

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ACTION-BASED
TEACHING IN EFL CLASSROOMS IN FINNISH LOWER
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman (POPS, 2014) mukaan opetuksen lähtökohtana tulisi olla oppimisen mahdollistaminen monipuolisesti muun muassa toiminnallisilla keinoilla. Kirjallisuuden mukaan toiminnallinen opetus käsittää laajan joukon opetusmenetelmiä, joissa oppijan aktiivinen osallisuus sekä vuorovaikutus tämän ja ympäristön kanssa nähdään merkittävänä oppimiseen vaikuttavina tekijöinä. Toisaalta eteenkin osa suomalaisesta kirjallisuudesta määrittelee toiminnallisen opetuksen sisältävän fyysistä aktiivisuutta, joskus ohittaen oppijan osallisuuden tärkeyden. (ks. esim. Leskinen, Jaakkola & Norrena, 2016.) Koska POPS (2014) ei varsinaisesti tarjoa toiminnalliselle opetukselle määrittelmää, mutta vaatii toiminnallisten menetelmien käyttöä opetuksessa, opettajien tulkintoja toiminnallisesta englannin kielenopetuksesta tarvitaan.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää opettajien näkemyksiä toiminnallisesta englannin kielenopetuksesta suomalaisissa yläkouluissa. Tutkimukseen osallistui yhteensä 27 opettajaa, joista 26 vastasi kyselylomakkeeseen, yksi osallistui haastatteluun ja yksi osallistui molempiin menetelmiin. Aineistonkeruu suoritettiin sähköisesti tammi-helmikuussa 2024. Tutkimuksen tulosten mukaan yläkoulujen englannin kielenopettajat määrittelevät toiminnallisen kieltenopetuksen monella tavalla, kun osa mieltää fyysisen aktiivisuuden vahvasti osaksi menetelmää (ks. esim. Leskinen, Jaakkola & Norrena, 2016), ja toiset keskittyvät oppijan aktiiviseen rooliin. (ks. esim. van Lier, 2007.) Tämä tulos osoittaa, että toiminnallinen opetus tulisi määritellä tarkemmin POPS:ssa (2014).</p> <p>Tutkimuksen osallistujat myös raportoivat käyttävänsä toiminnallisia menetelmiä osana opetustaan säännöllisesti ja uskoivat niiden mahdollistavan oppimisen laajalle joukolle oppijoita. Oppimisen mahdollistamisen lisäksi hyötyinä nähtiin esimerkiksi oppimisen hauskuus ja yhdessä tekeminen. Haasteina ja rajoituksina sen sijaan kerrottiin olevan muun muassa oppilaiden levottomuus ja vaikea käytös sekä ajan- ja tilojenpuute. Niistä huolimatta opettajat suhtautuivat varsin positiivisesti toiminnalliseen englannin kielenopetukseen. Tulokset osoittavat, että toiminnalliseen opetukseen tulisi tarjota opettajille enemmän lisäkoulutusta ja -materiaaleja jo opettajakoulutuksesta lähtien. Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa myös hyödyllisiä havaintoja jatkotutkimuksia varten.</p>	
Keywords action-based teaching, learner agency, English language, lower secondary school	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Action-based teaching is a learner-focused instruction method. The use of action-based methods began in the 2000s (Günday & Delibaş, 2016, p. 146), and it originates from Kolb's (1984) concept of experiential learning in which learning is described to happen through experiencing and interaction with the environment. However, the focus in the action-based approach is on learner agency (van Lier, 2007) in which the learner themselves plan and adjust their actions to enhance their learning process (Aheran, 2001, p. 112), i.e., the learner is an active agent. An active agent can conduct actions that favor them to achieve a certain goal (Aro, 2015, p. 48), such as completing a given language learning task. In addition, interaction between the learner and their environment is viewed as an important factor to learning. In foreign language learning, especially social interaction enhances learning significantly (Ahearn, 2001).

Action-based teaching and learning is mentioned as an important method in the Finnish National Core Curriculum (2014), and it requires the teachers to use the methods diversely in all teaching. Nevertheless, the concept is not defined clearly, and it is up to teachers to interpret the meaning. In addition, literature defines action-based teaching differently: others consider the learners' physical activity as a central concept as others focus on the learners' mental activeness. Finally, action-based teaching has not been widely researched from the perspective of lower secondary school English as foreign language teachers. Therefore, this study can provide new and useful insights concerning the teachers' perspectives of the method in lower secondary schools.

The target group of the study were English as a foreign language teachers (from now on EFL teachers) teaching in Finnish lower secondary schools. All in all, 27 EFL teachers participated in the study, from which 26 answered an online questionnaire. Additionally, one teacher, who also filled in the questionnaire, as well as another teacher, who did not fill in the questionnaire, participated in online interviews. The data was mostly analyzed by using the content analysis method. In addition, questions involving multiple choice answers were analyzed by using various charts.

The study will begin with Section 2 in which I will first briefly present some of the developments that have occurred in foreign language teaching and learning throughout the years. In Section 3, I will discuss the action-based teaching and learning approach by examining the origin of the ideas of the approach. Next, I will define the key terms of this thesis: *learner agency* and *action-based teaching and learning*, followed by an explanation of the teacher's role in action-based teaching as well as examples of action-based tasks. Then, I will present both benefits and challenges of the approach and finally, conclude the section with a brief overview of the approach in the Finnish context.

In the fourth section, I will explain the need for this study in more detail, followed by presenting the data and arguing why I have chosen descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis as the analysis methods of the data. The participants of the study will be introduced after this, followed by the fifth section consisting of the results of the study. I will present the results in the order of the questions of the questionnaire. The sixth section will be the final section of this thesis, and it consists of the implications of the results as well as suggestions for further studies.

2 FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

2.1 Foreign language teaching

In this section, I will present some developments that have happened in foreign language instruction. I will, first, discuss method-centered pedagogies, followed by meaning-focused approaches. Finally, I will consider some reasons on why the pedagogical frame has shifted.

There have been various approaches towards foreign language instruction through the years. Until the 1970s, language was taught by method-centered pedagogies analyzing the content (Germain, 1982, p. 49). One example of this type of pedagogy is the grammar-translation method, in which the focus of instruction is on grammar and memorization of its rules (Järvinen, 2014, p. 171). Thus, the learning of the language occurs mainly through memorization and oral skills are viewed secondary (Piccardo, 2014, p. 9). This method was followed by the audiolingual method in which language is viewed as a reflex-like human behavior (Piccardo, 2014, p. 9). The teaching consists of, for instance, repetition and drilling exercises to enhance memorization (Järvinen, 2014, p. 177), since it was thought that after memorizing phrases the learners could apply them in new situations (Piccardo, 2014, p. 9).

The instruction then shifted from focusing on the linguistic aspects to more meaning-focused pedagogies. According to Piccardo (2014), the idea of communicative competence was one reason for this shift. It was realized that communication is one of the most important aspects of language learning. Thus, the communicative competence approach formed, with the aim being to provide learners with skills to communicate (Piccardo, 2014, p. 9). In the approach, the instruction's purpose is to create natural communication between the learners, focusing mainly on meaning instead of form (Järvinen, 2014, p. 191–192). Moreover, language is seen as a larger concept than just conveying information: it is used to express emotions and be in contact with others, for example (Piccardo, 2014, p. 11).

Another reason for the shift was realizing the importance of language needs. The current idea in foreign language instruction is that the teaching should be planned according to the learners' and the society's needs (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFR, 2001, p. 132; Piccardo, 2014). Furthermore, language instruction is goal-oriented, and the aim is to create language awareness (Alanen, 2006, p. 186). This consists of, for instance, instruction on the strategies and competences a learner needs to complete a task successfully (CEFR, 2001, p. 132). Thus, the learner becomes more aware of the useful strategies, enhancing their learning process (CEFR, 2001). The main goal in language instruction today is for the learners to be able to communicate in the target language by designing instruction relevant to their everyday lives (CEFR, 2001).

All in all, the focus of foreign language instruction has shifted from analyzing linguistic elements to focusing on communication. Instead of the learners memorizing grammatical rules and phrases, for example, they are taught to use the language to express meaning more spontaneously. Learners are taught learning strategies, and the instruction is designed to be more relevant to the learners' lives.

2.2 Foreign language learning

Next, I will move on to present some foreign language learning theories. The theories I have selected share ideas with action-based language learning. I will begin by considering the importance of interaction to language learning. Then, I will point out Krashen's second language acquisition theory, followed by discussing the role of input and output in foreign language learning. I will conclude the section by explaining the significance of the language learning environment and the language learner themselves to the foreign language learning process.

Interaction is the key to language learning. According to Ahearn (2001, p. 111), language is a result of social interaction as participants communicate meaning. Thus, language learning is closely related to the social context. Mick (2015, p. 91) also emphasizes the importance of language learning and its social nature: language learning is necessary for one to become a social actor. They continue that through language an individual can then negotiate access to a language community. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) discuss Vygotsky's sociocultural language theory in which he argues that the individual's learning is mostly determined by the sociocultural context in addition to biological factors. The learning environment has a strong influence on an individual's learning in early stages of life but within time the individual gains independence of their own learning (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

The input-output theory has also been discussed in foreign language learning. In this theory, it is argued that a foreign language can be learned when both input and output of a language are combined (Johnson, 2017, p. 79). Johnson (2017, p. 79) defines input as the language other people use to communicate with the learner, while output is the language that the learner produces themselves. They add that combining both input and output forms communication between language learners, and therefore, interaction is viewed as a significant factor in foreign language learning. However, Johnson (2017, p. 79) also discusses Swain's output hypothesis which views the output of a

language as more important to language learning than the input. Whereas input can be faked, output cannot (Johnson, 2017, p. 79): one can fake understanding on what they have heard but producing language without knowledge is more difficult to fake.

Krashen (1989, p. 10) argues that a second language can be either acquired or learned. He defines language acquisition as a similar process to an individual learning their first language, subconsciously while using the language to communicate. He adds that in this sense, the learner does not realize the learning process and acquired knowledge. Acquisition can, therefore, be perceived as accidental learning. On the other hand, a language can also be learned. According to Krashen (1989, p. 10), it is a conscious process in which the learner is aware of the learning process as well as their knowledge of the language. Thus, language learning usually occurs in educational settings, such as in language instruction, whereas language acquisition occurs while the learner interacts with their environment (Krashen, 1989).

As discussed earlier, the social environment impacts the learning process of a language. The environment also consists of language affordances which can enhance the language learning process. Aalto et al. (2009, p. 405) mention that affordances are functional and linguistic elements in the learning environment that the learner can use as a resource to learn. They continue that the learner might not benefit from all offered affordances but only from those that benefit the learning at the current time. Mäntylä (2021, p. 61) adds that the learner needs language awareness to benefit from the affordances. Therefore, affordances have the most effect when the learners are aware and able to use the offered affordances.

The learners themselves have the most significant role in language learning. First, Aalto et al. (2009, p. 410) point out that cognitive processing is always required to learn a language. Thus, the learners need to actively think about the material being taught to learn it. Second, Piccardo (2014, p. 34) mentions that language learning is always personal since previous experiences and knowledge as well as expectations affect the

learning process. They add that in language learning, the already known languages affect the way a new language is learned. Hence, other languages should be viewed as resources to learning a new language (Piccardo, 2014, p. 34). Finally, Piccardo (2014, p. 34) discusses the importance of the learners' abilities to reflect on their language skills. They continue that acknowledging personal skills and needs of improvement enhances the learning process.

In conclusion, foreign language learning is complex and consists of various elements. Language learning has a social nature, and the learners need to be in interaction with their environment, using both input and output to acquire knowledge. The learners themselves have a significant role to their learning because it is a personal experience affected by, for example, personal skills and previous knowledge. Thus, the learning of each individual is unique.

3 THE ACTION-BASED TEACHING APPROACH

3.1 History of the action-based approach and related approaches

In this section, I will introduce the experiential learning approach. I will discuss the significance of it in relation to the action-based approach. In addition, I will present other related foreign language teaching approaches and briefly discuss the similarities and differences of them in relation to the action-based approach.

Kolb's (2015) experiential learning approach can be seen as the origin of the action-based method (Öystilä, 2003). According to Kolb (2015), his approach has originated from the combination of multiple theories, most significantly Dewey's learning-by-doing theory, Lewin's arguments of the importance of an active learner and Piaget's cognitive-development theory. Öystilä (2003) discusses that Dewey first combined meaning, doing and thinking together in learning in the early 1900s. They continue that Lewin in turn highlighted the importance of the learner's activity in the learning process. Kolb (2015) adds that Piaget's cognitive-development theory is significant to understanding the relevance of the learner in the learning process. According to Kolb (2015), Piaget's theory emphasized the importance of the interaction between a child and their environment, as the child gains knowledge by performing actions in their

environment. Kolb (2015) then combined these thoughts into the approach of experiential learning.

