

EFL and English language in cross-curricular studies: a case study in a Finnish upper secondary school

Master's Thesis

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English
May 2021

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos
Tekijä – Author Iiro Keränen	
Työn nimi – Title EFL and English language in cross-curricular studies: a case study in a Finnish upper secondary school	
Oppiaine – Subject Englanti	Työn laji – Level ProGradu -tutkielma / Maisterintutkielma
Aika – Month and year Toukokuu 2021	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 101 sivua + 4 liitettä
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Suomalainen lukiokoulutus on jo useamman vuosikymmenen ajan perustunut kurssimuotoiseen opiskeluun, jossa oppilaat voivat pakollisten oppiainekohtaisten kurssien suorittamisen lisäksi rakentaa lukujärjestyksensä omien opiskelutavoitteidensa mukaisesti. Oppilaiden henkilökohtaisen opintorytmin ja -valintojen lisäksi myös opintojen loppupuolelle painottuvat ylioppilaskokeet ovat luoneet kuvaa suomalaisesta lukiosta vahvasti oppiaineorientoituneena koulujärjestelmänä. Tällä hetkellä voimassa oleva Lukion opetussuunnitelma (LOPS 2015) toki kannustaa laaja-alaiseen oppimiseen sekä oppiainerajojen ylittämiseen, mutta suomalaiset lukiot eivät ole varsinaisesti velvoitettuja tällaiseen työskentelyyn. Tätä vastoin suomalaisissa peruskouluissa monialaiset oppimiskokonaisuudet (MOK) ovat tulleet osaksi jokavuotista koulutyötä viimeisimmän koulureformin myötä.</p> <p>Oppiainerajat ylittävää opetusta on kuitenkin järjestetty jo lukiotasollakin, mutta tutkimuksia aiheesta ei vielä juurikaan ole saatavilla. Tässä tutkimuksessa kartoitetaan erään yksittäisen koulun vuosittain toteuttamaa opiskelukokonaisuutta, joka kantaa nimeä <i>tiimijakso</i>. Tiimijakso on ollut kyseisen koulun keino tuoda oppiaineita aiempaa vahvempaan kontaktiin toistensa kanssa, tarjoten oppilaille oppiainekohtaisten sisältöjen lisäksi mahdollisuuden laajempien tietojen ja taitojen oppimiseen projektityöskentelyn kautta. Englannin kielen oppiaine on ollut mukana kaikissa tähän mennessä toteutetuissa tiimijaksokokonaisuuksissa, ja tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena olikin selvittää koulun englannin opettajien sekä syksyn 2020 tiimijakso-opiskelijoiden kokemuksia ja näkemyksiä tähän oppiaineintegraatioon liittyen. Tarkoituksena oli kartoittaa miten englannin oppiaine sekä englannin kieli ovat käytännössä mukana tiimijaksossa, paneutuen samalla koettuihin etuihin ja haasteisiin, joita oppiainerajat ylittävä työskentely on tuonut englannin opetukseen ja opiskeluun. Tutkielmaa varten haastateltiin kahta tiimijakson suunnitteluun ja työskentelyyn osallistunutta englannin opettajaa, sekä 11:tä ensimmäisen vuoden lukio-opiskelijaa. Semistrukturoidusta haastatteluista koostunut aineisto analysoitiin aineistolähtöistä menetelmää käyttäen.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat, että englannin oppiaineen ja englannin kielen rooli tiimijakso-opinnoissa oli vahvasti riippuvainen opettajien näkemyksistä. Englannin oppiaineen oppimistavoitteet tiimijaksossa pohjautuvat edelleen opetussuunnitelmaan, mutta opettajat voivat suunnitella ja toteuttaa englannin integrointia haluamallaan tavalla. Näin ollen opettajien lähestymistavoissa oli selkeitä eroja etenkin englannin kielen suullisen käytön roolista projektitöissä. Opettajien ammatillisesta näkökulmasta suurimmat tiimijaksotyöskentelyn edut liittyivät laajentuneeseen työkuvaan, joka rikkoi opettajien normaalia kurssityöskentelyrutiinia. Niin opettajat kuin oppilaatkin kokivat, että tiimijaksotyöskentely tuki erityisesti englannin suullisen kielitaidon harjoittelua ja oppimista. Lisäksi englannin kontakti muihin oppiaineisiin nähtiin yleisesti positiivisena asiana, tuoden kieltä lähemmäksi arkipäivän käyttöä ja monipuolista projektitöitä. Tiimijakson merkittävimminä haasteina nähtiin vähentynyt englannin opetuksen määrä, projektitöiden vaikutus oppilaiden henkilökohtaisiin englannin arvosanoihin, sekä oppiaineen määrittelemätön rooli tiimijaksossa. Haastatellut oppilaat kokivat että syksyllä 2020 englannin oppiaineen rooli jäi vähäiseksi muihin verrattuna, ja kielen käytön valinnaisuus projekteissa aiheutti epäselvyyttä joidenkin oppilaiden keskuudessa.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords EFL, Finnish upper secondary school, cross-curricular learning, project-based learning	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository JYX	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

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1 INTRODUCTION

Finnish general upper secondary school education has been undergoing important developmental changes at the beginning of the 21st century. The new core curriculum will be introduced at this school level in August 2021, being the third curricular change in the last two decades. In addition, the extension of compulsory education in Finland is due to become effective simultaneously, raising the minimum school leaving age from 16 to 18 years. According to Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus), the Finnish upper secondary school provides students with extensive general knowledge, preparing them for higher education at universities, universities of applied sciences and vocational training. In the current National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2015, this general knowledge is stated to comprise of values, skills, attitudes and will, resulting in the development of responsible, compassionate, and social individuals, capable of critical and independent thinking (NCC 2015: 12).

Since the 1980s, the Finnish upper secondary school education has been organized around the completion of subject-specific courses, and in the 1990s, schools also started shifting towards a classless approach to instruction where students may personally build their syllabi, following the compulsory and optional courses in a flexible way (Kupiainen et al. 2018). The three to four-year studies culminate in the matriculation examination, a nationwide high-stakes final examination testing students' knowledge and skills in separate subjects, also functioning as the indicator of students' applicability for higher education studies. Due to these premises, the upper secondary school has been generally considered the most subject-focused level of education in Finland (Elo and Nygren-Landgärds 2020). Compared with the concept of subject-centeredness, *integrative* or *cross-curricular learning* aim to create interconnections between school subjects, bringing separate study contents closer together, simultaneously also contributing to the learning of skills across subject boundaries – also known as cross-curricular, interdisciplinary or 21st century skills. Considering the organization of Finnish upper secondary school studies, subject cooperation and interplay do not seem to have a fundamental role at this specific school level. On the contrary, Finnish basic education has already introduced and adopted *Multidisciplinary Learning modules* as a way to promote learning beyond subject boundaries, offering students a chance to participate in multisubject theme weeks or other forms of integrative learning at least once a school year (Cantell 2015).

However, the organization of upper secondary school studies does not completely disallow cross-curricular work, and the present thesis focuses on presenting and examining an example of such a

study unit dedicated to creating interconnections between school subjects. The unit in question is referred to as the *team period* (tiimijakso), an approximately seven-week study entity during which first-year upper secondary students complete their courses through cross-curricular project works, in addition to traditional subject-specific lessons. Unlike the Multidisciplinary Learning modules of basic education, team period or any other forms of cross-curricular work in Finnish upper secondary school are yet to be studied. This thesis will address this research gap by examining the integration of the English as a foreign language (EFL) subject and the English language into such cross-curricular work.

Firstly, the present study focuses on the planning and implementation of cross-curricularity, introducing how EFL teachers have integrated their subject and the English language into team period work throughout the four-year history of the study experiment at the focal school. The study aims to explain how the EFL part is planned and what it consists of, also focusing on the role of the English language in cross-curricular work. Secondly, the study intends to define the experienced affordances and challenges of team period EFL studies. By presenting and analyzing teacher and student experiences, the study will explore the advantages that team period studies have offered both to the English language learners and the instructors, however, also introducing a critical perspective, shedding light on the problem areas of cross-curricular language learning.

This thesis will first present theoretical background concerning integrative learning, focusing on the terminology of cross-curricularity, as well as project-based learning (PBL) as an integrative language learning method (Chapter 2). Then, Finnish upper secondary school organization and curriculum will be examined from the perspective of cross-curricularity, accompanied by a summary of earlier studies in the Finnish context (Chapter 3). The following chapter introduces the aims, data collection methods, and participants of the present study, as well as the method of analysis (Chapter 4). Moreover, the team period concept of the focal school will be explained in this part of the thesis. In the penultimate chapter (Chapter 5), the data of the study will be presented and analysed, and finally, the thesis will be concluded with a discussion based on the relevant findings (Chapter 6).

2 LEARNING ACROSS SUBJECT BOUNDARIES

The aim of this chapter is to introduce theoretical framework for cross-curricular learning and its different approaches. Firstly, the theory behind cross-curricularity will be examined, also providing definitions for cross-curricular skills (2.1). Secondly, this chapter reviews existing literature on different cross-curricular approaches; multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity (2.2). Finally, the chapter will be concluded by presenting Project-based learning (PBL) as a form of EFL integration (2.3).

2.1 Cross-curricular learning

Before defining cross-curricular learning, it is essential to present the idea of integration in this context. Essentially, *integrative instruction* can be understood as the study of broader entities or overarching themes requiring skills and knowledge from different *subjects* or *disciplines* (Cantell 2015: 13-14). In this context, a discipline is defined as a broader and more active concept than a subject, as the latter is restricted to the knowledge about a particular area of learning (Barnes 2015: 9). A discipline, instead, contains the skills, values and activities distinguishing learning areas from each other, as disciplinary learning is concentrated on aspects applied in the real world, usually in combinations of several disciplines (Barnes 2015: 9). However, in this thesis, the terms *subject* and *discipline* are used interchangeably when referring to school subjects and their content.

One of the key components of integrative instruction is the implementation of *cross-curricular learning*, and thus, also the development of *cross-curricular skills*. According to Barnes (2015: 11), cross-curricular learning refers to a situation where knowledge, skills and attitudes gathered from different disciplines are applied in the study of a single problem, theme or idea, similarly to the description of integrative instruction. Consequently, the cross-curricular skills promoted by such learning can be described as skills that go beyond the traditional subject-specific borders.

The concept of cross-curricularity is not unambiguous, as it may have several legitimate meanings and options of implementation. Thus, it is difficult to reach a consensus over a single definition, and the significance of a cross-curricular approach for teaching and learning still remains questioned by some educators (Hayes 2010: 383). Nevertheless, the task of defining cross-curricularity may be commenced with Barnes' (2015b: 260) statement that "the world beyond the classroom is cross-curricular". This statement portrays the idea that every person experiences the surrounding world

through their own eyes, by linking together thoughts from several different viewpoints, or disciplines. In an educational environment, the skills and knowledge of any of the curriculum subjects may be used to better understand, examine and share ideas and questions concerning the world surrounding us, and thus, cross-curricular approach to learning brings these multiple viewpoints together, creating lasting and transferable understanding of the world (Barnes 2015a, 2015b). However, the division of learning content into different subjects is arguably the normal way to organize education. As argued by Goodson and Marsh (1996), school subjects represent the fragmentation of knowledge in our society. In contrast, a cross-curricular approach exploits and explores wider areas by combining knowledge, skills and understanding from various subjects and methods (Savage 2010: 8-9). Similar ideas are included in the implementation of *curriculum integration*, an approach thoroughly examined by James Beane (1997) which will be examined later in this chapter. In this design, the curriculum is organized around overarching problems and issues, without regarding subject-area boundaries, and the themes of study are drawn from real life (Beane 1997).

In the light of these frameworks it is reasonable to examine arguments supporting integrative instruction and cross-curricular learning, as well as some concerns surrounding the topic. Starting with the supporting arguments, cross-curricular learning is said to offer learners a creative way for developing their knowledge, skills and understanding through the stimulating study of interconnected topics (Hayes 2010: 383). As the traditional subject-driven approach focuses mainly on topics and skills within each subject itself, other issues may be prevented from entering the curriculum, thus also preventing the integration of everyday life knowledge (Beane 1997: 8). Beane (1997: 8) also argues subject-driven approach to be based on the knowledge reflecting the interests of the academic elite running the educational decision making, creating a situation where students might consider important knowledge as something abstract and separate from their lives. Learning that happens beyond subject-specific boundaries, on the other hand, may engage students' imagination, and encourage the process of active enquiry, taking initiative and participation in discussions, thus promoting the social aspect of learning, too (Hayes 2010; Beane 1997). Essentially, cross-curricular work supports the constructivist idea of learning, that is, learning by experiencing in collaboration with others, rather than by being told what to study and how (Hayes 2010: 382). Moreover, cross-curricular work not only creates connections of ideas within and across subjects, but also links them into broader life experiences, making education more meaningful, relevant, and authentic (Hayes 2010: 383; Barnes 2015b: 275). Consequently, learners may also have an important role in planning the cross-curricular themes, thus integrating their own experiences into the process and further improving the meaningfulness in learning (Barnes 2015b; Hayes 2010).

In addition to these positive claims, learning across subject boundaries has also generated critical responses. One of the arguments against cross-curricularity is that, fundamentally, learning needs boundaries provided by subject-centered teaching, thus ensuring that learners gain essential skills in key subjects (Hayes 2010: 384). Moreover, different subjects may have competing values and interests and even consist of incompatible pedagogical approaches (Jephcote and Davies 2007: 210). It has also been implied that some subjects are simply more valued and considered more important than others by students, parents and teachers (Jephcote and Davies 2007; Coughlan 2011, cited in Savage 2012: 80). Some arguments, instead, focus on the practicality of the approach, as cross-curricular links between certain subjects are argued to be more natural to create than others. An example of this can be found in the study by Koskinen-Sinisalo et al. (2020), which examined implementations of *Multidisciplinary Learning Modules* in Finnish primary schools. The results showed that foreign languages, such as English, French or German were completely omitted in the modules that the teachers had taught, whereas visual arts, environmental studies and Finnish ('äidinkieli ja kirjallisuus') were distinctly the most practical and widely-used ones (Koskinen-Sinisalo et al. 2020: 38-39). Barnes (2015b: 275) also argues that linking together too many subjects may create contrived connections, which again may hinder progress and the fulfillment of learning objectives.

From teachers' perspective, problematic issues concerning cross-curricular work have included the lack of confidence in teaching such themes, and insufficient collaboration within schools. A survey conducted in 27 European countries by The Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE 2005) found that many teachers feel themselves professionally inadequate to implement appropriate content and teaching approaches to cross-curricular work. In addition, a lack of communication culture and solid staff hierarchy were considered hindering factors, as well as the difficulties in motivating colleagues, a problem faced by the coordinators of cross-curricular work. This lack of confidence in the cross-curricular approach is not an unexpected finding at least from subject teachers' point of view, since they are obliged to draw attention from their individual subject cultures into wider concepts and themes (Savage 2012: 80). Indeed, many teachers define themselves through their subjects, and the opportunity to develop this area of expertise and teach it to others is one of the most essential factors contributing to teachers' job satisfaction (Spear, Gould and Lea 2000, cited in Savage 2012: 80). Grenfell (2002) examines cross-curricularity precisely from a language teacher's perspective, stating that cross-curricular work demands professional development in at least two ways. Firstly, stepping outward from their subject-based expertise, language teachers are to face the limits of their knowledge and understanding of the

surrounding world. Secondly, they must find ways to teach languages effectively through other topics and subject areas. According to Barnes (2015b), successful cross-curricular work requires enthusiasm and commitment from all the participants – including teachers – and positive experiences in such projects may help them develop their own creativity and provide new perspectives for future work. Indeed, Harris, Harrison and McFahn (in Krawiec 2014: 245) highlight the role and responsibility of individual teachers in successful cross-curricular work, as they should provide students with engaging and motivating source materials, but also relate the studied contents into students' prior knowledge and experiences. Another factor is that cross-curricularity obliges teachers to abandon their role as information delivering authorities, and concentrate more on facilitating the learning process (Fautley and Savage 2011).

Another important aspect of cross-curricular work is the increased influence of student interests. Overall, cross-curricular work gives more room to student questions and concerns, and in some cases, such learning units may be completely based on learner perspectives and interests. The downside of such an approach is that the integration of students in planning and decision making in educational questions may allow them to avoid areas that they find more difficult, which again might lead to the adoption of undesirable work attitudes and habits (Hayes 2010: 384). Indeed, Fautley and Savage (2011) admit that lessons with cross-curricular content may become very demanding but also rewarding for both the teachers and the students. Zajączkowska (in Krawiec 2014: 246), instead, argues that cross-curricular work may promote the feeling of self-efficacy, as students become more autonomous and less dependent on the teacher's instructions. In addition, since cross-curricular work is usually organized through projects and group work, this kind of an approach necessitates collaboration between students and development of cross-curricular skills. The collaborative aspect of cross-curricular work will be elaborated in the subchapters about inter- and transdisciplinary learning (2.2.2 and 2.2.3), but next we will explore the skills across subject boundaries.

The era of globalization and the use of new technologies have brought societies closer together and diversified the educational world and working life in a way that consequently calls for teaching of modern skills, such as the ability of working in teams, finding and analysing information and critical problem solving (Boss and Krauss 2007, cited in Kofou et al. 2014: 134). Jacobsen (2011: 71-72) states that the modern working life requires teamwork that is intrinsically multidisciplinary and multicultural, bringing people with different backgrounds and fields of expertise together in the task of problem solving. As the amount of knowledge keeps increasing, information sharing and innovation through teamwork are considered some of the key features of work in modern enterprises

all over the world (Binkley et al. 2012: 17). Moreover, Binkley et al. (2012: 17) state that there is an incessant and ever-growing need for the mastery of digital and technological tools, which enable human productivity and creativity to reach new levels.

In educational practice and scientific literature, there is a frequent tendency to make a distinction between two types of skills: domain specific, and domain exceeding ones (Meijer et al. 2001: 80). The domain exceeding skills may also be referred to as cross-curricular or *basic skills*, applicable and usable within several different domains, whereas domain specific skills are linked to the learning and practice of a particular domain (Alexander, Graham and Harris 1998). However, it is essential to make a slight distinction between basic and cross-curricular skills, since the former highlights the wide range of application of skills that might be useful to students in different areas of life, not only in a school environment. Cross-curricularity, instead, implies that there are skills shared by several subjects that may be learnt and practiced in different classes (Meijer et al. 2001: 80-83). Drake and Burns (2004) classify skills in a similar way by distinguishing between lower-order, discipline-specific, and interdisciplinary skills. Accordingly, the lower-order skills merely require students to recapitulate already existing knowledge, whereas the discipline-specific ones – while being connected to a particular discipline – demand active work with the content (Drake and Burns 2004: 44-45). Finally, the interdisciplinary skills are said to appear in multiple subject areas, requiring more complex performance from the students, as instead of knowledge interpreters, they become knowledge producers. Drake and Burns (2004: 45) provide some examples of interdisciplinary skills, such as information management, critical thinking and problem solving, which again, may consist of subsets of skills. Consequently, in this thesis the terms interdisciplinary and cross-curricular skills will be used interchangeably because of their similarities.

Binkley et al. (2012: 18) define sophisticated thinking, problem solving, collaboration and communication skills as the essential things that students should acquire to be successful not only in their future work, but in life overall. In academic literature, such skills have also been referred to as 21st century skills (Binkley et al. 2012; Gordon et al. 2009; Ananiadou and Claro 2009; Finegold and Notabartolo 2010), a denomination which effectively emphasizes the relevance and particularity of these skills in the era we currently live in. Furthermore, some authors make distinctions between skills and competences, especially in a European context (Gordon et al. 2009; Ananiadou and Claro 2009; Finegold and Notabartolo 2010). Gordon et al. (2009: 12) define competence as a larger concept, including attitudes and capacities in addition to a set of skills. Similarly, Ananiadou and Claro (2009: 8) consider a skill merely the ability to perform a task, whereas competence encompasses the ability of applying learning outcomes in defined contexts. Thus, a competence includes functional aspects,

interpersonal qualities, and ethical values, too (Ananiadou and Claro 2009:8). Despite these differences, in this thesis, the term *skills* will be used when referring to the combination of these two.

Even though there is a wide variety of terminology surrounding the topic in question, it seems that cross-curricular, interdisciplinary and 21st century skills all refer to similar sets of skills. All these skills are something that cannot be reached or acquired explicitly through the study of one school subject, but instead, they are found somewhere beyond the traditional subject boundaries. However, defining such skills is a task that educational decision makers must pay attention to. According to Ananiadou and Claro (2009: 5), governments should properly identify and conceptualize these skills in order to incorporate them into educational standards and practice, because otherwise, the whole process might become irrelevant to individual schools. Consequently, such frameworks have already been developed by several international and national organizations, one example being the European Reference Framework (for further reading: Binkley et al. 2012: 34-36). Despite the variety of instructions, different frameworks seem to introduce similar skills and competences, highlighting aspects such as critical thinking, adaptability, communication, collaboration and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) (Finegold and Notabartolo 2010: 6; Ananiadou and Claro 2009: 8-11; Binkley et al. 2012: 36-56).

In summary, cross-curricular teaching and learning can be regarded as an educational response to the demands of modern society. Krawiec (2014: 244) argues that cross-curricularity plays an important role in present education, as it offers tools for integrating knowledge from different domains and helps students structure their learning experiences, consequently promoting the development of the modern skills needed in working life. Now that the concept of cross-curricular work and the skills linked to it have been defined, the following sections will examine different practical cross-curricular approaches.

2.2 Implementations of cross-curricular work

In order to meet the expectations of the modern world, different methods for integrative or cross-curricular instruction have been created, supporting the learning cross-curricular skills simultaneously with subject contents (Kangas et al. 2015: 37). In the field of integrative instruction, Drake and Burns (2004) provide an overview of three basic approaches for planning such learning units: *Multidisciplinary integration*, *Interdisciplinary integration* and *Transdisciplinary integration*. However, these three terms are often used interchangeably and in an ambiguous manner when talking

about an integrated approach to teaching and learning, and hence, this misconceptualisation may cause difficulties and confusion in planning and implementing such study modules or courses (Park and Son 2010: 82; Wall and Shankar 2008: 551). According to Wall and Shankar (2008: 551), all the above-mentioned approaches may be placed under the overarching term of *cross-disciplinary* work, which is used as a general term for referring to work that involves several disciplines. All of the approaches share the underlying notion of combining knowledge from different school subjects – or disciplines – in the study of wider topics or themes, but the differences are found in the role of individual subjects in the approaches, or more specifically, in the degree of separation between subject-specific areas (Drake and Burns 2004: 15). Consequently, these approaches offer three different structures for planning and implementing integrative or cross-curricular instruction, and their features will be presented in the following subchapters.

2.2.1 Multidisciplinary integration

In Multidisciplinary or multisubject integration, the planning of integrative units lays emphasis on the role of disciplines, i.e. the individual school subjects and the skills and contents that are promoted in them (Drake and Burns 2004: 8; Beane 1997: 10). The planning process of a multidisciplinary integrative unit focuses first on the objectives of individual disciplines, and their contribution and adaptability to a chosen theme is examined as a secondary objective (Beane 1997: 10). Thus, the individual disciplines are set apart from each other, but they all contribute to the study of a common overarching theme in their own subject areas. This structure of a multidisciplinary approach is illustrated in the following figure:

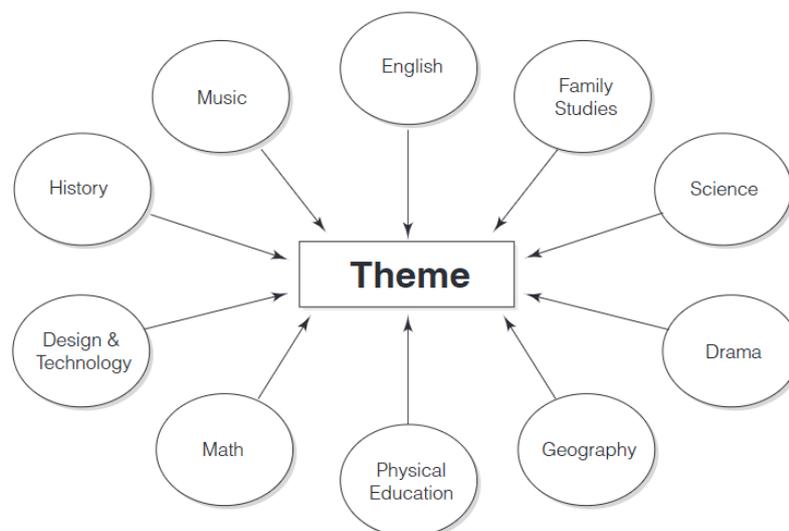


Figure 1. Multidisciplinary integration (reproduced from Drake and Burns 2004: 9)

As shown in Figure 1, the chosen theme is studied separately from the perspective of each individual discipline of the unit, so that the identities and boundaries of different school subjects are retained and not mixed. Certainly, the subjects are taught and studied in relation to the theme, but the instruction still focuses more on the discipline-specific skills and content, rather than on cross-curricular skills (Beane 1997: 10). Beane (1997) argues that this multidisciplinary approach as a form of integrative instruction is not indeed far from the traditional subject-based one, as students systematically move from one subject to another, while the teachers' role is to relate their subject areas to a shared objective, in this case, to a theme. Drake and Burns (2004: 10-11) elaborate that the practice of a multidisciplinary approach may be implemented in various ways depending on the educational context. For instance, in American elementary schools it has been practiced in the form of learning centers, focusing on activities from the perspective of one discipline at a time, whereas in the higher grades the subject studies are sequenced to match the content in other classrooms (Drake and Burns 2004: 10-11).

The integrative nature of multidisciplinary has evoked some criticism. It may be argued that the term *integration* should not even be related to the multidisciplinary approach (Beane 1997: 9), because fundamentally, it maintains the same objectives of the traditional separate-subject approach to learning, since it is organized and aimed to cover subject-specific content and skills. According to Beane (1997: 10), in a veritably integrated approach, the planning begins with the selection of a theme, which later enables the identification of bigger concepts and activities that help exploring it. Beane (1997) also argues that the chosen themes should be explored without letting subject boundaries limit the planning process or the eventual implementation. Thus, student work should be based on activities or projects that require knowledge from multiple disciplines, consequently promoting the learning of cross-curricular skills (Beane 1997: 11). Moreover, the approach does not encourage teachers to plan complex interrelationships between the different disciplines of the unit, as they merely concentrate on covering the theme from the perspective of their own subject, without integrating or interrelating ideas from others (Barnes 2015: 70-71; Kaufman et al. 2003: 6). Due to this, the multidisciplinary approach has been considered the least sophisticated form of cross-disciplinary work, as teachers do not form any concrete collaborative teams, but are instead restricted to work in an isolated manner, representing only their own subject (Wall and Shankar 2008: 551).

However, from the teachers' perspective, the clear separation between subjects facilitates assessment and guarantees the progress within subject-specific framework, conducted by the teacher (Barnes 2015: 71). Furthermore, the multidisciplinary approach may also lead to such cross-disciplinary work

where the collaboration of different subjects is more recognizable, if teachers manage to create project-centered activities, eventually calling for the use of knowledge from all the integrated subject areas of the unit (Beane 1997: 12). Even though the multidisciplinary approach may not be as integrative in nature as other approaches, it has been argued that multidisciplinary dialogue plays an important role in the development of modern approaches to teaching and learning (Kaufman, Moss and Osborn 2003: 28). Therefore, effective communication between disciplines is an essential part of successful multidisciplinary work (Park and Son 2010: 83). In multidisciplinary planning, subject teachers may realize what kind of common skills and concepts are actually covered in their classes, and consequently, these cross-curricular skills may be studied simultaneously in each separate subject, thus helping the students to better understand connections between them. However, as Figure 1 shows, learning cross-curricular skills is not always explicitly regarded as the ultimate objective of a multidisciplinary approach.

2.2.2 Interdisciplinary integration

The challenge of the multidisciplinary approach is that the skills and knowledge from different subjects are not necessarily brought in contact with each other. Stronger integration of knowledge would be more accessible and meaningful for learners, and placing the subject-specific contents into wider contexts may even encourage pupils to participate in active enquiry and discussions on the topic (Beane 1997: 7; Hayes 2010: 383). The next integrative approach takes a step closer towards such interaction between school subjects, as Drake and Burns (2004: 12) provide an overview of *Interdisciplinary integration*. This approach is illustrated in Figure 2:

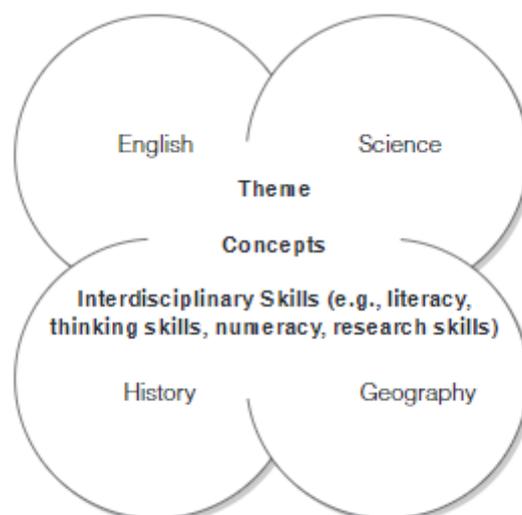


Figure 2. Interdisciplinary integration (Drake and Burns 2004: 12)

Similarly to multidisciplinary integration, separate disciplines exist and are identifiable also in the interdisciplinary approach, but these subject-specific features assume less importance in the instruction (Drake and Burns 2004: 12). Thus, the emphasis is set on cross-curricular skills over subject-specific knowledge, as the instruction is organized around common learning areas across disciplines (Drake and Burns 2004: 12). In Figure 2, these learning areas are defined as *themes*, *concepts*, and *interdisciplinary skills*, which are bound together and studied from the perspectives of school subjects English, science, history, and geography. Since the subject areas are related to and may even merge with each other, the strict one-subject approach may be avoided and replaced with a more comprehensive perspective. Essentially, subject-specific content is still an important part of both the interdisciplinary approach, but its role is to contribute to the ultimate objective of learning interdisciplinary / cross-curricular skills (Drake and Burns 2004: 12).

