

**BUSINESS MAJORS' ATTITUDES TO AND BELIEFS  
ABOUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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Master's Thesis  
English language  
Faculty of Humanities  
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Spring 2021

# UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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Title Business Majors' Attitudes to and Beliefs about the English Language	
Subject English	Level Master's Thesis
Month and year May 2021	Number of pages 73 + appendix
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Maisterintutkielmani tutkii kauppatieteiden opiskelijoiden asenteita ja uskomuksia englannin kielstä yritysmaailmassa. Keskeisenä käsitteenä tutkimuksessa toimi BELF (<i>Business English as Lingua Franca</i>). Käsite tarkoittaa yritysmaailmassa käytettävää englannin kieltä, kun kanssakäymisessä osapuolet eivät jaa samaa äidinkieltä tai englantia äidinkielenään.</p> <p>Tutkimus toteutettiin kolmiosaisen kyselyn avulla, joka sisälsi sekä suljettuja että avoimia kysymyksiä koskien osallistujien asenteita ja uskomuksia. Kysely toteutettiin Webropolin välityksellä ja siihen osallistui 98 kauppatieteiden opiskelijaa Jyväskylän yliopistosta ja Turun yliopistosta. Kyselyn tulokset analysoitiin sekä määrällisin menetelmin että sisällönanalyysin avulla.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat, että kauppatieteiden opiskelijoiden asenteet vaihtelevat riippuen heidän kokemuksistaan englannin kielen kanssa ja heidän omista urahaaveistaan. Tutkimuksen osalliset osoittivat pääosin positiivisia sekä neutraaleja asenteita BELFin käyttöä kohtaan, sillä he tunnustivat sen olemassaolon ja tärkeyden yritysmaailmassa. Negatiivisia tunteita esiintyi suurimmaksi osin osallistujien oman englannin taidon vuoksi tai kokemuksen puutteesta johtuen. Tulevaisuuden uskomuksia koskien tutkimushenkilöt totesivat näkevänsä englannin roolin pysyvänä ja tärkeänä heidän tulevaisuudessaan riippumatta siitä, työskentelevätkö he Suomessa vai ulkomailla. Osallistujista suuri osa ilmaisi halua työskennellä kansainvälisessä yrityksessä tulevaisuudessa ja näki englannin taidon ja sen kehittämisen tärkeänä osana omaa ammatillista osaamistaan.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset toimivat hyvänä lähtökohtana tulevalle tutkimukselle. Halu parantaa englannin kielen taitoja varsinkin alakohtaisella tasolla tuo esiin tärkeän kysymyksen yritysten sisäisestä sekä työhön valmentavan koulutuksen tarpeesta englannin kielen suhteen. Varsinkin puhetaidot ja alakohtainen sanasto nähtiin tärkeiksi kehityskohteiksi tulevaisuudessa.</p>	
Keywords language attitude, beliefs, BELF, ELF, mixed analysis method, content analysis	
Depository University of Jyväskylä	
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The English language holds a unique position in the world of business communication. The demand for a common communicative tool has been fulfilled by the conceptualization of Business English as Lingua Franca (BELF). *English as a lingua franca* (ELF) refers to English used as a communicative tool between people who are non-native speakers of English. The added “B” (*business*) in BELF conveys the context in which ELF is used; it concerns speakers who use ELF within the context of their profession and to conduct their work with other international professionals (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta, 2005, 403-404). BELF refers to English as a language of business, while recognizing the multinationality, -lingualism, and -culturality of the contexts it appears in (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 205).

The majority of English speakers nowadays are non-native speakers of English (Crystal, 2012, 69). This is true of business as well: most English speakers in businesses are non-native speakers as well, and their number is in constant growth (Nickerson, 2015, 391-392). Regardless of English having the status of a foreign language in Finland, English is a staple requirement for job seekers in nearly all businesses (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010). This is due to the status of English as a *lingua franca* of the business world and the fact that Finnish businesses are operating ever more internationally. Finns need to be able to compete with their foreign competitors, and an ability to communicate efficiently is a definite advantage for competition (Grosse, 2004, 366).

As a field, linguistics considers all languages and variations of languages completely equal. However, from the perspective of social psychology, languages stimulate different attitudes. Language attitude research holds great importance for predicting and analyzing certain behaviors and cultural formations based on the attitudes that individuals have toward languages (Solís Obiols, 2002). In addition to attitudes, a related concept is beliefs. Compared to attitudes, beliefs relate to more prevalent concepts and larger-scale topics (McKenzie, 2010, 19-20). Studying people’s beliefs focuses on the

“opinions and targets” of the researched group (Wesely, 2012, 100). Research that focuses on both phenomena can thus cover the topic at hand: evaluations of Business English as a Lingua Franca. They offer a tool enabling a focus both on more dormant and affective responses to specific themes (attitudes) and more general assumptions and presumptions of the concept as a whole (beliefs).

The number of internationally operating companies in Finland is increasing (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF), 2019). The future professionals in this field are business majors. Their attitudinal responses and beliefs of the future can thus give insight into the role, uses, and meanings of English in the future. Business students also can shape intercultural communication and the role of English in business contexts. Therefore, the attitudes and beliefs that these students have of BELF are important to investigate in detail. So far, however, there is not much research on attitudes and beliefs regarding BELF in Finland. The research field considers mostly professionals who have already entered working life or are not native speakers of Finnish (Bergroth, 2007; Malessa, 2011). For these reasons, the present study aims to investigate the attitudes that Finnish business majors have toward BELF in general, and the beliefs that they have of BELF in their future profession.

Such a study can offer a new research focus in the study of attitudes. Its new angle on the language attitude and belief research in Finland offers a basis to continue to examine the future of Finnish workplaces and the possible changes they will undergo during the coming years. There exist only little data on attitudes toward BELF, therefore, conducting a comprehensive study on the next generation of BELF users will provide insights into the future of BELF in Finland and thus pave way for further studies on the topic.

The structure of the present study is the following. First, an overview of the development of English to the Business Lingua Franca in the world will be presented. The study will then investigate the use of English in the context where the present study is set in, Finland. This will be followed by an account of the key concepts at hand and

by a discussion of previous research that is relevant to the present field of study. Next, the specific research questions of this study and the information of the empirical research itself will be presented. This will be followed by the methodology for collecting and analyzing the data. The findings of the analysis will be reported in section 5, Analysis. These findings will be further reflected upon and discussed in the next section. In the end, a review of the study's impact and findings as a whole will be presented, including a discussion of the limitations of the study.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. The development of global English and English as business lingua franca

This study focuses on attitudes toward English as a language of business. The use of the English language has been constantly growing within businesses (Nickerson, 2015, 391-392). Within Finnish businesses, too, English has and is becoming the more popular language of communication. Therefore, this background section will begin by introducing some of the most prevalent reasons for the importance of English as a global language and as a *Business Lingua Franca* (BELF).

English is a global language that has a unique position in politics, the economy, and societies. The language has become a de-territorialized tool for communication between cultures. However, English is always tied to its history and culture (Phillipson, 2017, 5-6). These ties shape the ways the language is used. Oftentimes it has clashed together with other language cultures it encountered due to their shared histories and different cultural practices (Phillipson, 2017, 5-8). Through these clashes, English has been constantly reformed in new contexts, and it has developed further. To understand these changes and their role in the context of the present study of non-native speakers' using English in their work, it is important to acknowledge the process that the language has gone through to reach this state.

Socio-cultural, geo-historical aspects, as well as technological and scientific development through the past decades, have contributed to the processes through which English has become the language of global communication, a *lingua franca* (Mautner & Rainer 2016; Crystal 2012). The power of the English-speaking world was mainly harnessed through political and economic competencies (Pennycook, 2006, 7). Military and organizational powers, media, and markets that have and continue to use English as their dominant language are prime examples of these competencies (Crystal, 2012, 86). The power harnessed enforced and allowed the English language to grow into what it has become today (Crystal, 2012, 86). In business contexts, the Western markets



and the spread of international organizations and global companies with Western origins post-World-Wars played a part in securing the position of English as the language of professions and international communication (Crystal, 2012, 86-87). Technological advancements, media, and global competition have since then supported the language's dominant position in the global marketplace (Pennycook 2006, 7). Phillipson (2017, 17) describes this growth as specifically tied to the growth of capitalism, therefore claiming English as "*the lingua economica*".

David Crystal (2012) discusses languages as resources in his books. He argues that English offers easy-access resources to people all over the world due to its set global status (Crystal, 2012, 5). Therefore, the choices that companies and workers make regarding language use come down to availability in the end. Societies need to be available for the global markets to compete; texts and media need to be available for as many people in the world and people need to be available for job markets, schools, and resources to make it in life. English has been the first language to offer availability through its position in the world ever since globalization began (Crystal, 2012, 13-14).

Within the corporate world, the economic power of today's English is visible globally. Businesses interact and communicate using English as their tool and for competitive advantage. The global competition has made English not only an asset but also a necessity for competition (Phillipson, 2017, 323). The language of business is a language that is used for specific purposes. The development of the language of business dates back centuries beyond the English language. Originally beginning from Greek and Latin the language has undergone shifts from one *lingua franca* to another (Phillipson, 2017, 317). In the past 200 has English become the most frequently used language in businesses and the considered *lingua franca* within the field (Phillipson, 2017, 318). The structures and the means of business language are targeted to describe and complete certain actions within the workplace and to create monetary or non-monetary profit for the business (Trninić-Janjić, 2014, 316-317). However, there is no clear distinction between what is considered the language of business and what is not. This is because

its structures are mostly set by the circumstances and contexts, they appear in. Concerning BELF, the language is defined by its *setting* and the *speakers* that use the language (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 205). As stated before, BELF considers interactions that occur between non-native speakers of English in business-related contexts. Thus, it is considered as one branch within the language of business (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 205).

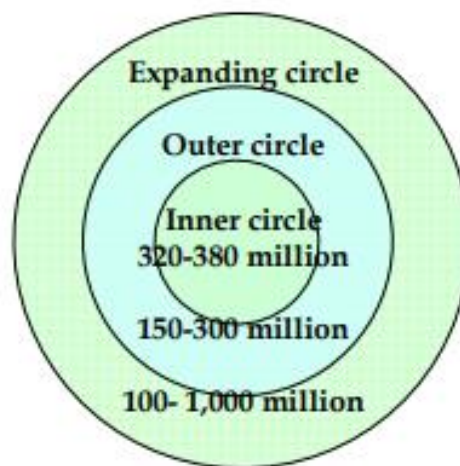
Discussing the development of global English and the language of business is highly significant for the present study. English as a lingua franca in business contexts (BELF) has been formed based on these two histories of the English language and the language of business. Therefore, knowing the basis for this concept gives a further grounding for the present study. The context that the participants of the study operate in are considered to be related to their responses to the questionnaire, therefore, this might serve as a foundation for explaining the further results of the research.

## **2.2. English as a lingua franca in business contexts (BELF)**

Proficiency in the English language is essential for organizations' internal and external communication (Gore 2011, 61) Therefore, English serves as a tool for understanding and negotiating relations and actions within an organization. In them, the language acts as a mediator within different cultures and languages since it is a universal requirement for all (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 205). Externally, organizations are also obliged to communicate with their stakeholders. Their success rates in communication are tied to language proficiency as well (Hopp 2014, 92). Hopp (2014, 92) argues that employees' strong language skills offer organizations opportunities that possibly separate success from failure. English is oftentimes assumed to be the minimum requirement before all else for this success to happen.

However, English is not the only language that serves as a competitive tool for organizations. After all, depending on the organizational structure and goals, other languages are of high value for organizations as well through the individual goals and structure of the organization (Grosse, 2004, 366). According to Kachru's (1996) Three

Circle-model of the English Language, the users of English can be categorized into three different groups: English as a mother tongue (L1) - speakers, English as a second language (L2, ESL) speakers, English as a foreign language (EFL) speakers (*Figure 1.*) (Crystal 2012, 60-61). According to Crystal (2012, 69), therefore, most English speakers consist of non-native speakers. Considering this perspective, it is evident that most users of English at workplaces will have a different mother tongue, and the hegemony of native speakers of English should be disregarded when concerning international business communication (Nickerson, 2015, 392).



*Figure 1: Kachru's concentric circles of English (1996, 2)*

As a concept, BELF refers to English as the tool of communication in shared multinational professional contexts (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 205). Communication between different cultural and language backgrounds can complicate the ways of conveying different messages and create new situations when different sociolinguistic backgrounds and factors are at play (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 205). BELF is an extension of Business English (BE) that is used in multicultural workspaces, by speakers of different mother tongues (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 204). BELF is the relevant concept in the present study because its subjects are students who are non-native speakers of English.

The users of BELF share two characteristics that define them. One of these is the corporate context of the language, and the other one is the language that they interact with (Kankaanranta & Louhiala- Salminen, 2010, 205). However, their linguistic uses and practices vary according to their mother tongue's sociolinguistic and pragmatic practices (Kankaanranta & Louhiala- Salminen, 2010, 205). The shared aspects of BELF are not easy to identify, since the corporate context entails many different fields, and a speaker might use BELF in ways that differ a great deal from another speaker in a different field. The differing linguistic backgrounds of BELF speakers are the essential connector within speakers of the variant. The notion of different cultures and mother tongues makes people aware of the language they use, and BELF is the tool that speakers use to moderate through different interactional situations within the workplace (Kankaanranta & Louhiala- Salminen, 2010, 207-208).

Corporate environments that share BELF as their discourse are by default influenced by the presence of multiculturalism (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 205). As stated previously, people's use of English varies depending on the conversations and activities that they take part in (Rathmayr 2016, 221). Multicultural settings are complex and require awareness from the people in the interactions. BELF focuses on the realization of this in the workplace by taking into account the different cultural aspects and possible limitations that might occur (Nickerson, 2015, 392).

The participants of the present study are going to use BELF as their means of communication in the future. They are non-native speakers of English using the language in the context of business with other people from varying backgrounds. The present study is set in Finland, where English at the workplace is at constant growth and the role of English in everyday life is prominent (Kalaja, Alanen & Dufva 2018; Leppänen et.al.,2009). Therefore, the following analysis will continue to explore English and BELF within the Finnish context.

### 2.3. The use and beliefs of English in Finland

The present study focuses on Finnish university students' attitudes. Therefore, there is a need to reflect upon the contexts in which the participants operate and the premises of these contexts. In the following, I will discuss the role and use of English, especially BELF, in Finland.

The English language is considered a foreign language in Finland. Finland has two domestic languages; Finnish and Swedish with Finnish being the mother tongue of approximately 88% of Finnish people and Swedish only 6% (Taavitsainen & Pahta, 2003, 3; Official Statistics of Finland (OSF), 2019). Regardless of the imbalance between the number of speakers of the two languages, Finnish and Swedish are officially concerned to have an equal status in Finland (Taavitsainen & Pahta, 2003, 3). English is officially a foreign language in Finland, and it is widely considered to have a status of a *lingua franca* (Taavitsainen & Pahta, 2003, 4; Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2005, 402). In the same way, as in other European and Nordic countries, the use of the English language present in Finland is growing (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 346). English education in Finland is highly autonomous, and schools can design their curricula by following the objectives set by the Ministry of Education (Kalaja, Alanen & Dufva, 2018, 1). During their elementary education, the students have the opportunity to choose a foreign language that they study from grade 2 onwards. Despite the availability of German, French, and other languages, too, English remains to be the primary choice of approximately 80% of elementary students and is at a recorded incline of 9% (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF), 2019).

The language selections of the studied subjects at schools in Finland can be considered a reflection of the use and views regarding English in Finland and vice versa (Kalaja, Alanen & Dufva, 2018, 2). English is present in the daily lives of Finnish people through media, advertisements, entertainment, and especially technological devices (Kalaja, Alanen & Dufva 2018; Leppänen et.al., 2009). The increase in English usage and visibility in Finland, therefore, might lead to and higher demand for English skills

overall as well. These contexts in which English is used vary depending on the educational background, age, and geographical location of the user (Leppänen et. al., 2009, 22). However, the internet and technological advancements through the years have narrowed the gap between the geographical differences between people from the cities and rural areas. As the workplace is the context in which BELF is used and will be studied in this research, it is relevant to consider how English is used in the workplaces around Finland.

The usage of a certain language at the workplace is tied to the organizational strategies and goals of the company. Due to the internationalization of Finnish companies and their non-discriminatory policies, they need to allow for English, most commonly, to be used in the professional repertoire (Du Babcock, 2009, 45). Therefore, different fields have English as a requirement for an employee, rather than merely an advantageous skill (Virkkula, 2008, 383). This is visible in the names of the companies to the requirement for excellent English skills in most of the job advertisements (Taaivitsainen & Pahta, 2003, 8). Leppänen et.al. (2009, 60-61) national survey of English in Finland revealed that the views of Finnish people of English in their work are relatively positive with the highest rate of negative responses recorded from the elder working generation (45 years and higher). This is presumably because English has not been present or as prominent during their education and the beginning of their careers. It also needs to be noted that as the survey is over ten years old, the role of English is likely to have changed within the Finnish and global context. However, these views about English suggest that Finns' attitudes are more positive than negative. According to the growing number of students at Finnish schools and businesses choosing the English language during recent years, it can be assumed that this statement is still true.

The overall attitudes of Finnish people toward English have been investigated in some recent surveys. The Eurobarometer (2012) shows that 88% of Finnish respondents regard English as the most useful language for personal development, and 39% viewed it as their second or foreign language (assumed either English or Swedish) at work)

(Eurobarometer 308 Special). The survey reveals some statistics, especially contributing to the possible indications of the present study as well. However, the study is nearly ten years old, which indicates that first of all, the participants of the present study have mostly been still in their basic education phase and therefore have not contributed to the study. Secondly, the role of English has changed drastically in ten years due to digitalization and the growth of globalization. However, this research is the most recent national-scale research regarding Finnish peoples' attitudes. Therefore, it gives insight into the history of Finnish people's attitudes regarding English and is indeed relevant to examine.