As explained by Kolb (2015), the main idea of experiential learning is that knowledge is gained through experiencing. He continues that learning is a constant process in which experiencing through transaction between the learner and their environment creates new ideas either by reforming or discarding old ideas. He defines that an efficient learner can experience objectively, reflect and create knowledge based on these experiences as well as adapt this gained knowledge later on. Thus, the learner has many aspects to consider, and the learner must swap roles rather efficiently to be an active learner (Kolb, 2015). Furthermore, Kolb (2015) argues that learning is best enhanced when a true purpose for communication occurs and is built on concrete experience and previous knowledge. Kolb (2015) concludes that understanding is a crucial element for one to gain knowledge. Even though experiential learning and action-based learning are closely related to each other, the core of the two approaches differ. While the focus in experiential learning is gaining knowledge through experiencing, action-based learning focuses on the role of an active learner.

The action-based approach closely relates to other approaches as well. For instance, task-based and content-based language teaching have a similar focus, as in all three approaches the goal is to activate the learner (van Lier, 2007, p. 48). Task-based language teaching is a communicative approach in which the main idea is to complete a given task (Hummel, 2014, p. 116), requiring the learners to express meaning instead of focusing on form (Järvinen, 2014, p. 197–198). The content-based approach on the other hand combines foreign language instruction with non-linguistic content, such as an academic subject non-related to language (Lyster, 2018). In other words, while the focus in task-based language teaching is on completing the task, the content-based language teaching focuses on the instruction of another subject, language being learned beside it. Therefore, these approaches focus on creating meaningful ways of

using language that enhances language learning, differing from the learner-focused action-based teaching.

In summary, the action-based approach to language teaching combines various theories on learning and teaching. It contains ideas from Dewey's learning-by-doing theory, Lewin's arguments of the importance of an active learner and Piaget's cognitive-development theory that then are combined in experiential learning. Moreover, it is closely related to task-based and content-based language instruction. Still, the action-based approach differs from the other approaches as an active learner is the center of the approach.

3.2 Learner agency

Now, I will discuss the concept of learner agency. I will first present a definition for the term. Then, I will point out individual factors affecting learner agency. Finally, I will argue the role the environment has on learner agency.

Learner agency is a significant factor in action-based learning. Agency is the individual's ability to plan their actions mentally (Aheran, 2001, p. 112). A learner is viewed as an agent when they initiate, participate and perform actions (Aro, 2015, p. 48). Thus, agency focuses on the learner's activity in their learning process (van Lier 2007). An active agent performs actions suitable for the given context to achieve the goal that has been given to them (CEFR, 2001, p. 9). According to Aro (2015, p. 48), agency consists of the action and effort a learner contributes to gain knowledge, and without these contributions, knowledge cannot be achieved. Hence, learning cannot happen without the learner being present in the learning situation.

Learners themselves affect their agency. Mercer (2012, p. 42) has divided the concept of agency into two dimensions: the learner's perception of their personal agency and the learner's agentic conduct. According to them, the former focuses on the learner's

perceptions of their agency in different contexts while the latter focuses on the learner's possible actions to improve their agency. Learners are never neutral agents (Piccardo, 2014, p. 18) since they have differences in their physical, cognitive, emotional and motivational capabilities, and learner agency contains both visible and non-visible behavior and beliefs (Mercer, 2012). Thus, agency is a result of interaction between the learner and their environment, the learner's perceptions and the way the learner uses these perceptions (Mercer, 2012, p. 41). The learner makes their own interpretations of the given situations according to these factors.

Personal factors affecting learner agency should be viewed critically. Mercer (2012, p. 41, 56) explains that learners must be aware of their personal perception of agency and must also believe that their actions can affect their learning in certain situations. Even so, they note that it should be acknowledged that the learner is not always going to utilize their agency to their best extent due to context, for instance. If the learner does not have tools to reflect on their actions, they may not be able to modify them to enhance their learning (Mercer, 2012). Therefore, educators should be consistent in building up their learners' perceptions of their agency by creating various kinds of opportunities to promote learner agency (Mercer, 2012, p. 56). Concentrating on the learners' understandings of themselves and the language learning process are ways in which enhancing learner agency is possible (Mercer, 2012, p. 56). When the learners become aware of useful strategies to promote learning, they can utilize them to their best extent.

In addition to personal factors, the environment affects learner agency. Ahearn (2001, p. 112) defines agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act". Ahearn (2001, p. 112) continues that all production and interpretation related to action is socioculturally mediated. In other words, the concept of agency is deeply interdependent (Aro, 2015, p. 49), i.e., depending on social interaction. The CEFR (2001, p. 9) discusses the term "social agent" in which the concept of agency is clearly linked with the environment too. As agency is dependent on the environment, at times the learners might

be active but not in the way the environment requires them to be (Aro, 2015, p. 63). Moreover, those, who do not succeed in the evaluated tasks but may do well in other types of activities, do not get the same reinforcement to their agency, thus discouraging them from active agency (Aro, 2015, p. 64). Thus, the environment's role should always be considered critically when learner agency is viewed.

Agency has been in some cases viewed as a synonym for free will (Aheran, 2001). However, this is problematic because the social aspect of agency as well as the effect culture has on human interaction and beliefs is ignored in this perception (Ahearn, 2001, p. 114). In Bandura's (1989, p. 1089, 1175) social cognitive theory, agency is viewed from two perspectives: agency from the learner's perspective and agency from the perspective of the environment. They also emphasize that these perspectives should not be separated from one another. Mercer (2012, p. 42-43) adds that the learner is not only a recipient to their environment: while engaging with the environment the learner can also influence and change the context. Hence, the relationship between the learner and the environment can be reciprocal.

To conclude, learner agency is a central component in the action-based approach. Learning cannot occur without the learner being an active participant in the process. The learner themselves have an effect on how they actualize their agency, but the environment's effect cannot be separated from this concept. Thus, learner agency is a complex concept, and various aspects should be considered when viewing it.

3.3 Action-based learning and teaching

In this section, I will define the action-based teaching and learning approach. I will discuss the importance of active thinking as well as the learner's role in the learning process. I will also consider the significance of interaction between the learner and their environment in relation to the approach. I will conclude this section by

explaining the reason why I have chosen the term *action-based* as opposed to various different terms describing the same method.

Kataja, Jaakkola and Liukkonen (2011, p. 30) define action as the physical activity conscious thinking creates. Öystilä (2003, p. 60) adds that the action is the core of the thinking process. Kataja et al. (2011, p. 30) state that this action usually builds a process in which the learner can view the acquired knowledge from a new perspective. Therefore, learning requires active thinking and reflecting and that they can be seen as pre-made plans for actions (Öystilä, 2003, p. 60). The thinking process cannot, thus, be separated from action (Öystilä, 2003, p. 60).

An active learner is the main principle in the action-based approach (van Lier 2007). According to the CEFR (2020, p. 29), the learner should be seen as a language user in language instruction, learning to communicate instead of studying content. The learner must have an active role in the learning process, i.e., they must be an active participant and thinker throughout the process (Mäntylä, 2021, p. 58). This provides them with various experiences and realizations (Mäntylä, 2021, p. 58) which can lead up to learning. The learning can be enhanced by connecting it more personally to the learners by using, for instance, feelings and previous experiences (Sergejeff, 2005, p. 82) as help, as well as considering the learners' needs (CEFR, 2020, p. 28). Additionally, the learners should be guided to plan strategy, to reflect and think critically (Piccardo, 2014, p. 28). Active learners can reflect on their learning process and modify it when recognizing skills that need to be practiced (Mäntylä, 2021, p. 59).

In addition to an active learner, interaction is seen as a significant factor in the action-based approach (Öystilä, 2003, p. 65; Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena, 2016, p. 14). The interaction can be either intrapersonal, happening in the mind of a person, or social (Ellis, 1999, p. 1), occurring in interaction with other learners. Nevertheless, the language is always learned through interaction between the learner and their environment (Mäntylä, 2021, p. 58), i.e., even if the interaction occurs intrapersonally, the

learner must still be in interaction with their surroundings. The CEFR (2020, p. 30) emphasizes the importance of social interaction in language learning. Mäntylä (2021, p. 58–59) continues that tasks in which learners communicate using the target language to achieve the goal enhance meaningful language learning. Hence, especially social interaction is central to foreign language learning.

Various terms have been used to describe the action-based approach. The CEFR (2001; 2020) calls the approach the action-oriented approach. In the Finnish context, on the other hand, the term functionality (*toiminnallisuus*) has been used multiple times (Finnish National Core Curriculum, 2014; Mäntylä, 2021; Öystilä, 2003). In Finnish, the term describes the approach well but in English it can be mixed up with the concept of functional language use. Mäntylä (2021, p. 53) points out that it is important to distinguish the differences between functional instruction and functional language use; while the previous consists of the idea of an active learner, the latter considers the language skills one needs to survive daily conversations. van Lier (2007) has named the concept the action-based approach. I have chosen to use this term, as it describes the approach the best: the approach is based on the learner completing meaningful actions throughout their learning process.

In summary, action-based methods aim to increase the learners' actions, activity, participation and interaction (Leskinen et al., 2016, p. 14). The main principle of the method is that active learners need to interact with their environment. The interaction can be either mental or social because the focus is on the learners actively participating in the thinking process. When the learners are guided to strategies to reflect on their knowledge, they can develop the skills in need for improvement. As the importance of the learner has been described above, I will next move on the role of the educator in action-based instruction.

3.4 The role of the teacher

The teacher has a significant role in making the instruction efficient in action-based teaching. Even though considering the learners' preferences is an important factor in action-based instruction (CEFR, 2020), Piccardo (2014, p. 30) mentions that it is the teacher's role to decide the type of tasks that are suitable for their learners. Moreover, they note that the role is diverse, but the main goal is to guide the learners to complete tasks successfully. Especially in the beginning of the process, the learners may need more assistance from the teacher. Öystilä (2003, p. 37) adds that according to Dewey, the teacher should guide their learners because guiding them creates more freedom. When the learners know through guidance what is expected from them, they can work more independently later on. Therefore, explicit instruction on learning strategies is important to enhance learner autonomy (Piccardo, 2014). Additionally, Piccardo (2014) remarks that guidance in self-reflection on the learners' personal skills and gained knowledge should be provided after the completion of the task. When the guidance is thorough, it can help the learners to use suitable strategies and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses more independently in the future.

In addition to considering the tasks and their completion, the teacher has other considerations. Sergejeff (2008, p. 83) describes that open-mindedness is required from the teacher since the approach contains some uncertain aspects. For instance, the learners make decisions based on their understanding of the objective in the task (Piccardo, 2014, p. 28). In addition, their personal competences affect the way they complete the task (Piccardo, 2014, p. 28). Therefore, the tasks can have different outcomes depending on the learners completing it. Savolainen, Jyrkiäinen and Eskola (2018, p. 181) add that teachers need to be able to reflect on the outcomes of action-based tasks by evaluating the learners' learning. Thus, they can modify the tasks to be more successful in the future if needed. Moreover, Sergejeff (2008, p. 83) explains that creating a safe environment is significant to ensure learner participation. When setting the atmosphere of learning to teamwork-focused instead of focusing on individuality

(Kolb, 2015), the learners can feel more comfortable working together. Last, Sergejeff (2008, p. 83) points out that teacher training on action-based teaching and learning can provide guidance on planning and executing instruction.

In summary, teachers have a diverse role in the action-based approach. They need to guide their learners into finding the best strategies to enhance their learning. The teachers also need to be adaptable to new situations, as, for example, the same task can have multiple outcomes depending on the learners. Furthermore, teachers need to create a safe environment to their classroom to ensure the learners' participation. Teacher training on the subject can help the teachers to use action-based teaching more effectively.

Next, I will discuss tasks in action-based teaching. First, I will define the term task and proceed to present types of tasks used in action-based teaching. I will then point out aspects that need to be considered when planning and executing these tasks, and the reasoning to this.

3.5 Tasks in action-based teaching

The CEFR (2001, p. 10) defines a task as having a goal that an individual aims to reach by completing purposeful actions. Therefore, the task's goals guide the learners into taking certain actions (Piccardo, 2014, p. 27). In language learning tasks, the learner's processing has an important role (CEFR, 2001). Processing is defined by taking in, producing, interacting and understanding oral or written texts (CEFR, 2001, p. 10). The learners use strategies they are familiar with in addition with their perception of the situation to complete the goal of the given task (CEFR, 2001, p. 15). The aim of the tasks should be to create real-life-like situations in which social agents communicate with each other (Piccardo, 2014, p. 26). The tasks can then be solved by the learners combining their personal strengths and knowledge together (Fischer, 2021). Thus, the

outcome of the task can vary greatly depending on for instance the learners' language skills and abilities to self-reflect (Piccardo, 2014, p. 27).

