

“KIELTÄ OPPII VAHINGOSSA JA MUKAVASTI”:  
Finnish Ninth-Grader Perceptions of Extramural English  
and Language Learning via Media

Bachelor's thesis

Anssi Virtanen

University Of Jyväskylä

Department of Languages and Communication Studies

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Media, varsinkin digitaalisessa muodossaan on ollut jatkuvasti entistä suuremmassa roolissa ihmisten elämässä viimeisten vuosikymmenten aikana. Monimuotoisen median käyttö ja kulutus on jatkuvasti nousussa ja sitä dominoi, koko maailmassa ja myös Suomessa, englanninkielinen media. Englanninkielisen median saatavuuden ja määrän takia se on myös osana suomenkielisten nuorten jokapäiväistä elämää, minkä seurauksena englantia koulussa opiskelevilla koululaisilla on mahdollisuus oppia englantia mediankäytön avulla koulun ulkopuolellakin.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli tarkastella suomalaisten yhdeksäsluokkalaisten omia mielipiteitä ja näkemyksiä heidän englanninkielisen median kulutuksestaan ja mahdollisesta englannin oppimisesta median kautta. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin kyselyllä, johon vastasi 61 suomalaista yhdeksäsluokkalaista. Kyselyssä kysyttiin yhdeksäsluokkalaisten mediankäytöstä: mitä mediaa he käyttivät ja kuinka paljon, mikä oli suosikkimedia ja miksi. Tämän lisäksi kyselyyn vastanneilta kysyttiin, kokivatko he oppineensa englantia mediankäytön avulla, minkä median avulla (elokuvat, musiikki jne.), ja mitä kielen osa-alueita he olivat mahdollisesti oppineet (esim. ääntäminen, kielioppi). Kyselyn vastaukset analysoitiin sekä laadullisin että määrällisin analyysimethodin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tuloksista voidaan vetää useita johtopäätöksiä. Kyselyn kaikki vastaajat kuluttivat englanninkielistä mediaa monia tunteja viikossa ja kokivat mediankäytön erittäin motivoivaksi tavaksi oppia englantia. Audiovisuaalinen media (esim. TV-sarjat, videot, elokuvat) koettiin parhaiksi tavoiksi oppia kieltä ja lisätä kielitaitoa. Kielitaidon kehityksessä ääntäminen ja sanasto nousivat esille vahvasti, minkä lisäksi varsinkin puhekielinen ja idiomaattinen sanasto koettiin lisääntyneen autenttisen materiaalin avulla. Autenttinen englanninkielinen media vaikuttaisi olevan arvokas työkalu sellaisen englannin opiskelijan elämässä, joka haluaa kielitaitonsa ja kompetenssinsa lähemmäs natiivin tasoa.</p>	
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

As the world of internet and media is increasingly dominated by the English language, so does it influence the lives of all media users. The same effect can be seen in the media used in Finland as well. Moreover, the use of internet and media has grown exponentially through the modern internet age, with social media playing a part in almost everyone's lives. As the overall use of media has grown, so has the research and interest surrounding it. Moreover, the research surrounding the possible learning opportunities and capabilities of different media has been around for decades now.

Previous research in this area has focused mainly on specific aspects of English linguistic skills and learning; for example, oral proficiency and vocabulary gain (e.g. Sundqvist 2009). Moreover, previous studies have focused more on specific parts of media, such as video games or music (e.g. Sylvén and Sundqvist 2012). In my study I focus on the students themselves, and their own thoughts of learning English through out-of-school media usage. However, while previously research has been commonly also interested in the genders of the learners, the present study does not focus on this side of language learning and media.

The more specific focus of this study is to look at the quantity and quality of media consumption of Finnish ninth graders during their spare time and analyze their own perceptions of learning a language through English-based media, while they are learning English in school at the same time. Moreover, the study aims to shine a light on the type of media Finnish ninth graders use, and the amount of time they spend on said media platforms. This type of research is particularly interesting to me, as I myself mainly learned English out-of-school. I learned through video games, cartoons, YouTube, books etc. I was four years old when I first spoke English, because I had been watching Cartoon Network in English without any subtitles. For these reasons I want to study and see if extramural English (EE) plays an even greater part in today's English-learners' lives. Extramural English as a term refers to the English language learners see, hear, write, and speak outside the classroom walls. Extramural English was coined by Sundqvist (2009) for her study.

In this paper, the relevant previous research and background material of out-of-school language learning, and noticing, is introduced, while similarly introducing and discussing previous research conducted on media and language learning. Then, the results of the present study will be revealed via analysis, in terms of the students' own perceptions of media and language learning, which is further discussed in chapter 4.

## **2 EXTRAMURAL LANGUAGE LEARNING AND MEDIA**

### **2.1 Extramural English and Learning**

The present chapter will introduce the theory of extramural English (EE) learning; while focusing more specifically on the definitions of out-of-class language learning in English. Moreover, it will explain and discuss the impact and variety of extramural English learning and activity; focusing on English proficiency and motivation, as the present study itself focuses on Finnish ninth-grader extramural English learning. Possible benefits and drawbacks of extramural English learning will also be discussed during section 2.1.2. Exploring these themes of language learning is particularly important, as the present study seeks to shine a light on the activities and opinions of students and learners in extramural and out-of-class language learning situations.

#### **2.1.1 Defining Extramural English (EE)**

Defining a term such as extramural English (EE) is not a simple task. Therefore, it is important to define what kind of activity and phenomena can and cannot take place inside the term in question. The actual world inside terms like ‘extramural English’ and ‘out-of-class’ is large, and oftentimes unstudied (Benson and Reinders 2011), as the term itself describes quite literally everything outside of a school classroom. Therefore, it is important that there are some set parameters and definitions of what extramural English encompasses in the context of this study. It should also be noted that in this context, the term ‘extramural’ does not in fact, refer to certain programs in school that might be considered less formal than traditional lessons, or programs that might be organized by students, for example (Benson and Reinders 2011). The actual term, extramural English, according to Sundqvist (2009) refers to activities that learners participate in during their own spare time, outside of the traditional classroom setting.

Out-of-class learning is described by Benson (2011) as any learning that occurs outside of the classroom and involves self-direction or naturalistic learning. Therefore, by this definition, learning out of class requires intent and a goal set by the learner themselves, without outside guidance. This is a broad term that encompasses a large section of learning. However, this definition is also lacking in a certain facet of learning, which Sundqvist (2009, 25) expands upon by stating:

In extramural English, no degree of deliberate intention to acquire English is necessary on the part of the learner, even though deliberate intention is by no means excluded from the concept.

But what is important is that the learner comes in contact with or is involved in English outside the walls of the English classroom. This contact or involvement may be due to the learner's deliberate (thus conscious) intent to create situations for learning English, but it may equally well be due to any other reason the learner may have.