The National Survey on English in Finland (Leppänen et.al.) conducted in 2009 explored multiple angles on attitudes that Finns express toward English in the workplace. The survey consisted largely of closed, multiple-choice questions due to its high number of participants. Among other topics surveyed in the study were attitudes toward English within companies, views on the adequacy of English proficiency within work-related contexts, and English usage within the workplace. The majority of participants expressed strongly seeing English usage as important in terms of work, which was also stated to be the context in which English was used the most by 26,8% of the respondents (Leppänen et.al., 2009, 93, 111-112).

Regarding the attitudes expressed toward English at the workplace, the respondents' attitudes were mainly positive (60%). The negative responses covered around 20% of all respondents. This percentage consisted majorly of over 45-year-old survey participants (Leppänen et.al., 2009, 60). As stated in the study, this may be due to generational differences. However, when asked about the views of the respondents' English skills at the workplace, they considered them insufficient with respect to professional vocabularies or other specialized terminology. Nevertheless, these responses did not seem to affect the respondents' positive or negative attitudes toward English, but the respondents concluded their English skills to be sufficient to communicate but the insecurities appeared mainly toward specific actions and situations when using English (Leppänen et.al., 2009, 90).

The biggest differences between the answers were recorded amongst different generations of Finns (Leppänen et.al., 2009 75-77, 112). The younger respondents expressed more positive attitudes toward English generally and using English. Their views on the role of English in the Finnish culture highlighted its prominence, whereas the older generations expressed attitudes that suggested that English has a more negative and irrelevant role. As concluded by Leppänen et.al. (2009), the younger generation views English mostly as part of their everyday life since they have been used to it, when for the older generations, English is still a rather new concept. This is an important and relevant notion within the context of the present study as well. The participants in this study are of the youngest generation to enter or yet to enter the workforce. Therefore, it could be assumed that their views can align with the views of the youngest respondents in Leppänen et.al. (2009) study as well.

#### **2.4.Key concepts: Attitudes and beliefs and their differences**

The present study focuses on the attitudes of business major students toward BELF in general and their beliefs of the role of BELF in their future profession. These two concepts, attitudes, and beliefs are both used in social studies, and, in such studies, they are often seen as related to each other. However, for the present study, a clear definition and reasoning for these concepts are necessary.

In social psychology and social studies, a large number of terms are used in attitudinal studies and other related terms (McKenzie, 2010, 19). In this section, I will clarify and define the terms of perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. While all of them are related to each other, it is highly important to distinguish between the definitions and uses of each term to justify and explain the terminological choices within the present study as well. In the next parts, in turn, I will discuss in more detail what is meant by “attitudes” and “beliefs” to justify the research methodology of the present study.

Typically, the notion of *perception* has been used in large-scale studies that focus on interpretations of selves, experiences, and understanding of certain issues (Wesely,



2012, 100). Often, although it is used interchangeably with beliefs or even attitudes, there exist slight differences between these concepts. Perceptions focus on specific experiences and assumptions. Beliefs are, as a concept, more pervasive and extensive focusing on entities rather than smaller instances (Wesely, 2012, 100).

According to McKenzie (2010, 19), beliefs can be described as a component of attitudes since beliefs account only for cognitive responses whereas attitudes consider a broader view in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. They can be categorized into two sections: descriptive beliefs and prescriptive beliefs. Descriptive beliefs consider the pre-existing conceptions about issues or presumptions such as "*Killing animals for food is wrong.*". Prescriptive beliefs in turn involve predictive, moral, or suggestive "should, ought" statements such as "*People should have free healthcare.*" (McKenzie (2010, 20). In the present study, I will use the term *beliefs* with the second research question, because the predictions of BELF use in the workplaces in the future heavily leans on prescriptive beliefs. This means that the statements made by the participants regarding their views on the status of the English language in Finland in the future heavily involve predictive and suggestive statements that have been formulated throughout the years. These types of responses are more prevalent than attitudes, which concludes them as beliefs instead.

Attitudes as a concept also have different definitions, depending on the different theoretical approaches within which they are discussed. However, attitudes have a few common characteristics by which certain research can be categorized under such terminology. For example, McKenzie (2010, 19) argues that attitudes are "a summary evaluation of an object or a thought". Differing from the other presented terminological definitions, attitudes are affective, oftentimes latent, and conveyed through both verbal and non-verbal cues (McKenzie, 2010, 20; Wesely, 2012, 99-100). Comparing these characteristics to beliefs, which are more prevalent and perceivable, a clear distinction can be made between these concepts (McKenzie, 2010, 20). For my study, attitudes are a useful concept for two reasons: 1) There is previous research that exists within similar studies that all use this term (Lee, 2020; Leppänen et.al., 2009; Bergroth,

2007), and 2) The present study's first research question focuses on pre-existing, possibly dormant affective responses toward the concept of BELF, which can be studied most thoroughly through attitudinal research methodology.

In conclusion, there exist different definitions for both attitudes and beliefs. This might confuse researchers' to consider them as synonyms rather than separate concepts within the same field of study (Malessa, 2011, 15). In Malessa's (2011) research on beliefs and attitudes she explains the difference between the two by referring to Oskamp's (1999, 12 in Malessa, 2011, 17) distinction between the two concepts by presenting the following example (Malessa, 2011,17):

I think the language is difficult → belief  
I don't like the language → attitude

This example demonstrates the difference according to which beliefs are cognitive (assumption "I think") and attitudes are affective (feeling/ emotion "I don't like). This definition is useful for the present study's findings as well.

### 3. ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

#### 3.1. Language attitude research: Theoretical shifts

Language attitudes are a widely researched topic within sociolinguistics and social psychology. It is a complex concept within their creation and functions since attitudes are not directly observable and can be conveyed both through verbal and non-verbal processes (McKenzie, 2010, 20). Attitude research has undergone changes within the methodologies and tools of analysis due to the changing shifts in psychology and social studies (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 345; Llamas & Watt, 2014, 611). The reasons behind these changes have been the semantic differences in terms of defining the term and the purpose of each research (McKenzie, 2010, 20). Traditionally, attitudes are claimed to be formulated based on three components; feelings (*affective*), thoughts (*cognitive*), and predispositions to act in a certain manner (*behavioral*) (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 346; Llamas & Watt, 2014, 610). The present study will use the definition used in McKenzie (2010, 19). According to this definition, attitudes are “a summary of an evaluation of an object or a thought” (Bohner and Wanke, 2002, 5 as cited in McKenzie, 2010, 20). The definition suits the purposes of the present study for the reason that it considers attitudes as a hypothetical and stable construct that can be observed through indirect responses to stimuli (McKenzie, 2010, 19).

Language is a social concept that constructs and expresses our beliefs, identities, and actions. Through language use and the social standing of the speakers, people take functions and form opinions toward other individuals that are based on these presumptions and conditions (Cargile et.al., 1994, 211). Over time, these performed functions lead to norms and ways in which languages are used and perceived more generally (Cargile et.al., 1994, 211). These perceptions about languages can be referred to as language attitudes. Generally, attitudinal studies focus on attitudes toward certain languages, their speakers, or language varieties (Cargile et.al., 1994, 212-214). Moreover, language attitude research can focus on different forms of language behavior, such as language learning, language choices, or language teaching (Fasold, 1984, 148,

as cited in Bergroth, 2007, 29). Defining what attitudes vary vastly on the views on *how* they are formed (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 347-348). These ways of forming attitudes differ depending on if attitudes are seen to be formed either through social interactions and preconceptions (*positivistic paradigm*), or if they are taken to be formed and transformed in discursive practices (*social constructionism*) (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 347-348). This will be further discussed in the following section.

Overall, there are two paradigms within attitudinal studies, and they form the outline and reasoning for the chosen methodologies in attitudinal research. In this chapter, both paradigms are discussed in terms of their appropriateness to the present study. The paradigms are the positivistic paradigm and social constructionism (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 347). The main difference between the research methodologies associated with these paradigms is that methods that are considered positivistic examine *what* language attitudes participants express, while social constructionism focuses on *how* these attitudes are formulated (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 347).

### **3.2 Positivistic Paradigm**

Traditionally, the methodology used to study attitudes has been built on the positivistic paradigm (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 347). The positivistic paradigm in attitude research draws on social psychology, and it is characterized by two major theories: the behaviorist (or cognitive) and mentalist theories (Bergroth, 2007, 30-34). According to both theories, attitudes are formed over time through social processes and can also be partly influenced by the genetic setup that the individual has inherited (McKenzie, 2010, 21; Bergroth, 2007, 31-34). However, the pivotal differences are the definitions of attitudes, their appearance in individual responses, and how they are studied (Bergroth, 2007, 31, 34).

The most traditional theory within attitudinal studies is the behaviorist one. According to behaviorist views, all human activity is behavioral and occurs in behavioral units (McKenzie, 2010, 21). Attitudes are defined as behavioral occurrences formed through affective components (Bergroth, 2007, 34). Therefore, in attitudinal research,

behaviorists tend to investigate singular responses of individuals within certain social situations (Bergroth, 2007, 34). These situations are often preconditioned and directly researched through closed questionnaires, analyses of documents (Bergroth, 2007, 36-37). The methodology has been considered insufficient in its way to describe and analyze attitudes within realistic contexts (McKenzie, 2010, 22). McKenzie (2010, 23) concludes that behavior is oftentimes altered by people either consciously or unconsciously to disguise their true attitudes. In addition, the preconditioned situations have tendencies of clinical and out-of-context responses, therefore limiting the reliability or applicability of the research (McKenzie, 2010,22; Bergroth, 2007, 34). Through focusing on the behavioral responses, the methodologies disregard the other attributes of the respondents (McKenzie, 2010, 22). This kind of criticism suggests that a view such as the mentalist view would be more appropriate since it takes into account the complexity of people (McKenzie, 2010, 24).

As stated above, within the mentalist view, attitudes are defined as mental entities formed through three components: feelings (*affective*), thoughts (*cognitive*), and predispositions to act in a certain manner (*behavioral*) (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 346; Llamas & Watt, 2014, 610; Bergroth, 2007, 30). Therefore, attitudes are considered to have been formed beforehand and are expressed both through verbal and non-verbal cues. The methodology concerning the mentalist view of attitudes focuses on indirectly examining responses to different stimuli rather than asking the respondents directly what attitudes they possess (Bergroth, 2007, 36). These expressions can be observed through indirect methods such as the individual's self-report or deduced from the external behavior of the subject (Cargile et.al., 1994, 45).

The most prevalent method within the mentalist theory is Lambert's (1960) *Matched-guise Technique*. The technique has been a widely used method during the past years within the field (Bergroth, 2007, 38). To provide insight into authentically formed attitudes that are expressed through an experience, the matched-guise technique uses audio recordings of the same speaker reciting a certain text passage (Lambert 1960, 44-45). The subjects, who are referred to as "judges" within the method, then react to

the recordings with the help of a questionnaire at hand. The technique intends to diminish the effects of the subjects' presumptions about the audio based on outer characteristics or the voices of different speakers (Cargile et.al., 1994, 46-47). However, the technique has received a lot of criticism due to its low reliability and validity (Cargile et.al., 1994, 48). This critique is based on the claim that the technique fails to reflect the findings of authentic situations, to select critically reviewed speech samples, and to evaluate and create dimensions that are fair and unbiased from the point of view of the researcher (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 346). As a result, researchers of language attitudes have developed new methods of research.

For the present study, the matched-guise technique is not the best choice, because the target of the current study is not to study language variants or speech responses and attitudes toward them. The attitudes that are studied are toward using BELF. Utilizing a matched-guise technique would prove to be difficult because the students study different fields and encounter different work situations in which they need to use English. It would be impossible to compile a matched-guise recoding that would cover the real situations in which each participant engages with BELF.

Instead, the direct method within the mentalist approach will be used in the current study. According to Bergroth (2007, 38), the direct method has received some criticism, because the setting of the research is an unauthentic one, and there might exist biases for the participants to modify their answers to appear better. However, these limitations have been diminished as much as possible by specifying each research question and by not directly asking about attitudes. Instead, the participants were asked about their feelings in BELF situations and their thoughts about BELF.

### **3.3 Social Constructionism**

Transferring from viewing human behavior positivistically preconditioned, social studies is has shifted toward contextually formed acts. This paradigm is called social constructionism. The shift took place in the late 20th century involving a viewing focus

on people as a “thinking society” and languages as tools for constructing these social realities (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 347-348)

Within language attitude research, this signified a shift toward viewing attitudes as social and context-dependent structures that serve the purpose of evaluative practices (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 348). The criticism of failures to represent authentic results within the traditional methods of attitudinal studies resulted in re-focusing on attitudes as a reflection of thought processes and something following actions (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 349). Hyrkstedt and Kalaja (1998, 347) define the social constructionist approach as follows:

...language as a direct reflection of what goes on in a person's mind to a means of constructing the social world, or versions of it, in the course of everyday interactions. At the same time, these constructions are constructed out of the linguistic resources available in a society, which its members will acquire in the course of time. Mental entities and processes (including attitudes) are taken for properties of discourse, and within this paradigm, it is possible to investigate more directly how these are jointly constructed by individuals in their talk or writing. (Hyrkstedt and Kalaja, 1998, 347)

This approach focuses, not on examining the “true” attitudes of subjects, but rather on analyzing the reasons and ways of constructing the attitudes that subjects express verbally.

The methodology within social constructionism aims at examining the functions of discourse (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 347-348). Therefore, the most widely used analytic method within the paradigm has been discourse analysis. As a method, discourse analysis does not provide the researcher with a set of processes to conduct and analyze data. Instead, it offers the researcher a general framework for further argumentation and analysis of the data (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, 348). The processes of discourse analysis require qualitative data oftentimes gathered through interviews or other discursive activities (Bergroth, 2007, 41). The data can appear in forms of speech or texts that are further analyzed through for example thematic analysis of the data (Bergroth, 2007, 58-59). This method proves useful when a smaller number of participants are considered in a research (Bergroth, 2007, 41). For the present study, conducting inter-

views with the participants would have been illogical due to the high number of participants. The other reason for not choosing this method was the impact that this study is intended to make. The present study is intended to serve to outline the attitudes and beliefs business students currently have of BELF.

### **3.4 Attitudes toward Business English and BELF in Finland**

Regardless of the long history of language attitude studies, there exists little research on attitudes toward BELF. As stated previously, the concept of BELF is rather new, especially in countries such as Finland. Therefore, the amount of research is limited, and it focuses mainly on attitudes by professionals already working. The present chapter will focus on examining the existing research. It is divided into three parts: the first one discusses international studies on attitudes toward BELF, and the second one introduces findings on attitudes toward BELF in the Finnish context. The third part will compile the main findings of these studies, exploring the possible recurring themes within them and the attitudes that have been identified in the previously discussed national-scale studies (Leppänen et.al. 2009).

Research on uses of and attitudes to BELF has largely been conducted in Asian and European companies or universities. One example of such a study is a survey by Lee (2020). The research was set in a university in Seoul, South Korea to discover which attitudes management majors have toward BELF. The study was conducted with the help of a questionnaire that focused on gathering quantitative data by using the five-point Likert scale. The results of this study suggested that the students' high motivation to studying English enhanced their positive attitudes toward BELF (Lee, 2020, 135). The positive attitudes were generated mainly due to their aspirations for the future and English being a key factor in that. The participants also highlighted the instrumental use of English as a tool for conducting and acquiring work. The methodology used in this study, as stated by Lee (2020, 136), offers solely quantitative data. As discussed above, using only a closed survey offers limited information and unrealistic conditions for authentic responses to occur (McKenzie, 2010,22; Bergroth, 2007,



34). Therefore, one of Lee's conclusions (2020, 16) was to suggest a mixed-method approach.

Another study conducted in Asia by Dharmajiva (2017) targeted to study Thai employees' attitudes toward using BELF in their work. The study was carried out using a questionnaire that consisted of mainly closed questions. There were two open-ended questions in the 38-question survey (Dharmajiva, 2017, 15). The results of the study indicated mainly positive attitudes toward BELF in the workplace. The participants stated that English skills have high importance for them in terms of being able to conduct work and that they would like to develop their skills in learning English at the workplace (Dharmajiva, 2017, 29-30). However, the results also showed that the participants felt that they lack education in Business English since it is not taught during their basic English education in Thailand. The participants concluded that there are times in which it is easier for them to use their native language instead of English due to their insufficient competency in that specific area (Dharmajiva, 2017, 30). Dharmajiva's (2017) research is a good example of a study on attitudes to BELF in other countries. Thailand's history with the English language and the use of the language in businesses is rather similar to Finland's: Thailand considers English as a foreign language as well and it is in wide use in the country, especially in professional contexts (Dharmajiva, 2017, 6-8). However, in the same way as some other Asian countries, Thailand has never been ruled by a European country. Therefore, the English language is still rather new to the country, much as it is relatively new in Finland, too, due to the country's history with the English language. This would suggest some possible correlation between the participants of these studies.

Within the Finnish context, there exist some larger-scale and some smaller studies regarding BELF usage. A larger-scale survey on attitudes by Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2010) concentrated on examining business professionals' perceptions of the use of BELF in the workplace. The 978 respondents in their study all worked for internationally operating, Finland-based companies employing different nationalities (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 206). The participants were all non-native

English speakers of BELF. The survey did not explicitly focus on the *attitudes* of the respondents. Instead, it investigated their perceptions. Nevertheless, the results of Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen's (2010) study contribute to the same framework in which the present study exists as well. The methodology aligns with the mentalist and discourse analytic attitude research, and their definitions of perceptions align with the definition of attitudes in the present study. The main result of their study was that the respondents' perceptions of the use of BELF were highly pragmatic. Their participants concluded that English enables them to conduct their duties and to communicate at work. This result gives insight into the mindset of the people currently in the work-life toward BELF usage in Finland.