Kataja et al. (2011, p. 30) mention that all tasks relating to doing and action follow the objective of action-based teaching. However, this action also requires an active thinking process. Still, various types of tasks can be perceived to follow the action-based objective, such as learning in movement, active thinking, problem solving (Mäntylä, 2021, p. 58), project work and drama (Leskinen et al., 2016, p. 14) as well as music (Sergejeff, 2007, p. 90). Moreover, the Finnish National Core Curriculum (from now on FNCC) (2014, p. 21) mentions games, playing and the diverse use of art as types of activities used in action-based instruction. Öystilä (2003, pp. 64–65) continues that using imagination as a part of learning is also action-based teaching: creating new meanings with metaphors, for example, can make the learning feel more personal.

When planning and executing action-based tasks, various aspects should be considered to enhance language learning. First, careful preparation is significant to make the tasks most effective. Setting clear goals to the tasks in the beginning and providing each learner with a distinct role to complete the tasks are important factors to ensure that the learners will succeed in the completion of the task (Fischer, 2021; Piccardo, 2014, p. 27). The learners must also be aware of the tasks' goals and how to achieve them by reflecting on their personal strengths and weaknesses regarding the requirements of the tasks (Piccardo, 2014). Second, evaluating the success of the tasks after completion should be considered to increase learning (Norrena and Vorne, 2016, p. 24). The tasks can thus be modified to make it even more successful in the future. Third, the tasks must be meaningful and relevant to the learner's real life, providing options to choose from what and how to learn (Mäntylä, 2021, p. 59; Fischer, 2021). Finally, Aalto et al. (2009, p. 410) mention that to make action-based tasks efficient, they should be cognitively challenging enough. They continue that tasks requiring active participation ensure better cognitive processing. Moreover, the actions performed in the tasks should be connected to each other (Piccardo, 2014, p. 27; Fischer, 2021) to

connect the learning tasks' learning outcomes to previous knowledge. Finally, the importance of social interaction should be remembered. When the learners combine their strengths together, the chances of succeeding in the tasks become more probable. Piccardo (2014, p. 38) argues that in an optimal case, the tasks work as tools that create opportunities for interaction between active agents, i.e., the learners. This communication is then what helps the learners to complete the tasks and learn.

All in all, action-based tasks can vary a great deal. The tasks should be related to real-life situations and involve some type of interaction between the learner and their environment. Moreover, the task's learning goal and how to reach it, as well as what strategies to use should be clear to the learners. This can increase the chances of the task being successful, thus, enabling learning.

3.6 Benefits and challenges of the action-based approach

In this section, I will discuss both the benefits and challenges of the action-based approach. I will begin by explaining the approach's positive effects on the learning process. Then, I will move on to the benefits of the approach considering social and emotional skills. After the benefits, I will present some challenges teachers might face, including issues with time management and learner variety for instance. I will conclude the section by discussing why the benefits outweigh the challenges.

The action-based approach has several benefits for learning. Even though being physically active is not the main focus in the approach, according to Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena (2016, pp. 14-16), it is a significant factor in learning. They continue that the increased level of activity assists learning as it makes the instruction more comprehensive and can allow the learner to achieve more feelings of success. Moreover, they add that this can make learning more enjoyable and motivating. Sergejeff (2007, p. 83) adds that learning through enjoyment decreases stress towards the learning process which again can increase the enjoyment of learning. Moreover, learning is not just

limited to the school environment. Using different senses, various learning skills, creativity and imagination (Leskinen et al., 2016, p. 14–16) is beneficial for multiple types of learners and can be connected to more realistic situations. When the learners can relate to the tasks, completing them can feel more motivating. Savolainen et al. (2018, p. 176) and Hahl and Keinänen (2021, p. 37) found that learners were more engaged in the learning process when they found it motivating. This allowed them to learn more deeply, since the focus was on the subject being taught.

Action-based teaching benefits social and emotional skills, too. According to Leskinen et al. (2016, pp. 14–16), social activities increase the cooperation between the learners. When the learners can work together and help each other, they can be given more responsibility, increasing the chances to all learners to participate in the instruction (Savolainen et al., 2018, p. 176) which can strengthen the relationships between learners (Sergejeff, 2007, p. 83; Hahl and Keinänen, 2021, p. 37) as well as teachers and learners (Hahl and Keinänen, 2021, p. 37). Additionally, while negotiating meaning and solving the tasks, the learners have a chance to practice team working skills such as listening and taking responsibility (Leskinen et al., 2016, pp. 14–16). Emotional control is also practiced while interacting with others (Leskinen et al., 2016, pp. 14–16) because, for example, listening to other learners and considering their thoughts are required skills when working together.

Action-based instruction can cause some challenges. Hahl and Keinänen (2021, p. 38) found that if teachers did not have enough knowledge or training on action-based methods, they did not use them. Aalto et al. (2009, p. 418) point out that activities following action-based guidelines might seem challenging to teachers, as some activities do not have just one result. They continue that vagueness can also require a great deal from the teacher, and teachers might experience being out of their comfort zone. Savolainen et al. (2018, p. 175) add that the lack of support from, for instance, colleagues not understanding the approach can cause difficulties. As mentioned before, the teacher is responsible for selecting, planning, modifying and executing tasks that

are suitable for their learners (Piccardo, 2014, p. 30) which can be challenging and time-consuming, especially in the beginning (Savolainen et al., 2018, p. 174), because various aspects must be considered to make the tasks more effective and manageable. Also, the lack of resources, such as maintaining materials and finding suitable space for the activities, can be a challenge (Savolainen et al., 2018, p. 174).

The differences between learners may cause challenges for teachers to execute action-based instruction. Savolainen et al. (2018, pp. 175–176) discuss the learners' conduct difficulties as a challenge: some activities involving, for instance, movement can cause challenges in behavior modification. Furthermore, they note that some learners might not understand or take their responsibilities seriously in action-based activities. They add that some learners need more time understanding the concept. In addition, some learners need more structure to feel safe in the school environment (Savolainen et al., 2018, p. 175). Therefore, action-based teaching might not be suitable for all learners. However, with enough guidance from the teacher, some of these challenges can be overcome.

Even though the action-based instruction requires a great deal from educators, it has various benefits to consider. The learning process can be perceived as more motivating when the learning is connected to realistic situations as well as various environments (Leskinen et al., 2016, p. 14–16). Moreover, learners become more active in the learning process which enhances learning. When the learners interact with each other, social and emotional skills develop, too (Leskinen et al., 2016, p. 14–16). Thus, this approach has various positive effects along with enhancing learning and should be considered by language educators. Action-based teaching is beneficial for the teacher as well. The simplest action-based activities can be adapted to various situations (Sergejeff, 2007, p. 83). Therefore, the teacher does not always have to come up with new tasks but can use the same one variously.

I have now explained the benefits and challenges of the action-based approach above. Thus, I will move on to review it from the perspective of Finland by discussing the role of the approach in the Finnish National Core Curriculum.

3.7 Action-based teaching and learning in the FNCC

The Finnish National Core Curriculum (FNCC, 2014) has been developed on the idea of the learner being an active participant in their learning process (2014, p. 17). It defines learning as a continuous process in which new knowledge should be built on old knowledge by doing, thinking, experimenting and reflecting. Moreover, language and the use of various senses enhance the learning process (2014, p. 17). The combination of individual learning and learning in interaction with other learners and educators as well as diverse environments are also mentioned as important factors to enhance the learning process (2014, p. 17).

The FNCC (2014, p. 17) states that the learner should be guided throughout their learning process. First, they should be guided to understand that their actions affect themselves, other learners and their environment. Second, the learner should be guided to recognize the most suitable learning strategies to further enhance their learning process (FNCC, 2014, p. 17). Third, the FNCC (2014, p. 17) emphasizes the importance of the learner's self-image since it affects the goals the learner sets for their actions. Confidence, for example, can increase the chances of the learners' participation in the instruction. Finally, according to the FNCC (2014, p. 17), thinking and working skills as well as predicting and planning different stages of learning should be taught throughout the learner's education. It states that once the learner becomes familiar with the factors mentioned above along with being active and responsible, the learners can become more autonomous. Thus, the idea of goal-directed and lifelong learning is strengthened.

In addition to discussing the agency of the learner, the FNCC (2014) mentions functional teaching as a method of instruction several times. Functional methods of teaching are mentioned, for instance, in sections of the transversal competence as well as under the section of foreign languages. Even though the term functionality (*toiminnallisuus*) is not defined clearly in the FNCC (2014), it presents vague ideas and examples of the method. For instance, playing, gamification, physical activity and experiential learning are mentioned as examples of functional methods of teaching (FNCC, 2014, p. 21). Furthermore, for instance, field trips and theme days are mentioned as examples of functional activities (FNCC, 2014, p. 31). In addition, it is said that experiential and functional methods as well as the use of different senses and movement in teaching make learning more memorable and increase motivation (FNCC, 2014, p. 29). No research is, however, mentioned to support these argued benefits.

In summary, action-based methods are considered significant in the FNCC (2014). The approach is described rather vaguely but some examples of methods are provided, and teachers are required to use them in various ways in their instruction. Next, I will present previous research on action-based teaching in Finland and Canada.

3.8 Previous studies on action-based teaching and learning

As already mentioned, the FNCC (2014) finds learner agency and functional methods significant in all instruction. Still, these have not yet widely been researched in the Finnish lower secondary school setting, and research has focused more on the primary school setting (see e.g., Savolainen et al., 2018) or in all education levels overall (see e.g., Faez et al., 2011; Hahl and Keinänen, 2021). When Hahl and Keinänen (2021) observed language teachers' (n = 130) perceptions on action-based teaching on all education levels in Finland, they found one third of the teachers included some type of movement in their definition of action-based teaching. Furthermore, most of the participants used action-based methods at least on a weekly basis, mentioning various

games, roleplay and running dictation as the three most popular methods following the action-based approach (Hahl and Keinänen, 2021).

Previous studies have also observed the benefits and challenges of action-based teaching. In Hahl and Keinänen's (2021) study, most teachers found that action-based methods improved learning and made it more motivating, meaningful and fun. In the Canadian context, Faez et al. (2011) observed similar results, adding that French as a second language teachers (n = 93) noted that their students' oral skills, confidence and self-assessment improved with action-based methods, and that it could be used diversely in assessment. On the contrary, the teachers in both studies pointed out that lack of training and knowledge on action-based teaching as well as time constraints limited the use of the methods. Only two of the 130 teachers that participated in Hahl and Keinänen's (2021) study reported that they had learned about action-based teaching in teacher education. Therefore, Hahl and Keinänen (2021) found that most teachers had to find and create materials themselves to include action-based methods in their instruction. Faez et al. (2011) additionally noted that some teachers found the shift from grammar-oriented teaching to action-based teaching challenging.

In their master's thesis, Lahtinen (2022) focused on lower secondary school education and found similar results in comparison to Hahl and Keinänen (2021) and Faez et al. (2011). Lahtinen (2022) noted that German as a foreign language teachers in Finland perceived action-based methods in instruction mostly positively. They noted that most significant benefits were seen to be the enhancement and motivation in learning and taking diversity into account. On the other hand, the lack of resources, challenges with individual learners and group dynamics as well as habits of the teacher were difficulties mentioned with the approach. According to Lahtinen (2022), the participants reported using action-based methods mainly as an addition to regular teaching or to develop the learners' social skills. Because the lower secondary school environment has not yet been researched from the perspective of EFL teachers, the need for this study exists. I will discuss the need in more detail in the next section.

4 THE PRESENT STUDY

4.1 Aim and research question

The English language is studied by almost all students in Finland. Hence, focusing on the EFL teachers' perceptions of action-based teaching can provide of language teaching and learning that can be adapted to all language teaching. Moreover, action-based instruction in the lower secondary school environment has not yet been widely studied. The focus has been on either primary school level teachers and students (see e.g., Savolainen et al., 2018) or more generally focused on all language teachers (see e.g., Hahl and Keinänen, 2021). Since it is mentioned as a significant teaching approach in the FNCC (2014), which also considers the education of lower secondary schools, more research is needed regarding this education level. Additionally, different definitions of the action-based teaching approach exist; while others focus on physical activity in the approach, others view learner agency as the most important aspect. In the FNCC (2014), the definition of action-based instruction is vague to some extent. Thus, the interpretations of the term should be viewed to see whether a more specific definition is needed. Furthermore, the perspective of the teachers should be viewed to understand how the concept of action-based instruction works in the actual school environment. Therefore, the research question is the following:

1. According to Finnish EFL teachers, what is the role of action-based teaching in lower secondary schools in Finland?

4.2 Data and data collection

In this section, I will present the steps of the data collection. I will first present how the online questionnaire was distributed as well as the layout of the questionnaire. Second, I will discuss the online interviews I conducted. Finally, I will point out the ethical considerations that this study followed.

