

PROMOTION OF LEARNER AUTONOMY IN THE EFL
CLASSROOM:
The students' view

Master's thesis
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Oppijan autonomisuudella tarkoitetaan oppijan sisäistä kykyä hallita omaa oppimistaan, eli kykyä asettaa omia oppimistarpeita vastaavia tavoitteita, toimia näiden tavoitteiden mukaisesti, ja arvioida omaa etenemistä. Kirjallisuuden mukaan formaali opetus voi joko edistää tai ehkäistä oppijan autonomisuuden kehitystä.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää, missä määrin opiskelijoiden mielestä oppijan autonomisuutta edistetään lukion englannin kielen opetuksessa sekä kuinka tyytyväisiä opiskelijat ovat kokemaansa oppijan autonomisuuden edistämiseen. Tutkimuksen aineisto kerättiin kyselylomakkeella, jonka jälkeen aineisto analysoitiin kvantitatiivisesti.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat ensinnäkin, että pääsääntöisesti lukio-opiskelijat kokivat oppijan autonomisuutta edistettävän lukion englannin kielen opetuksessa melko usein. Toisaalta tulokset osoittavat myös, että opiskelijat kokivat joitain oppijan autonomisuuden osa-alueita edistettävän useammin kuin toisia.</p> <p>Toisekseen tutkimustulosten perusteella voitiin päätellä, että lukio-opiskelijat olivat jokseenkin tyytyväisiä siihen, missä määrin he kokivat oppijan autonomisuutta edistettävän. Koska opiskelijoiden tyytyväisyys korreloi koetun oppijan autonomisuuden edistämisen kanssa, voitiin tulosten perusteella päätellä, että mitä enemmän opiskelijat kokivat oppijan autonomisuutta edistettävän, sitä tyytyväisempiä he olivat, ja päinvastoin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että avoin keskustelu ja opetusmenetelmien reflektointi takaavat sen, että oppijan autonomisuuden kehitystä tuetaan opetuksessa tarpeeksi.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Due to the wide acceptance of learner-centered methods and approaches to teaching foreign languages, more weight is currently put on the role of the learner in the learning process. No more are learners viewed as passive recipients of information, but as active interpreters and processors of knowledge, which they seek based on their own interests and needs. This interest in the learner's role in the learning process has given rise to the concept of *learner autonomy*, which means the learner's ability to control and take responsibility of his or her own learning.

Learner autonomy has received much attention in research and education lately. In addition to the emergence of learner-centered approaches to teaching, the importance of learner autonomy is justified for various reasons. Firstly, it is argued that autonomous learners are more efficient learners. This argument is often justified on the grounds that being able to take responsibility of one's own learning implies the presence of such attributes as intrinsic motivation, metacognitive skills and awareness of the subject in question and of learning as a process, all of which have been related to efficient learning.

Secondly, being able to control one's own learning implies life-long learning, which is a necessity in today's world in which globalization and the development of information technology have led to a fast exchange of vast amounts of information. As formal teaching simply cannot keep up with the continuous changes, learners need to be able to process some of that information on their own, i.e. autonomously.

Thirdly, as autonomous learning is characterized by critical evaluation of and reflection on information, learner autonomy also implies active and critical participation in the community, which is a prerequisite of development on a larger scale. This active, critical citizenship is related to the concept of *personal autonomy*, which is said to develop from learner autonomy. As personal autonomy is related to such important issues as freedom of choice and individuals' mutual appreciation of one another, the importance of learner autonomy on a larger scale becomes evident.

Although learner autonomy has caught the attention of many scholars and practitioners in the past few decades, interestingly it has not been studied much. It seems to be a concept the importance of which is widely recognized, but which no one seems to be able to grasp. As learning, and language learning, in specific, is a complex phenomenon, so seems to be learner autonomy. It is probably due to this complex and multidimensional nature of learner autonomy that it has not been studied that widely, at least not to the extent the increased interest in the concept would suggest. Nevertheless, this study took the challenge. In particular, this study focused on students' perceptions of the promotion of learner autonomy in the context of English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland.

The aim of the present study was to examine the extent to which learner autonomy is perceived to be promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. In particular, the interest was in *the students' views*; it was thought that as learning is an innate phenomenon and learner autonomy is an innate capacity, students should have a say in the teaching practices they encounter in the classroom. Furthermore, as learner autonomy is all about the learners getting their voices heard, it was fairly natural to study the promotion of learner autonomy from the viewpoint of the students. As the promotion of learner autonomy has not been studied much, the present study aimed at forming as wide a view of the issue as was possible with the limited resources, which is why a quantitative method was chosen for this study. The data was collected with a questionnaire from 2nd and 3rd year level upper secondary school students. The responses were compared by the participants' gender, age, course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade in order to see whether such background variables had an effect on the answers. The findings of this study can be used as a reference when reflecting on teaching practices, especially when the aim is to see whether some aspects of teaching could be revised when it comes to the promotion of learner autonomy.

As learner autonomy is a multidimensional and complex concept, the present study will begin by defining it as well as by reviewing its interdisciplinary background. In chapter 3 the practical implementation of learner autonomy in the context of formal education will be discussed. In chapter 4 the theoretical background of the promotion of learner autonomy will be reviewed, and its

operationalization will be explained. In chapter 5 some of the studies on the issue will be reviewed. In chapter 6 the methodology of the present study will be described. Chapter 7 will report the findings. Finally, in chapter 8, the results will be discussed in the light of previous studies. The present study will be concluded with an evaluation of the study and suggestions for further research.

2 LEARNER AUTONOMY

Although autonomous language learning has existed for as long as humans have used language to communicate with the environment, the concept has received conscious attention in the field of language education only for a few decades, but increasingly so. The emergence of autonomy as associated with learning can be dated back to the wider social changes concerning politics, education and psychology in the 1960s (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 152-154). Since then the interest in learner autonomy has grown, and currently the concept intrigues numerous scholars around the world. Learner autonomy can even be seen as one of the most important goals of education in Finland in such ideas as *participatory citizenship*, *life-long learning* and *self-development* introduced in the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2003: 12), all of which are key features in learner autonomy. There are numerous reasons for the increased interest in learner autonomy, but mainly the development of information technology and globalization has shown that since institutionalised education simply cannot keep up with the continuous changes, learners need to be able to process information on their own – autonomously.

