

# FINNISH STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TAUGHT DEGREE PROGRAM IN NURSING

Master's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Suomessa on tarjolla 12 tutkinto-ohjelmaa sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoille, joissa opintojen kieli on englanti. Tutkinto-ohjelmissa opiskelee sekä suomalaisia että kansainvälisiä opiskelijoita, ja heitä ohjaavat erilaiset motivaatiot englanninkielisessä koulutusohjelmassa opiskeluun. Englanninkielisiä tutkinto-ohjelmia on tutkittu laajasti kansainvälisten opiskelijoiden perspektiivistä ja etenkin tutkinto-ohjelmien vaikutusta kansainvälisten opiskelijoiden integroitumiseen suomalaiseen yhteiskuntaan ja työelämään. Kuitenkaan suomalaisia opiskelijoita englanninkielisissä tutkinto-ohjelmissa ei ole tutkittu pääasiallisina kohteina, vaan lähinnä vertailevissa tutkimuksissa kansainvälisten opiskelijoiden rinnalla. Englannin kielen näkökulma puuttuu myös lähes tyystin tutkimuksen kentältä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli saada selville suomalaisten sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoiden näkemyksiä englanninkielisestä sairaanhoitajakoulutusohjelmasta. Tutkimuskysymykset liittyivät opiskelijoiden syihin opiskella kyseisessä koulutusohjelmassa, heidän kielitaitonsa kehitystä tukeviin ja estäviin tekijöihin sekä siihen miten nämä ovat yhteydessä toisiinsa ja ei-englanninkielisille sairaanhoitajille asetettuihin kriteereihin. Lisäksi yksi tutkimuskysymys keskittyi tutkinto-ohjelman kehittämisehdotuksiin. Tuloksia voidaan näin ollen käyttää hyödyksi englanninkielisten sairaanhoitajakoulutusohjelmien kehittämisessä.</p> <p>Tutkimukseen osallistui 15 suomalaista sairaanhoitajaopiskelijaa yhdestä englanninkielisestä tutkinto-ohjelmasta. He vastasivat ensin Internet-pohjaiseen kyselyyn ja lisäksi neljää osallistujaa haastateltiin ilmiön syvämmän ymmärtämisen saavuttamiseksi. Vastaukset analysoitiin aineistolähtöisen sisällönanalyysin avulla. Suomalaisilla sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoilla oli useita syitä, jotka vaikuttivat heidän valintaansa opiskella englanninkielisessä koulutusohjelmassa. Tärkeimmiksi syiksi nousivat kuitenkin englannin kieleen liittyvät seikat sekä toiveet kansainvälisestä työllistymisestä. Kielitaitoa ja kommunikatiivista kompetenssia tukivat koulutusohjelmassa laaja englannin kielen käyttö, akateeminen lukeminen ja kirjoittaminen sekä materiaalit, silloin kun ne oli laadukkaasti tehty. Suurimpia estäviä tekijöitä olivat opettajien heikko kielitaito sekä harjoittelujen suorittaminen suomeksi. Osallistujilla oli useita ehdotuksia siitä, miten tutkinto-ohjelmaa voisi kielen näkökulmasta kehittää ja näitä käsiteltiin suhteessa taustateoriaan ja tutkijan omiin näkemyksiin.</p> <p>Jatkossa kiinnostavaa olisi tietää, miten samat osallistujat kokevat saamansa hyödyn koulutusohjelmasta myöhemmässä vaiheessa jo toimittuaan ammatissa jonkin aikaa. Lisäksi laajempi tutkimus samasta aiheesta on tarpeen, jotta saadaan paremmin yleistettävissä olevia tuloksia. Mikäli kehitystyötä tutkinto-ohjelmissa tehdään tuloksia vastaavaan suuntaan, myös seurantatutkimus on aiheellinen, jotta saadaan selville miten muutokset ovat vaikuttaneet tutkittaviin aihealueisiin.</p>	
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## Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
2	COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH AS A TARGET FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE NURSES .....	7
2.1	Communicative competence.....	7
2.2	English for Specific Purposes.....	11
2.3	Linguistic competence required from foreign language nurses.....	13
2.4	Language proficiency tests and their use in recruiting foreign nurses .....	17
2.4.1	International English Language Testing System (IELTS) .....	18
2.4.2	Occupational English Test (OET) .....	19
2.4.3	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) .....	20
2.5	English Language Taught Degree Programs in Finnish higher education .....	21
2.5.1	English language taught degree program in nursing .....	22
2.5.2	Linguistic requirements for Finnish nurses .....	25
2.5.3	Previous studies on the English language taught degree programs .....	26
3	PRESENT STUDY .....	30
3.1	Purpose of the study .....	30
3.2	Data.....	32
3.3	Method of analysis.....	35
4	STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TAUGHT DEGREE PROGRAM IN NURSING .....	38
4.1	Reasons behind studying in the English-mediated degree program.....	38
4.2	Reported use of English within the program and its relationship with language tests and requirements for foreign nurses .....	41
4.3	Students' views on the material.....	46
4.4	Studying abroad.....	49
4.5	Aspects that support or hinder English development .....	51

4.6 Student suggestions .....	53
5 DISCUSSION .....	57
5.1 The correlation between the aims and motivations of the Finnish students and the perceived gain from the ELTDP .....	57
5.2 Communicative competence and the language tests in relation to the perceived support received from the ELTDP .....	59
5.3 Suggestions for developing the ELDTP in nursing.....	63
5.4 Implications of the study .....	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	69
Appendix 1: Questionnaire form (in Finnish) .....	76
Appendix 2: Interview questions.....	84

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Having studied both nursing as well as languages and education, I wanted to unite both professional fields in a meaningful way in this study. Working as a nurse, I have had contact with Finnish nurses who studied in the English language taught degree program (ELTDP) in nursing and the topic of this study arose from those experiences. There are 12 English language taught degree programs in nursing offered in Finnish universities of applied sciences, and there are both Finnish and international students studying in them, with varying ratio between the two groups. It is clear that different factors guide the Finnish and international students in making the decision to study in an English language taught degree program in Finland. English language taught degree programs have been studied previously from the point of view of the Finnish language and international students, and how the program supports their integration to the Finnish society and professional life (Pitkäljärvi, Eriksson & Kekki 2011; Koivisto & Juusola 2008). Some comparative research has been carried out on the views of Finnish and international students in ELTDPs (Niemelä 2009) and in ELTDPs in nursing (Pitkäljärvi 2012). Finnish nursing students in the ELTDPs, however, have not been studied, and more specifically, studies from the point of view of English have not been made in the Finnish context. As mentioned before, the ratio between Finnish and international students depends on the individual education facilities, but the proportion of Finnish students can be as high as 50 % of the student body. Thus, it is equally relevant to find out the views and perspective of the Finnish students. Furthermore, the entire program is offered through the medium of English and, consequently, deserves to be examined from the perspective of the language.

There are target general competences for all students graduating from universities of applied sciences in Finland and international, social and communication competences are a few of them (Eriksson, Korhonen, Merasto & Moisio 2015, 15). While these general competences are meant equally for the students studying in the mother tongue, I claim that upon providing education in a foreign language, these competences should extend to said foreign language. Components of international, social and communicative aspects, such as interculturality, multiculturalism, sociolinguistics and language are all included in the theories of communicative competence and, thus, communicative competence was chosen as the theoretical framework of the current study. From the early models of Chomsky (1965) and Hymes (1972), the theory of

communicative competence has grown and become more detailed in organization. Canale and Swain (1980) developed a framework of four components, which included grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledges and strategic and discourse competences. In somewhat similar model, Bachman and Palmer (1996) reorganized and extended the model to include grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic knowledges, assorted under different umbrella terms. Communicative competence has been taken as the target result of learning in the Common European Framework of Reference, which is followed in European schools, and indeed, the Finnish National Core Curriculum is based on it. Therefore, it is natural procession to keep communicative competence as the target learning result in Finnish higher education as well, bearing in mind the target competences of higher education graduates.

The purpose of this study was to find out the views of the Finnish students in an ELTDP in nursing on the support they receive in terms of their language proficiency in English and how it is related to their aims and motivations for attending the program. In order to reach the aim of this study, research questions were formed to find out, first, the students' aims guiding them to choose an ELTDP, second, the aspects of the degree program that support or hinder their communicative competence, third, how these are related to each other and the requirements for foreign nurses and, finally, the students' ideas on how to develop the program.

This qualitative study was conducted using two methods of data gathering, a Webropol-questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The participants were 15 Finnish students studying in one ELTDP, and four of them were included in the interview section. The data was analyzed using data-driven content analysis and, through categorization, themed results were found to answer the set research questions. The results can be used to develop not only the individual ELTDP, but all ELTDPs in nursing offered in Finnish universities of applied sciences and, thus, make them more attractive and beneficial for both Finnish and international nursing students.

The theoretical framework consists of communicative competence, and what it entails, introducing English for Specific Purposes as a teaching method, and finding out what linguistic competence is required from foreign language nurses. Three commonly used language tests are introduced and their use in recruiting foreign language nurses is discussed. Equally important is the introduction of English language taught degree programs (ELTDPs) in Finland and the individual degree program under examination. Additionally, the language related competences of Finnish nurses and relevant previous studies are included. In chapter 3, the study design is

introduced, including the aim and research questions of this study, as well as detailed descriptions of the data and analysis. In chapter 4, the results are narrated under themes and illustrative excerpts of the data are given. In the last chapter, the results are discussed further in relation to the existing theory and studies. Furthermore, suggestions are made on how to use these results to develop the program further. In addition, the implications of this study are discussed.

## **2 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH AS A TARGET FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE NURSES**

In this chapter, I will first introduce briefly the history and main theories of communicative competence. The later models of communicative competence have shaped the foreign language education in Finland, as in many other European countries, and it is, thus, important when examining education that is conducted through the medium of a foreign language. Second, I will introduce English for Specific Purposes as a form of teaching and discuss its usability in vocational higher education. Then, I will move on to discuss the linguistic competence required of foreign language nurses and introduce three language proficiency tests that are commonly used in recruiting foreign language nurses. Another important subsection on the English Language Taught Degree Programs (ELTDPs) follows. Firstly, I will discuss their position in Finnish higher education in general and secondly, I will move on to introduce the degree program in nursing that is the target of research in this study. Additionally, the linguistic competence required of Finnish nurses is discussed separately and, finally, relevant previous studies on the ELTDPs are introduced.

### **2.1 Communicative competence**

The history of acknowledging communicative competence as something separate, something more than just grammatical knowledge, has its roots in the mid-sixties, when Chomsky first separated the theoretical knowledge of language and the actual performance (Chomsky 1965). Chomsky's theory was criticized by various linguists for being too narrow and, in the early seventies, it was developed further by Dell Hymes (1972), who viewed sociolinguistic aspect as an important part of communicative competence. After these two founding theories, there have been many developments of the models of communicative competence, with the most important ones being the theoretical framework for communicative competence by Canale and Swain in 1980 and, later, the model of Bachman and Palmer. First, the theory of Canale and Swain consisted of three individual components, which were, the previously mentioned grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledges, and, additionally, strategic competence. Later the

framework was developed further by adding a fourth component, named discourse competence. Following Chomsky's theories, grammatical component has to do with the linguistic skills that enable the speaker to express their messages. The sociolinguistic views of Canale and Swain very much followed the theory of Hymes and this component is discussed further in the following section. The strategic element in the theoretical framework entails the communication strategies with which a speaker can compensate for the lack of perfect knowledge of the functions of language. Whereas discourse competence is formed by the mastery of "cohesion in form and coherence in meaning". While the theoretical framework of Canale and Swain was and still is very much in use in forming theories of second and foreign language learning, due to its applicability, there have been other models presented, such as the one by Bachman and Palmer in 1996 (Figure 1). (Bagaric & Djigunovic 2007, 97, 101.)

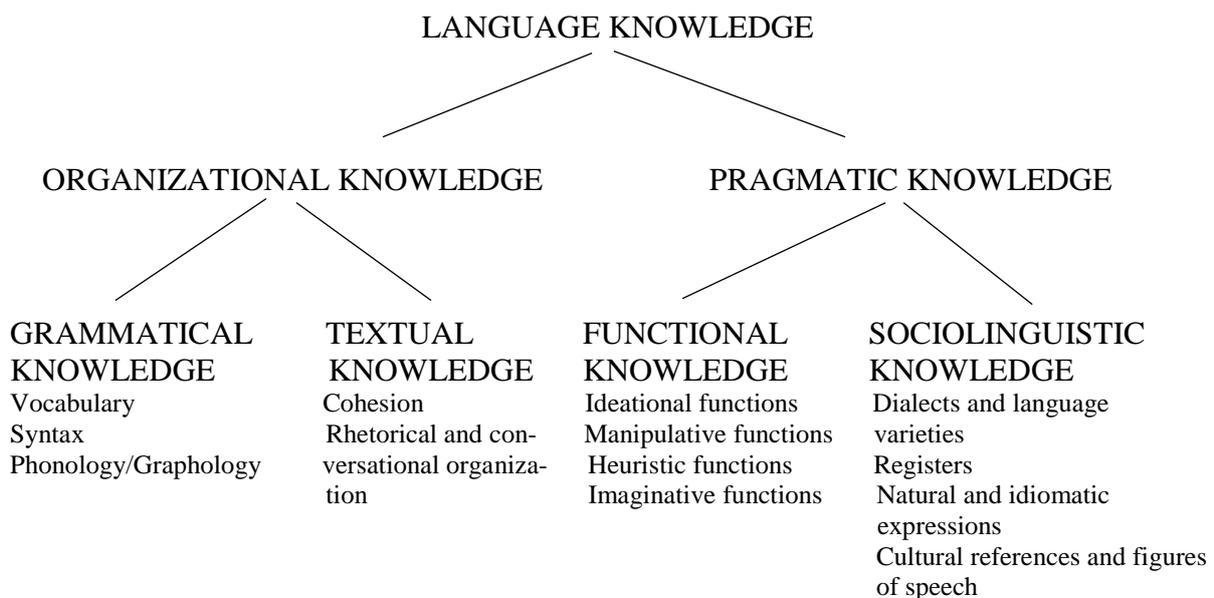


Figure 1. Bachman and Palmer's (1996, 68) model of communicative competence

According to their model, Bachman and Palmer (1996, 67) use the term *language knowledge* as the umbrella term consisting of organizational and pragmatic knowledge. Under the organizational knowledge exist grammatical and textual knowledge, which can be seen similar to the grammatical and discourse components of the previous theory. Similarly, pragmatic knowledge is divided into two subsections, which are functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. While sociolinguistic knowledge matches the previous theories, the functional component needs some deciphering. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996, 69), this

component consists of, not only strategic competence but also cultural knowledge and further functions of language, such as manipulative and ideational functions. In short, the theory of communicative competence has been developing since the mid-sixties and the newer models contain some earlier components, such as grammatical and sociolinguistic competence, as well as newer components respectively. These models help us understand that competence in language is complex and that there are various aspects to consider when investigating language competence, and how to achieve it, in foreign language learners.

Communicative competence has been taken as the target result of learning in European schools and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The Finnish education system follows a national core curriculum and the national core curriculum is planned according to the recommendations of the CEFR (Finnish National Agency for Education 2014). While the CEFR guides basic and upper secondary education in Finland, as well as in other European countries, there are some aspects to consider. First, the language knowledge of the students in higher education is difficult to determine, because of the varying backgrounds of the students, as not all students come from European countries and some students might have gone through vocational training instead of upper secondary education prior to entering the program. Second, the objectives listed in the CEFR for language learning are equally relevant in further studies, even when certain base knowledge can be expected of the students. Thus, it is relevant to take a look into the CEFR as well. In the CEFR the components included in the definition of communicative competence are, similarly to the previous models, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Contrastingly, in the CEFR a broader category of linguistic competence has been taken in use. This category, in addition to grammatical knowledge, consists of lexical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic knowledge. (Council of Europe 2001, 13, 109.)

As seen previously, sociolinguistics is part of all important theories of communicative competence and, while the other components are by no means less important in language learning, they are more present in the language teaching of basic and upper secondary education in Finland. While linguistic and pragmatic competences are easily transferrable to any higher education domain, with the exception of lexical knowledge, sociocultural aspects are more field specific.

Sociolinguistics is a field of study that focuses not only on language and its structures, but, more importantly, on the situations in which the language is used (Hymes 1986, 37). According to Halliday (1978, 32) the context of situation determines the language functions and linguistic

features that we need. I will now introduce some key concepts of the sociolinguistic theory and discuss what they might mean from the perspective of healthcare domain. To begin with, it is important to understand the meaning of a *speech community*. A speech community is formed by a group of speakers that share the knowledge of the norms that govern communication in the social situations typical to the community. Although the term is often used to refer to large groups of people, such as urban citizens, speech community as a term applies to a professional group as well. For example, a group of hospital workers, from different professions even, form a speech community that form a social organization, e.g. a hospital, communicate to one another in order to reach common goals and speak in the same manner, e.g. medical jargon. While being part of the speech community does not mean a member has to relinquish their other linguistic repertoire or personal traits, it means that the member is able to communicate within the boundaries shared by the community. All members of the speech community have their own linguistic repertoires and ways of communicating in other domains, and while these repertoires always remain in an individual, in the said community, they communicate abiding by the shared rules of communication. As a field of study sociolinguistics emphasize the importance of both social and cultural aspects. (Hymes 1986, 16, 54.)