If we are looking for a simple way to define interdisciplinary work, it may be described as the integration of information, tools, perspectives, ideas and theories from multiple fields, with the objective of creating something new, explaining phenomena or solving problems (Helmane and Briška 2017: 10). The term *interdisciplinary* is not, however, as unequivocal and simple to evaluate as the previous statement might imply, due to the wide variety of practices and methods of instruction associated with this terminology (Applebee et al. 2007: 1005). Applebee et al. (2007) provide examples of how differently *interdisciplinary teams* may be understood and how they may function within schools. Fundamentally, such a team may be perceived as a set of subject-area specialists, i.e. subject teachers, who all participate in the implementation of an interdisciplinary entity, and who are together in charge of the same group of students. The teaching and studying are organized around common themes or concepts, but at one extreme, the subject teachers may remain in their own areas of specialty, developing and teaching their own subject-specific contents related to the theme. Evidently, one might argue that such an approach should be regarded as a multidisciplinary approach rather than an interdisciplinary one. At the other extreme, this group of teachers may plan a completely new study entity that focuses on wider issues, expanding or even exceeding the traditional subject areas and their content. This latter example requires significantly more collaboration, since the subject teachers face the theme together, trying to develop new content and ways to teach it (Applebee et al. 2007: 1005).

In contrast to the multidisciplinary approach presented earlier in this chapter, effective interdisciplinary work increases the level of collaboration and communication between teachers, i.e. team members, as the planning and implementation of such work is considered a shared responsibility

(Crow and Pounder 2000: 217). Crow and Pounder (2000) argue that this kind of collaborative approach allows teachers to develop interpersonal skills and participate in cooperative decision making, and furthermore, it may encourage teachers to experiment on new teaching strategies. Crow and Pounder (2000: 217) also argue that interdisciplinary teacher teams may be especially beneficial at the secondary level where coordination across different subjects has traditionally been considered quite minimal. This may be perceived, for instance, in the Finnish upper secondary school where subject teachers are personally responsible for teaching individual courses of their own area of expertise. Consequently, through interdisciplinary collaboration teachers may develop their understanding about and responsibility for student learning and study outcomes (Crow and Pounder 2000: 217).

From the learner perspective, the interdisciplinary approach has been supported through several arguments. Firstly, it may offer solutions to the demands of the 21st century education where the development of new skills and ways of thinking is considered especially important (Kidron and Kali 2015). Essentially, learners should face topics and themes beyond the scope of a single discipline in order to integrate new insights, facilitating the understanding of correlations of disciplines, larger thematic content and new situations (Kidron and Kali 2015; Helmane and Briška 2017). Secondly, as Collins (2006) argues, this approach may motivate learners to develop their personal thoughts and opinions, linking pupils' own experiences into the learning process and highlighting the potential of cooperative learning. Interdisciplinary work motivates learners to express their ideas and discuss them with other students of different competence levels, thus promoting the social-cultural aspect of learning and the creation of collective knowledge (Kidron and Kali 2015; Collins 2006). Consequently, interdisciplinary work does not only allows and enhances the subject and teacher collaboration, but also encourages students to work together. Finally, as the approach encourages learning through discussion and group work, it allows the whole process of learning to become more student-centered, based on the learners' personal backgrounds, such as experiences, attitudes, communication abilities and behavioral issues (Kidron and Kali 2017; Crow and Pounder 2000).

2.2.3 Transdisciplinary integration

According to Meeth (cited in Kaufman, Moss and Osborn 2003: 6), the transdisciplinary approach is a way to move truly beyond the discipline boundaries, as such programs are organized around and based on larger issues or problems. Compared to the other integrative approaches, the idea of transdisciplinarity is to discover what different disciplines have in common and what lies beyond

them, rather than to focus on the mastery of the disciplines themselves (Palaiologou 2010: 278). Consequently, this approach has been considered the most evolved, complex, and abstract method of cross-disciplinary collaboration, expanding the relationships between disciplines and placing them within a more comprehensive system without firm boundaries (Bernstein 2015; Wall and Shankar 2008). Kaufman, Moss and Osborn (2003: 7) argue that in a transdisciplinary approach, the disciplines may be defined better as perspectives than individual and isolated content areas. Eventually, when addressing bigger questions or problems, these perspectives are inevitably bound together, contributing to a more complex and complete understanding on the topic. The authors also explain that each discipline may only provide a narrow point of view on a larger whole, and thus, a transdisciplinary approach with multiple disciplines is required to interpret this bigger entity (Kaufman et al. 2003: 7). According to Drake and Burns (2004: 13-15), transdisciplinary integration may happen, for instance, through project-based or problem-based learning.

Compared to the previous approaches to integrative instruction, transdisciplinary integration gives considerably more space to student interests, as the curriculum is organized around students' questions and concerns (Drake and Burns 2004: 13). Indeed, it is argued that the involvement of youth perspectives is essential for educational improvement, promoting the active participation of students themselves (Schultz 2011: 4). Nevertheless, student participation in curriculum development and school decision making is not an overly frequent phenomenon, as student approaches to the structures and functions of teaching and learning are widely disregarded in normal schoolwork (Schultz 2011: 4-5). In the transdisciplinary approach, instead, the learner inquiries are considered the whole basis of the instruction, promoting student participation in educational planning. With this method, the identities of individual disciplines and the subject-specific borders between them are further diminished, or even completely eliminated. Whereas in multidisciplinary integration the emphasis is retained on the separate disciplines, and the interdisciplinary approach focuses on the promotion of interdisciplinary skills through these disciplines, the transdisciplinary approach aims at merging all the disciplines into one overarching entity. The transdisciplinary approach is illustrated in the following figure:

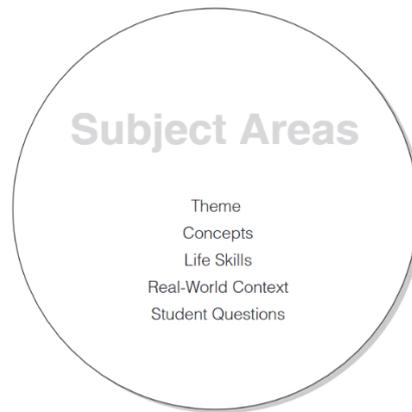


Figure 3. Transdisciplinary integration (Drake and Burns 2004: 14)

When comparing Figure 3 with the earlier ones in this chapter, the changes in the roles of disciplines and focus points of learning can be distinguished quite effectively. In Figure 1, each discipline has its own entity, linked to the common theme, whereas in Figure 2, the disciplines are interconnected, so that the interdisciplinary skills may be reached via this combination of knowledge. Finally, in Figure 3, the discipline borders have disappeared completely, and now they form a background entity under the label of *subject areas*, which contribute to the study of *themes* and *concepts*, promoting the learning of *life skills* in *real-world contexts*. Furthermore, all this process is initiated on the basis of *student questions* and perspectives, a premise which enables students to bring forth topics that they find interesting, relevant and worth examining, thus adding meaningfulness to the study process (Drake and Burns 2004: 13). Indeed, Schultz (2011: 5) states that by giving room to learner perspectives in planning, students may function as teacher educators, providing insight on the things that motivate and engage them as learners.

The integrative nature of transdisciplinarity is most evidently seen in the role of disciplines, as the learning happens by overlapping and erasing the traditional borders between them (Giacosa 2020; Bernstein 2015; Wall and Shankar 2008). This approach challenges the framework of disciplinary perspective, since it does not simply draw together various concepts from different disciplines, but assembles and creates completely new frameworks, helping learners to better understand the present world and more complex issues (Palaiologou 2010; Bernstein 2015; Park and Son 2010). Figure 3 illustrates that life skills and the real-world context are an essential part of transdisciplinary work, and these features make this approach a noteworthy option when facing the challenges of modern education. Binkley et al. (2012) state that the schools in the 21st century must replace the educational expectations of the past with new standards, enabling students to acquire skills needed in their future working life, and in life overall. Among others, these skills include new *ways of thinking*, encouraging

students to use their creativity and innovation in problem solving and decision making (Binkley et al. 2012:18). Park and Son (2010: 83-84) argue that in transdisciplinary work, students may share their skills and experiences to produce new knowledge, and this knowledge production is essentially characterized by problem solving. Consequently, to solve the problems, students must broaden their perspectives, bringing themselves to the borders of different disciplines, and thus, generate more meaningful knowledge (Wall and Shankar 2008; Giacosa 2020).

Giacosa (2020) presents an example of transdisciplinary work in an Italian secondary school, where teachers of three different school subjects (English, Italian and Art History) created a learning unit for studying The First World War and its effects on the society. Giacosa (2020) explains that the team of teachers attended a course on multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary approaches before beginning the project, and the unit was planned by this same teacher team. The unit consisted of lessons devoted to transdisciplinary activities, especially from a literary perspective, but it also included lectures held by professionals on modernism and musicology that contributed to the overall studying of the topic. Finally, the unit was concluded with student presentations on poems and other literary work of the WWI period. Even though the example of Giacosa (2020) does seem to promote transdisciplinary learning, it is not mentioned whether the unit was organized around student questions or not, and therefore, the degree to which the study unit followed the transdisciplinary approach might be questioned to some extent.

Similarly to interdisciplinary work, successful transdisciplinarity promotes and requires cooperation and collaboration between the experts of several disciplines, i.e. subject teachers or researchers, but also that of students. From the teachers' point of view, transdisciplinary work requires careful preparation and willingness to understand larger concepts outside of one's own area of expertise (Palaiologou 2010: 278; Park and Son 2010: 83). Since the projects or problems studied in transdisciplinary work are not anymore clearly attached to particular disciplines or clearly definable subject content, teachers must also have an open and humble attitude towards the immensity of knowledge they face with their students (Wall and Shankar 2008). Giacosa (2020) states that transdisciplinary work is not the easiest option for teachers, requiring specific training in order to succeed, but she also highlights the potential of the approach in reactivating the teacher's role as the driving force of pedagogical action. Consequently, the role of teachers becomes "interactive learning designers" (Park and Son 2010: 85), aiding students to produce new and meaningful knowledge, and preparing them for the future.

As for student work, transdisciplinarity effectively promotes the interactional aspect of learning, as students' learning experience is characterized by the sharing of skills and experiences (Park and Son 2010: 83). As Lattuca (cited in Wall and Shankar 2008: 561) explains, learning is fundamentally a social activity, and this collaborative work may provide students with a great amount of innovation and educational growth. Park and Son (2010: 84-85) further support this statement by underlining the quality of student participation and interactivity through problem solving. Meeth (cited in Kaufman, et al. 2003: 6) states that transdisciplinary programs start with an issue or a problem, and the process of solving the problem defines the role of the disciplines required in the process. Effectively, as the tasks or projects are not merely linked to one particular school subject, the learning process becomes a combination of different subject knowledge, students' personal perspectives, and group work policies which all contribute to the achievement of a shared learning objective (Palaiologou 2010: 278; Park and Son: 84). In addition, Beane (1997: 6) supports the integration of student perspectives, arguing that a problem-centered approach helps to create a more democratic classroom setting where students are active and collaborative decision makers. Arguably, collaborative problem solving promotes flexible and complex thinking, and stimulates student curiosity, but moreover, it may foster critical thinking skills as students get to explore deeper relationships between content areas (Kaufman, Moss and Osborn 2003; Giacosa 2020).

As mentioned earlier, the three integrative approaches presented in this chapter have been used interchangeably in some contexts, but there are indeed, significant differences in their characteristics. When discussing the level of integration, both multi- and interdisciplinary approaches maintain a separation of different subjects in the implementation of cross-curricular work, but the latter might be considered a more collaborative and integrative option. The transdisciplinary approach, instead, extends the discipline boundaries even more, resulting in the most authentic form of integration. This gradual increase of integration has been portrayed in the form of a continuum, as can be seen in the following figure:

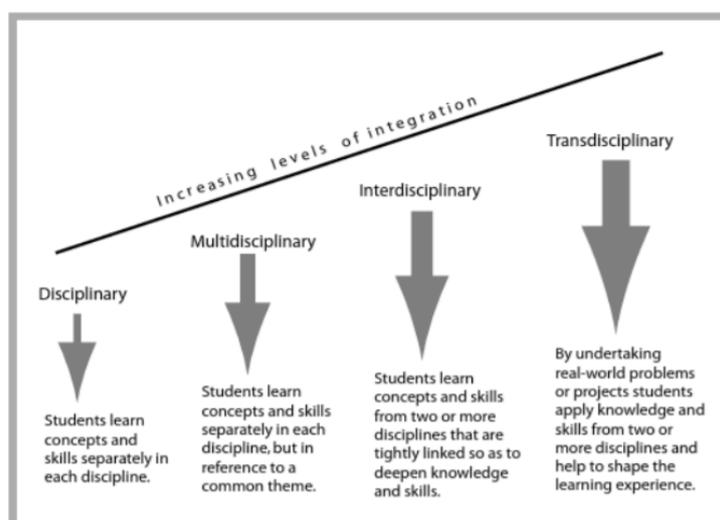


Figure 4. Levels of integration (Helmane and Briška 2017: 12)

The continuum portrayed in Figure 4 begins with traditional disciplinary work, where concepts and skills are studied separately in different disciplines. By increasing the level of integration, the second step is to adopt a multidisciplinary approach and study these disciplines in reference to an overarching theme. Moving even further on the continuum, interdisciplinary work promotes interconnections and collaboration between disciplines, in order to reach deeper knowledge and skills related to the studied content. Finally, at the top of the continuum there is transdisciplinary work, arguably the most integrative approach to learning, where the discipline-based knowledge is applied in the study of real-world problems or in the form of project work. Beane (1997), however, declares that placing the approaches on a continuum proves out to be problematic. According to Beane (1997: 35), such a scale erroneously implies that teachers and students move from a traditional disciplinary or separate-subject approach towards multidisciplinary, and later towards interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity while gradually increasing the integrative aspect of learning.

The terminology surrounding the topic of cross-curricularity can be difficult to determine in each situation, since some learning experiments might not be explicitly multi-, inter-, or transdisciplinary in nature, but something of a combination instead. However, since the features of each approach are now examined at least on a theoretical level, the following subchapter is dedicated to relating the topic to foreign language studies through project-based learning (PBL).

2.3 Project-based learning as an integrative method in EFL studies

The final section of this chapter aims to introduce Project-based learning (PBL) as an integrative learning method. Firstly, the PBL model will be introduced and linked to the features of cross-curricular learning, and secondly, the topic is further examined from the perspective of EFL studies. For instance, Drake and Burns (2004:13) mention PBL as a way of implementing transdisciplinary work, since students may choose a local and realistic problem they want to tackle, without letting discipline boundaries affect the choice of the topic. In this context, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of other forms of integration which will not be introduced or studied in this thesis. Similarly to PBL, approaches such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Phenomenon-Based Learning (PhBL), and Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) are also considered to comprise of integrative working methods. However, the present study focuses on a particular study unit in a Finnish upper secondary school, where the EFL integration occurs mainly through cross-curricular project works. Thus, PBL was chosen as the most essential and appropriate theoretical concept aligning with the objectives of the present study, and hence, the other notable integrative methods are not further examined.

2.3.1 Project-based learning

Project-based learning (PBL) is an approach or a model where learning is organized around projects, i.e. “complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities” (Thomas 2000:1). Furthermore, other essential characteristics of project-based work include the use of authentic content and assessment, cooperative learning, reflection, and incorporation of adult skills, among others. Despite these descriptions, Thomas (2000) argues that a generalized or a universally accepted model for PBL is yet to be defined, and the idea of project work in the educational context is not in fact a revolutionary one, since different forms of experiential and active learning have been implemented at schools for quite some time. However, to make the approach distinguishable from the prior models of school project work, PBL is argued to promote the engagement in a more cognitively challenging studying, emphasizing students’ points of view in the learning process (Thomas 2000: 3). Moreover, the focus on authenticity, constructivism, and the learning of new skills – also defined as 21st century skills – have been brought up as the essential features of PBL, similarly to the objectives of cross-curricular work.

The objective of learning science researchers is to examine principles governing students' learning, and to discover ways to promote deeper conceptual understanding in learning situations. According to Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006), until the 1990s, the existing schooling structure mainly contributed to students' superficial learning, without providing them with a chance of increasing their engagement or developing deeper understanding. Project-based learning has been regarded as an educational approach overcoming this issue, by letting students engage in important, realistic, and meaningful problems that emulate the work of experts in real-world situations (Krajcik and Blumenfeld 2006: 318). Based on the constructivist findings, the deeper and more effective learning may be achieved by letting students actively construct their understanding by using their own ideas in the study process. Consequently, projects allow students to investigate, create hypotheses and explanations, and discuss and try out new ideas in a collaborative way.

Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) build PBL on four principal learning sciences ideas. Firstly, the idea of *active construction* highlights the importance of students' personal experiences and interaction in the surrounding world in the learning process. According to this idea, the promotion of deeper understanding requires students to actively and continuously construct and reconstruct their ideas when exploring studied phenomena. Thus, the development of knowledge is considered a continuous process, where learners interact by sharing, discussing, and creating ideas. This aspect aligns with the characteristics of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work, where the interactional aspect of learning promotes the creation of collective knowledge (Kidron and Kali 2015; Collins 2006; Park and Son 2010). Per se, PBL is considered a student-driven approach where the whole learning process begins with learners' naturally occurring inquiries similarly to the idea of transdisciplinarity (Bell 2010: 39; Drake and Burns 2004: 13). Moreover, Bell (2010) states that student choice and activity is an essential element in all the phases of project-based work, since, with the help and supervision of the teacher, students may progress with their projects into their preferred direction. Related to the idea presented by Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006), Thomas (2000) argues for the need of transforming and constructing knowledge through decision-making, problem-finding, problem-solving and discovery. According to Thomas (2000: 4), it is essential that real PBL projects are not carried out with the application of already-learned knowledge or skills, but instead, they should also require the involvement of new understanding and new skills.

Secondly, effective learning is argued to occur in authentic and real contexts (Krajcik and Blumenfeld 2006). This *situated learning*, emulating real-life work, offers students a possibility to observe the world and develop their understanding based on their own findings and conclusions, and thus, solve

authentic problems. Krajcik and Blumenfeld argue that when learners try to acquire information through memorization, for instance, they lack the connection to meaningful real-life situations, and such disconnected knowledge might be later difficult to apply to practical use (2006: 319). By contrast, a meaningful learning context helps students to relate new information to their own experiences, consequently contributing to links between knowledge and practice, and the development of conceptual understanding. This feature aligns effectively with transdisciplinary integration, where the working is strongly related to real-world contexts (Drake and Burns 2004: 14). Ultimately, real-life challenges introduced by PBL provide students with stronger feelings of authenticity, as the solutions and conclusions derived from project work may be implemented in realistic contexts (Thomas 2000).

The third idea introduced by Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) is *social interaction*. The most effective learning is argued to result from the collaboration of teachers, students, and other community members, as these participants aim at constructing shared understanding on larger phenomena. The social aspect of deeper learning becomes evident in the act of sharing, debating, and creating ideas, and this interactional building of new knowledge brings learners together as a community with a shared objective. Nevertheless, in addition to nurturing students' collaborative and communicative skills, PBL also promotes the development of independent thinkers and learners (Bell 2010; Lam 2011). Thus, project work also takes students' individual learning preferences into account. Finally, the fourth idea emphasizes the significance of *cognitive tools* in the learning process. In educational context, these tools are also often referred to as learning technologies, tools that may expand the amount of accessible information, and thus, amplify the learning outcomes (Krajcik and Blumenfeld 2006). In addition to these aspects, the cognitive tools also allow students to easily share information and develop illustrational multimedia content themselves.

In terms of learning outcomes, it has been agreed that the implementation of the PBL model may provide students with various benefits. Firstly, the process of working on a project encourages student autonomy and independence, resulting in increased self-esteem and positive learning attitudes (Bell 2010; Fried-Booth 2002; Skehan 1998). The autonomy achieved in such work can be regarded as students' responsibility of their own learning by self-monitoring their progress and setting goals for their work (Bell 2010: 40). Certainly, the teacher may intervene and guide the students in different phases of the process, but the PBL model is essentially characterized by its student-centeredness. Essentially, the teacher's role as the provider of information must change to that of a facilitator, or even that of a learner (Alvin 2018). As stated by Alan and Stoller (2005: 11), teacher's excessive control might disable students from developing ownership towards their projects, and by contrast, a

total omission of such control leaves students completely on their own with their work. Therefore, a convenient balance between autonomy and guidance must be established to promote successful project work.

The emphasis on student interests and decision-making power in PBL may contribute to increased motivation, engagement, and learning enjoyment (Lee 2002). Arguably, students are more motivated in participating in authentic and meaningful projects with real world connections, and the engagement in the learning process is said to be more profound when the classroom work is not such firmly predetermined, but instead, affected by students' choices (Lam 2011). Even though the authenticity of some projects may be questioned due to their hypothetical basis, they still allow students to examine and appreciate the complexity of real-life situations and problems (Alvin 2018). Moreover, to promote the authenticity and engagement, these real connections may be established with the world outside the school environment by using the Internet, or in collaboration with local professionals or other community members (Lam 2011: 142).

From the perspective of skills learnt at school, PBL seems to enhance and promote such development in various ways. One of the essential benefits of project work is related to its communicative aspect, contributing to enhanced social and cooperative skills, while reinforcing group cohesiveness (Coleman 1992). PBL demands students to become productive communicators by sharing, brainstorming, and negotiating ideas, but moreover, collaborative work makes students adopt to other people's perspectives and create respect for their peers (Bell 2010). Thus, students must learn to rely on the work of other people while trying to reach a shared objective. Moreover, PBL is argued to be beneficial for developing problem-solving and higher order critical thinking skills, which are defined as life-long and transferable skills applicable in various out-of-school settings (Allen 2004). Since projects are generally realized in groups or in teams, learners get to practice decision-making and team dynamics, such as leadership qualities (Lam 2011). Especially decision-making is a continuous aspect of project-work, and PBL allows students to practice this skill not only on a personal level, but collaboratively with others in different phases or project work. Since PBL aims at addressing real world issues, the skills promoted in such work are also considered useful outside the classroom and later in life. Arguably, team-working ability, taking initiative and decision-making are all skills that employers seek and appreciate (Lam 2011).

In addition to the benefits of project-based learning, there are also certain challenges in its implementation. Firstly, projects as activities are found highly time consuming, requiring great attention to detail (Habok and Nagy 2016). Indeed, PBL challenges students to solve more complex problems, and the time and effort paid to the execution of the project itself might result in reduced

emphasis on study material and content (Grant 2002; Beckett 2005). According to the arguments of Wrigley (2007), learners involved in PBL spend a considerable amount of time planning and shaping the work of their group. Thus, PBL should be implemented with a more flexible schedule, since the process of completing a project usually takes more time than expected by the teachers (Gaer 1998; Marx et al. 1997).

Secondly, successful project work requires careful planning, preparation, and classroom management skills from behalf of teachers (Hutchinson 1991). Blumenfeld et al. (1991) argue that the whole design of projects must appreciate student motivation, and simultaneously, the knowledge required in the completion of a project must coincide with learners' abilities. Thus, the scope of a project should not surpass students' knowledge and skills, since otherwise, the value of the work might be disregarded by the learners (Gaer 1998). Besides the knowledge and skills related to the study content, students should also be familiar with collaborative working. Arguably, students who have not worked in groups might find projects considerably more challenging, having difficulties in negotiating with other group members and dealing with compromises in the process (Johnson and Johnson 1989; Grant 2002). According to Grant (2002), this lack of experience in group work might also lead to significant differences in student performance, causing some students to be less active than others. This also creates challenges concerning assessment, since in successful PBL, teachers should be able to assess both individual and group achievement (Wrigley 2007).

Thirdly, even though the increased independence and responsibility of students in PBL can be considered an advantage, there are also obvious challenges related to this issue. Many instructors feel more comfortable with traditional working methods where the teacher plays a central role in the classroom (Scott 1994). Accordingly, teachers have found difficulties in monitoring students' activities while abandoning their traditional roles as teachers (Marx et al. 1997). As argued by Alan and Stoller (2005), teachers in PBL must find a balance between student autonomy and their own control over the projects. Consequently, in order to fully exploit the potential of PBL, teachers should receive adequate training not only in theory, but in practice, too (Wu and Meng 2010).

To conclude, PBL as a study method includes both affordances and challenges. However, based on the existing literature, PBL as an integrative study method seems to have various similarities with the concept of cross-curricularity. Active participation and engagement of students, the promotion of collaborative learning, problem-solving and real-life learning contexts are all features creating links between the approaches introduced in this theoretical framework. Furthermore, PBL and cross-curricular work focus on promoting the same set of skills beyond subject boundaries, whether these

are to be called cross-curricular, interdisciplinary of 21st century skills. In the next section, the PBL model will be further examined in relation to EFL studies.

2.3.2 Project-based learning in EFL context

According to Beckett (2002), project work simultaneously contributes to the learning of content and diverse skills, but moreover, it promotes the acquisition of language. This subsection aims to present what kind of attributes PBL may bring to foreign language studies, focusing specifically on EFL learning. In this context, PBL may also be referred to as Project-Based Language Learning (PBL), but since the two approaches do not include any notably differing features, the term PBL will be used throughout this thesis.

According to Coffin (2013:191-192), PBL has been implemented in foreign language classrooms since its expected learning outcomes align with the objectives of language learning. Such outcomes include greater communicative and collaborative skills, problem-solving skills, and deeper content learning in the target language (Coffin 2013; Larsson 2001). Moreover, another important benefit of PBL is improved language skills (Levine 2004). Projects are said to naturally integrate the four language skills – speaking, listening, reading, and writing – and the method allows the use and practice of these skills in relatively natural contexts (Haines 1989; Stoller 2006). An example of this can be seen in a study by Fragoulis and Tsiplakides (2009), where a six-month PBL project in Greek primary schools positively contributed to the learning of all four language skills. In particular, students' speaking and listening skills showed the greatest improvement, owing to the increased amount of authentic communication activities. Similar results were found by Poonpon (2017) in Thailand, as university students of English perceived to have improved the aforementioned skills through PBL, and furthermore, project work positively contributed to students' translation skills and knowledge of English vocabulary. Similarly, Farouck's (2016) study on Japanese EFL students showed PBL contributing to the learning of complex grammar and advanced vocabulary.

As concluded by Farouck (2016:11), ultimately, communication is at the very center of language learning. Whether discussing first, second or foreign language learning, language always requires a social context, and students begin learning and developing their language skills according to the context they find themselves in (Hoff 2006). In the process of PBL, students' communicational skills are specifically promoted through activities such as discussing the overall project, exchanging information and opinions, dividing tasks, and presenting the final product of the project (Güven 2014;

Mikulec and Miller 2011). In the context of foreign language learning, PBL is argued to support the use of the target language for genuine communicative needs (Hedge 1993). According to Hutchinson (1991: 13), project work fulfils two important communicative elements – motivation and relevance – addressing the needs of learners by focusing on real language use. This idea is supported by Levine (2004), arguing that PBL provides students with a possibility to complete authentic and meaningful activities by using authentic language. According to Brown et al. (1993), authentic activities are designed to develop thinking and problem-solving skills that are essential also outside the school context. Arguably, some language use situations in EFL courses might remain foreign and abstract to the students, if they lack the opportunity to speak English and to relate the language to a local and real context (Farouk 2014). In PBL, instead, the completion of authentic activities lets students engage in purposeful communication requiring practical language use, offering students chances to speak and listen to a foreign language such as English (My et al. 2020). In addition, PBL also promotes collaborative skills and teamwork, and it makes students perform tasks that are essential in language learning. This cooperative practice promotes knowledge exchange between students, thus also encouraging individual learners to speak more in the foreign language (Lam 2011).

One of the primary goals of project-based instruction from a linguistic perspective is comprehensible output, occurring during the project as well as in the final product or outcome of the work (Lam 2011: 141). Effectively, the influence of PBL in communicational skills has also been noted in the EFL context. Several studies have concluded that PBL may have a positive impact on students' English-speaking skills (Nassir 2014; Astawa et al. 2017; Rochmahwati 2016; Yang and Puakpong 2016). For instance, the studies of Astawa et al. (2017) and Rochmahwati (2016) showed a significant difference on students' English-speaking skills before and after the implementation of PBL, accompanied by improvements in students' attitudes on language learning. According to Poonpon (2017), studying English should not merely focus on competency in grammar and syntactic accuracy, but instead, students must be provided with opportunities to use English language in real life settings. The existing literature seems to conclude that students' English-speaking skills are indeed improved by PBL activities, and such work may provide significant advantages compared to the traditional methods of language teaching and learning (Sanchez 2019; Zare-Behtash and Sarlak 2017). Moreover, according to a study by Coffin (2013), the benefits of PBL in the EFL context are not limited only to the learning of the target language, since the communicational skills in students' native language are improved as well.

In addition to speaking skills, PBL promotes the learning of other language skills, too. The use of authentic materials in PBL promotes reading skills, reflecting on how language is used in real life

contexts (Berardo 2006), and the practice of listening skills becomes evident through a variety of language functions while completing projects (My et al. 2020). Writing skills, instead, are said to be an essential part of each project phase, such as planning, drafting, and revising (Wee and Jacobs 2006). Moreover, in PBL, students may practice and improve their writing collaboratively by giving and receiving peer feedback throughout the project process (Simpson 2011). The positive impact of PBL on English writing skills has been concluded at least by Sadeghi, Biniiaz and Soleimani (2016) and Astawa et al. (2017). The study by Sadeghi, Biniiaz and Soleimani (2016) showed that, considering English writing skills, PBL students outdid their peers participating in traditional instruction-based studying. Astawa et al. (2017), instead, found significant differences between students' writing skills before and after PBL implementation.