First, the data was collected by an online questionnaire via Webropol. Sue and Ritter (2007) argue that online questionnaires are beneficial when the aim is to reach participants from a geographically wide range efficiently and fast. The questionnaire consisted of nine questions and was in Finnish (Appendix 1). In addition, the questionnaire was piloted prior to publishing it, and no modifications were made. I published the link of the questionnaire to two Facebook groups for Finnish teachers. The first group was for Finnish EFL teachers in general (*Englannin opettajat*) and the second one was for Finnish foreign language teachers (*Yläkoulun kielenopetus*). With the link, I asked that only teachers teaching in upper secondary schools would answer. In addition, the same link and information were sent to The Association of Teachers of English in Finland to spread on their newsletter. The data from the questionnaire was collected from weeks 4–6 in the winter of 2024.

The online questionnaire consisted of nine questions from which five were close-ended and four open-ended questions. Bourque and Fielder (2003) note that in a questionnaire the questions should progress from easier to more complex. In addition, close-ended questions are less time-consuming for the participants which can further motivate them to complete the whole questionnaire (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; Peterson, 2000). Therefore, the first two questions of the questionnaire were single-choice questions regarding the participants overall experience as a teacher and years of

teaching English. The third question was open-ended, asking the participants to define the term action-based teaching. It was placed in the beginning of the questionnaire to orientate the participants to the topic, and open-ended to enable the participants to freely define the term without any bias (Peterson, 2000). The fourth and fifth questions were close-ended questions about the frequency of using action-based teaching as well as the sections of language instruction it is used.

As the questionnaire progressed from simpler to more complex, the last questions required more in-depth thinking from the participants. The sixth question was open-ended, asking to describe methods used in action-based teaching. To find out if limitations to using action-based teaching existed, the seventh question was a combination of a single-answer and open-ended question: if the participant answered limitations existing, they were asked to name the limitations and if no limitations existed, the question ended. Finally, the last two questions were open-ended, asking about the benefits and challenges of action-based instruction.

In addition to the online questionnaire, two online interviews were conducted to complement the data (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 109). The interviews were held in the weeks of 7 and 8 in the winter 2024 with Both Zoom and Google Meet. In addition, the interviews were recorded. The interviews were semi-structured. Thus, the questions planned before the interview were based on the theoretical background, the research question (Hyvärinen, Suoninen & Vuori, 2021) and the data collected from the online questionnaire. The questions were identical for both interviewees but the way they were asked varied (Hyvärinen et al., 2021). In addition, some follow-up questions based on the interviewees' answers were asked. The collected data was stored confidentially and deleted as soon as I had transcribed it. Furthermore, the transcripts were stored safely and will be destroyed after the study is finished.

The study was conducted ethically. To reach EFL teachers from all over Finland and to guarantee participant anonymity, the questionnaire was distributed online. Sue and

ritter (2007) note that anonymity is more guaranteed online, as the participants can answer the questions privately. Before participating in the study, a privacy notice was presented to the participants. In addition, they had to accept the study's terms and conditions to be able to answer the questionnaire. Hence, the participants knew their rights and assured belonging in the target group before participating in the study. Furthermore, at the end of the questionnaire, the participants had the option to leave their contact information to participate in an online interview. However, the contact information the participants could leave was done on another form, and the only background information asked from the participants was their teaching experience in years. Thus, anonymity was ensured to all participants.

4.3 Participants

Overall, 27 upper secondary school EFL teachers participated in the study, from which 26 answered the questionnaire. As seen in Table 1, the experience of teaching English altogether varied. One participant had been teaching for two years, two participants had 3–5 years of teaching experience and six participants reported 6–10 years of teaching experience. The largest number of participants had been teaching for 11–20 years in total, as 13 chose this option as their answer. Finally, 4 participants reported that they had been teaching for over twenty years. Therefore, 65 % of the participants had over ten years of teaching experience in total.

TABLE 1 Finnish EFL teachers' (n=26) answers to the question: *How many years have you been teaching English overall?*

Teaching experience	Number of answers	Percentage of answers
Under two years	1	4 %
3-5 years	2	8 %
6-10 years	6	23 %
11-20 years	13	50 %
Over 20 years	4	15 %

Table 2 presents the participants' answers to their experience of teaching English in lower secondary schools. The overall experience was lower than in Table 1, as one fifth of the participants had been teaching for under two years in the lower secondary school environment. Two of the participants reported that they had 3-5 years of teaching experience and six had 6-10 years of experience. Again, more than half of the participants had teaching experience of over 10 years, as 11 teachers had been teaching for 11-20 years and two teachers for over twenty years in lower secondary schools. However, the number was lower than in the overall teaching experience.

TABLE 2 Finnish EFL teachers' (n=26) answers to the question: *How many years have you been teaching English in lower secondary schools?*

Teaching experience	Number of answers	Percentage of answers
Under two years	5	20 %
3-5 years	2	8 %
6-10 years	6	23 %
11-20 years	11	42 %
Over 20 years	2	8 %

Additionally, two teachers participated in online interviews. As one of the interviewees had answered the questionnaire, too, the other interviewee had not. To ensure

anonymity, the names of the participants are not used. Instead, the participants will be called Teacher 1 and Teacher 2. Teacher 1 had attained all their 11 years of teaching experience from teaching EFL in lower secondary schools. Teacher 2, on the other hand, had an overall teaching experience of seven years, from which for four they had been teaching in lower secondary schools.

4.4 Data analysis

The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis (QCA). Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the multiple-choice questions. Because the number of participants was low, instead of generalizing the quantitative data, the distribution of the data was described and summarized using various graphs (Tilastollinen päättely, 2021). I selected QCA to analyze the rest of the data because the purpose of this study was to view the teachers' thoughts on action-based EFL teaching. Therefore, the aim was to focus on the content of the data, i.e., to find out what the participants meant with their answers (Willig, 2012). According to Schreier (2012), QCA is suitable when interpretation is needed from verbal and visual data, such as self-collected data from interviews and open-ended questions. Since the focus was on the meaning, for instance, the linguistic perspective was disregarded (Vuori, 2021). However, it should be noted that the researcher's own perspective always has a role in the analysis in this method because they interpret the data from their own perspective (Willig, 2012, p. 45) Thus, even though I aimed to be impartial while analyzing the data, the results are likely not completely objective. Even so, QCA was chosen to enable more free analysis and a broader perspective on the topic.

The data was coded prior to presenting the results. When analyzing the open-ended questions and interview transcripts, I began by analyzing the content based on the theoretical background (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). I aimed to connect the data to previous research as well as explain the findings using theories on action-based teaching. I searched for similarities among the answers and grouped them into different main

categories based on vocabulary or themes presented (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 99; Peterson, 2000). In some cases, I further divided some answers into subcategories to provide more information about the main categories (Schreier, 2012). After grouping the answers, I named these categories based on their shared theme (Vuori, 2021).

I used examples and tools to report the findings. I presented the categories one by one, including examples of both the open-ended answers as well as citations from the interviews. The analysis is, therefore, more transparent: according to Schreier (2012), it gives the reader a chance to see how the categories were expressed in the data. I utilized text matrices to summarize categorizations (Schreier, 2012). Furthermore, I used tables and figures as an aid to display the quantitative data from the close-ended questions. The frequency was presented by percentages rounded to the nearest full number. This enabled the possibility to compare different factors and find relationships between them (Denscombe, 2014, p. 258).

5 FINDINGS

I will now present the results of both the questionnaire and interviews. The data will be presented based on themes brought up in the data. I will first discuss the participants' definitions to the term action-based language teaching, followed by the frequency of using the methods and what type of action-based methods the participants reported using in their instruction. Then, I will view the restrictions, benefits and challenges action-based language teaching can have according to the participants. I will conclude the section by presenting results on the participants' thoughts of the teacher's role in the action-based teaching approach.

5.1 EFL teachers' definitions of the action-based language teaching approach

The aim of the third question in the questionnaire was to find out how EFL teachers define the action-based language teaching approach. Based on their content, the participants' definitions could be divided into four categories: *physical activity as the definition*, *an active learner as the definition*, *both physical activity and an active learner as the definition* and *others*.

Before I introduce the four categories of definitions more thoroughly, I will report some shared thoughts that the participants from several definition categories pointed out. First, seven of the 26 participants included gamification, games or playing as a

part of the action-based instruction approach. I will discuss this more in section 5.4 but as it was mentioned several times in the definitions, teachers seem to perceive it as an example of action-based instruction. Second, three definitions included the idea of learning without using schoolbooks. Additionally, none of the definitions mentioned actual exercises from the books as examples, indicating that the participants do perhaps not view completing exercises as a part of the action-based teaching approach. Finally, 18 of the participants included physical activity in their definition of action-based language teaching. This corresponds to Savolainen et al. (2018, p. 180), as they found that teachers strongly associate moving around and movement as a part of the approach.

TABLE 3 Finnish EFL teachers' (n=26) definitions for action-based teaching.

Physical activity as the definition	An active learner as the definition	Physical activity and an active learner	Other definitions
moving around	learner agency	learner agency	closely related approaches
movement	interaction	moving around, movement	everything except "traditional" instruction

5.1.1 Physical activity as the definition

Physical activity was mentioned as the main aspect of the action-based teaching approach by 13 of the 26 participants. Therefore, in these definitions, learner agency (Aheran 2001; Aro, 2015; van Lier 2007) is not mentioned as an important aspect. The definitions could be divided into three categories: moving around, movement and combining both. While two of the definitions focused on the term moving around (*liikkuminen*), the main idea of two definitions was the term movement (*liike*). Both terms were associated with the learner and their learning process, but the difference between these two terms was that while the former requires the learners to move around in the environment, movement included smaller actions as well, such as pointing at or moving around objects. Finally, nine of the definitions contained the idea of both moving around and movement. The action-based teaching approach was seen to connect

language learning with some type of physical activity. Savolainen et al. (2022, p. 182) found similar results when they asked primary school classroom teachers to define action-based teaching: movement was perceived as important to the learning process.

As seen in Extract 1, Teacher 2 also defined action-based teaching as an approach that somehow physically activates the learners. They mentioned that it could be either smaller movements, such as raising learners raising their hand to indicate the answer or moving around in the school environment.

(1) *“Tavalliseen oppitunnin rakenteeseen tulee liikettä. Että niinkun noi oppilaat (--) aktivoitetaan sellaiseen liikkumiseen, (--) jotain pitää mennä tekemään johonkin. Semmosta niinkun kehollista. Et voihan se olla ihan vaa semmosta et nostetaan käsi ylös.”*

“Movement is included in the structure of a regular lesson. That those students (--) are activated to that kind of movement, (--) something has to be done somewhere. Something bodily. It can be just something like raising a hand.” (Teacher 2)

5.1.2 An active learner as the definition

Two of the participants mentioned that the active learner was the main idea of the action-based teaching approach. One of the participants included the term *learner agency* (van Lier 2007) in their definition. The other participant also specified that in the approach learners have a mentally active role in the instruction (Extract 2), thus, indicating to learner agency without using the term. Moreover, they noted that action-based instruction can be either happening in the learners' minds or in interaction with other learners (Aro, 2015; Mäntylä, 2021). Both definitions continued that various methods used to teach a language are included in the approach.

(2) *“Toiminnallisuus tarkoittaa, että oppilas on jotain muutakin kuin vastaanottava osapuoli. Voi tarkoittaa monenlaista tekemistä yksin, parin kanssa, ryhmässä. Paritehtäviä, pelejä, näytelmiä jne.”*

“Action-based teaching means that the student is something else than just the receiving participant. It can be various types of actions alone, with a partner, in a group. Partner-activities, games, plays etc.” (Teacher 3)

In their interview, Teacher 1 also defined action-based teaching as various types of instruction involving the learners mentally active participation. They continued that action-based instruction contains methods in which the learner learns while completing actions. As examples they mentioned drama, games and playing, for instance.

5.1.3 Physical activity and an active learner as the definition

Eight of the participants combined the idea of physical activity and an active learner into their definition of the action-based teaching approach. All the definitions included the idea of learner agency to some extent, mentioning some type of learner participation. Three definitions included the idea of social interaction and collaboration as a part of the action-based teaching approach. One of these definitions elaborated that all learners are required to actively participate to make the instruction successful (Extract 3). This definition is in correlation with Savolainen et al. (2018, p. 176), since classroom teachers found everyone's participation important. As the CEFR (2021) discusses the term social agent as an important factor in action-based language learning, these definitions also agree with it.

(3) *"Oppilaita osallistavaa, liikuntaa, kaikkien panosta vaativaa opetusta."*

"Teaching that requires the students' participation, exercise and everyone's effort." (Teacher 4)

On the other hand, five of the definitions focused on the participation of individuals. Thus, these definitions agree with Ellis's (1999, p. 1) idea that interaction occurring in the learning process can also be intrapersonal. Many reported that the learners must actively participate in the instruction to it to be action-based. One participant defined that in action-based language instruction the learners themselves are required to do and experiment to learn (Extract 4). As seen in Extract 4, even though the interaction is defined as happening mentally, it happens in interaction with the environment while the learners experiment with their surroundings (Mäntylä, 2021).