Even though learner autonomy has received interest in the field of education, and in language learning in specific, its definition tends to vary in the literature. However, there seems to be a general agreement on a definition first introduced by Henri Holec, a prominent figure in the field of learner autonomy, in a project report to the Council of Europe in 1980: “autonomy is...the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec 1980: 3). Although agreed upon, the definition is still quite vague and open to various interpretations. In this section, therefore, the concept is explored at length. Firstly, in section 2.1, the historical background and diversified nature of the concept is reviewed, starting from its

philosophical roots in the ideas of such great thinkers as Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill, and moving on to its political roots in the educational reform and change in the political climate in the 1960s. In section 2.2, the definition of learner autonomy is reviewed by exploring the previously introduced definition in greater detail. Lastly, in section 2.3, the present trends around autonomy in language education are reviewed.

2.1 History of learner autonomy

Although learner autonomy has gained interest in the field of language education only in the past few decades, the historical roots of the concept in other fields go further back. However, since learning, at least in the evolutionary sense as adaptation, has existed from the beginning of life, and language learning, in specific, for as long as humans have used language to communicate with the environment, autonomous language learning as an *attribute* dates back to prehistoric times. Although learner autonomy predates and is independent from institutionalised education, due to formal education the innate attribute has been given a name and brought to conscious attention.

Although learner autonomy is a fairly recent concept, the etymology of autonomy goes further back to the sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, in which it was first applied to states and institutions free from external control (Benson 2011: 50, Benson and Voller 1997: 4). Only later was it applied to individuals, and at first solely in the field of philosophy. The ideas of such philosophers as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) can be seen as a basis of the modern view of autonomy (Benson 2011: 50). Both philosophers emphasized the importance of free will as a basis of a working society: for Kant and Mill, individuals' strive for individual freedom, both their own and others', leads to a society of mutual respect and freedom in which no-one treats others as means towards ends but as ends in themselves. In the ideas of these philosophers can be seen the confidence in the innate goodness and skills of an individual, which is the fundamental idea in learner autonomy as well.

Educational reform and the philosophers and educators involved in it finally linked autonomy to the fields of learning and education. Jean-Jacques Rousseau

(1712-78), with his classic work on education, *Emile*, has had a great impact on later thinkers and educators (Benson 2011: 27-36). Rousseau was, first of all, an advocate of the innate goodness and abilities of individuals like Kant and Mill. In addition, his ideas entail such fundamental ideas of autonomy as learning through natural, authentic phenomena, and learner's responsibility for learning. Similarly, John Dewey (1859-1952) emphasized the importance of interaction with the authentic environment and problem-solving as a source of learning (Benson 2011: 29-30). However, as a pragmatist, Dewey's ideas are less romantic and more practical: according to him, the aim of education is in participation in social and political life, which is learned in the collaborative environment of a classroom. Consequently, Dewey has had an influence on learner autonomy on a practical rather than on an ideological level.

In addition to Rousseau's and Dewey's rather naturalistic approaches to education, there have been more radical and political contributors to learner autonomy. Paolo Freire (1921-97), for example, believed that learning is, instead of adaptation to the existing state of affairs, transformation of individuals and social realities (Benson 2011: 31-32). According to Ivan Illich (1926-), on the other hand, formal education is unnecessary for learning, harmful even, because it prevents the learner from thinking outside of the box and from developing the self and the community (Benson and Voller 1997: 5). For them, therefore, autonomy is not only a psychological attribute of an individual, but it has got wide social implications as well.

Although learner autonomy has got its historical roots in philosophy, the field of psychology has had, and continues to have, an effect on the concept. First of all, learner autonomy can be seen in the work of numerous psychologists who work or have worked in the field of education, one of them being the humanist psychologist Carl Rogers (1902-87)(Benson 2011: 35). According to Rogers, learning is a unique, individual process that arises in and is affected by individual experiences and results in changes in behaviour; the teacher's role is to facilitate this natural process of self-actualising. In addition to Rogers, the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) has been noted in the field of learner autonomy (Benson 2011:42). Although Vygotsky's work has started to influence the field of education only fairly recently, he has quickly become an influential figure in the field (Benson 2011:42). When it comes to learner autonomy, especially his view of learning being an active, social process in

which the often implicit inner processes become externalised and explicit supports the reflective, metacognitive nature of learner autonomy.

The psychological roots of learner autonomy can also be seen in the historical shifts in the psychology of learning. The deterministic view of learning as a simple, mechanic process of responding to external stimuli held by behaviourists gave rise to a response, i.e. the emergence of humanistic and cognitive psychology (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 153). Both psychologies view learning as a process affected by the individual's subjective experiences and internal states; according to humanistic and cognitive psychologies, learning is something learners do, as opposed to the behaviouristic view of it being something done to them (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 153). At around the same time humanistic and cognitive psychologies started to take root, the development of sociolinguistic disciplines gave rise to the pragmatic, social view of language held today (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 152-153). These views of learning and language are both active and interactive, and have resulted in more learner-centred methodologies in education and the development of learner autonomy (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 153).

Due to the innate nature of learner autonomy, it should not come as a surprise that the concept has caught attention in the field of psychology even outside the educational context, at least through psychological concepts that are closely related to learner autonomy. One of these is *self-regulation*, which means the mind controlling its functions, states and processes (Vancouver 2005: 305). As an ability to control one's own learning, which is an inner process, learner autonomy can be viewed as a form of self-regulation. From a neuropsychological point of view, learner autonomy can be linked to *executive functioning*, which is a set of unobservable, self-regulatory goal-directed behaviours located primarily in the prefrontal cortex (Barkley 2004: 304). Since the metacognitive behaviours related to learner autonomy have been linked to executive functioning and the prefrontal cortex, a conclusion could be drawn that learner autonomy resides in the prefrontal cortex as well. Furthermore, due to the similarity of the concepts, psychological studies on self-regulation and executive functioning might shed some light on the psychological and physiological bases of learner autonomy.

In addition to the philosophical and scientific roots, the development of learner autonomy has also political and social overtones. Firstly, the wave of minority rights movements of such social groups as sexual, ethnic and linguistic minorities made the need for a more individualistic approach in education evident (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 152). The same need, especially that deriving from the language needs of migrant workers, brought about the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project established in 1971, which eventually gave rise to CRAPEL (*Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues*), the centre of research and implementation of learner autonomy, run by the oft-cited Henri Holec (Benson 2011: 9). Secondly, the development of technology made studying and learning outside the classroom more common, which quite naturally contributed to the spread of learner autonomy (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 153). The commercialization of language provision through such technology-based innovations as cassette and online language courses resulted in the view of learners as consumers, who need to be able to make conscious choices on the learning materials they buy (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 154). Thirdly, due to globalisation, the demand for foreign languages especially among adult language learners has grown significantly. Since the needs and schedules of adult learners are diverse, flexibility is expected from the programmes and autonomy from the learners (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 153-154). Lastly, resulting from the increase in general equality, wider access to education has led to an increase in the amount of pupils in schools. Consequently, due to the growing diversity among students and the relative shortage of educators, flexibility and autonomy are required in school as well (Gremmo and Riley 1995: 154).