The promotion of learning motivation is also an important feature related to PBL activities, and this aspect is essential also in the EFL context. As argued by Cook (1993), motivation plays an important role in successful language learning, especially in the language classroom context. In fact, Wachob (2006) argues that, ultimately, motivation is the key to success in second and foreign language learning. This claim is further explained by Richards and Schmidt (2002), who consider motivation one of the crucial factors between success and failure in foreign language learning, since it provides learners with a direction to follow in their study process. From this perspective, project work as a learning method has been argued to increase students' interest and motivation to participate (Brophy 2004; Simpson 2011). In addition, this enhanced motivation has been found to result in learning enjoyment, stronger engagement, and positive attitudes towards learning in general (Lee 2002; Stoller 2006; Levine 2004). These positive attitudes play an important role in achieving communicative competence in a foreign language, alongside with knowledge and skills (Coffin 2013:191). Lee (2002) argues that these positive experiences stem from the meaningfulness of PBL, since the work is related to specific contexts and to students' personal interests. Furthermore, classroom language in PBL is not predetermined, but it is dependent on the nature of the project, thus letting students affect the characteristics of language use (Larsen-Freeman 2000).

In addition to the motivational perspective, the positive impact of PBL on learners' self-confidence and self-esteem has been articulated as one of the benefits of the approach (Stoller 2006; Fried-Booth 2002). As stated by Fried-Booth (2002), the whole process of PBL work leading to a final product gives students opportunities to develop their confidence and independence. An example of this can be found in the study by Coffin (2013), according to which PBL work helped EFL students to discover their potential as language learners better than before. Another study by Imtiaz and Asif (2012) concluded that, alongside with improvement of language skills, Pakistani EFL learners became more

autonomous and independent in their learning through the implementation of PBL. Similarly, Farouck (2016), found that PBL encouraged EFL students to independently use learning materials, resulting in increased autonomy in language learning. Indeed, according to Skehan (1998), the learner autonomy is increased in project-based learning, especially when students get to actively participate in project planning.

Related to the topic of self-confidence, it is also essential to mention the effects of PBL on learners' willingness to communicate. According to Farouck (2016:11), the term willingness to communicate (WTC) is used when examining how learners utilize their opportunities to communicate in a second or a foreign language. In addition to several other individual variables – such as personality, social situation or attitudes – self-confidence has been found to be the most fundamental antecedent of willingness to communicate (Macintyre and Charos 1996; Yashima 2002). As explained by MacIntyre et al. (1998), a person's self-confidence comprises of their perceived communicative language competence and lack of anxiety. Effectively, learners with high perceptions of communicative competence and low level of anxiety are found to demonstrate higher willingness to communicate. In a study by Farouck (2016), project work offered Japanese EFL students opportunities to practice their language skills by giving presentations, conducting interviews and answering questions in English. Consequently, PBL work and active English language use helped students to reduce anxiety and to improve their willingness to communicate.

As argued in this subchapter and concluded by My et al. (2020:10), the development of language skills, improved motivation and enhanced self-confidence can be regarded as the most prominent benefits of PBL from the perspective of EFL learning. Nonetheless, PBL has also evoked criticism. Firstly, students' lack of linguistic skills may cause difficulties in foreign language PBL work. Several studies have concluded that completing project work in a foreign language has simply been found too difficult by students (Farouck 2016; Moulton and Holmes 2000; Li 2010; Beckett 2002; Gibbes and Carson 2014). These problems may be related to the range of vocabulary (Sayuti et al. 2020), language accuracy (Farouck 2016), or linguistic abilities in general (Gibbes and Carson 2014), as students have had difficulties in expressing themselves in a foreign language while completing projects. Secondly, students' lack of confidence has been found to hinder PBL work. According to Sayuti et al. (2020: 1874), students are usually shy and uncomfortable when speaking English in the classroom, and this language speaking anxiety does not necessarily disappear neither in project-based learning (Farouck 2016). Thirdly, EFL lessons dedicated to PBL work cover less content compared to traditional teaching and study methods (Krajcik and Blumenfeld 2005; Mitchell et al. 2009). In traditional EFL lessons, learners may cover grammar, vocabulary and different themes more diversely

and extensively, whereas PBL focuses on linguistic content related to the project and its outcomes. Even though PBL offers a better chance to learn authentic English, the diversity of linguistic content might be diminished.

The objective of this theoretical chapter was to introduce terminology and concepts related to cross-curricularity and project-based learning. In addition to the general pedagogic aspects of this theoretical framework, the language learning perspective was introduced through the examination of PBL in EFL studies. At this point, however, it must be stated that none of the PBL studies presented in this chapter were conducted in Finland, but indeed, in very different educational contexts compared to the setting of the present study. After discussing cross-curricularity on a general level, the following chapter will take a closer look at how this topic is treated in the Finnish core curricula.

3 CROSS-CURRICULARITY IN THE FINNISH CONTEXT

The most recent and notable educational reform in Finland concerned both the basic education, as well as upper secondary education, for which new core curricula were put into practice in 2016 (Cantell 2015). Before the reform, the idea of integrative studies had not been completely absent, as the previous curricula (LOPS 2003, POPS 2004) had encouraged the study of certain cross-curricular themes that should be integrated into the contents of each separate school subject (Cantell 2015: 12). As Cantell (2015) continues, these instructions enabled initial steps towards the idea of studies beyond subject boundaries, but the implementation of these cross-curricular themes did not necessarily lead to collaboration between different school subjects. Consequently, the educational reform of 2016 presented new terminology and objectives concerning cross-curricular studying, and even put forward certain obligations for integrating these new study and teaching methods into the school-level curricula.

3.1 Integration in the Finnish core curricula

When discussing the development of interdisciplinary work in the Finnish educational context, the most essential reforms can be found in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2016 (NCC 2016). The new curriculum highlighted the importance of *integrative instruction* ('eheyttävä / eheytetty opetus') in basic education, and as a form of implementing this approach, introduced the notion of *Multidisciplinary Learning Modules* (MLs) ('monialaiset oppimiskokonaisuudet'). Essentially, integrative instruction may be considered to correspond with the theory of cross-curricular work: it can be regarded as the study of broader entities or overarching themes, which requires skills and knowledge from different subject areas (Cantell 2015: 13-14). One of the key components of integrative instruction is the development of cross-curricular skills, and the objective of this approach is to help students find connections between different school subjects, so that this knowledge may be further applied and used for building meaningful entities of the studied contents in collaboration with others (NCC 2016: 31). Furthermore, this allows students to elaborate on the importance of these contents from a personal and societal perspective, and thus, expand their worldview (NCC 2016: 31).

As mentioned, the implementation of integrative instruction brought forward the terminology of MLs. In the curriculum for basic education (NCC 2016), these modules were made a compulsory component of the annual schoolwork in Finnish basic education, so that every student may complete

a multidisciplinary module at least once a school year (NCC 2016: 31). Although not being completely neglected, the topic of integrative instruction is not covered as thoroughly in the National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools 2015 (NCC 2015). In order to distinguish the two curricula discussed in this thesis, the curriculum for basic education will be referred to as NCC 2016, and the one for upper secondary schools as NCC 2015. Moreover, it is relevant to mention that the new version – the National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools 2021 – will be implemented in Finnish upper secondary schools in August 2021. However, since the curriculum reform is not yet in force during the writing process of this thesis, this document is not further discussed.

The general objectives of NCC 2015 highlight the importance of learning wide-ranging general knowledge and ability, as well as the comprehension of larger entities (NCC 2015: 34). During their upper secondary school studies, students should gain diverse experiences in building new knowledge and skills not only in specific subjects, but also across the subject boundaries (NCC 2015: 34). More specifically, the curriculum introduces *cross-curricular themes* ('aihekokonaisuudet'), defined as societally significant educational challenges. The objective of these themes is to make students aware of current phenomena, and encourage the creation of responsible, future-oriented conceptions (NCC 2015: 35). Similarly to the objectives of integrated instruction introduced in the NCC 2016, the cross-curricular themes should enhance the understanding of connections and correlations between school subjects and topics, in order to structure wider entities across subject-specific contents (NCC 2015: 35).

The upper secondary school core curriculum (NCC 2015: 35) contains six cross-curricular themes: *active citizenship, entrepreneurship and working life* ('aktiivinen kansalaisuus, yrittäjyys ja työelämä'), *well-being and safety* ('hyvinvointi ja turvallisuus'), *sustainable lifestyle and global responsibility* ('kestävä elämäntapa ja globaali vastuu'), *knowledge of cultures and internationality* ('kulttuurien tuntemus ja kansainvälisyys'), *multiliteracy and media* ('monilukutaito ja mediat'), *technology and society* ('teknologia ja yhteiskunta'). In addition, the curriculum provides motivation and justifications for the study of these themes and gives each of them separate objectives (NCC 2015: 35-39). Consequently, all of the themes should be further elaborated in the regional or private syllabi of schools and integrated in the teaching of every school subject, but the core curriculum does not offer any explicit guidelines for the practical implementation of the themes.

In addition to the cross-curricular themes, the upper secondary school curriculum also defines what kinds of skills students are to learn on this level. The rich variety of teaching and study methods will encourage students to do research and solve problems, thus enforcing the development of critical and creative thinking (NCC 2015: 14). Consequently, such work will contribute to the learning and understanding of larger entities, which again promotes competence and skills beyond subject boundaries (NCC 2015: 14). The general objectives of upper secondary school education imply that students get to develop their skills in information retrieval, in applying knowledge and in problem solving, but moreover, there is also a clear emphasis on collaboration and interactional skills (NCC 2015: 34). Another important mention is the skill of learning to learn, meaning that students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses as learners, and gain confidence in developing these features. Many of these skills align with the cross-curricular, interdisciplinary or 21st century skills put forward in earlier research on cross-curricularity (see sections 2.1-2.2). Thus, on a theoretical level, upper secondary school studies also promote the learning of skills across subject boundaries.

3.2 Integration in the Finnish upper secondary school

To be able to discuss the integrative possibilities in Finnish upper secondary school, it is necessary to first introduce how the studies are organized on this educational level. In the 1980s, all the Finnish upper secondary schools began to implement a course-based curriculum where each subject content is further divided into courses, and since 1994, schools started gradually shifting towards classless approach to instruction (Kupiainen et al. 2018: 12). Due to these reforms, Finnish upper secondary school students may personally build their syllabi by choosing the courses and the way they want to advance in their studies, allowing more flexibility and freedom of choice (Kupiainen et al. 2018: 12). Certainly, there are courses that are compulsory to everyone, but apart from those, students may choose which subjects and courses to focus on.

Another noteworthy element of upper secondary studies is the *matriculation examination* ('ylioppilastutkinto'). In the core curriculum, upper secondary school education is said to prepare pupils for further studies, such as universities or vocational universities (NCC 2015: 12). Effectively, the knowledge and skills acquired at school are displayed in the *general upper secondary education certificate* ('lukion päättötodistus') and in the *matriculation examination certificate* ('ylioppilastutkintotodistus') (NCC 2015: 12). Kupiainen et al. (2018: 16) mention that the matriculation examination has a 160-year-old history in the Finnish educational system as the final examination of upper secondary school studies, and its role as the indicator of applicability for further

studies is still valid, even though continuously discussed. According to the act on Finnish matriculation examination ('Laki ylioppilastutkinnosta 502/2019') coming into effect in August 2021, students must take part in and pass at least 5 exams – with two obligatory exams in mother tongue and literature, and at least three other subject-specific exams – to obtain the certificate. Thus, students have the chance to plan their personal syllabus according to their own interests, and consequently, also decide which optional subjects and their exams to include in the matriculation examinations.

The course-based organization of studies and the role of matriculation examination set an interesting challenge for the implementation of integrative or cross-curricular learning, since this system does not correspond with the presented multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches to studying. In fact, the findings of Cantell (2017) imply that in the Finnish context, adult education and upper secondary school are considered the educational levels where the implementation of cross-curricular work is considered most challenging. As argued by Elo and Nygren-Landgärds (2020), the Finnish upper secondary school has been criticized for its subject-centeredness, as well as for the tradition of mainly preparing students for the matriculation examinations. Since these subject-focused final tests are found to represent the culmination of the 3-year general upper secondary school studies, they seem to influence not only the teaching, but also the way students perceive their studies on this educational level (Salmenkivi 2013). Since the studies are divided into courses of different subjects, and the matriculation examinations focus on testing students' knowledge and skills in these separate subject areas, the fundamental organization of Finnish upper secondary school does not seem to promote cross-curricularity.

Indeed, the present upper secondary school curriculum (NCC 2015) does not oblige schools to create or organize explicit cross-curricular courses or study units, and there also seems to be an obvious lack of research on such experiments in this context. However, based on the review of different approaches in section 2.2, the upper secondary school studies and the cross-curricular themes could be placed under the approach of multidisciplinary integration. According to NCC 2015, the six cross-curricular themes of should be integrated to the study of each separate school subject. The aim is to provide students with a wide-ranging understanding on the themes, but ultimately, this studying might not happen simultaneously in each subject because of students' personalized syllabi. Thus, aligning with the definition of multidisciplinary integration, the overarching themes are explored from different perspectives, but further interconnection between the school subjects is evidently missing. Moreover, the cross-curricular themes presented in the NCC 2015 are not necessarily integrated into every

course of the syllabus, or at least not as profoundly as to others. For instance, considering the English studies, the cross-curricular theme of technology and society might be covered most explicitly during the fifth course (ENA5), titled *Science and future* ('Tiede ja tulevaisuus') (NCC 2015: 111).

Moving towards the quintessential topic of this thesis – teaching and studying English in a cross-curricular unit – it is necessary to examine how this phenomenon is approached in the upper secondary school curriculum. The curriculum defines that the study of foreign languages is a part of cross-curricular work, it should contribute to the study of larger entities, and that all forms of such work will encourage students to utilize their skills in different languages (NCC 2015: 107). Most of the Finnish upper secondary students complete the advanced syllabus of English ('A-kieli'), and in the precise objectives of this subject, it is stated that cross-curricular teaching may be implemented to all EFL courses (NCC 2015: 110). Moreover, considering the optional specialization studies in EFL ('syventävät kurssit'), it is possible to integrate areas of content from other studies into these courses (NCC 2015: 111). Evidently, the curriculum encourages cross-curricular work through these statements, but ultimately, all the practical implementations of such work are left for the schools to decide and to create.

3.3 Previous studies on Multidisciplinary Learning modules in Finnish schools

The existing literature has already paid attention to the Multidisciplinary Learning modules of Finnish basic education, although not necessarily from the EFL perspective. For instance, Braskén, Hemmi and Kurtén (2020) studied the role of science and mathematics in the MLs of a Finnish lower secondary school. Other ML studies have focused on student participation (Niemi and Kiilakoski 2020) and experiences of teachers and teacher students on their first multidisciplinary modules (Valli, Valli and Lähdesmäki 2017; Långström 2017). Furthermore, the study by Koskinen-Sinisalo et al. (2020) aimed to examine Finnish primary school teachers' experiences on teaching MLs. This case study included both quantitative and qualitative data, introducing survey answers of 19 primary level teachers', as well as interviews of three teacher participants. Among other findings, the study showed how different school subjects have been included in integrative instruction. The survey answers showed that foreign language subjects (English, German, French) and Swedish had never been present in MLs, resulting in Finnish being the only language used in cross-curricular work (Koskinen-Sinisalo et al. 2020: 38-39). The inclusion of language subjects was found challenging, since the learner groups in the focal MLs included students from various different grades, and such work would

require more cooperation between the teachers. Consequently, the inclusion of language subjects was considered an issue that must be focused on in the future.

In addition to the aforementioned studies, two Master's Theses in Finland have focused specifically on the role of EFL in Multidisciplinary Learning modules. Mäki-Arvela (2020) studied how Finnish EFL teachers have realized MLs in the lower secondary schools, also examining how the language is used and taught in them. According to her findings, the MLs were studied in various ways, such as by organizing theme weeks or workshops, including both individual and group work. The teachers reported that English was mainly used as the language of instruction, but also as a means of communication and information acquisition. When it came to the practice of the language, English writing skills were considered to play the greatest role, accompanied by reading comprehension and grammar. Instead, the focus on oral skills was found less systematic, even though students were reported to speak English at least a bit during MLs. Another important finding was that there were no specific objectives for different language learning areas, since the modules were primarily designed to promote the learning of transversal competence.

The study by Christou (2020) examined the experiences and perspectives of four Finnish primary level EFL teachers concerning subject integration in MLs. The qualitative interview data showed that the MLs seem to follow the framework of Multidisciplinary Approach to integration, where a particular ML theme is studied through subject-specific instruction, i.e. in traditional EFL lessons. Thus, the integration of EFL with other school subjects in the same learning situation was found a more uncommon and challenging option, and EFL subject teachers planned their part of the MLs mostly alone (Christou 2020:75). Furthermore, Christou placed different integrational approaches of the EFL teachers into three theoretical concepts: content integration, presentative integration, and experiential integration (2020:76). Content integration focuses on the learning of content, whether it means using EFL as a tool for studying a theme or learning theme-specific vocabulary in English. In presentative integration, instead, students have a chance to assemble the acquired knowledge into a product, in the form of a poster or a presentation, for instance. Finally, experiential integration involves a more interactive approach, where the English language is used to solve problems in realistic learning situations.

As presented in this chapter, the integration of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to cross-curricular work has been scarcely studied in the Finnish context. Moreover, the existing studies have focused on integrative studies in basic education – the Multidisciplinary Learning modules – whereas

the implementation of cross-curricularity in upper secondary schools has been lacking further examination. Thus, the next chapter will introduce in more detail how the present study aims to fill the research gap by providing information on this topic in the upper secondary school context.

4 THE PRESENT STUDY

In this chapter, the design of the present study will be presented. Firstly, the aims of the study will be discussed by introducing the research questions. The second section presents the concept and implementation of *team period* in the focal school and as the object of investigation of this study. Thirdly, the data, the gathering method and the participants of the study will be discussed. Finally, the methods used for analysing the data will be outlined and discussed.

4.1 Aim of the study

The present study aims to explore how teachers and students view the integration of English in cross-curricular study units. Firstly, the study focuses on examining what kinds of perceptions EFL teachers have on the planning process and the implementation of their subject into cross-curricular studies. Secondly, the experiences of both teachers and students will be examined in order to find out how they view the pros and cons of this cross-curricular work on the study of EFL and the English language.

As the contemporary Finnish upper secondary school education is characterized by a course-based curriculum where students get to personally choose the studied subjects and organize their syllabi, a cross-curricular approach to studying may be considered uncommon on this level. As each school subject is further divided into separate courses with different focus areas and study contents, the creation and implementation of cross-curricular study units across subjects might be a challenging task. Furthermore, as cross-curricular work is not yet an integrated part of the national curriculum (NCC 2015), it is up to schools themselves whether to implement such work or not. Thus, it is essential to examine how the cross-curricular work has been arranged, especially from the point of view of English as a foreign language.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. From planning to implementation, how are EFL and English language integrated into cross-curricular instruction as part of the team period arranged in the focal upper secondary school?
2. What have been the affordances and challenges of EFL integration from the perspectives of teachers and students?

The first research question aims to describe how EFL teachers have integrated their subject and the English language into team period work and into interconnection with other school subjects. As typical upper secondary school work is defined by the teaching and studying of subject-specific courses, it is intriguing to examine how this approach has been modified by the teachers in order to meet the objectives of cross-curricular work.

The second question explores the perceptions of both teachers and students, aiming to discover the advantages of EFL integration, as well as the challenges brought up by cross-curricular work. This research question was motivated by the feedback concerning the integration of EFL as one of the subjects, received from the team period students of 2019. According to the experiences of the author of this thesis as a team period EFL teacher, the constant use of English language in project learning was not found a suitable approach by all students. However, on the contrary, such strong integration had its affordances, too, contributing to improvement of speaking skills. Thus, this study attempts to examine whether this issue was a relevant one also during the latest implementation, however, paying attention to other affordances and challenges as well.

4.2 Team period

Before presenting the data, methods and participants of the study, it is essential to explicate how the focal school had implemented what they referred to as the team period (“tiimijakso”). The objective of this subchapter is to explain what this study unit consists of, what theories it is based on, how it is structured, and how it has been developed throughout the years of its implementation. The information provided in this thesis is mostly based on an interview of the teacher responsible for the team period, but in addition, the personal experiences of the researcher as a team period teacher will also be included.

In this case, the team period is an approximately seven-week study unit for the first-year students in upper secondary school, where in addition to traditional teacher-led subject lessons, students get to work in teams while completing different kinds of cross-curricular projects each week. Even though Finnish upper secondary students normally complete their studies according to their personal syllabi, they do indeed have their own ‘home group’ or ‘home class’ based on their surnames. In the focal school, the first-year students are divided into 8 such groups, from A-H. In the team period, they are further divided into two team period courses – the first one including groups A-D, and the second one with groups E-H – and these two groups have different sets of subjects that they focus on during the

period. During the conduct of the present study, for instance, the team period of groups E-H consisted of geography, Finnish, EFL, guidance counselling ('opinto-ohjaus') and ICT ('tieto- ja viestintäteknologia').

The idea of the team period was initially introduced to the school by an exterior company, which provided training on this new educational innovation. According to the school's current team period responsible teacher, this training was mostly theoretical, as the aim was to provide background and motivation for implementing team studying and learning in the upper secondary school context. After the training, the company moved aside and left the actual planning and realization for the focal school to decide. Thus, the school's organization has had the possibility and responsibility to develop the experiment to a direction they consider effective and appropriate throughout the years.

The interviewed responsible teacher highlighted the influence of the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools (NCC 2015) and the General Upper Secondary Schools Act on team period work, since these two documents form the basis and provide the framework for upper secondary studies in Finland. Essentially, the current core curriculum (NCC 2015) encourages schools to teach modern skills related to information retrieval, problem solving, interaction and collaboration, among others, and calls for the building of new knowledge beyond subject boundaries. Furthermore, it is important to promote the active participation of students and give them experiences on goal-oriented work through projects and teamwork. The team period responsible teacher mentioned that these aspects will be even more highlighted in the upcoming core curriculum, which will be implemented in Finnish upper secondary schools in the fall of 2021. In addition, the General Upper Secondary Schools Act of 2019 states that upper secondary school syllabi may include thematic studies, contributing to the development of cross-curricular competence. Consequently, these official documents have functioned as the background of the team period at least in the focal school.

As the name of the study unit implies, the fundamental idea of the team period is to give students possibilities for and experiences of working in teams, thus also contributing to the learning of essential skills needed later in studies and in working life. According to the team period responsible, other important features and objectives include the understanding of larger entities, the collaboration and interconnection between multiple school subjects, as well as the emphasis on creativity and innovativeness. Consequently, categorizing the team period as a way of organizing instruction proves out to be problematic, since the study unit seems to be a combination of several approaches.

The structure of the period is built by the participating teachers, and thus, the practical implementation of each team period may differ depending on the selected subjects, as well as the individual teachers

designing the subject courses. Consequently, the content of the period varies each year. However, the basic organization has remained the same during the years, so that the team period includes teacher-led classes on each subject as well as cross-curricular team projects. If we use the subject combination of the groups E-H as an example, it is the teachers of these subjects who design the course for their shared set of students. The students take part in traditional lessons where subject content is studied – in a similar way as in normal upper secondary school courses – and in addition, they work on the weekly projects. A typical weekly schedule may be structured so that the lessons in each subject are placed on Mondays and Tuesdays, and the rest of the week is dedicated to the team projects. These projects, instead, intend to incorporate contents from several participating subjects, an approach which can be essentially regarded as cross-curricular work, stepping out of the subject-specific learning areas. The students get to work in predetermined teams of 4 or 5 people, and these teams remain the same throughout the whole period.

As mentioned, the team period courses are planned by teams of teachers. As the team period in this school has always been implemented in the fall semester, the planning process starts already in the preceding spring. The first step is to choose the subjects for the study unit, and thus also, the teachers for each of them. During the four-year history of the study unit, different combinations of subjects have been experimented, resulting in a clearer understanding about the practicality of subjects and their possible interrelations. As an example, it can be mentioned that subjects such as physics and mathematics have consciously been left out due to practical reasons, whereas some of the more successful subject combinations have established their place in the team period during the years. When it comes to the teachers, participation in this experiment has been completely voluntary.

During data collection in the fall of 2020, the team period study unit for groups E-H was designed collaboratively by a geography teacher, a Finnish teacher, an English teacher, and a guidance counsellor. Their shared task was to plan the weekly projects with the objective of bringing their corresponding subjects coherently together. Such a process began by examining and comparing the subject- and course-specific study objectives in the core curriculum in order to find out the connections between the subjects and course contents. Once the projects were chosen or invented, the teachers had to find ways to incorporate their subjects into them. Essentially, the weekly projects might not always include explicit contents from each subject of the study unit, but instead, some of them may focus more on a specific subject over the others. An example of a cross-curricular project from this year's team period would be the news broadcast, where the students got to combine their knowledge of geography, ICT and Finnish. Firstly, the Finnish studies helped students to familiarize with the structure and language of a news article; secondly, ICT skills were crucial in filming and

editing the news video; and finally, a climate topic brought the subject of geography into the project. From a theoretical point of view, it must be noted that these weekly projects cannot be compared to project-based learning implemented in the foreign language classroom. While team period projects are based on multiple school subjects and their interplay, project-based learning may focus explicitly on the study of a particular subject, such as EFL.

In addition to the collaborative planning of the weekly projects, individual subject teachers must design the subject-specific contents and plan subject classes for the period. In the case of an English teacher, for instance, the teacher's job is to plan how to cover the contents of ENA1 (the first English course of upper secondary) during the seven-week study unit, similarly to a normal course. The ideal approach is to incorporate as many topics as possible into the cross-curricular weekly projects, but understandably, this is not always possible since these projects are combinations of multiple subjects. Therefore, the English teacher must leave certain topics to be covered in the traditional subject lessons, so that the learning objectives of ENA1-course may be fulfilled. A typical course in this upper secondary school consists of approximately 18 lessons of 75 minutes, but in the team period, the number of lessons is reduced to less than 10 because of the time dedicated to the weekly projects.

Since the Finnish upper secondary school is based on the completion of courses, the students have to be graded accordingly also in the case of the team period. To assess the learning objectives of each participating subject and to make assessment justifiable, the grading system used in the team period is a certain type of a hybrid between individual and team assessment. Thus, the students are graded on the basis of the weekly projects realized in teams, as well as for their individual work in each subject. In this case, individual work refers to subject specific tasks, exercises, homework, or exams that the teachers design for their respective courses. For instance, in the fall of 2020, for the ENA1 course the students were required to complete two vocabulary tests, one vocabulary homework task, a short essay, an oral task and a grammar test. The oral task was planned and filmed in teams, but otherwise the students completed the tasks individually. At the time of the present study, these course-specific tasks made up 60 percent of the course grade in each subject. Thus, the remaining 40 percent consisted of the weekly team project works, where all the members of the team were granted the same grade or number of points. Once again, using the groups E-H as an example, each teacher was responsible for assessing the weekly projects of one of these groups, comprising of 5 or 6 teams. In addition, an individual teacher must assess all the students of these groups in their own subject, so that, for instance, the English teacher may evaluate every student's skills and knowledge according to the objectives of the first English course of upper secondary school.

English studies in the team period are based on the first course of upper secondary school English studies, ENA1 (*Englannin kieli ja maailmani*). According to the core curriculum (NCC 2015: 110), in this course, the students get to analyze and evaluate their language studying skills and set objectives for their English studies. Content-wise, the course deals with linguistic diversity, English language as a global phenomenon and language skills as a form of cultural competence (NCC 2015: 110). The themes of the course are strongly related to the everyday life of young people. Thus, during the team period, the students study the contents of the first English course as they would do at any rate, and they get a normal grade for completing the course.

On account of the team period structure where subjects are studied separately, but in addition, merged together in project work, it is not easy to situate the team period along the three-level continuum of cross-curricular integration approaches presented earlier in this thesis (2.2.3). The subject lessons and the study of particular English course contents evidently imply that team period work is multidisciplinary, since the shared themes are covered separately from the perspective of each subject. On the other hand, the authentic cross-curricular aspect of the team period becomes evident in the form of the weekly team projects, where the boundaries between different subjects become significantly more transparent. In these projects, students work collaboratively to create something new detached from strict subject-related contexts, as the students have the possibility to develop their projects according to their own ideas and interests. This aspect of the team period work may be associated with the interdisciplinary approach to integration presented by Drake and Burns (2004), since the included subjects are still acknowledged and visible, but the project works are to integrate all the subjects into larger cross-curricular entities. To conclude, team period can be considered a hybrid form of integration, comprising elements from several integrative approaches.

4.3 Data and methods

4.3.1 A qualitative case study design

Since the present study has its focus on the experiences and perceptions of teachers and students, a *qualitative approach* was chosen. Qualitative research is oriented towards the micro-level and the close-up view on a particular topic, relying primarily on human perception and understanding (Stake 2010). This approach supports the aims of the present study, which essentially tries to understand individual teachers' and students' perceptions. Moreover, in a qualitative study, the whole research

design may be a reflexive process operating through all the stages of the project (Maxwell 2009: 214). Consequently, the processes of collecting and analyzing data, gathering and compiling theory, and elaborating research questions may happen simultaneously throughout the study, thus influencing each other (Maxwell 2009: 214-215). This broader and less restrictive design allows, for instance, a data-driven research orientation, thus contributing to the eventual focus of the research questions.

As Stake (2010: 20) argues, the most common methods of qualitative research are observation, interviewing, and examination of artifacts, e.g. different documents. For this study, interviews were chosen to be the main data gathering method, alongside observations. According to Stake (2010: 95), one of the main purposes of interviews in qualitative research is to obtain “unique information or interpretation held by the person interviewed”, an approach suitable for the aim to examine the team period in a profound manner. More precisely, the interviews in question were *semi-structured*, used as a synonym for a *theme interview* by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 75), placed along a continuum between a structured and an unstructured one. In a semi-structured design, the interviewer prepares a set of predetermined questions for the interviewee(s), however, allowing the interview situation to be conversational and informal, thus providing more flexibility and room for open conversation (Longhurst 2016: 143-145). This setting offers participants a chance to openly discuss issues they consider important, and the actual interview questions may be covered in an undetermined order that best suits the situation (Longhurst 2016; Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009). Moreover, the semi-structured design and the conversational nature of the interview allows the interviewer to ask further questions in order to cover issues not thought of originally, or correct misunderstandings (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 73). This design was preferred, since an open discussion could evoke important topics and findings that might not be covered in a strictly structured interview.