A smaller-scale interview study conducted in Finland by Bergroth (2007) investigated the attitudes of Finnish professionals with limited proficiency in the English language. The interviewees were between forty and fifty years old. The results of this study indicated differing attitudes toward English usage in the workplace. The participants stated that they use English daily in their work. They highlighted awareness of the need for English skills in the business environment (Bergroth, 2007, 103-104). Their attitudes toward English were positive in that they saw the potential that English offers for employees. However, they also had negative views, and these concerned having limited English proficiency in situations that would demand specific knowledge and misunderstandings would cause issues. These situations include important meetings, communicating with native speakers, and using field-specific vocabulary. According to Bergroth (2007, 104), the underlying reason for these varying attitudes might be that English is considered to be a rather new concept within Finnish businesses. The change toward using and needing English to conduct work has been rapid, especially for workers who have been in work-life before this change. The participants of the present study are entering or have yet to enter work life, therefore it will be interesting to find out whether they have a different view on the use and role of English in the workplace.

Another study on attitudes toward Business English in Finland was conducted by Lehtonen (2004). This study investigated the attitudes of professionals in a Finnish company toward English as the language of work. The aim was to shed light on the role of English in Finnish workplaces. As her data, Lehtonen (2004) collected semi-structured interviews (n = 7). The age of the participants in Lehtonen's (2004) study varied between thirty and fifty-four. Most of them had studied English for approximately ten years at school, some of them reported not having studied English at all. According to the results of this case study, the participants had fairly positive attitudes toward the use of English in the workplace and stated that they use it almost daily. Once more, the role of English was seen in a highly practical way. However, the interviewees also indicated some negative attitudes; these mainly concerned their capabilities in English communication. Nevertheless, "perfect" English skills were not seen as compulsory. Instead, the ability to convey a message and higher English proficiency were not seen as advantageous, but rather as neutral by the participants (Lehtonen, 2004, 93-95).

### **The Practical Role of English and BELF**

The studies that have been considered in this section all concluded that English has a practical role in the workplace (Bergroth, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Lehtonen, 2004; Lee, 2020). The attitudes that were expressed toward English were positive when concerning the functionality of the language and communications with people from other cultures (Bergroth, 2007, 103-104; Lehtonen, 2004). However, English was also considered to have only an instrumental function. It did not affect the informants' attitudes within spheres of their lives other than their work (Lehtonen 2004, 82, 84; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 207). Some of them regarded English as a tool for work, rather than an advantage, or a language that they are learning. This view is linked to the competency of certain participants, since seeing English as a tool requires them to have the ability to use this tool. Therefore, the participants' motivation to learn the language might increase because they want to be able to use the language as a tool (Lehtonen, 2004, 93-94; Bergroth, 2007, 105). The study subjects in Bergroth's (2007, 105) study, for example, concluded that the instrumental function

of the language either causes them stress or serves them as a functional tool. The nature of the reaction would depend on the situation and their confidence in speaking English. This would then assumably be dependent on their proficiency in the language.

### **The Importance of BELF in the Workplace**

In all of the studies discussed in this section, English was seen to have an important role in the workplace. BELF, in turn, was seen as a tool for communication (Lehtonen 2004, 82, 84; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 207; Leppänen et.al. 2009; Lee, 2020). The attitudes for using BELF within the workplace have been mainly positive, due to its neutral and practical role in the workplace. It is seen as important in terms of conducting business efficiently and easily (Lehtonen 2004, 82, 84; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, Bergroth, 2007). According to Dharmajiva (2017, 30), her participants saw English as an enjoyable and positive part of workplace communication. However, she also states that the participants thought that there are issues within BELF communication, due to possible misunderstandings between different non-native speakers and their different competencies (Dharmajiva, 2017, 31). All in all, English is noted to have high importance at the workplace and BELF allows the professionals to communicate through a common language (Bergroth, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Dharmajiva, 2017; Lehtonen 2004; Lee, 2020). When attitudes are positive, the communication is seen as useful and necessary by the participants, but there also exist instances in which using BELF might prove to be problematic (Dharmajiva, 2017; Bergroth, 2007).

### **The Role of English Proficiency in Professional Contexts**

A notable finding within the previous research is that English proficiency is seen as important, but a good proficiency is not necessary and does not seem to affect the ability or the willingness to conduct work in English (Lehtonen (2004, 93-95) and Leppänen et.al. (2009, 85-86, 90). BELF users are non-native English speakers communicating with other non-native English speakers. Therefore, it is evident that the

other speakers' English skills might vary as well. However, as Bergroth (2007) concluded in her study, the professionals with limited English proficiency, stated that the level of their skills gives rise to negative attitudes in situations requiring a high level of English skills (Bergroth, 2007, 87). For example, if encountered by a task that requires field-specific language that the speaker is not prepared to deliver, this may cause nervousness, worry, or other negative feelings leading to more negative attitudes to the language use itself. In addition, as mentioned before, Dharmajiba (2017, 31) discovered similar negative attitudes toward insufficient English skills and the need to use BELF in the workplace. These results indicate that proficiency has a strong effect on the attitudes of the BELF speakers and can shift their views either toward seeing it as positive or negative.

### **The Insecurities in BELF Communication**

Another prominent theme within the present framework is the insecurities related to BELF communication at work. It was stated by Lehtonen (2004), Bergroth (2007), and Dharmajiva (2017) that their participants did at times feel insecure about BELF communication at work. These insecurities can stem from their perceived proficiency in English, or other factors affecting the confidence of the speakers. However, an important discovery in these studies was that the insecurities did not necessarily lead to negative attitudes toward English usage or the attitudes toward BELF at the workplace.

### **Generational Differences Between Expressed Attitudes**

Most of the studies reported few differences between demographic groups. For example, differences in results between women and men were not significant. The largest differences in each study were between different generations (Leppänen et.al., 2009; Lehtonen, 2004; Bergroth, 2007). This also means that there are differences in the degree of their study of English and the presence of English in their lives. As discussed above, English in Finland has become widely used only during the past 4-5 decades. Therefore, the oldest generations of employees have had to get used to using English

at work, without having received similar training in English as the younger generations of workers.

### **3.5. Beliefs about BELF**

Beliefs have often been considered to fall under such related terms categories as attitudes, views, opinions, perceptions, etc. However, as suggested by Pajares (1992), certain characteristics distinguish beliefs from other associated concepts. Beliefs serve the purpose of affecting human behavior through their cognitive functions (Pan & Block, 2011, 392-393). In contrast to “knowledge”, beliefs refer to opinionated and subjective understandings of something, whereas knowledge is based on assumed factual information (Pan & Block, 2011, 393). Beliefs are therefore resilient to change due to their early-age formation and connections with the self (Pajares, 1992, 324).

Together with attitudes and values, beliefs form the belief system of an individual, which is a large part of one’s identity. Identities and selves affect the functions of humans and their views of the world, while also being situationally formed in social situations (Kalaja, 2003, 105-106). Self-efficacy is an example of beliefs affecting human behavior and functions. Bandura (1986) concluded that this sub-construct of beliefs that concerns individuals’ self-perceived confidence toward performing certain actions is due to their more general beliefs of their own capabilities. In sum, the beliefs that participants of the present study possess of BELF are likely to affect their future use of BELF in the workplace and, more generally, how Finnish workplaces use foreign languages.

To understand the importance of languages, communication, and language training within business contexts it is crucial to examine the views and beliefs that employees possess of BELF. These beliefs shape the social situations and settings of language use. There exists no previous research specifically targeting the beliefs of university students toward BELF. Therefore, in this section, I will go through studies that relate to

the topic either through the target subject groups' similarity, or the target of the research.

I will begin by introducing the national survey by Leppänen et. al. (2009) one more time. This is because the research included questions regarding the respondents' views of the future of English, which as a topic is central in the present study as well. The survey concluded that 90% of the participants expressed strong beliefs about how the role of English will become stronger within the Finnish society in the future (Leppänen et.al., 2009, 130). There were slight differences between different age groups of respondents: for example, the older generations did not have as strong beliefs of the role of English, whereas the younger generation expressed stronger beliefs toward English having an important role in the future (Leppänen et.al. 2009, 130). However, the most notable difference between the different age groups of the respondents was the variation amongst the answers of different educational backgrounds (Leppänen et al., 2009, 132). The participants who had a higher educational background seemed to have stronger beliefs of the increased significance of English in the future. For example, the younger participants indicated more often beliefs toward English becoming a compulsory skill for each Finn in 20 years (Leppänen et.al., 2009, 132). This is a relevant observation in terms of the present study as well. The participants of this study are all receiving higher education, thus possibly sharing some of Leppänen et.al. study's respondents' views.

Another relevant study for the present purposes is Rantala's Master's Thesis (2002) that discussed the beliefs of Finnish university students about English as a foreign language. Two different participant groups in the study were compared with each other. The first group consisted of students taking a part in an English course, and the other group was participating in a course on computer science. The findings of the study indicated that the students believed motivation and age are important factors when considering learning the language (Rantala, 2002, 75). Rantala (2002, 75) also stated that, surprisingly, occupational goals were not an important factor for the

study's participants. Instead, the students stated that their desire to be able to communicate with the language was a highly important factor when considering their language learning (Rantala, 2002, 76-77). These results will be useful for the present study as well since they represent a relatively similar target group. Thus, they can give insight into the kinds of beliefs that other university students have voiced.

Malessa's (2011) Master's thesis A concentrated on finding out the beliefs that Finnish as a second language (F2) learners have about English in Finland at the time and in the future. According to her results, the F2 speakers had firmly believed that English has an important role in Finland, even to the extent that it is more important to Finnish people than Swedish (Malessa, 2011, 37). Overall, their beliefs indicated that the use of English will increase in Finland in the future. However, they also thought that English would not achieve a status of an official language in Finland in the future. They felt that English has a prestigious status in Finland and that the heritage of the country's national languages is still strong and would not allow for English to replace any of them (Malessa, 2011, 40-42). The findings of Malessa's study give an interesting perspective for the present study's discussion as well. The differences between native Finnish speakers (F1), which the present study's participants are, and F2 speakers within this study are worthwhile reflecting upon.

This chapter concentrated on examining the previous research on attitudes and beliefs that are relevant to the present study. The findings of the previous studies give insight and serve as a basis for the findings of the present study. Attitudes of business students have a limited background in previous research. However, the research suggests that the students' age and language competency would influence their attitudes (Lehtonen, 2004; Bergroth, 2007; Dharmajiva, 2017). In addition, these studies suggest that BELF is mostly seen as positive when concerning workplace communications (Bergroth, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Dharmajiva, 2017; Lehtonen 2004; Lee, 2020). Previous research on beliefs, in turn, indicates beliefs toward the influence of the English language in Finland growing in the future (Malessa, 2011;



Leppänen et.al., 2009; Rantala, 2002). These studies will be referred to later in the research. Next, the fourth chapter will introduce the present study, its settings, and methodology.

## **4. THE SET-UP OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

### **4.1 Aims and research questions**

The present study focuses on the attitudes that business majors have about the English language in the context of their studies, and beliefs regarding English in their future profession. The justification of these aims of the study is that examining the attitudes of future professionals will provide an insight into the future of workplace communication. Actions are performed based on certain attitudes and therefore the status of English might change in the future depending on the attitudes that are expressed. To support the findings, the beliefs that the students express will discover the possible consequences of the attitudes that they express in the first research question.

The specific research questions in the study are as the following:

- (1) What kinds of attitudes do Finnish business major students have toward BELF currently?
- (2) What kinds of beliefs do these students have about the role of BELF in their future profession?

Attitudes were chosen as the concept for the first research question due to the pre-existing, possibly dormant affective nature of attitudes (McKenzie, 2010,20; Wesely, 2012, 99-100). These types of responses can be studied through the attitudinal methodology. Beliefs however are the focus of the second research question since beliefs are more prevalent in their nature and account for only cognitive components whereas attitudes account for behavioral, affective, and cognitive ones (McKenzie, 2010, 20).

### **4.2 Participants**

The participants in the study consisted of 98 business major students at the University of Jyväskylä and the University of Turku, Finland. The criterion for selecting them was that they are currently studying either in the Bachelor's (30,9%) or Master's

(69,1%) or programs within business studies. For them, BELF as a concept is a relevant one, because they are non-native speakers of English and will use BELF as their communicative tool in the future. The participants were all non-native speakers of English, with either Finnish or Swedish as their first language. Their level of proficiency in English, according to their estimate, was above average with most being confident in having high proficiency in English. Out of the participants, 5,2% were between the ages of 18-20, 45,4% between the ages of 21-24, 34% between 25-30, and 15,5% over 30 years of age. Consisting of 65 respondents over half of the participants were women, and 32 stated to be men.

Overall, university students in Finland have studied English from the age of seven or nine. In general, terms, to pass either the general upper secondary school qualifications or vocational upper secondary qualifications the students' must be able to communicate and interact with at least one foreign language in their field (Valtioneuvoston asetus tutkintojen ja muiden osaamiskokonaisuuksien viitekehyksestä, 2017/120 §2). Finnish universities also have a requirement of an academic English course within nearly every field of study (Opintopolku, 2020) that students are expected to complete to finish their degree. This course is designed to ensure that the student's English language skills are sufficiently specialized within their field of study, and to prepare them for communication in English in their future workplace. The vast majority (94,8%) of the participants of this study stated that they had studied English for more than ten years, which means that they would have received the above-mentioned English education. The rest (5,2%) indicated that they had studied English less than 10 years, which means that they most likely had studied another foreign language or have received a different type of education overall. The average grade of the participants by their estimate was 6.8 (with a Finnish grading scale from 4 to 10). 71,1% stated to grade their English skills as 9 or 10, 21,6% as 8, and 7,3% from 7-6. However, there were no students who perceived their skills at the level of the two of the lowest grades.

Due to the above-mentioned reasons, it can be assumed that Finnish university students in Finland have intermediate to advanced English language skills. Therefore,

the participants of this study could be assumed to have sufficient skills in English to communicate within their future work environment as well. The participants are studying to become professionals in a certain field of business in which English might be used to a varying extent. The usage of the English language within work or academic contexts depends on the job descriptions and their studies. The vast majority (95,9%) of the present study participants stated that they use English from a daily to a weekly basis. Only 4,1% stated that they use English less than weekly. The participants were to inform as well if they are working while studying. 57,7% of them said to be working while studying either part-time or full time. Out of the group of working students, 63,7% stated that they use English weekly or daily. 32,7% stated to use English less than weekly or rarely. Only 3,6% answered not to use English during their working hours at all.

#### **4.3. Collection of the data**

The present data were collected with the help of an online questionnaire. It has been argued by Cargile et al. (1994) that within the discipline of direct attitude research, questionnaires and interviews have remained the most common method of data collection. There are three main reasons for choosing a questionnaire for the present study. The first reason is that the number of participants can be higher than it would be possible in an interview study. The second reason is the current global situation with COVID-19. In this situation, it is more efficient and safer to conduct my study with the help of a questionnaire. The third reason for a questionnaire study is that, even though the questionnaire has been claimed to be somewhat of an outdated method due to some of its limitations regarding the restricted amount of self-expression (McKenzie, 2010,22; Bergroth, 2007, 34; Lee, 2020), it is possible to modify to avoid this limitation to a certain extent. Therefore, social constructionist features in the forms of discursive questions were necessary to be included in the data collection methodology as well. This was implemented in the form of the indirect open-ended questions of the research. These types of questions allowed for more objective and realistic results of the study. This enabled the respondents to answer by using their

own wordings and sentences. However, discursive features will not be the sole data collection method within the study since quantitative data was also included as well. This is done to create an extensive and well-rounded questionnaire that will gather appropriate findings through both indirect and direct questions.

The questionnaire builds on the following four principles: 1) its appropriateness to the research questions, 2) its suitability to the target group, 3) its objectivity, and 4) the opportunity it offers for the respondents' self-expression and authenticity. These principles will enable an accurate and discursive way to collect genuine responses from the students (Cargile et al., 1994; Lee, 2020; Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998).

As (McKenzie, 2010, 22) concluded, questionnaires tend to limit the objectivity of the responses due to the preset conditions that questionnaires offer. Especially within attitudinal studies, this limits the validity of the results. To ensure the objectivity of the present study, care has been taken to design the questionnaire as clearly and unambiguously as possible. This means that the question topics were specified carefully. As an example, instead of asking directly about the respondents' language attitudes, the questions were formed so that they ask them to indicate feelings that English speaking in different work situations triggers in them. To ensure the validity and functionality of the questionnaire, it was tested using a group of test subjects. This procedure and the overall design of the questionnaire will be presented in the following chapter.

The questionnaire was constructed, tested, and completed in a way that allows for full anonymity for the respondents. The data were collected through an e-mailed link that allowed the participants to answer the questionnaire without revealing any information about themselves. The results were gathered in Webropol and transported to an Excel file, which was destroyed after the research. The only personal information gathered from the participants were their age, sex, degree, and study field. The data were presented in a random order which allowed for increased confidentiality of the data.

#### 4.4. Design and testing of the questionnaire

The structure of the questionnaire follows a traditional attitudinal questionnaire study. The questionnaire includes both open-ended and closed questions - these allowed the respondents to express themselves as authentically as possible (Denscombe, 2008, 272). This design yields both quantitative and qualitative data, thus offering a comprehensive outlook on the research topic. The methods within the study are always tied to each other (Denscombe, 2008, 273-274). For example, the quantitative part within the present questionnaire formed the basis and foundation that was broadened and further explained in the analysis of the qualitative data. With the number of participants and the target for more extensive and large-scale research, this method was hoped to serve as an efficient and useful research tool. To allow for maximized understandability and authenticity, the questionnaire was in Finnish.

