opetuksessa suullisia harjoituksia?

- En lainkaan
 Harvoin
 Silloin tällöin
 Usein
 Melkein jokaisella oppitunnilla

5. Jos käytätte suullisia harjoituksia, miten valitsette ne? (Voitte valita useamman vaihtoehdon.)

- Suunnittelen itse
 Käytän oppikirjan tai opettajan oppaan harjoituksia
 Etsin internetistä
 Keskustelen kollegoitteni tai ystävieni kanssa
 Muu, mikä?
-

11. Kuinka tärkeinä pidätte seuraavia ominaisuuksia suullista harjoitusta suunnitellessa tai valitessa?

	I aysin merkityksetön	Jossain määrin merkityksetön	Ei merkityksetön eikä tärkeä	Jossain määrin tärkeä	Erittäin tärkeä	En osaa sanoa
Ohjeidenselkeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aiheen ajankohtaisuus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aikataulut	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oppilailta vaaditun kielen tarkkuus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vihjeiden tai avun saatavuus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harjoituksen spontaanisuus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mahdollisuus käyttää erilaisia kommunikaatiostrategioita	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Toisto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Autenttinen kielimateriaali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eriyttämismahdollisuudet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Puhumista rohkaiseva ympäristö	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Mikäli teillä on muita kommentteja suullisiin harjoituksiin tai tähän kyselyyn liittyen, voitte kirjoittaa ne tähän.

APPENDIX 2. ORIGINAL FINNISH ANSWERS TO QUESTION 6

(1) On tosi tärkeää että luokka on turvallinen paikka avoimeen kommunikaatioon. Tämä koskee niin opetukseen kuuluvia asioita kuin sen ulkopuolisiakin. Kun oppilas tietää voivansa puhua omista asioistaan avoimesti, tämä luottamussuhde antaa rohkeutta puhua oppitunneilla.

(2) Opettajana täytyy suunnitella pelit ja leikit todella huolella, että tietää kaikissa tilanteissa mitä tehdään. Jos jotain menee pieleen, pitää olla 'plan B' ja yleensä myös 'plan C' valmiina.

(3) Tehtäviä suunnitellessa on otettava huomioon erilaiset oppilaat ja heidän tarpeensa. Jotkut haluavat esiintyä, mutta toisille se aiheuttaa paljon ahdistusta - ja kaikki pitäisi saada puhumaan. Siksi sellaiset harjoitukset ovat hyviä, missä on tarjolla erilaisia rooleja. Toisaalta yhtä tärkeää on myös että harjoitukset liittyvät aiheeseen. Mitä hyötyä on sellaisesta tehtävästä jossa puhutaan vain puhumisen vuoksi? Kyllä suullisissakin harjoituksissa pitää harjoitella aiheena olevaa sanastoa tai kielioppia yms.

(4) Rohkaisee puhumaan, aihe kiinnostaa, 'koukuttaa' oppilaat, monipuolinen kielenkäyttö, hauskaa pitää olla!

APPENDIX 3. ORIGINAL FINNISH ANSWERS TO QUESTION 12

(2) On vaikeaa antaa yksi vastaus oppilaiden motivaatioon suullisissa tehtävissä, koska eri oppilailla on erilainen motivaatio, ja mieliala voi muuttua paljonkin oppitunnin aikana. Vielä vaikeampaa on arvioida miten eri osat tehtävissä vaikuttaa motivaatioon koska ne tapahtuvat yhtä aikaa etkä voi jatkuvasti tarkkailla motivaatiota. Toisaalta opettaja voi myös omalla olemuksellaan ja energisyydellään vaikuttaa paljon siihen miten oppilaat asennoituvat oppitunteihin.

(4) Kiva kysely! Hauskaa että jotain kiinnostaa opettajienkin mielipiteet. Jaksamista gradun kirjoittamiseen!

(5) Kysymykseen 8 liittyen: Jos harjoituksia ei ohjeista kunnolla koko oppitunti voi mennä pilalle kun oppilaat eivät tiedä mitä tehdä eivätkä yleensä uskalla kysyäkkään. Toinen tärkeä tekijä on aihe: mikään ei tapa mielenkiintoa niinkuin aihe joka ei kiinnosta pätkääkään.

(6) Oppilaiden pitää tietää kieliluokassa että he voivat puhua ja tehdä virheitä – virheet on paras tapa oppia! Joskus opettajan kannattaakin pysytellä kauempana kun oppilaat puhuvat keskenään, että he uskaltavat heittäytyä keskusteluun eivätkä jää miettimään että mitä se opettaja mahtaa ajatella.

(7) Ihan vaan päivän mieliala voi vaikuttaa tosi paljon siihen miten oppilaat suhtautuu tehtäviin.

(8) Kysely oli paikoin vähän epäselvä. Esim mitä tarkoittaa erimielisyydet kysymyksessä 9? Tässä on varmaan päällekkäisyyttä edeltävän vaihtoehdon kanssa?

(9) Kyselyssäsi oli ongelmana, että kaikki kohdat eivät olleet kovin selkeitä.

(10) En ole varma ymmärsinkö kaikkia kysymyksiä ihan oikein.