To conclude, the development of and interest in learner autonomy has been diversified, which has resulted in a multidimensional view of the concept. Despite the fact that autonomy raised interest in philosophers nearly three centuries ago, the development and research around learner autonomy has flourished for only a few decades. However, it seems that the growth of interest in the concept is only escalating. Globalization, the speed of information exchange and international migration and travelling have made autonomous learning, and language learning, in specific, a necessity if one wants to keep up with the continuous changes of today's world. It seems that while the history of learner autonomy is covered in theory and ideology, the future brings practical, applicable knowledge that helps in meeting the needs of everyday life.

2.2 Defining learner autonomy

Although the interest in learner autonomy has grown substantially in the past few decades, there still seems to be some disagreement on the definition of the concept, especially on its details. There is, however, a general agreement on a definition first introduced in a project report to the council of Europe: autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning (Holec 1980: 3). The reason why there is, despite its seemingly simple definition, disagreement on the details of learner autonomy is the remarkably complex nature of the concept: as it is stated in the definition, instead of a set of observable behaviours, autonomy is a *potential* or an *ability* that resides in the learner. Since autonomy is not a simple observable event, it is quite natural that describing it without clear empirical evidence causes dispute. Furthermore, since learner autonomy is not a fixed, all-or-nothing attribute but a matter of degree (Nunan 1997: 192), defining it becomes even more troublesome since also the *context* that changes a learner's position on that continuum needs to be taken into account. Nevertheless, despite the complexity and the multidimensionality of the concept, learner autonomy can, and will, be defined in more detail.

One way of looking at a concept in more detail is to dissect its definition into smaller units for closer scrutiny, as is done here for the **learning** part of the definition above, *ability to take charge of one's own learning*. Depending on which approach to knowledge and learning (positivism, constructivism or critical theory) is taken, learner autonomy can be divided into three versions: *technical*, *psychological* and *political* (Benson 1997: 19-24). The *technical version* of autonomy, which implies a positivist approach to knowledge, entails the technical skills, such as learning strategies and task implementation, needed in managing one's own learning. Due to the technical nature of these skills, they can be taught and thus promoting the technical version of autonomy in education is rather simple. The *psychological version* of autonomy, which can be traced to constructivism, refers to learner autonomy as an innate capacity with cognitive aspects such as attitudes and abilities affecting learning. As an innate capacity that necessitates opportunities to actualise, autonomy can either be suppressed or promoted in institutional education. The *political version* of autonomy, which originates in the critical approaches to language, emphasizes control over the processes and

content of learning, and has, therefore, connotations to power relations in learning and teaching.

Continuing with the dissection of the definition of learner autonomy, if autonomy can be described in terms of **control** over learning, then that control needs to be defined in more detail. According to one view, there are three dimensions of control: *control over learning management*, *cognitive processing* and *learning content* (Benson 2011: 92-116). The three dimensions somewhat overlap and are even interdependent. Firstly, *learning management* refers to the cognitive and attitudinal factors involved in the planning, organisation and evaluation of learning. They are the explicit learning strategies that can – much like the technical skills in the technical version of autonomy – be trained and taught. Secondly, *control over cognitive processing* means controlling the cognitive competencies that underlie the observable behaviours listed under learning management. The three most important cognitive processes involved in this are: attention and, especially, directing it to essential objects both inside and outside the learning process; conscious reflection at the level of language and learning process; and metacognitive knowledge, i.e. awareness of cognitive processes and knowing how to learn. Thirdly, the last dimension of control, *control over learning content*, refers to the 'what' and 'why' of learning. Like the political version of autonomy described earlier is related to power relations, control over learning content is concerned with who decides what to learn and how. Consequently, out of the three dimensions of control, in an institutionalised setting in which curricula, school books and/or teachers define the learning content to a large extent, it is the most problematic. Students might seem to have control over methodological aspects of learning, but if goals and content are other-determined, autonomy is reduced to choosing a methodology suitable for those particular goals and content (Benson 2011: 113). As can be seen from the description above, the three dimensions of control not only overlap with each other, but with the three *versions* of autonomy introduced earlier. The dimensional approach is, in fact, an improved version of the three versions, and, therefore, preferred currently more in the literature (Benson 2011: 62).

Since learner autonomy can be seen as a continuum of an innate capacity as described earlier in this section, it has also been described in terms of **stages of development**. According to one view, autonomy consists of three domains that describe the level at which a person makes choices; *the communicative level*, *the*

learning level, and *the personal level* (Littlewood 1996: 429-432). Firstly, at *the communicative level*, the learner is able to make choices about language use and appropriate strategies in communicating meanings in different situations and specific tasks. Secondly, *the learning level* refers to the independent use of appropriate learning strategies. Lastly, at *the personal level*, the learner is able to make choices about his or her (language) learning at a wider context, for example by creating personal learning contexts. Thus, according to the model, autonomy consists of stages of development, beginning from being able to make choices about specific tasks, and leading up to an autonomous life in general.

Since autonomy entails various aspects of language learning, it is often confused with related language learning methods. However, learner autonomy, or even autonomous learning, is not a language learning method, but "an attribute of the learner's approach to the learning process" (Benson 2011: 2). Nevertheless, there are reasons why certain learning methods or programmes are so easily confused with learner autonomy (Benson 2011: 11). First of all, although a certain method or programme does not equal learner autonomy, a learner might well be autonomous when using a certain language learning method or taking part in a language learning programme. Certain methods or programmes, such as adult learning, might even be more closely related to learner autonomy than others. Secondly, there are programmes that require at least some level of learner autonomy and autonomous language learning in order to be efficient. Such programmes, such as self-access centres or technology-based courses, do not, however, necessarily develop learner autonomy or lead to more autonomous learners.