When observing the functions of a speech community, one can detect *speech situations*, such as examining a patient in a hospital ward, which can contain *speech events*. These speech events are points of communication, be it written, spoken or even nonverbal, where the rules emerge. If examining a patient is the speech situation, the communication between a doctor and a nurse would be the speech event, and within that speech event, individual comments, commands, questions and such, are called *speech acts*. Speech acts are guided by the social and cultural rules, as well as language rules, that exist within the speech community such as conventions and social relationships between the interlocutors. (Hymes 1986, 56-57.) Not only are there sociocultural norms about the use of language, but also the use of talk itself. Cultures, those that exist in different countries as well as cultures of different domains, have variability in how much and what kind of talk is appropriate in any given situation. (Nyyssönen & Rapakko 1992, 7.) Sociolinguistics as a theory is obviously far more complex and wider than the beforementioned, but understanding of these basic concepts helps us see, that communicative competence cannot be measured by simply determining grammatical correctness of a speaker. The example, through which I have explained the basic concepts of sociolinguistics, is universal to all professionals working in the healthcare domain and clearly nursing education entails opportunities to learn and accommodate to these norms and rules of communication. That being

said, these norms are highly culture dependent and, thus, they pose a challenge for foreign language nurses, or any professional working in the healthcare domain for that matter.

According to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 103), it is important to build interculturality of the students through raising awareness and understanding of the target cultures. It is not an easy task to decide how much cultural infusion should be included in language teaching. Even more difficult it is, when teaching content is in a much more important position than teaching language. In fact, when the language in question is as global a language as English, the question arises, which cultures to include? According to British Council (2013, 5), some 1.75 billion people speak English at a useful level, with around 400 million native speakers. Not only are there various countries with English as their main language and many more with English as an official language, but also non-English countries have professional domains where English is the language of communication. While this decision has to be left for the education providers to take, there is general knowledge of how to build intercultural competence, as it does not happen by accident but must, in fact, be taught explicitly. Most importantly, the learners must be provided with knowledge of other societies and cultures. There can be no understanding of other cultures without the presence of them in the education. Through knowledge and understanding, a learner is able to build empathy and approval towards other cultures, which correspondingly are needed to succeed in intercultural communication. (Lambert 1999, 66.) How, then, to go about implementing culture in the education. General culture traits and information about the society can be implemented by including spoken and written texts, knowledge about history, geography and institutions, knowledge about the existing pragmatic norms and norms of interaction (Crozet & Liddicoat 1999, 116). These are just as well applicable to the culture of a certain domain, such as healthcare in a different country as they are to a foreign country or culture itself. An answer to the question might be provided by the theory of teaching English for specific purposes, which will be looked into in the following section.

## **2.2 English for Specific Purposes**

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a form of teaching English in a way which is designed to respond to the specified needs of the learners with a tight relationship to the content of the discipline. In the center of this teaching method is the language appropriate for the activities

and tasks specific to the language learners and, thus, it is in contrast with *General English*. The primary issue when designing ESP should be the reason behind the learners' need to learn English. ESP is more likely used with adult learners as they more often need a foreign language in a professional setting in addition to general communication situations. (Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998, 3, 5.)

Using ESP as a teaching method has some clear advantages over teaching General English. As it is directed towards the learners' needs, it wastes no time and is thus more cost-effective than teaching General English. In addition, it is motivating for the learners, as it is highly relevant for them. It also makes it possible to divide the teachable units in a meaningful way. Moreover, ESP prepares the learners to function in a foreign language in situations that are authentic to them. (Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998, 9.)

The challenge of using ESP is that it usually requires close collaboration between a language teacher and a content teacher. A language teacher's role is crucial in planning, selecting materials and making sure of the correctness and validity of the language content. However, there are different ways of organizing ESP in terms of the amount of collaboration. The least amount of collaboration is required when the teachers do some of the planning together and the most when they also team-teach or co-teach the course. Everything on the range between these two is possible. (Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998, 45.)

At the basis of planning ESP should be some form of needs analysis. Some important things to consider when starting to plan language teaching in this form are the following. Firstly, perhaps the most important factor is the professional language skill needs of the learners, e.g. what are the tasks and situations the learners will need to perform in English. Secondly, some personal information should be gathered of the learners in terms of subjective needs, attitudes and motivations. Thirdly, the level of English of the learners should be somehow defined in advance. Additionally, there are several other factors that can be considered depending on the planning process of teaching, such as learner lacks and needs, deeper knowledge of the language and skills needed in the professional life, targets of the course and information on the target environment. Clearly the depth of the needs analysis depends on resources and the manner of realization of ESP as a method. (Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998, 125.)

English for Specific Purposes can be further divided into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Nurses, for example, are expected to be able to function in a fairly academic world, especially during their studies (O'Neill, Buckendahl, Plake

& Taylor 2007, 300) but most of their work is more closely related to practical situations. Thus, the needs of nursing students' language skills are not purely either but rather they need both EAP and EOP in their education to survive and thrive in both sides of their professional life. EAP needs can be, for example, reading textbooks, articles and studies in English and writing essays and reports. EOP needs, on the other hand, include interacting with English-speaking patients and co-workers. (Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998, 49.)

### **2.3 Linguistic competence required from foreign language nurses**

Since the beginning of March 2017, Finnish higher education degrees have been checked and modified to fit the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The objective of this reform is to make Finnish higher education degrees compatible within European countries and enhance the possibilities of working abroad with an existing Finnish degree without having to go through complementary education in the target country. (Ministry of Culture and Education 2017.) By April 2018, 35 European countries are part of the EQF, with expectations of the rest joining by the end of the year. Moreover, plans have been made to extend the framework to apply in Australia and New Zealand in years to come. (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training 2018) Consequently, Finnish nurses have many opportunities to be employed outside of Finland. Possible reasons behind wanting to work abroad vary from personal situations, such as relationships and family relations, to financial reasons and even personal interest. According to my professional experience, most common destinations that Finnish nurses seem to choose are the neighboring Nordic countries, probably for their convenient location and easy recruiting process, English-speaking countries, possibly for language reasons, and some individual countries, such as Saudi-Arabia, for monetary reasons. Fortunately, many of these destinations are happy to accept foreign workforce. For example, Australia welcomes immigrant nurses (Glew 2013, 102), even though they require sometimes tedious measures within the actual process of registration as a nurse.

A needs analysis was conducted in 1992, to find out what linguistic competence was needed of foreign language nurses, by Cameron (1998). The needs analysis was carried out in the university of Pennsylvania and it had multiple phases. First, Cameron interviewed four directors of different divisions of the School of Nursing. Second, he attended a workshop for clinical supervisors. Additionally, he met with nursing students and conducted theoretical research. The

setting of the study was North American and it was based on the typical social domain of Philadelphia, which is mainly urban, multi-ethnic and varied in social class. He found five main categories, which were *speech production accuracy*, *academic performance*, *clinical performance*, *dialect and cultural variation* and *inferencing skills*. Under the first category, which can be seen to belong to the grammatical and discourse components of the previously introduced theories, many elements were listed, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and discourse. Under the second category, *academic performance*, Cameron (1998, 211) listed the four main components of language use, reading, writing, listening and speaking, but in an academic context. Additionally, he listed critical thinking and moral reasoning as part of academic performance. Moving on to more specific skills for nurses, the third category, *clinical performance*, consisted of getting information from patients, transmitting information to them and even translating information from medical language to more colloquial forms. In addition, this category entailed the use of different channels of communication and general social interaction within clinical setting. While the study was conducted in North American setting, the fourth category, *dialect and cultural variation*, applies in any other setting where a foreign language nurse might work. Under this category, Cameron listed the introduction to the nature of dialect variation in American English, which can be broadened to include any dialect variation present in any given environment. Similarly, introduction to cultural differences in styles of communication is relevant in all different environments. Another part of this category was learning the differences between medical and vernacular vocabulary for the body and bodily functions. The last category of *inferencing skills*, consisted of functions such as inferring meanings from both spoken and written texts, such as irony and criticism, understanding utterance meanings according to the speaker and situation and inferring “relevant social information that requires knowledge of local culture”. (Cameron 1998, 211, 213-214.)

While Cameron’s analysis is somewhat outdated, it is one of the few studies focused on foreign language nurses. There is considerably more existing research on international workers in the medical field compared to other healthcare professions. Watt and Lake (2011, 153), have handled the issue of professional language use of international medical graduates and they make an important distinction between general language proficiency and professional language proficiency. Adding to that, they raise academic language proficiency as a separate skill set, present and needed in the medical field. As can be seen in the descriptions of the most commonly used English language tests, in recruiting international nurses, which will be introduced in the following chapter, general, professional and academic language skills are

present as well. Thus, Watt and Lake's view on the matter are relevant within the health care domain in general, not only the medical field. Watt and Lake (2011, 154) describe general language skills as needed in successful day to day interaction in non-specific surroundings. However, professional language proficiency is highly dependable on the actual profession, as communication is affected by the specific roles, responsibilities and communication tasks within the professional field. Thus, being a proficient language user in daily situations or even in a certain professional setting, does not mean that one is a proficient language user in the health care domain. Contrastingly, one needs to be able to learn professional language skills in the setting where language skills are needed, to be able to communicate in an appropriate, field specific way. Without the appropriate skills in professional language, health care workers are not able to perform their duties as professionals, such as interviewing patients, offering information and guidance to them and communicating successfully with colleagues. In health care domain, successful communication is essential as there are people's lives in question. (Watt & Lake 2011, 153.) What makes this problematic, as Watt and Lake (2011, 154) state, is that what is seen as appropriate professional communication, varies culturally. One might suggest that Western cultures, or even the cultures that English-speaking countries share, have enough similarities to expect certain amount of applicability in professional language skills. However, English-speaking nurses are hired in various countries where English is not the official language which makes it much harder to be able to predict what cultural knowledge is needed to learn the appropriate professional communication skills. Not only does it make it difficult for the language test providers but it is almost impossible for an individual education provider to accommodate learning sufficient communication skills for every possible professional situation. This shifts some of the responsibility to the individual professionals according to their personal plans of employment.

As stated before, Australia is one of the English-speaking countries that welcome international workforce in the health care domain. In addition, it educates both English speakers as well as English as a foreign-language-students in the field of nursing. However, the lack of sufficient professional language skills in English of the international students has led nursing educators, such as Glew (2013) to consider effective solutions to the problem. Glew (2013) suggests that English language learning should be embedded into the nursing education to ensure the needed professional language proficiency. While Glew operates in an English-speaking environment, I see no reason why his suggestion would not be relevant for English-speaking nurses in a Finnish domain.

Glew has developed a comprehensive plan on how to improve the English language proficiency of international nurses entering the Australian workforce, including testing system and embedding English language learning within the framework of nursing education. Glew's (2013, 104) idea for the language development is explained through the use of IELTS scoring, which will be looked into in more detail in the following section. While the required band scores are at the medium level in the admission stage, they ascend progressively throughout the education. Thus, the level of the students' English proficiency is at the required level in terms of being able to enter workforce without problems. Moreover, he emphasizes the importance of academic and professional language skills as part of the nursing education. On how English language learning is facilitated during nursing education, Glew (2013, 105) suggests the use of interactional and functional language learning. As nursing education entails a good amount of practical learning situations, together with theoretical studies, it is ideal for the use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methods. Students learn English interacting in the simulated situations that mimic real life and, more importantly, they develop their skills in both, content and language, at the same time. As a result, upon graduation they should have the required proficiency in both. However, this does not happen automatically by using English as medium of education, but attention should be paid to using appropriate methods. Glew (2013, 105) gives an example of discussing, analyzing and evaluating academic, nursing related, texts, as a way to improve the students' language skills. In effect, English language learning can and should, in fact, be facilitated within the framework of nursing education, when the objective is to provide English-speaking workforce in the health care domain.

In his article Glew (2013) cites various sources on the importance of foreign nurses having appropriate professional English language skills. As reasons for this, he states patient safety and avoiding delays in the nurse registering process. Similarly, Walker, Trofimovich, Cedergren and Gatbonton (2011, 722) have collected examples of situations where the lack of linguistic competence of healthcare professionals has led to patient suffering. More importantly, The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has released a statement on the cultural and linguistic competence required from nurses. According to ICN (2013), a nurse should be able to communicate verbally and in writing directly with the client or with the help of an interpreter. It is safe to assume that in the client's birth country they should be able to get health services in the main languages spoken in the country, i.e. in English in an English-speaking country. For the purposes of this study, the use of interpreters will not be addressed more thoroughly.

According to ICN (2013), linguistic competence is important to avoid errors in situations such as advice and instruction giving to the client or registering clients' symptoms and problems. The ICN makes it clear in the statement that nurses themselves should appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity and, moreover, take care of sufficient linguistic and cultural competence. In addition, the role of the workplace is emphasized. The statement is focused on societies with larger cultural and linguistic diversity rather than on the situation of immigrant nurses. However, the idea behind the statement applies perfectly to the client needs addressed by immigrant nurses. Whether the responsibility to promote linguistic and cultural diversity lies upon the individual nurses, workplaces or educational facilities, is another question. By using language tests as part of their recruiting regime, workplaces shift some of the responsibility to the direction of the individuals. Whereas these individuals, upon choosing a foreign language degree program, again shift the responsibility to the direction of the educational facilities. Thus, in my opinion, educational facilities that have opted to provide foreign language degree programs should offer education that promotes the students' linguistic competence as well as other aspects of communicative competence.

## **2.4 Language proficiency tests and their use in recruiting foreign nurses**

To be able to work as a nurse in an English-speaking country, and most countries to which Finnish nurses are recruited, the nurses have to pass a language proficiency test. There are a few different international tests that are widely in use. Upon examining requirements for immigrant nurses in different countries, I found that the most common language tests accepted are the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Occupational English Test (OET) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). To give a few examples, according to Ford (2018), to work as a nurse or a midwife in the United Kingdom, acceptable IELTS or OET scores must be presented. According to the Nursing and Midwifery board of Australia (2019), all of the above-mentioned tests are accepted, and, additionally, the Pearson test of English academic, which will not be discussed further. The situation of the USA is more complex, because of the great autonomy the different states enjoy. In the following, the above-mentioned tests and their uses in recruiting foreign language nurses will be described more thoroughly.

### **2.4.1 International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is a language test widely used in English-speaking countries to determine the level of the language of speakers of English as a foreign language (EFL). The test is conducted in standard English and it is in use in various domains at least in North America, Great Britain, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia. The test consists of four modules that test different language skills. These are listening, speaking, writing and reading. Each skill domain is scored separately using band scores from 0 to 9 and, in addition, the test taker receives an overall band score. Interestingly, there are two versions of IELTS, one tests general language skills and the other academic language skills. Differences between the versions appear in the writing and reading modules, whereas the listening and speaking modules are identical. General version is used when testing the language skills of most immigrants and people who aspire to function in a vocational setting. Academic version, on the other hand, is used when testing candidates who are pursuing higher education in an English-speaking country. Nursing is considered to entail academic elements and, thus, the academic version is mostly used in testing nurses and aspiring nursing students. However, there is no field specific version of IELTS for nurses for the time being, even though this has been suggested and there have been attempts to create one. (O'Neill, Buckendahl, Plake & Taylor 2007, 300.)

In the academic version the modules contain the following elements. The listening module consists of four parts, a dialogue, a monologue and two group discussions, of which the first two deal with social issues and the two latter are in educational context. The candidates have to answer 40 questions in total which can include, for example, multiple choice questions, short answers, classification and matching. The reading module consists of three passages of general interest, taken from magazines, journals, books and newspapers. Similarly to the listening section, the candidate has to answer 40 questions of different types about the content of the passages. The writing module consists of two tasks; the first one describing or explaining a diagram or a chart and the second one is a short argumentative essay on a given topic. Contrastingly, the speaking module is done in a face-to-face situation with a trained examiner. The discussion consists of giving personal information, speaking about a given topic and follow-up questions of said topic and finally a conversation of a topic related to the given topic in the second section. (O'Neill et al. 2007, 301-302.)

The final score, as mentioned before, is formed by separate band scores from each module. The band scores in use are from 0 to 9, 0 signifying a situation where a candidate has not given any assessable information and 9 signifying expert user skills. All the scores in between, including decimal scores, are in use. (IELTS 2018.) The acceptable score, however, depends on the domain of the test. Some domains require only a certain overall band score, whereas others require additionally a minimum score from all the domains separately. As there is wide variation between countries in accepted IELTS scores, it is impossible to state any definitive scores and, thus, I will give a few examples. For nurses who wish to work in Britain, acceptable scores are 7.0 overall and 7.0 band score from each module according to Nursing and Midwifery council in Britain (SI-UK 2018). Similarly, Australian health staff recruiters (Health Staff Recruitment n.d.) inform the acceptable scores to be 7.0 overall and 7.0 band. An example from the United States, Washington State Department of Health (2018) announces 6.5 overall and 6.0 band scores as acceptable for nurses educated outside of the United States.

