



University students' attitudes towards mandatory English in their studies

Bachelor's thesis
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1. INTRODUCTION: THE STATUS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

We live in a more global world than ever before. This concerns education planning and educators all over the world. As such, education is progressively geared towards *internationalization* and preparing students to excel in the future of the job market, which is becoming increasingly global. The language of *internationalization* is English. There seems to be an increasing expectation to be able to use English in different fields. Academic articles reach a wider audience, if they are published in English compared to a native language of the country (Björkman 2013: 10-12). As such, there are more non-native users of English than there are native users. Due to which, non-native English speakers are using English to communicate with other non-native English speakers. However, the normative standard is still oriented towards native language speakers for creating the norms (Jenkins 2014: 12-15). This situation leaves one to consider how these aspects discussed above affect the scope of the individuals. The aim of this study is to begin to unravel the general picture of how these aspects of the now global world are seen by students in higher education.

2. BACKGROUND LITERATURE

2.1. WORLD ENGLISHES

Kachru (1985. Björkman 2013:3-6) described the use of Englishes as circles. The inner circle represented the native language speakers who provide the norms for the language i.e. the UK, the US, Australia and New Zealand. The outer circle countries placed historical importance or used English as an institutional language e.g. India and African countries with English colonial history. According to Kachru, these countries were in the process of developing their own norms for the language. The last one, the expanding circle, Kachru describes as representing the countries, in which English is a foreign language. They are described as being dependent on language norms. In the expanding circle, non-native English speakers are using English to communicate with other non-native English speakers.

2.2. ENGLISH AS LINGUA FRANCA

Lingua franca is a common language, a tool, for individuals, who have no common native language. *English as lingua franca* (ELF) is defined by Seidlhofer as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only

option” (2011: 7). English has reached a global status as a *lingua franca* in many domains. English is a common language used in many domains, such as education, business, sports and many more. Compared to other *lingua franca*, none have reached as widespread reach and application as English globally. (Björkman 2013: 2) Graddol listed twelve international domains in 1997, which have continued to use English increasingly as their working language (Graddol 1997: 8).

1. Working language of international organizations 2. Scientific publication 3. International banking, economic affairs and trade 4. Advertising for global brands 5. Audio - visual cultural products, e.g. TV, popular music 6. International tourism 7. Tertiary education 8. International safety 9. International law 10. In interpretation and translation as a relay language 11. Technology transfer 12. Internet communication and conferences.

Since World War II many scientific journals in Europe adopted English as the language of publication, instead of their native language for the purpose of gaining a wider audience. (Graddol 1997: 9). English articles are cited more than e.g. French articles in French journals. This seems to result in higher value for the English articles (Garfield 1989: 1, Björkman 2013: 10). Readers of Scandinavian and Dutch languages also seem to value more research articles written in English more (Ammon 2001). More recently, Ljosland (2007, 2008, 2011. Björkman 2013:20.) investigated the use of academic English in Norway. The studies project that Norway is on its way to a definite diglossia. Regarding doctoral work, it is reported that English is seen as more prestigious compared to Norwegian in thesis writing. The advantages of writing in English include easier employability and establishing a position in the research field. In addition, Ljosland reported that the majority of the participants had not reflected on their choice of the language. The results of the study show that English is favored in scientific publication and as a medium of instruction that has political support.

In European tertiary education English usage has increased. There are a growing number of exchange programs in English, the goal of which is to allow students to receive education in other EU countries, as well as programs for students from all over the world. Using English makes student and staff exchanges easier. In addition, collaborations between universities and job opportunities increase as a result (Björkman 2013: 14).

2.3. ENGLISH IN ACADEMIC CONTEXTS TERMINOLOGY

In this chapter, I will focus on terminology that can be used to describe the use of English in academic contexts. English medium instruction, EMI, is used to teach the language or other content and the teacher adapts their methods to support the meaning (British Council). In chapter 2.1. the meaning of

Lingua franca was defined. Academic English can be referred to as English as a *lingua franca in academics (ELFA)*. This term focuses on the spoken language use. ELFA corpus was started in 2001, (Mauranen & Ranta 2008, Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta 2010, Mauranen 2012). Another way to refer to the phenomenon of Academic English is *English for special purposes (ESP)* and its subcategory of *English for academic purposes (EAP)*.

2.3. GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is the process of denationalization of markets, politics and legal systems, i.e., the rise of the so-called global economy. (Mancini, 2012: vii).

One aspect of globalization has been the exponential growth of technology in a relatively short amount of time, especially the internet. This has changed the landscape for media around the world. Everyone who has access to internet, has access to news and information about almost anything. However, due to there being more users who can access information in English than other languages, there is more information available compared to other languages. Internet World Stats (2020) estimated the ratio of English users on the Internet to be 77% of all estimated users, followed by Spanish 70.4% and Chinese 60.1%. However, it is important to note that it is difficult for these statistics to be used consider a phenomenon that is as multi-faceted as language, the statistics provide an indicative, easier to approach understanding of the world. As such, multilingualism cannot be considered, as they assign only one language per person to have the all the language totals to add up to the total world population. Besides language speakers, we might observe how much content is available in English on the internet. Web Technology Surveys (2021) estimate English content websites to be 61.3% of all websites whose content language they know, which is considerable compared to the following languages, which are Russian 8.0% and Turkish 3.9%. By contrast, the content on the Internet seems to be overwhelmingly in English.

2.4. INTERNATIONALIZATION IN FINLAND

As the borders of the countries in the world seem to matter less with the emergence of the internet, one of the goals of education of children in comprehensive schooling in Finland is how to value one's own and other's heritage. Multiculturalism is seen as a positive resource. The aim is to teach children to recognize how cultures, religions and beliefs affect society and their lives every day. The pupils should be able to recognize cultural characteristics and be able to operate flexibly in different

environments. This “Tasks and aims of the comprehensive schooling” (2014: 21) is given top-down from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

The goal of higher education is to offer chances for *internationalization*. This can be seen in different Finnish universities’ policy documents. I have inspected some of the Finnish universities’ policies and language requirements as best that could be found on their websites. The universities in question are Aalto University, Helsinki University, University of Turku, University of Oulu and Jyväskylä University. As Universities are relatively independent organisations, each university has their own policy according and in consideration of the legal framework. To sum up my understanding of the universities’ policy documents, internationalization is seen as a way of enhancing competitiveness, as well as a chance for international employment. It could also raise the image and ranking of higher education institutions in a specific country or that of the institution in question.

2.5. ENGLISH IN ACADEMIC CONTEXTS IN FINLAND

The national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish (Language Act: section 1. 423/2003). As Finnish is the first language for majority of the population, most of the universities have mainly Finnish as the language of instruction and degrees. However, there are bilingual universities with Swedish and Finnish as their languages of choice, as well as universities with only Swedish as their main language. The Finnish law concerning universities under section 11 (558/2009) leaves the decision of using a language other than Finnish or Swedish as the language of instruction and degrees to the universities’ purview.

Section 11. -- 2. In addition, the universities may decide to use a language other than that referred to in subsection 1 as a language used for instruction and degrees.

In their language policies, Finnish universities strive to develop the national languages as languages of sciences, while also being a part of the international academic community. Their goals include enhancing multilingualism, as well as internationalization in their practices. Degrees in English are offered generally starting from master’s degrees. The university policies and language requirements referred to are Aalto University, Helsinki University, University of Turku, University of Oulu and Jyväskylä University.

As for the beginning of English in Finnish academia, it was chosen as an international language in the 1950s (Haarman & Holman 2011). Exchange programmes with US universities started in 1953.

By 1995 87.2 per cent of publications in the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics, medicine, mathematics) and for 82.5 per cent of publications in the social sciences (sociology, history, philosophy) was published in English (Ammon 2003, Ferguson 2006).

2.6. POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE REGARDING LANGUAGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Language policies are traditionally seen as *top-down language planning* (Jenkins 2014:74). Spolsky's (2004: 5-15) concept of language policy consists of three components: *practice*, *beliefs* and *management*. *Practices* can be observed i.e. they are what people actually do. *Beliefs* or *ideologies* which are important in this regard, are values and statuses given to languages, their varieties, and features. Status or value of a language variety are socio-economic in nature. They can be ascertained by how many people use it and what benefits the use gives to them. *Management* or traditionally *language planning*, means efforts of someone or a group that can claim authority over other people in a specific domain to influence their *practices* or *beliefs*.