However marginal it may be, unintentional learning is also an important part of extramural English, and the present study, although it could be argued that it is difficult to study and record unintentional learning. Moreover, as this study is interested in the opinions of the learners themselves it could be challenging for the students to realize if they have learned in this manner, and if the learning progress has been intentional or unintentional.

Location is another issue that the terms in question deal with, which brings to attention Benson's (2011) term 'out-of-class learning' compared to the term 'out-of-school learning' used by other researchers (e.g. by Lamb 2004). However, the difference between them is important, as 'out-of-class' could mean literally outside of a language classroom, which does occur in the present study. Students could learn English by talking to each other in English or scrolling through social media in school hallways, while not existing in a traditional classroom setting. For these reasons; extramural English is the more fitting term for the theory behind the present study, as it encompasses both intentional and unintentional learning anywhere outside of a language classroom. Moreover, EE covers both concepts of input and output, and it functions as an umbrella term without any negative connotations or collocations (Sundqvist 2009). Sundqvist also points out that extramural English activity and learning is generally voluntary for the learner, which is also closely associated with the theory of learner autonomy. According to Sundqvist, EE is a 'broadly defined' term, which is also important for the study at hand. As learners are all individuals with individual levels of skill and interests, they learn through and from different mediums, media, and locations. It is therefore logical for the study to use EE as the *de facto* term, as to not 'rule out' differentiating experiences of learners.

### **2.1.2 The Impact of Extramural Learning and Activity on English Proficiency and Motivation**

This section is devoted to discussing different themes that involve learners improving their skills in extramural English (EE) situations, and how these situations could improve one's proficiency of English language. Moreover, as this section looks at the effectiveness and positive linguistic gain of EE language learning, it will also point out possible negative traits of voluntary self-learning.

Learner activity, for one, has been analyzed in many ways by previous research. Sundqvist's (2009, 2011) research into oral and vocabulary proficiency divided EE activities into active and passive EE

activities, finding that active EE activities (such as video games, browsing the internet, reading) were more efficient methods of learning oral proficiency and vocabulary gain than passive activities (such as watching TV or movies). Hyland (2004) deliberates learner activity by stating that her study found that while students devoted their own time to studying English outside the classroom, most of this time was used for receptive activities, such as listening and reading rather than activities with output, such as speaking. While cultural differences can also be cited in the differences of learner activity, the difference of output and input are important when discussing learner activity out-of-school, as these activities might explain what facets of English proficiency learners learn in EE language learning situations.

The amount of English language content learners can access is large, which could be considered both a negative and a positive. Lai, Zhu and Gong (2014) deliberate in their study that learners engage in such a wide variety of activities that it is difficult to discover which of them is more effective and useful for English proficiency. Palviainen (2012) considered the amount of venues English learners were able to access out-of-school as a positive, comparing the amount of activities and resources to Swedish learners, who had much less to choose from. According to Palviainen, English learners exhibited more confidence in their language skills compared to the Swedish learners. EE language learning is therefore at an advantage compared to learning other languages. Furthermore, EE activities can positively impact the capabilities of learners participating in tests in school, as was seen in Sylvén's (2004) study, where she concluded that students who had spent the most time on EE activities had the best scores in vocabulary tests. These examples of EE activities could have a significant impact on English learning and proficiency.

Autonomy, and extramural learning, is not possible, or at least highly unlikely to occur, without motivation. Learners would not participate in EE activities, if not for some compelling reason, whatever it may be. While some researchers, such as Bailly (2011) provide different, and sometimes very exact reasons for learners to participate in different EE activities, the present study considers EE activity to be a byproduct of other activities that learners participate in (such as playing video games for example). Nevertheless, language learning can be highly motivational for many reasons, and have a significant impact on one's English proficiency, or the pursuit of it. The positive motivational factor of self-learning by choice during one's spare time is also closely linked to learner autonomy which is defined by Benson (2011) as the ability and capacity of taking control over one's own learning and activity. However, learner autonomy is not without its own issues, as Bailly (2011) points out, learners might have a hard time finding useful and effective sources of learning material from the huge amount that is available without assistance. More discussion is required of learner motivation, but in the

context of the present study; the context of using media as a tool for learning, which is discussed in section 2.3.

## **2.2 Awareness, Attention and Language Learning**

This section will discuss the theory of noticing in language learning. As the study focuses on opinions and reflections of learners on their own extramural language learning, it is also important to discuss the role of awareness in learning. This is particularly interesting and important for the present study, as different media, and different methods of EE language learning might garner different results of effectiveness compared to attention.

The role of awareness, particularly in L2 language learning situations, has been heavily studied and debated by researchers for over two decades. Much of this debate and research is based on Schmidt's (1990, 1) Noticing Hypothesis – which claims that “subliminal language learning is impossible, and that noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for converting input to intake”. This means that for a learner to learn and understand a language, they need to be aware and pay attention to the target language and its linguistic features. While following researchers generally agreed with his findings, Schmidt's research also created significant critiques and counterarguments, such as the vague use of terms like ‘noticing, awareness and attention’ without more definition, which was another issue of debate considering Schmidt's research and theory. One such critique is by Tomlin and Villa (1994) who objected to the emphasis placed on noticing, while arguing that other factors are more critical to the L2 or SLA phenomena. Moreover, Tomlin and Villa (1994) expanded and developed Schmidt's hypothesis and refined the theory of attention, focusing more on processes such as detection and orientation.

Schmidt (1990) concludes that it is impossible to learn subliminally, while admitting that unintentional or incidental learning could be possible, when a task demands attention to other features. He uses reading as an example of his noticing hypothesis, stating that while people are reading their focus is almost solely on the words that they are reading, and they do not focus on the background noise around them (e.g. outside noises or music). Moreover, Schmidt (1990) also found that memory requires attention. Therefore, while low attention input might reach a learner's short-term memory; if the learner does not have an opportunity to process it, the input does not reach their long-term memory. Other researchers have also discussed Schmidt's hypothesis from different viewpoints. One such context is the attention of a learner during various EE activities. For example, Sundqvist (2009) posits that different extramural activities require more attention than others in order

to be meaningful to a learner. She compares reading to watching TV; as reading serves no purpose without attention, while watching TV can be meaningful even if the viewer's attention is low.

Forms of input can therefore have varying degrees of effectiveness on language proficiency and skill gain. This effectiveness can also vary on the time given to the EE activity. For example, high attention requiring activities such as playing video games can yield a high effectiveness over a short period of time, while low attention requiring activities such as listening to music or watching TV can yield the same effect on language proficiency – however – over a longer period. This theory is valuable to the present study, as it seeks to understand which EE activities learners prefer during their spare time.