Conducting a qualitative study is argued to be a productive approach in examining the ways how people and organizations realize different things (Stake 2010: 2). The present study focuses on the team period and the teachers and students of one particular upper secondary school in Finland, and thus, it may be defined as a *case study*. The concept of case study has been defined in multiple ways by different authors, but the primary purpose for it remains the same, as it aims to explore the particularity of a single case, whether it refers to a person, an institution, or a system, for instance (Simons 2009: 3-4). According to Gomm (cited in Simons 2009), the aim of a case study is to understand the case itself, rather than to generalize findings to a larger part of society. Furthermore, as suggested by Simons (2009: 5), a qualitative case study is a particularly appropriate method in the field of educational practice. As the present study explores the implementation of the team period in

one single school, the findings may not be easily generalizable to other settings beyond this specific educational experiment.

4.3.2 The interviewed participants

The participant group of the present study included both upper secondary school teachers and students. The interviewed teachers were given pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity, and the students will be referred to as Student A, B, C etc. At the focal school, there were two EFL subject teachers who had taken part in the team period at least once during the four-year span of its implementation. In addition, a third teacher was interviewed for this study, as this person had worked as the team period’s responsible teacher since the beginning of the cross-curricular experiment. Practically, this teacher was responsible for training new team period teachers for the study unit. However, her comments were only used to form the introductory section 4.2, where team period as a phenomenon is presented. The background information collected from the EFL teachers is shown in the following table:

Table 1. The EFL teacher participants of the study

Participant (pseudonym)	Teaching experience	Years at the school	Experience in the team period
Niina	10 years	7 years	2 times planning and teaching
Teija	16 years	9 years	2 times planning, once teaching

The students, instead, were all first-year students of upper secondary school at the age of 15 or 16. As the team period students were divided into two larger groups each with distinct subject combinations, all the interviewed students were chosen from the group that had studied EFL as one of their subjects. The present study and its aims were presented to all these students personally by the researcher to motivate and encourage them to participate. Thus, the eventual interviewees were not chosen arbitrarily, but instead, from a group of students who had expressed their willingness to take part in the study. In qualitative research this is not considered a problem, since the aim of the study is not to portray generalizable information, but indeed, the opposite (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 74).

Essentially, the data gathering process consisted of three different frames of interview, each one with their distinct objectives. Firstly, one of the interviews was arranged to obtain basic information on the team period (Appendix 1). This interview was aimed at the responsible team period teacher, who could provide background information and motives for the implementation of cross-curricular work, as well as some experiences and feedback from the past years. This interview lasted 80 minutes. Secondly, the interview question sheet for the two EFL subject teachers (Appendix 2) was compiled on the basis of background readings and previous studies with slightly similar topics. These EFL teacher interviews were conducted individually with each one of them. The first interview lasted 55 minutes, and the second one 40 minutes. Finally, the third interview (Appendix 3) was aimed at the upper secondary school students, and its structure was left the most open, with the intention of letting students report their perceptions and experiences as freely as possible. The interviewed students had a chance to decide whether to participate individually or in small groups of 3 students at most. In total, 7 student interviews were conducted, with a total of 11 participants. These interviews' durations ranged from 9 to 27 minutes.

As can be seen, there were no time limits for any of the interviews, and the semi-structured design did not set restrictions concerning the order of questions or topics covered. However, the interviewer occasionally influenced the progress of the conversations by drawing attention to the questions prepared for each interview, so that essential topics could be discussed. The language of each interview was Finnish, as it was the mother tongue of all the participants. Therefore, the question sheets and interview extracts presented in the findings were also originally in Finnish, and only later translated into English for the purposes of this thesis. In the Finnish language, the word *englanti*, or more colloquially *enkkku*, may refer to both the English language, as well as the EFL subject. When these terms occurred in the interview extracts, they were translated according to the context, referring to one of these two options. The teacher interview sheets were sent to the participants by e-mail beforehand, so that they could familiarize themselves with the topics, recall their experiences and prepare for the interviews. Effectively, this decision was made to obtain as much information as possible, which is indeed, the most important aim of an interview (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 73). The students, on the contrary, did not get to read the planned questions beforehand, but they were informed about the main topics that were to be discussed in the interviews.

4.4. Method of analysis

The decision to gather data through interviews consequently affected the choice of method for data analysis, and thus, this process was conducted by using the *content analysis* method. In qualitative research, content analysis usually focuses on different forms of textual data, i.e. documents, such as transcribed interviews, written reports or journals, with the aim of verbally describing their content by categorizing or summarizing the chosen data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 103-106). The result of effective content analysis is a coherent and comprehensive description of the studied material, which may eventually be linked to existing theories and earlier studies on the topic (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 103-108). More precisely, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 99) define three varieties of qualitative content analysis: *a theory-based* (teorialähtöinen), *a theory-driven* (teoria-ohjaava) and *a data-based* (aineistolähtöinen) approach. In the theory-based approach, the process of data analysis is heavily guided by previous scientific theories or models in the field (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 97). For instance, the theory-based approach may focus on the testing and application of existing models in new scientific contexts, a design preferred in studies of natural sciences (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 97). In the second option, in the theory-driven approach, existing knowledge and theoretical background may be utilized to guide the analysis process, so that the findings are eventually linked to some existing theory. However, the analysis may also introduce wider perspectives and new ideas on the topic, as long as the connection to predetermined theoretical background is maintained (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 96-97).

In the data-based approach, on the other hand, the significance of data is prioritized, allowing existing theories to be adjusted to the data and the findings deduced from it (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 95). This approach was chosen as the method of the present study, since it let the research questions function as the guideline for data analysis, rather than obliging the analytical focus to be predetermined by theory. Effectively, data-based content analysis moves from empirical data towards conceptual understanding of the topic (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 112), which seemed an appropriate approach for the study at hand. It was preferred to let the analysis be more data-based and guided by the research questions, than make it strictly rely on theoretical framework. Another reason for this choice was the complexity of existing terminology surrounding the study unit at hand. Even though as the researcher I was familiar with the basic concept of the team period and its working methods already before the process of data collection, the essential theoretical framework was difficult to determine beforehand. Depending on the point of view, the team period may be regarded as an educational experiment incorporating multiple different approaches, such as phenomenon-based learning (PhBL), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), collaborative learning or

integrated curriculum, to mention a few. Due to this overlap of educational approaches, it was preferred to prioritize the data and its implications on the topic of EFL studies in the team period first. Afterwards, these findings could be used to determine and be linked to the essential theoretical concepts.

As Tuomi and Sarajärvi argue (2009: 95-96), the goal of the data-based approach is to form a theoretical understanding of the data, in this case, based on the interviews and the findings deduced from them. The researcher has to organize the collected data into a concise and explicit form, so that the dispersed pieces of information gathered from several participants may be presented in a more meaningful and coherent manner (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 108). Thus, in qualitative research, it is essential that the data is not presented merely as a list of isolated statements or as ‘results’, but instead, the researcher should succeed in drawing meaningful conclusions on the basis of the data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 103). In order to meet this objective, the data must first be deconstructed and conceptualized, and only later reconstructed into a logical entity in the form of categories or themes, thus introducing the most essential phenomena concluded from it (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 108).

Consequently, the analysis process of the present study consisted of three stages, according to the design presented by Miles and Huberman (cited in Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 108): data reduction, data clustering and data abstraction. The analysis process began by listening and transcribing the interview recordings. Then, in the data reduction phase, the essential extracts related to the research questions were color-coded and reduced into simplified versions. Next, by collecting and assembling the extracts describing similar topics, they were clustered into sub-themes. Evidently, this data clustering process contributed to the formation of the present study’s structure. Afterwards, on the basis of the sub-themes, the clustering process was repeated to place them into main themes (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 124-125). The main themes and sub-themes of the study are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Clustering of sub-themes and main themes

Sub-themes	Main theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The planning process - EFL teachers’ approaches to integration - The role of formal EFL lessons - The use of English language in the projects 	Integration of EFL and the English language

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordances for EFL teachers' professional development - Promotion of spoken language skills and confidence in speaking - EFL and English language in contact with other subjects 	<p>Affordances of EFL integration in the team period</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time restrictions and lack of diversity of EFL studies - Defining the role of EFL in the team period - Disproportionate influence of weekly projects on the EFL course grade 	<p>Challenges of EFL integration in the team period</p>

Ultimately, the analysis yielded ten sub-themes, grouped under the three main themes presented in the table. The following chapter of this thesis presents and examines the above themes in more detail. Lastly, the results of data abstraction process – the final stage of analysis – are discussed and concluded in the last chapter of the thesis, as the information of the present study is used to form theoretical descriptions on the topic (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 127).

5 EFL AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE TEAM PERIOD

This chapter presents the analysis of teacher and student interviews. It is divided into three subchapters under the following titles: ‘EFL integration in the team period’ (5.1), ‘Affordances of EFL integration’ (5.2) and ‘Challenges of EFL integration’ (5.3). The first sub-chapter presents team period work from the EFL perspective, explaining the role of EFL studies and the English language in this cross-curricular study unit. The second chapter focuses on the positive effects of such EFL integration from both the teachers’ and students’ point of view. Finally, the third chapter is dedicated to the exploration of existing problems of EFL integration, laying emphasis on the challenges of the team period.

5.1 EFL integration in the team period

The objective of this subchapter is to explain EFL integration as part of the team period. The section 5.1.1 explores how the teachers at the focal school perceived the planning process of the EFL work. The second section (5.1.2) presents the integrational approaches of the two interviewed EFL teachers, also providing concrete examples of EFL’s role in the weekly projects. In the third section (5.1.3), teachers’ and students’ perceptions on the role of formal EFL lessons will be examined. Finally, the last section (5.1.4) focuses on the study participants’ views on the English language use in the cross-curricular project works.

5.1.1 The planning process

Regarding the planning of the EFL content in the team period, both English teachers stated that it is mostly their personal task, similarly to the planning of any other upper secondary school English course. Effectively, the teachers reported that they are the ones who design the course plan and the lessons as they must cover the essential contents of the first English course despite the reduced number of lessons compared to a normal schedule. However, the planning process of the weekly tasks has been considered a shared responsibility of all the participating teachers, as the aim is to bring subjects and course contents together in a meaningful way in the form of larger projects. Even before designing the weekly tasks, the teachers use the core curriculum (NCC 2015) as a tool for comparing the contents and learning objectives of each subject and each specific course that is included in the

study unit. In effect, according to the EFL teachers, this method has been a functional way to find similarities and shared themes between subjects, but in addition, it has forced the teachers to familiarize themselves with the curriculum texts and, also, to consider the work of their colleagues in a new way. The following extracts demonstrate the teachers' views on the planning process. Extract 1 depicts how the EFL teachers viewed planning as a collaborative effort, whereas the second one shows how the role of EFL in the projects was articulated by one of the teachers:

(1) Niina: Well mainly it [planning the English part] is my thing to do, but in a way, we have also planned together, so that someone says, for example, could we put some English here or there, or what do you think about that. I mean it's not completely in my hands. And the same thing with every subject, in Finnish [the subject] for instance, like could we add Finnish this way or would this [topic, theme] go with Finnish? We think about those issues together.

(2) Teija: Yeah certainly that was always done together, the weekly projects were planned together with all the teachers. And sometimes I had to say it out loud that now English has to be put in there, how do we get it [integrated]. It wasn't always me who figured how to add English there, sometimes it was someone else.

The English teachers in this study considered the planning of weekly tasks more collaborative and, like in the case of any other participating subject, all the teachers had to be aware of and pay attention to integrating the English subject into the tasks. However, as can be seen in extract 2, one of the teachers also mentioned that sometimes it has been necessary to articulate the importance of one's own subject, so that it is truly taken into consideration. As shown, all the participating teachers were collectively responsible for the integration of different subjects. These comments are supported by the findings of earlier studies on interdisciplinary teams, according to which team teachers tend to spend more time discussing curricular issues compared to other teachers (Crow and Pounder 2000). Indeed, team period planning is essentially characterized by curricular work, since teachers must find interconnections between the subjects and specific courses. Moreover, according to Horn, Stoller and Robinson (2008: 5), one of the most important aspects of cross-curricular planning is the definition of shared goals and expectations, so that each teacher understands to focus on meeting the same objectives. Thus, it could be argued that despite the collective nature of project planning, the EFL teacher in extract 2 considered herself responsible for promoting the integration of her subject.

Another noteworthy aspect concerning planning and structuring team period work is the exclusion of students from this process. According to the EFL teachers, usually in normal courses their students have a chance to affect the course design, for example, by voting which texts to study or what kinds of individual tasks to include in the assessment of the course. According to Jagersma (2010), student

involvement has been proven to increase student engagement, which again may have a positive effect on the whole learning process. Moreover, it has been argued that the action of not involving students in the planning may cause them to feel lack of connection towards the objectives of a course or the overall curriculum (Rudduck and Flutter, cited in Jagersma 2010: 7). In the focal school, both English teachers stated that this influence of student interests has been consciously diminished, due to the particular nature of team period work. However, whereas Niina seemed to complain about this situation (extract 3), Teija did not approach the topic in a similar manner (extract 4):

(3) Niina: I feel a bit guilty about this [the lack of student involvement] because usually I like to give them a chance to have a say on at least something, but maybe this thing is influenced by the fact that this kind of work is not such a routine as teaching a normal course. So maybe for the teacher it feels like it's easier to manage when you decide it by yourself, and secondly, for instance the texts are consciously selected, so that which texts go hand in hand with the weekly tasks.

(4) Teija: No, the students did not get to influence the planning or the structure in any way, I did that all by myself. There are simply too many moving parts in the process.

As illustrated, Niina mentioned feeling “guilty” about not involving students in the planning process, since usually they get to influence the organization or contents of the courses at least in some way. Based on this comment, this situation is not necessarily the teacher’s personal decision, but a result of the team period work in general. Firstly, the whole study unit was considered such a large entity that it had to be well prepared and planned already beforehand in order to make it manageable for both teachers and students. Secondly, as Niina argued, the studied course contents have to be “consciously selected” to go “hand in hand with the weekly tasks”, and this process is better conducted while planning the work with other teachers. As usual, the English course in the team period includes the study of determined texts from the course book, and the objective is to find meaningful connections between these texts and the cross-curricular work of weekly projects.

Similar findings have been found in the primary school level in Finland, where the planning of Multidisciplinary Learning modules tends to be realized usually only by teachers (Christou 2020; Koskinen-Sinisalo et al. 2020; Långström 2017). However, according to Koskinen-Sinisalo et al. (2020: 41), primary level pupils seem to have a chance to choose their working methods in cross-curricular work, and they also get to decide which study materials to use and in which groups to work. Similarly, the EFL teachers in the present study reported that in the team period, students themselves may approach each weekly task the way they find convenient, but in contrast, the teams are chosen by the teachers before the beginning of the period.

Effectively, if the unit was based solely on student interests, the objectives of the English course might be more challenging to achieve. Certainly, the teachers argued that students may influence the development of the future team periods via feedback, but it is difficult to include their ideas and perspectives into the unit that they themselves get to study. However, students themselves determine the scope of their projects and come up with their own creative ideas concerning the content and design, which is an important feature of project-based group work (Carbaugh 2016, cited in Redchenko 2016).

After all, since the weekly tasks are projects including perspectives and topics of multiple subjects, there are certain compromises to be made in the planning process, and consequently, the role of EFL may be designed in various ways. As seen, EFL teachers are personally responsible for designing the actual EFL course content, but the project integration is a shared task of the whole teacher team. Moreover, contrary to normal EFL courses, students do not participate in the planning process. Essentially, this issue was found to stem from the unusualness of team period work.

5.1.2 EFL teachers' approaches to integration

The teachers interviewed in this study had experimented differing approaches regarding the role of EFL in the team projects over their years at the school. Some years, the English language was integrated into projects more profoundly, whereas sometimes the inclusion was more of an optional feature, left to the students to decide to which extent to use it. Certainly, the role of English may have also varied according to each separate weekly project, but nevertheless, the integrational approaches of the interviewed EFL teachers seem to be based on two differing profiles.

In the fall of 2020, there were in total five weekly tasks for the students, out of which four were planned by the teachers and one was a project work designed and presented by an actual company outside of the school. Three of the four teacher-designed tasks included the EFL subject as a concrete part of the project. In the first one, the students had to create an educational board game for studying contents of geography, Finnish and EFL. The EFL part consisted of communicational situations invented by the students, where the players got to practice their oral skills by acting out short monologues or dialogues. The second week's project was to create and tell the story of an immigrant or a refugee who has arrived in the USA, and the EFL perspective was present through the cultural aspects of the task. In addition, the students had the possibility to use English in their work, for instance, by scripting and filming an interview of the immigrant / refugee in English. Finally, the aim

of the third task was to produce a news broadcast on a natural disaster. This week, the students were also to film an English-speaking video where the imaginary victims of the event discussed their experiences. The fourth week was dedicated to creating a panel discussion, but in this project, the EFL part was not similarly explicit as in the three other ones. In conclusion, the English teacher affirmed that EFL was somehow included in most of the tasks, but the English language was an optional feature except for the video of the third week. The following extract illustrates how the teacher regarded the EFL part of the projects.

(5) Niina: So now that we've had 4 assessed weekly projects, in three of them EFL was there, and one had no real EFL part. But in those three there was something I was able to plant there, something that wasn't too difficult from the ENA1 course perspectives. [...] so there is something that can be done using the English language or topics that were clearly related to the English course. So that's how English has been there. [...] we thought that not every subject has to be included in every project, so then we've also had something where Finnish or geography parts haven't been so strong.

As Niina mentioned, the approach of their whole teacher team during the fall of 2020 was that the subjects did not always have to be equally present or “included in every project”, but instead, the emphasis of subjects might vary depending on the tasks. Consequently, she stated that the integration of EFL was not regarded as an obligatory feature for every single project work, but the most important thing was to utilize it in the most suitable contexts. This perspective is further reasoned in the following extract:

(6) Niina: In a way I had a light approach towards the weekly tasks, I thought that it's not that big of a deal, as long as we can add it [EFL] to some [tasks/projects], I saw that we can do basically anything with this language. But since it's the first [English] course, we can't have vocabulary that's too hard, but we can apply the language use so that we make it fit the ENA1-contents, so that it's not too difficult. And so I didn't want to get stuck with what we have to do and what we don't have to do, but instead, I thought that let's see what kind of opportunities we have [in the projects] and then we'll add English in there and make it applicable that way.

As illustrated in extracts 5 and 6, Niina did not necessarily consider EFL content and English language use as the basis of cross-curricular work, but instead, the EFL integration was implemented and shaped according to the possibilities found in each project. As depicted in the extract, English language use could be applied so that it “fit” the course contents, and it could be “added in there” when considered appropriate. As implied by Niina, the integration of EFL was done by attending to various affordances for language use, but ultimately, the content and objectives of ENA1 course had

to be respected in the process. The weekly tasks may not include elements or parts that largely exceed the contents of the first English course, a feature which sets limits to cross-curricular work, or at least requires creativity and cautiousness from the planners of the study unit. For instance, Niina mentioned that vocabulary concerning natural disasters is only studied in the sixth English course of upper secondary school, and therefore, demanding students to combine this geographic topic with the English language would be an inappropriate requirement. Thus, the English-speaking video on the topic focused more on the practice of orally expressing one's emotions and feelings, and not necessarily discussing the natural disaster itself. Niina's comments imply that in cross-curricular work, EFL must condition to the contents of other participating subjects. Indeed, the foreign language integration must be realized quite subtly, and the students cannot be expected to handle every topic in English. To conclude, Niina's integrative approach could be seen as a light version, where EFL is applied according to appropriate possibilities.

After all, the design of the whole study unit does not follow any strict guidelines, and therefore, the depth of the integration of EFL or any other subject may vary each year. In comparison with the examples presented previously, the role of EFL in the team period of 2019 was slightly different. That year, instead of geography, social studies were included in the study unit alongside with EFL, Finnish, and student counseling. Once again there were 5 weekly projects, but this time all of them were teacher-designed, and the application of the English language in these tasks was quite explicit in the form of oral language use. The first task was to prepare and give a presentation on three professions, out of which one had to be presented in English. In addition, the students had to interview a person – in Finnish – practicing one of those professions. The second task was a board game, similarly to the team period of 2020, but this time the EFL part focused more on specific grammar topics of ENA1-course. On the third week, the students were to script, film, and edit a video advertisement about their hometown, and each team had to aim their advertisement to a specific target audience, such as students, elderly people, or families with children. Effectively, the final product, the video advertisement was to be in English. The fourth task was to create a workshop for the second and third-year students of the school, and in this case, the English language was present only in the works of a few teams. These 6 teams built their workshops on Finnish cultural topics, aimed at international teacher guests who visited the school at that time. All the other teams, instead, realized their workshops in Finnish on various themes related to internationality. Finally, on the last week, the students scripted and portrayed a short play related to George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Once again, the final product was presented using the English language.

The English part of 2019 was indeed planned earlier by Teija – one of the interviewed EFL teachers – but it was the author of this thesis who worked as the teacher of the course during the actual team period. When asked about the integration of EFL into the weekly tasks, Teija stated that it was a conscious decision to make the English language apparent in every single project in the team period of 2019. Moreover, she had also planned and taught the English course of 2018 team period, and this approach of strong English use was something that she wanted to include also in the next implementation. The following extract explicates this perspective:

(7) Teija: [...] but yes, I definitely wanted it [the English language] to be an evident part of every week's project, I didn't let any part slip through without cramming some English in there. Like for example the first task, maybe it was a bit clumsily there, that "how do you need language skills in the working life", and one [profession] had to be presented in English. That was a bit forced, but it was still there, sometimes it can be like that but so what, it doesn't matter [...] so I wouldn't leave English out of the tasks, it should be visible and distinct each week.

According to Teija, the use of the English language was an essential part of cross-curricular work, and something that should not be omitted. As illustrated in the extract, she stated that in some weekly projects, this strong EFL integration might have seemed “a bit forced”, but this aspect was not considered harmful. Evidently, Teija preferred to make this integration clear and “visible” in each project work, without letting it “slip through”. When comparing the comments of Niina and Teija, there is a noteworthy difference in the way they expressed the role of EFL, or the role of English language. Whereas Niina tried to find something she could “plant” into the projects, Teija had had to “cram some English in there”, thus, resulting in the feeling of English being included “a bit clumsily” in some project works. As Teija argued, even though the EFL part might have felt forced, “it was still there, sometimes it can be like that”. Instead, Niina’s view seemed to focus on the meaningful possibilities of EFL integration. Overall, this issue demonstrates how cross-curricular work in general might be perceived in various ways when discussing the role of participating subjects. Some teachers might want to highlight their own subject or at least make its role equally present with others, whereas to some, cross-curricularity refers to the simple interplay of subjects without preconditioned roles.

Another important remark on the topic is that, concerning the English contents or the points of view to the integration of EFL, there has not been much collaboration between the English teachers. Certainly, the weekly tasks of previous years may be reused to facilitate the planning process, but otherwise, the teachers of different team periods might not exchange materials of a specific subject, for instance. Both interviewed EFL teachers mentioned that the planning process is influenced by the other subjects of the team period, and of course, also by the personal views of individual teachers and

the collective vision of the teacher team. For this reason, the teachers were quite unaware of each other's approaches to EFL integration. The following extract illustrates how Niina reacted to her colleague's approach.

(8) Niina: Here we see that this whole thing depends on the person, so I didn't even know that it [English language] had had such a big role before. Maybe now it was affected by the fact that we had more lessons than before, so I felt that we are in no hurry studying the English contents [of the course]. And since we had time to study the texts in the lessons, I didn't feel like now it [English] must be always put in there [the projects].

Arguably, the lack of communication between the teachers has enabled the creation of differing integrational approaches. As can be seen, Niina recognized that in addition to teachers' personal views on the topic, the EFL integration may also be affected by the organization of the whole study unit. When the number of English lessons was higher, she did not feel such pressure about fitting EFL into all projects. By contrast, in the interview, Niina also mentioned that in her first team period experience in 2017, the EFL integration "might have been stronger" since they had more weekly projects and less formal English lessons. Consequently, the English contents had to be included in the cross-curricular work more profoundly to be able to cover the essential ENA1 contents during the study unit.

The two integrative profiles presented in this subchapter illustrate the varying nature of team period implementation in the school. Since this cross-curricular study unit is not a determined or mandatory part of general Finnish upper secondary school education, its implementation is not regulated in any way. Thus, the focal school of this study has developed the team period to meet the objectives of the National Core Curriculum (NCC 2015), but otherwise, the planner teachers may create the study unit according to their collective interests. Consequently, this feature has also contributed to the nature of EFL integration, since the subject's role in the study unit is not explicitly predetermined. Based on the teacher comments, each year the role of the subject is modified by EFL teachers' personal views and the collective planning process of teacher teams.

Arguably, this alterable nature of team period work has its pros and cons. On the one hand, the lack of clear guidelines or regulations concerning EFL integration – or that of any other subject – provides teachers with more freedom in the planning process. The teachers have a chance to invent and create projects without focusing too much on the separate roles of each participating subject, thus promoting cross-curricularity, and enabling the learning of interdisciplinary skills in addition to subject-specific ones. For instance, as demonstrated earlier in this subchapter, one of the EFL teachers had integrated her subject into the weekly projects when she considered it convenient and suitable. Thus, the EFL

subject does not have to be forced into each project work, but it may be used depending on the existing potential and possibilities. On the other hand, this undefined role of subjects and the lack of regulation may imply that students study and learn different things in each team period. Surely, the whole study unit is still based on the objectives of the curriculum (NCC 2015), but the experiences of team period studies could be considerably different each year. Especially the level of EFL integration is an intriguing topic, since the two English teachers had quite differing approaches to this aspect. Evidently, if one year the EFL integration consists of explicit English language use in each week's project, and the next time the projects are realized completely by using Finnish, the learning outcomes could prove out to be quite distinct.

5.1.3 The role of formal EFL lessons during the team period

Regarding the formal teaching and studying of English in the team period, the teachers stated that it does not greatly differ from the normal practice of other upper secondary school English courses. To a large extent, the first English course revises earlier EFL studies, and thus, for instance, its grammar contents focus purely on the tenses of the English language. Since the cross-curricularity of team period work does not necessarily enter the EFL lessons, both interviewed teachers considered them quite traditional. This can be seen in the following extracts:

(9) Niina: I have regarded the team period English lessons as ordinary ones, so that they haven't been specifically "team period lessons", but instead, quite normal.

(10) Teija: How is team period teaching different? Well, the English lessons are not in any way different from the normal ones, sure they might be more compact, a bit hurried, but that's all. [...] partly they were teacher-led, just like normal lessons, so that I speak and teach something, then they get to practice. So, there was nothing special in the lessons.

As illustrated in the extracts, the formal English teaching and studying seems to follow the ordinary upper secondary school work, and the lessons themselves are not necessarily considered cross-curricular in nature, or specifically "team period lessons". As Teija mentioned, the lessons might be "more compact", but the structure is familiar, consisting of "teacher-led" parts, as well as parts where students get to practice the studied topics. Thus, it is mostly during the weekly projects when students get to work across subject-specific borders, whereas the EFL lessons focus on ordinary subject-specific studies. However, Netten and Germain (2010) argue that the study of different subject areas ultimately contributes to the development of transdisciplinary competencies. In addition to the particular knowledge associated with the English language during the English lessons, students may

also learn abilities which can be exploited outside the EFL area. Thus, the shared thematic contents of the team period courses may be beneficial in a transdisciplinary way, even if the subject lessons were mostly focused on specific EFL content.

In addition to the teachers, the students in this study expressed similar perceptions about the EFL lessons in the team period. In other words, most of the interviewed students regarded the formal teaching and studying to be similar to their experiences from basic education. However, they also considered the role of the lessons in the overall team period work as more complicated. Some students reported that the English lessons were purely dedicated to the contents of the course book, and it was difficult to establish connections between the lessons and the team projects. Consequently, these two components of team period work were considered slightly separate entities, as can be seen in the following extracts:

(11) Student A: [when it comes to] English I think we've had mostly normal studying, that we've been in the English classes doing exercises from the book and studied grammar topics. So we haven't had it an awful lot in the weekly projects, but then for example this week we had the English work [video]. But otherwise, it has been pretty normal schoolwork, so it's not maybe that smoothly integrated to the whole team period, like geography or Finnish.

(12) Student B: [...] and to me it feels like the English course has been completed like individually, or separately, so that we have tests and we've been in the English lessons, and some more tests [...] so in my opinion pretty much similar to lower secondary school, we went through theory parts and then we had certain exercises and so on.

According to the student comments, the team period lessons were organized similarly to their earlier English studies. As shown in extract 11, Student A considered the English studies something separate from the weekly projects, since the lessons seemed to focus merely on “grammar topics” and exercises of the course book. In addition, Student B mentions how the English course was completed “individually” or “separately”, consisting of students’ individual EFL course work and tests. These comments imply that the relation of EFL lessons and cross-curricular projects was not possibly as clearly perceived by the students as by the EFL teachers in this study. Moreover, according to the experience of Student A, the EFL subject was not “that smoothly integrated to the whole team period”. As explained earlier in subchapter 5.1.1, the EFL teachers try to plan and structure their team period English courses in a way that supports cross-curricular studying, meaning that the contents covered in the lessons are linked to the weekly projects as well as possible. However, as can be seen in the previous extracts, some students might have had difficulties in realizing and understanding these connections.