In addition to certain methodologies, learner autonomy is often confused with independent language learning (Benson 2011: 14-15). Although being in control of one's own learning implies independence, it does not mean it as an opposite to *interdependence*, because learner autonomy does not mean learning without other people. In fact, social strategies belong to the most important learning strategies applied by an autonomous learner; knowing how to make use of other people as interlocutors, sources of input and even help is an important skill and an indication of learner autonomy (Oxford 1990: 144-146). In addition, since learning always takes place in a social context either in its narrow, more spatial meaning or referring to the wider socio-historical context, there are

always others involved in the process, at least in the norms and expectations guiding one's decision-making processes (Kohonen 1992: 19). Especially when language is at stake, the interdependent nature of learning becomes more apparent, since language always requires an audience. Furthermore, since various dimensions of learner autonomy described so far imply that learner autonomy can be developed, there is an implication that interdependence even in the setting of formal education can be beneficial for learner autonomy. A teacher's help might be necessary, for example, in the training of technical skills needed in autonomous learning. Thus, it is safe to conclude that independent learning in isolation from others does not equal learner autonomy, and that learner autonomy requires interdependence.

Regardless of the details, learner autonomy has certain implications both for the individual and education as well as for the whole society. On the individual level, autonomous learning means, first of all, efficient learning; although empirical evidence on the efficiency of autonomous learning is still insufficient, there is no doubt that a person who knows how to learn learns efficiently (Benson 2011: 123). Secondly, learner autonomy promotes life-long learning (Kohonen 1992: 17), which is a necessity in today's world in which information exchange is faster and wider than ever. Furthermore, life-long learning helps in keeping up with the continuous change of occupational life and enables engaging in constant self-development. Lastly, learner autonomy is highly empowering, because through it learners gain their own voice and become the authors of their own story (Pennycook 1997: 45). The implications learner autonomy has for education derive directly from the individual level. The efficiency of autonomous learning, for example, is quite naturally an issue that benefits also educators – given that they attend to learner autonomy in their work. In addition, the empowerment of learners is emancipatory for the teacher as well: once both parties trust the learner's innate ability to exercise control over his or her own learning, they can share responsibility more.

In addition to the individual and educational level, learner autonomy has an influence on the whole society; learner autonomy promotes active, critical participation in the community, which, in turn, helps develop the community (Benson 2011: 1). Since greater learner autonomy implies, due to the shift of responsibility and control over learning from an authority to the individual him- or herself, a less authoritative orientation to knowledge and life in general,

learner autonomy improves also critical thinking. Consequently, learner autonomy can be seen as a prerequisite for *personal autonomy*, which is the basis of active, critical participation mentioned earlier. In addition, as the acceptance of personal autonomy implies a wish to maintain each person's personal autonomy, it will lead to the Kantian ideal of treating others as ends instead of means to an end (Benson 2011: 53). In conclusion, however complicated and multidimensional a concept learner autonomy is, its implications are wide and so valuable that learner autonomy should be borne in mind in education.

2.3 Current understanding of learner autonomy

While learner autonomy is a multidimensional and diversified concept, in the field of language education there is currently a direction towards more practical research that is applicable in real-life contexts. Especially during the past decade or so, measures, programmes and materials that aim at forming a more practical understanding of learner autonomy have been developed (Benson 2010: 77-78). Different kinds of questionnaires, such as those that aim at measuring readiness for autonomous learning and at defining the level of autonomy of individual learners, have been developed to measure learner autonomy. Although a difficult task, measuring learner autonomy should be possible, at least in principle, since the notion that learner autonomy is a matter of degree implies some kind of scale to which individual learners can be placed (Benson 2011: 65). There is also a wider justification for measuring learner autonomy: by being able to measure changes and differences within and among learners, the effects of different variables, such as teaching materials or specific programmes, can be studied. In fact, programmes that either aim at promoting and fostering learner autonomy, or require learner autonomy from the participants, have already been developed (Benson 2011: 65). Especially the amount of technology-based language learning programmes has grown rapidly in a relatively short period, and programmes in online-communities enjoy great popularity. In addition to large-scale programmes, more specific materials for fostering or promoting autonomy have been developed for teachers and learners. The aim of all these is to move from the formerly dominant level of philosophical and psychological theory to practice, and, especially, to link learner autonomy to formal education.

There is an increasing amount of literature on learner autonomy in practice, and especially Leni Dam has been productive in promoting learner autonomy in the language classroom. Her contribution to the field is not only in writing and theory, however, since during over 30 years' of personal experience she has put theories on learner autonomy into practice with children and adolescents in Danish primary and secondary schools (Dam 2011: 40). In addition, together with Lienhard Legenhausen, Dam started the LAALE project (Language Acquisition in an Autonomous Learning Environment), during which the effects of teaching according to the principles of autonomous language learning on students' linguistic development were observed (Dam 2011: 41). With the extensive work and years of experience, Dam has managed to prove that given the right conditions, autonomous language learning is possible and practical in an institutional setting as well.

Although individual researchers and educators such as Dam have set the practical movement into motion, changes in larger educational structures are needed for that movement to become a part of everyday teaching practices. Luckily, learner autonomy has not been left unnoticed in the decision-making facets. The Council of Europe's contribution to the practical promotion of learner autonomy has been significant through the development of European language portfolio (ELP). With its origins in the Rüsclikon Symposium of 1991, it was first developed in tandem with the Common European Framework of Reference to promote and facilitate cooperation among the different educational institutions in countries around Europe (Little, Goullier and Hughes 2011: 7). In the website for the ELP it is stated, that "ELP was developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe to support the development of learner autonomy, plurilingualism and intercultural awareness and competence". ELP consists of three parts, *The Language Passport*, *The Language Biography* and *The Dossier*, and it can be used both in informal and formal contexts. According to the Principles and guidelines of ELP, when used in formal contexts, one of ELP's principal aims is to involve learners in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning (European language portfolio (ELP): principles and guidelines 2000: 12). Consequently, ELP is a significant, official tool for promoting learner autonomy in the classroom.

As the exploration of the history, detailed definition and different approaches to learner autonomy shows, the concept is nothing but clear-cut. However, from

an educational, political and sociological point of view, learner autonomy is highly important, because it is a fundamental feature of all learning and the basis of personal and social growth. Like Jean-Jacques Rousseau has said:

Make your pupil attend to the phenomena of nature, and you will soon arouse his curiosity. But to nourish this curiosity, be in no hurry to satisfy it. Suggest problems but leave the solving of them to him. Whatever he knows, he should know not because you have told him, but because he has grasped it himself. Do not teach him science: let him discover it. If ever you substitute authority for reason in his mind, he will stop reasoning, and become the victim of other people's opinions...

(Boyd 1956: 73-76, as cited in Benson 2011: 28)

Attending to learner autonomy is, therefore, like going back to the basics of learning, which arises from the learner's innate curiosity. As the description of the current state of research on the issue shows, learner autonomy is finally moving from idealism to reality and practice.