#### **2.4.2 Occupational English Test (OET)**

Occupational English Test (OET) is widely accepted by healthcare councils in various countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Dubai, Singapore and Namibia. It was specifically developed to test the level of English in occupational situations in the healthcare domain. There are 12 different occupations that have been taken into consideration in the test modules, modules being the same as in IELTS, listening, reading, writing and speaking. Listening and reading modules are the same for all healthcare professionals, whereas writing and speaking are specific to profession. Listening module consists of two recorded pieces, one a consultation in a form of a dialogue and the other a presentation of a health-related topic. The task types in the listening module are similar to those in IELTS. In the reading part, the candidates read health-related texts and fill in missing words in a summary and answer multiple-choice questions. However, in the other two modules, writing and speaking, the tasks vary according to the profession and they are based on typical workplace situations. Thus, writing part for a nurse can be, for example, to write a letter of transfer for a patient or a letter to inform the patient. Similarly, the speaking module mimics a real-life situation in the form of roleplay tasks with the test giver. (Occupational English Test 2018.)

OET is graded similarly to the IELTS, all modules receive a separate score determined according to certain criteria set for the separate modules. However, OET scores are given in letters, from A to E, A being the highest and E being the lowest. OET score A is the equivalent for the IELTS band scores 8.0-9.0, whereas B is the equivalent for the passing scores 7.0-7.5. Most healthcare councils accept OET result B in each module as qualification for healthcare registration, although the OET officials recommend checking this with the relevant professional body or organization. (Occupational English Test 2018.)

As mentioned above, Occupational English Test is widely used in recruiting international nurses in Australia. Manias and McNamara (2016) explored the views of health professionals, instead of language experts, on the standards of the speaking module of the OET. They wanted to find out specifically, what the professionals working in the health care domain found important in EFL communication within the domain. Comments were made using the existing OET criteria for the speaking module, including fluency, intelligibility, appropriateness of language and resources of grammar and expression. Additionally, the professionals suggested criteria, such as clinician engagement and management of interaction. The main problems found in the language related criteria were: accent and pronunciation, correct language but not appropriate situationally, limitations in vocabulary and limited grammatical resources. Firstly, strong foreign accent and faulty pronunciation affect the intelligibility of speech and, thus, can lead to misunderstandings in communication. Secondly, EFL speakers often use grammatically correct expressions but due to the lack of sufficient professional language proficiency, they end up using these expressions inappropriately, which may lead to confusion between the interlocutors. Thirdly, limitations in vocabulary, especially in the professional domain, leads to difficulties in explaining concepts. More specifically, the use of repetition as a language strategy, due to the lack of limited vocabulary, affects the perceived professionalism of the speaker. Similarly, the lack of grammatical resources can be seen as a professionalism demeaning factor. (Manias & McNamara 2016, 240.)

### **2.4.3 Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)**

Another widely used language test is Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). It is accepted in various different domains, such as visa application and healthcare certification purposes, in over 130 countries. TOEFL is presently administered solely in the Internet and

paper version is no longer available. The whole test is done in a block that includes modules for reading, listening, speaking and writing, with a short break in the middle. All modules focus on the academic context and the contents are chosen accordingly. The reading module consists of three to four passages from academic texts and requires the candidate to answer 36 to 56 questions. The listening module consists of recordings of lectures, classroom discussions and conversations after which the candidates answer around 40 questions. Speaking part consists of six tasks where the candidates record their speaking of a familiar topic or a topic based on the previous tasks. Similarly, the writing module contains two essay tasks that respond to the previous topics present in the test. The test in whole is not specific to any variation of English but the most common variations, e.g. North American, British and Australian, may appear. (Educational Testing Service 2018.)

The scoring of TOEFL is similar to that of the IELTS, as all modules receive a separate score and the total score is the sum of all parts. The separate modules are scored between 0 to 30 points with the total score thus being between 0 to 120 points. (Educational Testing Service 2018.) For the time being, there are no set scores that are accepted in all domains and countries. Contrastingly, it seems that all countries, professional bodies and institutions are free to determine their own criteria for a passing score. There are some recommendations made (Wendt & Woo 2009) about the acceptable scores in the field of nursing but it seems that so far, these recommendations have not been taken into practice. An example of accepted TOEFL scores is a total score of 83 with speaking score of 26, by Washington State Department of Health (2018).

## **2.5 English Language Taught Degree Programs in Finnish higher education**

In Finland, higher education has been divided under two main organizing parties, universities and universities of applied sciences. Universities of applied sciences offer higher education that responds to the needs of the society in terms of working life, development and vocational leadership. Nursing degree programs, among others, are offered widely in the 23 universities of applied sciences in Finland. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018), universities of applied sciences have great autonomy in terms of organizing their administration and the education they provide. In the following chapter, I will introduce foreign language degree programs in general and then move on to examine the foreign language nursing degree

program, that is the focus of this study, followed by the required competencies of nurses in Finland and how those are connected to foreign language, culture and communication.

The existence of foreign language degree programs, which generally means degree programs through the medium of education in English, in Finnish higher education has been explained through the needs of professional life. The biggest reason is not necessarily the need to gain foreign work force but rather the need to be able to respond to the globalization of our daily and professional life. Foreign language degree programs promote both student and teacher mobility internationally and thus have a great impact in international networking. Additionally, through these programs it is possible to offer foreign students an existing education package to choose instead of having to plan and execute individual courses for the benefit of exchange students. (Garam 2009, 3.) According to Garam (2009, 5), especially Finnish universities of applied sciences deem it important that these degree programs advance the internationalization of Finnish students. More importantly, Garam claims (2009, 9) that around 80 per cent of international degree programs aim to produce work force for international professional field rather than the domestic field, although she does not clarify which programs fall under the 20 per cent that do primarily aim to produce work force for the domestic field. It is also possible that this aim is not clearly indicated by the institutions offering foreign language degree programs.

While there is no existing national internationalization strategy for higher education in Finland, all major organizing and regulating actors in the field agree that internationalization of higher education furthers its quality. The key components of internationalization are facilitating student mobility both ways and recruiting international workforce in the Finnish higher education. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2015.)

### **2.5.1 English language taught degree program in nursing**

In Finnish universities of applied sciences, there are 12 foreign language degree programs available for nursing students (Studyportals 2018). As well as other degree programs in nursing, the foreign language degree programs are guided by EU directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, as well as the directive 2013/55/EU amending the previous one. This EU directive regulates all degree programs in nursing within the European Union and aims to facilitate professional mobility within the member countries. (European

Commission 2018.) Other regulations guiding the foreign language degree programs are Health Care Professionals Act (559/1994) and Decree (564/1994) for the education, National competency areas and requirements for nurses, the professional competence requirements of a nurse (Ministry of Education and Culture 2006) and the national core curriculum of the degree programs leading to a post-secondary degree. (Study guide 2018.) In Finland, the registered nursing degree consists of 210 ECTS credits and thus lasts 3,5 years (Finnish Nurses Association 2018).

The degree program in nursing, taught through the medium of English, consists of basic and professional studies, which contain both theoretical studies and practical training. Under basic studies are listed contents such as language and research studies, entrepreneurship and basics of healthcare and social services. The professional studies are more nursing oriented and contain courses about clinical nursing, evidence-based nursing, family-oriented nursing, multi-professional nursing and healthcare promotion. The focus of the degree program is to develop the students' vocational skills in all manners possible. (Study guide 2018.)

The latest study guide for the Finnish language degree program in nursing (2018) of the examined education facility addresses internationalization in the following manner:

The studies enable the creation of an individual career path, for example, by focusing on the development of entrepreneurship and internationalisation readiness. International experience can be accumulated by completing part of the theory studies or practical training abroad.

According to the study guide for the Finnish language instruction degree program, internationalization is also one of the foci of the degree program. In fact, internationalization is one of the perspectives from which the students can choose to build their professional skills. The study guide also mentions multi-cultural environments as operating fields of nurses. This being said, the study guide for the English language instruction degree program in nursing does not raise the issue of internationalization at all. It is stated, however, that the students are able to operate in multi-professional and multi-cultural fields and that they are able to meet people from other nationalities. Students are also encouraged to take part in the exchange program while that is not obligatory. Nevertheless, it is surprising how little the international aspect of the degree program is articulated in the study guide, especially compared to the Finnish language degree program in nursing.

The English language taught degree program in its totality is offered through the medium of English, which means that all the content courses are taught using English as the language of

instruction. In addition, a specific English for Working Life -course of 4 ECTS credits is obligatory for all students. The course contents consist of central field-specific concepts, oral and formal written communication, applying for a job and carrying out a field-specific project or composing a portfolio. The intended competences according to the study guide (2018) are internationality skills, communication skills and working life skills. In addition to this course, language related skills are not mentioned in the learning outcomes of any other courses, even though they are taught through the medium of a foreign language to most of the students. Individual courses, such as Cultural Nursing, contain internationality skills as one of the competences they promote.

According to the degree program leader, around half of the student body in the program is formed by Finnish students and the other half by international degree program students. The number of students that come to Finland to conduct their studies entirely has increased significantly during the last few decades. According to Garam and Korkala (2013, 5) the amount more than doubled between the years 2003 and 2012. However, Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences started to charge international students, coming outside of EU/ETA countries, tuition fees in 2017 and it is still difficult to say how this affects the numbers in the long term. The overall number of Finnish students who perform a part of their studies outside of Finland, in different exchange programs, is also on the rise. However, this development is not that consistent and, actually, some years there is a decrease in the amount. Garam and Korkala (2013, 6) note that the situation is more dependent on the individual educational facilities and that there are several factors that affect the Finnish students' decision to apply for exchange programs. These factors include motivation provided by the education facility, job prospects in Finland, selection of target countries and students' personal reasons.

In the degree program in nursing under examination in the current study, there is no evaluation of language skills of the students applying to study in the program. Having gone through the Finnish basic and upper secondary education, it is assumed that the language skills of the Finnish students are good enough to be able to study in an English-mediated program in higher education. Previously, according to the director of the degree program, the foreign students' language skills have been tested as part of the entrance exams, but this practice has been abandoned. After finishing upper secondary education in Finland, the students are expected to have reached B2.1 level skills in English, if this is the main foreign language they have been learning. The skills expected on that level, described in a very general manner in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 110), are the following:

(The student) has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.

Additionally, in the CEFR all separate skills are given a more thorough description of skill levels between A1 and C2, with C2 being the highest skill level. Similarly to the expected level of English the students have, according to the director of the degree program, the teachers are expected to reach the same B2.1 level of language skills. However, the reality is that the teachers' skills vary between B1 and C1 levels. The CEFR (ibid.) description of B1.1 level on general linguistic range is the following:

(The student) has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.

As can be seen in the two descriptions, the latter indicates significantly lower language skills. Obviously, variation in skill levels exists in the student body as well, as their English skills have not been tested univocally.

### **2.5.2 Linguistic requirements for Finnish nurses**

Earlier the linguistic requirements for foreign language nurses were examined from the point of view of the actual needs of the professional field in countries where the working language is English. Here the linguistic requirements are examined from the point of view of the regulations, guidelines and expectations set for the nurses who get their education in Finland. I deem both equally important and will refer to these requirements when discussing the results of this study. More importantly, the regulations and guidelines shown in this subsection govern and guide Finnish nursing education and, thus, should be followed by the educational facilities. Language, internationalization and multiculturalism related issues are, in fact, raised in various regulating bodies. In decree 1129/2014 on the universities of applied sciences, it is stated that degree programs have to offer the students such communication and language skills that they are able to perform in their field as well as in international activity and cooperation. Similarly, in the Degree Regulations (2018, 2 §) of the university of applied sciences in question, sufficient skills to perform in activities in the international field, is listed under the objectives of study, as well as sufficient communication and language skills. It is, of course, difficult to define what is sufficient and how much cultural and linguistic proficiency is needed to perform in the

international field in any given line of trade. Thus, examining regulations and guidelines more specific for nurses and nursing students is necessary. Finnish Nurses Association (Eriksson, Korhonen, Merasto & Moisio 2015), together with the network of Finnish universities of applied sciences, have determined qualifications for Finnish nurses. Eriksson et al. (2015, 15) described first the general competences that apply to all graduates of universities of applied sciences, of which the relevant ones for the current study are *communication and social competence* as well as *international competence*. The description of international competence is fairly general and contains, for example, the ability to understand cultural differences and the ability to function in the work field with one foreign language. In addition, the ability to find and utilize relevant, professional literature in a foreign language is mentioned. However, the description of communication and social competence is more specific and perhaps more relevant in relation to this study. To summarize, a graduate needs to be able to listen and produce speech in written, oral and visual forms, they need to know how to act in typical social and communication situations and be able to use information technology in their work. Additionally, a graduate has to understand the principles of group work and be able to work as a part of a multiprofessional group. When thinking of nurses, typically, these qualifications are meant for nurses operating in Finnish language, in a Finnish healthcare domain. Nevertheless, when a person conducts their entire nursing education in a foreign language, these qualifications need to transform to apply to that language as well. These general competences, together with professional skill requirements set by the Ministry of Culture and Education (2006), were the basis for building the career specific competences for nurses, in which communication and social skills are embedded in all sections of qualifications where they are needed (Eriksson et al. 2015, 34.) Intriguingly, Finnish Nurses Association (2018) mentions interest in internationality and multiculturalism as one of the requirements for aspiring nurses, as early as when introducing the profession for those who are potentially interested.

### **2.5.3 Previous studies on the English language taught degree programs**

Niemelä (2009) gathered a large volume of answers (n=687) from both Finnish (38%) and international (62%) students studying in English language taught degree programs in Finnish universities of applied sciences. The answers were gathered through an internet survey from students who had started their studies between years 2005 and 2008. The study was very general

as the aim was to find out the views of the students on the degree program, from various different angles, such as quality, internationality and usefulness of the program and instruction, content and atmosphere in the program. In her study, Niemelä included all degree programs that are taught through the medium of English, with around 12 % studying health and social sciences, and, thus, the answers are not perfectly applicable in examining only degree programs in nursing. However, some of the questions she included are very similar to those of the current study and, therefore, deserve a closer look. While both Finnish and international students were included in the study, it is relevant to focus on the Finnish students' answers here as only Finnish students are included in the current study. Niemelä's study is significantly wider than the current one and, therefore, only the relevant points of her study will be reported here and discussed further in chapter 5.

Niemelä first examined the reasons behind choosing to study in an English language taught degree program (ELTDP) and the main reason seemed to be that the students felt the ELTDP would have a positive effect on their chances to work abroad. Other popular reasons the students gave were planning to work abroad in the future, wanting to develop their English skills, thinking that ELTDP would better their chances to work in Finland and wanting to study in an international environment. The rest of the given options had more variety in the answers. For example, some felt it was easier for them to study in English, some had lived abroad previously, some reported the location to be a factor and some felt it was easier to enter than a corresponding program taught in Finnish, however, the percentages in these answers were from low to very low. (Niemelä 2009, 7-15.)

The perceived quality of education was examined as well and the students felt that the quality was good or mediocre. The English skills of Finnish teachers were rated as somewhat sufficient with the skills of foreign teachers being better to some extent. When asked about the possible solutions to support the students' learning, teachers' better English skills were requested while their own English skills were experienced sufficient. That being said, other, non-language related, issues were raised as well. Another examined topic was exchange studies and whether the students had gone or planned on going abroad for part of their studies. A little less than half said they had not, but were planning to do so, while 32 % said they had not and were not planning to. Some 20 % of the participants had conducted a part of their studies abroad. The benefits of exchange programs were recognized and most students felt that their university of applied sciences encouraged them enough to conduct exchange studies. (Niemelä 2009, 17-18, 39-41, 46.)

The students were then asked about their perceived gain from the degree program. Most students felt that they had gained the necessary English skills to perform in their field. Similarly, they felt that the program had prepared them to work in a multicultural environment and to better understand the differences between cultures. While not as pronounced, the answers also showed that the students are able to utilize professional literature in a foreign language, as well as find information about internationalization in their field. The majority agreed that their degree gives them good or somewhat good prospects of working abroad, with almost half of the participants reporting to having already benefitted from the degree in applying for jobs. When asked about their plans after graduation, 28 % reported wanting to work in Finland, with 11 % wanting to work abroad, 15 % wanting to work in both and 15 % saying it did not matter whether they worked in Finland or abroad. The rest either had plans to study further or could not yet specify their future plans. A clear majority, however, reported wanting to work in a multicultural environment where they had the chance to use English. (Niemelä 2009, 79-85.)

Another relevant study is that of Pitkäljärvi (2012), conducted among both teachers (n=18) and students (n=27) in ELTDPs in nursing specifically. Pitkäljärvi used focus group interviews of both groups to form questionnaires, which then was sent to 283 students in the health care field. The aim of the study was to compare the experiences of Finnish ELTDP students and international ELTDP students. However, the focus of the study was not in the English language but rather in teaching strategies and clinical placements. Relevant to the current study, on the other hand, is that Pitkäljärvi included the motivations of the Finnish students for choosing an ELTDP and she found out that the main motivations of the Finnish students examined for choosing an English language study program of nursing were *expanding employment opportunities abroad* (55%) and the *willingness to improve or keep up English skills* (40%). These motivations, the first labeled under personal motivations and the second under language related motivations, were by far the most common guiding factors for the students. Contrastingly, *interest towards cultural diversity offered by the degree program* was reported as a motivational factor only for 13% of the students. Other reported motivations were *extra challenge brought about by the language*, *interest in care provision* and *convenient location*, which all received less than 15% of answers in total. (Pitkäljärvi 2012, 47.)