Björkman (2014) has analysed university policy documents in Sweden and expanded on academic *English as lingua franca* in the Swedish academic context. Her results indicate that language policy documents refer heavily to official documents that have and that their primary aim is to promote and protect the Swedish language as decreed in documents such as the Language Act (2009). In the Finnish Language Act, in section 2, it is decreed that every person to have the right to use his or her own language (Referring to Finnish and Swedish in this section) with the authorities. Section 35 describes the Measures of promotion to linguistic rights of Finnish and Swedish speakers. According to Björkman, little focus is put on language practices in language policy documents. The descriptions of English use and considering English as a *lingua franca* in the organisation usually does not instruct the staff or students how they should use language in different situations or their everyday life as a part of the organisation. Björkman proposes that a more beneficial approach for policy documents would be to base them on research on actual language practices. She emphasizes local practices as a tool to achieve effectiveness.

3. PRESENT STUDY

3.1. THE AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of the study is to survey how Finnish university students feel about having to use English language in some capacity in their studies. I hope to compare results from different subgroups, such as age, gender, faculty and university of the respondents.

Research questions:

- 1) How positively and negatively do Finnish university students feel about possible “mandatory” use of English in their studies, and does this have a correlation with their major?
- 2) Is there a correlation between the degree of positive or negative feelings and other participant characteristics (e.g. gender, year of study)?

3.2. DATA COLLECTION

I approached all Finnish universities communications staff members for permission to distribute the online questionnaire among their undergraduate students. Some accepted and others declined distribution from other than their own students. Some I did not hear back, from. However, this might be due to poor planning on finding the person in charge of communication. In the cases, where the universities declined, I proceeded to approach these universities’ subject associations, and some agreed to distribute the questionnaire. I took a sample of the results because of time constraints, but the questionnaire is open until 31st of May.

3.3. PLANS AND PARTICIPANT CONSIDERATIONS

In the planning phase, I considered the possible respondents. In the year 2019, there were close to 154, 000 attending university students in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2020). In addition, it is reported that “Women completed the majority of university degrees [in 2019], nearly 60 per cent. The share was on level with the previous year.” This might be reflected in the data. In a way skewing the data but reflecting on the whole group.

How many is enough of respondents? According to Denscombe (2014:49), social research involves surveys with small numbers, 30-250, in practice. The pragmatic approach, which this study follows, uses non-probability sampling for a representative sample. The goal of this study was not to gather a large amount of data, as usually it is difficult to find out respondents. Many students are working on their thesis and decide to use survey as a method, as it is a fairly popular one, roughly at the same

time of the year, so I considered possible “questionnaire exhaustion”. Fortunately, there were more respondents than expected and I was able to collect a good amount of data.

3.4. DEFINING THE MAIN CONCEPTS

Examining positive or negative attitudes held by university students, requires that I define the main psychological concepts, which are *attitude* and *motivation*. “*An attitude is a learned disposition to think, feel and behave toward something.*” (Allport, 1935). Often, attitudes have been divided into in three components: cognition, affect, and behavior. Baker (1992), Gardner (1985) and Garret (2010) sum up these components. The cognitive component; thoughts and beliefs about the world; the affective component concerns feelings toward the object; the behavioral component concerns a readiness for action, and perhaps in ways that are consistent with the cognitive and affective judgments. Gardner & Lambert’s (1972) motivation theory was created to measure direct attitudes toward participants’ L1 and L2. The main theory is learner’s *orientation* refers to motivations for learning a second language. In the theory, there are two types of orientations: instrumental and integrative. An example of instrumental orientation would be to improve language skills to further one’s career or other utilitarian reasons. The language is used as means to reach a specific goal. Integrative orientation includes reasons to integrate or into the language community, to be able to communicate or appreciate the culture of the target language.

3.4. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Liu et al. (2018) examined direct language attitudes of English, Putonghua (also known as mandarin Chinese), as well as local dialects in the first-tier city Guangzhou, second-tier city Tianjin, and a small city of Yan’an. The study is significant, because they examined language attitudes of non-local subjects and attitudes toward three varieties across economically diverse cities. The study adopted Gardner & Lambert’s (1972) motivation theory to measure direct attitudes of the participants. Galloway and Rose (2013) examined attitudes in a bilingual business degree program at a Japanese university, where visiting senior and postgraduate international students are hired to assist sophomore students in the classroom to not only help students understand business concepts in the course, but to provide opportunity for real life English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) use as well as exposure to the English used by people from varied backgrounds. Akteruzzaman and Islam (2017) strived to assess the English language as a feature of globalization where English is considered to be of the utmost value. The study examined the commercial and linguistic aspects of English in Bangladesh to reach

a conclusion whether the mass perceives this very language as it should be or there are any other economic and cultural aspects. Yucedag and Karakas (2019) aimed to discover the perceptions of high school language division students towards English as a lingua franca in a Turkish province. Krishnasamy et al. (2013) strived to identify differences between the three ethnic groups, namely, Kadazans/Dusuns, Bajaus, and other minority ethnic groups on the beliefs about learning English as a second language based on the five variables, that is, language aptitude, language learning difficulty, language learning and communicating strategies, nature of language learning as well as learning motivation and expectation. A modified version of Horwitz's (1987) Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) was distributed.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. CONSIDERED METHODS

In the planning phase, I considered interview as a method. According to Kalaja et al. (2011: 131-134) it is a suitable method for collecting data for research about the subjects' experiences, opinions, or attitudes. In this method, the voice of the subjects becomes an integral part of the study. However, interview as a method does not provide direct information or information on the behavior of the subject. As the information is filtered through the individual's experiences and opinions, it is not objective information. By contrast, interviews enable the researcher to ascertain how the individual parses through different situations or how the study subjects experience the phenomenon that is being studied. As the data is unequivocally linked to the context of the interview and the participants of the interview, the collected data should not be taken out of the context. The interview types are structured, semi-structured and open interviews. In the end, I feel that interview would be a suitable method for a study to further the present study. I set out to explore the topic and build a general idea of the phenomenon. The method that I chose for this goal was survey. I strive to *describe characteristics of a population by examining a sample of that group* (Dörnyei 2007). According to Peer (2012), surveys are best used for explorative research. As such, I am not looking cause-effect relations, which surveys are not well suited for. The main data gathering method for survey studies are questionnaires. The results of questionnaires are generally quantitative. The data will be analysed using statistical analysis. I will start with the null hypothesis to figure out if the variables have a link or not. The possible tests to use after that include factor analysis or correlation analysis.

4.2. THE PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

The participants of the pilot were former university students. As such, they would not be a part of the focus group but have had similar experiences. In the light of the answers and the comments, I decided to make the introduction, which includes notes about privacy, consent and how to contact me clearer and easier to understand. In addition, I modified the instructions similarly based on the feedback. A consideration that arose from the pilot was how to ask the respondents to self-evaluate their language skills adequately. I added a part on how difficult the respondents felt the four aspects of language proficiency i.e. listening, reading writing and speaking, were in their situation. Another new question that arose, was whether the respondents had completed compulsory language and communication studies, and if this would have a correlation with negative feelings or difficulties or not. Similarities were eliminated and some questions were merged.

4.4. THE FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

As my intention is to gather data about attitudes and opinions, I have opted to use Likert scale. It is a widely used scale in social research. To explore student attitudes, I will be using a modified Attitude and Motivational battery test (Gardner 2002).

I approached all Finnish universities communications staff members for permission to distribute the questionnaire among their undergraduate students. Some accepted and others declined distribution from other than their own students. Some I did not hear back, from. However, this might be due to poor planning on finding the person in charge of communication. In the cases, where the universities declined, I proceeded to approach these universities' subject associations, and some agreed to distribute the questionnaire. I took a sample of the results because of time constraints, but the questionnaire is open until 31st of May. The questionnaire was built in four parts. Part 1 had 1-7 point Likert scale for language skill self-evaluative questions on the basic aspects of language skills i.e. listening, reading, writing and speaking. Part 2 was modelled after Gardner's Attitude Motivational Battery Test. It had also 1-7 Likert scale with statements concerning anxiety and motivation. Part 3 listed possible aspect that might have a positive effect on the respondents' English language proficiency, which included option 8=Does not apply to me. Part 4, the final question was an open question that was left for the respondents to provide more information or context for a specific answer that they might want to expand on or to give comments on the questionnaire in general.