The English teachers reported that the EFL classes are spent studying the contents of the course book, and the focus is on familiar topics such as grammar, texts, vocabulary, and oral exercises. However, Niina mentioned that in the very first team period there was no EFL course book, but instead, they used materials from the internet as the context for studying vocabulary and themes of the course. She did, however, consider this approach as significantly more laborious, as can be seen in the following extract:

(13) Niina: [...] the first time we didn't use a book at all, back then the grammar was studied by using kind of an exercise package, and for the vocabulary I searched, I made a huge job searching articles, news or other forms of texts from the internet that were related to the study topics, and even so that the students could choose between an easier and a harder [version]. [...] I was really happy with the outcome, but phew, it kept me busy. [...] back then I didn't realize how I could link the texts of the course book to the weekly projects.

As explained by Mishan (2005:45), authentic texts as a classroom resource provide teachers a chance to use materials that are appropriate for particular learner groups or individual students. As Niina reported, in addition to searching different forms of texts, these study materials were targeted at learners with different proficiency levels, so that “the students could choose between an easier and a harder [version]”. Such an approach may indeed enhance the cross-curricular nature of studying English, and Niina stated having been “really happy with the outcome”. This statement could be assumed to mean that Niina found the EFL lessons of team period 2017 to have been effectively linked to the weekly projects. Using authentic materials might also prevent students from regarding the team period EFL lessons merely as traditional English studies, but instead, as something that promotes cross-curricular learning. Moreover, authentic materials are argued to reflect genuine communication, relating study content into real life language use (Berardo 2006: 60-64). This concept seems to align with the objectives of team period work, where the foreign language is brought into contact with other school subjects. Using a course book as the basis of the EFL lessons may indeed set some restrictions for team period work, since the books are not necessarily aimed at such cross-curricular ambitions, but they are used to meet the objectives of the core curriculum.

The topic of study materials is a problematic one, since the more integrative option with authentic materials requires significantly more time and planning from teachers. As can be seen in extract 13, Niina mentioned having made “a huge job” searching text materials for students, and this approach definitely “kept her busy”. Despite the benefits of authentic materials, later in the interview she mentioned she would not use the same system again due to the immense workload. In the light of this experience, it could be argued that to further promote the interplay and connection of EFL lessons

and cross-curricular projects, teachers might need more time and resources for planning their subject content. As shown already in subchapter 5.1.2, it seems that EFL must condition to the contents of other school subjects in team period work; a fact that already complicates the use of an EFL course book. After all, team period planning is additional work alongside normal teaching, and the subject teachers cannot place all their attention solely on the planning process.

Since team period as a concept promotes collaboration and project-based learning, this team aspect of studying was also discussed with the teachers. When asked about how teamwork is visible in the formal English lessons, the EFL teachers' comments were not completely unanimous. Instead of sitting alone or in pairs, the students have spent their English classes in their teams of 4 or 5 people, but the studying might not always be organized around the team. The English teachers stated that this group arrangement is suitable especially for oral exercises and that it is also used in other English courses, but in the end, students might not perform all the activities as a team. The following extracts demonstrate the differing experiences of the two EFL teachers:

(14) Niina: [...] fundamentally it's so that they study with their team, and talk, because that's the thing that studying a language strongly requires alongside, the communication. So in that sense it has been the same in the English lessons, that they sit in their teams and the idea is to work together.

(15) Teija: It was pair work like often in [English] lessons, yeah, it was normal upper secondary school studying, which in my case means that there's quite a lot of oral practice in pairs. But of course, they did that in groups, practically in pairs, maybe they even sat with their teams. But I'd say it was more pair work, and then the English tasks outside the classroom were done individually.

As can be seen in the extracts, Niina found that the student teams were an essential part of the work in English lessons, too, whereas Teija preferred to talk about pair work. However, as illustrated in the extracts, both teachers emphasized the significance of oral practice in their lessons, whether in teams or in pairs. Niina mentioned that communication is the thing that “studying a language strongly requires”, and Teija reported that her normal teaching approach means that “there's quite a lot of oral practice” in the lessons. In addition to this collaborative and communicational aspect, the teachers reported that the lessons consisted of students' individual work and some teacher-led parts. In general, the students had similar perceptions on the EFL lessons, but there was also some dissonance in their comments. This is illustrated in the following student extracts:

(16) Student C: At least compared to the lower secondary there's been a lot less, like, conversation and such, and instead, a lot of grammar and exercises, less conversation or concrete

tasks. [...] so actually, in the English lessons we haven't done any tasks, I mean like conversations in groups, but it has been only studying. So maybe that part is then included in the weekly projects.

(17) Student D: Well, [we've had] basic English exercises so that the teacher has taught something and then we've done exercises, but then we've also had quite a lot of oral activities in pairs. [...] But I don't know if it's just her [the teacher's] way of teaching, that there's a lot of oral practice or is it just because of the team period.

Even though the EFL lesson contents have been the same for each participating group, the experiences seemed to differ to some extent. As illustrated in the extracts, Student C commented on the small amount of oral practice or communicational exercises in English, whereas the second one reported such work to have been an important part of the lessons, saying that they “had quite a lot of oral activities in pairs”. In addition to this divergence of experiences, the teamwork aspect evoked differing opinions. To some, team or pair work was an essential part of EFL lessons, whereas others stated that the team perspective was only present due to their seating arrangements.

To conclude, the EFL lessons were an important part of the study unit since students must have a chance to study the determined contents of their first English course. Compared to Finnish basic education where subjects are studied throughout the school year, the organization of the upper secondary school requires the EFL studies to be divided into several separate courses. Thus, in addition to the promotion of cross-curricular learning, team period work must be arranged so that the ENA1 course contents are sufficiently covered. According to both teachers and students, the formal EFL lessons were found to follow the same structure and working methods as ordinary English lessons. However, based on the students' comments, it can be argued that the interconnections between EFL lessons and cross-curricular projects are not yet completely clear. Despite the efforts of teachers in linking these components together, the students have considered the lessons to be somewhat separate from the overall cross-curricular work of the study unit. The application of authentic materials could be a solution to this issue, linking the EFL lessons and weekly projects firmly together. However, such approach was found challenging due to the increased amount of preparatory work.

5.1.4 The use of English language in the projects

Even though the integration of EFL or the English language might have varied each year, it is reasonable to mention that the working language of the weekly projects has inevitably been Finnish. Even though the final products might have been presented partially or completely in English, both

interviewed teachers reported that the students never or extremely rarely used it as a communicative language in the planning or working phase of their projects. According to the teachers, these experiences were familiar from normal English lessons where, after a while, foreign language conversations are easily switched into Finnish. Even though both teachers emphasized the role of the English language as a tool used for studying other subjects outside the EFL context, it may be challenging to transfer this approach to students, especially when it comes to oral language use. Therefore, one of the teachers mentioned that the use of English language is usually only practiced in the English class, and Finnish is preferred in other occasions, such as in the weekly project works. The following extract demonstrates this view.

(18) Teija: No no, it's only in the English lessons where we push on the button like "okay, now we do things in English". But, of course they don't, if they work on a project that's mainly in Finnish, even if they read or used some English materials, it doesn't transfer into their speech in the working phase.

As reported by the Teija, the working phase of the projects was executed by using the Finnish language, even if the product itself was in English. According to Netten and Germain (2010: 110-111), project works enable students to work collaboratively and to assist each other in the learning process. Moreover, from the perspective of language learning, when working on a project, students may use different and more complex language functions, such as gathering information, explaining, and negotiating meaning. However, the team period work does not necessarily contribute to such advanced English use since the weekly projects are mainly completed by using Finnish. Another argument is provided by Redchenko (2016), who states that the use of a foreign language should be integrated into all project implementation stages if the objective of such projects is to effectively strengthen and develop students' language skills. According to Díaz (cited in Redchenko 2016: 6205), the four stages of any project are preparation, execution, presentation, and final stage, involving discussion, analysis, and assessment of the project. Thus, even though team period work may allow students to practice their writing and speaking skills in the form of project presentations, the other potential language use stages are evidently missing. Certainly, strong EFL integration concentrates especially on language learning, and it can be considered an effective method in EFL-based projects realized in EFL classes (Redchenko 2016). However, since team period work does not focus merely on EFL, the use of English is also reduced to certain activities.

From the student perspective, the use of English language was considered one of the most problematic topics of team period work since it was rarely designated as a mandatory part of the projects. In general, the interviewed students argued that the English language was regarded as an optional and

additional feature that might enrich the projects and bring some variety to them, rather than being an automatic and integrated part of each week's task. Thus, the language was presented as a possibility that the teams could utilize, and there was no pressure or obligation concerning the use of English in most cases. These perspectives are presented in the following extracts.

(19) Student E: Yeah I mean, it wasn't like defined that now you have to do like this, some English part right here, but it's more like that here you have this option [...] but if you didn't use it [English language], it didn't feel like you had done something wrong. And then, it might be a bit easier – if it's just an option – to stick to the Finnish language, so you don't have to think about anything extra.

(20) Student C: [...] sometimes there has been something that had to be included from English [subject], and at least we used it in a video, so that there was an interview in English. And some other things where we've spoken some parts in English. So we've included it but not every group has [done the same]. And at least, it hasn't been obligatory.

In extract 19, the optionality of using English is illustrated effectively. Since the teams themselves could decide whether to use English or not, this possibility to choose between the mother tongue and a foreign language might have affected some students' language use during the team period. As Student E reported, using Finnish throughout the projects might be considered a more tempting and less laborious option, saying that “it might be a bit easier” so that they “don't have to think about anything extra”. Despite the use of English being an optional feature left for the students to decide, most of the interviewees stated that their teams had tried to integrate the language into the projects from time to time, and some of them worked this way always when possible.

However, students stated that if they decided to add English to their projects it was used only in certain parts. For instance, as can be seen in extract 20, some students had integrated spoken English into their second week's task, when telling the story of a refugee or an immigrant. Some groups had decided to script and film an interview in English, because one of the objectives of the task was to explain how this imaginary person might have adapted to living in the USA. In this case, the students argued that it was a natural decision to use some English in order to create a more authentic context, as shown in the following extracts:

(21) Student F: In a way I think the English language brings some authenticity to some projects, like for example, if there's a refugee who has moved to the USA, it might feel pretty weird if he or she spoke Finnish there. So it makes the work more realistic.

(22) Student E: For example, it goes well with geography if we talk about some other nationality. Then it's really clear that we should speak English in the task since the people living somewhere else don't know the Finnish language as we do. So in that sense it's obvious to use English.

As implied, the use of English language depended on the project assignment, and the overall context of the project. This refugee project was mentioned several times precisely for this reason, as the theme of foreign nationalities seemed to promote the use of English as a more global language, creating more authenticity. As stated by Student E, it was “obvious to use English” because of the foreign context. However, as explained earlier, in 2020 team period, English language was used in individual parts of larger projects, and consequently, the final works were never completely in English. This was also true in the few projects where English was designated as an obligatory feature. For instance, the first week's board game was to include activities for practicing spoken English use, but the game also included activities on geography and Finnish language topics, which effectively, were completed in Finnish.

When linking the teacher and student comments, it is evident that the role of English language in the projects has not always been clearly predetermined. However, using the refugee task as an example, teachers do have the possibility to create project assignments encouraging students to use the foreign language. As shown in the student comments, spoken English was welcomed when it was found relevant and meaningful, and this might be an issue that should be taken into account already in the team period planning process. As argued earlier in section 5.1.2, the different integrational approaches of the two teachers have significantly influenced the role of English language use in the projects. However, according to the interview data, the students have not adopted English as the primary working language of their projects. Despite this lack of intense language integration, even reduced use of English in project-based learning may be beneficial for the students (Poonpon 2017). After all, this topic must be discussed while taking students' linguistic proficiency and experience into consideration. The completion of project works in a foreign language has been found difficult by students in several studies (Farouck 2016; Moulton and Holmes 2000; Li 2010; Beckett 2002; Gibbes and Carson 2014). The first-year students in Finnish upper secondary school have already studied English for approximately 7 or 8 years, but demanding them to complete cross-curricular projects solely in a foreign language might seem an overestimated requirement.

5.2 Affordances of EFL integration in the team period

Another objective of the interviews was to discover what kinds of affordances the team period work provides from the EFL perspective. This subchapter introduces the most notable themes or topics compiled from the teacher and student interviews. Firstly, the section 5.2.1 focuses on the teachers' perspective, exploring how the EFL subject teachers have professionally benefited from the team period experiment. Secondly, the section 5.2.2 introduces English-speaking skills as the significant outcome of team period studies. Finally, the section 5.2.3 explores how EFL has been brought into contact with other upper secondary school subjects through team period work.

5.2.1 Affordances for EFL teachers' professional development

Regarding their personal teachership, the interviewed participants emphasized the positive and enlightening experiences that cross-curricular work has offered them. One of the most significant features was the collaboration with other subject teachers, an aspect that has been missing from their work outside of the team period. Certainly, the English teachers mentioned that during normal courses, there is collaboration between the teachers of the same subject, and in these subject groups, it is common to share ideas concerning course contents, course tasks, or assessment, for instance. Nonetheless, for both interviewed teachers, professional collaboration beyond subject boundaries has become apparent only after the experiences of team period work. As the teachers explained, usually an upper secondary school teacher merely focuses on their own courses, and in a way, there is no time and no reason to explore possibilities for cross-curricular work as an individual teacher. However, one of them stated that the connections between different subjects have emerged to them from time to time while teaching English, but it has been difficult to find time to pay more attention to these interconnections. This point of view is illustrated in the following extract:

(23) Teija: [...] I had already earlier noticed, by chance, that for example in the [English] culture course we cover pretty much similar topics to those they study in Finnish about literature or poetry, so the knowledge was there, but there has never been time to peek behind that corner. [...] so now that we had ENA1 and AI2 [Finnish course], there are similarities also elsewhere, potential for crossing the border, but there is no time [outside the team period] [...] and in theory there's no way to know what others [teachers] do. So now it became clearer what a Finnish teacher's or a social studies teacher's work is like, and how that reflects to your own.

As the comment suggests, Teija perceived the team period as something that has given teachers the possibility and resources for “crossing” subject boundaries. Even though interconnections between different subjects and even specific courses might have already existed, it has been difficult for an individual teacher to find time to further examine such cross-curricular “potential”. This is also one of the challenges of cross-curricular work at an upper secondary school level, as the normal course-based organization of studies makes teachers focus on the planning and teaching of their own subject courses. Naturally, subject teachers are professionals in their own fields, and without cross-curricular innovations such as the team period, they will also remain in their area of expertise. As mentioned already in the section about the planning process (5.1.1), team period offers teachers an unusual chance to work together on a larger study unit. As concluded in Cantell’s (2017: 239) study, cross-curricular work can increase subject teachers’ understanding of other subjects’ contents and study objectives. In the team period, the participating teachers become more aware of each other’s work and the interconnections of subjects, helping them to see past the EFL content they have been focused on for years.

Furthermore, the collaborative aspect offered the EFL teachers a chance to break away from routines and the control that subject teachers usually have over their courses. Teija even mentioned that normal course work almost seems like “a repetitive circle” where the teacher’s job consists of “teaching, testing, and assessing”. In the team period work, instead, there was more room for creativity and new perspectives, especially due to the collaborative planning of weekly tasks executed in teacher teams. This can be seen in the following extracts:

(24) Niina: Well, these have been really enlightening experiences, as an EFL teacher I wouldn’t normally work with a geography teacher, for instance, [...] this kind of work shakes up your routine and you can’t just work on kind of an autopilot. That you really have to think things over and it’s really refreshing that you have to do that, and you get to do that, and definitely widens one’s views.

(25) Teija: To me it was like a pedagogic academy, kind of another teacher training, without exaggerating. So you learnt to plan tasks where you directly apply the things that are mentioned in the curriculum [...] and when you started to make connections between the other subjects, it also kind of became clearer what we’re supposed to learn in the [English] course, in addition to covering the course book. [...] And when we chewed the ideas, modified, and applied ideas together and I tried to think how to cram my subject in there, in the end it was really educative and put my creativity to the test. And that was a big challenge but extremely rewarding in my opinion.

As can be deduced from the extracts, both teachers had found team period to offer more variety to their work as teachers, obliging them to create something new and step out of the traditional working methods. As illustrated in extract 24, Niina reported team period to “shake up” their routine, preventing teachers to work “on autopilot”, which might indeed happen during traditional EFL course work. Teija even regarded team period planning and implementation as a form of “teacher training” and stated that the work across subject boundaries has also clarified the objectives of their own English course. Indeed, adapting to cross-curricular activity may challenge teachers’ values and beliefs about themselves and their subject, as the focus is not merely on their field of expertise (McClune, Alexander and Jarman 2012). The positive comments gathered in the interviews imply that cross-curricular work clearly has its advantages also from the teacher perspective, expanding subject teachers’ job description. As argued by McClune et al. (2012: 67), cross-curricular activity requires teachers to apply a new pedagogy, thus promoting teacher development and their confidence in sustaining new approaches. Stepping out of from their traditional subject-expertise obliges teachers to face their own limits of knowledge and understanding (Grenfell 2002). Moreover, according to Crow and Pounder (2000), working in teams may ultimately provide teachers with a larger variety of skills and more work discretion, compared to the instructors who have not experienced such working methods.

When asked about new ideas that team period work has offered for English teaching, the teachers highlighted the ability to create one’s own course tasks, as can be seen in the following extracts:

(26) Niina: I’m not completely sure when I’ve made students do oral tasks [assessed ones] for the first time, but at least after the team period we’ve done more of those. Then probably the vocabulary tasks, those were used already before, but the instructions for them are modified all the time so I’ve also used them more and more.

(27) Teija: Well, at least the ability to create an assessment grid. That you can invent a task out of nowhere and then think and define what you want students to do in it, and then the assessment for it. [...] That has been extremely helpful, realizing that any task can be assessed this way.

As illustrated, Niina mentioned “oral tasks” and “vocabulary tasks” as something that have been used more after team period experiments. In addition, Teija emphasized the ability to invent tasks and to create “assessment grids” for them. During the team period, in addition to the project assignments, the participating teachers must define how to assess students’ project works each week, and these assessment grids have become the means to achieve this. Consequently, Teija found it “extremely helpful” that with this experience, she could create her own tasks and similar assessment grids for EFL course works, too. Arguably, not everything has to be based on the contents of the English course

books, but the teachers may invent and create meaningful tasks also themselves. At least according to Teija's perception, team period work has provided her with this new assessment method.

Another important aspect of team period work was a change in how the EFL teachers viewed their role in the classroom. As argued earlier in this thesis, the formal EFL lessons were considered quite traditional by both the teachers and the students, and consequently, the teachers' job consisted of normal teaching of EFL course content. However, the cross-curricular weekly projects offered new working methods not only for the students, but also for the teachers. Instead of being the English language experts in the classroom, during the project works, the teachers had to adapt to new roles. This can be seen in the following extracts:

(28) Teija: Yeah, I was more like a mentor or a facilitator. They did their projects quite independently, sure they had some questions every now and then. And then of course I took care of the schedule, like now we should do this and that [...] so yeah I think it has been more about mentoring. [...] So I didn't necessarily tell them how to do something but more like "maybe you could pay attention to that". And of course, I didn't even have clear answers since the project assignments are so open, I cannot have the answers.

(29) Niina: It has been clearly more like instructing and, kind of, looking for options. If a team is thinking that okay, we have a little problem here, I can join in and we'll go through their options: could they proceed in this or that direction or could they come up with some new way? So it's about opening up different situations and instructing [the teams] that way. Maybe in some cases the teacher role is also there, for example, one team wanted to include a comic relief into their news video [...] so I had to take the teacher's role and go through the structure of a news item with them, kind of explaining what our topic was and whether it was appropriate to add a comic relief in it. But mostly instructing.

As implied in the extracts, the EFL teachers did not regard their roles necessarily as language teachers. As illustrated, Teija preferred to talk about "mentoring", and Niina about "instructing" when discussing their roles during cross-curricular project work. Teija reported that students "did their projects quite independently", and she did not control her students' work by telling them "how to do something". Instead, she even highlighted the fact that, due to the open nature of project assignments, the teacher cannot even have "clear answers". Niina seemed to agree with this, stating that usually it is more about "looking for options" with her students, "opening up different situations" so that students find a direction to follow next in their work. These findings are not surprising, since the change in the teacher role is a fundamental part of project-based learning, as the teacher becomes less dominant, acting as a guide, coordinator or facilitator (Fragoulis and Tsipalakides 2009). Both teachers

mentioned that, in contrast to normal English teaching, during the project works they provided teams with different options and rarely told them exactly what to do. Thus, the responsibility of completing the work remains in the hands of students, and the teacher mainly supervises the work. This approach is an essential part of both cross-curricular and project-based learning (Drake and Burns 2004; Bell 2010). However, as illustrated in Niina's response (extract 29), sometimes it was necessary to also function as a teacher, telling students what is "appropriate" in certain projects, mentioning the comic relief as an example. This balance between student autonomy and teacher's guidance seems to follow the basic ideas of PBL, since students have a chance to develop ownership towards their projects while the teacher occasionally intervenes, not always to provide information, but to facilitate the process (Alvin 2018; Alan and Stoller 2005).

In the English courses, the teachers are experts of their subject, and they are presumed to provide knowledge on the English language. Instead, in cross-curricular work, such detailed knowledge is not necessarily requested since the project works focus on larger content across subject-boundaries. Consequently, according to one of the teachers, students rarely asked for help in linguistic issues during the project works. This can be seen in the following extract:

(30) Niina: There hasn't been a lot of that, so the questions are usually about the project assignments, like "are we supposed to do it this or that way". But no questions that focused on the use of English, like "can we say that" or "how should we say this". Maybe the first time [the first team period] there was more of that, but it might have been due to the fact that back then we had more projects that included English.

Niina's response suggests that the student teams in the fall of 2020 integrated English language into their work quite independently without guidance from the teacher, since there were "no questions that focused on the use of English". Nonetheless, she mentioned that this might have been affected by the overall role of English language in the projects, comparing the two team periods she had taken part in. As Niina reported, during the first team period they "had more projects that included English", whereas the use of English language during the fall 2020 was considered an optional feature as argued in section 5.1.2. Indeed, based on my own experiences from fall 2019, the students' need for English instruction might vary depending on the depth of English language integration. In the fall of 2019 when English was used in every project work, the students asked numerous questions on linguistic issues. The topics of the questions ranged from detailed grammar to word choices and formal language use, and thus, the teacher role also included the expertise of the English language. Thus, the EFL teacher's role in the whole study unit may once again vary depending on the level of integration.

If the foreign language is not necessarily needed in the project works, the subject expertise of the teacher is not similarly present or requested.

Although the team period was considered a positive and a rewarding experience, the teachers stated that the new working methods may also be more laborious and demanding. Nowadays, as the study unit has already been implemented in four consecutive years, there is certain routine in the way it is planned and realized, but according to the teachers, the first years of the experiment were more turbulent and worksome. The reason for these statements is that the first rounds had to be planned from scratch, as there were no concrete examples of how to create a cross-curricular study unit, or how to integrate EFL into such work. This issue is illustrated in the following extracts:

(31) Teija: It was indeed extremely tough, especially the first round when we created the projects. And especially when the study period already started and we still hadn't finished planning all the weekly tasks, so that was tough. But then as I participated for the second time and got to improve the existing tasks, it was fun. So in that sense, I would recommend anyone to participate more than once, it gives a deeper experience and understanding. And also the fact that you get back to your own track, to tune and improve your earlier work, the assessment criteria, making them clearer. [...] About the challenges, I guess the limits of your own creativity, what you can come up with. [...] of course it was worksome, slow and difficult to create the projects, but it was also really rewarding, not everything has to be easy.

(32) Niina: This whole thing has changed a lot, you notice that we've done this for a while now. Even though we can't use everything as it is [materials from previous years], we have different frameworks, we have experience on what works and what doesn't work, we know how to run the schedule. So now we have lots of thing ready, compared to the first time when we really created everything from scratch, completely.

According to the teachers, the first rounds of planning were considered the most demanding experiences of team period work, described as “extremely tough” by Teija (extract 31). This argument was supported by Niina, stating that the first time they “created everything from scratch”. Since both teachers had participated twice in the planning process, they were able to comment on the development of the work throughout the years. As commented by Teija, the second time offered her a chance to “improve the existing tasks” and to “tune and improve” her earlier work, also providing “a deeper experience and understanding” on team period. Furthermore, commenting on the study unit in general, Niina mentioned that nowadays they have “different frameworks” and “experience on what works and what doesn't”, helping the planning process. These findings align with Barnes's (2015b) suggestion that positive experiences in cross-curricular work may help teachers develop their

creativity and provide new perspectives for future work. Here it is noteworthy to bring forth Teija's comment, saying that "it was worksome, slow and difficult to create the projects, but it was also really rewarding, not everything has to be easy". This is an effective illustration about the professional development acquired through team period work, challenging subject teachers' in a completely new way, but also providing them with feelings of success.

To summarize the themes discussed in this subsection, the interviewed EFL teachers considered team period a valuable cross-curricular experience from various perspectives. Firstly, they had had a chance to participate in collaborative work with other subject teachers. Secondly, the experience had shaken up their routines as teachers by putting their creativity to the test. Thirdly, the teachers had adopted new professional roles since cross-curricular work let them function as instructors rather than subject experts of the classroom. Certainly, the team period had also been considered a laborious experiment and something more demanding than ordinary EFL course teaching, but at the same time, cross-curricular work has been a rewarding and educative challenge that offered variation to upper secondary school teacher's routine.

5.2.2 Promotion of spoken language skills and confidence in speaking

Even though the teachers have had slightly differing approaches to the integration of English language in the weekly projects, communicative language skills seem to have maintained a key role in the study unit. Teija had a clear vision of integrating spoken English into each weekly task, and thus, the students had to or had the opportunity to practice their speaking skills each week. The following extract presents this point of view:

(33) Teija: Well English, it became strongly oralized. In the feedback, students said that performing in English improved a lot because it was done so often, basically every time. [...] there was some negative feedback but not crucially. On the contrary, there was positive feedback saying that 'we spoke more English than ever before', and publicly, so they became more confident in that [...] and surely the little obligation to use it [English] has made them cross certain thresholds they wouldn't otherwise. So if it is given as an option then definitely the majority ignores it simply because of that.

As illustrated in the extract, Teija had received "some negative feedback" due to the role of English language, but she underlined the positive student experiences. Since English language was used in the projects "basically every time", students had reported that their "performing in English improved

a lot". Based on Teija's experience, students grew familiar with using the language, and she argued them to have become "more confident" in speaking English. Indeed, she considered that the obligation to use spoken English in the projects had made students "cross certain thresholds", and if it is merely given as an option, "the majority ignores it". Deduced from these statements, Teija found the English language as a compulsory feature to bring more advantages than disadvantages, encouraging the students to speak. Effectively, the implementation of project work has been found to increase students' motivation, engagement and learning enjoyment in general (Lee 2002; Stoller 2006; Levine 2004), which again are important factors contributing to the achievement of communicative competence in a foreign language (Coffin 2013).

Furthermore, Teija clarified that students' language performance in the projects was never assessed, but the emphasis was always on the content of the work. This can be seen in the following extract:

(34) Teija: [...] Sure the talented speakers stand out in these projects. But that doesn't take anything away from the others, it doesn't affect their English grades. I never considered it like that, it was a bonus, so I always assessed only the product, the result. So of course, if we had had an assessment criterion that now your oral skills will be assessed... but we didn't have that. I think that would be a heavy thing to do in the first English course, especially in front of the whole class, I would never make them do that.

As reported by the teacher, the assessment criteria of team projects never included spoken English language, meaning that students were not evaluated according to their speaking skills. In fact, Teija also mentioned that public performing in English is not usually implemented in EFL courses, also admitting that assessing students in such way in their first English course "would be a heavy thing to do". Consequently, since the students did not have to worry about the assessment of their English performance in projects, Teija considered public speaking a convenient part of the team period work. Moreover, as reported by Teija, the talented English speakers might have stood out from others, but ultimately, this proficiency was not considered an advantage in assessment, since it did not "affect their English grades".

On the contrary, Niina did not integrate spoken English as explicitly into the weekly projects, or at least the performing part was left more optional. The teacher stated that for the weaker English students, it was not necessarily beneficial to force them to perform in front of others in a foreign language, and therefore, the integration of the whole EFL subject might have been perceived in a significantly different way during the team period of 2020. The following extract illustrates this perception:

(35) Niina: [...] so I thought that it doesn't really support their English studies that they have to perform in English before other students' eyes, or that they have to watch themselves speaking English on a video, that just feels wrong. And so, I don't want to put them into that situation, I feel like they should be supported in some other way. [...] For many students it's already a really big step to go in front of the class and speak Finnish, not to mention using another language. It can be a tough situation.

As suggested by Niina, forcing students to perform in English was not an appropriate approach to promote their English-speaking skills. As the extract illustrates, Niina treated performing in one's mother tongue already as a "big step" for some students. Moreover, she emphasized that putting students into situation where they must speak English in front of others "just feels wrong". Thus, it can be argued that she regarded the topic as a moral issue, reflecting on the meaningfulness of such approach in language learning. Relating these comments to the ones given by Teija (extract 34) about the assessment of students' English speaking, public performing seemed to be an issue that had to be delicately handled in team period work. Nonetheless, even though earlier in extract 34, Teija emphasized that she would not assess students' public performing in English, she and Niina seemed to have somewhat differing perceptions about making students use the language in the projects. Whereas Teija regarded the obligatory English use as an encouraging and positive approach, Niina found that students' language learning "should be supported in some other way".

Niina's response shows an awareness of the possible role of foreign language anxiety, a topic that cannot be completely ignored when talking about spoken English language. Such anxiety may arise because of limited knowledge of the target language, fear of negative evaluation, or if the oral production is considered a test situation rather than simply a communicative action (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986). After all, team period participants are first year students in upper secondary school, and probably, most of them are not used to speaking English in public. Compared to pair or group discussions practiced in EFL lessons, performing in front of their peers in a foreign language can be a more demanding task. Nevertheless, in this study, the interviewed students did not consider the EFL integration to cause any additional distress or anxiety, as the following extract illustrates:

(36) Student A: Well always when we've had it [English language] in a project, we have kind of, or in a way it has been optional, so I don't think it has been a problem. Sure, it is harder than Finnish but [...] it has been just an additional thing there, so that it hasn't been used that much, and we haven't stressed about it.