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to collect general information and key background information of the participants. Their history of studying English and using it, as well as their socio-cultural background, was considered most likely to be a factor that affected their responses later in the questionnaire (Bergroth 2007; Lee 2020). The second part of the questionnaire concentrated on the first research question: the attitudes that the participants express toward BELF currently. In this part, the concept of BELF was explained thoroughly to make sure that the respondents understand it clearly. This assures that the answers could be as accurate as possible. Mostly based on open-ended questions, this section concentrated on the students' formulations of their attitudes. The focus on the third part of the question was on the second research question. It included open-ended questions again, but also some closed questions focusing on the perceived role of BELF in the future (Pan & Block, 2011; Kalaja, 2003; Ellis, 2008).

The questionnaire was tested beforehand on test subjects to ensure any issues or difficulties with the answering process. The test subjects consisted of five university students studying different fields with some experience either in business studies or work life. This allowed for a comprehensive outlook on the understandability of the questionnaire and the possible response types that might be expected. The test subjects were asked to give feedback on the content, language, answerability, and understandability of the questionnaire. According to the feedback, some revisions were made to ensure that the results would accommodate the research questions as well as possible.

#### **4.5. Analytic Methods**

Onwuegbuzie and Combs (2011) state in their work on the mixed analysis method, that data analysis can take different directions regarding the goal of the research. The different data can be transformed to emulate the other according to which type of data is the priority of the research or they can be regarded as equal (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2011, 5). This means that quantitative data can be transformed into qualitative forms or vice versa depending on which is the target data type of the research. The present study involves quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered through the means of a questionnaire. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaire consist of the closed questions. The open-ended questions were treated as initially qualitative data and therefore quantized in figures at the beginning of the analysis process through using content analysis. The intention was to provide an analysis that gives thematic insight into the main findings of the data. Thematic analysis followed the structure of qualitative research analysis. Therefore, implementing the mixed analysis method allowed the data to be qualitized to allow for thematic analysis. First, the data underwent quantizing the data in figures and then thematically organizing the data in thematic sets to allow for conclusive qualitative content analysis.

Onwuegbuzie & Combs (2011, 5-7) provide a step-by-step process model for a mixed analysis in their research. This model will be utilized in the present study, too, due to

its suitability and similarity within the data type since similar questionnaire data was used in their example as well. The steps within the present data analysis will be as follows:

- (1) Transforming the data (quantizing all data in numeric units)
  - a. Data process for quantitative data using Microsoft Excel
  - a. Content Analysis of the qualitative data using Microsoft Excel
- (2) Visualization of the data in figures
- (3) Quantitative analysis of the data
- (4) Qualitizing the data (transforming the quantitative data into qualitative sub-categories)
- (5) Qualitative analysis of the sub-categories
- (6) Summarizing the data information in sets of main categories and their analysis

The open-ended questions of the questionnaire were treated as qualitative data and analyzed using content analysis (CA). CA has been a common analysis method for analyzing qualitative data to transform it into quantitative themes (Spurgin & Wildemuth, 2016, 307-308). The method offers a systematic and objective means for quantifying the gathered data. For the present study, CA proved useful for creating data codes for a comprehensive analysis and discussion on the open-ended questions. This allowed for the data to be analyzed as a larger entity, rather than separate sets of quantitative and qualitative data. Most of the questionnaire's open-ended questions targeted to support the statements and answers retrieved from the answers to the closed questions. Therefore, treating the two data types as separate was nonsensical.

Content analysis has traditionally been done by following two different approaches: deductive and inductive. The deductive approach considers traditionally already existing data or knowledge that is being retested in the new research (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, 109). The inductive approach follows a process in which analysis moves from specific data categories to more general statements. This approach is commonly used in contexts in which there exists a smaller amount of previous research on the matter



(Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, 109). The content analysis process itself follows a three-step model regardless of the approach that has been chosen for the research. These steps include preparation, organization, and reporting (Elo et.al., 2014, 1-2). The differences between the approaches lie in the specific actions that are being taken within the process steps. The inductive approach will utilize the specific data from the gathered samples whereas the deductive approach will utilize the previous research data as well (Elo et.al., 2014, 1-2). The present study's CA process followed the inductive approach. This is because there exists no previous data model for the present analysis and the collected data are solely based on attitudes that have not been identified in previous research.

Content analysis has been criticized because of reliability issues concerning data collection and analysis methods. The trustworthiness might become compromised at each stage of the research (Elo et.al., 2014, 2). The trustworthiness depends on the amount of attention paid to gathering reliable and sufficient data, preciseness in the coding of the data in terms of the coding themes, and the attention to detail within the reporting phase (Elo et.al., 2014, 5-8). Elo et.al. (2014) provide a checklist for conducting trustworthy content analysis. This list is a step-by-step approach with questions for the researcher to follow throughout all three steps of analyzing the qualitative data. These questions have been followed throughout the analysis of the present study's data as well.

The analytic process of the answers given to the open-ended questions followed the aforementioned three steps. The analysis began with the preparation phase in which the data consisting of each answer to the open-ended questions were coded and categorized. The codes were revisited and revised to find the most appropriate categories.

Spurgin and Wildemuth (2016, 310) argue that to carry out a successful coding process, the researcher needs to select variables that emerge from the research questions of the present study. The variables determine what types of indicators must be looked for when coding the data. In case no previous variables exist, the researcher needs to

familiarize themselves with the content to discover the variables. Within the present study, the data were separated into the variables according to the questions each participant has answered to. These variables were related either to the first or the second research question of the study. After selecting the variables, the researcher needs to find out the indicators within these variables that are counted into the categories. According to Spurgin and Wildemuth (2016, 311), the selection of the indicators is crucial in terms of the validity and reliability of the study. They can appear in two forms; countable content characteristics or features or sets of categories that represent the initial message. The first form, i.e., the indicator style, was used in the present research. This type was chosen because the data were targeted to be presented in the quantitative form of frequencies within the themes.

The second step within the process was the organization of the data. In the organization phase sub-categories of the coded data were formed. These sub-categories were grouped together and further formed into more general categories (Elo et.al., 2014, 2, 7). This allowed the present researcher to come to general conclusions regarding the research questions and the responses to them in a reliable way (Elo et.al., 2014, 7). Within the third step of the CA process, reporting of the findings was made and discussed together with the results of the closed question results. This allowed for conclusions and reflection of the research questions made in contrast to the previous research.

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis began by quantizing the data with the help of Microsoft Excel as the tool. In this chapter, the quantitative visualization of the data will be presented and analyzed. The CA of the open-ended questions will include the quantitative analysis of the indicators of the answers and the sub-categorization of the recurring concepts within each variable (question). At the end of each section, the data will be analyzed through forming the main categories to form the narrative profiles of the participants and qualitative analysis on the findings (Onwuegbuzie & Combs (2011, 9). The participants were 98 Finnish business major students at the University of Jyväskylä and the University of Turku.

### 5.1. Finnish business majors' attitudes toward BELF

The first research question focused on students' attitudes towards BELF. This question was examined in the second section of the questionnaire. Question 15 examined the feelings that using English overall generates in the participants. The percentage rates for each feeling are presented in Figure 2.

15. Millaisia tunteita englannin kielen käyttö (puhuminen tai kirjoittaminen) herättää sinussa? (valitse 3) ('Which feelings does using English (speaking or writing) generate in you? (pick 3')

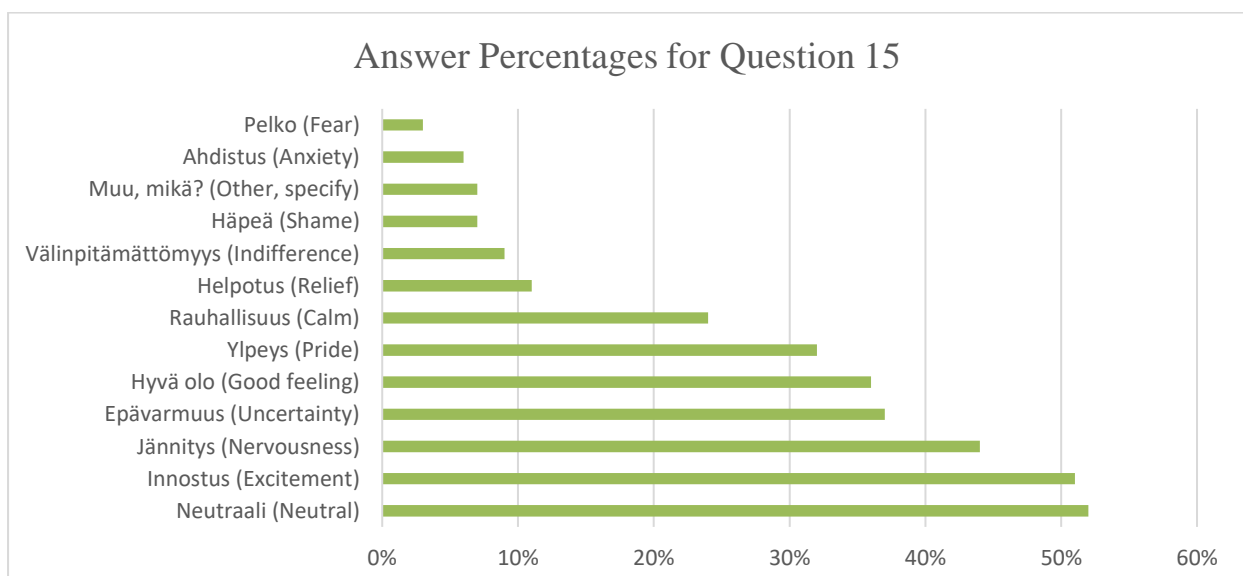


Figure 2. Response rates to Question 15

The students expressed both negative and positive feelings about using English. The three most frequent answers were “Neutraali” (‘neutral’), “Innostus” (‘excitement’), and “Jännitys” (‘nervousness’). The least common answers included all of the strongly negative feelings such as “Pelko” (‘fear’), “Ahdistus” (‘anxiety’), and “Häpeä” (‘shame’). In addition to the closed answer options, there was a “Muu, mikä?” (‘other’) option within this question. There were altogether seven answers. Out of these answers, three were negative (“tuskaisuus” (‘painfulness’), “työläs” (‘laborious’), and “epävarmuus natiivin kanssa keskultaessa” (‘uncertainty when having a conversation with a native speaker’). The rest were more or less positive responses (“Kiinnostus” (‘interest’), “rentous, sosiaalisuus” (‘relaxed’, ‘sociable’), “normaali” (‘normal’), “toive siitä, että sujuu hyvin” (‘hoping that everything will go well’).

The following open-ended Question 16 aimed to give the reasoning for the choices the participants made in Question 15. 18 different indicators were found in the answers and coded. After the coding, the frequency of each code was counted to detect the most prominent indicators. Figure 3 presents the frequency of the indicators within Question 16.

16. Mistä luulet, että nämä tunteet johtuvat? (‘Where do you think these feelings are coming from?’)

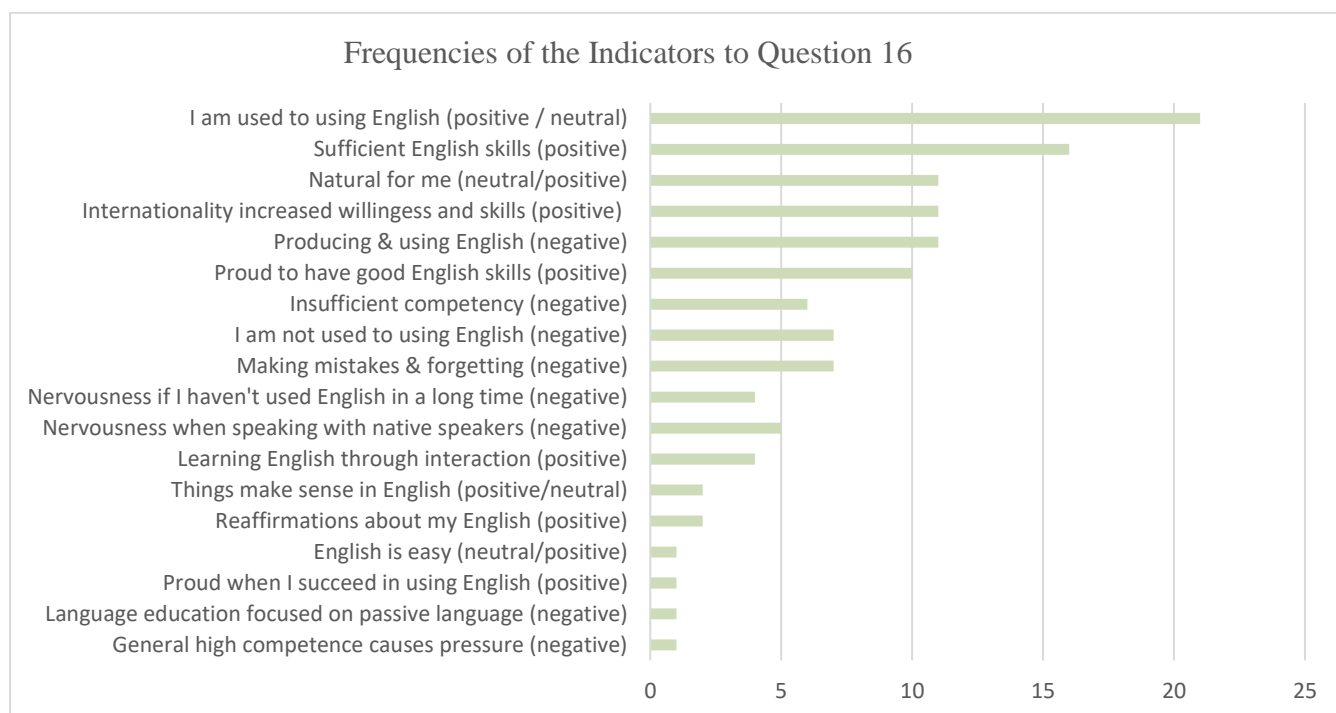


Figure 3. The frequencies between the indicators (Question 16)

The three most frequently occurring indicators relate to speaking English (21 mentions), sufficient English skills (16 mentions), and the use of English as natural (11 mentions). All of the most frequently mentioned indicators were mainly positive or neutral, which correlates reasonably well with Question 15. Within Question 15, one of the most answered feelings was “nervousness”. The correspondence to this answer is visible in the indicators that were evenly occurring within Question 16 as well. Negative responses displayed an even number between different indicators after the three most answered ones. This was due to various reasons for English causing negative feelings.

The sub-categorization which followed the coding process revealed three main categories within the answers given to Question 16. These categories were competency, experience, and social aspects. Each theme was connected to one of these categories. Competency and experience received the most negative and positive responses. Competency-related themes were the most connected with negative attitudes, however, experience in using English received nearly as many responses. The category of social aspects was divided into approximately half with regards to the number of negative and positive attitudes.

Question 17 replicated the question type that Question 15 displayed. However, the focus was on BELF and its use in work-related contexts. This question related directly to the first research question of the present study.

17. Mitkä tunteet ovat mielessäsi päällimmäisenä kun mietit työtilannetta, jossa englantia käytetään lingua francana? (valitse 3) ('What feelings come to mind first when you think about a work-related situation in which BELF is used? (pick 3)')

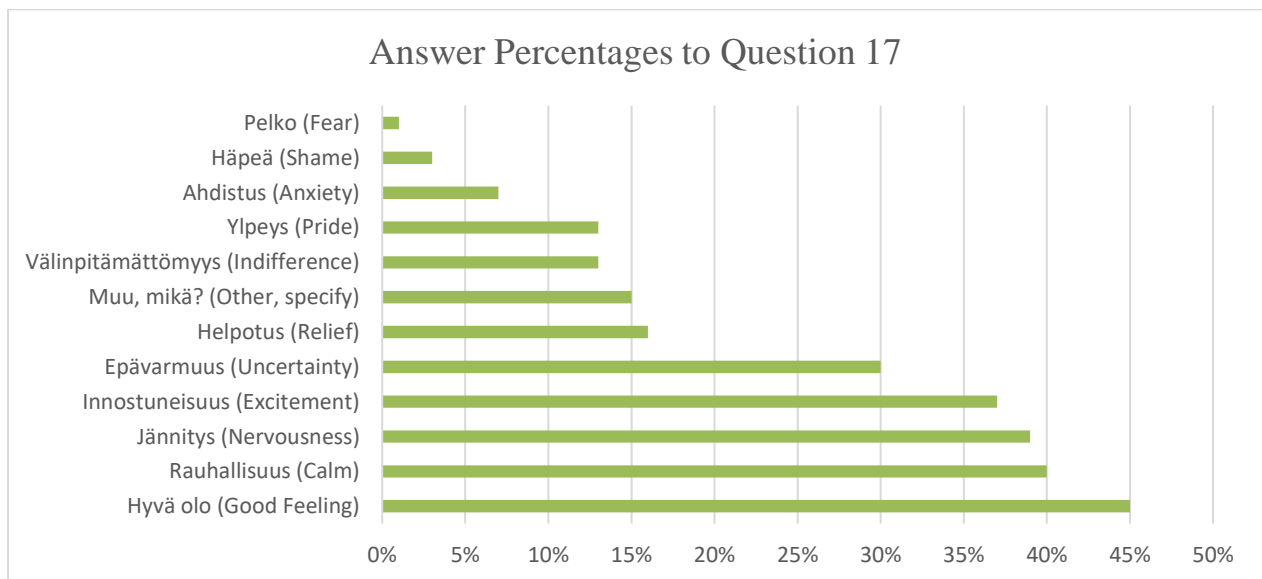


Figure 4. Response rates to Question 17

Figure 4 displays the answer rates to Question 14. The three most frequent feelings indicated were positive ones ("Hyvä olo" ('good feeling'), "Innostuneisuus" ('excitement'), "Rauhallisuus" ('calm')). However, negative feelings such as "Jännitys" ('nervousness') and "Epävarmuus" ('uncertainty') received a high number of responses as well. In addition, the 'Other'-option received four answers, indicating mostly negative to neutral responses ("Ei oikein mikään" ('nothing really'), "Tavallisuus" ('regular'), "Tuskaisuus" ('painfulness'), "Toive onnistumisesta" ('hoping

that everything will go well')). It can be concluded that the participants mainly viewed BELF as generating positive feelings rather than negative ones. However, there were some answers toward the negative feelings as well.