3 LEARNER AUTONOMY IN THE CLASSROOM

Currently, in the area of learner autonomy, there is a direction to a more practical understanding and application of the concept. Language learning in new, unconventional settings beyond the classroom has received popularity in research, but at the same time, learner autonomy in formal education has gained interest. Although learner autonomy has traditionally been linked quite strongly to contexts beyond the classroom, according to current understanding, learner autonomy and autonomous language learning can take place in an institutional setting as well. In fact, when carefully designed and implemented, formal teaching can even promote learner autonomy (Ellis and Sinclair 1989: 10).

Since the current understanding of learner autonomy being achievable in formal education is so different from the traditional view of relative freedom from institutions, the link between learner autonomy and formal education should be explored in greater detail. First, in section 3.1, it is described how learner autonomy is, although not necessarily explicitly, a goal of upper secondary school education in Finland. Second, the ways in which learner

autonomy fits instructed learning and formal foreign language teaching is explored in section 3.2.

3.1 Learner autonomy in relation to the goals of education in Finland

Although traditionally in the field of learner autonomy it was generally thought that learner autonomy is tied to informal learning contexts outside the traditional classroom setting, learner autonomy is, in fact, quite relevant in the formal foreign language education in Finland as well. The strive for learner autonomy in foreign language education can be seen already in teacher training; although there are, especially among older generations of FL teachers, still those who swear by behaviourism as a way of educating language learners, at least in subject teacher training in the University of Jyväskylä such themes related to learner autonomy as *active citizenship*, *societal equality*, *inclusive pedagogy* and *intercultural understanding* are valued explicitly (Aineenopettajan koulutuksen opettajan pedagogisten opintojen opetussuunnitelma 2010-2013: 1). In addition, specifically in teaching English, future teachers are trained in accordance with the pragmatic, social view of language (Opetussuunnitelma 2012-2015: Englannin kieli: 1), which, as was explained in section 2.1, is the starting point of learner autonomy as well. Thus, newly graduated English teachers in Finland have at least been equipped with the principles of learner autonomy and should, at least in principle, be able to take learner autonomy into account in their teaching.

As the seeds of learner autonomy in the English language classroom are planted already in the English language teacher training, the strive for learner autonomy can also be seen in the explicit aims of prevailing education. For instance, in the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools, learner autonomy is introduced through such ideas as *participatory citizenship*, *life-long learning* and *self-development* (LOPS 2003: 12). Although the term *learner autonomy* is not used explicitly, since aforementioned ideas are, as was explained in section 2.2, important features and outcomes of learner autonomy, learner autonomy itself is indeed implied in the goals of upper secondary school education in Finland.

In addition to the general aims of upper secondary school education, learner autonomy can also be seen in the aims of foreign language teaching as they are expressed in the Curriculum. First of all, according to the Curriculum, promoting readiness for spontaneous, self-directed learning and enhancing such metacognitive skills as self-assessment, recognition of strengths and weaknesses and planning and implementation of suitable strategies, all of which are important features of learner autonomy, belong to the aims of foreign language education (LOPS 2003: 100). Second of all, when it comes to educational aims on the course level, on each course the learners' learning skills ought to be attended to by guiding them in developing the cognitive and metacognitive skills needed in learning (LOPS 2003: 101). In addition, the pragmatic, social view of language that gives rise to the active and interactive view of learning and, therefore, learner autonomy, is prevalent throughout the section of foreign languages in the Curriculum (LOPS 2003: 100-106). In conclusion, although not necessarily explicitly stated, learner autonomy is at least implied on several occasions and levels in the official aims of foreign language education in Finnish upper secondary schools.

3.2 Learner autonomy and formal foreign language teaching

While learner autonomy has traditionally been associated with learning outside the classroom, the current movement towards implementing learner autonomy in institutional settings has proven otherwise. In fact, when considering certain aspects of learner autonomy, it fits formal language education surprisingly well. Firstly, however, some fundamental issues on the topic need to be overcome. To begin with, the roles and relationships in the language classroom need to change. Since learner autonomy is about **control** over learning, the role of the teacher needs to change from someone who is in control of learning and makes learning happen *in* the learners into a facilitator and a guide in the learning process that is controlled *by* the learners (Voller 1997: 101). Second, a change in the role of the teacher entails the very same of the learners; dependence on and need for teaching and controlling that the learners have been conditioned to by previous experiences on language learning need to be "decoditioned" (Holec 1980: 30). In other words, the learners need to become active in the learning process instead of being passive recipients of taught information. Once both the teacher and the learners have understood and accepted their new roles and

relationships in the learning process, learner autonomy can take place in the language classroom.

As was mentioned earlier, not only is learner autonomy a goal of English teaching in Finland, at least an implicit one, the concept also accords with formal English teaching in practice. To begin with, learner autonomy corresponds well with some of the pedagogical ideals and approaches that are prevalent in English teaching in Finland, such as the view of the learners being active in the learning process, the strive for learner-centredness, and the general aim of directing students towards independence from other people in their thinking, learning and behaviour (Littlewood 1996: 427). In addition, as was discussed in section 2.2, although learner autonomy is linked to *independence*, it also requires *interdependence* on multiple levels. Language use and language learning are highly social practices, which require interdependence from other language users and learners (Kohonen 1992: 19; Oxford 1990: 144). An institutional setting is a convenient place to introduce that interdependent aspect of learner autonomy. Furthermore, since learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept that requires specific skills and attributes from the learner, a teacher might be needed in the training of those technical aspects relevant in autonomous learning (Benson 1997: 19). Moreover, since autonomy consists not only of the *ability* to make independent choices but also of the *willingness* to do so, in addition to helping in the acquisition of discrete knowledge and skills required in autonomous learning, the teacher plays an important role in boosting the learners' motivation and confidence to take charge of their own learning (Littlewood 1996: 428). In fact, learner resistance is a major obstacle in the promotion of learner autonomy, and since it is partly due to the stagnant perceptions of what formal education ought to be like, that obstacle is most effectively overcome precisely within formal education (Lewis and Reinders 2008: 97). The teacher can avoid learner resistance with specific strategies that will be discussed later in sections 4.1 and 4.2.

In conclusion, learner autonomy is not merely a preoccupation among scholars; it is a multidimensional yet concrete aspect of learning that not only *should*, but also *can* be taken into consideration in formal teaching of English in Finland. Furthermore, in the light of previously mentioned issues relating to the goals and practical issues of formal teaching of English in Finland, it is evident that incorporating the promotion of learner autonomy is reasonable, desirable even.

Nevertheless, promoting learner autonomy requires some effort. The ways in which learner autonomy can be promoted in institutional English teaching will be covered in the next section.