## **2.3 Language Learning and Media**

This section will discuss and incorporate the concepts and theories from the previous sections and explore language learning through media. This section will focus on previous studies about the subject, while outlining the general theory around language learning through media. Additionally, this section will also discuss possible benefits and drawbacks of language learning through media, for example motivation and linguistic skill gain, which will support the analysis section of the present study, as the focus is on extramural language learning specifically through media.

Language learning via media is often shown to be very motivational for learners. Lemish (2014) states that media consumption is usually voluntary for the learner and is usually very limited in terms of supervision (which coincides with self-learning and EE activity), and it does not involve any obligations. Furthermore, media usage does not require any formal testing, and is usually very enjoyable for participants (Lemish 2014). McCarty (2011) argues similarly that social media has the possibility to enhance learner motivation, making it possible for them to reach and communicate with a large community within the target language. Therefore, freedom and autonomy of learning are a valuable source of motivation in learning via media. However, learner autonomy also has its own issues, as learners themselves are responsible for their own learning and activity, and as such can simply decide not to participate in any EE activities (Bailly 2011).

Another advantage that language learning via media has is authentic material, and the wide availability of relevant content towards language proficiency. For example, Sundqvist (2009) argues that English has a very dominant role in media, when discussing the role of English in Europe. She says that many TV shows and movies are not dubbed in Sweden, which means that many children in such countries have a chance to understand and learn a considerable amount of English before even

attending school. She continues to point out that English is also the dominant language on the internet. Which means that authentic material is particularly available to learners of English. Tschirner (2011) agrees by stating that the appearance of huge quantities of videos and oral language (audio) on the Internet provides new opportunities, particularly for foreign language education and learning.

Relevant and comprehensible material, such as authentic videos on YouTube, are particularly important for the acquisition of oral proficiency (Tschirner 2011). Moreover, Siddell (2011) provides research on the usefulness of how sound and video media, and the supporting “scaffolding” around it (e.g. illustrations, headlines, comments etc.) provide training of listening skills for learners. Sundqvist (2009) concludes that active EE learning methods (e.g. playing video games) provide learners with greater oral proficiency, and vocabulary gain. While findings show that language learning via media has certain issues, research has proven it to be effective and motivating for learners in obtaining and learning multiple linguistic skills.

Previous studies in the field of language learning via media have revealed a slew of potential positive factors for language learning: oral proficiency (Tschirner 2011), listening comprehension, (Siddell 2011) and vocabulary acquisition (Sundqvist 2009, Sylvén 2004). Media has been shown to be a motivational tool for language learning (Lemish 2014), and the amount of authentic English language content provides learners with an advantage over other languages (Palviainen 2012). The present study does not seek to disprove these previous findings, but to add even more onto them in the context of Finland and Finnish students, as the present study also looks to prove if the findings of previous studies are also seen in the context of Finland, making these benefits independent of geographic and cultural differences. Moreover, other linguistic skills are also considered in this study (e.g. grammar and writing), not only skills that are already proven benefits of media activity. Furthermore, the present study seeks to find differences, and possible advantages, of learning via media versus learning English in school, as previous studies such as Sylvén (2004) have focused on the benefit of extramural English activity for school tests and school success.

## **3 THE PRESENT STUDY**

### **3.1 Aim and Research Questions**

The aim of the study is to explore the perceptions of Finnish ninth graders on extramural English (EE) activity and their use of English media. The main goal is to illustrate the opinions of students on their own use of EE activities via media; what media do students use the most; what do students regard as the most efficient for language learning; and what they might have learned from media that they might have not learned in school. Another question the research will attempt to answer is which skills and/or language proficiency learners might have gained, and from which media.

The study will answer the following questions:

1. What perceptions do Finnish ninth graders have about the quality and quantity of their English media consumption and its effects on their English learning?
2. Is any particular English media perceived as more beneficial than others by the students and why?

While previous research on the subject of language learning via media has usually focused on one particular media, and usually one particular language skill, as is the case in the research of Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012) for example; the present study aims to look at language learning via media from a more general perspective, and through the opinions and perceptions of students to see how they themselves perceive the value of extramural English activity. As previously mentioned, the students that were chosen for the present study are Finnish ninth graders. This particular age and group of students was chosen for a few different reasons, such as the fact that the students have spent the last 9 years in school, and in theory should have the ability to analyze and voice an opinion of their own learning. Moreover, for this study it was supposed that Finnish ninth graders are generally active users of media, and therefore should give valuable and reliable data for the analysis. To summarize, while previous research has usually taken a deep dive on a specific subject inside of media and learning, this study aims to provide more of a general glance at the larger subject of media and learning by covering more ground.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

The data for this research was collected as a two-page questionnaire in Finnish (see appendix for Finnish and English versions of the questionnaire). The questionnaire focused on the quality and quantity of Finnish ninth graders' extramural media usage. The questionnaire was carried out at two junior high schools in Central Finland. Furthermore, the data was collected in four separate classroom situations during the autumn of 2018 (anonymously), with the researcher always present to help students with questions and issues arising during filling the questionnaire. Overall, 61 questionnaires were collected during the data collection phase.

The two-page questionnaire consisted of seven questions in total, three of which were closed questions and four of which were open-ended questions that respondents could answer in writing. Furthermore, the questionnaire had one yes/no question, where the respondents circled the answer.

The first page of the questionnaire focused on general extramural English activity, first asking the students to rate which media they used every week and how much time they spent with said media, using a numerical rating scale from '0-3 hours' to 'over 15 hours per week'. Secondly, the following question asked which of these media were their favorite, and why. Lastly, on the first page, the students were asked if they use English in other situations (other than media).

The second page focused on the linguistic side of extramural English activity, first asking the students to circle [YES/NO] if they had learned English through English media, then asking the students to rate which linguistic skills they had learned, from one to five (1 = very little, 5 = a lot). The following question was then interested in what media students perceived to be the best for language skills, and why. Furthermore, the sixth question of the study was interested in the students' perception of EE activity compared to traditional classroom settings, asking if they had possibly learned skills through EE activity and media that they might not have learned in school. Lastly, the questionnaire asked the respondents to report their last English grade that they had received in school.

### **3.3 Methods of Analysis**

The data for this research was analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis; looking for connections and trends of learners' perceived extramural English media usage, opinions and language learning. As previously mentioned, the present study employed the use of a questionnaire, as to elicit answers that were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. For the analysis, the previous research of Dörnyei (2009) on constructing and administering questionnaires

and data processing was used as supporting background knowledge. Furthermore, the questionnaire was chosen as the method of data collection and basis of analysis, as it was deemed most effective for analyzing a large amount of answers and results (quantitative data), while also giving the respondents a chance to answer open-ended questions (qualitative data).