As part of Pitkäljärvi's (2012) study, 18 teachers from 6 universities of applied sciences were interviewed using focus group interviews. Not only teachers of nursing program, but others within the health care sector. Objectives were to find out ELTDP teachers' views on teaching methods and clinical practice. (Pitkäljärvi, Eriksson & Kekki 2011, 554.) Pitkäljärvi et al. (2011,

555) report that the use of a foreign language as the medium of education was one of the factors that the teachers had to take into consideration upon choosing the appropriate teaching methods. Teaching methods that the teachers felt promoted learning included experimental methods as well as offering information through multiple senses and this was considered challenging. Another challenge, according to the teachers interviewed, was the difficulty of finding practical learning placements for students who do not speak either of the two national languages, Finnish or Swedish. Whereas practical training places for healthcare students are crowded, places for English-speaking students are practically nonexistent. (Pitkäjärvi et al. 2011, 556.) The teacher's experiences were mainly focused on the international students and, interestingly, while the students' language skills were raised as an important factor, no mention of the language skills of the teachers themselves was included in the study. Teaching methods and practical training will be discussed more thoroughly in relation to the current study in chapter 5.

In 2007, Koivisto and Juusola (2008, 14-15) conducted a survey for international students studying in English language taught degree programs in Finnish universities of applied sciences, about their views on studying in these programs as well as living as a student in Finland. The internet-based questionnaire was sent to all students with mother tongue other than Finnish or Swedish studying in these programs at the time. Altogether 1,157 responses were gathered. Most of the participants of the study came from non-English-speaking countries, although native English speakers were involved as well. While Koivisto and Juusola's study was not specific to ELTDPs in nursing and it was conducted among international students instead of Finnish students, it offers some relevant insight to be discussed further in chapter 5.

The aim of the study (Koivisto & Juusola 2008, 15), that has relevance to the current one, was to find out what the students thought of the received education and its quality. The views of the respondents over this matter were widely divided, where around 20 % of the respondents found their received education to be of good quality and interesting. Contrastingly, around 10 % were disappointed in the quality of the education. The main problem with the quality, according to the respondents, was the insufficient English skills of the teachers, even though the teachers in general were viewed as competent and motivated. Native English speakers as teachers were suggested as the solution to the problem. (Koivisto & Juusola 2008, 43, 54.)

### **3 PRESENT STUDY**

In this section I will introduce the specifics of the present study within the framework of the existing theory of methodology in qualitative, linguistic study. First, I will discuss the aims of this study, together with the research gap and the study questions I have set for this study. Second, I will proceed to introduce the data and how it was collected. Finally, I will describe the methods of analysis used in the current study.

#### **3.1 Purpose of the study**

The reason behind choosing this topic lies within my personal interest towards nursing education, as I am a nurse. Not only have I understanding of the health care domain that is needed to be able to conduct this type of research, but I also have had connections with various nurses who have studied in an English language taught degree program. In addition, I wanted to combine the two professional fields in a meaningful way. According to Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (2004, 71) personal interest is one of the important criteria when choosing the topic of research. The hypothesis behind the current study is that the Finnish students, who choose to study in ELTDP in nursing, have dreams and plans to practice their profession outside of Finland. The Finnish degree program in nursing is applicable in other European countries though the standardization of the European degree programs, and, in addition, Finnish nurses are either actively recruited to work outside of Europe or they choose to do so for personal reasons. The aim of the current study is to find out how the Finnish students in the ELTDP perceive the support they receive in terms of their language proficiency in English and how it is related to their aims and motivations for attending the program.

Even though some 50 percent of the students studying in the study program included in this thesis are Finnish, the topic of the current study has not been examined from their point of view or from the point of view of English. The percentages of Finnish students attending ELTDPs in nursing vary according to where they are situated, but according to the director of the study program, in this educational facility it is around 50 percent. Furthermore, the topic has not been researched in the Finnish context at all from the point of view of English. Contrastingly, the English language taught nursing programs have mainly been studied from the view point of the

Finnish language and the Finnish society and how these programs support the integration of foreign students. Thus, it is interesting and relevant to study the other half of the students in these programs, the Finnish students. There are some existing indications of the aims and motivations behind the choice to study in the ELTDPs, such as that of Pitkäjärvi (2012), but no research to show how these programs respond to and support achieving those goals. While the material gathered by Niemelä (2009) answered the latter question as well, only around 12 % of the participants were students in the health care sector. Furthermore, there are no previous research on the role of English in these programs even though it is used as the medium of instruction. Through the findings of this study it is possible to see if the expectations of the students and what the program offers align. Thus, it offers information for the program organizing party and can be used as a basis for developing the study program in a way that it offers as much support for the Finnish students as possible, helping them reach their aims. The benefits offered by the research is another important criterion when choosing the topic (Hirsjärvi et al. 2004, 72) and the results of the current study, as stated, can be very useful and beneficial if they are chosen to take into consideration.

In order to reach the aims of this study, appropriate research questions had to be formed. Firstly, it was important to find out what the students' aims, besides becoming a nurse, were when they entered the English language taught degree program, to be able to find out also, how the degree program answered to these aims. Secondly, and maybe most importantly, I wanted to find out what were the actual aspects that the students found positive and negative in terms of bettering their English language skills. Thirdly, I felt it was important to find out, how the students felt the situation could be helped, in order to make this study as useful as possible. Based on these ideas, the following research questions were formed.

1. What are the aims and motivations of the Finnish students for studying in the English language taught degree program?
2. What aspects of the study program support and what aspects hinder the development of their communicative competence in English?
3. What type of support do the students feel would be beneficial for them to reach their goals?
4. How do the students' aims, what the students report to gain linguistically and the requirements for foreign-language nurses correlate?

## 3.2 Data

The current study represents *qualitative research*, where the starting point is an assumption and theoretical background according to which research problems are created and used to construct meaning of people's views of a certain problem or phenomenon. Data collection in qualitative research happens in natural setting and data analysis is inductive and leads to forming themes or patterns. In qualitative research, it is salient that the researcher reports the voices or participants in a reflexive manner, including complex description and interpretation of the researched problem. (Creswell 2007, 37.) In addition, the current study entails *quantitative* elements, as the data will be gathered using a questionnaire consisting of both closed-response items and open-ended questions. However, the numeric data retrieved from the answers will be presented as raw numbers and percentages and will be used to give support to the qualitative data. Another thing to consider is that while quantitative research aims to provide results that can be generalized (Kalaja, Alanen & Dufva 2011, 19), that was not the aim of the current study, as it is conducted within the context of only one education provider. Contrastingly, I wanted to focus on understanding the phenomenon beyond the statistics and give the participants a chance to voice their views. Thus, in order to deepen the understanding of the views of the participants, four of them were interviewed. The data collection and analysis of these different elements will be presented separately, however, the interpretation and discussion of the results will be combined to for a broader understanding of the phenomenon. (Ivankova & Creswell 2009, 142-143.)

As mentioned above, the first data gathering method used in the current study is a *questionnaire* consisting of both closed-response items and open-ended questions. Closed-response items only require the participant to choose an answer from a limited set. Categories for the answers have been decided beforehand by the researcher. (Brown 2009, 201.) Possible closed-response items are selection, multi-selection, Likert scale, positions, hierarchical, semantic differential scale and ranking. In the current study, the main closed-response item type was selection, either between yes and no or between multiple choices. In addition, semantic differential scale and slider scale were used in one question each. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, require the participant to form an answer by using their own words, in writing. Open-ended questions still provide very structured information, compared to interviews for example, but they allow the participants to bring up their thoughts and views about the issue more freely, without much effect of the researcher's bias. In addition, by using open-ended questions, it is possible to

broaden and deepen the understanding of the researched phenomenon. Open-ended questions may be fill-in items, sentence completion, short-answer items or broad open questions. (Brown 2009, 201-203.) Using open-ended questions is particularly useful in the current study, as its aim is to find out the views and perceptions of the participants on a previously unknown subject (Hirsjärvi et al. 2004, 148). Thus, mainly broad open questions were used in the questionnaire.

The benefit of using a questionnaire is the relative simplicity of gathering large data. It is possible to send it electronically to a large body of possible respondents. In addition, it is time saving, both in the data gathering phase as in the analysis phase, where at least the closed-response items are analyzed rapidly. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2004, 184.) The benefit of using open-ended questions in the questionnaire is that texts can be substitutes for speech and contain speech-like features, however, they are more durable and thus more available for rereading and repeated analysis (Krippendorff 2004, 75). However, some problems may occur. It is possible that a number of potential respondents decide not to participate and thus the sample group stays too small and does not really represent the whole cohort. In addition, the items of the questionnaire may be misinterpreted as there is no chance of clarification and thus, the questions must be carefully constructed and tested through piloting of the questionnaire. Additionally, it is impossible to ensure the participants' honesty, but the possibility of this does not solely appear in using questionnaires but is always present in examining people's views and perceptions. (Hirsjärvi et. al. 2004, 184.)

A questionnaire must be constructed so that each of its items measure some attribute, view or attitude of the respondent. In addition, all items must have relevance in relation to the set research questions and the researcher must be able to defend the selection of these items. It is important to form the questions so that their meaning to all participants is explicit and this can be achieved by using clear and simple expressions. (Alanen 2011, 147, 149, 151.) It is also important to address only one issue per question, not to use negative form and to avoid leading questions (Brown 2009, 206-209). These principals were followed when constructing the questionnaire in an online base Webropol (Appendix 1). Even though the participants study in an English language taught degree program, Finnish was selected as the language in use so that the use of a non-native language would not affect neither the answering rate nor the extent of the answers. The questionnaire was piloted in April 2018 among both students of English and former students of nursing in the English language taught degree program, with altogether 8 participants. The questionnaire was then modified to a more understandable and visually

pleasant form and to better accommodate the themes I wanted to research in this study. None of the respondents in the piloting phase were involved in the actual focus group.

After the piloting phase, the link to the online questionnaire was sent to internet platforms, through the director of the study program. Questionnaire surveys are used to find out the views of a sample group that represents a whole (Dörnyei 2007, 101). First decision about the sample group was to include only the students of one English-mediated degree program instead of all 12 programs offered in Finland. This means that the results of the current study are not generalizable in Finland. The second decision was to make the questionnaire available to all Finnish students studying in the before mentioned degree program. Webropol statistics show that the questionnaire was opened 125 times, even though the number of Finnish students studying in the researched degree program at the time was around 80. Obviously, some of the students may have opened the questionnaire more than one time and due to the link being available to other students as well, it may have been opened by some, who later discovered that the questionnaire was not meant for them. Disappointingly, only 15 answers were completed and sent. This gives an answer rate of around 19 percent, which confirms the study to be more qualitative, case-study like in nature. Due to the low answer rate, I decided to broaden as well as deepen the answers by interviewing some of the respondents. This is where the third decision was made concerning the sample group. The students to be interviewed were randomly selected from those students that, answering the questionnaire, had left their contact information. Altogether four such students were interviewed, using semi-structured interview, constructed on basis of the answers given in the questionnaire (Appendix 2).

Semi-structured interview, which is a compromise between a structured interview and an unstructured interview, is the most commonly used interview type in applied linguistics. In semi-structured interview, there are guiding questions, prepared beforehand, but it leaves space for follow-up questions and elaborations. When using a semi-structured interview, the interviewer must have somewhat clear view of the phenomenon to be able to construct the questions in a way that does not limit the depth of the response. (Dörnyei 2007, 136.) Semi-structured interview was perfect for the current situation, because I already had a clear idea of the phenomenon based on the questionnaire answers. Guiding questions were easy to construct, as there were either clear themes arising in the previous answers, that I wanted to focus more on, or confusions between answers, that I wanted to clarify. Moreover, while conducting the interviews, I noticed that a tightly structured interview would not have worked, as each of the respondents had something new to say which lead to me using follow-up questions. The

interviews were conducted following Dörnyei's (2007) instructions, in a quiet and peaceful public space, with each lasting around 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded under consent and, thus, there was no room left for error in marking the answers.

### **3.3 Method of analysis**

Content analysis is a research technique as well as a tool for analyzing data. As a research technique, it provides new insights and broadens the understanding of certain phenomena. In addition, it offers a way of making replicable and valid inferences of the researched data. The data, which can be analyzed using content analysis, is not only written text, but also art, images, maps, sounds, signs, symbols and spoken texts. As an analysis tool, content analysis can be seen as objective and systematic description of the data. For the study to be reliable, it must be replicable and that can be reached by abiding by rules of analysis that are "explicitly stated and applied equally to all units of analysis". Validity of the study is reached by following external criteria in performing the processes of sampling, reading and analyzing the messages that form the data. (Krippendorff 2013, 24-25.)

Content analysis should focus on facts that are constituted in language. Krippendorff (2013, 78-79) categorizes these facts in four classes: attributions, social relationships, public behaviors and institutional realities. The classes relevant in the current study are attributions and public behaviors. Verbal, analyzable attributions are for example people's concepts, attitudes, beliefs, intentions, emotions, mental states and cognitive processes. From these attributes, the current study is interested in the attitudes, beliefs, intentions and emotions of the study subjects and thus content analysis serves well the intentions of the research. Krippendorff's class of public behaviors contain the confirmations of individual's values, dispositions, conceptions of the world and commitments to their way of being. Thus, this class has value in finding out the individual's perceptions in relationship to the context and the surrounding world. Content analysis is used to derive these features from the texts gathered using the questionnaire and the interviews.

At its most simple, the process of using content analysis is to analyze the texts through this method, which through inferences offer the answers to the research questions set beforehand. The process, however, entails phases which will be described here. Firstly, there is data making, which consists of four components: unitizing, sampling, coding and reducing. Through

*unitizing*, it is possible to make distinctions between the gathered data, omitting irrelevant material and keeping together the data that cannot be divided without loss or change of meaning. In the current study, not much unitizing was made as answers were gathered specifically for the purpose of this study. Only some utterances and extra information were omitted due to their irrelevance in relation to research questions and aims. *Sampling* makes it possible to limit the data to a manageable subset of units if the original size of the study is large. However, in the current study sampling was, in a way, made in the process of the survey and conducting the interviews. Moreover, all unitized data is relevant to the study, as they reveal the attitudes and views of the participants. *Coding*, on the other hand, has to do with transforming spoken texts into analyzable components and thus will be used to transform the spoken interviews into written text, whereas the answers of the questionnaire are already in a written form and therefore available for analysis. In the process of transcribing, all spoken elements were included in the written form. Contrastingly, all gestures, sounds and nuances of speech were omitted, due to their irrelevance, as there was no analysis of discourse, just the content of the answers. Coding also entails all finding and marking of meanings and expressions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 123-124). *Reducing data* is typical when gathering large volumes of data and thus irrelevant in the current study. (Krippendorff 2013, 84-85.) As seen above, data making can be quite an extensive process, but sometimes, as is the case of the current study, it can be somewhat straightforward.

Secondly, the process moves to inferring contextual phenomena through descriptive accounts of texts and finding out the meanings and causes behind them, as well as what they refer to, entail and provoke (Krippendorff 2013, 85-86). In data-driven content analysis the analyzable items are unknown previously and, thus, earlier presumptions and perceptions about the phenomenon should not have any effect in executing the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 108). Consequently, data-driven content analysis is well suited for the current study, as it is a previously little researched phenomenon. In this phase, the answers and transcribed texts are themed, which means that all relevant data is divided and arranged under appropriate themes. In addition, it is important to note what is said about each theme, instead of just arranging each item in a category, which again would be categorization. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 105-107.) In the current study, the questions of the questionnaire, directed by the set research questions, form certain themes that were partially modified by the later interviews. All data were marked and divided under these themes. Most of the data was then put into charts in the following manner, to facilitate the analysis. The marked answers and citations were written as given, in

Finnish, under 'original expressions'. These citations were then transformed into 'reduced expressions' in English. Subsequently, similar expressions were put under 'subcategories', which in turn formed 'combined categories'. These themed findings will be addressed in the following chapter. In addition, representative examples are given. The rest of the data, such as background information and unrelated comments, were divided under appropriate themes and used as examples when relevant.

Finally, the process leads to narrating the answers of the analysis in relation to the research questions set for the study. Narrating may simply mean the explanations of the findings and the contributions they make to the previous knowledge of the phenomenon. In addition, it might entail arguing for using the content analysis method over other available methods and making recommendations for actions based on the results. How the narration is conducted depends on the context of the research. (Krippendorff 2013, 86.) In the current study, the most important thing is to narrate the explanations of the findings and the contributions they make in relationship with the research questions set for the study.