(4) *"Kielenopetusta, jossa oppilaat itse tekevät ja tutkivat ja johon usein liittyy fyysisesti liikkumista."*

"Language teaching, where students do and experiment themselves and physical moving around usually relates to it." (Teacher 5)

All the definitions included physical activity to some extent. However, as seen in Extract 4, some definitions pointed out that it is not necessary, but it usually occurs in the activities. Therefore, these definitions combine the idea of an active learner and physical activity.

5.1.4 Other definitions

Four of the definitions did not completely fit into the categories above. Two of these definitions were closely related to other approaches similar to the action-based approach. One definition focused on the idea of functional language use, in which the instruction focuses on how the language is used in daily situations (Mäntylä, 2021). The other one described learning happening with the help of a task, thus, describing the idea of task-based language teaching (Hummel, 2014). The idea of an active learner could be identified in both definitions. However, as the main focus of these definitions were on other factors than learner agency, the definitions are categorized as closely related approaches.

The other two definitions were rather vague. These definitions could be seen following the idea of action-based teaching to some extent, but they did not contain neither physical nor mental activity. As one of the definitions described action-based instruction as everything except “traditional” teaching (Extract 5), the other one defined action-based teaching as pair discussions and filming.

(5) *“Kaikki muut aktiviteetit, paitsi perinteiset kuuntelu-, luku- ja kirjoitustehtävät.”*

“All activities except traditional listening, reading and writing activities.” (Teacher 6)

5.2 Frequency of action-based teaching classrooms

The fourth question in the questionnaire aimed to find out the frequency of action-based methods in the Finnish EFL classrooms. As Figure 1 indicates, 54% of the participants answered using action-based methods on a weekly basis, making it the largest number of answers. Teacher 2 also mentioned using action-based methods on a weekly basis on instruction to all their students. The frequency had decreased from what it had been when they were teaching in primary school, nevertheless, it still occurred on a weekly basis. Daily use received the second largest answer rate since 27% of the participants chose this answer. These results correspond to Hahl and Keinänen’s

study (2021, p. 35), as they found that most Finnish foreign language teachers used action-based methods either on a daily or weekly basis.

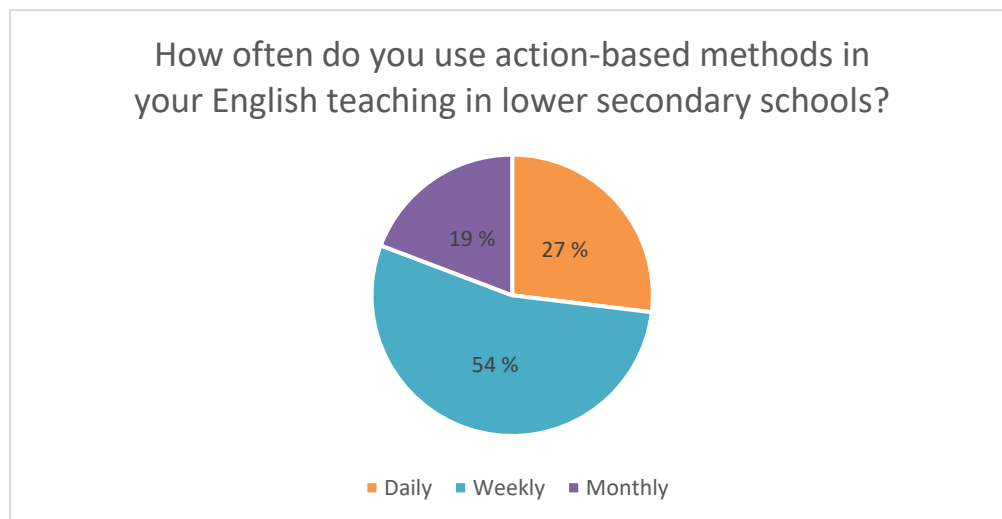


FIGURE 1 Finnish EFL teachers' (n=26) answers to the question: *How often do you use action-based methods in your English teaching in lower secondary schools?*

The remaining 19% of the participants reported using action-based methods monthly. Neither options *more rarely* nor *never* were chosen by any participants. Nevertheless, it could be that the teachers not using action-based methods did not participate in the study. Teacher 1 answer supports this statement, as they mentioned rarely using action-based methods in their teaching less (Extract 6).

(6) *"Enemmän heti alkusyksystä silloin, kun tehdään muutenkin sitä ryhmäytystä oppilaille (--). Se oli ihan erilaista ennen koronavuosia, ja sitten kun meillä tuli se 2--3 vuotta, että tavallaan piti se kontakti pitää niinku poissa oppilaiden välillä. Se jää päälle, on hirmu hankala päästä takaisin eli paljon, paljon vähemmän nykyään, kun silloin aikaisemmin. (--). Silloin tällöin keväällä. Kato herää aina keväällä."*

"More in the beginning of the fall when grouping is done to the students. (--). It was so different before the Covid19 years and then when we had those 2--3 years that contact between students had to be left out. It stays with you, it's really difficult to get back, so much much less now than before. Now and then in the spring. See, you always wake up during spring." (Teacher 1)

As Teacher 1 describes, they have not been using action-based methods regularly after the Covid-19 pandemic ended. Because throughout the pandemic students were not allowed to move around as freely, Teacher 1 had adapted to these methods after the pandemic, too. They continued that using the methods usually occurs during the beginning of the school year since it naturally goes along with other grouping activities. After this, Teacher 1 does often not use action-based methods until the end of the

school year. When asked to elaborate more, they explained that this was due to time constraints and habit. I will focus more on the reasons in section 5.5.

5.3 Action-based teaching in language sections

The fifth question in the questionnaire aimed to find out the sections of language instruction in which the participants used action-based methods. The results are presented in Figure 2.

According to the participants, action-based methods were used in all sections of English language teaching listed as options. From the eight language sections listed, three were chosen by more than half of the participants: vocabulary and speaking both received an answer rate of 96 %, and grammar was chosen the third most with the answer rate of 65 %. These answers correlate with answers from both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2: when they discussed examples of action-based activities they used in their teaching, they also mentioned vocabulary and grammar as the main language sections.

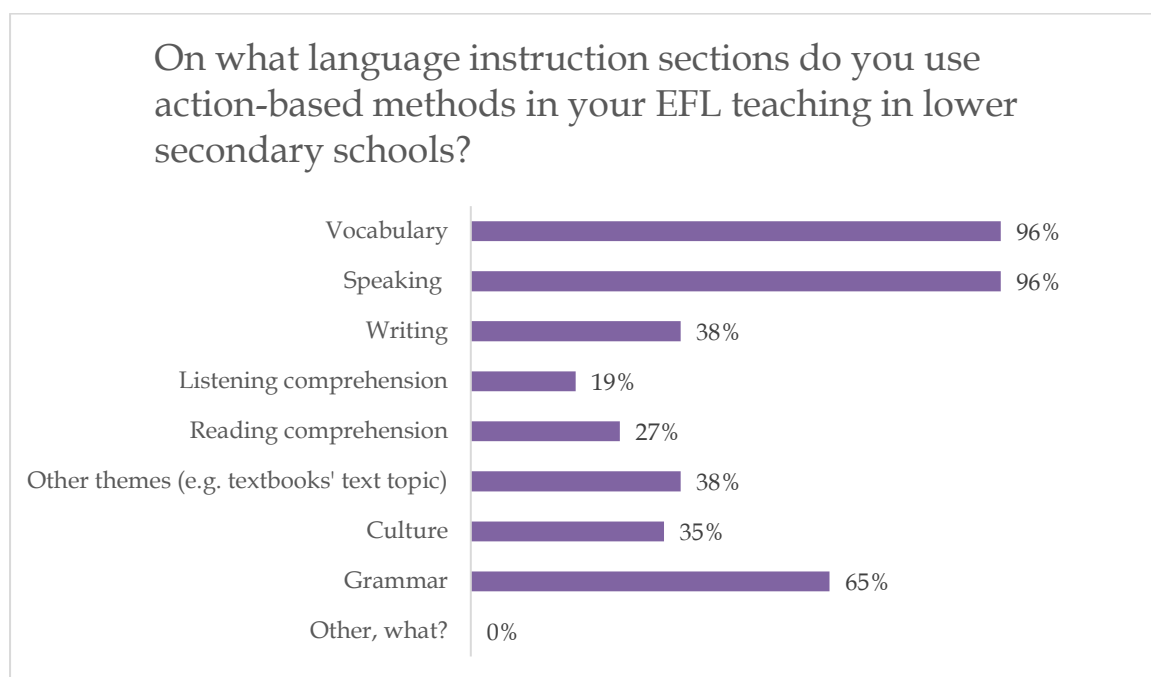


FIGURE 2 Teachers' (n=26) answers to the question: *On what language instruction sections do you use action-based methods in your EFL teaching in lower secondary schools?*

On the contrary, five of the language instruction sections listed as options on the questionnaire were chosen by under half of the participants. 38 % of the participants reported using action-based methods when teaching writing and other themes, such as textbooks' text topics. Culture received an answer rate of 35 % whereas reading comprehension was chosen by 27 % and listening comprehension 19 % of the participants. The participants had an opportunity to add other language sections in which they used action-based teaching, but no other sections of language were mentioned.

5.4 Types of methods used in action-based teaching

The sixth question of the questionnaire aimed to find out the kind of methods the participants used in their action-based teaching. Three categories could be formed based on the answers: *methods involving physical activity*, *methods involving games, playing and drama* as well as *methods involving conversation or project work* (Table 4). It should be noted that most of the participants reported using methods from more than one category.

TABLE 4 Finnish EFL teachers' (n=26) answers to the question: *What kind of methods do you use in your action-based teaching in lower secondary English teaching?*

Methods involving physical activity	Methods involving games, playing and drama	Methods involving conversation or project work
Using music to move around	Online games	Discussions
Running dictation	Games involving explaining	Group work
Answering with movements	Memory games	Presentations
Exercises involving moving around	Board and dice games	Classroom stations
	Puzzles	
	Escape room games	
	Acting and charades	

5.4.1 Physical activity as a method

As the participants' definitions of action-based teaching as well as Hahl and Keinänen's (2021) study indicate, physical activity was mentioned as a part of action-based instruction methods. These methods go also along with Kataja et al. (2011, p. 30) explaining that all methods using physical movement is action-based. All in all, 12 participants answered using movement and moving around as methods in their teaching. Out of the 12 answers, three defined using movements to indicate an answer or an opinion, and two mentioned using activities in which moving was required. In addition, four of the twelve answers included *running dictation* as a concrete example of their teaching methods. Teacher 2 also reported using running dictation as an action-based method (Extract 7). Hahl and Keinänen (2021, p. 36) also found that Finnish foreign language teachers reported using running dictation the third most out of the methods that were presented in their study.

(7) *"Mulla on ollut ihan vaikka lausesaneluu, et on ollut luokan ulkopuolella (--) lauseita (--) voi olla siis ihan sanojakin. (--) Sit ne (oppilaat) käy niinkun pareittain, toinen pysyy kirjurina pöydässä, ja sit toinen kipittää sinne käytävään ja pistää mieleensä sen jutun (virke / sana) ja sit tulee takasin ja sanelee sen sille (parille).*

"I have had just running dictation, that outside of the classroom there are sentences (--) can be words, too. (--) Then they (students) go in pairs, the other stays as the writer at the desk, and then the other one skitters to the hallway and memorizes the thing (sentence / word) and then comes back and dictates it to them (pair). (Teacher 2)

Teacher 2 explained that they placed, for instance, words or sentences outside the classroom. The students were instructed to work as partners, one at a time retrieving the words or sentences, and then coming back to dictate it to their partner, who was to write it down.

5.4.2 Games, playing and drama as a method

Out of the 26 participants, 18 mentioned games as a method they used in their action-based instruction which correlates to Hahl and Keinänen's (2021) findings. Out of the 18 answers, six participants included online games and four participants word explanation games as examples. Furthermore, three of the 18 participants reported using memory games, board and dice games as well as puzzles as action-based methods in

their action-based instruction. One of the participants described using an escape room type of game when focusing on reading comprehension (Extract 8).

(8) *"Luetun ymmärtäminen: Vuoden lopussa teen yleensä lattia on laavaa -teemaisen pakohuonepelin missä oppilaiden pitää ratkoa englanninkielisiä arvoituksia löytääkseen luokkahuoneesta oikea vastaus/vihje seuraavaan arvoitukseen."*

"Reading comprehension: At the end of the year, I usually do a floor is lava -themed escape room game in which the students need to solve English riddles to find the right answer/clue from the classroom to the next riddle." (Teacher 7)

In this game, the learners were required to understand the meaning of English riddles to find clues and complete the game. This game combines many aspects of action-based teaching, as it includes for instance gamification (FNCC, 2014), problem solving (Mäntylä, 2021) and creativity (Öystilä, 2003).