4.3. CONTENT ANALYSIS

With the addition of the final question (Ch 4.2. The Pilot Questionnaire) that was open for comments on the survey, there was need for an additional method. Content analysis allows researchers to analyse relatively unstructured data concerning the meanings, symbolic qualities and expressive contents, as well as the communicative roles that these play for the study subjects (Krippendorff. 2018:51). Content analysis is used to break down text into smaller units that are then categorized. The units are analysed for frequency of the relationships between them. The analysis portrays the order of occurrence. It can be used to consider values and opinions, as well as how different ideas are related. On one hand, content analysis is a great method for quantifying a text and it can easily be repeated by other researchers. On the other hand, there is an in-built tendency to take the units and their meaning out of the context, which might even blur the writer's intentions. Content analysis is not good with implied meanings of a text (Denscombe. 2014: 283-285). With the constraints of resources and time, I wagered content analysis to be a suitable method.

4.2. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A survey includes personal information from the participants. I will strive to collect the least amount of personal information as possible. Personal data should only be relevant for answering the research questions. I will collect the data anonymously and the participants should not be recognizable. I will be the one responsible for collecting and storing the information correctly. I will store the data to university U-drive. The data should be deleted after completing the thesis. The thesis will be published in JYX, so the participants need to be made aware of that. The data will be used only for the thesis. I will include a form for data privacy notice and consent (notification for the research subjects) and the paperwork for permission from the university authorities. As cited in data privacy instructions, in case of academic research, the legal basis for processing personal data is usually public interest (University of Jyväskylä. 2021).

5. SMALL GLOSSARY FOR STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In surveys we can look at frequency, average or distribution of a factor or factors, as well as correlations and associations between two or more factors. Statistical tests of significance are used to give proof of possible links between the factors. The following glossary lists the used statistical terms.

5.1. THE NULL HYPOTHESIS

Statistical significance tests answer the following questions: “How strong the connections between the variables are?” and “Is A caused by B or do they occur independently?” Denscombe recommends that social researchers start with the null hypothesis. If statistical probability is less than 1 in 20 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is not in effect (Denscombe 2014). Everything is a coincidence, until proven otherwise.

5.2. THE MEAN I.E. THE ARITHMETIC AVERAGE

The mean describes equal distribution of values. It can be used with interval and ratio data. However, the mean is affected by extreme outliers. A way to make the results less distorted is to use a larger sample. It is the safest method, when there are relatively few outliers and those that exist balance and cancel each other out. The mean may lead to strange descriptions. (A fraction of normally full numbers) They should not be taken as literal, but statistical descriptions (Denscombe 2014:253).

5.3. THE MEDIAN I.E. THE MIDDLE POINT

The idea of ‘average’ might be associated with the idea of ‘middle of the range’. The median is a middle point of a group of numbers. On both sides of it are exactly the same amount of numbers. The median is not affected by extreme outliers (Denscombe 2014:254).

5.4. STANDARD DEVIATION

Standard deviation expresses how much the values varied from the mean on average. The greater the dispersion, the larger the standard deviation. Standard deviation can be processed further and is a basis of many other statistical procedures. However, it can be used only with cardinal numbers i.e. interval and ratio data (Denscombe 2014:257).

5.5. CHI SQUARE TEST

The purpose of the Chi square test is to test the independence of two categorical variables (Webropol 3.0).

5. ANALYSING THE RESULTS

5.1. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

I approached all Finnish universities communications staff members for permission to distribute the questionnaire among their undergraduate students. Some accepted and others declined distribution from other than their own students. Some I did not hear back from. However, this might be due to not finding the correct person in charge of communication. In the cases, where the universities declined, I proceeded to approach these universities' subject associations, and some agreed to distribute the questionnaire. I took a sample of the results. At that time there were 779 respondents. The questionnaire was left open until May 31st of 2021. Of these responses, those who had not answered appropriately were discarded. This left 764 responses.

5.2. DESCRIBING THE RESPONDENT DISTRIBUTION

The average age of the respondents was 25,5 years. Distribution of the respondent's age was concentrated mostly on the 20-30 years of age range (Table 1.). The biggest age group was 20-24, of who there were 57%. The second biggest age group was 25-29, of who there were 23% (Table2.). The third biggest age group was 30-34, of who there were 7%. This is indicative of the age when most people study at university. Something to note is that under 20 and over 50 were both 4%, which might be referred that most university students do not start their university studies straight after secondary education. In addition, it is possible to start even after reaching 50 years of age. Most of the respondents were female, 75%, whereas there were 22% male respondents and 3% other (Table3.). In this case, the data is skewed to represent more female respondents. However, this is indicative of reflecting the number of female students in higher education, as mentioned in Ch 3.3. Plans and Participant considerations. Statistics from Faculties represented were Humanities and Social Sciences 32%, Mathematics, Technology and Science 22%, Business and Economics 17%, Information Technology 13%, Educational Sciences and Psychology 12%, Language and Communication 2%, Health Sciences 2%, and Law 0% (i.e. 1 respondent) (Table 4.). As the categorisation of the faculties varied from university to university, I simplified them for the purposes of clarity. The naming of the faculties in this way was made according to best of my understanding of the faculties' domains seen from the universities' websites. Most of the respondents, 49%, reported their home university as Jyväskylä University. 22% of the respondents were from University of Turku, 13% were from Vaasa University, 10% from Tampere University and 6% from University of Eastern Finland. Limitations of the participant distribution will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7. Conclusion.