The following question gave insight into the answers displayed in Question 17 above. The open-ended question was targeted to explain the feelings the participants expressed. It was analyzed using the same CA method as in Question 16. There were 15 overall themes identified in the answers. The following figure presents the findings.

18. Mistä uskot näiden tunteiden johtuvan? ('Where do you think these feelings are coming from?')

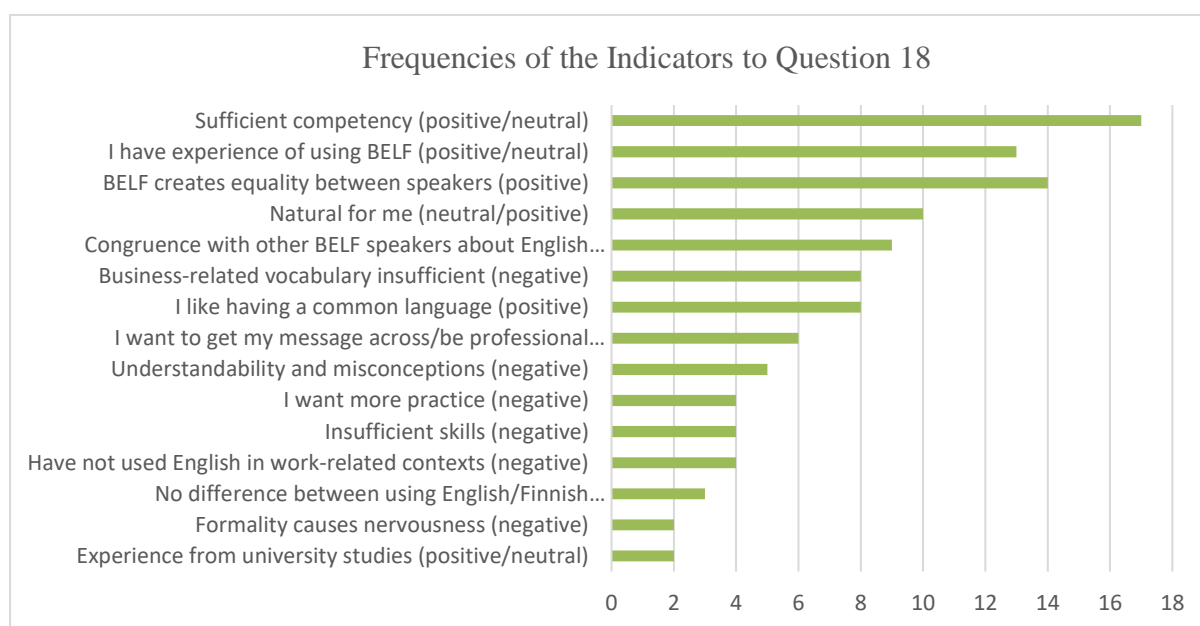


Figure 5. The frequencies between the indicators (question 18)

From the figure, it can be seen that the distribution between negative and positive feelings was that the positive indicators were more uniform in their popularity. There were multiple mentions of competency (17 mentions), experience (13 mentions), and BELF creating equality (14 mentions). The most common negative-influenced answers were business-related vocabulary as insufficient (8 mentions) and the inability to convey a message/be professional (6 mentions). Five respondents did not give any reason for their answers in this part. However, the overall picture of the indicators that

emerged from the previous question is clear. It suggests a division between the positive and negative feelings, with the positive feelings having more mentions than the negative.

The categorization phase of the indicators to Question 18 resulted in three general categories that were the same as in the previous general categorization of Question 16: social aspects, competency, and experience. Each indicator falls under one sub-category within this question. The number of negative and positive attitudes under each indicator was relatively evenly distributed. However, within the social-aspects category, there were more positive attitudes than other indicators. Competency received the most negative attitudes.

Question 19 further explored the idea of the participant imagining a situation where they would have to use English at the workplace frequently. The open-ended question gave further insight into the imaginary situations that the participants might encounter, and into the feelings and attitudes, they experience in this kind of a situation. The following figure presents the indicators of the question answers in a frequential order.

19. Kuvittele, että olet työssä, jossa sinun on usein käytettävä englantia viestiäksesi työtovereidesi ja asiakkaiden kanssa. Mitä tunteita tai ajatuksia tällainen tilanne sinussa herättää? (‘Imagine that you have a job in which you need to use English in order to interact with your coworkers and customers. Which thoughts and feelings does this situation arouse in you?’)



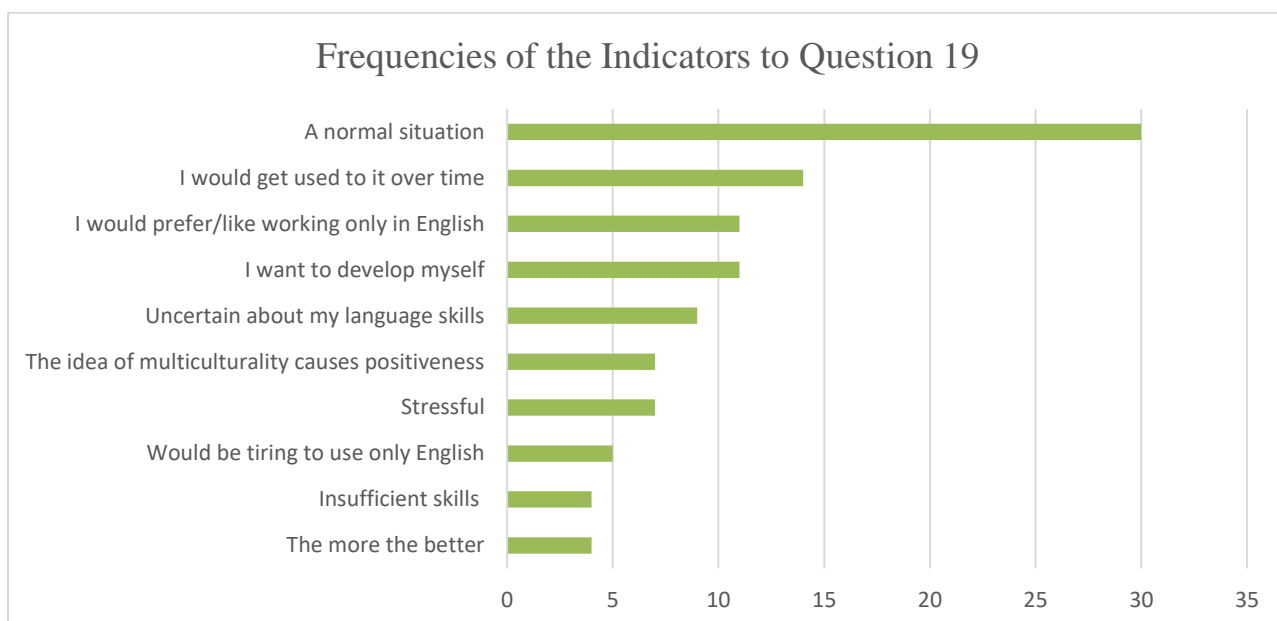


Figure 6. The frequencies between the indicators (Question 19)

The distinctly most often mentioned indicator in imagining English as the tool for interaction was viewing it as a normal and regular situation (30 mentions). Claims such as “Perustoimintaa työmarkkinoilla” (‘General event? at the labor market’) and “Normaali osa työelämää” (‘Normal part of work life’) were mentioned often. The second most mentioned indicator was getting used to using English over time (14 mentions). This view was mostly connected to other mentions explaining how the respondents saw usage of English at the moment. The most common type of mention connected to this claim was “Herättää vähän jännitystä, mutta toisaalta tilanteeseen varmasti tottuisi nopeasti ja jännitys laantuisi.” (‘It makes me a little nervous, however, I would probably get used to the situation fast and the nervousness would subside’).

The sub-categorization of the answers to this question revealed three main categories: I would like it, I would not like it, this situation is normal. There were different reasons given to each of the categories. It was clear that the situation (involving the use of English) as normal was the most common category. The category in which the participants claimed to like the situation received reasons such as wanting to develop their language skills, or the internationality making the situation positive. The category in which the participants stated not to like the situation concerning issues they had with their competency, or their desire to use Finnish as well.

To encourage the participants to elaborate on their thoughts about English in work-related contexts, Question 20 asked them to explain in their own words what they thought as the positive aspects of using English in the workplace. Their answers to the open-ended questions were coded, and the indicators in them were then identified. The figure below combines the indicators and their frequencies.

20. Mitä hyvää mielestäsi on englannin kielen käytössä työpaikalla? ('What good is there about using English in the workplace?')

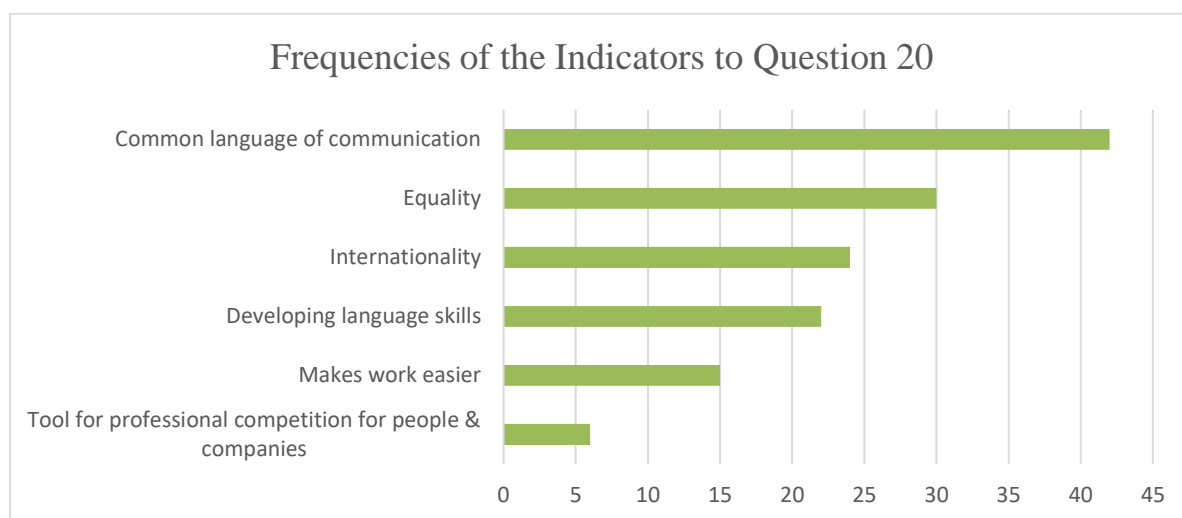


Figure 7. The frequencies between the indicators (Question 20)

Most of the participants expressed claims that were very much alike. English as a common language of communication (42 mentions) and equality (30 mentions) were mentioned most frequently. The least common mentions were English usage making work easier (15 mentions) and the language being a tool for professional competition for people and companies (6 mentioned).

In contrast to the positive aspects of using English in the workplace, Question 21 examined the negative views that the participants had. Similar to the previous question, the answers were coded and analyzed. The figure below presents these results.

21. Mitä huonoa mielestäsi on englannin käytössä työpaikalla? ('What are the negative aspects of using English in the workplace?')

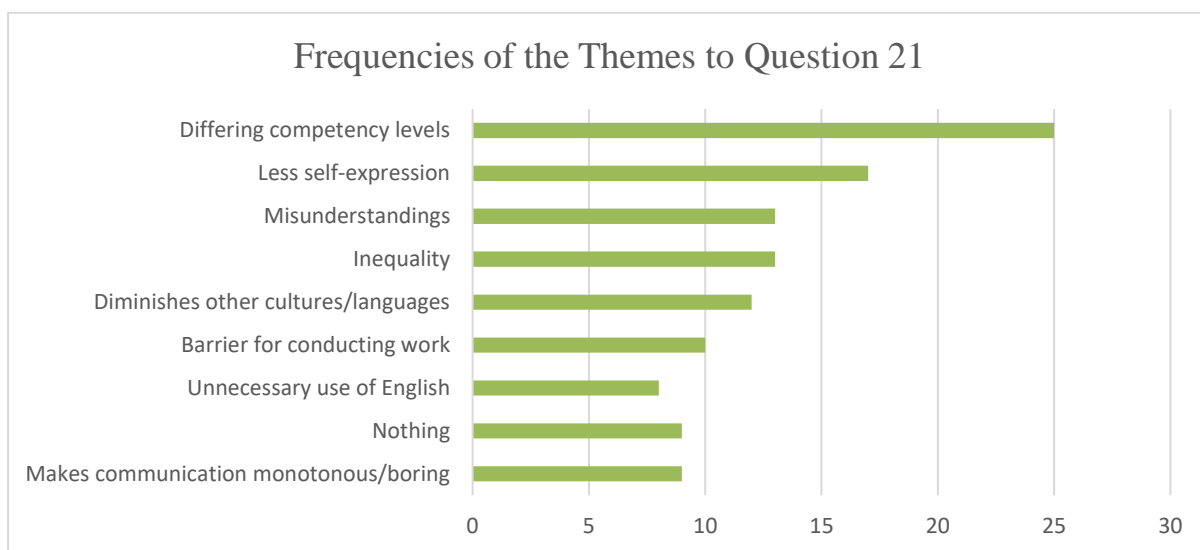


Figure 8. The frequencies between the indicators (Question 21)

The figure presents a relatively even distribution of the mentioned indicators within the question. The most common mention was the differences between peoples' language competencies (25 mentions). The decline of self-expression due to the use of English (17 mentions) was the second most common answer. This was oftentimes connected to the mentions about language competency. As an example, one of the respondents stated "Ihmiset puhuvat eri tasolla englantia, ja kielimuuri/vaikeus ilmaista itseä voi olla pois työtahokkuudesta." ('People have different skills when using English, and language barriers and difficulties to express themselves can affect their effectiveness at work'). This statement was voiced in three different mentions.

The sub-categorization of answers given to Questions 20 and 21 revealed three main categories: social-, self-, and work-related aspects. Social aspects considered indicators such as the equality and inequality that English at work generates, the possibility to communicate with everyone, or the undermining of other languages. These mentions were notable because they contradict each other. Some participants saw English as creating equality in the workplace by not excluding for example foreign employees. However, some participants viewed English as creating inequality considering the competency to speak English. For example, one respondent wrote "Varsinkin vanhempi ikäluokka puhuu huonosti eikä välttämättä edes halua puhua" ('Especially the older generation do not speak well and do not necessarily even want to'). The work-related category identified in the responses concerned the aspects that either aid

or complicate work in terms of the competitive advantage of English, materials being in English, or the fact that there might be misunderstandings within speakers of different native languages. The categories in this section give a good insight into the participants' explanations on liking or disliking English at work.

As the focus of this study is on BELF communication that occurs between non-native speakers of English, it is important to highlight the possible differences that occur in situations where there are native or non-native speakers of English. Question 22 examined the possible variation between attitudes when comparing interaction with native or non-native speakers. The respondents were asked to answer "yes" or "no" to the following question, which was followed by an open-ended question to further explain these views.

22. Koetko asenteesi englannin kielen käyttöä työssä kohtaan muuttuvan riippuen siitä, onko kanssakäymisessä mukana syntyperäisiä englannin puhujia vai englantia toisena/vieraana kielenä puhuvia työntekijöitä? ('Do you feel that your attitude toward using English in work-related contexts varies depending on if there are native speaking or non-native speaking workers in the interaction?')

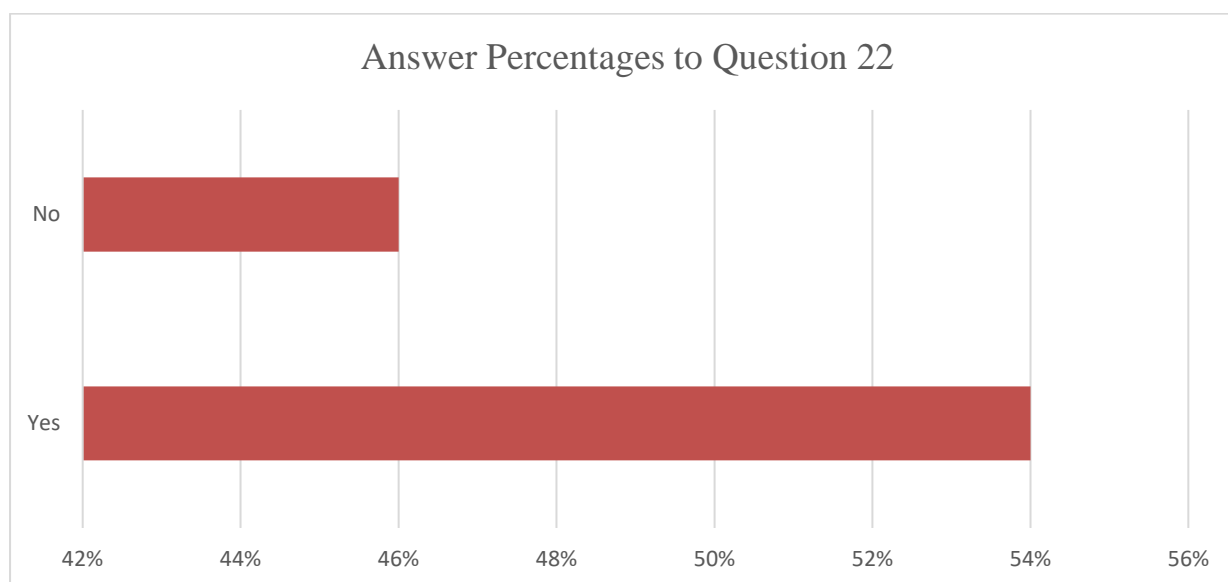


Figure 9. Question 22 answer percentages

The chart displays a relatively even distribution within the answers to this question. Around half of the respondents claim that their attitude changes according to the nativeness of the people in the BELF interaction. However, almost half concluded that it would not affect their attitude.