Quantitative methods were used for gauging the activity of learners and their perceived time of media usage, and the quality of the media they used in context of language learning as numerical data. Qualitative methods were used for analyzing open-ended questions, and the perceptions and opinions of students, for example specifying which media learners perceived as most beneficial to language learning. Furthermore, these questions were also analyzed as numerical data, as to provide general data of learners' preferred media, for example. Moreover, all collected questionnaires were numbered randomly from 1 to 61, as certain open-ended answers will be quoted and analyzed in the context of the general findings of the study.

As the present study aims to analyze the use of media for language learning, said media had to be chosen to be relevant for the target group of ninth graders. Both traditional (e.g. books & newspapers, and television) and new media (e.g. video games, and social media) were considered for the present study. Therefore, said media were selected and grouped as they were deemed relevant for modern learners and media users. It should be noted that some media, while different, were grouped together in order of similar function and activity (e.g. TV and Videos). The media selected are as follows:

- Books & Magazines
- Movies
- Music
- TV & Videos
- Video Games
- Internet & Social Media

As the study intends to discover which language skills learners have acquired via media, relevant linguistic skills needed to be selected for the present study. While some language skills were selected based on previous research, such as Sundqvist (2009) and Tschirner (2011) for example, others were chosen as they were deemed relevant to the school studies of the Finnish ninth graders in question (i.e. Grammar). Furthermore, others were chosen, as they were deemed relevant for certain media, such as writing and oral communication for video games. Even still, it should be noted that the following list should not be considered as exhaustive, or extensive for that matter. Nevertheless, the selected language skills for the present research are as follows:

- Grammar
- Pronunciation
- Oral communication
- Vocabulary gain (i.e. new words)
- Writing

## 4 EXTRAMURAL ENGLISH LEARNING VIA MEDIA

### 4.1 Extramural English Activity and Media Habits

During the first part of the questionnaire, all 61 respondents were asked to rate and measure their own English media activity and habits. Respondents were also asked about their favorite type of media (from choices in the questionnaire) and to think of other ways that they use English, possibly outside of media usage. Furthermore, the respondents were asked to write down their latest grade received in English at school. To start with, respondents were asked to mark their media usage per week, which is seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Amount of English media used per week.

	<b>0-3h</b>	<b>3-5h</b>	<b>5-10h</b>	<b>10-15h</b>	<b>Over 15h</b>
Books & Magazines	54	4	1	1	1
Movies	26	24	5	4	2
Music	7	12	11	16	15
TV & Videos	7	19	16	7	12
Video Games	28	11	6	9	7
Internet & Social Media	2	12	13	13	21

First, over 88% of respondents (54 of 61) marked that they spend three hours or less per week with English language books and magazines. This could mean that the majority of this group of ninth-grader students read very little of traditional literature and printed text, or not at all. Furthermore, 64% of respondents also indicated that they spend five hours or less each week on video games. This

is a surprising majority – although – the popularity and use of video games might differ for many different reasons; including gender and age. Still, 28 of 61 respondents (46%) marked that they spend three hours or less each week playing video games. As for movies, the clear majority of respondents (82%, 50 of 61) marked down that they watch movies for five hours or less each week. This amount of time each week could be considered as zero to three movies per week, which seems entirely logical and feasible.

The three other genres: Music, TV & Videos, and Internet & Social media were all very even across the board by hours per week. 42 of the respondents (69%) answered that they spend at least five hours each week listening to English music. Moreover, 25% of all respondents marked that they spend over 15 hours every week listening to music in English. Furthermore, 57% of all respondents answered that they spend at least 5 hours each week watching TV & Videos in English. Lastly, only 2 of 61 respondents answered that they only use internet and social media for three hours or less, while all other respondents spend at least three hours per week. Most notably, 34% of respondents answered that they use internet and social media for over 15 hours each week. These three genres turned out to be the most popular in general, at least in terms of activity and hours spent per week.

Before the analysis of Figure 1, it should be noted that this question was, at first, supposed to be a single-answer question; meaning that it was expected of the respondents to answer only one media. However, most respondents answered multiple media for question two: ‘What is your favorite media (from those mentioned) and why?’. In total, the 61 respondents gave 79 votes for their favorites. Those results are seen in Figure 1. Due to this change the analysis of Figure 1 and question two (see Appendix 1 & 2) was both quantitative, focusing on the actual numbers, as well as qualitative, focusing on the actual reasoning the respondents gave for their answers. Moreover, the qualitative analysis has been split into four paragraphs with the following general themes that were found and analyzed in the answers of respondents:

1. Extramural aspect
2. Social aspect
3. Quantity of material and content
4. Motivation and learning

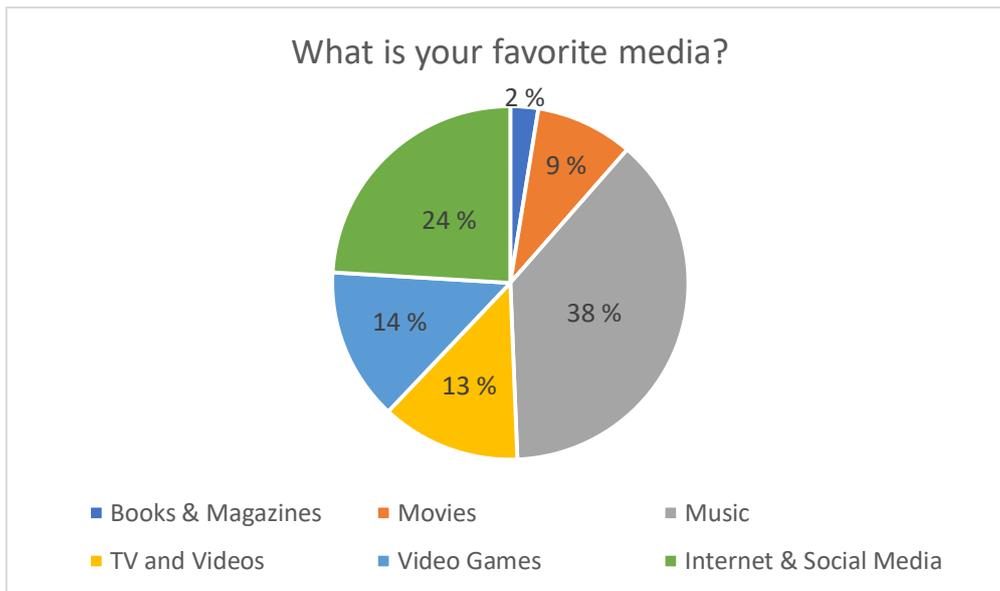


Figure 1. The answers in percentages to ‘What is your favorite media?’.