Table1. Respondent age distribution

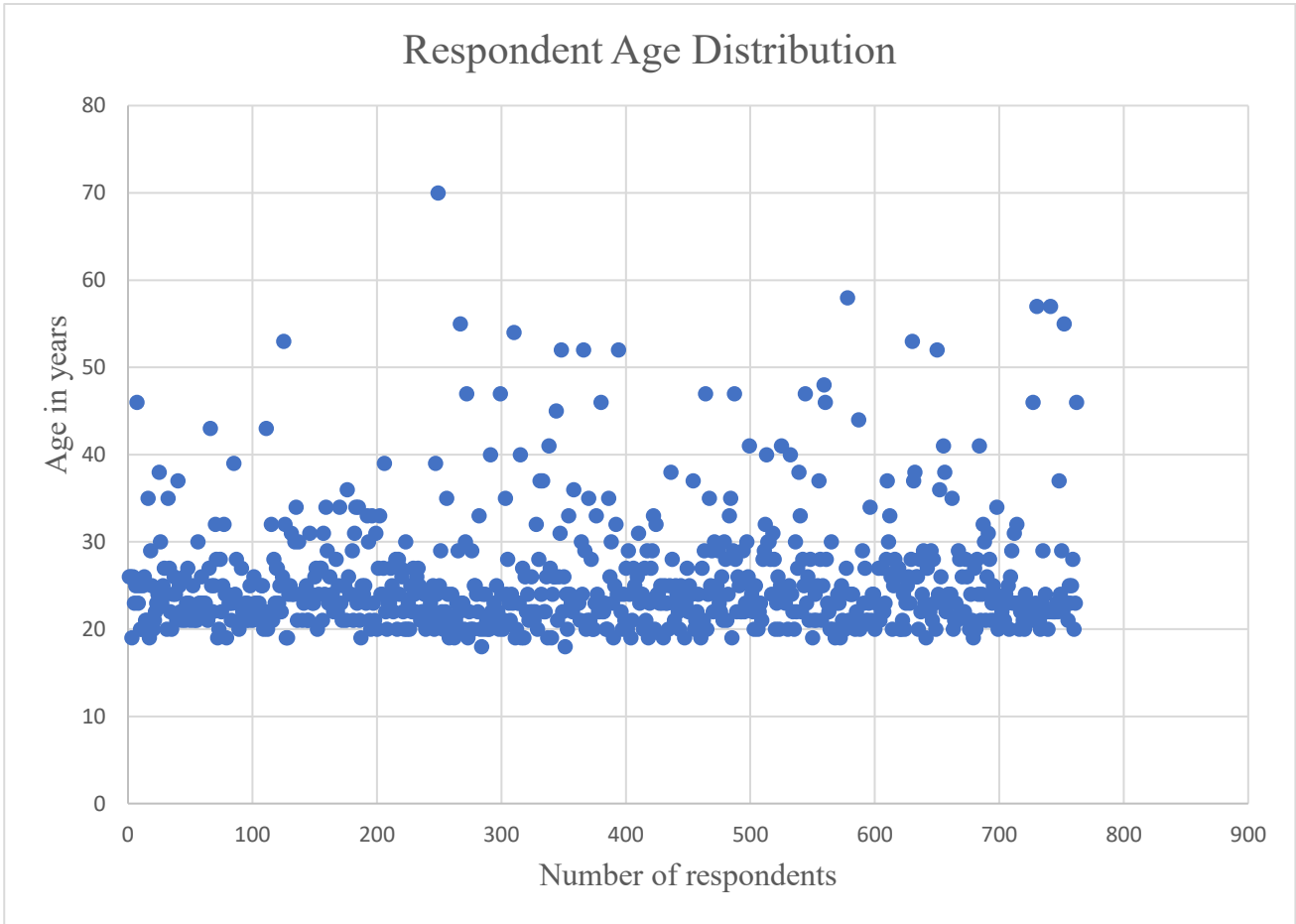


Table 2. Age of the respondents, per cent and number of respondents

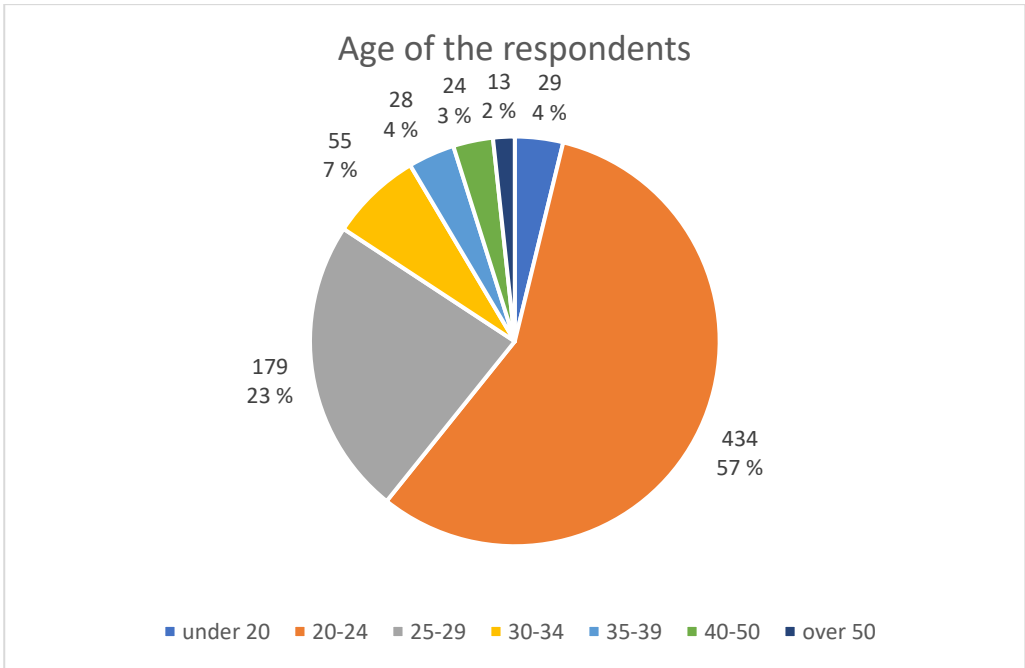


Table 3. Gender of the respondents, per cent and number of respondents

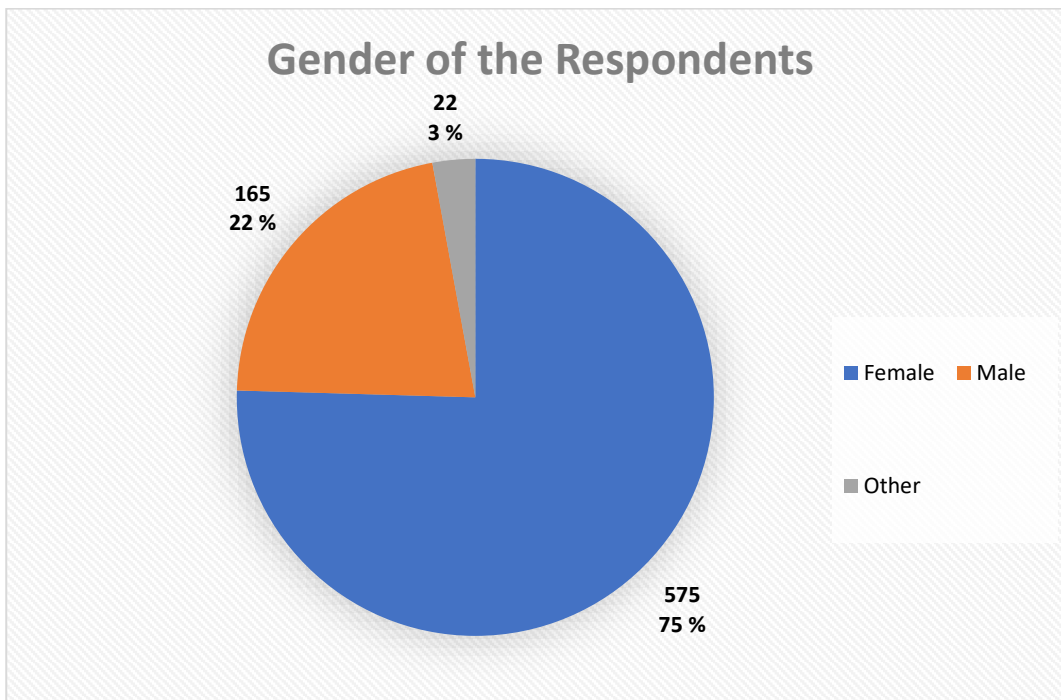
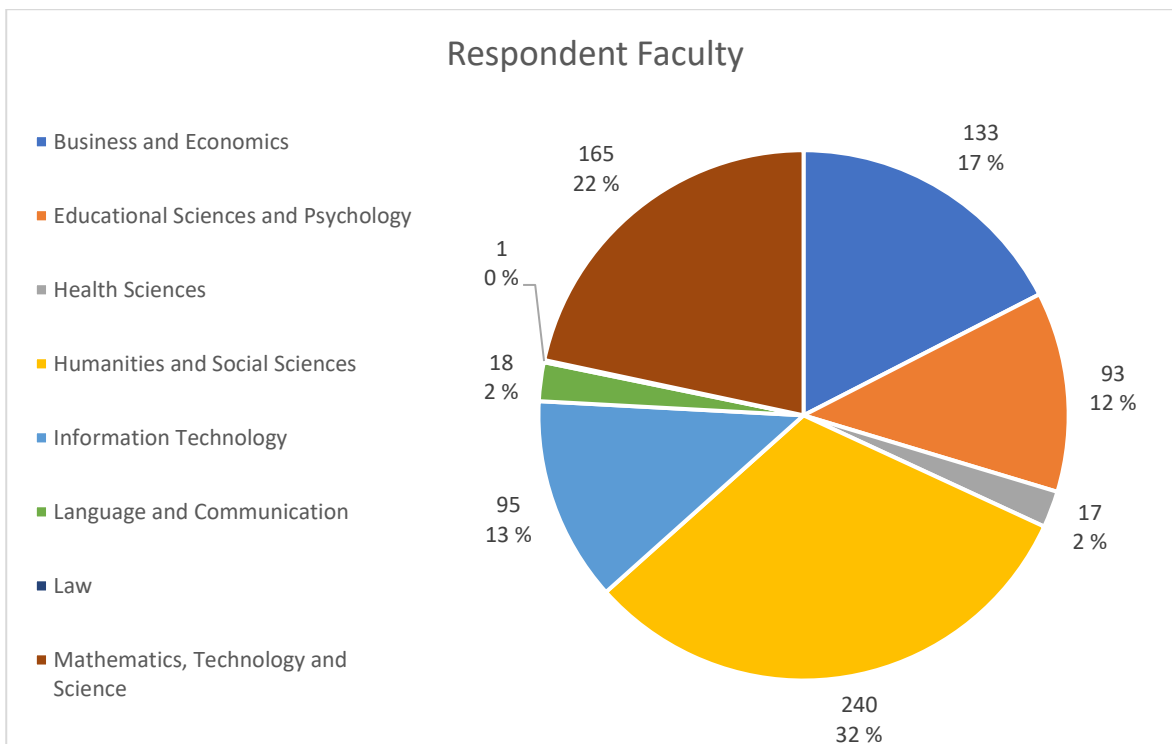
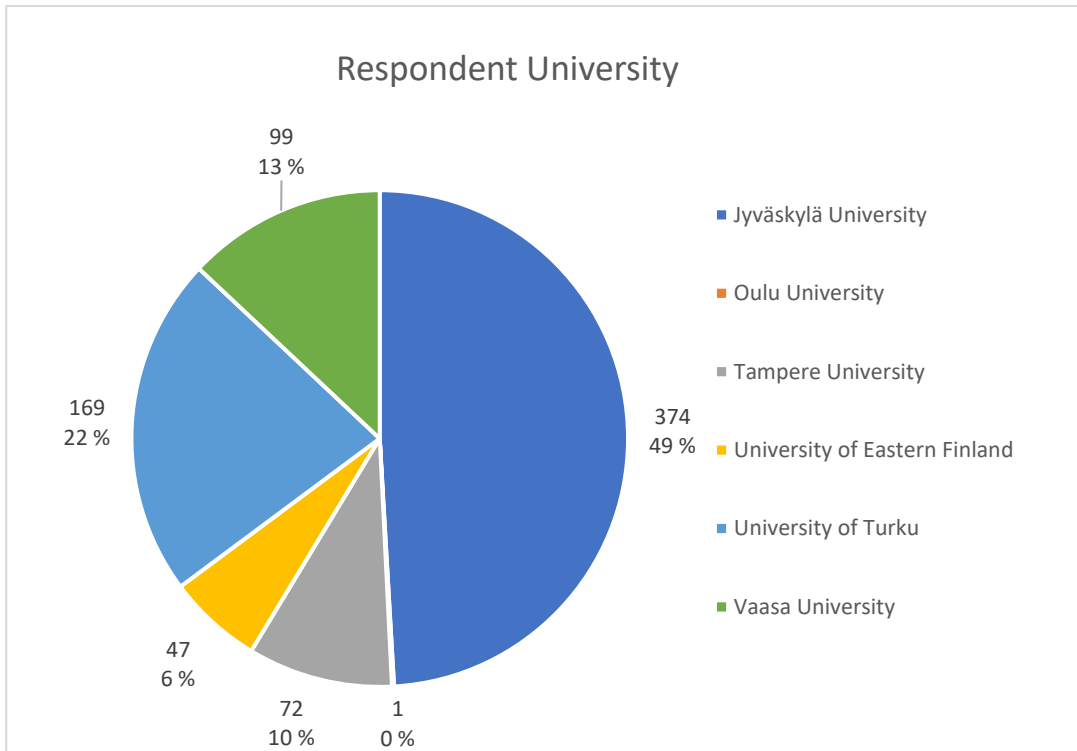