## **4 STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TAUGHT DEGREE PROGRAM IN NURSING**

Although the data collection was done in two phases, the analysis was conducted considering all data simultaneously. Therefore, the results will be presented together, under themes, combining answers from both, the questionnaire and the interviews. Illustrative examples are given under each theme and they are marked according to the person they belong to, with *I* meaning an interviewee and *Q* meaning a questionnaire answer. The numbers refer to the specific people behind the answers. To begin, some basic information about the participants was collected, making sure the information collected had some relevance to the set research questions (Alanen 2011, 149). Out of the participants 73 % (n=11) were women, whereas in the interview the ratio was 50 % to 50 % between sexes. Most of the participants of the study (53 %, n=8) were in their third year of studies, with 20 % (n=3) of first year students, 20 % (n=3) of second year students and 7 % (n=1) of fourth year students. This question was deemed important, because students with different amount of completed studies can give answers with more variety. The level of English skills of the participants prior to higher education was generally high: 67 % (n=10) of the participants reported their English level to have been very good or excellent, 20 % (n=3) reported good level and 13 % (n=2) reported satisfactory level English skills. None of the participants reported their level to have been poor. Generally, the level of prior English skills was even higher among the interviewees, with 75 % (n=3) reporting very good or excellent level and 25 % (n=1) good level of English. Further background information was deemed irrelevant in relation to the research topic.

### **4.1 Reasons behind studying in the English-mediated degree program**

The participants were asked about their reasons behind choosing to study in the English language taught degree program in nursing. The original idea behind this question was that the students chose this program instead of the Finnish language taught degree program in nursing, because they wanted to work abroad after graduation. However, the students reported reasons not only related to that, but also various reasons outside the preset view I had. Altogether five combined categories were formed, when analyzing the answers. The reasons behind choosing to study in this degree program were related to language, work, international study culture and

the degree program itself. Additionally, there were reasons that were categorized under unrelated reasons. Many of the participants offered various reasons behind their decision and, thus, these answers were only analyzed qualitatively without providing supporting numeric information.

Under the category of **language related reasons**, four subcategories were formed. Three students reported to be *native like speakers of English* and for that reason they preferred to study in English. In their answers, these participants brought up experiences of living or studying abroad previously, as well as speaking English at home with one of their parents.

(1) Asuin Englannissa kun olin lapsi ja kielestä tuli käytännössä toinen äidinkieli. (Q8)

I lived in England as a child and English became practically my second native language. (Q8)

With this in mind, it is understandable that they have felt comfortable to continue using English in their further studies. As mentioned before, the student body of the degree program is formed by Finnish students and foreign students and, as can be seen here, the classification of students into these two groups is not that straightforward. In effect, the decision was left for the students to make, as the questionnaire was open for everybody and only its title and description directed the Finnish students to answers. Accordingly, in the participants there are native like English speakers who identify themselves as Finnish. Different from native like English speakers, there were four students that reported *motives of wanting to develop or maintain English skills*, which was an important factor for many of the participants of both Niemelä's (2009) and Pitkäjärvi's (2012) study, as mentioned in chapter 2. Others brought up *positive views of English as a language or of English as the language of study*. One subcategory was formed by a simple statement of *preferring English over Finnish*. Even though these reasons stem from different backgrounds, they are all related to the language, more specifically to English as the medium of study and the findings were to be expected when examining an ELTDP.

Due to my hypothesis and the results Niemelä (2009) and Pitkäjärvi (2012) received, I suspected the next category to be prominent. In said category of **work-related reasons**, three subcategories were formed. Some students had *hopes for international career* or as one interviewee said:

(2) Sitten on helpompi mennä ulkomaille töihin tai että pitää sekin vaihtoehto auki kun opiskelee vieraalla kielellä. (I1)

It is then easier to go work abroad or at least keep that option open when you study in a foreign language. (I1)

Although others did not state directly their aims of wanting to work abroad, they still wanted to *gain skills suited for working abroad*. One person just stated they wanted to *broaden career opportunities* and that can be understood to mean job opportunities abroad as well as in Finland. Moreover, 73 % of the respondents reported, in a separate question, that they aim to work abroad after graduation. Many countries were listed under possible future places to work in. English-speaking countries were brought up in various occasions, which was to be expected as it is a natural procession after studying in English. Nordic countries were also often mentioned, probably due to their convenient location and possibly due to financial reasons. Other European countries were mentioned either individually or Europe as a whole, as was the case with Asia and Africa as well, though less frequently. Saudi-Arabia and Dubai were mentioned separately, which can be understood as nurses are often recruited to these places from Finland with great benefits (see any trade union magazine). Other places mentioned were Finnish communes abroad and crisis areas, as well as the Red Cross, as a specific organization rather than a place. Work-related reasons was the main category I had in mind when creating the hypothesis of this study. According to my personal knowledge of the subject matter previously, the main reason for Finnish students to study in the English-mediated degree program in nursing was having hopes for an international career. Therefore, these results were expected and fit well my original hypothesis.

Less expected, but equally relevant reasons were those that were **related to the degree program itself**. Two people reported that the *English language taught degree program was easier to enter than the Finnish one*. One did not specify the reason, but said that they could not enter the Finnish language taught degree program but this one they could. The other, on the contrary, offered an explanation.

- (3) Täällä on tosi vaikea päästä suomenkieliseen koulutukseen, jos ei oo papereita (suomalaisesta) peruskoulusta...englanninkielisessä koulutuksessa ne ei kato mitään muuta kuin mitä siinä kokeessa on, että ne ei kato jos on aikaisempaa kokemusta omassa maassa tai käynyt jotain hoitajakoulutusta vaan kaikki alkaa nollasta, eli se on semmonen tasanen reilu tsänssi päästä opiskelee. (I3)

In here, it's really difficult to enter the Finnish-mediated program if you haven't graduated from the (Finnish) basic education...In the English-mediated program they don't consider anything else than what is in the exam, they don't consider previous experience in your own country or if you have some previous studies but it all starts from zero, a fair, equal chance of getting in. (I3)

For this person, obviously their background had great influence in the situation upon applying for the program but it can also be seen, that the English-mediated degree program has very different process of applying. According to this interviewee, the entrance exam of the ELTDP has greater value than the one of the Finnish language taught degree program and, thus, offers

different and fairer, in their opinion, chance of getting in. There is an obvious explanation to this difference between the degree programs, as the English one is offered to foreign students as well and it must be difficult, if not impossible, to compare and score the background studies and experience of foreign students of various different countries. That being said, this also plays into the advantage of those Finnish students who want a clean sleigh when applying for higher education studies and, thus, is very understandable. More surprisingly, there were two instances, where this *degree program was randomly selected*. Additionally, one person reported wanting to get *further education to complement their previous education* as a practical nurse.

In addition to the previously discussed reasons, **international study culture** was mentioned as the reason three times. The city, in which the education is offered, was mentioned to be an international environment as well as the program itself. Furthermore, under **unrelated reasons** were categorized the following: *wanting new experiences, wanting more challenge* and *the locality of the educational facility*. International study culture was also one of the often-reported reasons behind studying in the ELTDPs in Niemelä's (2009) study. Therefore, we can see strong correlation in the results of this theme, even though the number of participants in the current study is significantly lower and more specialized, due to the study including only nursing students from an individual ELTDP.

## **4.2 Reported use of English within the program and its relationship with language tests and requirements for foreign nurses**

In this section I will present the students answers related to the language tests and the required skills of foreign nurses introduced earlier. The participants answered using a slider scale on how much of their studies are conducted in English. All students answered 50 % or more, with more than 93 % answering above 75 %. A large number of participants, 40 %, felt that around 85 % of their studies are conducted in English. The participants were then asked separately where they got to use written and spoken English, but it seems redundant to list here all answers they gave. It makes more sense to say that basically they use English in all aspects of their studies except for practical training and the documentation related to those. In fact, 87 % of the students felt that they get to use English enough during their studies. That being said, seven participants reported wanting to use more English when conducting practical training. One participant stated the following:

- (4) Opintoihin kuuluvat harkat tehdään suomeksi, mikä välillä turhauttaa, koska asiat on koulussa opiskeltu englanniksi eikä sitä kuitenkaan pääse työssä pääsääntöisesti käyttämään. (Q6)

The practical training, that the education entails, is done in Finnish, which at times is frustrating, because we learn these things in English at school but then we don't get to use it in work. (Q6)

A few students also raised the fact that there is a contradiction between the degree program being in English otherwise and all practical training being in Finnish. In addition, they felt that it would be more useful to be able to practice working in English, especially for those who aspire to work abroad after graduation. However, there was understanding found that it might be impossible to organize practical training in English in the Finnish setting due to resources and the fact that most patients and instructors speak Finnish after all. Moreover, not all participants called for the opportunity to perform their practical training in English. Contrastingly, many said that it was, first of all, easier for them to practice working in Finnish, and, secondly, they felt it was important to learn the Finnish professional vocabulary as well, as most of them will likely work at least in Finland in the future.

As seen in the previous section, the majority of the participants reported wanting to work abroad after graduation. A further question was set about their knowledge of the required English skills in the jobs of their interest. A scanty majority of 55 % reported being familiar with the linguistic requisites. In addition, the participants were asked to report how familiar they are with different language tests and what they entail. The results can be seen in the following table (Table 1). The students were requested to give their answer on a numeric scale, where all numbers held an attribute. The attributes given were: 1 = cannot say, 2 = not familiar, 3 = have heard, 4 = somewhat familiar and 5 = well familiar. Altogether, 13 answers were given to this question and in the last section, *other, which?*, three answers were given, with two answers of *cannot say*, which can be construed to mean that they have heard of another language test but cannot remember the name of it. One answer, numeric value 4, was given and the test was named ICTS, an acronym that does not transform into any widely known language test. Thus, the last section does not offer any valuable information. The table does, however, show that generally the tests were not well-known but not completely unknown either, although, one interviewee stated the following:

- (5) Ehkä itessään tommostesta ei oo paljon puhuttu, että sitä saatettais vielä testata ja testataankin sitä...mulla ei oo mitään hajua mitä ne (testit) käsittää edes. (I4)

Maybe there hasn't been a lot of discussion that they might and, in fact, do test it later...I have no idea what they (the tests) entail even. (I4)

This might explain, why two people had ignored this question completely and the amount of numeric value 1 (cannot say) given, which was in total ten times. Out of the options given,

TOEFL was slightly more familiar, with median of 2,8, than IELTS, with median of 2,7, to the participants. Not clearly, but still more unknown was OET. Upon more scrutiny of the results, OET did receive overall more votes on the lower part of the scale and zero on the numeric value 5. Whereas TOEFL and IELTS both received around 8 % respectively.

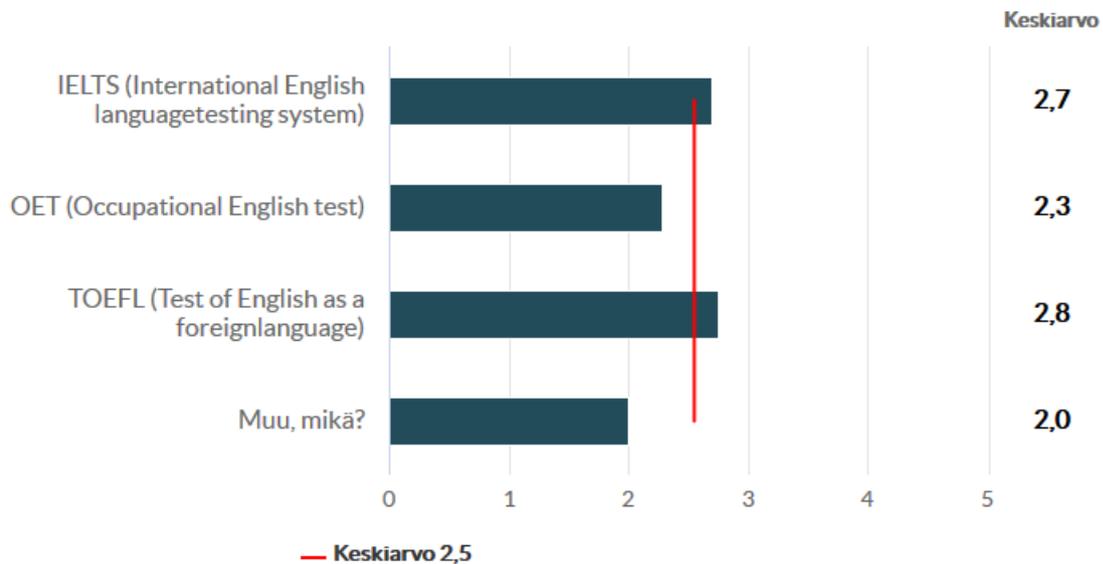


Table 1. Students' reported familiarity of common language tests (Keskiarvo = average)

These language tests were introduced in chapter 2 and, although there are some differences in the content of the tests (see IELTS 2018, Occupational English Test 2018, Educational Testing Service 2018), they obviously test different linguistic features. The participants were asked about the presence of these linguistic features in their education in the questionnaire phase. The interviewees were then asked more thoroughly, with actual examples from these tests, how they felt the program prepares them for the test items. Firstly, I will introduce the results of the questionnaire phase and, secondly, I will continue with the interview answers.

In the questionnaire, these questions were not obligatory and the amount of answers varied between 11 to 15 out of 15 participants. The percentages will be presented in relation to the amount of people who answered each question. The answers to a question about the presence of vocabulary were easily divided to two options, around 55 % of the participants said there is some vocabulary present and around 45 % that there is a lot of special vocabulary. When studying in a foreign language, it is inevitable that there is professional vocabulary present, the difference is, whether attention to learning it is paid. Another reason, why not all participants feel that there is a lot of it present might be the fact that they learn the special vocabulary in

Finnish during their practical training periods and, thus, feel there is a lack of special vocabulary in some way. When asked about the presence of grammar, the answers were very clear, however, with 83 % of the participants saying it was present very little or not at all. Some courses were mentioned in which grammar comes up and these were either language courses or thesis writing courses. Similarly, according to 83 % of the participants, no attention is paid to pronunciation outside of the individual English course. Related to that, variations of English are not in an important role, with 69 % saying different variations are not present at all or very little and 23 % saying there is some mentions about these. Examples given about variations were that the students should stick to one variation in their writing and sometimes vocabulary examples were given in different variations. On the other hand, the results were very different when asked about the presence of academic reading and writing, which is an important part of language testing. As O'Neill, et al. (2007, 300) stated, nursing is considered to belong to the academic domain and thus, these skills are included when testing their language skills. Some 67 % of the participants reported academic reading to be an important part of their studies, with 17 % feeling it was not that well emphasized in the education, but still present somewhat. Similarly, 64 % said there is plenty of academic writing done during their studies. Surprisingly, some 14 % felt there is little or none of academic writing present. Again, individual courses were mentioned, them being either English courses or related to the thesis process. A few people elaborated their answers by saying that all written assignments should be done according to the academic writing instructions of the education facility.

In the interview phase, the questions were divided and formed according to the four domains that the language tests contain: writing, reading, listening and speaking. More specifically, reading and writing academically, as mentioned before (O'Neill et al. 2007, 300). When asked how the program facilitates learning academic writing, the thesis process was brought up. Nevertheless, the interviewees' opinions were somewhat in contrast to the ones given in the questionnaire, as one of them said that although it is somewhat present, there are not the type of writing assignments present that are required in the tests, such as argumentative essays or summaries (O'Neill et al. 2007, 301-302.) One even elaborated that this type of skills should be learnt previously to entering the program and that it is given that the students know how to write academic texts. However, the interviewees' views on the presence of academic reading lined with the results of the questionnaire. All of them said there is much academic reading done during the course of their studies. When asked about how the program facilitates their listening comprehension skills, all of the interviewees said that it does not do so, in any specific

way. Nevertheless, in two instances, it was brought up that they do actually hear many different accents due to the multilingual and multicultural environment the program offers, not to mention them being surrounded by the English language all the time. However, native English speakers are not well- represented in this program and, thus, the listening skills required in the language tests maybe do not get rehearsed significantly during the education. In the speaking domain, the tests consist of speaking assignments such as conversations with natives or simulated professional situations (O'Neill et al 2007, 302; Occupational English Test 2018) These, the interviewees felt, were very much present in their studies. They reported speaking extensively in English and, more importantly, practicing professional situations in English in 'skill labs', which are simulated situations, where the students get to practice nursing in an environment as real as possible. As seen in the results, many of the features that appear in the language tests used to recruit foreign language nurses are present in the ELTDP, while the specific task types and English variations might not. Remembering that language skills are not the only parts to form communicative competence, I now move on to examine sociocultural aspects.

Due to the requirements about cultural knowledge set for foreign nurses (see ICN 2013), I deemed it important to ask the students about the cultural aspects present in their studies. Beforehand, I intended to find out specifically about the presence of the cultures of the English-speaking countries, but the answers I received were much wider. My own preset ideas and the wide cultural context in which the program exists probably caused some confusion in the participants and, perhaps because of that, a slight majority of 53 % said other cultures are not present in their studies while 40 % said they were very much present, creating a conflict. Fortunately, some students elaborated their answers and, in addition, I had the opportunity to continue with the subject further with the interviewees. Learning about other cultures was deemed very important and the students also felt that the multicultural environment of the program facilitates that well. The participants did not see this only as a factor that prepares them for working outside of Finland but indeed in the globalizing world in general:

- (6) Mun mielestä se on tosi tosi hyvä juttu ja tärkeä juttu, että me kaikki opiskellaan sellaisessa ympäristössä missä on paljon kulttuuria, kun se valmistaa työelämään kun töissä tulee kaikenmaalaisia ja -kulttuurisia ihmisiä...Et mun mielestä se on tosi hyvä ja melkein suosittelisin sitä kaikkiin sairaanhoitajakoulutuksiin et jos pääsis tekee suomenkielisetkin opiskelijat muidenkin opiskelijoiden kanssa vaikka tuolta kansainväliseltä puolelta niin se olis tosi hyvä. (I3)

I think it's really really good and important that we all study in an environment with a lot of culture, as it prepares for working life with people from different countries and cultures...I think it's really good and would recommend it for all nursing education. It would be good if the Finnish-mediated nursing students could also collaborate with the students in the international program. (I3)

As mentioned before, the significance of the multilingual and -cultural environment to the developing of listening skills was brought up as a positive factor. When asked specifically about the cultures of the English-speaking world, the answers were not that straightforward though. One interviewee said that learning about any specific culture is a bit redundant and that it is more important to learn the language well. Still, due to the international nature of the degree program, some responsibility was shifted toward the education provider. Suggestions were made about providing more voluntary courses or discussion groups on, not only English-speaking cultures, but also foreign nursing cultures and environments for those who are interested. On the other hand, this personal interest was also raised as an important factor. One should be able to find the information needed when specifically interested in a certain country or culture as a possible future work environment.