In addition to games, eight of the 26 participants mentioned playing as an example of their methods. Competing against others, either individually or in teams, was mentioned by three of the eight answers. However, no other specifications were given. Drama, on the other hand, was mentioned by five of the 26 participants and some examples of it were provided, too. Two of the participants defined using acting as a method in their instruction, as charades was also mentioned twice. Teacher 1 also recalled using drama in their teaching on occasions. These findings correlate with Leskinen et al. (2016), as they mention drama as an action-based teaching method.

5.4.3 Conversation or project work as a method

Seven of the 26 participants answered using conversation or project work as methods in action-based teaching. Although methods in previous categories have involved social interaction among the students, too, the methods presented in this category mainly focus on dialog without elements from the other categories.

Methods focusing on discussions between the students were mentioned by five of the seven participants. None of the participants elaborated more but Teacher 1 pointed out that they used A/B-discussions as an action-based method. Additionally, three of the seven participants reported using classroom stations as an action-based method.

Finally, group work and interviews as well as creating and presenting work were all mentioned once. Similar results were found in Hahl and Keinänen's (2021) study, too.

5.5 Factors restricting the use of action-based methods

The aim of seventh question was to find out whether Finnish lower secondary school EFL teachers had any factors restricting the use of action-based methods in their teaching. From the 26 participants, 22 reported that some factors did reduce the use of these methods, and four of the participants did not find any restricting factors. The four main categories found to complicate the adaption of action-based methods were *student-related factors*, *teacher-related factors*, *time-related factors* and *size-related factors*. Even though the factors are divided into different categories, some overlap and are intertwined beyond the categorization.

TABLE 5 Finnish EFL teachers' (n=22) answers to the question: *What restricts the use of action-based methods in your teaching?*

Student-related factors	Teacher-related factors	Time-related factors	Size-related factors
Challenging student behavior	Coping at work	Hurry	Group size
Students' personal challenges	Personal attitudes and preferences	AB-activities take too much time	Space
Suitability and preferences			

5.5.1 Student-related factors

14 of the 22 participants mentioned student-related factors restricting the use of action-based methods. These factors could be further divided into three categories: *challenges with student-behavior*, *students' personal challenges as a restriction* and *the instruction's suitability and students' preferences*. Most of the participants reported factors from more than one category.

Nine of the 14 participants reported that challenges with students' behavior were a restriction. According to the answers, the most common restriction was related to restless students because six participants mentioned it. Furthermore, three participants answered that challenging students made it more difficult to use action-based methods in their teaching. These findings correspond to Savolainen et al. (2018, pp. 175–176) study, as they that action-based activities can cause challenges for students to modify their behavior.

Students' personal challenges were reported restricting by two of the participants. As one of these participants answered that the increase of the students' challenges with concentration, learning as well as communication-, self-regulation- and emotional skills caused restrictions, the other one reported that, for example, social anxiety and mutism made it difficult for some students to participate in action-based activities. Teacher 1 also mentioned that action-based methods might not be suitable for everyone (Extract 9). Savolainen et al. (2018, p. 175) found that some students need a more structured learning environment. Therefore, action-based activities might not be fit for all learners.

(9) *“Uusien ryhmien kanssa pitää vähän varoa, että mitä sä teetät, koska sieltä saattaa tulla tosi yllättäviä reaktioita. (--) Ehkä se on sitä korona-aikaa ja ehkä se on myös sitä, että ihmiset on niin paljon enemmän puhelimella, että on vähemmän vuorovaikutuksessa toistensa kanssa. Mut se näkyy niissä oppilaissa nykyään.”*

“With new groups, you need to be careful what you do because there can occur some really surprising reactions. (--) Maybe it's because of the Covid time and maybe also because people are so much more on their phone that they are less in interaction with each other. But that is visible in those students these days.” (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described that when trying new methods with new students, unexpected reactions from them can occur. They further explained that this could be because interaction between people has decreased after Covid and because time spent using mobile phones has increased. As Leskinen et al. (2016, pp. 14–16) found, action-based activities can advance interactive skills. Thus, challenges with social skills could possibly be overcome by practicing them by using action-based methods in instruction.

The third category of student-related challenges were to do with the suitability of action-based methods for some students and students' preferences. Three of the 14 answers as well as both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 found challenges in this section. One participant reported that some groups of students are not ready for action-based activities. Additionally, two participants reported that some students were passive and unwelcoming of the methods, thus, restricting the use of them. Teacher 1 also discussed this but suggested that the students should be trained to action-based methods to overcome this challenge. Teacher 2 added that on some occasions, even the passive students participated after some persuasion. In some cases, however, this does not work (Extract 10).

(10) *"Jos on tosi huono ryhmähenki, (--), ne (oppilaat) haluaa vaa pakertaa niinku omal paikallaan ja omassa kirjassa katse. (--), Et siinä pitää olla semmosta yhteisöllisyyttä ja mukavaa tekemisen meininkiä."*

"If the team spirit is really bad, (--), they (students) just want to work in their own place and look at their own book. (--), So there needs to be some kind of sense of community and joy of work." (Teacher 2)

As Extract 10 indicates, the learning environment influences how action-based activities benefit learning. Teacher 2 outlined that when students did not feel comfortable around each other, they would rather work individually. This correlates with Sergejeff (2008, p. 83) finding that to strengthen participation, the learning environment should be safe for the learners. Nevertheless, in these cases action-based teaching could be individualized if the team spirit cannot be increased.

5.5.2 Teacher-related factors

Three of the 22 participants mentioned teacher-related factors as restricting their action-based instruction. One mentioned that the lack of personal imagination reduced the amount of action-based teaching. Two others, along with Teacher 1, answered that they did not use the methods as much due to coping at work. For example, producing and maintaining materials were mentioned as limiting factors. Again, these findings correlate to Savolainen et al. (2018) study finding that teachers workload restricted the use of action-based methods.

Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 both discussed teachers' attitudes and thoughts that could restrict the use of action-based methods. Teacher 1 mentioned that they personally did not acknowledge that action-based instruction was effective because the learning happens individually instead of teacher-directly (Extract 11).

(11) *"Ei itse ehkä miellä, että siinä toiminnallisessa oppisi niin hyvin, tiiäkkö, koska minä en ole sanomassa sitä, että miten tämä tehdään vaan sinä itse mietit. (--)* Mulle se on (--) tämmönen välikevennys."

"Maybe I don't personally perceive that learning would be as efficient action-based teaching, you know, because I'm not saying that what needs to be done but you think yourself. (--) To me it's this kind of a recess." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 1 viewed action-based teaching as a pause from "actual teaching". Teacher 2 continued that all teachers might not be aware of the methods or do not have the courage to try new teaching methods. They added that usually action-based teaching was only used in language instruction (Extract 12). Moreover, they implied that the methods are maybe not used as often in the lower secondary school environment as in primary schools. This could indicate that, overall, teachers need more training on the topic to feel more encouraged to adapt them in their teaching (Sergejeff, 2008).

(12) *"Jos toiminnallisuutta olis muissakin oppiaineissa, eikä vaan kielissä (--), niin sit oppilaat tavallaan tottuis siihen. (--)* Ihan ku yläkoulu ois semmonen, et kaikki kiva loppuu, tai jotenkin silleen et kaikki tulee tylsäks."

"If action-based teaching would occur in other school subjects as well, not just languages (--), then the students would be familiar with it. (--) It's like lower secondary school is where all the fun ends, or that somehow everything becomes boring." (Teacher 2)

When the interviewees were asked to think of ways for teachers to increase the use of action-based methods in their teaching, both mentioned collaboration with colleagues as well as teacher training. Having the support of colleagues and being able to discuss the methods used in teaching were mentioned as ways to increase the action-based teaching. Savolainen et al. (2018) found that if colleagues were not supportive, it was more difficult for the teachers try new teaching methods. In addition, both teachers thought that teacher training was an important aspect to consider. According to them, this could ensure that more teachers would feel encouraged and be aware of action-based methods. Finally, Teacher 1 emphasized that the role of individual teachers'

courage: they thought teachers should be encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and try new teaching methods.

5.5.3 Time-related factors

Out of the 22 participants, six reported time-related factors restricting the use of action-based methods. All the answers included some type of hurry or lack of time. Teacher 1 also mentioned that they did not find time for action-based teaching. When asked for reasons they told that, for instance, various theme days reduced the number of lessons that were already limited before the additional theme days. Furthermore, as seen in Extract 13, Teacher 1 wanted to focus on teaching grammar and prepare their students for bigger exams before ending lower secondary school. Therefore, they did not have as much time to use action-based instruction.

(13) *"Mulla on kuitenkin se tähtäin sinne ysiluokan loppuun, niin noihin kokeisiin mitkä siellä on. (→) Mä haluan tehdä ne tietyt kieliooppiasiat niin käydä heidän (oppilaiden) kanssa läpi."*

"I am aiming to the end of ninth grade to the exams that there is. (→) I want to go through the certain grammatical aspects with them (students)". (Teacher 1)

Teacher 1 continued that on occasions tasks planned take up more time than planned because the students are not interested in the tasks or used to them, hence, being resistant. They added that it is not the students' fault but to save time it has been easier to not use action-based methods. Teacher 2 reported time-related restrictions, too. They elaborated that on occasions action-based activities can take up the whole lesson because the tasks take time to complete, and they also need to be gone through together. These results, again, correlate with Savolainen et al. (2018) findings that action-based tasks can be time-consuming to plan and execute.

5.5.4 Group size-related factors

The final category of factors restricting the use of action-based methods were related to size. First, six of the 22 participants, in addition with both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2, reported that the size of the group was a reducing factor. If the groups have too many students, one teacher may not be enough to arrange and maintain more complicated tasks. The factor of group size is closely related to student-related factors discussed in

section 5.5.1. However, since the students have no control to the large groups, I have chosen to present this factor under size-related factors.

In addition to group-size, four of the 22 participants and both interviewees mentioned that some spaces are not suitable for action-based methods for them being too small or in an unsuitable place. Savolainen et al. (2018) found similar limitations related to size in their study. Additionally, Teacher 2 described how their class was situated in the middle of the hallway and passing students would most often do damage to the materials if they were situated outside the classroom. They continued that, in some cases, both size-related factors can even overlap (Extract 14).

(14) *"Luokassa ollaan (oppilaat) ihan sillit suolassa ja pulpetit vierekkäin. (--)* Jos on ihan super iso ryhmä (--), 24 tai 26 (oppilasta) jopa joskus, niin ei pysty. Se on niin härvellystä se koko systeemi, et ei siitä tuu ehkä mitään muuta, kun ehkä hallaa ja hermojen menetystä."

"In the classroom (students) are so side-by-side and desks together. (--) If the group is super big (--), 24 or 26 (students) even sometimes, then you can't. It's just gimmicked, the whole system, so nothing else results, except harm and the loss of temper." (Teacher 2)

Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 pointed out that if the number of students was lower and classroom sizes bigger, it would make action-based teaching easier. These restrictions are, therefore, perhaps caused by lack of resources in the educational system.

5.6 Benefits of action-based teaching according to Finnish EFL teachers

In this section, I will present the results to the questionnaire's eight question concerning teachers' thoughts of the benefits of action-based methods. Two main categories could be formed from the 26 answers: *benefits to learning* and *social and emotional benefits*, and they are presented in Table 6. It is noteworthy that some of the benefits are intertwined to each other, as, for example, positive feelings can create a more welcoming atmosphere. In addition, some participants mentioned factors from both categories.

TABLE 6 Finnish EFL teachers' (n=26) answers to the question: *What kind of advantages do action-based methods have in your opinion?*

Benefits to learning	Emotional and social benefits
Physical activity	Positive feelings
Learner agency	Welcoming atmosphere
Considering various senses and learning styles	Interaction

5.6.1 Benefits to learning

Out of the 26 participants, 20 participants found that action-based methods benefited learning. As the definitions given by the participants could indicate, physical activity was reported as a beneficial factor to learning by 10 of the 20 participants. Many added that physical activity would benefit learning since it, for instance, enables movement to the learning process, and learners can combine the movement to the learning material. These answers correspond to Leskinen et al. (2016, pp. 14–16), as they discussed the importance of physical activity to learning. In addition, seven of the 20 participants mentioned that action-based teaching activated the students. Out of these answers, two contained the idea of *learner agency* (van Lier 2007), as five did not elaborate on whether they meant physical or mental activity as a beneficial factor.

In addition to the activation of the students, other benefits to learning were mentioned. From the 20 answers, four answers included the idea that action-based methods enhanced memorization. Furthermore, three of the 20 responses reported that teaching was more diverse when action-based methods were used (Extract 15).