Table 4. Respondent faculty, per cent and number of respondents



5. Respondent university, per cent and number of respondents



5.2. QUESTIONNAIRE SCORES

Next, the scores of the questionnaire will be considered in three sections: respondents' self-evaluation of their English proficiency (Table 6. and 7.), Attitude Motivational Battery Test, (Table 8., 9. and 10.) and possible positive or negative language use environments (Table 11. and 12.). The instruction to fill the questionnaire was to select the most appropriate answer on a Likert-scale from 1-7, 1 being strongly disagree and 7 being strongly agree. In section 3, option 8 "Does not apply to me" was added. It was later omitted from the complete scores of Table 12. to not affect the results. The amount of "Does not apply to me" answers can be seen in Table 11.

5.3. SELF-EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCORES

Concerning self-evaluation of English language proficiency, the average score was relatively low, between 2-3.3. Median scores varied from 2 to 3. From this might be inferred that on average the respondents did not consider listening, reading, writing, and speaking in English to be overly difficult. From these categories, writing and speaking were considered slightly more difficult on average. In addition, Chi square test was used to test the independence of the statement categories. The variables considered were age, gender, faculty, and

university of the respondents. From Table 7. can be inferred that there was no statistical significance between these variables and the statements.

5.4. ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE SCORES

In this section, the scores of statements modelled after Gardner's Attitude and Motivational Battery Test will be considered (Table 8.-10.). The lowest scores were given to statements concerning passive language use i.e. listening, understanding, as well motivational feelings of uncertainty or by contrast, feeling at ease in language use situations. On average the scores range from 3-4. By contrast, most of the respondents agreed more with scores ranging on average from 5-7 with statements conveying nervousness in explaining scientific concepts and anxiety related to others' perceptions of their skills in front of their peers. Other high scores were given to statements, which included integrative motivation i.e. allowing them to communicate with English speakers, understanding and appreciating culture, as well as gaining knowledge through language use. Considering the variable of age, there was a statistical significance with the following statements: "I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear" ($p=0.603$), "I need to learn more than basic vocabulary related to my field" ($p=0.770$), "Learning English can be important to me because it will make me more knowledgeable" ($p=0.991$), and "Learning English can be important to me because it will be useful in getting a job" ($p=0.894$). Concerning the variable of gender, the only statement with statistical significance was "Learning English can be important to me, because it will allow me to converse with English speakers" ($p=0.922$). The faculty of the respondents was statistically significant for the following statements: "I get anxious during lectures that are delivered in English" ($p=0.552$), "I would get nervous if I had to explain a concept from my studies in English" ($p=0.741$), "I feel at ease when I speak in English" ($p=0.780$), "I feel anxious about what other students think of me when I speak in English" ($p=0.655$), "It is important to me to be able to read scientific articles from my field in English" ($p=0.641$), "Learning English can be important to me, because it will allow me to converse with English speakers" ($p=0.703$) and "Learning English can be important to me because it will make me more knowledgeable" ($p=0.847$). Lastly, the university of the respondents will be considered. It is important to note that most of the respondents were from Jyväskylä University as the results will reflect more on them. In the scores, statistically significant results were: "I get anxious during lectures that are delivered in English" ($p=0.708$), "I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear" ($p=0.616$), "I need to learn more than basic vocabulary related to my field" ($p=0.639$) and "Learning English can be important to me because it will make me more knowledgeable" ($p=0.978$).

Comparing the results with Liu et al. (2018:15-16), their statements of integrative orientation towards English for migrant students was high (Table 9.), on average 5-6 in all the cities they surveyed. Questions of instrumental orientation had more varied scores, ranging from 4.5 to 6 on average (Table 10.). The scores of the present study of integrative orientation i.e. language learning with the goal of e.g. experiencing and appreciating cultural aspects of language, was more agreed with a score of 5 to 6 on average. Instrumental orientation questions received lower scores of 2.5-4, from which can be inferred that the feelings of English language as a tool for achieving other goals was not agreed with or neutral. Anxiety as affecting motivation received scores from 3-4.