### **4.3 Students' views on the material**

The participants were asked about the content material in English they have in use in their studies. The types of material that were listed are internet databases, articles, academic texts and studies, videos, books and slides or other documents made by their teachers. Most of the students reported the material to be mainly electronic and physical books, for instance, were not used so much. Even though, these were sometimes pointed out to be available in the campus library, they were seldom used or required. In fact, three out of four interviewees reported having missed the use of books during their education. All three had wanted some basic nursing or anatomy related book to be obligatory to acquire. They felt that books offer reliable information and that basic information is often more easily found in a book than in various different e-documents. In addition, they felt that books were only mentioned in passing and that their use in tasks was not emphasized. One also mentioned that even when books were brought up as good sources, they were not able to find these books in the campus library. Similarly, one of the interviewees wanted internet-based material packages that contain all the basic procedures, that would be easily available for the students to see quickly during their work practice, for example. This, he felt was necessary due to two reasons. Firstly, theory courses related to the practical training periods were often much before the actual training periods and, according to them, one needs to recap the information before that. Secondly, it takes time and effort to find the information from the course related material, whereas a file with accurately named documents would be much more useful for checking the procedures in any phase of the

studies. Having said that, generally the participants thought that they have enough material in use, with 73 % agreeing.

More importantly, the participants were asked how the material, in their opinion, supports developing their English skills. The answers were analyzed through content analysis and four combined categories were found. There was self-reported development of English skills through the material, many felt that the development of English skills depends on the quality of the material, some reported using compensatory material and one person felt that the material does not support developing English skills in any way. In the following, these combined categories will be examined in detail.

**Development of English skills through the material** in use can be broken down into four subcategories. Firstly, in two instances, *development of academic English skills was reported*. This is very understandable, as seen in the results of the previous section, the students get to practice both academic reading and writing quite extensively. Secondly, *videos* were separately mentioned twice as accommodating learning English. Thirdly, further two people reported having learnt *English vocabulary through the material* and, finally, two participants reported *uncategorized support* for developing their language skills. This subcategory was named as ‘uncategorized support’ as the participants did not broaden their answers further. All in all, the answers in this category were very straightforward and clear.

The second category, **development of English skills depends on the quality of the material**, was broader and much more complex. Effectively, this category was divided into two subcategories, with the first one being *supports well if material is good quality* and the second one being *supports somewhat depending on the quality of material*. Differentiating between these subcategories was not an easy task but the main issue in both was the relationship between the quality of the material and its usefulness. The reported problems with the quality was closely linked to the quality of English in the material, be it written or spoken. According to some answers, material was excellent and supported learning in some courses and in others, the material was replete with grammar errors, spelling mistakes and such. Unsurprisingly, the quality of the material had an effect on the students’ motivation and even to their trust in the teacher of the course. Similarly, the teachers’ ability to use electronic platforms was considered a factor in the previously mentioned issues. Additionally, the students reported that the quality of videos used in teaching varies greatly, the main problem being the quality of English used in these videos. It was not clear, however, which videos were problematic, but two types of video-

material were mentioned: videos from the streaming website Youtube and videos made by the educational facility. Other problems with material quality were webpages that were considered untrustworthy or non-scientific and the lack of sources in teacher-made material. In any case, the problems with material quality were closely linked to the teachers and, thus, the situation can be improved. This issue will be further addressed at the end of this chapter together with students' suggestions.

The two first mentioned categories entail most of the answers about the material and the two latter ones were much more concise. The third combined category, **using compensatory material**, was easily divided under two subcategories. Firstly, there was *student led use of compensatory material*, as in the student independently found material to understand the subject matter better. Secondly, *teacher led use of compensatory material* was reported. In an example given, teachers were reported to guide students towards links, videos, books and studies for further learning. The last category was, as mentioned, only one instance where a student reported **not getting any support from the material** for learning English.

In addition to the previous, the participants were asked whether the material, or indeed the program, prepares them for working in Finland or outside of Finland. I deemed this an important factor due to the premise that the Finnish students aspire to work outside of Finland after their studies. Four main categories were formed and they went from one extreme, **prepares for working in Finland**, to the other, **prepares for working outside of Finland**, with **prepares for both equally** in the middle. Many answers had various differing ideas within them and these ideas will be discussed here under the main categories. However, any numeric data will not be presented because the opinions were conflicting even within the individual answers. Again, the last category, **does not prepare for working in either**, was formed by one person's opinion. The point they made out was as follows:

- (7) No ei oikeastaan kummassakaan. Suomeksi et sitten osaa oikeaa sanastoa ja ulkomailta et pärjää kun tietoa jää puuttumaan puutteellisen opetuksen takia. (Q15)

Not really for neither. In Finnish, there's the lack of vocabulary and internationally the problem is the lack of information due to the inadequate education. (Q15)

Other combined categories were again divided under subcategories and in the one about **prepares for working in Finland**, there were four. Two participants answered this *without further reasoning*. Under another subcategory were listed answers according to which the *teaching and/or the material is based on the Finnish official recommendations and legislation*. This is, indeed, a very valid point as it is to be expected that any number of students of this degree program will stay and work in Finland. Another subcategory was formed by mentions

of *Finland as the setting for practical training* which guides the teaching to prepare for working in Finland. This corresponds with the views on practical training discussed in the previous section. Final subcategory was formed by a statement that the material *does not prepare for working internationally* and, thus, it was included under this combined category.

The other extreme, **prepares for working outside of Finland**, was also divided under four subcategories. Similarly to the aforementioned, two people reported this option *without further reasoning*. Other reasons given were *vocabulary that is learnt in English* within the education and *material which is partly made outside of Finland*. Additionally, there were *discussions and examples mentioned about working outside of Finland*.

Even though it was difficult to form any definitive, numeric data about this matter, it seems that most participants felt the program and/or material **prepares for working in both settings**. The largest subcategory was *prepares for working in both through the content of studies*. The participants felt that as they are learning to work as a nurse, the setting of work is secondary to the professional skills offered by the education. Other subcategories were more difficult to define and they, altogether three instances, were named *both without further reasoning* and *uncategorized both*. The main point to come across, however, was that after graduating from this degree program, they will be first and foremost nurses and, thus, prepared to work both in Finland and outside of it.

#### 4.4 Studying abroad

The participants were asked about aspects of studying abroad and the answers of the questionnaire prompted further questions about the matter in the interview phase. As seen above, all practical training done during the studies is conducted in Finnish, in the Finnish healthcare domain and thus, studying abroad was deemed a relevant subject. However, out of the 15 respondents, only one had studied abroad. Further four, or 36 %, had plans of studying abroad in the future, leaving the number somewhat lower from those of Niemelä (2009), who reported altogether almost 70% of the participants having done or planning on doing part of their studies abroad. The participants were also asked if the education provider encourages studying abroad and the answers were conflicted. Most participants, 46 %, felt that the education provider encourages studying abroad enough. Nevertheless, almost as many, 40 %, felt that it does not encourage studying abroad enough. The extremes, *does not encourage at*

*all* and *encourages too much* both received one answer. In other words, it is clear to see this opinion is affected by the participants' personal view.

Due to the aforementioned hypothesis that Finnish students aspire to work outside of Finland after graduation, the participants were also asked if they felt studying abroad should be obligatory. Out of the participants, 20 % said it should be obligatory for Finnish students studying in the program and 80 %, a clear majority, said it should not. The reasons behind these answers are dealt with here more thoroughly. Under the combined category **studying abroad should be obligatory**, three subcategories were formed and each subcategory consisted of one answer. One person felt it was necessary for *international experience*, another for *opportunities of using the learnt content* and the third one because *all practical training is done in Finnish, in Finland*. They also raised the fact, that studying or practicing abroad would offer more challenge and an opportunity to see different ways of working. The other combined category, **studying abroad should not be obligatory**, received four subcategories and, under those, many more answers. The main reason why studying abroad should not be obligatory was due to *personal reasons*. Six people brought up issues such as situation in life which makes it difficult to move abroad for a period of time or simply a student's right to choose themselves. Almost as broad of a subcategory was formed by *financial reasons*. Many felt that studying abroad is too expensive even with the financial support received from the exchange program. In addition, a few people brought up the fact that, not only do the students have expenses abroad but also in Finland during the exchange period. Third subcategory was formed by answers related to *Finland being the preferred future workplace*. Understandably, practical training places are good for building proficiency as a nurse in Finland and, maybe even more importantly, finding contacts that may lead to desired working opportunities. Lastly, two people reported a *lack of practical training places abroad* as the reason behind their opinion. They felt that there would not be enough suitable places if all Finnish students were made to go study abroad. In addition, language and insurance related issues were raised.

In the interview phase, the participants, that had not studied abroad nor planned to do so, were asked if they felt that choosing not to study abroad would hinder their possibilities to work abroad in the future and one felt that it would not. Due to them being bilingual and having dual citizenship, they felt that it would be fairly easy for them to work abroad in they wanted to. Upon learning about those opportunities, they found out that work experience in general was more important than experience abroad solely. Another student, however, felt that not studying abroad would definitely hinder their possibilities to work abroad later in life.

- (8) Kyl mää uskon, että siitä varmasti on haittaa et kuitenkin se on tärkeä nähdä miten sitä työtä tehdään ulkomailla. Siinäkin löytyy hoitajan ammatissa paljon eroa eri maiden välillä, että mistä asioista sää esimerkiksi vastaat...(I4)

I believe that it definitely will hinder as it is important to see how the work is elsewhere. There are many differences between countries, for example, what is your responsibility...(I4)

Similarly, a student who plans to study abroad during their studies, felt that it would benefit them due to these same reasons. They also added that one learns when seeing things done differently, be it better or worse than what they are used to. They also brought up personal need to vary their studying environment as a reason for choosing to study abroad. Concluding, the participants recognize the benefits of conducting part of their studies through exchange programs, but there are aspects hindering their motivation to take part in them, such as personal and economic reasons.

#### 4.5 Aspects that support or hinder English development

The participants were directly asked about the aspects that they felt support or hinder developing their English skills. These, self-evidently, formed the two main categories in the analysis process. Under the **aspects that support developing English skills**, six subcategories were formed. In five instances, *using English daily in everything* was mentioned. Similarly, *communication in English* was mentioned seven times. More specifically, conversations with other students were deemed important and especially the significance of international students in this aspect. While *material* was discussed more thoroughly in a previous section, it was also brought up as one of the aspects that support developing English skills in seven instances. Three participants brought up having to write *assignments in English* as a factor that helped them develop their English skills. Fewer answers formed the last two subcategories, *teacher with international experience* and *learning independently*. Especially from the interview answers, I deduced that teachers with international experience are scarce in the faculty and more would be welcome. Learning independently as an aspect can be seen both negatively and positively. It is possible that the students meant that the program does not offer enough to develop their English skills within the education. On the other hand, personal effort and eagerness to learn always leads to better results in learning and thus, these can be seen as neutral or even positive opinions. Altogether, many aspects were found that helped the students to better their English skills, communication and, simply, using English daily being the key.

Nevertheless, the participants also reported various **aspects that hinder developing their English skills**, with the principle subcategory being the *poor English skills of teachers*, which falls in line with the results of Koivisto and Juusola (2008). In the questionnaire answers only, this was brought up ten times, out of 15 respondents. One of the interviewees stated the following:

- (9) Opettajien englannin kielen taidot on aika puutteellisia mun mielestä tossa, siihen nähden että siellä on kuitenkin ulkomaalaisiakin (opiskelijoita), että välillä tulee ihan semmosia asiavirheitäkin sen kielitaidon puutteen takia. (I1)

The English language skills of the teachers are quite lacking, in my opinion, thinking that there are foreign students also. At times there is even erroneous content due to the lack of language skills. (I1)

The students brought up issues such as grammar errors, the lack of correct vocabulary and poor pronunciation which affects understanding between teachers and students and which forms a cumulative problem when the students get an erroneous pronunciation model. The Finnish students also felt that they had to perform as language polices and translators for the international students, which affected their concentration and learning during lessons. One interviewee gave a descriptive example:

- (10) Koulutuksessa tuli esille tämä sana *retard* ja se on semmonen väärä sana mitä ei saa enää nykyisin käyttää ja sitä ei ollut korjattu. Ja opettaja alkoi käyttää tätä sanaa ja mä jouduin keskeyttää ja sanoa, ettei tällaista sanaa voi enää käyttää. Et se voi olla tosi huono, että opiskelijat oppii tällaisia sanoja ja sit ne lähtee töihin vaikka johonkin Amerikkaan niin se on ihan hirvee juttu siellä sitten käyttää tämmöstä sanastoo. Että olis tosi tärkeätä saada semmosia opettajia, jotka osaa hyvin sitä englantia puhuu ja tietävät mitkä on oikeita sanoja käyttää työelämässä. (I3)

In school, this word *retard* came up and that is a word that no longer can be used in that context and it had not been corrected. And the teacher started using this word and I had to interrupt and say that this word cannot be used anymore. It can be really bad if students learn these words and then go work in America for example, and it's a really bad thing to use these words there. So, it would be really important to get teachers who speak good English and know which words to use in the working life. (I3)

Many students also brought up the effect this has on their motivation. They felt that their time would be better used studying independently at home than attending the lessons. Especially difficult they found situations where attending lessons is obligatory and the teacher's English skills are poor, the result being poor motivation as well as poorly learnt content. Another aspect that was brought up, was the fact that international students, who come to study in Finland from outside of Europe, now have to pay a tuition fee. One interviewee's view was the following:

- (11) Mun näkökulma on se, että nyt kun siitä tuli periaatteessa maksullinen, niin sehän kuulostaa aika järkyttävältä, että jos pitää maksaa kauheesti opiskelusta ja sit se kielen laatu ei vastaa sitä koulutustasoa niin kyllähän sitä pitäis alkaa sit pikkuhiljaa mukauttaa siihen ammattitaitoisempaan puoleen. Et ennen mun näkökulma oli se, et kun se oli periaatteessa ilmaista niin siinä voitais vähän lipsua mutta nyt siinä pitäis vähän sitä rimaa saada nostettua. (I2)

My view is that now that they have to pay (the tuition fee), it sounds pretty disturbing that they have to pay horrible amount of money to study and then the quality of language does not match the quality of education. Surely, they should start adjusting it to be more professional. Before I thought that, as it was free of charge, one can slip a bit but now they should raise the bar a little bit. (I2)

Even though, plenty of frustration could be seen from the answers, understanding could be found too. One of the interviewees had noticed that some of the teachers were perhaps put up to the job reluctantly and without the skills needed. More importantly, another interviewee reminded that even though the teachers might lack the needed language skills, they are, in fact, proficient in teaching the content.

Another large subcategory was formed by the fact that *no practical training is offered in English*. However, there is no need to go into more detail here as the subject is thoroughly discussed elsewhere. Nevertheless, it has to be stated that it is indeed an aspect that hinders developing English skills with seven mentions in the questionnaire answers. Another thoroughly handled matter is the *material*, which formed its own subcategory in the aspects that hinder English development likewise. As discussed in a previous section, the material is at times lacking in quality, which was brought up in two instances. One person brought up the lack of quantity as a problem. The last subcategory was formed by a singular opinion on the *English course*, offered at the beginning of studies, being *too basic*. In short, by far the biggest aspect that hinders developing their English skills, the students deemed to be the poor English skills of the teachers. This, along with other aspects, will be revisited in the following section.

#### 4.6 Student suggestions

This section is formed by the analyzed answers collected in both the questionnaire and the interview phase. In the questionnaire, the participants were specifically asked what would help them develop their English skills within the degree program. The interviewees were asked more specific questions, formed according to the answers from the questionnaire. Here they will be reported as a unity as they complemented each other very well.

Two combined categories were found on aspects that would help develop English skills according to the students. The first combined category consists of aspects that are **dependent on the education provider**. In other words, these are the things that the participants feel the program organizing party could do to facilitate their learning English. *Native English-speaking*

*teachers* were brought up as one solution. Some students had experiences of having native English speakers as teachers and according to them the experiences were good. While others saw this as a valid alternative, some were hesitant. One student brought up the issue of teachers' knowledge of the Finnish healthcare domain as an even more important factor than their language skills. Obviously, that is a valid point and very important considering the environment in which the education is executed. That being said, there is no reason why native English speakers and Finnish teachers could not be complementing each other within the program and sharing their knowledge within the workplace.