First, the numbers and percentages of Figure 1 correspond with the results in Table 1. Music was the clear favorite media among all respondents with 30 out of 79 votes (38%), which was followed by Internet & Social Media with 19 votes (24%). Video Games was the third favorite with 11 votes (14%), and TV & Videos with 10 votes (13%) respectively. As with time and activity, Movies and Books & Magazines proved to be the least favored among the respondents. Movies received 7 votes (9%), while Books & Magazines only received 2 votes (2%). Furthermore, many of these votes for the least favored media were secondary votes; as in other media were also included in the answers where the least favored media were mentioned. Music, in comparison, received mostly votes where it was the only media mentioned.

As to why these media were chosen by the respondents, four distinct themes emerged from the analysis, as mentioned above. As a reminder, the following quotes by the respondents are for the question: ‘What is your favorite media (from those mentioned) and why?’. The first theme that emerged from the answers was the extramural aspect of media usage. As to why music was their favorite media, respondent #26 answered: “Musiikki, koska tykkään kuunnella sitä esim. koulumatkoilla” [Music, because I like listening to it for example on my way to school]. The portable and hands-free nature of music seemed to be one of the defining factors of why it was chosen to be the favorite media of some respondents. Respondent #38 answered: “musiikki, koska kuuntelen samalla kun teen jotakin” [Music, because I listen (to it) while doing something].

The second theme that emerged from this analysis was the social aspect of media. It should be noted that Video Games and Internet & Social Media were media that were especially mentioned for their

social aspect by respondents. For example, respondent #55 answered: “Videopelit kun voi olla kavereiden kanssa” [Video games because you can be with friends]. Respondent #46 answered: “Videopelit ja internet ja sosiaalinen media koska pelaan lähis päivittäin ja käytän sosiaalista mediaa kokoajan ja sillä pääsee puhumaan mun kavereille” [Video games and internet and social media because I play almost every day and use social media constantly and I use it to talk to my friends]. Therefore, these media mentioned in the quotes were seen as social spaces where one could spend time with and communicate with friends.

The third theme, quantity of material and content, has been discussed already during the present study in the background theory section (2.3). As mentioned, English has a very prominent and dominant position in the media (Sundqvist 2009). Considering this theme, respondent #6 answered: “Suosikkini on englanninkieliset TV-sarjat. Tämä johtuu siitä, että niiden tarjonta on yksinkertaisesti muita kieliä suurempi. TV-sarjoissa vastaan tulee niin paljon juuri englantia, etten edes ajattele puheen olevan vieraskielistä” [My favorite is English (language) TV-shows. This is because their supply is simply larger than other languages. I come across so much English in TV-shows that I don’t even think of the speech as being a foreign language]. The same can be said for English videos on the internet, as they are so readily available in vast amounts on video sharing sites such as *YouTube*, for example.

The fourth theme that emerged from the analysis is motivation and learning. It should be noted that several different media were mentioned by the respondents as being motivational to them. This can be directly attributed to personal preference. However, these media (e.g. TV & Videos, Video Games, Music) were also chosen by respondents due to being motivational from a learning aspect as well, as respondent #9 answers: “Musiikki, koska on kivaa kuunnella musiikkia ja opetella sanat ulkoa, samalla oppii lisää englantia” [Music, because it’s nice listening to music and memorizing the words, (and) you learn more English at the same time]. Similarly, respondent #8 answered: “TV ja videot, koska opin niistä englantia ja niitä on vaan kiva katsoa” [TV and videos, because I learn English from them and they are just nice to watch]. From this analysis, it could be argued that motivation and extramural English learning go hand in hand, regardless of the media in question. Motivation and media have previously been connected in studies such as Lemish (2014).

Furthermore, for the first part of the questionnaire, the students were asked to answer freely to the question ‘Do you use English in some other way?’, as to glean possible information of English activity outside of media usage.

As one can see from Figure 2, two distinct themes were found from all 61 respondents. While six respondents (10%) answered that they use English while at school, and four respondents (7%)

answered that they use English while traveling, most answers (80%) fall under two categories. First, the most common answer among respondents (44%) was some form of communication in English. The answers to this category ranged from speaking with friends, family, and relatives, and often just for fun. However, an interesting theme also emerged from the ‘communication’ answers, as many respondents answered that they use some form of social media to talk to their foreign friends etc. in English. This is, of course, considered a part of media usage.

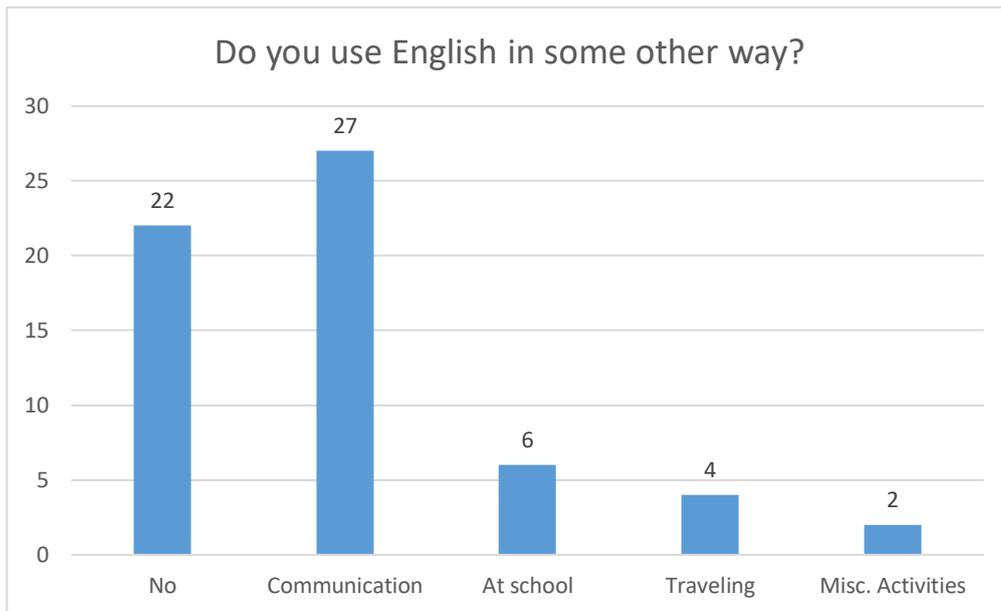


Figure 2. The collected answers to ‘Do you use English in some other way?’

The second theme that emerged was the amount of negative answers (36%) by respondents, which leads to the overall analysis of this section. As almost a third of respondents answered negatively to activity outside of media usage, and many who answered communication, in truth, were using social media for their communication, an overall conclusion can be drawn from first section: while the respondents’ extramural English activity is not necessarily restricted to media, it is defined by it.