4 PROMOTING LEARNER AUTONOMY IN A FORMAL SETTING

As became evident in the previous chapter, the promotion of learner autonomy in formal English teaching in Finland is justifiable on multiple levels. In addition, it was shown that an institutional setting is not only suited for promoting learner autonomy, but that it is also a rather convenient environment for doing so. While such aspects of learner autonomy as *cooperation* and *interdependence* are already existent in the language classroom, other aspects, such as the *technical skills* and *willingness* related to learner autonomy, can quite naturally be incorporated into foreign language teaching. The promotion of learner autonomy requires some effort and careful thinking from the teacher, however. Due to the increased interest towards the concept and, especially, its practical implementation, numerous scholars and practitioners have produced literature on how to promote learner autonomy in a formal setting. It is noteworthy to mention that empirical evidence on the effectiveness of such practices that aim at greater learner autonomy is still insufficient; however, due to the complex nature of the concept, the experience-based intuitions of practitioners that support the use of autonomy-promoting approaches can be said to prove more than formally collected empirical data ever could (Benson 2011: 126).

Since there is a vast array of literature on how to promote learner autonomy and, in addition, each scholar approaches the issue from a slightly different angle, it is reasonable to address those theories first in order to get an overall idea of the field. Hence, some of the theories that promote learner autonomy are first reviewed in section 4.1. While the theories differ from one another in their perspective and offset, they also have a lot in common and even have features that overlap greatly. A compilation of these similarities, i.e. the important themes in the promotion of learner autonomy, is presented in section 4.2. As will become evident later, this compilation has also worked as the starting point

of the present study, which will be discussed in greater detail from chapter 6 onwards.

4.1 Theories of promoting learner autonomy in foreign language teaching

Although the theories reviewed in this section differ more or less from one another, there are some underlying assumptions that they share. Firstly, in each theory it is assumed that with certain strategies and processes, learner autonomy can be fostered in an institutional setting. Secondly, they all view learner autonomy as the learner's *innate capacity* that can be either suppressed or promoted, as opposed to something that is done to the learner. As Esch (2010: 37) describes the promotion of learner autonomy:

...the provision of circumstances and contexts for language learners which will make it more likely that they take charge - at least temporarily - of the whole or part of their language learning programme and which are more likely to help rather than prevent learners from exercising their autonomy.

Thus, evident in each theory is also the view of learner autonomy being a context-bound, gradual and changeable capacity. The term *pedagogy for autonomy* is frequently used for the approaches that aim at fostering autonomy in a classroom context, and the discrete procedures those pedagogies incorporate are often referred to as *pedagogical strategies for autonomy* (Benson 2011: 174). Next, these different strategies, as introduced in the different theories, will be discussed.

In order to clarify and categorize the multitude of theories on the promotion of learner autonomy, Benson (2011: 125-126) identifies six different approaches to fostering learner autonomy: resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based and teacher-based approaches. While resource-based and technology-based approaches refer mainly to the out-of-class strategies that aim at promoting learner autonomy, the four latter approaches are essential to this present study, since they approach the issue mainly from within a classroom context. In *learner-based approaches*, Benson (2011: 154) subsumes those theories that connect learner training and learner development with greater learner autonomy, an example of which is Ellis and Sinclair's (1989) approach, which will be discussed later in this section. With

classroom-based approaches, on the other hand, Benson (2011: 164) refers to those theories that aim at promoting learner autonomy by incorporating learners in the decision-making processes concerning their everyday learning content and procedures. *Curriculum-based approaches*, according to Benson (2011: 176), are those in which learner control is extended to the curricular level, an example of which is Cotterall's (2000) approach, introduced later in this section. Lastly, *teacher-based approaches*, in Benson's (2011: 185) view, put a major emphasis on developing learner autonomy on the notion of *teacher autonomy*, an area which has received an increasing amount of attention in the field recently. Although Benson has identified different approaches in literature on the promotion of learner autonomy, the lines between approaches are rarely clear-cut, and models often incorporate features from various approaches. Nevertheless, Benson's categorization of approaches illustrates well how diversified the area actually is.

While the theories on the promotion of learner autonomy in a classroom context are manifold, the fact that learner autonomy in itself is a multidimensional issue diversifies the issue even more. Littlewood's (1996) framework for developing autonomy in and through foreign language teaching demonstrates this issue well. According to Littlewood (1996: 428-429), autonomy is a multidimensional capacity in two different ways. Firstly, autonomy consists of three domains: autonomy as *a communicator* (autonomy on a task level), as *a learner* (autonomy on learning level), and as *a person* (autonomy on a personal level). Secondly, in order to be autonomous in any of the three domains, two components need to be present, namely, **ability** and **willingness**, both of which can further be divided into two subordinated components; ability into *knowledge* and *skills*, and willingness into *motivation* and *confidence*. According to Littlewood's (1996: 431-434) framework, in order to promote learner autonomy in teaching, the distinct components need to be combined with the three domains, either separately or more holistically; a teacher might, for example, concentrate on building up the learners' confidence in communication, or on knowledge involved in learning and, more specifically, learning strategies. Littlewood's view of learner autonomy consisting of both willingness and ability complies with the multidimensional view of learner autonomy, and is inherent in the majority of other theories presented in this section, as well.

Whereas Littlewood's framework offers a rather broad view of the promotion of autonomy, more practical and detailed approaches to the issue exist. One of these is the framework by Dam (2011), which is, in Benson's (2011) terms, a classroom-based approach to the development of learner autonomy, since it mainly deals with day-to-day learning management. Although originally developed to promote learner autonomy among children, the principles introduced by Dam are not age-restricted in any way, and can thus be implemented with learners of all ages. For Dam (2011: 41), the development of learner autonomy is "a move from teacher-directed teaching environment to a learner-directed learning environment", which complies with learner-centeredness that is fundamental in theories on learner autonomy. According to Dam (2011: 41), the teacher's role in the development of learner autonomy is, much like in Littlewood's (1996) model, to make students both *willing* and *capable* to take over the responsibility of learning, i.e. planning, carrying out the plans, and evaluating the outcome.