Table 6. Questionnaire scores: Respondent's self-evaluation of their English language proficiency, 1-7 Likert scale, 1=Strongly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 7=Strongly agree

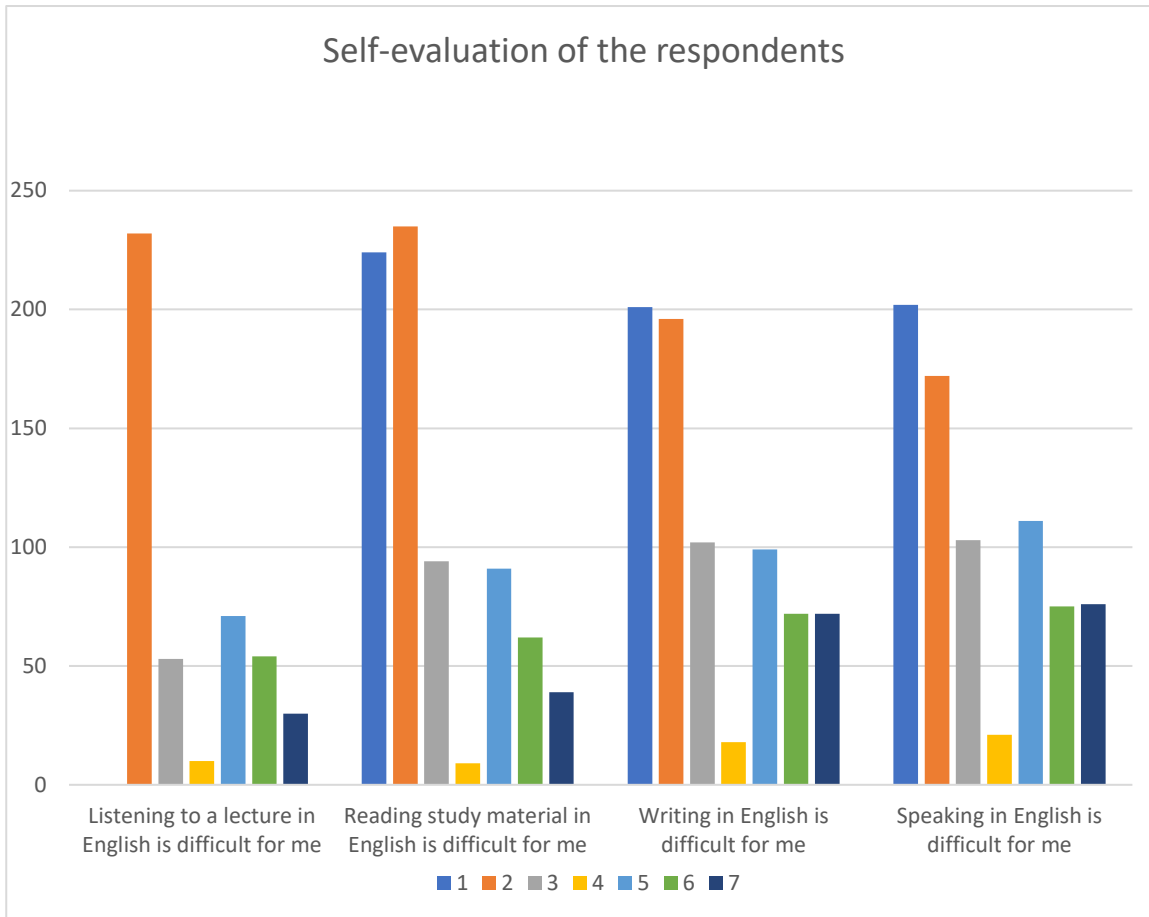


Table 7. Complete scores of the Questionnaire Part 1: Self-evaluation, 1-7 Likert scale, 1=Strongly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 7=Strongly agree

Statement	Average	Median	Standard deviation	Age (p)	Gender (p)	Faculty (p)	University (p)
Listening to a lecture in English is difficult for me	2.4443	2	1.8143	0.001	0.001	0.325	0.456
Reading study material in English is difficult for me	2.8011	2	1.8781	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.026
Writing in English is difficult for me	3.1605	2	2.0515	0.009	0.002	0.214	0.477
Speaking in English is difficult for me	3.2579	3	2.0805	0.721	0.292	0.161	0.107

Table 8. Scores of Attitude and Motivational questions, 1-7 Likert scale, 1=Strongly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 7=Strongly agree

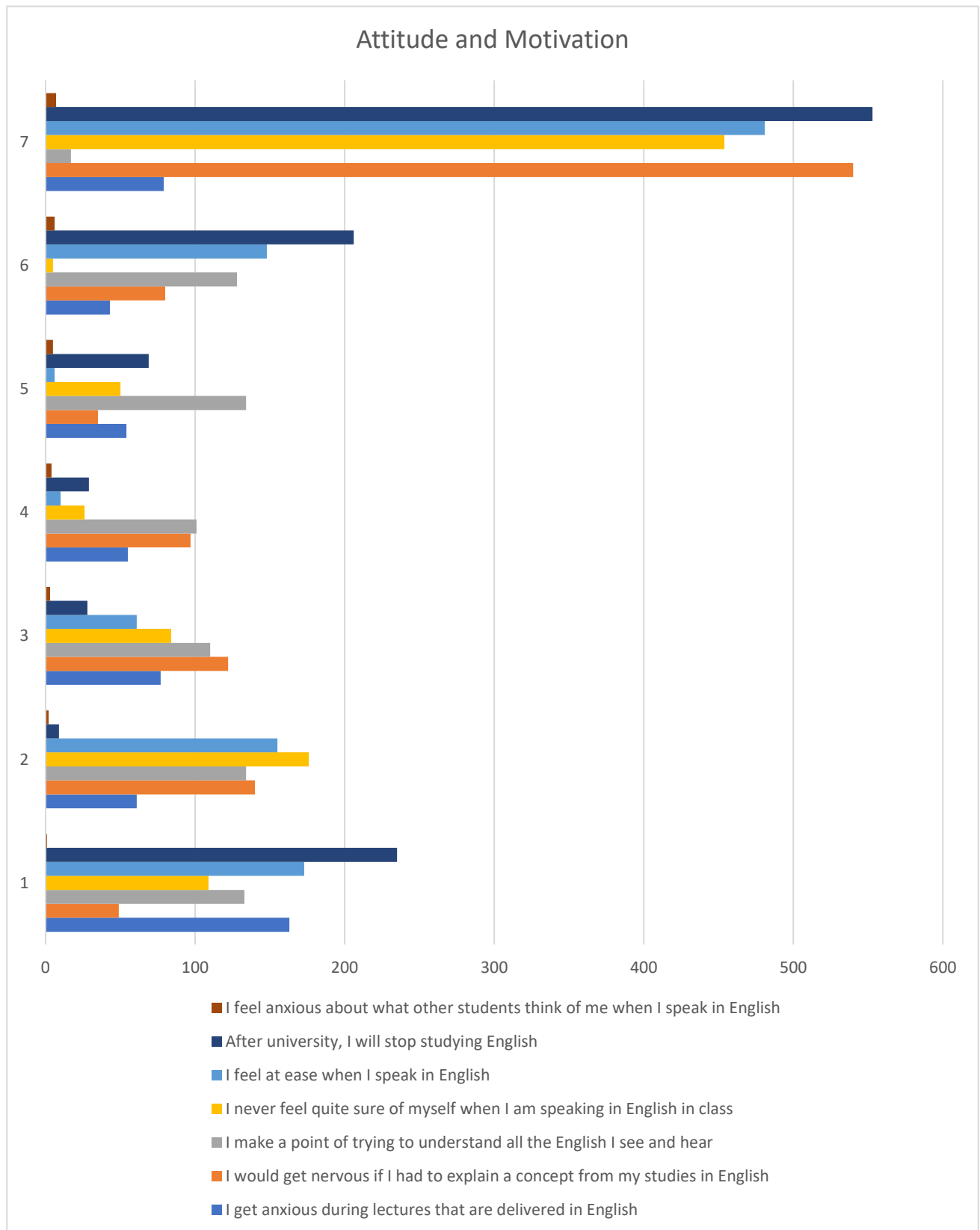


Table 9. Scores of “Learning English” Questions, 1-7 Likert scale, 1=Strongly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 7=Strongly agree