(15) “(--) *Tarjoaa (oppilaille) erilaisia mahdollisuuksia näyttää osaamistaan.*”

“(--) *Offers (students) different kinds of opportunities to show their skills.*” (Teacher 8)

According to the responses, the methods considered various types of learners, thus, enabling learning to a larger number of students. As Extract 15 indicated, the participants noted that action-based teaching gives students various types of opportunities

to present their knowledge. These responses correlate with Leskinen et al. (2016, pp. 14–16) who pointed out that the diverse use of senses and learning skills is beneficial for a variety of learners, and closely relate to Hahl and Keinänen’s (2021) findings that action-based teaching provided opportunities to differentiate learning. In addition, eight of the 20 participants considered that action-based teaching benefited learning because it brought change to “normal” instruction (Extract 16). They elaborated that, for instance, the traditional schoolbooks were not used in action-based teaching, and that the learning occurred through playing and games which might not feel as learning to the students, i.e., students would learn by accident.

(16) *“Vaihtelua normi pännttämiseen.”*

“A change to usual cramming.” (Teacher 9)

Motivation was found as a benefit to learning by 11 of the 20 participants. They mentioned that students would, for example, get more excited about learning and achieve feelings of success when action-based methods were used in teaching. One of the participants replied that the students preferred action-based teaching more than regular instruction. Additionally, four of the 11 participants mentioned that the instruction could be tied more closely to realistic situations which increased motivation. These answers correlate to, for instance, Sergejeff (2007) and Savolainen et al. (2018) discussing the importance of enjoyment and motivation to the learning process, as well as Leskinen et al. (2016) and Savolainen et al. (2018) noting that motivation can be increased by connecting the instruction to more realistic situations.

5.6.2 Emotional and social benefits

Out of the 26 participants, seven participants pointed out that the groups’ social environment benefited from action-based teaching. First, five of the seven answers reported that, for instance, playing and humor resulted in students’ positive feelings, such as happiness and having fun. As seen in Extract 17, action-based methods were recalled being meaningful for the students, creating a welcoming atmosphere for the students to attend class.

(17) *"Toiminnalliset menetelmät ovat mielekkäitä oppilaille. Enkun tunneille on kiva tulla."*

"Action-based methods are meaningful for the students. It's nice to come to English class." (Teacher 10)

The positive feelings were seen to enhance the learning process by one of the seven participants, too. They elaborated that if the students had more positive feelings, they would also learn better. Furthermore, two of the seven participants mentioned that action-based methods increased the groups' team spirit, when the students interacted with each other. All these findings correspond with previous studies (see e.g., Hahl and Keinänen, 2021; Leskinen et al. 2016; Savolainen et al. 2018) on the emotional and social benefits of action-based methods.

5.7 Challenges of action-based methods

Next, I will present the results to the questionnaire's final question aiming to find out Finnish EFL teachers' perceptions on challenges action-based teaching might cause in the lower secondary school environment. All the 26 participants reported some challenges, although two participants began their answer by reporting that they did not find any challenges. I have divided the challenges into two categories: *challenges related to students* and *challenges related to the environment and time*, and they can be seen in Table 7. It should be noted that many participants found challenges from both categories. Moreover, some of the challenges were closely related to the restrictions mentioned in section 5.5.

TABLE 7 Finnish EFL teachers' (n=26) answers to the question: *What kind of challenges do action-based methods have in your opinion?*

Challenges related to students	Challenges related to the environment and time
restlessness	noise
comprehension of responsibilities	classroom and group size
personal features and preferences	lack of time
students' needs	

5.7.1 Challenges related to students

From the 26 participants, 22 participants reported challenges related to students. I further divided the student-related challenges into four subcategories: *restlessness, comprehension of responsibilities, personal features and preferences* as well as *students' needs*.

Restlessness in students was mentioned by nine of the 22 participants. According to them, action-based activities caused restlessness among students, and already restless students would get even more agitated. One participant continued that they only used the methods occasionally to avoid these situations. Some participants also described that especially tasks involving movement and competition could further create restlessness and even conflicts among students. Nevertheless, the conflicts were reported being rare (Extract 18).

(18) *“Levottomien ryhmien kanssa kisaaminen saattaa johtaa konflikteihin oppilaiden välillä jos kilpailuhenki on liiallista tai oppilaiden välillä on riitaa tms. Tätä tapahtuu kuitenkin harvoin.”*

“With restless groups the competing can result in conflicts between the students if there is too much competitiveness or there is quarrel between students or something similar. This, however, happens rarely.” (Teacher 11)

In addition to restlessness, eight participants from the 22 pointed out that some students were not able to comprehend their responsibilities in action-based teaching. Three of the six participants reported that not all students either perceived the action-based tasks necessary or comprehend that the tasks had learning goals. Thus, the students did not focus on learning while completing the task but instead focus was on the game, for instance. The other three participants, on the other hand, noted that not all students understood or took their responsibilities of completing the tasks seriously. These students would then not either do the tasks properly or participate in the completion of the tasks (Extract 19). Savolainen et. al (2018) found similar results, as they reported that from the teachers' perspective some students did not participate in the activities like they were required to.

(19) *“Vapaammassa tilanteissa enemmän mahdollisuuksia "lusmuilla" ja tehdä kaikkea muuta.”*

“In more free situations there are more chances to “weasel” and do everything else.” (Teacher 3)

The students' personal features and preferences as challenges were mentioned by six of the 22 participants. First, two of the six participants pointed out that shy students would at times have difficulties participating in action-based tasks involving interaction with their peers. Second, introvert students were also mentioned twice. According to these participants, introverted students were seen uncomfortable participating. Moreover, they reported that some students perceived action-based tasks more tiring than activities from schoolbooks. Finally, two of the participants noted that not all students seemed to prefer action-based activities. According to the participants, these students would have preferred to do activities from the schoolbooks instead (Extract 20).

(20) *"Kaikki (oppilaat) eivät innostu toiminnallisista tehtävistä, vaan tekisivät mieluummin vaikka kirjan tehtäviä."*

"All (students) don't get excited about action-based tasks but instead they'd rather do, for example, the book's exercises." (Teacher 12)

Two of the 22 participants mentioning student-related challenges pointed out the students' needs to be considered. As the other participant described that students needing support in their cognitive control could create more disruption in action-based teaching, the other participant reported that neuropsychological students did not feel comfortable when tasks would create a restless environment.

5.7.2 Challenges related to the environment and time

All in all, ten participants mentioned challenges related to the environment and time. Eight of the ten participants pointed out that challenges with the environment caused difficulties carrying out action-based instruction. Seven of these participants reported that action-based teaching would sometimes increase the volume in the classroom that could then disturb the students participating in the teaching as well as other people working close by. Moreover, two participants reported that the noise levels would increase especially with larger groups of students. The other one elaborated that the noise would get loud when action-based tasks involved games and excitement (Extract 21).

(21) *“Isossa oppilasryhmässä tulee helposti kova meteli, kun esim. pelataan tai oppilaat innostuvat kovasti tehtävästä.”*

“Larger groups of students easily create loud noises when e.g., playing games or the students get really excited about the task.” (Teacher 13)

One of the eight participants discussing challenges with the environment noted that the size-related issues caused challenges in executing action-based teaching. They reported that both the large size of the group as well as the restricted amount of space or the unsuitability of the classrooms made action-based teaching more challenging. Another participant had suggested that if the teaching spaces could be adapted according to the instruction, executing classroom stations and drama in teaching would be easier (Extract 22).

(22) *“Olisi mahtavaa, jos olisi muunneltavia tiloja, niin voisi tehdä esim. pistetyöskentelyä tai draama/näytelmiä aivan toisin.”*

“It would be awesome if there were adaptable spaces, so you could do e.g., classroom stations and drama / plays in whole different way.” (Teacher 14)

Two of the ten participants brought up that time was a challenge in action-based activities. Both participants reported that planning and executing tasks would sometimes take up too much time compared to the wanted results. The other participant recalled that to make sure that the task would be efficient, it was up to the teacher’s planning, instructing of the task and experience. They continued that experience was important since it showed them what tasks work in practice (Extract 23).

(23) *“Tehtävä ja tehtävänanto on mietittävä ja ohjeistettava tarkasti, jotta aktiviteetin hyöty ajankäyttöön nähden on tasapainossa. Kokemus opettaa, mikä toimii ja mikä ei.”*

“The task and the instructions need to be thought through and given carefully, so that the task’s benefit balances with the time it takes. Experience teachers what works and what doesn’t.” (Teacher 15)

5.8 The teacher’s role in action-based teaching

Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 were asked to explain how they see the role of the teacher in action-based teaching. Because the questionnaire did not contain a question concerning this topic, this section will contain results from the interviews only. Both interviewed teachers described that instead being in a leadership role, the teacher’s role

was more of a supervisor and a mentor. Teacher 2 continued that it is not always possible but when it is, instead of being a “traditional” teacher, the role consists of coaching and enabling learning (Extract 24).

(24) *”Vähän sellaista coachaamista mitä niinku haluttais että me (opettajat) oltas, vaikka nyt ei kaikissa tilanteissa toimi. Siis tavallaan just se niinku tilanteen mahdollistaja ja ohajaaja, mut et niinkään se opettaja ehkä siinä.”*

”A bit like coaching is what is wanted that we (teachers) would be, although it doesn't work in all situations. In a sense, the situation's enabler and supervisor, but not really the teacher, perhaps.” (Teacher 2)

Teacher 1 elaborated more on what the role of coaching meant to them. They discussed the importance of instructing the tasks clearly as well as planning beforehand on the means to go through the task after completing it to ensure that the learning goal is achieved (Extract 25). This corresponds to Fischer (2021) and Piccardo (2014, p. 27) since they both noted that for an action-based task to be successful the teacher needs to set clear goals and provide roles for each student.

(25) *”Teen hyvin selväksi ohjeet. (-- Pitää myös miettiä, et miten sen (tehtävän) käy läpi. Et ei voi vaan jättää lillumaan tehtävää, et joku voi tehdä sen ihan vasemmalla kädellä vaan se pitää myös purkaa.”*

”I provide the instructions very clearly. (-- You must also think about how to go through it (the activity). You can't just leave the activity to hang, then someone can do it sloppily, but you also need to go through it.” (Teacher 1)

During the completion of the activity, Teacher 1 pointed out that their role was to be a supervisor. They observed that all students followed the given instructions and if needed, directed them to the actual task. Finally, they noted that their role was to encourage the students to perform well (Extract 26).

(26) *”Kun ne (oppilaat) tekee sen ohjeen mukaan, nii mä seuraan. (-- Ja sit ku mä huomaan, et okei tossa nyt joku ei mee, ei natsannu, nii sitä mä käyn niinku ohjeistamassa uudestaan. (-- Mun tehtävää on ehkä enemmän tsempata siinä.”*

”When they (students) do according to the instructions, I observe. (-- And when I notice that okay, something's not right, I go instruct again. (-- My role is maybe more to encourage.” (Teacher 2)

These insights correlate with the definition of action-based teaching because for van Lier's (2007) learner agency to be achieved, the students need to be mentally active in the completion of the tasks. Moreover, encouragement can enhance the students'

feelings on safe environment, which is important to achieve in action-based teaching, according to Sergejeff (2008, p. 83).

6 DISCUSSION

In this thesis, I have discussed the concept of action-based teaching. It originates from Kolb's (2015) experiential learning approach, and the focus is on a mentally active learner learning through interaction with their environment. Because the FNCC (2014) mentions that action-based methods should be used in various ways in instruction, the study aimed to find out Finnish EFL teachers' perceptions on this concept. Now, I will consider possible implications of the results as well as suggest some improvements and ideas for future research.

According to the results, Finnish EFL teachers associate physical activity rather strongly to the term of action-based teaching. One reason for this could be that the Finnish term functionality (*toiminnallisuus*) closely relates to the term action (*toiminta*), and action could be understood as physical movement. Another reason could be that action-based teaching has various definitions overall. Some researchers define action-based teaching to include physical activity in Finnish literature (see e.g., Leskinen et al., 2016). Furthermore, the term functionality is used in the FNCC (2014) multiple times without a definition. The readers themselves have to then come up with a definition based on the examples given in the FNCC (2014).

Although under half of the participants noted the concept of *learner agency* in their definitions, some answers included the ideas of the concept without it being mentioned. For example, van Lier's (2007) learner agency and Aheran's (2001) emphasis

on the importance of social interaction were mentioned straightforwardly by only a few teachers, but other teachers brought up the ideas of these terms in their other answers. Furthermore, when the teachers discussed the methods they used in their action-based teaching, many mentioned games as an example. When participating in gameplay, the learners need to be mentally active, adapting their gained knowledge to succeed. Moreover, all three of the method categories involved interaction either with the environment or with others. Hence, it could be that even though the teachers' focus is essentially on physical movement, their methods involve learner agency and interaction, too.

The FNCC (2014) should be viewed critically. Since it requires teachers to use action-based methods as a part of their instruction, a clear definition should be provided. This would ensure that more teachers would be aware of the meaning that the FNCC (2014) aims for, as now it is up to the reader to interpret the meaning. In addition, according to the results of this study, time-related challenges seemed to cause difficulties in executing action-based teaching. Not finding time as well as all teachers not perhaps being aware of action-based methods in teaching raises the question of how this can be because the FNCC (2014) requires the use of these methods as a part of instruction.