The above extract suggests that the English language use had not affected Student A's stance on the topic. Since the English language was not considered the most fundamental part of the projects, but

instead, “just an additional thing there”, it seemed to cause no problems or stress whatsoever. As argued by the student, using English was found “harder” than sticking to Finnish language, but eventually, the English parts were merely small elements in the overall projects, and the foreign language had not been “used that much”.

Evidently, once again, these findings illustrate the varying nature of team period English, since it is the teachers who decide how to integrate EFL into cross-curricular work. Fundamentally, the two EFL teachers had different perceptions concerning English language use, since Teija considered it an essential part of each week’s work, whereas Niina wanted to spare students from uncomfortable performing situations. As discussed earlier in section 5.1.4, the students had quite actively integrated spoken English language into their projects even despite its optionality. However, not all the student teams had followed this practice, since completing the projects in Finnish might have been considered a more effortless option.

When discussing the topic of language skills with students, they were unanimous about the positive effect of EFL integration on their English speaking skills. The students noted that the practice of such skills was not always an essential part of the actual English lessons, where a considerable amount of time was dedicated to explicit language content such as grammar. There were also some oral exercises where students had the possibility to speak English in pairs or in groups, and mostly, students had found these activities useful and beneficial. However, students seemed to find differences between the language use in EFL lessons and in the project work, as can be seen in the following extracts:

(37) Student E: In the EFL lesson if we have an oral exercise in pairs, it is kinda hard to just suddenly start speaking English since it’s just a brief exercise. So especially if there’s not so much time, it’s just easier to say the same thing fast in Finnish and then proceed in English. [...] and it was nice to use it [English] in the project because normally I don’t really get to speak English in my everyday life, like having normal conversations in English. So maybe if we had more that kind of conversations, not anything to do with assessment, so that we could just practice having conversations, because it’s pretty important that you could speak the language that you’re learning.

(38) Student J: Well, we’ve always done them [oral exercises] based on the book, like practicing words or grammar, but at least in my opinion you learn best just by speaking. So that’s been nice in this thing [in the team period].

As Student E reported, the oral practice in EFL lessons might happen through “brief exercises”, and thus, it can be difficult “to just suddenly start speaking English”. Especially due to the limited time dedicated to these exercises, problematic sections might be resolved “fast in Finnish”, before

proceeding with the foreign language. Furthermore, as stated by Student J in extract 38, oral exercises in EFL lessons are always “based on the book”, related to vocabulary and grammar. In the team projects, instead, the use of English language was found less restricted. Even though the working language during the projects was not necessarily English, the integration of the language into certain parts of weekly projects had a positive impact on the interviewed students’ speaking practice. As can be seen in extract 37, the student mentioned not having too much experience of speaking “English in everyday life”, but the project work provided a chance to practice “normal conversations”. Student E further stated that it is “important that you could speak the language that you’re learning”, emphasizing that such normal conversations could be practiced more. This argument was supported also by Student J, stating that “you learn best just by speaking”. Consequently, it can be argued that team period work gave these students a chance to practice English-speaking in a meaningful and authentic way, compared to EFL lessons where the conversation topics are somehow predetermined. Indeed, it is possible and even probable that the topics of EFL course books do not always coincide with the interests of students, resulting in hasty exercises and interference of the Finnish language.

The students in this study argued that when deciding to use spoken English in their projects, they could invent and create their own interactional contexts, and focus on practicing everyday language use and the ability to express oneself in English. The focus on English speaking skills is elaborated in the following extracts:

(39) Student A: It has been the speaking that has been emphasized, I mean in the lessons we’ve read some texts, but in these [projects] it’s been more about general language use, that you can fluently produce speech [...] kind of everyday English, that you are able to talk and have a normal English-speaking conversation, like practical [use].

(40) Student E: [...] the refugee support group, the thing where we had to speak in English for about 5 minutes with a group, it was somehow clearer [compared to EFL lesson exercises] that we speak English the whole time. And you had to get by with English, so you didn’t have Finnish there to help you. So maybe you learn better that way, when you simply have to use it, that it’s precisely defined that you have to use English. So you learn to be okay with that and to apply the skills that you’ve learnt earlier from a course book.

(41) Student D: Well at least I’ve spoken a lot more English, or it feels like especially in the lower secondary school we didn’t have that much speaking exercises so now I’ve spoken a lot [...] but I don’t know if this is different compared to other courses since this is the first English course in the upper secondary, so is there always the same amount of work and similar exercises. But, for example, when we had to speak about the catastrophe in groups in English, that was nice and I

hadn't done anything like that before, so that for 5 minutes you just have to come up with something and speak in a situation.

As suggested by the comments, the interviewed students agreed on the importance and significance of practicing spoken language use. Despite being proficient English learners, majority of the students mentioned that speaking the language is the skill they should practice more, and to many, the team period work seemed to favor the development of this skill. In extract 39, Student A mentions that the projects focused more on “practical” and “general” language use, or “everyday English”, compared to the work done in EFL lessons. This perspective implies that cross-curricular work might give students a possibility to speak English that is closer to real-life situations, and additionally, in the projects, students may use the language according to their own proficiency and interests.

Moreover, as illustrated in the two other extracts (40, 41), team period work seemed to encourage students to cope with speaking English. As argued earlier in this section, during the EFL lessons it is normal to rely on Finnish when encountering problems with the foreign language. In the project works instead, students might indeed overcome the urge to use one's mother tongue. As Student D mentions (extract 41), in some projects “you just have to come up with something” in the foreign language, which is arguably something that occurs in authentic language use situations outside the school context, too. Student E (extract 40) had similar experiences, reporting that in projects, “you had to get by with English” without having Finnish “there to help you”. This student also mentioned that such adaptation to situations might be a better way to learn the language, “when you simply have to use it”. Consequently, this perception seems to align with the one presented by Teija concerning the compulsory use of English (in extract 33). Indeed, demanding students to speak English is not necessarily a negative approach, but instead, it might function as an important incentive in some cases. Moreover, as argued by Student E, study tasks might be “clearer” when students are aware of having to speak the foreign language.

Furthermore, a few students implied having more experience in speaking English, stating that they use the language to some extent also outside the school environment. These students mentioned that the integration of the English language may be most beneficial to students who struggle precisely with speaking:

(42) Student C: Well the advantage, in my opinion, is that it doesn't make it harder or easier, but it's beneficial for those who don't speak English that well or who are scared of speaking it. So at least many of my team members have gained confidence in speaking English when we've used it in our projects. Gaining confidence, I've noticed how it has built up.

(43) Student G: Yes, in my opinion exactly the fact that we get to speak English and have conversations in groups. It's definitely very useful especially to those who have some trouble with pronunciation or with producing speech. And at least it hasn't made my work harder in any way.

According to these statements, team period work may indeed encourage learners of all levels to speak the English language more than before. In the first extract, the interviewed student mentions how his peers “have gained confidence” through project work, also stating that “it’s beneficial for those who don’t speak English that well”. Student C emphasized how his team members’ increased confidence in speaking has been visible, since he had “noticed how it has built up” during the team period. In the second extract, Student G mentions that speaking English in groups may be especially useful to “those who have some trouble with pronunciation or with producing speech”. These two interviewed students were quite familiar with speaking English themselves, commenting that the language integration did not make their work “harder in any way”. Nonetheless, they were able to see the significance of team period work for less proficient speakers. It could be argued that the confidence in speaking English might have been linked to the fact that students could use the language the way they personally wanted. As explained by Larsen-Freeman (2000), the language in project learning is dependent on the nature of each separate task, letting students affect the way language is eventually used. Thus, such work might encourage students to use the foreign language more actively, resulting also in improved self-confidence in speaking. As explained earlier, oral EFL course book exercises might focus on particular grammar or vocabulary, making students practice speaking on these predetermined topics or themes. In projects, instead, the less proficient speakers might be able to focus on the mere production of speech by using their existing skills, not having to adapt to new grammatical forms, for instance.

The findings in this section imply that the students of the latest team period considered EFL integration a useful way of practicing speaking English. However, the two EFL teachers had somewhat differing opinions on whether to oblige students to speak more English or not: Niina wanted to spare students from uncomfortable foreign language speaking situations, and Teija regarded compulsory language use as an essential incentive for oral practice. The students in this study seemed to find it necessary to learn to cope with speaking English, and project works were a useful way to practice general speaking in the foreign language. Consequently, it could be implied that students in the team period learn effectively when they must manage with the English language. Based on the student comments, the projects could include obligatory English parts to encourage the speaking of the language.

5.2.3 EFL and English language in contact with other subjects

The two English teachers strongly supported the role of EFL and its applicability with other school subjects in the experiment. The English teachers especially emphasized the possibility of regarding English language as something interconnected with everything else, that it is not merely a separate subject studied in the English class, but it may, indeed, be used as a tool and a resource for studying and learning in collaboration with other subjects. As explained by Kajasto (2015), one of the simplest ways to implement cooperation between foreign languages and other school subjects is to use the language in other classes, even in small amounts. Moreover, Kajasto argues that the cooperation between subjects may enhance students' language awareness on all school levels. In the team period, the English language might not necessarily enter the lessons of other subjects, but it is still linked to them through the cross-curricular projects. The following extracts represent the ideas of EFL teachers on the topic.

(44) Niina: It [EFL in team period] has worked well, to me it seems like now we really do something sensible with the language, so that we're not tied to the idea of English being a subject of its own, but it's a part of this whole thing. [...] it's great that we get to use the language so differently compared to normal courses, so that we can do that one part in a geography task in English, it feels like we are closer to real life and real-life language use, compared to just sitting and studying English in the English class, so that we get to use the language in real situations. That works great and that's what's the best about this.

(45) Teija: Has it been a natural part of the bigger picture... Yes, in my opinion EFL can be theoretically added as a working language. Of course, EFL and Finnish [the subject] are both perfect team period subjects, if we don't have to pay too much attention to the content. [...] so essentially, EFL can be linked to any other [subject], because the English proficiency [of students] is sufficient for that, so for example EFL and music, why not? Not necessarily so that there's a particular course, like ENA5, but EFL overall. If English is used as a working language, we can do anything with it. Sure, if we have to define which course we're using, it limits the work a bit.

As illustrated in the first extract, Niina emphasized the interconnection of EFL and other subjects of the study unit. Based on the comments, EFL in the upper secondary school is normally considered a separate entity, but in the team period, teachers and students are not “tied to the idea of English being a subject of its own”. Niina also implied that the language could be used “differently compared to normal courses”, bringing the study of English “closer to real life and real-life language use”, so that it was not regarded merely as study of linguistic content. The positive experience of the teacher is

summarized in the idea that, in the team period, they “really do something sensible with the language”. Niina’s comments imply that she is not completely satisfied with the way EFL studies in the upper secondary school are normally realized, since the subject seems to be clearly separated from others. Based on her perceptions, students should have opportunities to use the English language more authentically and in “real situations”, and team period has succeeded in this task quite effectively.

The applicability of EFL in cross-curricular work was supported also by Teija, stating that it “can be linked to any other” school subject, also calling it a “perfect team period subject” alongside with Finnish. This argument was based on Teija’s positive perception of students’ English proficiency, and she mentioned that, “theoretically”, English could be “added as a working language” in the study of other subjects. However, as discussed already in section 5.1.4, English was not used as the working language in team period, and probably such strong approach might be difficult to implement in general upper secondary schools. Indeed, the Finnish education system already provides an IB Diploma Programme, offering students second-degree education in the English language (Mäkelä 2020). Thus, it can be discussed whether it is meaningful or necessary for general Finnish upper secondary schools to offer such strong language integration studies.

Furthermore, it must be stated that Teija’s optimistic vision of EFL integration concentrated on the overall interconnections between different subjects, and the course-based integration was found a slightly more complicated issue. As she mentioned, “it limits the work a bit” if they must define which particular courses they are using in cross-curricular work. This is the exact case of team period work, where 4 different subject-specific courses are integrated under the same study unit. Thus, even though team period work was welcomed and positively experienced also by Teija, she would find the creation of cross-curricular work easier if there was less emphasis on the study content of individual courses.

Both English teachers mentioned that the combinations of subjects have worked well in the study units they have participated in. As explained earlier, EFL has been integrated into team period work alongside with subjects such as Finnish, geography and social studies. According to the teachers, these experiments have been successful since the teacher teams have been able to find meaningful interconnections between the participating subjects. Thus, even though Teija (extract 45) defined EFL and Finnish (and literature) as examples of “perfect team period subjects”, the potential of cross-curricular work might, in fact, be considerably influenced by the collaborative planning work of teachers, and not only by the simple nature of different school subjects. However, as mentioned in the introduction chapter to team period (3.2), subjects such as mathematics and physics have been consciously left out of the team period. Moreover, chemistry was included in the very first implementation in 2017, but the attempt did not result in further experiments with the subject. Even

though team period has not been piloted with every school subject, the four-year span has provided teachers with experience on the applicability of different subjects in cross-curricular work. Thus, EFL as a subject has been found suitable for this type of work, since it has been included in the team period each year since the first experiment.

In the interviews, the English teachers also expressed their support to other forms of cross-curricular work. In effect, in relation to the upper secondary school curriculum reform of 2021, the teachers in the school have been asked to design possible subject-combinations for smaller cross-curricular study units. Whereas the team period consists of 4 or 5 subjects, these new experiments might integrate courses of two subjects into smaller and more easily manageable entities. Both English teachers stated that they would be willing to participate in creating and teaching such units, and moreover, as illustrated in the earlier extracts, they highlighted the aspect that EFL can be combined to almost any other school subject.

When the overall EFL integration was discussed with the students, the consensus seemed to be that the subject was suitable for cross-curricular work, providing something new to language studies. Most of the interviewees stated that they could not come up with any particularly negative perspectives concerning the EFL integration, and instead, it was considered a meaningful extra feature providing variety for the team period work. Some positive student comments are presented in the following extracts:

(46) Student G: Well English is kind of a global language, so it is really useful for everyone, and the fact that it's included in this – that we get to practice speaking and interacting in English – that's really helpful in everyday life. So, it has been a big positive thing. [...] so, we become a bit more fluent with the language, that we learn context and stuff like that, so it's not just individual words but we learn to produce sentences that are fluent and understandable.

(47) Student H: Well, at least for me English is quite easy, so it has been a nice and a bit easier theme alongside everything else. And then, on the other hand, it has also provided some diversity and variety for the realization of the projects.

(48) Student F: In my opinion, it's nice that it [EFL] is still in this, I don't know if it would be less interesting if we only had geography or that kind of subjects, so EFL brings some variety in there. By and large, I think it's good that we have a foreign language as one of the subjects: it makes it more interesting, and the fact that we speak it a lot, that's a positive thing.

The above extracts demonstrate that students considered EFL as something that promotes the diversity of team period work. In extract 46, Student G highlights the effect of EFL integration on

learning English, an aspect offering students a possibility to practice “speaking and interacting” in the foreign language more than usual. Moreover, the student mentioned the importance of such practice for “everyday life”. This comment aligns with the teacher experiences, as the EFL integration was considered to bring the foreign language studies closer to real-life language use. The second student (extract 47), instead, focused on the affordances of EFL in the weekly projects, reporting it to bring more “diversity and variety” to cross-curricular work. Finally, in the third extract, the difference between EFL and other subjects is emphasized, as the foreign language was argued to make the whole team period work “more interesting”. Here it must be noted that the student made a clear distinction between EFL, and subjects such as geography. Arguably, students might regard the study of foreign languages different from that of other school subjects: EFL does not have to be necessarily studied from the book, but it can be learnt by using it in different contexts, and this seemed to be an aspect that was positively welcomed by the students in this study.

One of the teachers in this study also brought up the idea of foreign languages as tools. Instead of focusing on the language as the object of study, the teacher implied that team period work might allow students to view the English language from another perspective:

(49) Niina: Maybe at the back of my head there's this idea that English language is a tool. So that we could make it more natural for the students to use English that way, like, we could study natural disasters just fine in English, too. Because it feels so artificial that we have this separation, so that now we study grammar and some specific texts on specific themes in the course book. And often these themes or topics are something that are at least touched upon in some other subject's course or lesson. So maybe the idea of using a foreign language as a tool is somewhere a bit underneath the surface, even though it's not a topic we have brought up or discussed together [with team period teachers].

As suggested by Niina, the separation of EFL and other school subjects is something she has found quite “artificial”. As illustrated in the extract, a great amount of EFL content is at least slightly related to the themes studied in other subjects, and according to the teacher, this could be taken into consideration more in language learning. Moreover, Niina mentioned that the idea of English language as a tool is “at the back of her head”, or “somewhere a bit underneath the surface”. Even though this perspective has not been explicitly discussed with other team period teachers, Niina had found team period work to somewhat support her vision. Indeed, according to Nikula (2005:54), in the EFL classroom, the language itself remains the main object of study, and the use of language as a tool may be a part of more integrative options, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Moreover, in the Finnish upper secondary school context, it is essential to comment on the

role of matriculation examination on this issue. This subject-specific final testing of Finnish general upper secondary school significantly influences teaching, since it lays emphasis on the distinct study contents of each separate subject. Consequently, the whole school system has been criticized for its subject-centeredness, as it focuses on preparing students for these final exams (Salmenkivi 2013). Considering this organization of upper secondary studies, the separation of EFL from other subjects seems inevitable at this educational level, and thus, cross-curricularity does not theoretically coincide with this organization, per se. However, team period experiment has functioned well, stimulating the system in a new way, offering learners a chance to view English language as something else than a mere object of study.

Overall, the English teachers and students interviewed in this study considered the team period work and EFL integration a positive experiment. The study unit provided teachers with new working methods, promoted the learning of English-speaking skills, and brought EFL into contact with other upper secondary school subjects.

5.3 Challenges of EFL integration in the team period

Although the team period was mainly praised, there were also some downsides or challenges concerning the English studies and the EFL integration, and these issues are presented in this section. In the first subsection (5.3.1), the time restrictions and lack of diversity of team period studies will be explored. The second subsection (5.3.2), instead, focuses on the problematic role of EFL as a team period subject. Finally, the EFL grading in the study unit is commented on in section 5.3.3.

5.3.1 Time restrictions and lack of diversity of EFL studies

One of the challenges of cross-curricular work is designing the schedule, especially in this case, when the unit is constructed around normal lessons and weekly projects. Evidently, the reduced number of formal EFL lessons has obliged teachers and students to cover the course content faster than usual. The first English course of upper secondary school concentrates on covering and revising contents that have already been studied on earlier school levels, especially concerning grammar. Nonetheless, even though this kind of a recap course enables the integration of EFL into cross-curricular work, the reduced number of lessons might still influence the teaching and studying. As the interviewed teachers mentioned, some contents must be consciously left out if they cannot be adequately

integrated into the weekly projects or into the small number of subject lessons. Certainly, this is a normal procedure also in other courses, since the whole course book is rarely studied thoroughly, but in the team period work, the essential contents must also be covered on a faster pace. Niina reported this to be one of the problematic issues from the student perspective, especially in the case of learners who struggle with their English studies. The following extract demonstrates this point of view:

(50) Niina: One of the downsides must be that there's so much less actual teaching, so, do the weaker students get the support they need? [...] in a normal course it is easier to pay attention to them and give support simply because there's more time to do that. So that is a downside that makes me worry a bit.

According to the comment above, time restrictions might complicate the practice of differentiated instruction ('eriyttäminen') in the team period EFL lessons, at least compared to the possibilities in normal EFL courses. Thus, the teacher speculated the impact of faster study pace inflicted by team period structure, worrying if some students do not "get the support they need". Indeed, when the amount of formal teaching is reduced almost into half of usual, it is logical to discuss the effect of cross-curricular work on learning. In Cantell's research (2017: 238), Finnish class teacher and subject teacher students were asked to comment on the pros and cons of cross-curricular studies, and some of the concerns of the respondents were related to the fulfillment of curriculum objectives. Since cross-curricular work aims to break the subject boundaries, the subject-specific study contents are not necessarily covered as thoroughly. Especially in the Finnish upper secondary school where each separate course has its own curriculum description and study objectives, it seems essential that the subject-specific course contents are not neglected on grounds of cross-curricularity. Moreover, already the existence of team period's subject lessons implies that cross-curricular projects are not considered a sufficiently effective study method to cover all the necessary contents. From the PBL perspective, at least Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2005) and Mitchell et al. (2009) have found that EFL lessons dedicated to PBL work cover less content compared to traditional teaching and study methods (Krajcik and Blumenfeld 2005; Mitchell et al. 2009). In traditional EFL lessons, learners may cover grammar, vocabulary and different themes more diversely and extensively, whereas PBL focuses on linguistic content related to the project and its outcomes. In the team period the projects have not yet been accredited by the teachers as the only study method, and the subject lessons are included to fill certain gaps. However, at least according to Niina's comments, this might still not be enough for the "weaker students".

Even though the course contents are covered more rapidly than usual, the teachers in this study stated that students do get to practice all the necessary language skills, but not quite as extensively as in

other EFL courses. The teachers reported that the EFL studies in the team period are designed to include practice of a wide variety of language skills, but there simply is not enough time for everything. For instance, the teachers reported that vocabulary and grammar have been thoroughly studied, and that students have had chances to practice their writing and speaking skills. As explained earlier, the whole team period work encourages students to work in groups, and this team perspective has been visible also in the English lessons. Thus, the communicative aspect of language learning has become especially evident since the use of English has not been restricted to the EFL classroom, but the students have demonstrated this competence also in their weekly projects. However, the English teachers mentioned that the practice of skills such as listening comprehension and reading comprehension have been somewhat disregarded simply because of the time restrictions, as illustrated in the following extracts:

(51) Niina: Well, it [EFL studies] is not completely comparable to normal EFL courses. For instance, we've only had a few listening comprehension exercises, so the students haven't had a chance to show their skills in that area, and the same with reading comprehension, too. I personally felt that they get to study vocabulary, writing and oral production quite diversely. But it cannot be compared to a normal course, different areas are not covered as extensively.

(52) Teija: At least according to their [students'] feedback, they said to have learnt a lot, so I guess I'll have to believe that. I do believe that we fulfilled the objectives of the course. And were some [language] skills practiced less? Well, maybe listening comprehension... or actually maybe not even that, because they got to listen to each other's project presentations [in English]. So it just happened in a different form, not through the exercises of the book, but authentically, sure with different accents, but still.

Niina suggests in the first extract that the team period studies do not necessarily promote an equally diverse set of EFL skills as normal English courses, as “different areas are not covered as extensively”. Indeed, this issue has been regarded as one of the downsides of project-based learning in the EFL context (Krajcik and Blumenfeld 2005; Mitchell et al. 2009). Even though PBL might promote the learning of authentic English and offer new affordances for language use, the diversity of linguistic content might be disregarded compared to traditional EFL lessons. However, this is once again an aspect that depends highly on the depth of EFL integration, since the EFL teachers in the team period may plan it the way they personally feel adequate. As illustrated in extract 52, Teija mentioned that her students indeed had a chance to practice their listening comprehension, since they followed their classmates' presentations in English. This topic was also discussed with the students of the latest team period. When students were asked how diversely they had practiced different

language skills, they did not necessarily respond in relation to actual skills, but instead, focused on the lack of certain exercises:

(53) Student G: Well, at least we didn't have any like listening or reading comprehension exercises, so those have been kind of left out.

(54) Student D: In my opinion we didn't have that much listening comprehension, but the vocabulary has etched on my mind since we had some tests on them.

(55) Student E: We didn't have any listening comprehension exercises, like "listen and answer the questions" kind of things. So, we have listened to some texts [from the course book] and read them, but actual listening comprehension, I don't think we've done that.

As shown in the student comments, the lack of listening comprehension exercises was mentioned several times in the interviews. It is interesting that students did not explicitly mention not having learnt listening skills, but the comments focused on highlighting the fact that they did not complete exercises directly aimed at the practice of such skills. Moreover, when discussing the topic, students might have associated listening comprehension only with the studying occurring in the formal EFL lessons. As mentioned earlier by Teija (extract 52), listening comprehension has been an integrated part of cross-curricular projects when students have presented their works in English. This aspect might be difficult for students to realize, and such presentations are not necessarily considered language learning situations, even though this potential exists. Arguably, students might not be fully aware of all the learning possibilities occurring in project work, especially if they are oriented in categorizing language skills according to different types of exercises, which might indeed happen in EFL lessons. Even though the interviewed students had acknowledged the practice of English-speaking skills during the team period, the natural byproduct of listening comprehension was not similarly clear.

5.3.2 Defining the role of EFL in the team period

Earlier in this thesis, subchapter 5.2.3 focused on the new and positive features that cross-curricular work has provided to the study of EFL in the focal upper secondary school. In addition to the successful experiences of EFL integration, some critical perspectives on the topic were also presented, focusing on the undefined role of EFL in the overall team period work.

When discussing the influence of team period in studying and learning English, the interviewed teachers reported that the study unit promotes the same skills as the ENA1 course would do at any

rate. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the teachers highlighted the role of the National Core Curriculum (NCC 2015) in the team period planning. However, even though English-speaking skills may not have been initially defined as a general focus point of the study unit, the practice of these skills has become evident in the project works. As illustrated in the following extract, the team period has aimed at promoting general English skills:

(56) Teija: What kind of learning objectives... well those were always marked in the project assignments, there we stated what English skills were practiced each time. We wrote them down when we realized what [parts of the project] was linked to EFL. [...] So the objectives of the ENAI course. And yes, general objectives of language learning too, so anything that was even slightly related to the EFL subject we wrote it there. We had to write them [learning objectives] clearly so that the students understood what they're actually learning, because at some point they questioned it, asking why we do this when this leads them nowhere, so we wrote them down. And I think the objectives were fulfilled pretty well, especially the communicative aspect, and performing.

These comments suggest that the focal English language skills in each project were determined only after the creation of a general project design. In other words, no task was designed with particular English skills in mind, but instead, the team period work is to contribute to the learning of wide-ranging language skills. As Teija reported, they tried to establish links between the tasks and the EFL subject in order to define the skills their students get to practice each week, and “anything even slightly related to the EFL subject” was written down. This is a notable finding from a theoretical point of view since the weekly projects cannot be compared to PBL implemented in the foreign language classroom. While team period projects are based on multiple school subjects and their interplay, project-based learning may focus explicitly on the study of a particular subject, such as EFL. Ultimately, the learning objectives of the two project approaches are quite different, since team period studies cannot focus solely on EFL learning, but the attention is laid on other subjects, too.

Furthermore, as illustrated in the above extract, the EFL skills and focal points had to be “clearly” presented to the students in the project assignments. According to Teija, this was a conscious decision, averting students from questioning the role of different subjects in the projects. This statement implies that students have had difficulties in perceiving and identifying subject-specific learning areas or skills practiced in cross-curricular work. This might be understandable especially in the case of foreign language subject’s integration if the language itself is not necessarily used in the projects.

Consequently, when the EFL aspect of project works was discussed with the students, the topic generated some intriguing comments. Even though no interviewee was against the integration of EFL

into cross-curricular work in general, the overall role of the subject was questioned by some students. The most sceptic comments laid emphasis on the little amount of English language in the actual weekly projects, and consequently, the students expressing this view considered EFL to be in a significantly smaller role compared to the subjects of geography or Finnish language. This issue is demonstrated in the following extract:

(57) Student I: Well it [EFL] has felt like it was a bit forced, so if I think about the first task where we had to make some kind of a board game, in the criteria they only said that there has to be an activity in English. But it hasn't played a big role in the weekly tasks, so actually they've been mostly about geography. [...] Here it has felt like okay, we can put English there if we want to, but it doesn't really matter. [...] Sometimes it has been so that, even though I personally would have wanted to do some projects more in English, in the team there are people who are not so excited about using it, then we're in a situation where I ask if we could do this part in English and everyone else is like "maybe not".

Effectively, the interviewed student did not feel obliged to integrate the EFL subject as strongly into the projects, and consequently, it had not “played a big role in the weekly tasks”. In fact, the student had found the projects to mainly consist of geography. Moreover, the optionality of English use seemed to cause disagreements in this student’s team, since the other members were not similarly “excited about using it”. As the student reported, his personal willingness to use English was not enough to motivate other team members to stronger integration. Certainly, this whole cross-curricular work is based on teamwork, and the completion of projects is influenced by the collective decisions made in each team. As shown in the extract, if most team members were not eager to use a foreign language, the whole completion of projects happened most likely in Finnish.

When discussing this topic with students, there were individuals who expressed their support to stronger EFL integration. According to these students, the subject could have been more present in the projects especially in the form of spoken English language use. About a third of the interviewed students argued that the optionality made it too easy to neglect the foreign language, and consequently, they would have wanted it to be more explicitly required in some projects, as is shown in the extracts:

(58) Student B: At least in my opinion in the weekly tasks we could have had some parts that must be done in English. Because in these that we had, it was optional, and I guess using English does not give anything extra, when it comes to the assessment. For example, last week when we did the news video, in the project assignment there could have been something like “include an interview

in English”. So in our group I think one team did something in English and everyone else in Finnish.

(59) Student A: [...] like you said that last year they [students] had to make all kinds of presentations each week [in English], I’ve started to feel like I could have developed it [EFL part] more in this whole thing. In a way, since I knew that English will be a part of this, I expected, mentally prepared myself for having to present something in English in front of the whole class. So, in my opinion, some weekly projects could have been made in a way that we spoke more English, but then, I don’t know, not everyone would like that.

In the first extract, Student B states that the use of English might be more readily adopted if it was clearly defined in the project assignments. The student provided an example of the news video project, where only “one team did something in English”, whereas others used Finnish. Indeed, to some students the optionality does not necessarily appear as an encouraging feature, but it might even have an opposite effect, enabling the complete omission of English language. Furthermore, the student mentioned that the optionality is not always a compelling option, especially if the use of foreign language does not benefit the team in the assessment. As shown in the second extract, experiences of older students from earlier years had affected Student A’s expectations on the team period work and the role of English language in it. This student stated that she had already “prepared” herself for performing in English, and eventually, argued that the language use should have been more present. This interviewee was certainly aware that all the students might not agree with this opinion, but implied that the EFL part could be further “developed”.