Closely linked to the previous, many students suggested simply *teachers with better English skills* as the solution. One person, in fact, stated that it does not matter if the teachers are native English speakers, so long as their skills match that level. Thus, these subcategories can be seen as very close to each other. The questionnaire answers were merely statements that teachers with better language skills are needed but with the interviewees I had the opportunity to discuss the matter further. They come up with ideas of offering the existing teachers language courses, even repeatedly to maintain the skills, more time to plan and create the material and, interestingly, support from language teachers. This, in turn, leads us to the third subcategory, *language teacher involvement*, which turned out to be extensive. Language teachers have a tiny role in the course of the degree program; they are present in the professional life English course provided during the studies and, additionally, they inspect the language in the theses of the students. The participants, however, had other ideas about how the language teachers could be further involved. As mentioned before, language teachers could offer support to the content teachers in the form of helping create good quality material or checking the existing material language wise. An interviewee suggested, that a material package could be created in collaboration of various content teachers and a language teacher to have good, clear, easy to access material for the students, which then could be revised from time to time for it to stay relevant and current. In my opinion, this would also solve the problem of using antiquated or erroneous terms, such as *retard* in the earlier example. In addition to supporting the content teachers, language teachers were requested to support the students as well. Students were unhappy with the amount of actual English courses within the program and they wanted not only more courses, but also more variety. Specifically, professional vocabulary was mentioned as well as cultures and varieties of English were mentioned. At the beginning of their studies, some students felt that they would have needed more feedback, from a language teacher, about their level of written and spoken English, and what they could improve. Some participants also

brought up wanting to get feedback on their course work from the perspective of a language teacher, as currently they are only revised by the content teacher. One interviewee commented the following on the lack of feedback from the language perspective:

(12)No kyllähän se vähän aiheuttaa hämmennystä että teenks mä nyt sit jotain väärin vai oikein...et vähän jää semmonen tyhjä olo että onko kielellisesti jotain häikkää siinä sit. (I2)

It causes confusion if I'm doing something wrong or right...I stay with an empty feeling of possibly having done something wrong linguistically. (I2)

One student also reported having noticed that the international students get more support from a Finnish language teacher, for example during skill lab work. They felt that something similar with an English teacher would be beneficial.

Another large subcategory was formed by answers that requested *more opportunities to speak in learning situations*. Although we saw in an earlier section that the students communicate with the international students in English and find that to help them develop their own language skills, many reported wanting even more communication and specifically during classes. A more active conversation culture was desired as well as more simulation activities, group work and even “pen pal” -style activities with nursing students of other countries. All in all, the participants had many great suggestions on how the education provider could help them develop not only their proficiency as a nurse but their proficiency as a multilingual nurse.

The aspects that would help develop their English skills that were **student dependent**, formed the other combined category, though considerably smaller. *Studying abroad* was reported as being one. Even though it could be argued that this is not solely student dependent due to reasons discussed earlier, I decided to include it here as ultimately it is the student's personal decision to apply or not to apply. This subcategory received surprisingly few answers, but that can be attributed to the fact that studying abroad was already discussed extensively before. In fact, some students included suggestions to the education provided in that section of the questionnaire. Not only should the school be more active in marketing the possibilities of studying abroad and encouraging the students, but also provide more financial support for the students to make it possible. Another student dependent aspect was *independent study*. Similarly, this only received one answer but reasonably thinking, independent effort in any studies is required to learn. One cannot expect in any situation to get all the information poured to their head by the education provider and, thus, this might be a given to most participants and because of that not worth of mentioning.

In this chapter I have presented the students' views on the examined topics with illustrative examples. I found that the students have a variety of reasons for studying in the ELTDP, with most of them related to the English language or future working life. The participants reported using English widely in their studies, with the exception of practical training, and getting plenty of practice in areas such as academic reading and writing, with less practice on others, such as varieties of English and English-speaking cultures. The students' views on the usefulness of the material in use were highly dependent on the quality of the material and, although the answers had a lot of variety, most participants felt that the material prepares them equally to work in both Finland and outside of Finland. The participants were asked about the aspects that support and hinder the development of their English skills and the main supportive aspect, according to them, was using English in everything from speaking with peers to written assignments. The main hindering aspect was deemed to be the lack of sufficient English skills of the teachers. In addition, the participants' ideas on how to better the situation were gathered. In the next chapter, these presented views will be discussed more in relation to the existing theory and previous studies. In addition, I will discuss the reliability and validity of this study as well as its implications.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

In this section the students' views, presented in the previous section, will be discussed in detail and in relation to the research questions set for this study as well as the existing theory. In addition, I will present my own ideas derived from the results and the theoretical framework on how to improve the education to better fit the aims of the Finnish students studying in it.

### **5.1 The correlation between the aims and motivations of the Finnish students and the perceived gain from the ELTDP**

As seen in the previous chapter, the participants reported various different reasons for choosing to study in the ELTDP in nursing. While individual students might have more than one reason for choosing the program, the motivations fitted under four main categories, which were related to language, work, international study culture and the degree program. Mostly the reported motivations of the participants in the current study were in line with previous results of Niemelä (2009) as well as Pitkäljärvi (2012). Especially in the study of Pitkäljärvi, language related reasons were reported often, as 40 % of the participants wanted to improve or keep up their English skills. In the current study, the same reason was reported by some 26 % of the participants. While the percentage was smaller in this study, language related reasons were reported altogether by 60 % of the participants, making it a significant factor for the students wanting to study in the program. While the students reported to be happy with the amount of English they used overall in their studies, as everything else is conducted in English except for the practical training, it is important to discuss more how the English language is present in the program. In the following section I will discuss the subject more from the point of view of communicative competence and the previously introduced language tests, but here it is important to note that, while English language is used as the medium of education, there is actually little focus on the language and language skills. Insufficient language skills of teachers were mentioned often in both phases of this study and it was brought up in many occasions, such as its effect on the quality of the material used in teaching, motivation and understanding. Some Finnish students actually felt that they had to perform as interpreters between the teachers and international students. As seen in the results, the Finnish students studying in the program in question have generally had good or even excellent success in their previous English studies

and, thus, one can assume that most of them reach at least the B2.1 level of English in the CEFR, introduced in chapter 2. As seen in that chapter, B1.1 level description shows significantly lower language skills and, as reported by the program leader, some teachers are closer to this level than that of B2.1. Therefore, it is understandable how the situation has formed but, on the account of language being one of the main reasons for the Finnish students to apply for this program, it seems important that something be done about it. Indeed, I find myself asking why the program is offered in English in the first place? Is it merely to facilitate the students who cannot study in Finnish, i.e. international students, or does it have some other relevance and, more importantly, does it want to arise to respond to the aims of all the students studying in it? Not only would more focus on language issues benefit the Finnish students, it is clear that it would be equally beneficial for the international students. While that group was not included in this study, it is important to note that, as Koivisto and Juusola, as early as 2008, already reported quality issues, specifically teachers' insufficient English skills, in ELTDPs from the point of view of international students. This view is supported by the answers of the participants in this study about having to work as a bridge between the teachers and international students. That can only mean that there is lack of understanding between the students and teachers, in which the Finnish language is being used as an unintended means of communication.

Interrelated with the language issues are the work-related motivations. As Niemelä and Pitkälä also found, the participants wish to advance their opportunities to work abroad after graduation. In fact, the percentage of students planning to work abroad in the future was significantly higher in this study than that of Niemelä, which included other ELTDPs. As presented in chapter 2, all Finnish degree programs in nursing are included in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and, thus, a nurse having graduated from a Finnish language taught degree program has equal qualifications to work outside of Finland as a nurse having studied in an ELTDP. What makes these programs stand apart is the language. Having sufficient English skills is required from foreign language nurses almost everywhere, where Finnish nurses generally get employed, disregarding neighboring Nordic countries, as Swedish is the usual required working language in those. This, indeed, makes the previously discussed language related issues even more important. While Niemelä reported that almost half of the participants of her study had already benefitted from the ELTD in applying for jobs, it is impossible to state anything similar in this study. However, that generates an interesting topic for future studies. A longitudinal study among the same participants is possible to find out

whether they actually got employed outside of Finland and how they felt about the ELTDP and its perceived benefits then.

Other reasons reported by the participants were related to the program itself or international study culture, even some uncategorizable reasons were found. Reasons such as the location of the education facility and different conduct of student selection, while equally important to the participants, are not as relevant for this study. As seen in the similar results of Niemelä, these reasons are always present for individual students but they do not form any generalizable results. It can be said, however, that surely the program offers what the students aimed for, in these cases. Similarly, according to the results, the students have been happy with the international environment in relation to their wishes, as this was brought up in many occasions.

## **5.2 Communicative competence and the language tests in relation to the perceived support received from the ELTDP**

As stated in the previous section, language related reasons played an important role in the participants' aims and motivations for studying in the ELTDP in nursing. In this section, I will go deeper and discuss the results within the framework of communicative competence and the language tests used in recruiting foreign language nurses, which were introduced in chapter 2. Additionally, I will make some suggestions on how to implement more focus on different sections of communicative competence. As seen in the said chapter, language competence is part of all theories of communicative competence, be it under the name grammatical knowledge, as in Canale and Swain's theory, or organizational and pragmatic knowledge, as in the later model of Bachman and Palmer. Thus, it is important to view how the ELTDP responds to the language needs of the students and, in this instance, it makes sense to do that within the framework of the previously introduced language tests.

All of the introduced language tests include the main components of language competence: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Therefore, I will discuss the topic organized under these components. Reading part of each test is somewhat similar, the test taker is expected to be able to read academic or nursing related texts and answer questions or fill-in missing information. As seen in the previous chapter, a clear majority of the participants reported that academic reading forms an important part of their studies. Plenty of reading is done especially

in the thesis process and, in addition, when preparing course work and such. One of the interviewees highlighted that all sources must be academic and from the framework of evidence-based nursing. Therefore, it can be said that the students get to rehearse their reading skills. However, outside of few individual courses, there is not much attention paid in how to actually improve reading skills in English. Agreeing with Glew's (2013) view, using academic, nursing related texts as part of teaching would be an excellent way to guide the students towards information, implement content knowledge and practice reading skills all at the same time. By using these texts, I mean analyzing, discussing and evaluating them from the point of view of the English language. Not only would it help the students develop their strategic skills in reading, it would familiarize them with the task types of the beforementioned language tests.

Closely related to reading is writing and, in this context, academic writing. While some discrepancies emerged when asked about this topic, majority of the students felt that academic writing is very much present in their studies. Again, the thesis process was mentioned in several occasions, as well as other written assignments. However, the task types present in the language tests, such as summaries, argumentative essays, describing tables and charts and writing patient care documents, were reported to be missing. In fact, as all practical training is done in Finnish, the students practice writing patient care documents more in Finnish than in English. It is possible that the students have practiced different types of written assignment previously to them entering a higher education program. That being said, there are plenty of opportunities to practice them within the framework of nursing education as well. While practicing academic reading skills, writing skills could be implemented in a form of assigning a summary of the read texts as a course assignment. Nursing related studies, as they are evidence-based, are bound to be full of charts and tables, and thus readily available for practicing describing them in textual form. Additionally, argumentative essays could be written for and against nursing practices, for the students to dig deeper into nursing related phenomena while practicing their English writing skills. However, little can be done with the issue of practical training done solely in Finnish domain and the lack of training in documenting. While some students get to practice skills related to that in exchange programs, most students do not. Thus, some form of practicing writing patient care documents, in my opinion, is crucially important within the studies provided by the facility. It is probable, that mostly digital documenting is used nowadays and it is impossible to prepare oneself in the use of all different documenting systems, as there are already various in use in Finland, not to even mention in the world. That being said, the vocabulary, structures and phrases are the same, independent of the form of documenting and,

thus, this could be practiced using pen and paper even. I have illustrated only a few examples of how to easily embed different written assignments to offer the students practice in writing skills and it is clear to see that there is no need to stick to the same task type always and leave academic writing to be only part of the thesis process.

When it comes to listening skills, it can be said that there is a lot of input of English, according to the students. As they reported, English is used in almost all situations and, thus, they get to hear many different variations of English. Large amount of input is clearly beneficial and, as one student said, helps them get used to hearing different accents and understand them better. However, the number of native English speakers is low, in both student body and faculty. Consequently, the level of input is dependent on the skill level of the speakers, which is closely related to the previously mentioned problems with teachers' language skills. The students reported the use of videos in teaching, which as an idea is excellent, but again, according to the students, the quality of the videos varies. As seen in chapter 2, the language tests introduced entail general English and, sometimes, different, common variations of English, such as Australian, British and American English. Keeping this in mind, it would be good to implement input in native English variations as well and I will introduce some suggestions on how to do so in the following section.

The remaining sector of speaking skills again is closely linked to listening skills. As stated before, English is used in almost everything during the studies. More importantly, the domains in which the students get to rehearse speaking in English are very similar to those of the language tests. That being said, the participants requested more opportunities to speak in learning situations and had ready suggestions which were introduced in the previous chapter. This too will be discussed further in the following section from the point of view of development points.

Having discussed the issues concerning language competence, I now move on to another important sector in communicative competence, sociolinguistic competence and more specifically intercultural competence within it and how it is present in the ELTDP in question. As Lambert (1999, 66) noted, to build a student's intercultural competence, knowledge of other societies and cultures must be provided. Many of the participants reported being happy with the multicultural study environment in the degree program and this is clearly a positive starting point to building intercultural competence. Another great thing is that exchange programs are offered and that the students are encouraged to take part in them. As presented before, almost

half of the participants felt that they were encouraged enough while, on the other hand, almost as many felt that they had not been encouraged enough. To gain more international experience, exchange programs offer great possibilities and taking part in them should be encouraged even more. Taking into consideration the available resources, the education provider should pay attention to what the students hope for in terms of facilitating their possibilities of conducting a part of their studies abroad. That being said, exchange studies are not the only means of gaining intercultural competence. As Crozet and Liddicoat (1999, 116) suggested, implementing culture in education is possible by including spoken and written texts, knowledge about history, geography and institutions related to healthcare and knowledge about the existing pragmatic norms as well as norms of interaction in the target culture. From the gathered answers, videos, rare native English-speaking teachers, and nursing related texts can be said to entail elements that support implementing culture in the education.

Exploring the general competences all universities of applied sciences should offer, under international competence, the ability to function in the work field in a foreign language was mentioned. While the program surely responds to this somewhat, as some of the students felt that the material, for example, guides them to work outside of Finland for various reasons. The reasons reported were vocabulary learnt in English, material produced outside of Finland and examples used of working life situations outside of Finland. The possibility of participating an exchange program offers another option for practicing this. Contrastingly, the lack of possibilities of conducting practical training in English within the country weakens reaching this ability. While many participants raised this issue, they sympathized with the education provider on how difficult it would be to organize this for the Finnish students. As Pitkälä et al. (2011, 556) found, finding practical training places for English-speaking students was already very difficult. In effect, it can be said that it would be impossible organize them for the Finnish students. The other two abilities listed under international competence were understanding cultural differences and find and utilize relevant, professional literature, and, according to the results, these abilities are well reinforced in the degree program.

Another of the general competences is communication and social competence, and while this competence normally refers to first language use communication, I claim that it should apply to the English language as well, when examining an ELTDP. The skills under this competence include understanding spoken language and producing different types of texts and these were already discussed previously. Another skill of knowing how to act in typical social and communication situations is closely related to sociolinguistic competence and while the

students get well acquainted with the social norms of a hospital environment in Finland, there is a lack of knowledge on what are the typical social and communication situations in other nursing cultures. Similarly, the ability to use ICT is mentioned as one of the skills, but this has already been discussed elsewhere. The last skill set of understanding principles of group work and being able to work as part of a multiprofessional group has to be examined in two parts. The participants reported working in groups in many situations in the run of their education. Thus, it is safe to say that they learn the first part of the skill set. However, the same problem of getting to know only the Finnish professional domain rises when examining the second part. Being familiar with the social conventions and knowing how to work as a nurse in a multiprofessional group in Finland does not mean that one automatically knows and can adapt to a multiprofessional group in other cultural setting. Again, a problem occurs in deciding which cultures should be included in the education and obviously that is for the education provider to decide, but some optional courses could provide an answer to how to implement this information in the education for those interested.

### **5.3 Suggestions for developing the ELDTP in nursing**

In this section I will introduce some development points taking into account the results of this study and the existing theoretical framework. In addition, some suggestions have already been made in the previous sections. Firstly, as Glew (2013) suggested, some form of language testing could be done as a starting point for a needs analysis. Similarly, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, 125) noted that some form of needs analysis should be the basis for ESP teaching. Cameron's (1996) needs analysis on the linguistic requirements of foreign nurses offers an interesting idea for the education provider on what are the language needs of nurses. While the use of language tests in the applying process to the program has been omitted and it is unlikely that it would be reintroduced, especially to reach to the Finnish students too, the students should be made aware of their language skills and development needs. At the very least the commonly used language tests should be introduced to the students and bring up the linguistic requirements existing for foreign language nurses. One might question the necessity of this to the foreign degree students who have chosen to come to study in Finland and bring up the fact that learning Finnish is much more important to them. However, in the globalized world it has to be recognized the English language is needed in Finland as much as when working abroad.