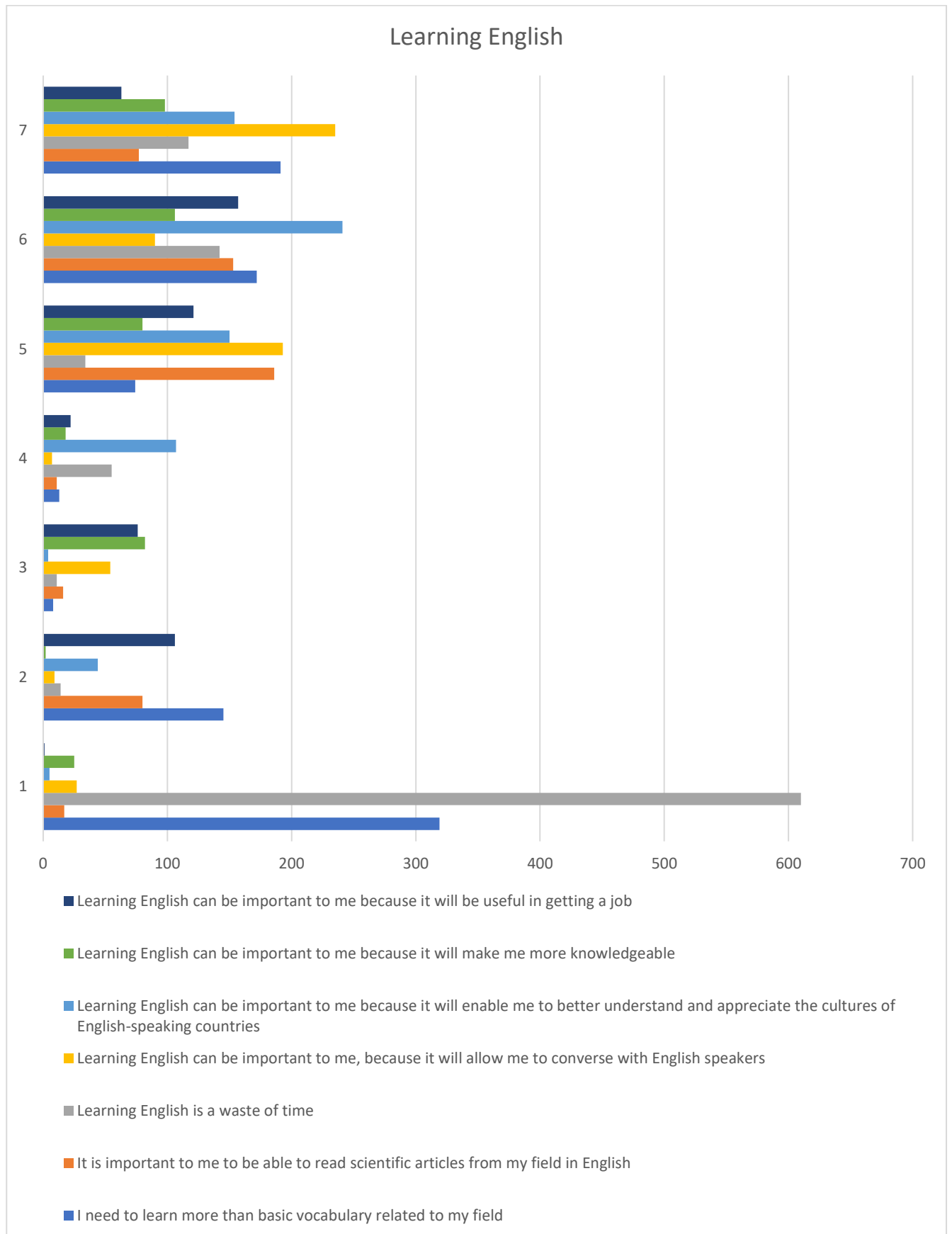


Table 10. Complete scores of the Questionnaire Part 2: Attitude and Motivational Questions, 1-7 Likert scale, 1=Strongly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 7=Strongly agree

Statement	Average	Median	Standard deviation	Age (p)	Gender (p)	Faculty (p)	University (p)
I get anxious during lectures that are delivered in English	3.7684	3	2.1927	0.027	0.000	0.552	0.708
I would get nervous if I had to explain a concept from my studies in English	5.2213	6	1.9161	0.000	0.000	0.741	0.040
I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear	4.0518	5	2.237	0.603	0.001	0.295	0.616
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English in class	3.9711	4	2.0619	0.373	0.061	0.301	0.470
I feel at ease when I speak in English	3.2579	3	1.9619	0.014	0.037	0.780	0.471
I need to learn more than basic vocabulary related to my field	2.4484	2	1.6808	0.770	0.000	0.054	0.639
After university, I will stop studying English	3.3092	2.5	2.1652	0.477	0.000	0.001	0.148
I feel anxious about what other students think of me when I speak in English	6.4265	7	1.2198	0.281	0.000	0.655	0.221
It is important to me to be able to read scientific articles from my field in English	1.4295	1	1.1497	0.00	0.000	0.641	0.493
Learning English is a waste of time	6.1089	7	1.4849	0.458	0.000	0.008	0.385

Learning English can be important to me, because it will allow me to converse with English speakers	6.3905	7	1.0574	0.000	0.922	0.703	0.479
Learning English can be important to me because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the cultures of English-speaking countries	5.2536	6	1.6174	0.000	0.180	0.124	0.064
Learning English can be important to me because it will make me more knowledgeable	6.6366	7	0.7311	0.991	0.364	0.847	0.978
Learning English can be important to me because it will be useful in getting a job	4.3311	5	1.7631	0.894	0.354	0.011	0.219

5.5. POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE LANGUAGE USE EFFECTS QUESTIONNAIRE SCORES

The instruction to fill the questionnaire was to select the most appropriate answer on a Likert-scale from 1-7, 1 being strongly disagree and 7 being strongly agree. In section 3, option 8 “Does not apply to me” was added. It was later omitted from the complete scores of Table 12. to not affect the results. The amount of “Does not apply to me” answers can be seen in Table 11. From it can be inferred that overwhelmingly the following categories did not apply to most of the respondents: “English language studies as a minor subject”, “Student exchange”, “Travelling abroad” and “Living or working abroad”. Most positive responses (5-7) were given to following categories: “Compulsory language courses”, “Travelling abroad” and “Using language during your free time or in personal life”. For those that felt like the categories were a part of their life felt these categories affected them positively averaging from 5-6. Statistical significance with age as a variable was found from the following statements: “English language studies as a minor subject” ($p=0.998$), “Student exchange” ($p=0.973$), “Living or working abroad” ($p=1.000$) and “Using language during your free time or in personal life” ($p=0.965$). The variable of gender was statistically significant for “Compulsory language

courses” (p=0.671) and “Using language during your free time or in personal life” (p=0.997). Faculty of the respondents was statistically significant for the following categories: “English language studies as a minor subject” (p=1.000), “Student exchange” (p=0.997), “Travelling abroad” (p=0.583), “Living or working abroad” (p=0.832), as well as “Using language during your free time or in personal life” (p=0.643). For the last variable, university of the respondent, all categories were statistically significant.

Table 11. Positive and Negative Language Use Effects, 1-8 Likert scale, 1=Strongly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 7=Strongly agree, 8=Does not apply to me