When discussing the topic of language optionality, it is also reasonable to mention some experiences from the preceding team period. The stronger integration implemented in the 2019 team period caused some students to express strong feelings against the English language use. Based on my own experiences of teaching in the team period in the fall of 2019 when English language was an essential part of every team project, some students were against the constant use of the language, as this obligation seemed to set some restrictions for the work and make the performing part a more unpleasant experience for some students. Nevertheless, there were also students who found such integration a positive feature, forcing them to open their mouths and to start using the English language more than before. Here it must be highlighted that in the present study there were no student interviewees who had participated in the above mentioned 2019 team period, and these comments are merely based on the feedback I personally received during the study period in question. However, regarding the experiences from different years, it can be concluded that the use of English language in the team period work has its supporters and opposers in each implementation, and a generally

satisfactory integrational approach may be difficult to design. As Teija mentioned, obliging students to use a foreign language “sure might evoke complaints”, but it may also encourage them towards more active spoken language use.

In the light of the student comments, it is essential to reflect on how to motivate students to integrate the English language more firmly into their work. As argued before, the optionality of the foreign language might naturally make its role less obvious in the projects. According to Hayes (2010), student authority may have its pros and cons: on one hand, it allows them to become more autonomous and less dependent on the teacher, but on the other hand, this circumstance also facilitates the omission of undesirable working methods. Consequently, it might be a natural decision for some learners to disregard the use of English in their projects, and thus, the objectives of the whole EFL integration should be determined with this circumstance in mind. Even though this study was not aimed at comparing students’ learning results in the team period, it could be argued that the teams integrating English language into their work might benefit more from the whole study process. After all, if the student teams decided not to use English in their projects, their English studies would have mainly consisted of the EFL subject lessons.

In addition to the language use, in some projects the subject integration might have consisted of other EFL-related aspects, such as culture or language awareness. This topic divided students’ experiences, since some of them regarded these possibly less obvious EFL perspectives also important, whereas according to others, the EFL role seemed to diminish considerably:

(60) Student G: Well the presentation and the story, in those ones we didn’t really use English, but in the evaluation criteria from the EFL perspective was like, ‘how does the refugee learn the language’. So although it has been a part of it, we haven’t spoken English that much ourselves, but the subject [EFL] has always been included in there in some way.

(61) Student I: In every project assignment we’ve had instructions like, the Finnish part is that we have to use appropriate language and good grammar, and the geography something like we have to cover these specific topics. The English part might have been that we have to think what’s the place of English language in this. So, for example, in our refugee story we only said that the refugee learnt English during his flight, and that he uses English in his new home. So if that’s the EFL part, then it’s quite trivial.

Both extracts deal with the same weekly project where the teams had to tell the story of a refugee. As illustrated in the first extract, Student G stated that the EFL part was clearly present and noticeable even if they did not speak the English language themselves. Thus, this student considered the EFL integration as a larger phenomenon, consisting of more than just the language. In the second extract,

Student I affirmed that the EFL part was indeed explained in the project assignment, but ultimately, the role of the subject did not convince him. Once again, EFL was compared to the other subjects in the cross-curricular work, by emphasizing its “trivial” role in the project.

When presenting teachers’ approaches to EFL integration in section 5.1.2, Niina mentioned that her vision was to add the subject into suitable places according to the possibilities found in each project. When relating these comments to the ones in extract 61, it seems that EFL has indeed had a minor role in some projects. At a general level, it is interesting to discuss what kind of a role a foreign language subject may even achieve in cross-curricular work, since already earlier in extract 57, student I mentioned that the projects had been “mostly about geography”. Unfortunately, this topic was not discussed with the EFL teachers, and thus, their opinions about the balance of different subjects cannot be presented here. However, the ‘geography dominance’ mentioned by the student is a good example showcasing the problem of foreign language subjects. In EFL focused PBL, the ultimate objective of project work is to improve students’ language knowledge and skills since the focus relies on the language itself. However, it seems that none of the team period projects were centered around the EFL subject, but instead, at least geography was perceived as the core of certain project works. Earlier in this thesis (chapter 5.1.2) it was mentioned that all the participating subjects did not have to be equally present in each project, but eventually, it seems that EFL might have been the one to leave the most room for other subjects.

Based on the findings in this section, it could be deduced that finding a relevant role for EFL and the English language in team period work was problematic in the focal school. Arguably, for some students, the EFL integration would be more obvious and recognizable if the English language were defined as a basic component of project works. Even though the optionality of using English was supported by some students in this study, and many teams had integrated spoken English into their projects (discussed in section 5.1.4), this approach had left the EFL role in cross-curricular work somewhat unclear.

5.3.3 Disproportionate influence of weekly projects on the EFL course grade

Even though several student teams had integrated English language concretely into their work, there was no general view or agreement over the effect of this decision on grading. In fact, some students had thought that using English might give them extra points in the assessment, which, however, was not necessarily true. Indeed, another problematic issue related to the role of EFL seemed to be the

share of team projects and their influence on students' personal EFL course grades. Among the interviewed students, there were individuals who regarded this balance quite incoherent, especially if the English language was not firmly present in the weekly projects. As explained earlier in this thesis, 60% of a student's EFL course grade was determined by their achievements in personal English tasks, and the remaining 40% were earned in the projects. Since the integration of English language in the projects was not always obligatory, this partition of percentages was considered disproportional by some students. The following extracts portray this point of view:

(62) Student B: I can't really see the English part in them [the projects]. If someone told me for example that I got 70% of the geography grade from the projects, I would totally understand that since it has been such a strong feature, but the English share could be something like 10%.

(63) Student C: I do know how much they [projects] affect the grade, but in the weekly projects there's really quite little English and some [teams] have none. So yeah, when it comes to other subjects, sure, but it shouldn't have to affect the English grade so much because there's so much more to them [the projects] than the English skills.

(64) Student E: Yes, if we have English there [in the project]. Or I mean, in some weekly tasks I haven't even needed any English so that makes me kind of question why it then also affects the English grade if I don't use the language.

As can be deduced, the little amount of English language in the projects made some students question the grading system used in the team period. In the first extract, Student B regarded the geography part of projects sensible and more significant, while stating that the EFL share in the grading "could be something like 10%". The second extract shows a similar perception of unfair grading since English skills were found only a minor component of the overall work. Finally, the third student questioned the grading system as she had not explicitly used any English in some projects.

The above comments imply that the personal English course tasks could be emphasized more in the assessment since, in those tasks, students may show their language knowledge and skills more explicitly than in the projects. Even though majority of the interviewed students had used English in their teams' work, the value of these projects in relation to their English grades was not considered fitting. In general, the interviewees stated that during the English course, they had chances to demonstrate their skills in various activities and assessed tasks, and the share of these tasks in relation to their English grades was considered more logical and easier to comprehend. According to some students' comments, the grading system was not particularly unfair since the team projects were generally successful, and thus, they contributed positively to the English grade as well. Despite this

beneficial aspect, students would have decreased the influence of the projects on the English grade, considering the level of EFL integration in the cross-curricular work.

The topic is indeed an interesting one, since the grading system might benefit the weaker English learners, and by contrast, impede the proficient students from obtaining the best possible EFL course grade. As the students argued, EFL was not always strongly present in the projects, but still, every work contributed to the assessment of the English course. The whole idea of cross-curricular studying in upper secondary school context is challenging exactly because of the course system. Since the subject content is divided into smaller study entities, courses, also the EFL proficiency is assessed separately in each individual course. Consequently, if there are teams and students who do not use English in their cross-curricular projects, it could be argued that the team period course grades cannot be objectively compared to students' other English grades, even if the cross-curricular work was successful otherwise. Moreover, the other way around, the students and teams using effort to integrate the English language into their projects might not ultimately gain any benefit by doing so.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The objective of the present study was to form an understanding of how EFL has been integrated into cross-curricular studies in a Finnish upper secondary school. During the four-year span of team period work, EFL has remained one of the core subjects of the study unit, and the aim of this thesis was to provide an insight on the practical role of the EFL subject and the English language in it. In addition, the study aimed to explore what kinds of affordances and challenges such work has brought forth from the EFL perspective.

The motivation for choosing the topic stemmed from my personal experiences as a team period English teacher in the fall 2019. Team period as a study experiment is still relatively new, and due to lack of earlier research on the topic, the current thesis presents one of the first inspections on cross-curricular work at the upper secondary school level. Compared to Finnish basic education and its compulsory Multidisciplinary Learning modules (MLs), cross-curricularity in Finnish upper secondary studies is still a bottom-up practice of the focal school of this study. The present study aimed to provide an overview of the study unit and its subject integration, focusing on the role of EFL. Consequently, the objective was to provide answers to the following research questions: firstly, 1. *From planning to implementation, how EFL and English language are integrated into cross-curricular instruction as part of the team period arranged in the focal upper secondary school?*, and secondly, 2. *What have been the affordances and challenges of EFL integration from the perspective of teachers and students?*

Before responding to these questions, I will first briefly characterize the team period as a particular form of cross-curricular instruction. Based on the findings presented in this thesis, and concerning the level of integration, the team period cannot be placed under one particular integrative approach. First, the study unit cannot necessarily be defined as a transdisciplinary one. According to Drake and Burns (2004), a transdisciplinary approach to integration enables the teaching and learning to be based on student questions and interests, thus providing learners with a chance to examine larger entities without clear subject-specific boundaries. Certainly, this does not occur in the team period, where the structure and design are planned by the teachers, and since the whole unit is organized around specific and predetermined school subjects. Instead, the study unit seems to be closer to the definition of interdisciplinary integration. In the projects, the students get to combine the contents and knowledge of different subjects into larger cross-curricular entities, similarly contributing to the learning of interdisciplinary skills (Drake and Burns 2004). However, it is also possible to find characteristics of multidisciplinary integration. In multidisciplinary integration, a topic or a theme is studied separately from the

perspective of various subjects, contributing ultimately to a broader understanding on the theme. The team period includes traditional lessons in all the participating subjects, which, in an ideal situation, are linked to the cross-curricular projects. However, the lessons are also aimed to cover the essential subject-specific course contents that are not present in the projects.

The analysis in this thesis showed that, each year, the planning of EFL integration is partly a collective task of the team period teachers, but also highly dependent on EFL teachers' personal visions. When designing the weekly projects, the whole teacher team works together, trying to integrate aspects from various subjects into these cross-curricular tasks. The projects are to combine elements not only from different subjects, but from precise individual courses, which makes the planning process a challenging task for the teachers. Furthermore, the study unit includes normal EFL lessons which are planned personally by the EFL teachers similarly to any other upper secondary school English course, and their content follow the ENA1 curriculum description.

According to both teachers and students, the formal lessons were found to follow the same structure and working methods as ordinary EFL lessons, and thus, the cross-curricular working methods did not enter the EFL classroom. Indeed, based on the findings of this study, it can be argued that the interconnections between EFL lessons and cross-curricular projects were not completely clear to the students. Despite the efforts of teachers in linking these components together, the students had considered the lessons to be somewhat separate from the overall cross-curricular work of the study unit. Teachers and students use a normal EFL course book also in team period studies, and this starting point may already set some restrictions for the work, since the book is not necessarily aimed at such cross-curricular ambitions but is instead used to meet the objectives of the course-specific curriculum. Authentic EFL materials were piloted by one of the EFL teachers already in 2017, and this experiment had been found considerably more time-consuming and challenging, but also rewarding. The constraining role of the textbook is a noteworthy topic when discussing the future development of team period, since the use of authentic materials might possibly improve the connection between formal EFL lessons and team projects. If the lessons were always built upon authentic materials effectively related to the project topics, students might have a stronger background for integrating explicit language use into their work.

A key finding of the present study is that EFL teachers play a pivotal role in the integration process. Firstly, the analysis showed that the two EFL teachers had neither discussed team period work together, nor shared their materials with each other. Secondly, the teachers seemed to have differing approaches of EFL integration, resulting also in distinct roles of English language use in cross-curricular work. One of the teachers considered English language an essential part of each project

work, whereas the other did not find such approach similarly fundamental. These comments illustrate the nature of team period as a non-standardized study experiment that may be realized in various ways. Arguably, this alterable nature of team period work has its pros and cons. On the one hand, the lack of clear guidelines or regulations concerning EFL integration – or that of any other subject – provides teachers with more freedom in the planning process. The teachers have a chance to invent and create projects without focusing too much on the separate roles of each participating subject, thus promoting the cross-curricularity of the work, and enabling the learning of interdisciplinary skills in addition to subject-specific ones. On the other hand, this undefined role of subjects and the lack of regulation or shared standards may imply that students study and learn different things in each team period. Surely, the whole study unit is still based on the objectives of the curriculum (NCC 2015), but the experiences of team period studies might be considerably different each year. Especially the level of English language integration is an intriguing topic, since the two teachers had quite differing approaches to this issue. Evidently, if one year the EFL integration consists of explicit English language use in each week's project, and the next time the projects are realized mostly by using Finnish, the learning outcomes could prove out to be quite distinct. In the end, individual EFL teachers and team period teacher teams might perceive curricular objectives somewhat differently, and thus, it might be reasonable to determine certain EFL-specific learning objectives for the overall team period work.

In this study, the affordances of EFL integration in the team period were divided into three main themes based on the interview data: affordances for EFL teachers, promotion of spoken language skills and confidence in speaking, and the contact of EFL with other team period subjects. From the teacher perspective, team period work had given them a chance to step out of their ordinary working routines, challenging their creativity and providing them with new professional roles. These findings align with the theories of inter- and transdisciplinarity, as well as with outcomes of project-based learning, where teachers function as instructors and students as the driving force of the learning process (Bell 2010; Drake and Burns 2004). Despite a greater workload, team period was considered an educative experience that had shaken up the routine of EFL teachers' common course-based work. When discussing the advantages of EFL integration on language learning, both the teachers and students unanimously declared the practice of spoken language use as one of the main affordances of cross-curricular work. The projects offered learners a chance to practice general and 'everyday' English, encouraging students of all proficiency levels to speak the foreign language. Consequently, it could be deduced that project work allowed students to use English according to their own skills, and the language was brought closer to general or practical use. According to the students, this spoken

practice taught them to get by with the language without relying too much on their mother tongue since they could decide what kind of language to use and how. Finally, an overall affordance of team period work was that EFL was brought closer to other school subjects, so that it was not considered solely an object of study but also a tool for learning other subjects. Indeed, theoretically, the idea of cross-curricularity does not coincide with the subject-centered organization of general upper secondary school studies, but the team period as a study experiment has been a functional way to promote the interplay and connections between school subjects.

In addition to the positive aspects, it was also essential to examine the challenges of EFL integration. One of the challenges was caused simply by the organization and schedule of the studies, since the study unit must be realized with a smaller amount of specific EFL teaching. This compromise of weekly projects and subject lessons may affect the study process of weaker EFL learners since the course contents are studied on a faster pace. Furthermore, the time restriction has affected the practice of certain English language skills, as the lack of listening and reading comprehension was mentioned as a downside of team period studies. Another noteworthy challenge was related to the grading system used in the team period, since students' EFL course grade was influenced by both the project works and the individual EFL course tasks. Since EFL and the English language were not always considered essential parts of cross-curricular work, the proportional influence of the projects on the EFL grade was found overestimated.

Finally, even though team period had brought EFL closer to other subjects, its role in the overall team period work was found a problematic topic by the students. As discussed in the analysis, even though EFL was considered a functional component of cross-curricular work, the students had found the EFL part of the projects quite minor compared to that of some other subjects. These experiences were mostly due to the optionality of English language use in the projects, even though the EFL integration was not restricted merely to this linguistic aspect. These findings not only lead us to discuss the role of EFL, but also the role of foreign language subjects in cross-curricular work in general. As found already by Koskinen-Sinisalo et al. (2020), the integration of foreign language studies has not been a preferred option in the implementation of MLs of basic education. In this study, the two EFL teachers had positive experiences on integrating their subject into team period, and they seemed to have a clear perception of the role of EFL in the overall work. However, this vision was not similarly present in all the student interviews. Indeed, it seemed that none of the team period projects were centered around the EFL subject, whereas geography was considered the core of content learning in cross-curricular work.

A development proposal would be to amplify the EFL role by defining English as the working language of the projects, or at least to determine certain parts of them to be realized in the foreign language. As argued by Redchenko (2016), in order to strengthen and develop students' language skills, the foreign language should be integrated to all project phases. Since many students seemed to relate EFL integration to explicit language use, working in English continuously throughout the study unit would make its role more obvious for them. Ultimately, however, this topic must be discussed while considering students existing language skills. After all, first year upper secondary students cannot be expected to abruptly adopt English as their only working language, and implementing such an approach might prove out to be controversial.

The present study must also be commented on from a critical perspective. Firstly, owing to the nature of a case study, the findings presented in this thesis cannot be generalized to describe cross-curricular studies in Finnish upper secondary schools: the present study focused merely on one specific school and its approach to team period work. Moreover, even though a qualitative study and interview as a study method provide the researcher with detailed and in-depth information on the studied topic, the analysis process is characterized by the researcher's personal interpretation. As argued by Saldaña (2011: 97), different researchers may process the same interview data in various ways, resulting in diverse categorizations or representations for analysis. In this study, for instance, the grouping of affordances and challenges of team period work are based on the conclusions drawn personally by the researcher.

The participant group included two EFL teachers and 11 upper secondary school students. The teachers were selected on account of their experience in the team period, but the student participants were picked arbitrarily from a list of volunteers. In the interviews, the students were not asked to describe their English proficiency, but the topic surfaced spontaneously almost on each occasion. Most of the 11 interviewees reported to be proficient learners of English, and this finding must be considered when discussing the findings of the present study. Since the student participants were chosen based on their own willingness to participate, it could be argued that the study topic mainly aroused interest among the above average EFL learners. This starting point might have resulted in a lack of perspective from students of different English proficiency levels, and consequently, the student comments presented in this study might have generated a biased overview on EFL integration.

The conclusions of the present study generated several interesting ideas for further study topics. As argued in the study, EFL integration in team period has been realized in different ways depending on the participant teachers. Thus, in order to construct a more comprehensive understanding on team period work and its effects, it would be essential to explore how students have experienced the EFL

integration each year. Since this cross-curricular study unit has been realized in four consecutive years, a comparative study on student experiences might be helpful in defining the EFL integration and its development during this period of time. Even though the teachers in this study provided some views on the team period development, it would be essential to compare how different integrative approaches have affected students' experiences, and possibly even their learning results. As already discussed, some students in this study might have wanted to increase the EFL role through spoken language use. In earlier team periods, instead, students had performed significantly more in English, and their experiences could be essential in defining how and to what extent the language should be integrated into projects.

The team period as a cross-curricular study unit is not implemented exclusively in the focal school, but in some other Finnish upper secondary schools, too. Despite this distribution of the concept, academic literature related to the term *team period* or the Finnish *tiimijakso* remains non-existent. Thus, cross-curricularity in the upper secondary school context seems a prolific area for further investigation. As mentioned in this thesis, the focal school of the present study has developed the study unit according to their own interests and visions, however, according to the objectives of the core curriculum (NCC 2015) and the General Upper Secondary School Act of 2019. These premises imply that the team period might be implemented in various ways in different Finnish upper secondary schools, and the study of different variations could provide us with a better understanding of the range of possibilities of EFL integration. Effectively, EFL has been an essential part of team period work in the focal school, having been included in each year's study unit, but its role in other cross-curricular experiments is yet to be studied.

The challenge of the present study concerned the definition of team period's integrational aspect, and thus, this thesis does not necessarily present a comprehensive examination of the theoretical approach to team period studies. As reported in the introductory section on the study unit (4.2), the experiment seems to be based on various pedagogical approaches such as the concepts of *cross-curricular learning* and *project-based learning* (PBL), but integrative language studies could be similarly studied as *phenomenon-based learning* (PhBL) or *content and language integrated learning* (CLIL), for instance. Even though the idea of integrative language learning might be most relevantly related to CLIL, the focal school has not yet defined the team period EFL studies in such a way. Thus, when forming the theoretical framework for the thesis, I considered PBL the most logical approach since the integrative nature of team period work becomes apparent exclusively in the weekly projects. As mentioned in this thesis, the formal EFL lessons of the period have not provided anything new to

language studies, but it has been through the projects that students have brought the EFL subject and English language in contact with other school subjects.

As presented and discussed in this thesis, EFL integration may be implemented in various ways, providing new perspectives to English language learning all the same. However, the EFL subject and English language in cross-curricular studies are topics that are not yet conclusively defined. The present study has shed some light on the phenomenon, drawing attention especially to the possibilities of cross-curricular language learning in upper secondary schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The interview sheet for the responsible team period teacher

1. What is team period?
 - What is it based on?
 - What is the theoretical background for team period?
 - Who participate in it?
 - How often has it been implemented?

2. How is team period work designed and planned?
 - Who participate in the planning?
 - What is the role of individual teachers?
 - How are the subjects chosen?
 - How has EFL established its place in team period?
 - What does the unit comprise of?

3. What are the learning objectives?
 - How are the objectives defined?
 - What kind of objectives do separate subjects have?
 - What kinds of cross-curricular skills are to be learnt?

4. What kind of working methods are used?

5. What kind of experiences are there from previous years?
 - What has the teacher and student feedback been like?
 - How has the study unit been developed throughout the years?

Appendix 2: The interview sheet for the EFL teachers

1. General questions on team period

- How did you end up participating in team period?
- Did you have any earlier experience on similar cross-curricular experiments?
- What kind of an experience has team period been to you as a teacher?
- How does team period fit in the upper secondary school studies?

2. Planning and implementing the EFL part

- What has the EFL planning been like?
 - i. Do you plan the EFL part by yourself or in collaboration with other team period teachers?
 - ii. Do students participate in the planning process?
 - iii. Are there any instructions or assistance to help in the planning work?
 - iv. What have been the pros and cons of planning? Successful experiences or challenges?

- How is the EFL subject integrated into team period work? How is it studied?
 - i. What is the role of EFL lessons?
 - ii. How EFL is integrated into the weekly projects?
 - iii. How are the ENA1 course contents covered?
 - iv. How is the EFL part assessed / evaluated?
 - v. What is the role of EFL in collaboration with other subjects?

- What kind of working methods are used in the team period EFL studies?
 - i. What kind of materials are used?
 - ii. How do the students study English (in teams, individually, in pairs...)?
 - iii. How would you describe the work (teacher-led lessons, individual work...)?
 - iv. How do the team period working methods promote the studying and learning of English?

- How is the English language used in the team period?
 - i. Is it present in everyday work or occasionally?
 - ii. Is English used as communicative language or as a tool in the study of other subjects' contents?

- In which ways do the other team period teachers participate in the EFL part / instruction?

3. The affordances and challenges of team period in teaching and studying of EFL

- What kind of study or learning objectives does the EFL subject have?
 - i. Any focus points?
 - ii. How / to which extent have these objectives been fulfilled in your opinion?

- How does team period differ from traditional work?
 - i. What kind of pros and cons in teaching and studying English?
 - ii. How are different language learning areas covered? Does some area become highlighted or neglected?
 - iii. What kind of new working methods you have had to adapt to as a teacher? What have you learnt professionally?
 - iv. What kind of a role have you had during team period work (teacher, instructor, guide...)?

- In what different ways students may demonstrate their language skills and knowledge in team period?
 - i. How diversely?
 - ii. In which ways does team period work encourage students to use English language?
 - iii. How does students' English competence affect their performance in team period studies?

- From the EFL perspective, what have been the positive and successful experiences?
 - i. And what have not?
 - ii. What has been challenging?

- How does EFL as a subject fit in team period?
 - i. What kind of new ideas for cross-curricular collaboration have you gained from team period work?
 - ii. With which other subjects could EFL be studied?

- What kind of feedback you have gotten from the students?
 - i. Pros and cons?
 - ii. What has been learnt in the team period?
 - iii. How have you reacted and responded to the feedback?

Appendix 3: The interview sheet for the students

1. General questions on team period

- What did you know about team period beforehand?
- What kind of an experience has it been?
 - i. What has been studied and how?
 - ii. How does it differ from traditional schoolwork?
- Had you had similar study experiments in basic school?
 - i. What differences do you find when comparing them to team period?
 - ii. Was EFL included in them?
- What has worked well in the team period, and what has not?
 - i. Something you have liked more or less?
- What have you learnt during the team period?

2. EFL subject and English language in the team period

- How has English been studied in the team period?
 - i. What kind of a role does it have?
 - ii. How is the subject and the English language included in the weekly projects?
 - iii. How has your team used English?
 - iv. How is the English part evaluated? What kind of works do you do?
 - v. Are there some pros and cons in the way English is studied in team period?
- How has team period work supported you English studying and learning?
 - i. Has it provided something new to the language studies?
- What kind of language skills have you practiced in the team period?
 - i. Is there something that has been highlighted or something that has been paid less attention to?
 - ii. What kind of language skills have you learnt?

Appendix 4: Original Finnish interview extracts

(1) Niina: No pääosinhan se on minun suunnittelusta kiinni, mutta kyllä me sillä tavalla yhdessä on tehty, että saattaa joku sanoa että voisko tohon laittaa sitä enkkua tai käviskö se tohon tai mitäs aattelet tosta. Että ei se oo ihan täysin minun käsissä. Ja niinku muittenki aineitten osalta, esim. äikän osalta että voitasko lisätä äikkää tälleen tai käviskö tämä äikkään? Yhdessä me niitä aatellaan.

(2) Teija: Joo se oli totta kai aina yhdessä, kaikki viikkotehtävät suunniteltiin aina yhdessä, kaikkien opettajien kanssa. Ja sitte joskus piti ihan sanna se ääneenki nyt tää enkku pitää saaha laitettua sinne. En se aina ollu minä joka keksi miten enkku saahaan sinne, se oli joskus joku muukin.

(3) Niina: Tästä poden vähä huonoo omaatuntoo koska yleensä tykkään antaa sen mahdollisuuden että ainaki jotaki voidaan päättää, mutta tähä on ehkä vaikuttanu se että ku tämmönen työskentely ei oo samalla tavalla rutiinia ku normikurssin pitäminen. Nii ehkä se opettajalle tuntuu vähä että pysyy paremmin langat käsissä kun sen päättää ite, ja toisekseen esim ne kappaleet nii ne on ihan tietosesti valittu että mitkä kappaleet valitaan että mikä passaa viikkotehtäviin.

(4) Teija: Oppilaat ei todellakaan vaikuttanu suunnitteluun tai rakenteeseen, kyllä suunnittelin ihan itse. Tässä on yksinkertaisesti niin paljo liikkuvia osia mukana.

(5) Niina: Niin se on nyt ku meillä on neljä semmosta arvioitavaa viikkotehtävää, nii niissä kolmessa enkku on, yhdessä ei ollu ollenkaa kunnon enkun osuutta. Mut kolmessa oli silleen että mitä sinne pystyy ujuttamaan semmosta mikä ei mee ykköskurssin kannalta liian vaikeeks. [...] eli siellä on jotain semmosta mitä on pystyny tekemään englanniksi tai semmonen jokin aihealue ihan suoraan liittyy englannin kurssiin. Niin sitä kautta enkku on ollu mukana. [...] me aateltiin että kaikkien aineiden ei tarvii olla kaikessa mukana, että sitte on ollu myös semmosia missä äikkä tai mantsa ei oo ollu niin vahvana.

(6) Niina: No sillä tavalla niitten viikkotehtävien osalta minä otin aika löysin rantein, totesin että ei se oo niin nuukaa, kuhan sitä johonki saahaan. Minä ajattelin sen näin että me pystytään tällä kielellä tekemään ihan mitä vaan. Mutta kun se on 1. kurssi, nii ei voi olla mitään hirveen vaikeeta sanastoo, mutta sitä aina pystytään soveltamaan silleen että ajatellaan sen sopivan ykköskurssin sisältöön, että se ei mee tasoltaan liian vaikeeksi. Nii en silleen halunnu liikaa jämähtää että mitä nyt pitää tehdä ja mitä ei pidä tehdä vaan aattelin että katotaan minkälaisia tilaisuuksia sinne aukenee ja laitetaan se enkku sitten niihin ja mietitään se silleen sopivaksi.

(7) Teija: ... mut joo, kyllä minä halusin että se todellakin on jokasessa viikkotehtävässä ihan selkeesti mukana, en antanu yhenkään osion mennä ohi ilman että ettäkö oisin työntäny (enkun). Niinku vaikka se ensimmäinenki tehtävä, olihan se ehkä vähä kömpelösti siellä että ”miten työelämässä tarvii kielitaitoa”, ja yks piti esitellä englanniksi. Se nyt oli vähän väkisin väännettyä,

mut se oli silti kuitenkin siellä, joskus se voi olla silleen mutta entä sitten, ei se haittaa [...] nii en jättäis todellakaan viikkotehtävistä pois, pitäis olla ihan näkyvä ja selkeä osa joka ikinen viikko.

(8) Niina: Tässä just näkee sen että tää on niin tekijänsä näköstä, että mä en edes tienny et se on ollu niin isossa roolissa aikasemmin. Nyt ehkä vaikutti se että kun niitä enkun tunteja oli enemmän ku ennen, niin minä koin kyllä että ehin ihan rauhassa ottaa ne enkun sisällöt. Ja kun me kerettiin tunneilla käyä ihan hyvin tekstejä niin mulla ei ollu semmosta että nyt se enkku pitää aina saada sinne viikkotehtäviin.

(9) Niina: Mää koen että ne enkun opetunnit on ollu ihan tavallisia enkun tunteja, et silleen ne ei oo ollu nimeonomaan ”tiimijakso enkun tunteja”, vaan ihan normaaleja.

(10) Teija: Miten tiimijakson opetus eroaa? No ei ne opetunnit eroa millään tavalla normihommista, vähä ehkä tiiviitä tietysti, vähä hoppua siinä, mutta siinäpä se. [...] osin ne on opettajajohtoista, että mää puhun ja opetan, ja sitten he pääsee harjottelemaan. Ei siinä ollu mitään erikoista opetunneilla siis.