Music, TV & Videos, and Internet & Social Media were the clear favorites of this group of respondents, both in terms of time and preference (Table 1 and Figure 1). Music and Internet & Social Media in particular seemed to be clear favorites amongst the respondents, being most popular in both time spent with, and preference. Furthermore, Movies, Video Games, and Books & Magazines were the lesser-favored media in this questionnaire, both in terms of time and preference. As previously mentioned, most respondents spent an entirely logical amount of time with Movies; watching about one or two movies per week. However, there was an interesting disparity in the answers towards Video Games. While most respondents spent very little, or no time at all, with video games, others

did in great quantities. Moreover, Video Games as a genre of media was the third favorite of all respondents. This leads to the conclusion that while unpopular with the overall group, Video Games as a genre is very popular with those who choose to spend time with said media. While Movies and Video Games were reasonably popular, Books & Magazines as a genre was particularly shunned by this group of respondents. It was the one with least time spent with, and least preferred by respondents, leading to the conclusion that traditional printed text is very unpopular in this group and by extension young people in general. Still, the clear takeaway from this section is that all respondents actively use and partake in English media during their spare time in at least one form, indicating that English is a regular part of students' lives even outside of school.

For the last part of this section, the students were asked to write down their latest grade received in English. It should be noted that in the Finnish school system, grades are usually given out from four to ten (4= Fail, 10=Excellent). Moreover, grades are usually received at the mid-point of the school year in December, and at the end of the school year in June. Therefore, as most of the questionnaires were conducted and collected during the autumn of 2018; most, if not all the grades reported are from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, received in June of the same year. This question was asked to see if there is any difference in amount of EE activity, and perceived benefit of EE activity and learning via media compared to the grade of the students. In Table 2, all of the respondents' latest English grades are seen in amount and percentage.

Table 2. Respondents' latest grade in English. (NB. all percentages are rounded off to the nearest percent.)

Previous grade in English	Number of respondents	Percentage
10	16	26%
9	21	34%
8	17	28%
7	5	8%
6	1	2%
5	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>

After comparing the groups (by grade) to each other in terms of EE activity, it seems that no clear difference is established by this estimate. It seems then that the opposite is true, with activity and

opinion being quite similar regardless of grade received in school. Furthermore, it appears that regardless of grade, all respondents use multiple media, with all respondents answering that they use at least two different media in English (answers in Table 1). However, how the use of English media affects school performance is beyond the means and aims of the present study.

## 4.2 English Language Learning via Media

The second part of the questionnaire focused on language learning via media and asked the respondents if they had learned English via media, what kind of skills relating to English (e.g. grammar, vocabulary etc.) they had learned, and through what media they had possibly learned English.

To start with, the second part of the questionnaire asked the respondents a simple YES/NO question: ‘Has the use of English media helped you learn English?’. The respondents were tasked with circling their preferable answer. It should be noted first that six (6) respondents did not answer either yes or no to this question, probably due to the poor design and placement of the question (see Appendix 2, Question 4). However, while these six votes were inconclusive, these respondents still answered the following question of linguistic skill gain (Table 3) as all the others did. Furthermore, all the other 55 respondents answered positively, leading to the conclusion that all answers, registered or not, to the YES/NO question were 100% positive, indicating that all respondents have learned, at least some, English via media.

Next, the questionnaire tasked the respondents to rate different linguistic skills they might have learned via English media from one to five (1 = very little, 5 = a lot), which are seen in Table 3. For example, if a respondent felt that they had not learned much grammar, or not at all, via media, they would then mark grammar as a 1 etc.

Table 3. Linguistic skills rated from 1 to 5.

	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	9	16	9	13	14
Pronunciation	3	7	13	19	19
Oral communication	4	5	13	21	18

New words	0	3	8	20	30
Writing	2	8	20	11	20

By the numbers most of the results seem to be very similar to each other, regardless of the linguistic skill and genre in question. For example, for Oral communication, 52 respondents have marked a 3 or above, which is 85% of all respondents. Furthermore, 51 respondents (84%) have similarly marked a 3 or above for Pronunciation and for Writing as well. This positive trend is most clearly seen with New words (i.e. vocabulary gain). 58 voters out of 61 (95%) have marked a 3 or above for New words, and furthermore, almost half (30, 49%) of respondents have marked a 5 for New words. These numbers indicate that the respondents generally perceive the use of media as a positive for their linguistic skill gain.

However, there is still one genre to discuss, which by the numbers, is different than the other genres that have been analyzed above. For Grammar, the respondents have marked each rating from one to five much more equally than all the other genres, with 2 being the largest with 16 marks (26%). These rankings show that while other linguistic skills could be learned from media, respondents perceive that grammar is more difficult to learn, or that they themselves have not learned grammar via media. While these statements could be true, it could also be argued that grammar, like the other linguistic skills mentioned, could be learned unintentionally or incidentally by English learners while using media, which corresponds with the Noticing Hypothesis of Schmidt (1990). Furthermore, it could be argued that grammar, or at least parts of it, can be learned via media, for example sentence structures, without the learner understanding it being a part of grammar (i.e. naturalistic learning). It should also be noted that the question itself is quite difficult to answer with just numbers, as grammar is such a large part of any language, it might be difficult for respondents to establish and perceive what they might have learned from media, which also brings up a different issue relating to the perceptions of learners and their noticing of learning via media.

The fifth question of the questionnaire was a multiple-choice question, asking the respondents: ‘What is the best media for learning English, and why?’. Respondents were tasked with choosing the genre(s) of media they thought best for learning English and giving an explanation as to why. First, the choices are seen in Figure 3, and then the analysis of the explanations is shown below.

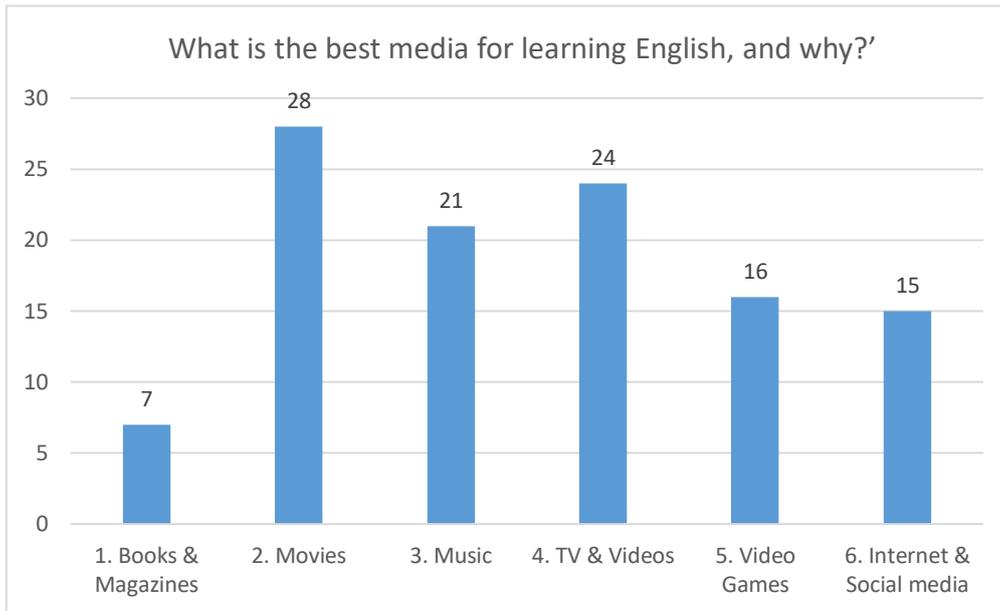


Figure 3. The answers to the question: ‘What is the best media for learning English, and why?’