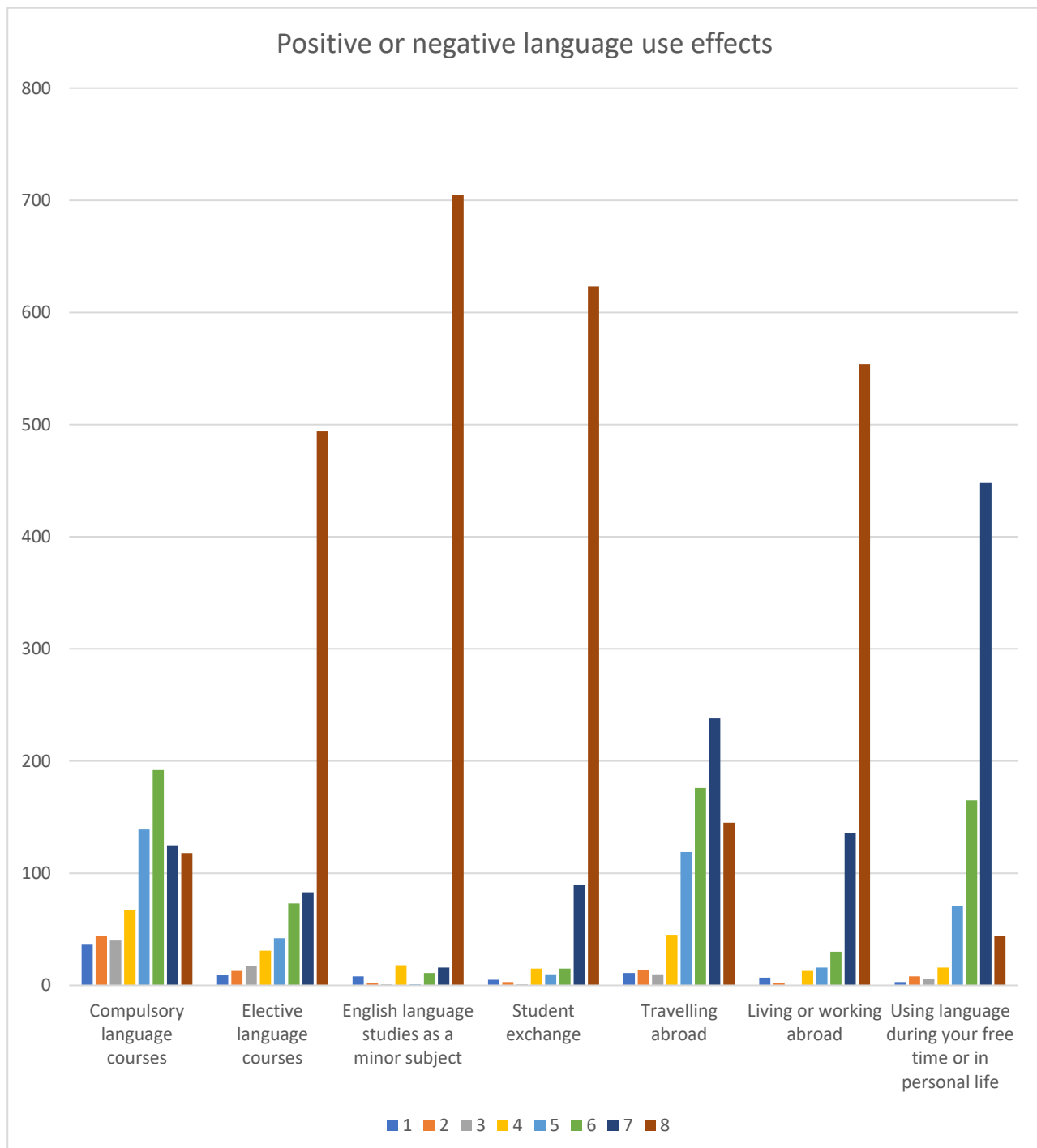


Table 12. Complete scores of the Questionnaire Part 3: Positive and Negative Language Use Effects, 1-8 Likert scale, 1=Strongly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 7=Strongly agree, 8=Does not apply to me

Statement	Average	Median	Standard deviation	Age (p)	Gender (p)	Faculty (p)	University (p)
Compulsory language courses	5.0295	5	1.716	0.352	0.671	0.268	0.836
Elective language courses	5.3694	6	1.6517	0.143	0.113	0.395	1.000
English language studies as a minor subject	4.7368	4	2.0661	0.998	0.282	1.000	1.000
Student exchange	6.0719	7	1.5726	0.973	0.277	0.997	1.000
Travelling abroad	5.8186	6	1.3447	0.312	0.265	0.583	0.998
Living or working abroad	6.2562	7	1.4013	1.000	0.162	0.832	1.000
Using language during your free time or in personal life	6.3905	7	1.0102	0.965	0.997	0.643	0.992

5.6. CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE OPEN QUESTION

In the following section, a sample of the answers to the open question will be discussed (Table 13.). The instances are counted from the 11 of all 31 pages of the comments, which were 246 in total. Most of the answers were in Finnish, but there were also some answers left in English. The text was searched for engl* to include varieties of Finnish conjugation. Units related to this search were then categorised and counted in the Table 13. below. Topics that arose from the comments concerned language, feelings of inequality, frustration and anxiety, motivation or lack of it, difficulties with producing language, English as an academic language, experiences of inadequacy, the presupposition that “everybody can use English”. Positive comments were linked to student exchange, travel and use of English during free time. The biggest category by far were comments describing English as an academic language. Some were linked to frustration and were negative feelings e.g. uncertainty and

anxiousness. Some lamented that it is difficult even for native speakers. Some of the responses were quite neutral in tone, describing English as an academic language that all need to learn. Other bigger categories were “uncertainty/anxiousness and the presupposition of “Everybody can use English”. Those who felt that it did not describe them had negative learning experiences and felt that their courses or study programs did not adequately prepare them to use English. There were some respondents who felt the use of English as unfair or that it was arduous to translate English study materials into Finnish essays. There were also respondents who felt motivated to learn and their beliefs aligned with the importance of a common language.

Table 13. A sample of the open answers

Category	Instances
Former schooling in English	5
No motivation	5
Want to improve	8
Uncertainty/anxiousness	10
Producing language is difficult	7
Too much emphasis on English	5
Unfair	3
Arduous	6
English is the academic language	22
Offered courses during study program inadequate/Infrequent use of English	8
“Everybody can use English” presupposition during courses	10
Student exchange as a positive effect	6
Travel as a positive effect	3
Use during free time as a positive effect	12

7. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to get a general picture of how positively and/or negatively Finnish university students feel about possible “mandatory” use of English in their studies, and does this have a correlation with their major? The results indicated that on average the respondents did not consider listening, reading, writing, and speaking in English to be overly difficult. From these categories, writing and speaking were considered slightly more difficult on average. The variables of age, gender, faculty, and university of the respondents were not statistically significant.

The scores of the present study of integrative orientation i.e. language learning with the goal of e.g. experiencing and appreciating cultural aspects of language, was more agreed with a score of 5 to 6 on average.

Instrumental orientation questions received lower scores of 2.5-4, from which can be inferred that the feelings of English language as a tool for achieving other goals was not agreed with or neutral. Anxiety as affecting motivation received scores from 3-4. The positive or negative effects linked to language use surveyed was indicative that overwhelmingly the categories of “English language studies as a minor subject”, “Student exchange”, “Travelling abroad” and “Living or working abroad” did not apply to most of the respondents. Most positive responses (5-7) were given to following categories: “Compulsory language courses”, “Travelling abroad” and “Using language during your free time or in personal life”. For those that felt like the categories were a part of their life felt these categories affected them positively averaging from 5-6. Statistical significance with discussed variables was found in some categories. Topics found in the content analysis of the open question by size were English as an academic language, feelings of “uncertainty/anxiousness and the presupposition of “Everybody can use English”. The study was explorative in nature and strived to provide a general overview of the phenomenon of English in academic setting from the student perspective.

7.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

I will next discuss the limitations and possible improvements of the study outside of technical problems and limitations of a first-time questionnaire maker.

Survey as a method enables to build a generalised picture of the whole group based on a sample of it. As such, the study is limited to a general view and deeper understanding of the subject requires a different approach. The study is also limited in how the researcher builds the questionnaire and how it is to be answered. There is little room for spontaneity and answers outside the box. In addition, there is the possibility that the respondent does not answer the question in a way that it was intended. As a matter of fact, despite the pilot questionnaire, there were some questions that were difficult to interpret by some respondents, which was inferred from their comments.

The limitation of self-assessment is that it can never be completely objective as there is the way we see ourselves that might greatly differ how others see us. Somewhere in between there is theoretically “the truthful view”. A more thorough assessment of language skills could be achieved with a standardised test. However, such a test is not required after upper secondary school. As it would be appropriate to obtain results of the respondent’s current skill level. This study is limited in its scope as a general view of the sample group.

Pondering on the distribution of the respondents, it needs to be considered that most would perhaps answer a questionnaire from their home university more readily than those from other universities. In addition, it might be that the correct personnel were not reached for distribution. Some universities had also limitation in distributing questionnaires from students that were not their own. A more throughout investigation of the distribution gaps would be required.

Despite wanting to keep the study mostly quantitative, the open question provided a good number of interesting answers. These answers might have provided enough data for another thesis. One aspect that I was not conscious of was the presupposition regarding the respondents. As it is a researcher's bias to see the world through one's own experience, I had expected most respondents to be Finnish speakers. The limitations of time and scope of this study did not enable to consider bilingual or multilingual respondents and their experiences. This is one option for further enquiry. Another option could be English as an academic language and perceptions towards it. The topic of inequality of language users rose from those who felt being in an unfair position and that English language was emphasised too much, as well as from respondents who felt their own skills to be good, but also considered the position of less skilled people in their point of view. Unfortunately, I do not have required time to look more in depth into the open answers as they were a relatively small portion in the scope of the whole study.

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