(11) Student A: Enkusta meillä on ollu mun mielestä aika paljo semmosta niinku ihan normaaliopiskelua, et ollaan niinku oltu tunnilla ja tehty just niitä kirjasta tehtäviä ja käyty ihan näitä kielioppiasioita läpi. Et sitä ei oo niin kauheesti ollu näissä viikkotehtävissä ja muissa mukana, mut tällä viikolla oli esim. se enkun video. Mutta muuten se on ollu semmosta aika niinku tavanomasta lukiomeininkiä, että sitä ei ehkä nii sulavasti oo sulatettu tähän tiimijaksoon niinku esim joku mantsa tai äikkä.

(12) Student B: [...] joo ja must tuntuu et se on semmonen itsenäinen suoritus tai erillinen se enkun kurssi, et meillä on testejä ja ollaan oltu tunneilla ja sitte on ollu lisää kokeita [...] nii mun mielestä aika samanlainen mitä yläkoulussa, että siellä käytiin teoriaosio ja sitte sen jälkeen oli tietyt tehtävät ja silleen.

(13) Niina: [...] sillan ekalla kerralla ei ollu kirjaa ollenkaan, elikkä sillan tehtiin kieliopit semmosena tehtäväpaketina, ja sitten noita sanastoja varten minä etsin heille valmiiksi, mää tein vielä niin valtavan työn, että mä etsin aiheisiin liittyvä artikkelit tai uutiset tai vastaavat tekstit netistä, ja vielä silleen että oli helpompi ja vaativampi. [...] Kyllä mä olin hirveen tyytyväinen lopputulokseen mutta huhhuh, kyllä se myös työllisti. [...] sillan mä en tajunnu ihan että mitä kautta mä saisin niitä kirjan tekstejä sidottua niihin viikkotehtäviin.

(14) Niina: [...] lähtökohtasesti se on sitä että työskennellään sen tiimin kanssa, ja puhutaan, koska sitä se oikeestaan vaatii se kielen opiskelu siihen rinnalle aika vahvana, sitä kommunikointia. Nii silleen se on ollu ihan samanlaista niinku enkun tunneilla, et ne istuu niissä tiimeissä ja tarkoitus on tehdä yhdessä ja työstää yhdessä.

(15) Teija: Se oli parityötä niinku tunneillakin usein, joo, se oli ihan normi lukion käyntiä, joka ainaki minun tapauksessa tarkoittaa että on aika paljo suullista pareittain. Mut totta kai, ryhmän sisällä ne sitä teki, käytännössä pareittain, istuvat ehkä niissä samoissa asetelmissakin jopa. Mutta se oli kumminki ehkä enemmän parityötä, ja sitte taas yksilöinä oli ne tunnin ulkopuoliset tehtävät eli yksilötehtävät.

(16) Student C: Ainaki yläasteelle verrattuna niin tosi paljo vähemmän on semmosia keskustelujuttuja ja semmosia, ja sit taas tosi paljon kielioppia ja tehtäviä, vähemmän ihan keskustelemista ja semmosia konkreettisia harjoituksia. [...] että oikeestaan englannissa ei oo oikeestaan millään tunnilla tehty mitään semmosia töitä, niinku vaikka keskusteluja ryhmässä, vaan ne kaikki on ollu vaan sitä opiskelua. Että se on ehkä tullu sitte noihin viikkotehtäviin se osuus.

(17) Student D: No, ihan perus enkun tehtäviä sillee että opettaja on opettanu ja sit ollaan tehty tehtäviä, mut sit on ollu aika paljo suullisia tehtäviä parin kanssa. Mut mä en sit tiiä onkse vaan sen tapa opettaa ylipäänsäkin, että on paljo suullista harjottelua vai onko se nyt tän tiimijakson takia silleen.

(18) Teija: Ei ei, se on vaan enkun tunneilla kun laitetaan se nappi päälle että ”noni nyt hoidetaan asiat englanniksi”. Mutta eihän ne tietenkää jos ne tekee viikkotehtävää joka on pääosin suomeks, niin vaikka ne lukis tai käyttäs jotaki englanninkielistä matskua, nii ei se tuu siihen puheeseen sillä tavalla siinä työskennellessä.

(19) Student E: Joo siis meinaan, että sitä ei oltu niinku määritelty että sun pitäs tehdä tälleensä, joku englanninkielinen osuus tässä, vaan se on silleen että tässä on vaihtoehtona tämmönen [...] mutta sit se että jos sä et käytä sitä, nii ei tuntunu siltä että sä olisit tehny väärin. Ja sit se on ehkä vähä helpompi – jos se on vaan vaihtoehto – niin tarrautua siihen suomen kieleen, että ei tarvii lähtee miettiä silleen ylimäärästä.

(20) Student C: [...] joskus siellä on ollu joku asia mikä enkusta pitäs tulla siihen mukaan, ja esim. me ainaki otettiin yhteen videoon, että siinä oli semmonen englanninkielinen haastattelu. Ja sit on ollu muita semmosia, että joitain osioita ollaan puhuttu englanniks. Nii me ollaan otettu sitä mukaan, mutta ei kaikilla oo ollu. Eikä se oo ollu silleen pakollinen ainakaa.

(21) Student F: Tavallaan mun mielestä enkku tuo niihin joihinki tehtäviin semmosta aitoutta, just esim. jos on joku pakolainen jostaki menny vaikka USA:an, nii se saattas tuntua vähä oudolta jos se puhuis suomee siellä. Nii se tekee niistä töistä todenmukasempia.

(22) Student E: Esim. mantsaan se tosiaan sopii kun puhutaan jostaki toisesta kansallisuudesta. Nii sit on se ihan selkeetä että siinä puhutaan englantia kun ei jossakin muualla asuvat osaa suomee niinku me sitä puhutaan. Niin sillee se on ihan selkeetä että käytetään enkkua.

(23) Teija: [...] olin jo niinku aikasemminki huomannu ihan sattumalta, että esim. jossain kulttuurikurssilla vaikka käyään aika samoja asioita mitä äikässä käyään vaikka kirjallisuudesta ja runoudesta, että kyllä se tieto oli olemassa, mutta ei sitte ikinä oo kerinny kattoo sen rajan yli. [...] kun nyt oli enkkul ja äikkä2, niin muissaki kohissa on niitä yhtymäkohtia, että potentiaalia ois siihen rajan ylitykseen muulloinki, mutta ku ei vaan oo aikaa [...] eikä toisaalta teoriassa mistään voi tietää mitä toiset tekee. Ja nyt se tosiaan aukes että minkälaista on äikän opettajan työ ja minkälaista yhteiskuntaopin ja näin, että miten se sitte heijastuu siihen omaan.

(24) Niina: No onhan nää ollu hyvin avartavia kokemuksia, eihän mulla enkun opettajana tulis tehtyä yhteistyötä vaikka mantsan opettajan kanssa, [...] et tämmönen työskentely ravistaa niistä rutiineista pois et ei voi vaan mennä semmosella autopilotilla. Että pitää tosissaan miettiä asioita ja se on hirmu virkistävää että niitä pitää miettiä ja saa miettiä, ja tosiaan kyllä paljon avartaa omaa näkemystä.

(25) Teija: No siis mulle se oli semmonen opettajakorkeakoulu, vähä niinku toinen opettajakoulutus ihan liiottelematta. Eli siinä oppi suunnittelemaan tehtäviä jotka tosiaan soveltaa jo suoraan sitä mikä omassa OPSissa on [...] ja sitten kun alko yhistäämään niitä aineita toisiinsa, niin siinä ikään ku aukeni tavallaan myös se että mitä sillä kurssilla on tarkoitus oppia, muutaki ku se että mie käyn sen kirjan. [...] Ja sitten kun siinä porukan kanssa pureskeli niitä ideoita ja muutteli ja sovelsi ja mietti että miten mie saan survottuu sen oman oppiaineen sinne, nii kyllähän se oli todella opettavaista ja luovuus oli koetuksella. Ja oli niinku paljon haastetta, mutta älyttömän palkitsevaa mun mielestä.

(26) Niina: En oo ihan varma millon oon ihan ekoja kertoja teettäny suullisia tehtäviä, ainaki niitä oon sen jälkeen teettäny enemmän. Sit varmaan noi sanastotyöt myös, et niitä ainaki oli käytössä jo ennen sitä, mut se niitten ohjeistus koko ajan vähä laajenee, nii niitäki oon käyttäny sitte koko ajan enemmän.

(27) Teija: No siis ainaki se semmonen arviointimatriisin luominen. Että osaa luoda tehtävän vaikka omasta päästä ja sitte miettiä ja määrittelee että mitä haluat että oppilaat tekee, ja sitte arviointi siihen. Siitä on ollu iha sikana hyötyä että tajuaa että minkä tahansa tehtävän voi arvioida niin.

(28) Teija: Joo olin enempi silleen ohjaajajana, ja semmosena avustajana siinä. Aika itsenäisesti ne teki niitä töitä, toki niillä oli kysymyksiä välillä. Ja sitte siinä aikataulun ylläpitäjänä määllä sillä tavalla että nyt pitäis olla tämmöstä ja tommosta [...] nii kyllähän se sitte ohjaamista ehkä on ollu enemmänki. [...] en välttämättä kertonu miten joku asia pitäis tehdä vaan enempi sillee että ”ehkä kannattaa kiinnittää huomiota tohon”. Ja eihän mullakaan tietenkään ollu suorita vastauksia kun ne tehtävänannot on niin avonaisia, eihä mulla voi olla vastauksia.

(29) Niina: No kyllä se selvästi enemmän on semmosta ohjaamista ja lähinnä semmosta vaihtoehtojen hakemista. Jos siinä porukka miettii että no meillä on vähä tämmönen ongelma tässä, nii mietitään heiän kanssa että mitkäs heidän vaihtoehot nyt on: voisko he lähtee tommoseen tai tommoseen suuntaan vai keksivätkö vielä jonkun toisen? Et lähinnä semmosta tilanteiden avaamista ja sitä kautta ohjaamista. Välillä ehkä joissakin tilanteissa enemmän sitte semmosta opettajan roolia, esim tossa yks porukka halus semmosen loppukevennyksen heidän uutisvideoon [...] nii siinä piti kyllä ottaa ihan semmonen opettajarooli ja käydä vielä läpi uutisen rakenne ja selittää mikä tässä on aiheena ja voiko tämmösen laittaa loppukevennykseen. Mutta pääosin ohjaamista.

(30) Niina: Ei oo sellasta ollu paljoo, että lähinnä sellasia tehtävänantoon liittyviä kysymyksiä että pitkö tää nyt tehdä näin vai noin vai mitenkä. Mutta ei sellasia kysymyksiä mitkä menis siihen kielen käyttämiseen että voiko sanoa näin vai pitääkö sanoa noin. Ehkä sillon ekalla kerralla sitä oli enemmän, mutta se sitte taas saatto johtua siitä että sillo oli enemmän niitä tehtäviä missä sitä enkkua oli.

(31) Teija: Olihan se ihan järettömän raskas, varsinki se ensimmäinen kierros kun me luotiin ne tehtävät. Ja varsinki ku tiimijakso jo alko eikä meillä kaikki loput tehtävät ollu vielä ees valmiina nii olihan se kova. Että sitten kun oli mukana toista kertaa ja sai parantaa niitä olemassa olevia tehtäviä, nii sehä oli kiva. Että siinä mielessä kelle tahansa soisin sen vaihtoehdon että osallistuis useemmin kuin kerran, se syvenee se kokemus siinä ja ymmärrys. Ja myös että pääsee omille jäljille, muokkaamaan ja parantamaan omaa aiempaa työtä, arviointikriteerejä, tekee niistä selkeempiä. No haasteista, kaipa ne oman luovuuden rajat, mitä keksii. [...] totta kai se oli työlästä, hidasta ja vaikeeta se tehtävien keksiminen, mutta se oli todella palkitsevaa myös, eihän kaiken tarviikaan olla helppoo.

(32) Niina: Tää koko homma on muuttunu hirveen paljon, huomaa sen että tätä on nyt tehty. Vaikka ei pysty kaikkea suoraan sellasenaan käyttämään niin on semmosia erilaisia runkoja on valmiina, on kokemusta siitä mikä toimii ja mikä ei, on ajatusta siitä miten sitä aikataulua kannattaa pyörittää, Et nyt on hirmu paljo valmiina verrattuna siihen ekaan kertaan kun tehtiin ihan tyhjästä, ihan täysin tyhjästä.

(33) Teija: No siis enkku tuli tavallaan suullistettua vahvasti. Opiskelijat laitto palautteessa, että englanniksi esiintyminen vahvistu heillä koska sitä tuli niin usein, käytännössä joka kerta. [...] vähän oli kielteistä palautetta mutta ei sitte nii ratkasevasti. Päinvastoin tuli hyvää palautetta lopuks että 'tulipahan puhuttua enemmän enkkua ku ikinä', ja julkisesti, että siihen tuli heillä itsevarmuutta. [...] ja varmasti se pieni pakko siinä on saanu ne ylittämään ne tiettyjä kynnyksiä, mitä ne ei ehkä muuten ois uskaltanu. Et jos sen antaa vaihtoehtona nii varmasti suurin osa skippaa sen ihan vaan siks.

(34) Teija: Toki sieltä tulee taitavat puhujat paremmin näissä tehtävissä esille. Mutta ei sekään taas sitten oo toisilta pois, ei se vaikuta niitten englannin numeroon sieltä. En ikinä aatellu sitä silleen, vaan että se on bonusta, eli arvioin aina vaan niitä tuotoksia, tuloksia. Et tietysti, jos ois ottanu arviointikriteerit että tässä tehtävässä teidän suullinen taito arvioidaan... mutta eihän me silleen tehty.

Musta se olis ykköskurssille aika kova juttu tehdä, varsinki luokan eessä. En ikinä laittas niitä tekemään silleen.

(35) Niina: [...] nii mä sitte aattelin sitä että ei se kyllä sitä heidän englannin opiskelua tue että he joutuu siellä toisten silmien alla suorittamaan englanniks, tai he joutuu kahtoo itteensä kun ne videolla puhuu englantia, että se vaan tuntuu pahalta. Ja en halua heitä siihen tilanteeseen laittaa, et tuntuu että kyl siihen se heidän tukeminen pitäs lähtee ihan toista kautta. [...] Monelle on jo tosi iso kynnys mennä luokan eteen ja puhua suomee ihan, saati sitte että siinä kieli vaihtuu. Se voi olla kova paikka.

(36) Student A: No aina kun se on ollu meillä jossaki tehtävässä nii sitte me ollaan niinku, tai se on periaatteessa ollu vapaaehtosta sillee, nii ei se mun mielestä oo ollu kauhee ongelma. Onhan se nyt tottakai vaikeempaa ku suomen kieli mutta [...] se on vaan ollu vähä semmonen ekstra juttu siellä, että sitä ei oo välttämättä käytetty niin paljo, nii ei me olla sitä silleen stressattu

(37) Student E: Enkun tunnilla jos meillä on joku suullinen paritehtävä, niin siinä jotenki on vaikee pelkästään yhtäkkiä lähtee puhumaan sitä englantia kun se on vaan semmonen ohimenevä nopee tehtävä. Että jos varsinki ei oo hirveesti aikaa, niin helpompi sanoo se sama äkkiä suomeks ja jatkaa sitten englanniks. [...] ja se oli kiva käyttää sitä [englantia] tossa tehtävässä koska normaalisti ei nyt hirveesti silleen arjessa pääse puhumaan englanniksi, niinku normaaleja keskusteluja englanniks. Nii ehkä jos ois enemmän sen tyyppisiä keskusteluja, ei niinku mitään arviointimielessä, vaan että voitais vaan harjotella keskustelemista, koska kielessä on aika tärkeitä että osaat puhua sitä kieltä ja mitä opettelet.

(38) Student J: No me aina ollaan harjoteltu [puhumista] kirjan kautta, niinku vaikka sanoja ja kielioppia, mutta kyllä mun mielestä ainaki niinku parhaiten oppii just silleen puhumalla. Niin sitte just se on ollu hyvää tässä [tiimijaksossa].

(39) Student A: Se puhumine on just tässä korostunu että on, siis tunnilla ollaan luettu jotain tekstejä kyllä, mutta sitten näissä on tullu just semmosta yleistä kielen käyttöä, että pystyt sujuvasti tuottamaan puhetta [...] semmonen ehkä ihan niinku arkipäivän englanti, että pystyy puhumaan, siis englanniks käymään semmosta normaalia keskustelua, semmonen niinku käytännön.

(40) Student E: [...] se pakolaisen tukiryhmä tai tämmönen missä piti keskustella englanniks joku 5min ryhmän kanssa nii se oli jotenki selkeempi että siinä koko ajan puhuttiin englantia. Ja sit sun piti pärjätä sillä englannilla että sulla ei ollu sitä suomen kieltä tukemassa. Että ehkä siinä just oppii paremmin jos sun pitää pelkästään käyttää sitä, tai et se on tarkemmin määritelty että sä käytät pelkästään englantia niin sä opit pärjäämään sillä ja hyödyntämään niitä taitoja mitä sä oot jossain aikasemmin oppikirjassa oppinu.

(41) Student D: No ite oon ainaki paljo enemmän niinku puhunu englantia tai että tuntuu että varsinkin yläasteella ei ollu niin hirveesti mitään puhumistehtäviä englannista niin nyt on puhunu tosi paljon englantii silleen [...] mut enmä tiiä onko meillä nyt sitte mitenkää erilainen toi enkun kurssi kun toi on eka enkun kurssi lukiossa että onko aina just ton verran tehtävää ja saman tyyppisiä tehtäviä. Mut esim ku meillä oli se ryhmässä puhuminen siitä katastrofista englanniks nii se oli ainaki kiva ja ei ollu ennen tehty koulussa semmosta että pitäis just vaikka joku 5min niinku päästä keksiä ja puhua niinku tilanteessa.

(42) Student C: No ehkä etuna mun mielestä silleen että ei sinänsä vaikeuta tai helpota, mutta etu semmosille jotka ei hirmu hyvin puhu englantia tai ei uskalla puhua englantia, niin ainaki monelle mun ryhmäläiselle on tullu tosi paljon rohkeutta puhua englantia kun ollaan tehty, puhuttu niissä töissä englantia. Tullu sellasta rohkeutta, se on niinku huomannu et se on kehittyty.

(43) Student G: Kyllä, mun mielestä just se että tulee puhuttua sitä enkkua ja käy just keskusteluja ryhmässä. Se on kyllä varmasti tosi hyödyllistä varsinki niille joilla on vähä vaikeuksia ääntämisen tai puheen muodostamisen kanssa. Ja se ei oo ainakaa mitenkään vaikeuttanu mun omaa työskentelyä.

(44) Niina: Se on onnistunu hyvin, mun mielestä tuntuu että nyt niinku tässä tehään jotaki järkevää tällä kielellä oikeesti, että me ei olla sidoksissa siihen että enkku on erillinen oppiaine vaan se on osa tätä kaikkee muuta. [...] on hienoo et kun sitä kieltä pääsee käyttämään nii eri tavalla kun normikurssilla, et me voiaan tehdä sitä mansan tehtävää ja sit siellä on se yks osa mikä tehään englanniks, et tuntuu että ollaan lähempänä oikeeta elämää ja oikeen elämän kielenkäyttöä kuin se pelkästään englannin oppitunnilla istuminen ja enkun opiskelu, että päästään käyttämään kieltä ihan oikeissa tilanteissa. Se onnistuu tässä hyvin ja se on minusta tässä ihan parasta.

(45) Teija: Onko se ollu luonteva osa kokonaisuutta... Kyllä, mun mielestä enkun voi teoriassa ympätä työkieleks. Totta kai enkku ja äikkä molemmat on ihan täydellisiä tiimijakso-oppiaineita, jos nyt ei tarvii sitä sisältöä hirveesti kattoo. [...] eli siis periaatteessa enkun voi liittää mihin vaan, koska enkun taitotaso lukiossa riittää eli vaikka enkku ja musiikki, miks ei? Ei välttämättä silleen että pitää olla tietty kurssi, vaikka ENA5, mutta enkku ylipäättään. Jos ois englanti työkielenä niin sillä voi tehdä ihan mitä vaan. Toki jos pitää määrittää mikä kurssi sitte on mukana niin se rajottaa vähän.

(46) Student G: No englanti on just tämmöne maailmankieli nii siitä on kyllä tosi paljo hyötyä kaikille, nii se että se on otettu tähän mukaan - se että tulee sitä puhumista ja vuorovaikutusta englanniks - nii se on arkielämässä tosi hyödyllistä. Niin se on ainaki tosi iso plussa [...] niin tulee just sitä sujuvuutta siihen kieleen, että oppii sitä kontekstia ja semmosia, että ei osaa vaan jotaki yksittäisiä sanoja vaan opitaan muodostaa lauseita jotka on sujuvia ja ymmärrettäviä.

(47) Student H: No ainaki mun kohalla enkku on silleen aika helppoo nii se on ollu iha mukava, semmone vähä helpompi aihe siinä kaiken mukana. Ja sitte on se toisaalta niihin viikkotehtäviin luonu semmosta monimuotoisuutta ja vaihtelua siihen toteuttamiseen.

(48) Student F: Mun mielestä se on kiva et se on mukana kuitenkin, en tiä oisko se sit vähä silleen ei niin mielenkiintosta jo ois vaan pelkästään jotain maantietoo tai jotain tämmösiä aineita, mut se enkku tuo vähä jotain erilaisuutta sinne. [...] No kokonaisuutena mun mielestä se on hyvä et on just niinku vieras kieli yhtenä aineena: se tuo mielenkiintosuutta ja just sitä et puhutaan paljo, se on positiivinen juttu.

(49) Niina: Takaraivossa ehkä jyskyttää se ajatus että englantia on väline. Niin että saatas tuotua luontevammaks oppilaille se miten sitä englantia vois käyttää sillä tavalla, että tavallaan, just jotaki luonnonkatastrofeja voitais ihan hyvin opiskella englanniksi. Kun se tuntuu jotenki teennäiseltä se jako, että nyt opiskellaan erikseen kielioppia ja jotkut tietyt tekstit tietyistä aiheista tässä oppikirjassa. Ja sit ne aiheet on monesti vielä semmosia että näitä samoja aihepiirejä nyt vähintään sivutaan jonkun toisen aineen kurssilla tai oppitunnilla. Nii se on ehkä vähä pinnan alla se ajatus siitä että mitenkä kieltä välineenä vois käyttää, mutta ei näitä tosiaan oo tuotu esille eikä oo keskusteltu yhessä.

(50) Niina: Yks haittapuolista on varmaan se että kun sitä opetusta on sen verran paljon vähemmän, niin et saako ne heikot opiskelijat sitä tukea mitä he tarvii? [...] kyllä normaaleilla kurseilla on mahdollista enemmän panostaa ja tukea heitä jo ihan siks että sitä aikaa on enemmän käytettävissä. Et se on kyllä yks haittapuoli mikä mua ainaki huolestuttaa vähäsen.

(51) Niina: No ei se ihan täysin oo verrattavissa normikursseihin. Esim. kuullunymmärtämistä meillä ei nyt oo ku joitaki yksittäisiä harjoituksia vaan, että siitä eivät oo okein päässy osottamaan taitojaan, ja sama luetun ymmärtämisen kanssa. Ite henkilökohtasesti koin että he pääsee opiskelee sanastoo ja kirjallista ja suullista tuottamista melko monipuolisesti kyllä. Mutta ei voi verrata normaaliin kurssiin, eri osa-alueita ei käydä niin laajasti.

(52) Teija: Ainaki niiden palautteen perusteella nii kyllä ne siinä ainaki väitti oppineensa, että jospa siihen pitäs uskoo. Kyllä mää luulisin että aika hyvin kyllä täytettiin sen kurssin tavoitteet. Ja jäikö joku osa-alue vähemmälle huomiolle? No ehkä tämmönen kuullunymmärtäminen... tai oikeestaan ei ehkä sekään, koska kuuntelua tuli sitä kautta kun ne kuunteli toisten esityksiä. Tuli vaan toisissa muodoissa, ei kirjan tehtävien kautta vaan, niinku oikeeta, totta kai murteellista mutta kumminki.

(53) Student G: No meillä ei ainakaa oo ollu mitää tämmösiä kuullun tai luetun ymmärtämisen tehtäviä, että ne on jääny tavallaan pois.

(54) Student D: Mun mielestä meillä oo ollu niin paljoo kuullunymmärtämistä, mutta sanastot on kuitenkin jääny tosi hyvin mieleen ku meillä on ollu sanakokeita tai semmosia testejä niistä.

(55) Student E: No kuullun ymmärtämistä ei meillä mitään tehtäviä ollu, että esim. ”kuuntele ja vastaa kysymyksiin” tyyppisiä tehtäviä ei meillä semmosia ollu. Että kyl me ollaan kuunneltu jotain kappaleita ja luettu niitä mutta ei meillä varsinaisesti kuullunymmärtämistä, ei mun mielestä oo tehty.

(56) Teija: Millasia oppimistavoitteita... no nehä oli toisaalta kirjattu niihin viikkotehtäviin, siellähä me kerrottiin mitä vaikka enkussa taidon osa-alueita harjoteltiin. Me kirjattiin ne näkyviin sitten kun me tajuttiin että mikä millonki liittyy enkkuun. [...] Eli enkkul kurssin tavoitteita. Ja joo toisaalta kielen oppimisen tavoitteita ylipäänsä, että mikä siellä osuu vähänkää enkkuun nii kirjotettiin sinne näkyviin. Meiän piti kirjottaa niitä selkeesti että oppilaat tajuais mitä ne oikeesti tässä oppii, koska jossaki viaheessa ne niitä kyseenalaisti, ne kyseli että miks tehään tämmösiä kun ei nää vie mihinkään, niin kirjotettiin ne auki sitten. Ja ihan hyvin ne tavoitteet mun mielestä toteutu, tosiaan varsinki se kommunikatiivinen puoli, ja esiintyminen.

(57) Student I: No se on kyllä tuntunu aika semmoselta pakotetulta sinne, että jos vaikka miettii se eka tehtävä piti tehdä semmonen jonki sortin lautapeli, nii siellä kriteereissä oli vaan että no siellä pitää olla joku aktiviteetti englanniks. Mut ei se niissä viikkotehtävissä ihan nii hirveen isossa osassa kyllä oo ollu, et ne oikeestaan ollu aikalailla pelkkää maantietoo. [...] Tässä on siis tuntunu vaan silleen että no voiaan laittaa sitä enkkua sinne jos halutaan, mut ei sillä oo ollu oikein mitään väliä. [...] Välillä se on ollu silleen, että jos tiimissä on porukkaa jotka ei oo kovin innostuneita siitä enkusta, niin sit me ollaan tilanteessa että mä kysyn voiaanko tehdä tää osuus englanniks ja kaikki muut on silleen että ”ehkä ei”.

(58) Student B: Mun puolesta ainaki niissä viikkotehtävissä ois voinu olla joku osio mikä pitää tehdä englanniks. Kun näissä nyt mitä on ollu, nii se on ollu vapaaehtonen, ja luulen ettei siitä enkun käytöstä mitään ekstraa kauheesti saanu, niinku arviointiin. Että esim. viime viikolla kun tehtiin toi uutisvideo, nii siinä tehtävänannossa ois voinu ollu joku että ”tehkää joku haastattelu englanniks”. Että meilläki yks ryhmä tais tehdä englanniks ja kaikki muut suomeks.

(59) Student A: [...] just tosta kun sanoit et viime vuonna niitten piti joka viikolla pitää kaikkii esityksiä, nii mulle on ainaki tullu semmone että oisin mä voinu enemmänki sitä enkkua tässä niinku kehittää. Tavallaan, ku mä tiesin että tähän tulee se enkkua, nii mä ootin just, henkisesti varauduin jo siihen että esitellään jotaki enkuks koko luokan eessä. Nii mun mielestä joissaki viikkotehtävissä ois voinu olla sillä tavalla että oltas puhuttu enemmänki englantia, mutta en tiä, sitte kaikki ei tykkäis siitä.

(60) Student G: No se esitelmä ja se tarina nii niissä ei oikeestaan ihan hirveesti enkkua käytetty, mut sit siinä arviointiperusteissa enkun kohalla on semmonen, ”miten se pakolainen oppii sitä kieltä”. Nii vaikka se on ollu osana, että ite ei olla hirveesti puhuttu englantia, mutta kyllä se enkkua jotenki siellä on ollu aina mukana.

(61) Student I: Meillä on ollu jokasen viikkotehtävän ohjeistuksessa jotain, että äidinkielen osuudessa pitää käyttää asiallista kieltä ja hyvää kielioppia, ja sitte maantiedossa että käsitellään nää tietyt aiheet. Enkun osuus on saattanu olla että mieli englannin kielen asema tässä. Että esim. siinä meiän tiimin pakolaistarinassa sanottiin vaan että joo se oppi pakomatalla englantia ja uudessa kodissa käyttää englantia. Nii jos tuo on se enkkuosio, niin on se aika mitätön.

(62) Student B: Nii mä en niinku nää oikein sitä enkun osuutta niissä. Jos mulle sanottais vaikka että mantsan numerosta vaikka 70% tulee viikkotehtävistä nii sen mä ymmärtäisin ihan täysin ku se on ollu semmonen vahva tekijä, mutta se enkun osuus vois olla joku 10%.

(63) Student C: Joo kyllä mä tiän miten se vaikuttaa enkun numeroon, mutta kun niissä viikkotehtävissä on oikeesti aika vähän sitä englantia ja kaikilla ei välttämättä oo yhtään. Että kyllä, muihin aineisiin toki mutta siihen enkkun ei välttämättä tarviis niin paljo vaikuttaa koska siinä on tosi paljon monesta muusta kysymys ku enkun taidoista.

(64) Student E: No siis joo, jos meillä on enkkua siinä. Tai siis meinaan, että kaikissa viikkotehtävissä en oo ees tarvinnu englantia nii se vähä mietityttää että miks tää vaikuttaa myös enkun numeroon jos mä en oo käyttäny sitä kieltä.