The results from Question 22 were further explored in the following question. The answers were divided into two groups depending on the answer the participant gave to Question 22. Two figures were compiled from answers to “yes” and “no”. These will be presented below.

### 23. Miksi? ('Why?')

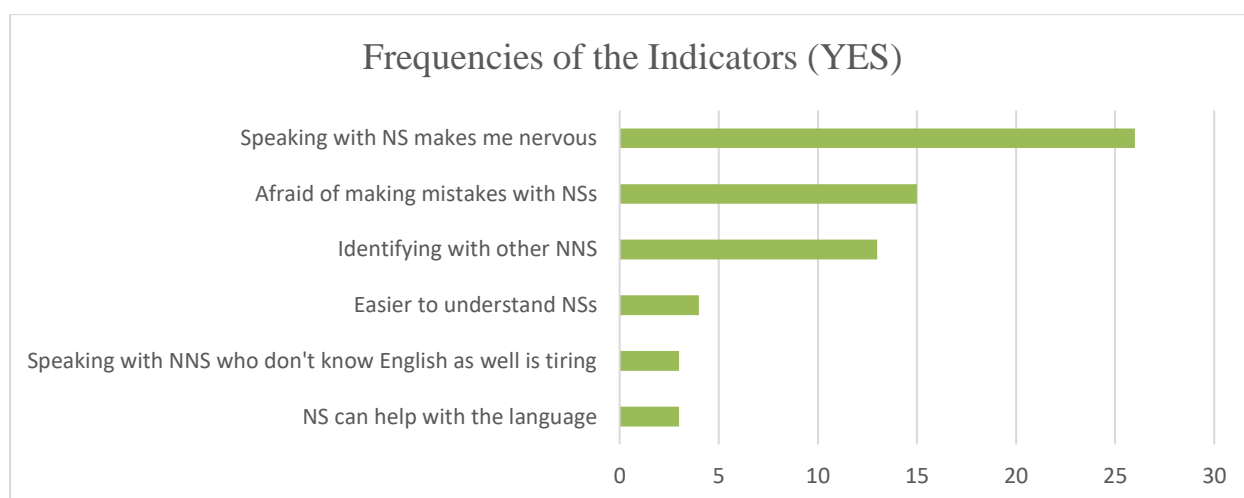


Figure 10. The frequencies between the indicators to answers “yes” (question 23)

The figure displays the most common mentions within the answers marked “yes” in Question 22. Most of the answers expressed negative attitudes towards native speakers (NS). The most common of these claims was that speaking with native speakers makes one nervous (26 mentions). However, there were a few mentions that indicated that interacting with NSs is easier (4 mentions), or that NSs can aid with the interaction in case there is something that the speaker does not understand or know (3 mentions).

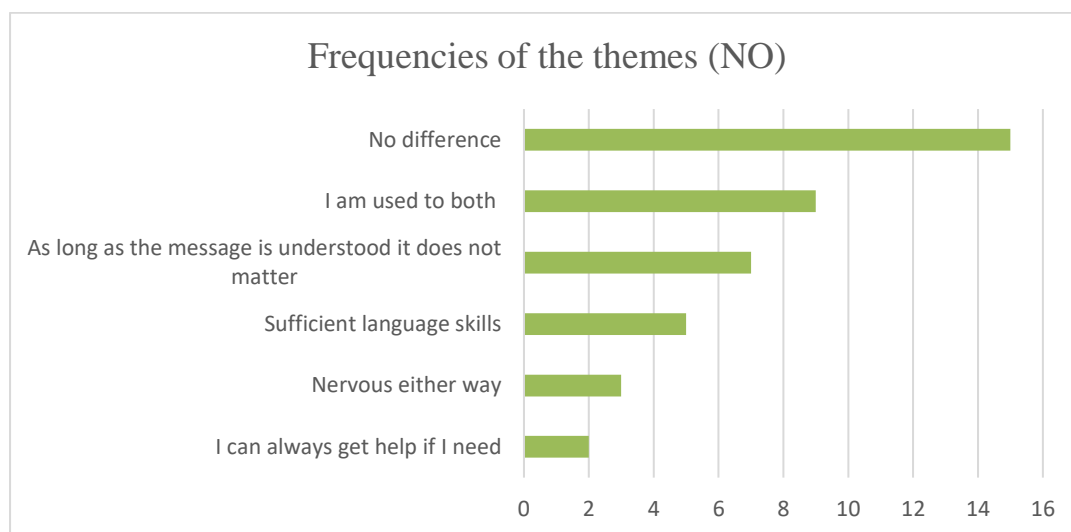


Figure 11. The frequencies between the indicators to answers “no” (Question 23)

The second figure for Question 23 presents the frequency of indicators to the answer “no”. Several of the mentions claimed that there is no difference between interacting with NSs or NNSs (15 mentions). The answers included mostly positive attitudes toward using English. However, one of the indicators highlighted a negative aspect claiming that the person with who they are interacting does not matter since they will be nervous either way (3 mentions).

The categorization of these two questions indicates three main sub-categories: competency, identity, and neutral. The competency category related to either the sufficient or insufficient skills that the participants claimed to have and the effects this has when speaking with NS or NNS. Mostly, the respondents’ view was that interactions with NS are more distressing because they would detect every mistake that the participant makes. Identity-related indicators suggest identification with other NNS and a sense of belonging, having the confidence to speak either way or inability to interact due to cultural differences. The neutral category includes indicators such as that the native-ness of the person in the interaction does not have an effect on the respondents’ attitude or being used to the situation in which there is NS or NNS present.

A compiling question within the second part of the questionnaire intended to allow the participant to describe their attitudes towards working in English in their own

words. It was hoped that the question allowed the participants to reflect more comprehensively on their answers to the previous questions. Figure 24 summarizes the thematic frequencies of their answers.

24. Kuvaile omaa suhtautumistasi ja asennettasi englannin kieltä kohtaan työssä  
(‘Describe your own attitudes toward English in work-related contexts’)

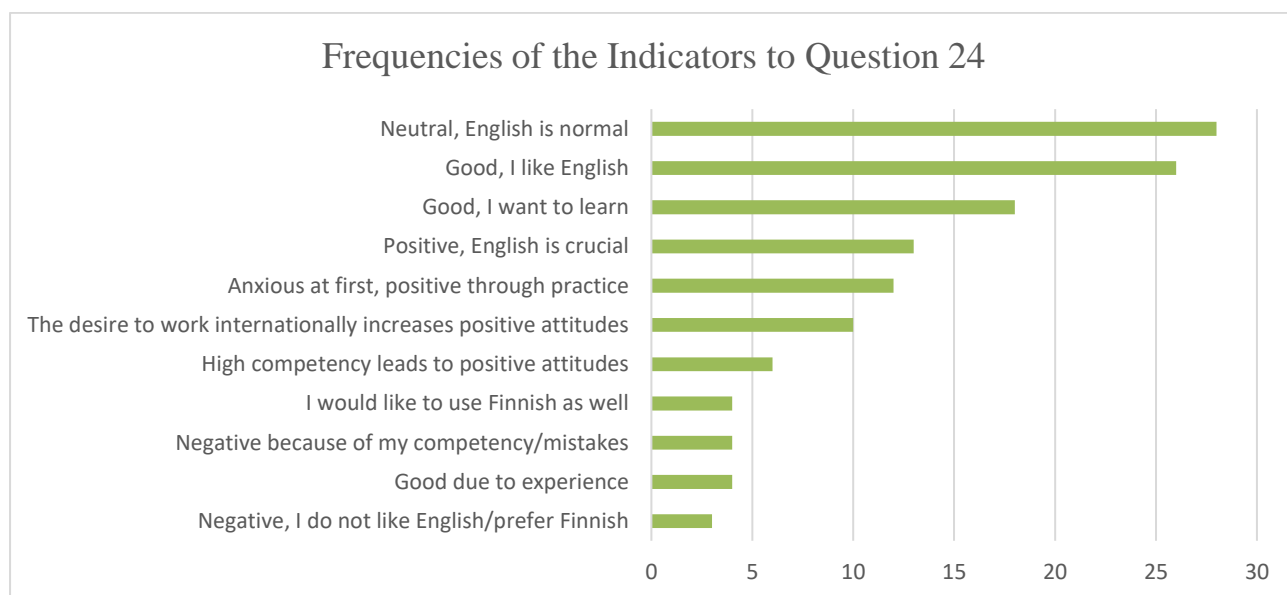


Figure 12. The frequencies between the indicators (question 24)

From this figure, it can be seen that the attitudes that were mentioned most often were neutral attitudes (seeing English as a normal part of their lives) (28 mentions), or positive attitudes, because of the respondents’ desire to learn English (26 mentions). In this part, the number of responses indicating solely negative attitudes responses was lower than in the previous sections. There were only two mention types regarding negative attitudes: Negative attitudes because of the participants’ fear of mistakes or their poor competency (4 mentions), and negative attitudes because the participants preferred Finnish over English, or their dislike of English (3 mentions). Other comments that expressed negative attitudes also indicated positive expectations or a positive change in one’s attitude over time (“Anxious at first, positive through practice” (12 mentions)). There were few mentions also about the desire to use Finnish together with English (4 mentions). This did not solely indicate a negative attitude toward English, but it also highlighted the fact that these participants viewed using only English as negative.

The categorization of the indicators in this question suggests three main sub-categories: Competency, objectives, and the importance of English. Competency-related indicators were related to either a high competency giving rise to positive feelings or negative feelings aroused from perceived insufficiency. The objectives category includes indicators that suggest that the participants express certain particular attitudes because of their objectives in the workplace. For example, one of the indicators suggested that the participants indicated positive attitudes because they want to work in international contexts in the future in which English is needed. Some participants expressed negative attitudes because they do not view English as a useful tool in their future and would prefer to use Finnish. The last category considered the perceived importance of English. Indicators indicated either the crucial role that English has in the workplace or the unnecessary use of English in Finnish work contexts. The common feature that all of these categories had was the notion that there were opposite claims in each of them.

The sub-categories that have been created based on the answers to the open-ended questions in this section suggest a few general categories that are relevant to the first research question. The general categories under which the findings of the second part of the questionnaire fall are competency and its effects on attitudes, future aspirations of the participants, the status of English in contemporary workplaces, and the view of English as a tool for work. Competency was related to answers to each question within the section. According to the answers of the participants, it could be deduced that the level of perceived English skills affected the participants' attitudes toward using it, at work or in interaction with both NSs and NNSs. The future aspirations of the participants were another major factor having an impact on their attitudes concerning each question. The participants possibly expressed positive or neutral attitudes toward English, since they saw the language as a necessity for advancing at work domestically or internationally. Reversely, some of the participants may have expressed negative attitudes, since they viewed English as an obstacle for their work and saw their future tied to fully Finnish contexts in which English would not be needed. The third main



category was the status of English in contemporary workplaces. This was something that was mentioned multiple times in the responses to the questionnaire. The participants expressed attitudes toward seeing English as necessary, and therefore as something generating feelings of nervousness. Some participants saw English as a way of creating equality between people representing different nationalities, especially in Finland. However, it was also mentioned that insufficient skills might generate inequality. The last main category found in the answers was English as a tool. This mention was something that usually fell under the neutral attitudes towards English. Some participants stated that English is merely a tool and that it has become standardized at workplaces, or that the English language work materials, computer software, and other tools are normal in work contexts. For these reasons, in their view, in these specific contexts, English has become normalized as a tool for work rather than a foreign language that is used.

## **5.2. Business majors' beliefs of the future role of BELF in their future profession**

The third section of the questionnaire aimed to discover the beliefs that the participants have of BELF in their future careers. This section began with an exploration of the students' beliefs of the reasons behind using English in Finnish workplaces and the overall status of English in Finland at the moment. After this, their beliefs about the future status of English in Finnish workplaces were examined. An overall view in the context of Finland followed by their personal view on their future relationship with the language gave a comprehensive insight into the students' beliefs. At the end of the questionnaire, there was a non-obligatory open-answer question for additional comments on the topic of the study.

Question 25 was set to examine what the respondents thought as the reasons why English is used in the workplace. The figure below presents the results of the most mentioned indicators within this question.

25. Miksi luulet, että englantia käytetään työpaikoilla? ('Why do you think English is used at workplaces?')

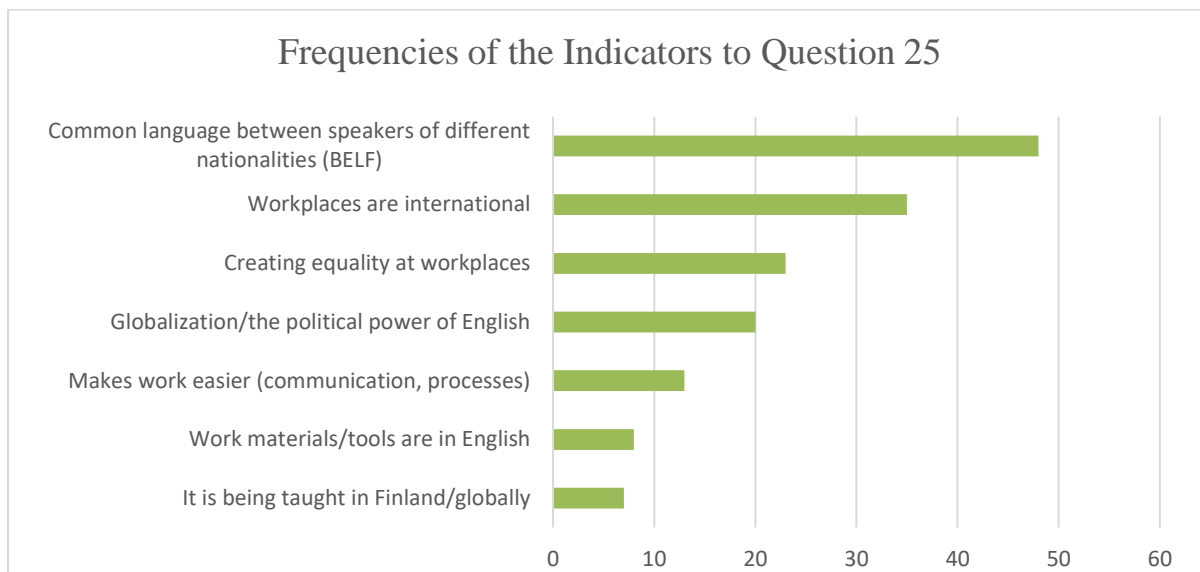


Figure 13. *The frequencies between the indicators (Question 25)*

The figure presents the numerical order of the indicators within this question. The indications that received the most mentions were English as a common language between people representing different nationalities and first languages (48 mentions). This mention covers almost half of all of the participants' mentions. The notion that workplaces are international nowadays was the second most common indicator (35 mentions). The third most common mention was that English creates equality in the workplace for all employees (23 mentions). The historical development and the power dynamic of English due to globalization was the fourth most often mentioned notion (20 mentions). Three of the least occurring mentions were that English makes work easier (13 mentions), English work materials (8 mentions), and the fact that English is being taught in Finland/other countries over other second languages (7 mentions).

The sub-categories within this question are first, the globalism of English, and second, work processes. First, the different ways in which English is important for international work consisted mostly of the answers within this section. English allowing for communication between different nationalities and the historical/political reasons behind the power of English, for example, were some of the indicators within this category. The second category consisted of the work processes in which English is present

in the modern workplace. Also, the materials and the communication being in English were something that the participants considered worth mentioning.

As a step towards the topic of the second research question, Question 26 was a closed question that inquired the participants' beliefs of the need for English in Finnish workplaces in the future. The figure below presents the percentages of the answers to this question.

26. Luuletko, että Suomessa tulee tarvitsemaan englannin taitoa työelämässä? ('Do you believe that one will need English skills in work life in Finland?')

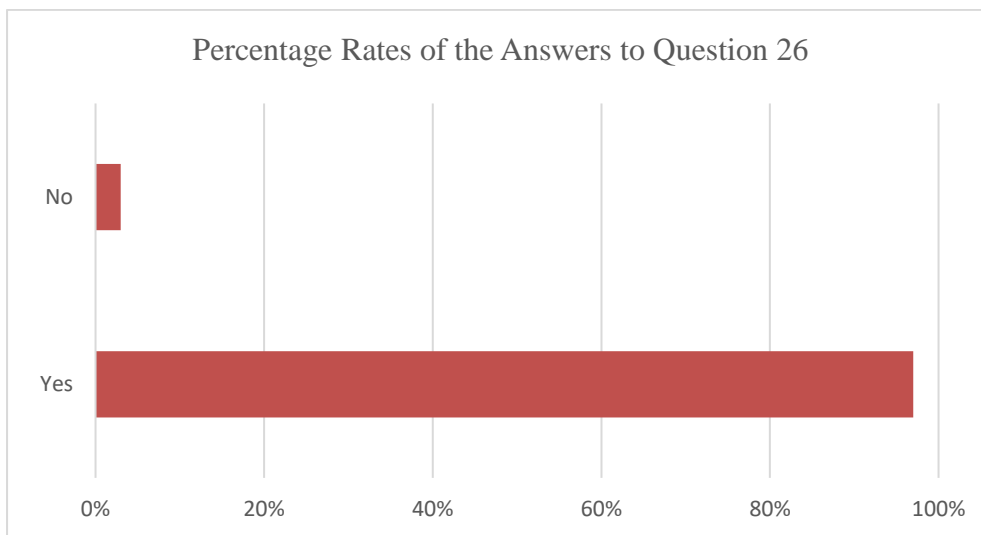


Figure 14. The percentage of the answers (Question 26)

93 answers were indicating "yes" for this question, and 3 claiming "no". Therefore, it can be concluded that the figure shows a clear majority of the participants viewing English as necessary in Finnish work lives.