The interviewees thought that the teacher has a significant role in action-based teaching. The teacher was seen to be in a more mentoring role, encouraging the students to succeed on their own. This role could be difficult for some teachers since it requires them to trust the students to do on their own. On the other hand, some participants viewed the methods as fun and extra as opposed to *normal* instruction: action-based teaching was used as a break from actual instruction. In addition, teaching preferences and the teachers' perceptions of action-based teaching were mentioned as limiting the use of these methods. Although all the study's participants viewed action-based teaching from a mostly beneficial and positive point of view, it was implied that it might not be a case in all situations: some teachers might not use action-based teaching

because they do not prefer it. These results raise the question that if the FNCC (2014) requires the use of action-based methods, why do some teachers view the methods not being a part of normal instruction, and others might not use them due to personal preferences.

The results also indicate that teachers generally use action-based teaching regularly. Nevertheless, the overall results indicate that many teachers may perhaps not know that action-based teaching can involve methods in which students work individually. Therefore, they may have not considered these types of methods while reporting the frequency, and the actual frequency levels could be higher. On the other hand, the frequency levels could also be lower than the results show: only Teacher 1 reported using action-based teaching more rarely than monthly. It could be that teachers not using action-based instruction did not participate in this study, since they did not find the topic relevant to them or did not understand the concept. Thus, the frequency levels found should be viewed critically.

The benefits found in the study were deeply intertwined with each other. Most teachers found that action-based teaching had advantages to learning through either physical or mental activation of the students. In addition, the social and emotional benefits found could enhance the learning process. As action-based tasks mostly involved interaction, it could increase the relationships between the students. Moreover, this could create positive feelings and a more welcoming atmosphere among the students. This could increase the students' participation to the teaching and enhance learning. All in all, it seems like all participants viewed action-based teaching beneficial.

Students' behavior and motivation were mentioned as restrictions by many of the participants. Because lower secondary students are usually from ages 13 to 15, age could be an affecting factor. Students usually experience changes at that stage of their lives which can lead to difficult behavior that restricts instruction. Additionally, these limitations could be due to students being more self-conscious or perceiving methods,

such as drama and playing, embarrassing since they require students to perform in front of their peers. Nonetheless, some teachers reported that the students got excited when action-based methods were used. This could indicate that making students used to the methods could also increase the participation and enthusiasm. Additionally, the results, as well as previous research (see e.g., Sergejeff, 2007), present that a safe environment is required for all students to feel encouraged to participate, emphasizing the role of the teacher. Finally, it should be remembered that not all methods are suitable for all learners, and it is up to the teacher to decide what kind of methods fit their students best.

The lack of resources seemed to cause both challenges and restrictions. First, lack of space and large group-size were mentioned by many of the teachers. According to the results, these factors can also create more difficulties considering, for instance, the environment: small classrooms full of excited students may cause loud noises. These challenges may be due to lack of resources in the educational field altogether. In addition, time-related constraints were discussed by many of the teachers. Teachers do already have a great deal of work. Therefore, action-based teaching can require extra effort from the teachers since they may need to plan and modify tasks, for instance. Considering that the FNCC (2014) requires teachers to use action-based teaching, the lack of ready materials seems odd. As Hahl and Keinänen (2021) found, schoolbooks barely include tasks following the action-based approach. Thus, it could be that teachers would use action-based teaching more if they were aware of resources from which they could find materials. This could indicate that teachers should be offered more support and training on action-based teaching, starting with providing tools on it already in teacher education.

Even though teachers seemed to elaborate more on the restrictions and challenges as opposed to benefits of action-based teaching, the benefits seem to overrule the challenging factors. For instance, four teachers did not find restricting factors to action-based teaching. Moreover, when the teachers were asked to elaborate on the challenges the approach possibly had, two participants in the questionnaire as well as

Teacher 2 indicated that the challenges were usually not impossible to overcome. In addition, although the frequency levels should be viewed critically, all but one teacher seemed to use the approach regularly in their teaching. If the restrictions and challenges were more powerful than the benefits, the frequency of the teaching would more likely have been lower.

All in all, the results indicate that teachers do not view action-based teaching as broadly as it is perhaps thought in the FNCC (2014). Yet, their action-based methods include elements from a broader context. Moreover, all teachers may not be aware of the FNCC (2014) requirements of using action-based methods variously and regularly. The role of the FNCC (2014) should, thus, be viewed critically. Teachers understand their important role in the approach, and even though they find challenges and restrictions related to the approach, the benefits seem to outweigh them.

This study has both strengths and weaknesses. The study's aim was to provide the teachers' perspective on action-based teaching in the lower secondary school environment, and it succeeded in it. The data gathering methods used in the study were suitable for the given context because they enabled participants from all over Finland to participate, providing a broader understanding of the topic. However, it should be noted that because of the low participation, the results of the study cannot be generalized. The data analysis was done transparently, and clear examples of the analysis are provided throughout the results sections. All in all, this study provides useful insights to the topic and can guide future research.

Action-based foreign language teaching should be researched more widely. It would be interesting to see how the results would be affected if the participants were provided with a definition of action-based teaching beforehand. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to find insight on what the actual frequency of action-based teaching is, and the reasons on why some teachers might not use the methods. Finally, the lower secondary school students' perceptions should be researched. All the study's findings

consider the teachers' perspective, and it would be interesting to see whether the perspectives of teachers and students correlate or not.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN FINNISH

Toiminnallisuus yläkoulun englannin kielen opetuksessa

Pakolliset kysymykset merkitty tähdellä (*)

Arvoisa Vastaaja,

Tervetuloa vastaamaan kyselyyni toiminnallisuudesta yläkoulun englannin kielen opetuksessa. Kysely on osa pro gradututkielmaani ja suunnattu englantia yläkoulussa opettaville opettajille. Kyselyssä on sekä monivalintakysymyksiä että avoimia kysymyksiä ja vastaaminen kestää noin 5-10 minuuttia. Voit myös tallentaa aloittamasi kyselyn ja jatkaa vastaamista myöhemmin. Muista painaa "Lähetä"-painiketta lopuksi lähettääksesi vastauksesi.

Osallistuminen on täysin vapaaehtoista ja sen voi keskeyttää missä tahansa vaiheessa. Vastaaminen tapahtuu anonymisti, joten osallistuja ei ole tunnistettavissa antamiensa vastausten perusteella. Tutkimuksessa kerättyjä tietoja käsitellään luottamuksellisesti, ja ne hävitetään tutkimuksen päätyttyä. Lisätietoja saat tietosuojailmoituksesta.

Mikäli olet kiinnostunut osallistumaan haastatteluun, jätäthän yhteystietosi kyselyn päätteeksi olevaan lomakkeeseen. Yhteystietoja ei voida yhdistää kyselyn vastauksiisi.

Jos sinulle herää kysymyksiä, olethan yhteydessä sähköpostitse:

Isa Rautio

isa.a.rautio@student.jyu.fi

Kiitos jo etukäteen yhteistyöstä!

1. Olen lukenut ja ymmärtänyt yllä olevan tietosuojalomakkeen. Vakuutan olevani vähintään 18-vuotias ja kuuluvani kyselyn kohderyhmään. Ymmärrän, että osallistumiseni on vapaaehtoista ja antamiani tietoja käsitellään luottamuksellisesti. *

- Olen ymmärtänyt, ja haluan osallistua tutkimukseen.

* * *

**2. Kuinka monta vuotta olet toiminut englannin kielen opettajana yhteensä?
(kaikki opetuksen asteet) ***

- alle 2 vuotta
- 3-5 vuotta
- 6-10 vuotta
- 11-20 vuotta
- Yli 20 vuotta

3. Kuinka monta vuotta olet toiminut englannin kielen opettajana yläkoulussa? *

- alle 2 vuotta
- 3-5 vuotta
- 6-10 vuotta
- 11-20 vuotta
- Yli 20 vuotta

* * *

4. Kuinka määrittelisit käsitteen toiminnallinen kielenopetus? *

* * *

Seuraavat kysymykset koskevat **yläkoulun** englannin kielen opetusta.

5. Kuinka usein käytät toiminnallisia opetusmenetelmiä opetuksessasi? *

- Päivittäin
- Viikoittain
- Kuukausittain
- Harvemmin
- En koskaan

6. Millä kielen osa-alueilla hyödynnät toiminnallisia opetusmenetelmiä? (voit valita useita) *

- Sanasto
- Kielioppi
- Kulttuuri
- Muut teemat (esim. tekstikirjan aihealueet)
- Luetun ymmärtäminen
- Kuullun ymmärtäminen
- Kirjoittaminen
- Puhuminen
- Muu, mikä?

7. Mitä toiminnallisia opetusmenetelmiä opetukseesi kuuluu? *

* * *

Seuraava kysymys koskee **yläkoulun** englannin kielen opetusta.

8. Rajoittaako jokin toiminnallisuuden hyödyntämistä opetuksessasi? *

- Kyllä, mikä?
- Ei

* * *

Seuraavat kysymykset koskevat **yläkoulun** englannin kielen opetusta.

9. Mitä hyötyjä toiminnalliseen opetukseen mielestäsi liittyy? *

10. Mitä haittoja toiminnalliseen opetukseen mielestäsi liittyy? *

* * *

Jätäthän yhteystietosi alla olevan linkin lomakkeeseen, mikäli olet halukas osallistumaan n. 30 min kestoiseen haastatteluun yläkoulussa esiintyvään toiminnalliseen kielinopetukseen liittyen. Yhteystietojasi ei voida yhdistää aiempiin vastauksiisi. Tämä ei sido sinua mihinkään, voit kieltäytyä haastattelusta myöhemmin.

* * *

Kiitos vastauksesta!

APPENDIX 2: THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

Action-based teaching in lower secondary schools

Mandatory questions are marked with a star *

1. I have read and understood the data protection form above. I guarantee I am at least 18 years old and belong to the target group. I understand that I'm participating voluntarily and that the information I give will be stored responsibly. *

- I have understood, and I want to participate in the study.

* * *

2. How many years have you worked as an English teacher altogether all levels of education) *

- Under 2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- Over 20 years

3. How many years have you worked as an English teacher in a lower secondary school? *

- Under 2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- Over 20 years

* * *

4. How would you define the term action-based language teaching? *

* * *

The following questions consider **lower secondary school** English teaching.

5. How often do you use action-based teaching methods in your teaching? *

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- More rarely
- Never

6. In which sections of language do you use action-based teaching methods? (you can choose several) *

- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Culture
- Other themes (e.g., textbook's themes)
- Reading comprehension
- Listening comprehension
- Writing
- Oral skills
- Other, what?

7. What kind of action-based teaching methods does your teaching include? *

* * *

The following questions consider **lower secondary school** English teaching.

8. Does something restrict the use of action-based instruction in your teaching? *

- Yes, what?
- No

* * *

The following questions consider **lower secondary school** English teaching.

9. What advantages do you think action-based teaching has? *

10. What disadvantages do you think action-based teaching has? *

* * *

Please leave your contact information to the link below if you are willing to participate in around 30-minute-long interview considering action-based foreign language teaching in lower secondary schools. Your contact information cannot be connected to your previous answers. This does not oblige you to anything, you can decline from the interview later.

* * *

Thank you for your response!

APPENDIX 3 : INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Kuinka monta vuotta olet toiminut englannin opettajana** / *How many years have you been as a teacher*
 - a. **yhteensä?** / *in total?*
 - b. **yläkoulussa?** / *as an EFL teacher in lower secondary schools?*
2. **Kuinka määrittelisit käsitteen toiminnallinen kielenopetus?** / *How would you define the term action-based language teaching?*
3. **Kuinka usein käytät toiminnallisia menetelmiä englannin kielen opetuksesi?** / *How often do you use action-based methods in your teaching?*
4. **Millaisia tehtäviä useimmiten käytät?** / *What kind of methods do you usually use?*
 - a. **Mistä löydät ne?** / *Where do you find them?*
5. **Rajoittaako tietyt tekijät toiminnallisten menetelmien käyttämistä yläkoulussa? Mitkä ja miten?** / *Do some aspects restrict the use of action-based methods in lower secondary schools? What and how?*
6. **Mikä lisäisi toiminnallisten menetelmien käyttämistä yläkoulussa?** / *What aspects would increase the use of action-based methods in lower secondary schools?*
7. **Oletko käynyt koulutuksia toiminnalliseen opetukseen liittyen?** / *Have you ever received any training on action-based methods?*
 - a. **Koetko tarvitsevasi lisäkoulutusta aiheesta?** / *Do you feel like you would need more training on this?*
 - b. **Oletko etsinyt lisätietoa toiminnallisesta kielenopetuksesta?** / *Have you done research on action-based teaching?*
8. **Millainen on opettajan rooli toiminnallisessa opetuksessa?** / *What is the teacher's role in action-based teaching?*
9. **Anna konkreettinen esimerkki onnistuneesta toiminnallisesta aktiviteetista.** / *Give a concrete example of a successful action-based activity.*