As per the multiple-choice nature of the question, the 61 respondents gave in total 111 votes for the different genres. Here an interesting shift happens, when compared to the previous section (4.1). While Video Games, and Internet & Social media were chosen among the clear favorites, and in terms of time spent with, here they are not close to the top three in perceived language learning effectiveness. However, one trend stands unchanged, as one of the clearest results of this analysis: traditional printed text in Books & Magazines continue to be ignored by this group of respondents. In contrast, one of the least favored genre previously, Movies, has been voted as the best media for English learning by the respondents, followed closely by TV & Videos, and then Music.

As to why each media was chosen as the best for English language learning, many different results arose from the answers of the respondents. Video Games and Internet & Social media were often grouped together in the answers, where communication, both in writing and speech was cited as the reason. Furthermore, Video Games as a genre was also mentioned when respondents cited learning new words as the reason for the choice(s), as seen previously in Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012). Vocabulary gain, a popular and logical reasoning by the respondents was often mentioned with Music, TV & Videos, and Movies as well. Another trend that emerged from the answers was the beneficial factor of listening comprehension and authentic pronunciation in audio(visual) media. Movies, TV & Videos and Music were most often mentioned with this explanation. However, an interesting oft-repeated answer revealed itself from the answers of many respondents who had chosen Movies as the best media for learning English, which could explain the top spot in votes: the existence

of subtitles, which is much more prevalent in Finland than dubbing in movies and TV-shows is. Moreover, as with movies, TV & Videos was often cited for the same reason of effectiveness.

Overall, one media was not seen above the rest as the *de facto* best media for English language learning, as the respondents gave logical answers and reasonings to all the media mentioned in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the 111 votes by 61 respondents gives even more credence to the fact that multiple media were considered by the respondents as the most useful for language learning. A few clear trends were revealed from the answers to this section, such as the positive attitude regarding learning English via media. Moreover, the respondents perceive that they have learned different linguistic skills via different media, for different reasons. For example, vocabulary gain through repeated listening of music, pronunciation from videos on *YouTube*, communication through video games etc. However, one result that was quite interesting and surprising was that of movies and subtitles. This combination was attributed many times as the best way to learn new English vocabulary by the respondents. This combination could emerge from another combination of linguistics: authentic content, direct context of words, and attention of viewer. Attention is the one facet that separates movies from the other media that were mentioned as useful for vocabulary gain and even pronunciation. While music and TV and even videos can have the same effect as watching a movie, more often they are closer to background noise for another activity. Movies on the other hand are usually more focused on by the viewer, which in turn helps and motivates the viewer to acquire new vocabulary and learn pronunciation more effectively.

### **4.3 Extramural English Learning Compared to School**

This section is solely dedicated to the analysis and results to the sixth question of the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to answer the open question: ‘Have you learned things from English media that you would not necessarily have learned during English class in school?’. This question was asked to see if EE learning and traditional classroom English learning had any distinct differences according to students. As with previous analysis, trends and similarities were looked for in the answers of respondents, which were then grouped together. As a result, four clear trends were found, which will be presented with quotes from certain answers.

It should be noted that one answer to this question, from respondent #2: “Ehkä osa kieliopista ja kirjoitus” [Maybe a part of grammar and writing], was the only answer which did not fit into the four trends that all other answers were grouped into. Nevertheless, the first group was the 9 (15%) negative answers, usually without any explanation as to why. However, this does not mean that these

respondents have not learned anything via media. It means in the context of the question that these respondents perceive that they have learned things via media, which they could also have learned in English class in school, as respondent #53 says: “Englannin oppitunneilla oppii melko paljon samoja asioita kuin median kautta” [You learn many similar things in English class as you do through media]. The second group was the opposite of the first in opinion, consisting of 9 positive answers (15%). While there were no explanations as to what and why they had learned via media, some of these respondents were very positive towards language learning via media compared to school. For example, respondent #32 says: “Olen itse oppinut varmaan englanninkielisestä mediasta enemmän kuin koulussa” [I have probably learned more through English media than in school].

The third group was the collection of 11 answers (18%) that mentioned learning pronunciation and listening comprehension via media, as respondent #3 says: “Ääntämistä, esim. elokuvista ja musiikista. Koulussa ääntämisen opettelu on huonoa” [Pronunciation, e.g. from movies and music. Learning pronunciation at school is bad]. Moreover, certain respondents mentioned learning colloquial – or vernacular language, and different dialects of English. For example, respondent #8 says: “Yleistä puhekieltä eli miten ihmiset puhuvat päivittäisessä elämässä. Muuten osaisi vain kirjakieltä~” [Colloquial language or how people speak in daily life. Otherwise you would only know written standard language]. One result then, at least according to these respondents, is the possible acquisition of pronunciation and of colloquial speech, which students could not acquire in class, as previously also seen in studies such as Tschirner (2011).

The fourth, and largest group by far with 31 answers (51%) were the answers that mentioned learning new words (e.g. vocabulary gain) that could not be acquired in class. Furthermore, vocabulary gain is again, as seen in Table 3 for example, the clear favorite among respondents. Moreover, similarly to the third group, colloquial language, idioms, and slang is a common explanation as to what these respondents have learned and can possibly learn in the future via media. For example, respondent #37 says: “Olen oppinut useampia sanoja ja sanontoja, kuten esimerkiksi ‘hold your horses’ ja ‘it’s raining cats and dogs’” [I have learned several words and sayings, such as ‘hold your horses’ and ‘it’s raining cats and dogs’]. A similar result of vocabulary acquisition can be seen in studies such as Sundqvist (2009).

According to the respondents, the acquisition of colloquial, informal, idiomatic, and vernacular speech and language is the clear benefit of EE activity compared to learning English in class. Moreover, learning English via media is often seen as motivational by the students compared to studying in class. It seems that using media to learn English affords students competence more akin

to native speakers, with the acquisition and heightened understanding of English language not seen or heard in classroom settings.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The goal of the present study was to examine the perceptions of Finnish ninth graders in terms of their extramural English activity and the use of English language media and its effect on English language learning. The quality and quantity of the students' English media consumption/activity was also considered, and the present study also attempted to find one particular media that was perceived to be the best for language learning by the students.