This question was followed by another closed question to gain more insight into the participants' beliefs about the need for English in the future in Finland. The question aimed to examine if the participants feel that the status of English in Finnish workplaces will change in the future. The figure below presents the results of the answers.

27. Luuletko, että englannin asema yhtenä yritysmaailman kielenä Suomessa muuttuu tulevaisuudessa? ('Do you believe that the status of English as one of the languages of business in Finland will change in the future?')

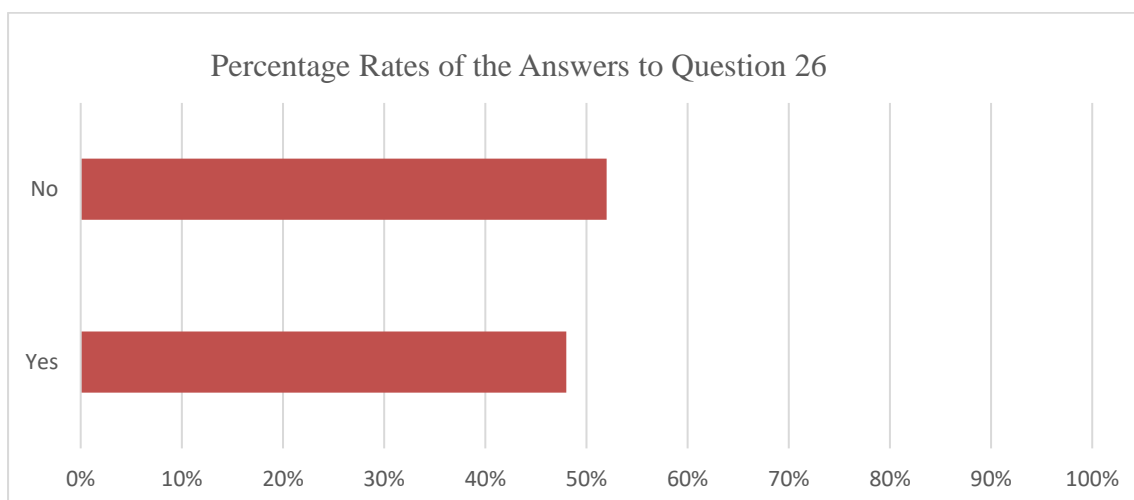


Figure 15. The percentage of the answers (Question 27)

The figure presents almost an even distribution between the participants' answers. The most answered option was "no" with 51 answers. The "Yes" - option received 48 answers altogether. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants' views regarding this topic varied a great deal. The assumption for the negative answer was that, since it was not believed that the status of English will change, it will remain in the current state of being. The positive answers to this question were further examined in Question 28, which requested the participants to explain in which way they believe the status of English will change. As a result, a numerical figure was compiled and is presented below.

28. Millä tavoin? ('In what way?')

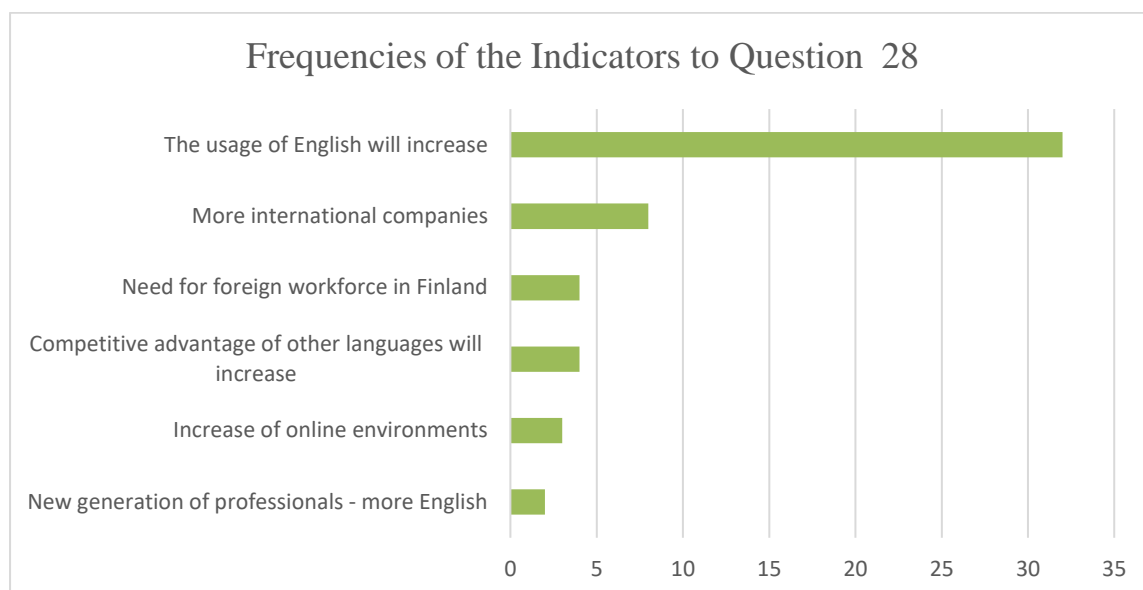


Figure 16. The frequencies between the indicators (Question 28)

The figure presents how the participants' views of how work-related English in Finland will change in the future. The most mentioned answer amongst the participants who had responded "yes" to the previous question (N=48) was that the use of English will increase (32 mentions). Other beliefs received much fewer mentions. However, five other indicators emerged from the responses. The second most mentioned belief was that the number of international companies will increase, therefore the need for English will grow as well (8 mentions). A need for more foreign workforce in Finland in the future (4 mentions) and the claim that the competitive advantage of other languages over English will increase (4 mentions) received the third most mentions. The least number of mentions was given to the themes regarding the increase of online environments (3 mentions) and new generations generating more use for English (2 mentions).

The sub-categories of this section are internationality and the change in the future societies of the workplace. The participants (N=51) who answered "no" to question 27 did not think that there will be a change in the status of English in the future -this is also counted as one of the sub-categories of this section. According to the participants, internationality and increased globalization will be some of the driving forces in changing the status of English. The societies of the workplace will undergo a generational change and a movement toward online environments as well. In addition, a

larger number of foreign workers may come to Finnish companies in the future. In the participants' view, all of these are factors that might change the status of English in Finland.

Question 29 asked the students to rate their belief of needing English in their future work on a slider scale. A slider scale was used to encourage a freer form of expression than is possible in the closed questions. The answers were numbered from 1 to 10 (1 being "not at all and 10 being "daily") according to the respondents' answers on the scale. The answers to this question are presented in the figure below.

29. Kuinka paljon uskot tarvitsevasi englantia tulevassa työssäsi? ('How much do you believe to need English within your future profession?')

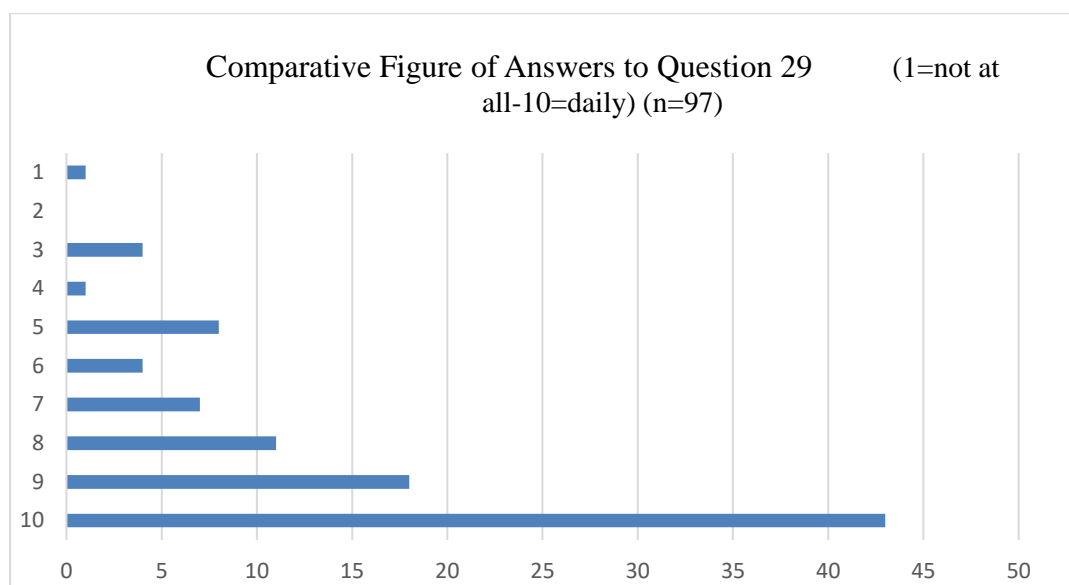


Figure 17. A comparative figure of the answers to Question 29

The answers to Question 29 indicate a clear inclination toward the belief that English will be needed in the future. The answer "daily" received the most answers (43 answers). The second and third most frequent answers were given to numbers 9 (18 answers) and 8 (11 answers). The fourth most common answer was number 5 (8 answers), marking the middle of the scale. Answers to number 7 (7 answers) and 6 (4 answers) were the fifth and seventh most answered ones. However, there existed a few answers indicating a belief about English as only a little to not at all necessary (3-1 with 4 mentions to 3, 0 to 2, and 1 for 1).

Question 30 allowed the participants to explain their reasons underlying their responses to Question 29 in their own words. Question 30 specifically targeted the second research question regarding the beliefs that the participants have of English in their future professional life. According to these, the numerical figure presented below was created.

### 30. Perustele arviosi? ('Explain your estimate')

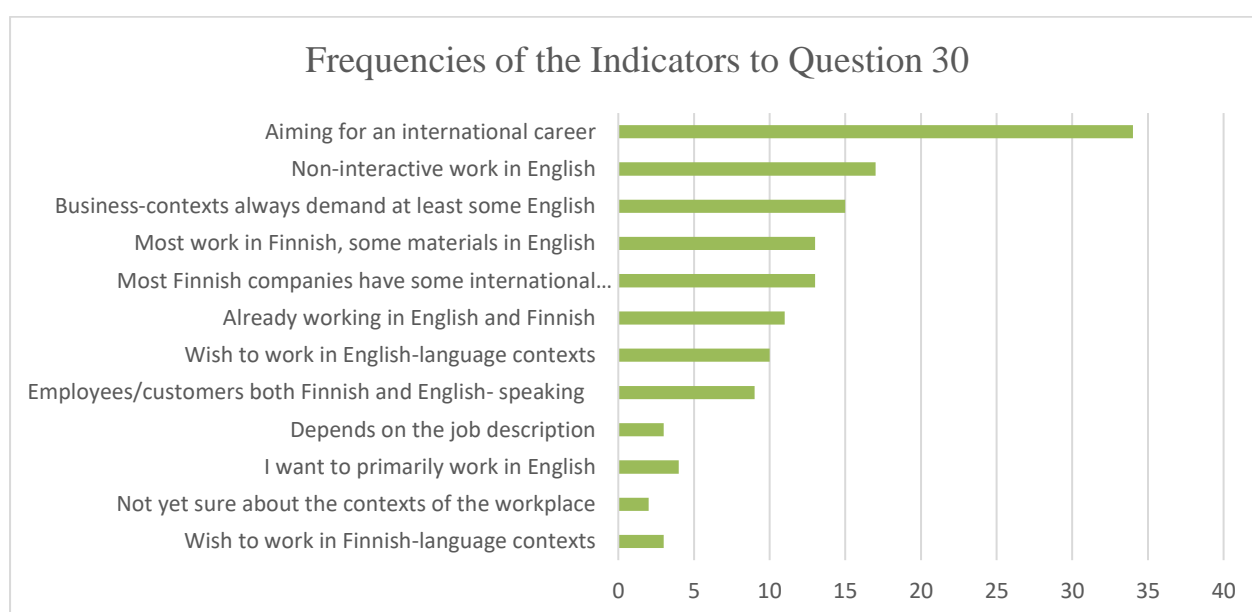


Figure 18. The frequencies between the indicators (Question 30)

The indicators created from the answers to Question 30 showed multiple different reasons behind the respondents' beliefs. The most often mentioned theme was the wish and aim for an international career in the future (34 mentions). The second most frequently mentioned theme was the claim that there is at least some need for English in the workplace, since the materials, programs, and other non-interactive aspects of work are in English (17 mentions). This was followed by the claim that nowadays business contexts always require English in some form (15 mentions). The next most common mentions after these were the notion that the participants believed that most work will be conducted in Finnish, but that, at the same time, some of its aspects would be in English (13 mentions). Another belief with the same number of mentions

was that, even though companies would be completely domestic and Finnish-speaking, they would nevertheless need international interaction at some point of their operations (13 mentions). 11 mentions were stating that the respondents already work both in English and Finnish, which means that they see English as a part of their future as well. A wish to work in English-speaking contexts in the future either in Finland or abroad was mentioned 10 times. Nine mentions were stating that in Finnish companies there will be both English- and Finnish-speaking employees or customers and that English will therefore be needed. There were a few mentions of the respondents' wish to work primarily either in Finnish (3 mentions) or English (4 mentions). How the job description (3 mentions) or the context of the workplace (2 mentions) affects the amount of English used received the least mentions from the participants.

Three sub-categories were identified in this section: future work, current work, and the status of English at workplaces. Future work as a category consisted of the participants' views on their goals and desires toward their future careers. Their aim for an international career, desire to work either in English or Finnish, or the specifics of the future workplace was some of the mentions that belong to this category. The subcategory of current work, in turn, concerned factors that had an impact on the views by the respondents already who are already working. The participants thought that English is already regularly used or that, reversely, that they do not have to use English in every situation at work. The last category concerned the status of English at workplaces. The current need for English in workplaces and the existence of at least some amount of English at workplaces in Finland were mentioned as well. All of these categories display that the participants' beliefs are rather uniform. At the same time, their reasons for these beliefs varied quite a lot.

The last question of the questionnaire allowed the participants to express themselves more freely and to elaborate on their views with respect to the questionnaire topics. There were overall 15 answers to this section. The answers highlighted three main



points: the participants' belief that English is crucial, the need for more Business English education, and the denial of the the need for English and reluctance to using it in the workplace.

Below are some typical comments concerning the belief that English is highly relevant in the workplace.

#### Example (1)

Englannin kielen käyttö normalisoituu yhä enemmän työelämässä ja sanoisin, että lähes jokaiselta asiantuntijalta ja johtajalta odotetaan jo englannin kielen osaamista vähintään oman alan termistöä.

'The usage of English is being normalized more and more at workplaces and I would say that it *is* expected from nearly every specialist and manager to have even field-related knowledge of English'

#### Example (2)

Olen työskennellyt eri aloilla jo kymmenisen vuotta, ja huomannut että joka työpaikassa on tarvinnut englanninkieltä - oli työ sitten myyntiä tai matkailualaa. Suomessa täytyy ottaa huomioon, että pieni maa ei pärjää yksin, ja kansainvälistyminen on pakollista. Myös maahan muuttaneet täytyy ottaa huomioon ja työpaikoilla täytyy pystyä kommunikoidaan enenevässä määrin myös englanniksi, jotta pystymme tarjoamaan kaikille töitä.

'I have worked in different fields for around ten years and noticed that I have needed English at every job, nevertheless, if it was sales or tourism. It needs to be taken into account in Finland that a small country will not survive on it's own and internationalization is compulsory. Immigrants need to be taken into account as well and people need to be able to communicate in English at workplaces to allow equal employment opportunities for everyone'

These comments indicate a strong belief about English as crucial in Finland regardless of the field or the company's procedures. This was visible in the previous questions as well. The equality mentioned in Example (2) was also one of the regularly mentioned advantages of English at workplaces.

Another theme that was consistent in the last section was that the participants expressed the need for more English education. Below are some of the comments expressing this statement:

#### Example (3)

"Pitää olla kursseja työpaikalla että työnantaja osallistuu työntekijän kehitykseen."

‘Workplaces need to offer courses so that the employer participates in the development of the employees’

#### Example (4)

“Mielestäni bisnesenglantia pitäisi opettaa laajemminkin kuin kauppiksessa, sillä moni joutuvat kuitenkin englanniksi viestimään.”

‘In my opinion, business English needs to be taught more broadly than in Business School for the reason that a lot of people will need to interact in English’

The comments highlight that in-company training for sufficient knowledge of business English is important because English is common at workplaces and people need a sufficient education to conduct business in an efficient? manner.

Two additional comments expressed reluctance to English. The following comments illustrate attitudes that indicated aversion toward using English at workplaces.

#### Example (5)

Taisi tulla jo edellä, mutta minä olen aina kärsinyt, jos olen joutunut käyttämään englantia työelämässä, koska oletus on se, että "kaikkihan osaavat englantia", eivätkä minun taitoni ole vahvat, koska en ole opiskellut englantia 3. luokasta asti, enkä käytä sitä yhtään vapaa-ajalla (esim. katsomalla englanninkielisiä tv-ohjelmia/elokuvia, lukemalla englanninkielisiä tekstejä netistä tai kirjoista). En ole myöskään juuri käyttänyt sitä työelämässä, koska olen sattunut sellaisiin töihin, joissa englannin taitoa ei ole tarvittu.

‘I might have mentioned this before but I have always had to suffer if I have had to use English in my work since it is assumed that “everyone speaks English” and my skills are not strong because I have not studied English since the 3rd grade and I do not use it in my free time (e.g. watching TV-shows/movies, reading texts online or books in English). In addition, I have not used English in my work since I have not had work in which I would have needed it.’

#### Example (6)

Mielestäni englannin kielen käytölle on oltava riittävät perusteet. Jos työyhteisö on täysin suomenkielinen, työ tapahtuu Suomessa ja asiakkaat ovat pääosin suomenkielisiä, on vaikea keksiä syytä, miksi työyhteisön sisällä pitäisi käyttää englantia työkielenä.”