There are some important principles Dam (2011: 43-45) highlights in the development of learner autonomy in an institutional context. Firstly, there is the fundamental notion of *choice*; according to Dam, having a choice enhances motivation, requires reflection which, in turn, heightens awareness of learning, shifts responsibility towards the learner, and has a positive impact on his or her self-esteem. Secondly, due to the external expectations and demands brought about by the institutional setting, clear guidelines need to be established so that the learners feel secure enough, and hence *willing*, to take over. Thirdly, as was mentioned earlier, in developing learner autonomy, the focus ought to be shifted from teaching into learning; in Dam's view, rather than passing on knowledge, the teacher's main concern is to help students take actively part in the learning process. The fourth principle in Dam's framework is the issue of *authenticity*, which for Dam means that the participants, i.e. the teacher and the students, act and speak as themselves and in the roles relevant to them in the institutional learning environment. Lastly, Dam highlights the importance of *evaluation* in developing learner autonomy; according to Dam, involving the learners in reflection, evaluation and assessment is important firstly because it provides evidence of progress which, in turn, enhances motivation, and, secondly, because it heightens awareness of learning.

In addition to the introduction of the aforementioned important principles in developing learner autonomy, Dam (2011: 45-48) describes how to put these principles into practice. In terms of teaching, the principles imply a major change in the role of the teacher; according to Dam, instead of merely passing on knowledge, the teacher provides options to choose from, makes curricular demands and guidelines clear for the students, structures lessons transparently, encourages authentic use of the target language, and provides tools for reflection, evaluation and assessment. When it comes to the activities in the autonomous language classroom, Dam suggests the kinds that require active participation from each student, give space for differentiated input and outcome, and require the use of the target language and, especially, authentic language use. Overall, the learners need to be able to take over the activities used. For evaluative practices, Dam promotes the use of such tools as logbooks, portfolios and posters, since they document well both the process of and progress in learning, and thus make the reflection and evaluation of learning easier for the students.

While Dam's classroom-based approach is primarily concerned with improving the *abilities* related to learner autonomy, in their model, Lewis and Reinders (2008) concentrate especially on improving *willingness* to take responsibility; for Lewis and Reinders (2008: 97), the major obstacle in encouraging learner autonomy lies in teacher-centred students. According to Lewis and Reinders (2008: 97-98), the reasons for learner resistance are varied: teacher-centred students might be accustomed to the teacher having and giving readily the answers; they might not see value in non-language activities related to autonomous learning, such as reflection on and evaluation of progress; engaging higher thinking skills is difficult and requires effort; and it is overall easier to let someone else take charge. In addition to learner resistance, Lewis and Reinders (2008: 99) identify another issue that causes difficulties in developing learner autonomy in the language classroom: apart from some rare exceptions, formal teaching is usually defined by curricular guidelines, strict timetables and materialistic limitations.

In their framework for developing learner autonomy, Lewis and Reinders (2008: 99) suggest some strategies for overcoming the aforementioned obstacles. Above all, the teacher should provide a rationale for everything that is done in the classroom, take it slowly, and build on what the students already know.

This way the students will not feel too overwhelmed in the face of change towards learner-centredness. In addition, Lewis and Reinders (2008: 100-106) offer concrete tips on how to develop learner autonomy in the language classroom. Firstly, following the view that language learning and the development of learner autonomy require interaction and cooperation, they suggest that the teacher should encourage pair and group work by explaining explicitly why working with peers is important in developing language and learning skills. In addition, by giving clear guidelines for the outcome, letting the students have a say in time allocation and in choosing the topic, and discussing group roles and working strategies, the teacher can ensure that group work actually works. Secondly, in order to develop learner autonomy among his or her students, the teacher should provide opportunities for self-access language learning; in practice, this could mean a designated space inside or outside the classroom in which the students can work independently, but with the teacher's guidance and help readily accessible. Thirdly, as awareness of learning is important in autonomous learning, the teacher should draw their students' attention to the learning process and make it explicit by incorporating the use of diaries and portfolios in their teaching. This gives way to self-assessment, which, according to the researchers, helps the students in identifying the problematic issues in their learning and, consequently, in coming up with suitable strategies to overcome those difficulties. Lastly, while formal language teaching usually follows rather strict curricular demands and course designs, for Lewis and Reinders this is not a problem in developing learner autonomy as long as the teacher gives the students an overall understanding of the course outline, demands and objectives: this will help the students to regain a sense of responsibility in the face of external demands.

Whereas Dam (2011) and Lewis and Reinders (2008) concentrate on the day-to-day learning experiences, Cotterall (2000) has approached the issue of promoting learner autonomy from a curricular perspective, i.e. her approach is curriculum-based. According to Cotterall (2000: 110), the major challenge in fostering autonomy lies in the transfer of responsibility for decision-making about learning from the teacher to learners. To overcome this challenge, Cotterall (2000: 111-115) introduces five course design principles that aim at promoting both control over learning, and the development of language proficiency. The five principles in Cotterall's framework relate to learner goals,

the language learning process, tasks, learner strategies, and reflection on learning.

Cotterall (2000: 111-115) elaborates on the five principles as follows. Firstly, a language course that aims at promoting learner autonomy should reflect *learners' goals* in its language, tasks and strategies, because effective learning, and autonomous learning, in specific, presumes goals to which the learners are committed. When Cotterall's (2000: 112) principles were put into practice in a 12-week intensive English language course at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, the first principle proved to enhance students' motivation. According to the next principle, course tasks should be linked to the *language learning process*; this makes the learning process explicit to the learner which, at the same time, raises awareness of learning and makes the transfer of responsibility much easier. With the third principle, Cotterall suggests that course tasks should either replicate or provide rehearsal for such *tasks*, i.e. communicative situations, that the learner will participate in in the future. This authenticity of classroom tasks proved to enhance the learners' motivation and confidence in Cotterall's study. According to the fourth principle, in a course that aims at fostering learner autonomy, different kinds of *learning strategies* should be discussed and practiced. This kind of learner training is of advantage especially when there are time limitations, since instead of tackling the numerous individual difficulties and needs in learning, the teacher provides the learners with tools to meet their own needs. The last principle in Cotterall's model for promoting autonomy suggests that a course should promote *reflection on learning*, since it raises the learners' awareness of their own learning on multiple levels: goal-setting, strategy implementation and evaluation.

Although Cotterall's (2000) model incorporates also aspects such as learner training that are linked to learner-based approaches to autonomy, Ellis and Sinclair's (1989) model is based solely on learner training. According to Ellis and Sinclair (1989: 3), learner training prepares learners for autonomy because it provides them with *strategies* and *confidence* to take more responsibility of their own learning. For Ellis and Sinclair (1989: 2-3), the aim of learner training is twofold. Firstly, learner training aims at providing learners with the alternatives about what, how, why, when and where to learn. Secondly, in order to be able to make informed choices about the aforementioned issues, learners need to be informed about the language itself, language learning

techniques and processes, and about themselves as language learners. In other words, learner training provides *opportunities* and enhances the *ability* to take charge of one's own learning. As Benson (2011: 155) points out and as is implied in Ellis and Sinclair's model, learner training works best when integrated with language learning instead of, for example, as a separate course.