In terms of activity, all respondents used at least two different forms of media in English, usually for many hours per week, which indicated that English is a regular part of students' lives in Finland. Furthermore, the availability of authentic English content in Finland and on the internet is vast, and by extent the effect of it on English learning students who are active on multiple media. While a clear 'best media for language learning' was not discovered, it was discovered that students perceive that English media in general, which they consider to be motivational learning tools, have multiple benefits for language learning and the acquisition of different linguistic skills. In addition, audiovisual media, which offer a wide variety of interesting and motivational content were perceived to be the best and most interesting for English language learning, such as movies, music, TV shows, and videos.

Audiovisual media, for example movies, music, video games etc. seem to provide positive opportunities of vocabulary acquisition, and to some extent oral proficiency (oral communication and pronunciation), which coincides with previous studies, such as Sundqvist (2009), and Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012). As vocabulary acquisition and oral proficiency are both proven benefits of English media activity from previous studies; quite an interesting finding resulted from the analysis of the present study: the acquisition of colloquial, informal, and idiomatic vocabulary and oral proficiency via English media. While language learning via media may not and should not replace traditional language learning in school during our lifetime (maybe never), extramural English activity should be seen as a valuable compliment to learning English in school, as EE activity provides the possible acquisition of competence and proficiency more akin to native speakers. This result could prove beneficial, for example, to teachers who are looking for motivational content which all students can

access (e.g. *YouTube* and TV), and to students who are looking to expand their comprehension and competence of English on their own.

While some general positive results were revealed within the present study, readers and researchers should approach it with caution, as there are some issues in this research. To start with, many issues arise from the questionnaire, and how and where the data was collected. The questionnaire was conducted and collected in four separate classroom settings, all of which created an issue of social desirability (Dörnyei 2009), as students want to please the researcher by answering positively, whether it is true or not. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the results are very general and non-specific, as some questions/collection methods were vague and therefore collected non-specific answers. The real effectiveness of English language acquisition via movies for example, cannot be seen, as it is only perceived by the respondents that it happens. Furthermore, some genres of media were grouped together, which creates more inconsistency and non-specific answers. Some media, such as Internet & Social media are so immense that it is hard to distinguish which specific parts are effective and useful for English proficiency.

While the results are generally positive and look promising, certain changes and adjustments are most definitely needed for future research, as to elicit more exact knowledge about extramural English activity via media, and its effects on proficiency. However, it is now known, at least in the context of Finland that students perceive English media to be generally useful, motivational, and positive for English language learning. The next step in terms of research would be to look at different media and specific English language content more closely and see if one is truly better for language learning than the other. Moreover, differences in English content availability per country compared to extramural language learning/school success would be another interesting viewpoint to cover for language learning and media research. Like media itself, the avenues for researching media and language learning are so vast that there are still innumerable viewpoints and topics left undiscovered and unexplored.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire in Finnish

## KYSELY ENGLANNINKIELISEN MEDIAN KÄYTÖSTÄ

Huom. Kysely on nimetön, joten vastaukset pysyvät anonyymeinä. Tämä ei myöskään ole koe.

Olethan rehellinen! Kysymyksiin ei ole oikeita tai väriä vastauksia. Tämä kysely teetetään kandidaatin tutkielmaa varten. Kiitos!

1. Kuinka paljon vietät aikaa englanninkielisen median parissa viikoittain?  
(merkitse taulukkoon lähin vaihtoehto)

	Alle 3 tuntia viikossa (0-3h)	3-5 tuntia viikossa	5-10 tuntia viikossa	10-15 tuntia viikossa	Yli 15 tuntia viikossa
Kirjat ja lehdet					
Elokuvat					
Musiikki					
TV ja videot					
Videopelit					
Internet ja sosiaalinen media					

2. Mikä näistä mainituista medioista on suosikkisi, ja miksi?

---

3. Käytätkö englantia jollain muullakin tavalla? Voit vastata vapaasti.

---

4. Onko englanninkielisen median käyttö auttanut sinua oppimaan englantia? Ympyröi vastaus: **KYLLÄ / EI**

Jos vastasit kyllä, niin miten?

Merkitse taulukkoon asteikolla 1-5. **1 = todella vähän, 5 = todella paljon**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Kielioppi</b>					
<b>Ääntäminen</b>					
<b>Suullinen kommunikointi</b>					
<b>Uudet sanat</b>					
<b>Kirjoittaminen</b>					

5. Mikä on mielestäsi paras media englannin kielen oppimiseen, ja miksi?

(Mediat: 1. Kirjat ja lehdet | 2. Elokuvat | 3. Musiikki | 4. TV ja videot | 5. Videopelit |

6. Internet ja sosiaalinen media | 7. Muu, mikä?) Voit myös valita monta, mutta kerro syyt!

---

6. Oletko oppinut englanninkielisen median kautta asioita, joita et välttämättä olisi oppinut koulussa englannin kielen tunnilla? (Vastaa esimerkillä tai esimerkeillä!)

---

7. Mikä on viimeisin saamasi numero englannista? (Viimeisin numerosi voi olla kahdeksannelta luokalta) \_\_\_\_\_

**Kiitos vastauksista!**

## Appendix 2. Questionnaire in English

### QUESTIONNAIRE ON ENGLISH MEDIA USAGE

NB. This questionnaire is anonymous, so your answers will also stay anonymous. This is also not a test. Be honest! There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. This questionnaire is being conducted for a bachelor's thesis. Thank you!

1. How much time do you spend with English media per week? (circle the closest option)

	<b>Under 3 hours per week (0-3h)</b>	<b>3-5 hours per week</b>	<b>5-10 hours per week</b>	<b>10-15 hours per week</b>	<b>Over 15 hours per week</b>
<b>Books and magazines</b>					
<b>Movies</b>					
<b>Music</b>					
<b>TV and videos</b>					
<b>Video games</b>					
<b>Internet and social media</b>					

2. Which of these English media is your favorite, and why?

---

3. Do you use English in any other way? Answer freely:

---

4. Has the use English media helped you learn English?

Circle the answer: **YES / NO**

If you answered yes, then how?

Mark on the chart from 1-5. **1 = very little, 5 = a lot**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Grammar</b>					
<b>Pronunciation</b>					
<b>Oral communication</b>					
<b>New words</b>					
<b>Writing</b>					

5. What is the best media for learning English, and why?

(Media: 1. Books and magazines | 2. Movies | 3. Music | 4. TV and videos | 5. Video games |

6. Internet and social media | 7. Something else, what?) You can choose multiple, but explain why!

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6. Have you learned things from English media that you would not necessarily have learned during English class in school? (Use examples!)

---

7. What is the last grade you received from English (Your last grade might be from 8th grade) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your answers!