‘I think there needs to be good reason for using English. If the workplace is fully Finnish-speaking, the work is conducted in Finland and the customers are primarily Finnish-speaking, is hard to find a reason for using English as the main language within the work community.’

These two comments bring out two different viewpoints. The first indicates a negative attitude toward using English because of one's insufficient skills. The second comment suggests aversion toward the unnecessary use of English in the workplace in which it would be needed. This comment contradicts the statements other participants made above regarding all Finnish companies needing English at certain points.

The analysis that has been presented in this section displays the participants' complex and varying attitudes and beliefs concerning BELF and the future of English in their professions. The participants expressed largely positive attitudes toward BELF in their own work lives. However, some participants saw English as unnecessary or negative in terms of having to use it themselves. The reasons behind these attitudes were mostly due to the participants' backgrounds and for example their experiences in English, or their education. The beliefs that the participants conveyed through their answers within the third section of the questionnaire were more coherent than their attitudes in the previous section. Their expectations for English usage in their future work life were quite uniform in that the majority believed that English is a definite part of their future work nevertheless their attitudes toward it. The connections between the two research questions and the participants' responses will be further discussed in the next section. In this section, the findings will be associated and compared to the previous research data found in similar studies to come to certain conclusions.

## 6. DISCUSSION

This section will present the findings of the present study in a reflective way. The aim here is to discuss the emerging themes of the responses and reflect on them concerning previous research in the field. The section will conclude with the organization of the findings into main theme groups. The grouping of the findings will enable the formulation of a clear understanding of the main findings and their implications to the research field.

The target of the present study was to discover the attitudes that Finnish business students have toward BELF, and the kinds of beliefs they have about the role of English in their future professional lives. The results of this study suggest that, while the attitudes of the students vary depending on their previous experiences with the English language and BELF, their attitudes tend to be more positive than negative. According to the participants' beliefs, nearly all of them see English as part of their future professional lives. The extent to which English is significant to them depends on each respondent's attitude toward English and their professional goals in terms of internationality or the job description. In the following, I will discuss these findings in more detail.

The second section of the questionnaire aimed at discovering the current attitudes that the participants expressed toward BELF. The question types were formulated so that they allowed the participants to indicate specifically the feelings that different situations triggered in them. Overall, the group of respondents was rather divided in their attitudes toward BELF. The results align well with the previous studies that have been made on the topic.

A similar division of attitudes was also identified in Bergroth's (2007) study on adults who use English in their work. The participants of the present study expressed the most negative attitudes when they regarded their competency in English. The participants indicated that their biggest problems with English were misunderstandings, grammar mistakes, and professional vocabulary. Similarly, the subjects of Bergroth's research indicated negative attitudes in this area (2007, 103-104). Professionals want to be able to conduct their work as well as possible, and when an aspect of that work proves to be difficult for them, it is natural that this causes negative feelings toward their competence. Due to the affective nature of attitudes, this factor was visible in the participants' answers.

An important observation to make in this connection is also how common it was that the respondents voiced the attitude *"It causes stress now, but I would get used to it over time"*. As stated above, the nature of attitudes is susceptible to change since attitudes are largely created through social situations and previous experiences and serve as responses to certain stimuli (McKenzie, 2010, 20). In addition, a related point about the competency itself and the impact on the participants' attitudes was how they also discussed the uncertainties they had with speaking English. The most common comment in this respect was the lack of practice in speaking. Education in Finnish schools has concentrated on receptive language skills rather than language use. It is only within the past few decades that English has started to spread into the daily lives of Finns, also giving rise to differences in usage and attitudes between different generations (Leppänen et.al., 2009, 101).

The lack of practice and insufficient training in spoken English or Business English has been a concern in previous research as well. There have been suggestions by the researchers that there should be more corporate language training (Bergroth, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010). This was an insight in the present study as well, particularly highlighted by the respondents' negative attitudes toward BELF because of their insufficient skills in spoken English or field-related vocabulary. Bergroth (2002, 18) discusses the lack of Business English skills in her research and argues

that there has been a need for more corporate language training for a longer time. The increase in corporate language training would diminish the inequality between the employees of the company (Bergroth, 2002, 107). This is an opinion voiced by that the participants of the present study as well. Therefore, enforcing corporate language training practices could prove highly useful. This would promote the future development of Finnish BELF speakers' attitudes toward more positive through raising their communicative and field-specific English skills.

Nevertheless, the attitudes toward BELF by the respondents to the present study were mainly positive. Their most common positive attitude was that English is important because it makes work possible. The instrumental role of English was emphasized in multiple mentions. The participants saw English as a tool for conducting work, competing in the job markets, and pursuing an international career. Again, these findings are in line with previous researches (Bergroth, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Lehtonen, 2004; Lee, 2020). However, as far as these results are concerned, it is important to highlight the context that the participants are thinking of. In the context of business, tasks must be completed efficiently, which requires the people conducting the work to be able to communicate effortlessly. Therefore, it is possible that in other contexts the instrumental value of the language would not be as prominent. This is exemplified by Rantala's (2002) research. The study concluded that the participants viewed English as a tool for communication. However, they did not emphasize the occupational value of the language (Rantala, 2002, 76-77). Therefore, provided that the current study's participants were studied in a non-business-related context concerning English, they might not emphasize the language's instrumental value as much. Thus, I believe that it is a matter of context as the results of this study as well.

BELF-focused communication was explored through a specific question considering NS interactions versus NNS interactions in the questionnaire. Questions 22 and 23 inquired the participants whether they view existing differences in their attitudes about interactions with NSs or NNSs. Most of the responses stated there is a difference if they are discussing with an NS or NNS. One of the main claims with the difference

was that the participants identified more with other NNSs. Also Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen's (2010) research on Finnish professionals' perceptions discovered that their respondents felt more comfortable with BELF communication, i.e. interaction between two NNSs, whereas NS interactions seemed to arouse feelings of anxiety and inequality in terms of the advantages that having English as a native language gives compared to the NNS (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 207). The participants in the present study who had similar feelings stated that communicating with NSs makes them nervous because "*They notice mistakes easily*" or "*It causes stress to try to be perfect*". Another similarity was that the participants of both of the studies indicated that they feel more comfortable with BELF communication because they can identify with the other speaker better (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 207). According to these statements, the answers to this question would suggest mainly positive attitudes toward BELF interactions. The participants who stated that there is no difference most likely feel neutral or positive about these situations. However, there were also a few comments stating that the situation is stressful or negative, regardless of who the other speaker is.

The third section of the questionnaire examined the beliefs of the participants about BELF in the future. The findings seemed to indicate homogenous beliefs. The participants concurred that English has a prominent status in Finnish businesses. However, they often disagreed about the possible changes in the status of English in the future. This is somewhat different from the findings of Malessa's (2011) and Rantanen's (2002) studies, which suggested their respondents mainly thought that English will have a stronger influence on working life in the future. The prominent status was recognized by some of the present study's participants as well yet the beliefs were not as uniform as Malessa's (2011) and Rantala's (2002).

The beliefs that the present study's participants had of their use of English in their future profession were highly dependent on their professional aspirations. This is reasonable in the sense that the extent to which English will be used in a person's work depends on the context they work in. As an observation, this is somewhat similar to a finding by Leppänen et.al. (2009, 101) that people who live in less populated, rural areas

in which English is not as prominent also use less English themselves. In addition, the job description has an impact on the amount of English used (Leppänen et.al. 2009,101). Therefore, it is clear that the participants who believed to have to use English to a large extent in the future also aspired to work overseas or in international domestic companies in the future in which they will need English. However, it also needs to be noted that some participants expressed a need for using English daily nevertheless of their job description. In their opinion, English does and will continue to have a significant role in all Finnish businesses in the future. Similar to Malessa's claim (2011, 47), this implicates that English already exists in each Finnish person's life. Therefore, this would include professional contexts as well.



## 7. CONCLUSION

The present study has examined the attitudes and beliefs of Finnish business students about BELF. The results for the first research question in the study gave a good insight into the existing attitudes of the participants toward BELF. The study concentrated on contrasting the attitudes that occur in BELF settings to the general attitudes toward English. This was done to discover possible differences between a specified BELF context and general views toward English. Through this comparison, the attitudes toward BELF were easy to analyze and interpret. The results showed variation within the attitudes. However, it was clear that the students were mostly positive and neutral about BELF concerning their future professions. Approximately 60% of the participants were already in work life and use English regularly. A couple of participants stated that they do not need English at all, that they do not want to use it. Otherwise, the participants used the language frequently. The high number of participants in work-life resulted in the fact that out of the positive attitudes, a large number was due to the gathered experience in using BELF. There were other reasons for positive attitudes to appear as well, such as the fact that the participants liked the language or felt that their work is more easily conducted in English.

In the same way as Bergroth (2002), Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2010), and Lehtonen (2004) concluded in their studies as well, it was discovered in this study that the practice of spoken English increases or would increase the positive attitudes of the employees. Therefore, the lacking competency of some employees, which was a statement made in the present study as well, caused negative attitudes toward BELF usage. The participants stated that they do feel positive about the language itself, but the lack of English skills in speaking, or business vocabulary gives rise to negative attitudes about using the language at work. They mentioned that their lack of competence gives rise to nervousness, anxiety, and uncertainty. These attitudes were further emphasized when some participants thought that they would feel more positive about English if they gained more practice with using the language. This was an observation also made by Bergroth (2007) and Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2010). Their

implication and the present study's suggestion as well would be to increase the amount of corporate language training. This would aid the respondents to become more confident in communicative practices, and it would be important for businesses to acknowledge that to better their operations and the well-being of their employees.

The beliefs that the participants of the present study reflected upon revealed that they all feel that English is a part of their future profession. English was seen to have a strong position in the business world in Finland regardless of the company. However, there were a few students who believed that the language is unnecessary in Finland or thought that the need for English at work is entirely dependent on the job description.

The research offers a good basis for further examination of attitudes to and beliefs about BELF. According to the results of the present study, there is some variation of attitudes of business students. Further exploration of the topic through a specific target group concentrating on a specific field, business, or age group for example would give more insight into the differences and the reasons for differences between groups of students. Broadening the view to discovering the attitudes of students in other academic fields for example would prove to be useful in the future.

Overall, a suggestion based on the results of the present study would be for businesses and educators to concentrate on the need for more field-related language training. The present study showed that students would benefit from more practice with the English language and specific knowledge considering the vocabulary and language practices in their field.

The research at hand has focused on large-scale results with a high number of participants from different fields of specialization in business. Due to the desire to create a basis for further research, the large number of participants created some limitations to the study's objectivity as well. Questionnaires might create preconditioned situations that would not serve as realistic situations as discourse analysis for example would (Bergroth 2007, 38); McKenzie (2010, 22). The specific answer possibilities tend to limit

the thought processes of the participants to a certain extent. In addition, the participants being aware that they are being studied might create a bias through which they would not answer as authentically as they would in situations that are discursive based for example. Regardless of how open-ended questions can allow for some discursiveness on the subjects' part through concise and short questions and the possibility to answer using their own words, it needs to be noted as something that could be elaborated on in future research. For example, a smaller-scale study on a specific group of students in marketing for example executed through using the social constructionist approach would serve as either fortifying or critical discussion to the results found within this research.

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## APPENDIX 1. (THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN FINNISH)



### Kauppätieteiden opiskelijoiden asenteet ja uskomukset englannin kielestä yrityksmaailmassa

 Pakolliset kentät merkitään asteriskilla (\*) ja ne tulee täyttää lomakkeen viimeistelemiseksi.

*Oheisen kyselyn tarkoituksena on kerätä aineistoa Jyväskylän yliopiston kielten ja viestintätieteiden laitoksen englannin kielen maisterintutkielmaa varten. Kyselyn tarkoituksena on kartoittaa kauppätieteiden opiskelijoiden asenteita ja uskomuksia englannin kieltä kohtaan yritysmaailmassa. Oheinen kysely on suunnattu kauppätieteiden pääaineopiskelijoille.*

*Vastaamalla kyselyyn annat minulle luvan käyttää vastauksiasi aineistonani tutkielmassani. Käsittelen antamasi vastaukset luottamuksellisesti, eikä sinua voida tunnistaa niiden perusteella. Annan tutkimuksestani mielelläni lisätietoja.*

*Yhteystietoni:  
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*Kiitos osallistumisestasi tutkimukseeni!*

*Ohjeet vastaamiseen:  
Vastaa jokaiseen kohtaan oman mielipiteesi mukaisesti ja kuten sinusta tuntuu vastaushetkellä. Lomake sisältää sekä suljettuja, että avoimia kysymysvaihtoehtoja.*

*HUOM! Mikäli kysymyksiä edeltää infoteksti, lue se tarkkaan ennen vastaamista.*

**1. Olen \_\_\_ - vuotias \***

- 18-20
- 21-24
- 25-30
- 30>

**2. Olen \***

- Nainen
- Mies
- Muu
- En halua sanoa

**3. Opintosuuntani \***

- Markkinointi
- Laskentatoimi
- Kauppaoikeus
- Strategia ja yrittäjyys
- Taloustiede
- Viestinnän johtaminen
- Ympäristöjohtaminen
- Vero-oikeus
- Talousmaantiede
- Tietojärjestelmätiede
- Kansainvälinen liiketoiminta
- Muu, mikä?

**4. Suoritan tällä hetkellä \***

- Alempaa korkeakoulututkintoa
- Ylempää korkeakoulututkintoa
- Tohtorin tutkintoa

**5. Työskentelen opintojeni ohessa \***

- Kyllä
- Ei

Seuraavaksi esitetään kysymyksiä koskien taustaasi englanti kielen opiskelun ja käytön parissa.

**6. Olen opiskellut englannin kieltä \_\_\_ vuotta (oma arvio) \***

Vuosimäärä  
(numeraalises-  
ti)

**7. Arvioi tämän hetkistä englannin kielen osaamistasi kouluasvosanalla (4-10) \***

- Numero
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

**8. Olen opiskellut tai opiskelen parhaillaan muita kieliä kuin englantia, ruotsia tai suomea \***

- Kyllä
- Ei

**9. Mitä muita kieliä olet opiskellut, tai opiskelet parhaillaan?**

**10. Käytän englantia opinnoissani \***

- Päivittäin
- Satunnaisesti viikon aikana
- Harvemmin kuin viikottain
- Erittäin harvoin
- En koskaan

**11. Käytän englantia työssäni**

- Päivittäin
- Satunnaisesti viikon aikana
- Harvemmin kuin viikottain
- Erittäin harvoin
- En koskaan

*Käsite BELF (Business English as Lingua Franca) tarkoittaa englannin käyttöä yrityskontekstissa yhteisenä viestinnän kielenä tilanteissa, joissa puhujilla on eri äidinkielet.*

**12. Onko käsite sinulle entuudestaan tuttu? \***

- Kyllä
- Ei

**13. Oletko opiskellut, työskennellyt tai asunut ulkomailla? \***

- Kyllä
- En
- 

**14. Onko sinulla ulkomaalaisia (ei suomen kansalaisia) läheisiä ystäviä/tuttavia? \***

- Kyllä
- Ei
- 

**15. Millaisia tunteita englannin kielen käyttö (puhuminen tai kirjoittaminen) herättää sinussa? (valitse 3) \***

- Innostus
- Pelko
- Helpotus
- Jännitys
- Ahdistus
- Epävarmuus
- Hyvä olo
- Häpeä
- Ylpeys
- Rauhallisuus
- Välinpitämättömyys
- Neutraali
- Muu, mikä?

**16. Mistä luulet, että nämä tunteet johtuvat? \***


*Kuvittele olevasi työtilanteessa, jossa englantia käytetään työntekijöiden kesken, joille englanti ei ole heidän äidinkieltensä.*

**17. Mitkä tunteet ovat mielessäsi päällimmäisenä kun mietit työtilannetta, jossa englantia käytetään lingua francana? (valitse 3) \***

- Välinpitämättömyys
- Ylpeys
- Häpeä
- Pelko
- Innostuneisuus
- Hyvä olo
- Epävarmuus
- Jännitys
- Helpotus
- Ahdistus
- Rauhallisuus
- Muu, mikä?

**18. Mistä uskot näiden tunteiden johtuvan? \***


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**19. Kuvittele, että olet työssä, jossa sinun on usein käytettävä englantia viestiäksesi työtovereidesi ja asiakkaiden kanssa. Mitä tunteita tai ajatuksia tällainen tilanne sinussa herättää? \***


**20. Mitä hyvää mielestäsi on englannin kielen käytössä työpaikalla? \***


**21. Mitä huonoa mielestäsi on englannin kielen käytössä työpaikalla? \***


**22. Koetko asenteesi englannin kielen käyttöä työssä kohtaan muuttuvan riippuen siitä, onko kanssakäymisessä mukana syntyperäisiä englannin puhujia vai englantia toisena/vieraana kielenä puhuvia työntekijöitä? \***

Kyllä

Ei

**23. Miksi? \***


**24. Kuvaile omaa suhtautumistasi ja asennettasi englannin kieltä kohtaan työssä \***


**25. Miksi luulet, että englantia käytetään työpaikoilla? \***


**26. Luuletko, että Suomessa tarvitsee englannin taitoa työelämässä?**

- Kyllä  
 Ei

**27. Luuletko, että englannin asema yhtenä yritysmaailman kielenä Suomessa muuttuu tulevaisuudessa? \***

- Kyllä  
 Ei

**28. Millä tavoin?**




**29. Kuinka paljon uskot tarvitsevasi englantia tulevassa työssäsi?**



**30. Perustele arviosi? \***


**31. Vapaa sana: Halutessasi voit kertoa vielä lisää kokemuksistasi ja ajatuksista liittyen englannin kielen käyttöön työelämässä.**