Additionally, a fact that one of the interviewees raised, higher education now is subject to a charge for students outside of EU/ETA countries and, thus, has to be viewed as a paid service which should provide best professional competence possible for all of its students. In fact, offering high quality education, in all senses, increases the attractiveness of the ELTDPs for the international students, and as stated in section 2.4, internationalization further raises the quality. This makes a quality enhancing cycle which surely will benefit both Finnish and international students.

Secondly, the environment in which nurses already are taught in Finland offers great basis for executing ESP in teaching. As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, 3) described, language teaching should be implemented in activities and tasks specific for the language learners and the degree program is full of opportunities for that, e.g. skill-labs, simulated situations and practical training. As stated before, it is rather impossible to reach language elements to the practical training in the Finnish domain, but within the teaching provided in the facility, it should be possible. As important as conducting some needs analysis, is the collaboration between content teachers and a language teacher, when using ESP. As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, 45) stated, the amount of collaboration varies from planning together to co-teaching, where obviously more cost-efficient would be the first option. There is a clear correlation between the theoretical framework and the results of this study; both request a language teacher's presence in planning, selecting materials and assuring the correctness and validness of the language content. While the participants' suggestions mainly included a language teacher in the planning process, a suggestion was made to widen their role to reach skill lab work. If the benefit of a Finnish language teacher for the international students is already recognized, why not adapt the idea to bettering the English language as well.

Planning process and skill lab work are not the only ways of including a language teacher. While a language teacher is already involved in the thesis writing process, they could be included in assigning and checking course work as well, at least at the early stage of the studies, as one interviewee requested. If new types of written assignments were to be given, such as previously discussed argumentative essays, summaries and description of charts and tables, a language teacher involvement is important to guide the students to write correctly in terms of grammar, vocabulary and text type.

One of the main problems, according to the participants, was the insufficient language skills of teachers. As suggested in the answers, the involvement of a language teacher could be the

answer to that as well. A language teacher who already is part of the planning and material choosing and providing process, knows the language needs of the teachers. Thus, language courses for the teachers could be easily offered as work place training, within the facility. More importantly, a close collaboration between language and content teachers can be seen as constant and maintaining the skills and quality of education. Another thing to consider is the cost-efficiency of having a language teacher deeply involved in the degree program instead of training people in different places, hiring multiple new people or not changing anything and in turn perhaps suffer from loss of international, paying students, due to quality issues. Additionally, resolving this problem would be greatly beneficial in raising the motivation level of students, as many reported suffering from low motivation due to the insufficient English skills of teachers. In fact, ESP as a method is highly motivating for learners, as it is relevant for them and it might be useful to consider implementing elements of ESP to the education.

Thirdly, the issue of raising the students' cultural and sociolinguistic awareness has to be acknowledged. To be able to achieve communicative competence in English, it is not enough to learn only the language aspects. These are some ideas on how to implement culture and social aspects into the teaching. One way of improving the level of English while implementing cultural awareness would be to use native English-speaking content teachers, who have work experience in the health care field. This was suggested by some participants of this study and, interestingly, also by the international students that were examined by Koivisto and Juusola (2008, 43). Native teachers could share their experiences on nursing elsewhere and what is appropriate social and communicative conduct in the workplace in their countries. It is not necessary, or beneficial even, to replace many of the existing teachers with international teachers and there are, in fact, other ways of including foreign expertise in the education. One way could be collaboration between Finnish and foreign education facilities. Foreign nursing teachers could be asked to make videos on nursing related issues and conducts in their countries and these could be used as elements of teaching in appropriate instances. This would help the students to hear and understand different varieties of English while learning about English-speaking cultures and nursing as a profession in them. One step further, is to start 'pen pal'-activity, as one of the participants put it, with other nursing students around the world. Using the available information and communication technologies, students could have their nursing student partner in a foreign facility. This way, students could practice their communication skills as well as listening and speaking parts of language proficiency and learn and compare nursing practices elsewhere. Separate courses, related to nursing in English-speaking countries,

were also suggested by the participants. This way they could be aimed at those interested and more specific content could be included. These are just some ways of implementing language learning and sociocultural awareness in the degree program and more ways can be thought of according to the available resources of the education provider.

#### **5.4 Implications of the study**

In this section I discuss the reliability and validity of this study as well as the conclusions and implications of the results and future research topics. The reliability of this study is supported by the meticulous way of describing the research process and including in appendices the questionnaire and interview forms. However, some difficulty in reproducing the study would be caused using a different interviewer and different follow-up questions and clarifications, as these do not appear in the interview form. That being said, the follow-up questions and clarifications were important to avoid misunderstandings, which in turn increases the reliability. Likewise, the process of analysis has been explained in detail to ensure the duplicability. Considering validity, the questionnaire forms, for example, should be constructed so that there is no room for misinterpretations and if the answers given imply something the researcher has not taken into account in anticipation, they must conform to the results instead of continuing on the path lead by their presumptions. The questionnaire was indeed thus constructed that almost all answers were unambiguous. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the question about the language tests received some ambiguous answers but that can be explained with the unfamiliarity of the issue for the participants. Additionally, I have explained the preset hypotheses that I had concerning the research topic and how that somewhat changed and somewhat persisted during the research process. In short, these increase the validity of the current study as well as the fact that two different means of collecting data was used.

Some weaknesses can be found when examining the current study. Firstly, as stated in section 2.4, universities of applied sciences enjoy great autonomy in organizing their education and, thus, the results of this study cannot necessarily be generalized to apply to all Finnish students in all Finnish universities of applied sciences studying in an ELTDP in nursing. Therefore, in order to get more generalizable results, the same study should be conducted with a wider sample. Correspondingly, the sample size itself was small, considering that only around 19 % of the assumed number of Finnish students studying in the said degree program answered the

questionnaire. While the sample size was smaller than desired and, thus, the results do not necessarily represent the cohort in whole, some clear answers were found and using interviews to deepen the questionnaire answers supported the relevance of this study.

While there are many aims and motivations that guide the Finnish students' decision to study in an ELTDP in nursing, there seem to be few that are more common than others, these being closely linked to the English language and the perceived advantage that the ELTDP gives them in getting employed outside of Finland. As discussed before, the English language is very much present in the degree program but its quality and usefulness in developing their own language skills are raised as the issues hindering them from reaching communicative competence. The participants felt that the program helps them prepare for some parts of the commonly used language tests, but for others less. Notably, the language tests included in this study were fairly unknown for the participants, which makes it difficult for them to even know what language competence is expected from them to be able reach their goals of getting employed outside of Finland. Similarly, even though the participants reported to be happy with the multicultural environment of the degree program, there is a lack of sufficient, appropriate culture and social input in the education in relation to the aims of the participants. To be more specific, the multicultural environment is created by the international students, most of which do not come from the desired target countries of the Finnish students. The benefits of participating in an exchange program were acknowledged and some ways of making it more motivating were suggested, with main inhibiting factors being personal and economic reasons. Most student suggestions on how to support the development of their communicative competence had to do with teachers and their language skills and well as including a language teacher more in the teaching process, as well as more active conversation culture within the program. These suggestions, together with the suggestions I gathered from the existing theoretical framework, were discussed more thoroughly in the previous section.

In the future, it would be interesting to examine the same participants of this study to find out where they got employed and whether they experienced benefits from studying in an ELTDP in getting employed. It would also be interesting to find out, if they have had to take the introduced language tests, what was their success in them and if they needed to prepare for the tests outside of their degree program. In case some developing is done in the actual ELTDP according to the results of this study, it would be highly relevant to repeat this study to find out how the students' views have changed. Another interesting research challenge would be to

include the international students in the ELTDPs in nursing to find out their views on the topic of this study.

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## **Appendix 1: Questionnaire form (in Finnish)**

### **Suomalaisten sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoiden näkemyksiä englanninkielisestä koulutusohjelmasta**

#### **1. Sukupuoli**

Nainen

Mies

Muu

#### **2. Minkä vuoden opiskelija olet?**

1. vuoden

2. vuoden

3. vuoden

4. vuoden

muu

#### **3. Mikä oli englannin kielen taitotasosi toisen asteen koulutuksen päästötodistuksessa?**

Välttävä

Tyydyttävä

Hyvä

Kiitettävä

Erinomainen

4. Minkä vuoksi valitsit opiskelun englanninkielisessä sairaanhoitajakoulutusohjelmassa?

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5. Onko tavoitteesi/toiveenasi työskennellä ulkomailla valmistuttuasi?

- Kyllä  
 Ei

6. Jos vastasit kyllä kysymykseen 5, missä? (Voit mainita useamman paikan, josta olisit mahdollisesti kiinnostunut)

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7. Jos vastasit kyllä kysymykseen 5, oletko perehtynyt siihen, millaisia kielitaitovaatimuksia on työpaikoissa, jotka sinua kiinnostavat?

- Kyllä  
 Ei

8. Mitkä seuraavista kielitaitotesteistä ovat sinulle tuttuja?

	1 	2 	3 	4 	5 
IELTS (International English language testing system)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
OET (Occupational English test)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TOEFL (Test of English as a foreign language)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muu, mikä?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Vastaa seuraaviin kysymyksiin oman näkemyksesi ja kokemuksesi mukaan

**9. Kuinka iso osa opinnoistasi tapahtuu englannin kielellä?**

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**10. Millaisissa tilanteissa opinnoissasi pääset käyttämään englannin kieltä kirjallisesti?**

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**11. Millaisissa tilanteissa opinnoissasi pääset käyttämään englannin kieltä suullisesti?**

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**12. Koetko, että pääset käyttämään englannin kieltä riittävästi koulutuksen aikana?**

- Kyllä  
 Ei

**13. Missä tilanteissa haluaisit käyttää englannin kieltä enemmän?**

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Millä tavalla opetuksessa kiinnitetään huomiota englannin kielen:

**14. sanastoon?**

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**15. kielioppiin**

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**16. ääntämiseen?**

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**17. akateemisen lähdeaineiston (oman alan kirjallisuus/tutkimukset) lukemiseen?**

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**18. akateemiseen kirjoittamiseen?**

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19. variaatioihin (eri maiden englannit)?

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20. Kiinnitetäänkö opetuksessa huomiota englannin kielisten maiden kulttuuriin? Millä tavoin?

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21. Millaisia englanninkielisiä oppimateriaaleja on käytössä (esim. oppikirjat, äänitteet, nettimateriaalit, videot, taustalukemisto, tutkimukset jne.)?

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22. Miten nämä oppimateriaalit tukevat englannin kielen kehitystä?

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23. Koetko, että sinulla on käytössäsi riittävästi englanninkielistä oppimateriaalia?

- Ei  Kyllä

**24. Valmistavatko oppimateriaalit sinua toimimaan hoitajana Suomessa vai kansainvälisesti vai sekä että? Millä tavoin?**

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**25. Oletko ollut ulkomailla vaihdossa opintojen aikana?**

- Kyllä  
 Ei

**26. Jos vastasit kyllä kysymykseen 25, missä?**

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**27. Jos vastasit kyllä kysymykseen 25, mitä hyötyä vaihdosta oli englannin kielitaitosi kehittymisen kannalta?**

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**28. Jos vastasit ei kysymykseen 25, suunnitteletko lähteväsi?**

- Kyllä  
 Ei

**29. Koetko, että ulkomaanvaihtoon lähtöä kannustetaan?**

- Ei ollenkaan  
 Liian vähän  
 Tarpeeksi  
 Liian paljon

**30. Tulisiko ulkomaanvaihdon mielestäsi olla pakollinen englannin kielisessä koulutusohjelmassa opiskeleville? Miksi?**

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**31. Tiivistettynä, mitkä asiat koulutusohjelmassa kehittävät englannin kielen taitoasi?**

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**32. Mitkä asiat estävät tai vaikeuttavat englannin kielen taidon kehittymistä? (esim. oppimateriaalit, harjoittelupaikat, opiskelijoiden/opettajien kielitaito jne.)**

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**33. Mikä auttaisi sinua kehittämään edelleen englannin kielen taitojasi saamasi koulutuksen puitteissa?**

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Mikäli olet kiinnostunut osallistumaan pitkittäistutkimukseen aiheesta, jätä yhteystietosi. Mahdollisessa pitkittäistutkimuksessa seurattaisiin tähän tutkimukseen osallistujien työllistymistä, kielitaitoa ym. myöhemmässä vaiheessa. Tietojasi käsitellään täysin luottamuksellisesti, eikä niitä yhdistetä tutkimuksen tuloksiin. Tietojen jättäminen tässä vaiheessa ei myöskään velvoita sinua osallistumaan tutkimukseen jatkossa.

**34.**

Etunimi	
Sukunimi	
Matkapuhelin	
Sähköposti	

## Appendix 2: Interview questions

1. Monenhenko vuoden opiskelija olet?
2. Englannin kielen taitotaso toisen asteen koulutuksen päästötodistuksessa?
3. Mitkä olivat sinun syysi/tavoitteesi, joiden vuoksi päätit opiskella englanninkielisessä koulutusohjelmassa?
4. Miten koulutusohjelma vastaa englannin kielen näkökulmasta omiin tavoitteisiin/syihin lähteä opiskelemaan englanninkielisessä koulutusohjelmassa
5. Yleisimmät sairaanhoitajien rekrytoinnissa käytetyt englannin kielitaitotestit sisältävät esimerkiksi seuraavia elementtejä, missä määrin koet näiden olevan tuttuja? Miten juuri koulutuksesi valmistaa näitä testielementtejä varten?
  - a. Akateeminen kirjoittaminen (argumentatiivinen essee, tiivistelmä, kaavioiden ym kuvaileminen tieteellisesti)
  - b. Kuullun ymmärtäminen (standardi englantia, yleisimmät natiiviaksentit britti, amerikka, australia)
  - c. Luetun ymmärtäminen (autenttisten ja ammattitekstien lukeminen esim. ammattilehdistä, kirjallisuudesta, verkkosivuilta, tutkimukset jne?)
  - d. Suullinen kielitaito (keskustelu natiivipuhujan kanssa sekä yleismaailmallisista että ammatillisista aiheista, ammatillinen roolileikki)
6. Kuvailisitko kaikki ne tilanteet, jotka tulevat mieleesi, joissa käytät englantia opinnoissasi, sekä kirjallisesti että suullisesti.
7. Mitä mieltä olet siinä, että harjoittelut suoritetaan suomen kielellä? Pitäisikö mielestäsi englanninkielisessä koulutusohjelmassa opiskelevilla olla mahdollisuus päästä suorittamaan harjoitteluja englanninkielisessä ympäristössä?
8. Sanastoon, kielioppiin, ääntämiseen ynnä muihin kielen oppimisen osa-alueisiin ei vastausten mukaan juurikaan kiinnitetä huomiota koulutuksessa. Toivoisitko enemmän huomiota näihin seikkoihin? Enemmän mahdollisuuksia nimenomaan englannin kielen kehittämiseen?
9. Akateemisen lähdeaineiston lukemiseen sekä akateemiseen kirjoittamiseen kiinnitetään vastausten mukaan paljon huomiota koulutuksessa. Tiedätkö, että tarkistaako kirjallisia tehtäviä/opinnäytetöitä kieliasiantuntija vai pelkästään sisältöasiantuntija? Oletko saanut palautetta kielellisestä sisällöstä vai pelkästään asiasisällöstä? Toivoisitko enemmän palautetta kielellisestä sisällöstä?

10. englannin kielen variaatiot/kulttuurit: Kuinka tärkeäksi koet englannin kielen variaatioista ja englanninkielisten maiden kulttuurista oppimisen? Onko mielestäsi vastuu itsellä henkilökohtaisesti vai koulutuksen tarjoajalla, että kulttuurista ja englannin kielen variaatiosta saa riittävästi tietoa?
11. Kyselyn vastauksissa oli paljon risteäviä mielipiteitä englanninkielisen oppimateriaalin riittävydestä ja laadusta. Mikä on sinun kokemuksesi materiaaleista? Toivoisitko lisää materiaaleja, millaisia? Millä tavalla materiaalit valmistavat sinua toimimaan hoitajana Suomessa, entä ulkomailla?
12. Suurin osa vastanneista ei ollut käynyt vaihdossa, eikä näin ajatellut tekevänsäkään. Mikä on sinun tilanteesi? (Jos ei, niin miten tämä on suhteessa omiin tavoitteisiin, esim. työllistyä ulkomaille. Miksi ei?)
13. Englannin kielen oppimista heikentäviksi tekijöiksi oli kyselyssä listattu seuraavia: opettajien heikko kielitaito, harjoittelut suomeksi, oppimateriaalit (näitä laativien opettajien heikko kielitaito näkyy). Oletko näistä samaa mieltä? JA JOS NIIN:
  - a. Miten nämä vaikuttavat opiskelumotivaatioosi?
  - b. Onko sinulla ajatuksia siitä miten tilannetta voisi parantaa?
  - c. Pitäisikö opettajilla olla mielestäsi korkeampi kielitaitotasovaatimus?
  - d. Pitäisikö koulutusohjelmassa mielestäsi olla natiiviopettajia?
  - e. Pitäisikö oppimateriaalit mielestäsi laatia yhdessä kieltenopettajan kanssa?
  - f. Pitäisikö kieltenopettajan olla enemmän läsnä oppituntien suunnittelussa/materiaalin laatimisessa/tehtävien tarkastuksessa jne.