According to Ellis and Sinclair (1989: 10), the teacher plays an instrumental role in learner training, and can help students in the process of learning how to learn in many ways. Ellis and Sinclair propose the following roles for the teacher: the teacher negotiates with the learners the content and methodology of the course; raises learners' awareness of and encourages discussion about language, learning and language learning strategies; creates an encouraging environment for experimenting with language and learning; allows for and respects different viewpoints; and gives individual guidance whenever possible. When these roles are implemented systematically, it will lead, according to Ellis and Sinclair (1989: 3), to enhanced motivation, more effective learning and learners taking a greater responsibility of their own learning.

Although Crabbe (1993) does not approach the issue of promoting learner autonomy explicitly from the perspective of learner training as Ellis and Sinclair (1989) do, also he stresses the importance of making the implicit learning processes explicit in formal language teaching. According to Crabbe (1993: 444-445), in order to promote autonomy in formal language teaching, there should be a bilateral connection between the *public domain of learning*, i.e. the shared, explicit classroom activities, and the *private domain of learning*, i.e. the learners' implicit personal learning activities. In order to establish that connection, a task on the public domain should inform about language and learning in a generalizable form so that it has relevance to the private domain. Crabbe (1993: 449-451) argues that the main issues in connecting the two domains lie either in classroom discourse about task or task design itself. When it comes to classroom discourse, there should be discussion on different aspects of learning. Tasks should include discussion firstly on problem identification, and secondly on suitable strategies to overcome the learning problems. It is through this kind of discussion that learning processes are made explicit, and learners can generalize the knowledge they acquire from separate tasks on the public domain. When it comes to issues arising from task design, the teacher should make sure that a task models learning activities instead of posing readily

identified problems and strategies. If, for example, the teacher's aim is to make the students aware of different reading strategies, instead of simply making the students do a reading comprehension task with preselected, and possibly even adapted, text and predetermined questions, the teacher should allow for them to choose their own texts and identify arising problems on their own. However, no matter what the task is like, discussion on the aspects of learning that underlie a task is important because it allows for shared knowledge and metacognitive understanding of the learning process, which is a prerequisite for autonomous learning.

While Crabbe (1993) puts some emphasis on the teacher's role in developing learner autonomy, some researchers concentrate in their work especially on the teacher and his or her role in learner autonomy. For example, Powell (1988: 109) argues that, while students are usually blamed for being heavily dependent on the teacher in their learning, teachers rely on students in their teaching as well: teachers view themselves as responsible for their students' learning and think that it is their job to teach and to pass on information. In contrast, Powell (1988: 118) points out the ideal:

The role of the teacher is crucial in creating, from the beginning, an atmosphere of trust and confidence within which the learners are able to feel free to exercise their independent judgement and pursue their interests within a fairly loose framework of content and procedures. The teacher must give a lead by providing starting points without subsequently transporting everyone to a pre-determined destination.

Thus, in addition to making students willing to take responsibility, the teacher must also be willing to share it. This subsumes that the teacher trusts the students' abilities. In addition, as Kohonen (1992: 32) puts it, once the teacher expresses trust in the students' abilities and appreciation towards their choices, the students can gain a feeling of ownership and responsibility of their own learning. In consequence, developing learner autonomy requires mutual trust and appreciation.

The connection between learner autonomy and enhanced motivation has been addressed by many researchers, and it has been mentioned also already in this section in relation to Ellis and Sinclair's (1989) model. The relationship between the two seems quite obvious; by allowing students to set and act according to their own goals, they become, rather naturally, intrinsically motivated to

achieve those goals. This is also what Dickinson (1995) concludes in her literature review on the connection between autonomy and motivation. According to Dickinson (1995: 169-172), there seems to be a causal relationship between such concepts as *intrinsic motivation* and *attribution theory*, and learner autonomy. However, the direction of the connection has caused some debate. Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002: 262), for example, found out in their study that motivation may play an inhibiting or enabling role in the realization of learner autonomy: the connection between motivation and autonomy seems to be bidirectional and dynamic. Thus, as Spratt et al. (2002: 263) suggest, when facing resistance and avoidance on the students' behalf, rather than immediately pushing those students towards autonomy, the teacher should promote intrinsic motivation and devote time to activities that show the usefulness of language learning.

As is evident from the study by Spratt et al. (2002), it seems to be important not to proceed to promoting learner autonomy too abruptly. Nunan (1997: 194), for example, makes the argument that most learners do not know initially what is best for them, and thus informed decisions about their own learning cannot be expected from them from the very beginning. Instead, Nunan (1997: 195) proposes five levels for promoting learner autonomy: the promotion of learner autonomy begins by simply making the learners aware of the goals, content and materials of teaching, continues with first involving and then letting the learners intervene in goal-setting procedures, after which they can *create* their own goals and objectives and, finally, apply classroom content creatively in the world beyond. According to Nunan (1997: 203), it is through this kind of careful and gradual pedagogical intervention that learner autonomy can best be developed. Cornwall (1988: 247) is in step with Nunan: in order to introduce learner autonomy successfully, there needs to be a gradual move to and controlled introduction of the new roles that come with it. Furthermore, the teacher and the course structure must provide guidance and support in this process, so that students can feel secure and trust that there is a safety net if their abilities are still lacking.

As can be seen, while some of the theories introduced in this section represent quite clearly one of the approaches Benson (2011) has identified, some theories seem to include characteristics of two or more approaches. Such is, for example, Lewis and Reinder's (2008) model, which is mostly a classroom-based approach

but has also characteristics of a learner-based approach in it. Thus, the categorization by Benson (2011) is not always clear-cut. In fact, as Benson (2011: 197) points out, since autonomy entails control over various aspects of learning, it is promoted most effectively by a combination of approaches and strategies in them. For the same reason, a combination of approaches was used as an offset for the present study. The next section introduces a compilation of the themes that are deemed as important in the theories that promote learner autonomy.

4.2 Important themes in the promotion of learner autonomy

As is evident from the previous section, the theories on how to promote learner autonomy tend to approach the issue from varying starting points and emphasize different issues. However, as Benson (2011: 197) points out, since learner autonomy is in itself a multidimensional and not at all simple issue, it is most effectively promoted by a combination of approaches. That is why, for this present study, the important issues in each theory presented earlier are gathered as a compilation, the aim of which is to provide a comprehensive idea of what needs to be taken into account when promoting learner autonomy in formal foreign language teaching. It should be noted that although, for the sake of clarity, the compilation is comprised of distinct themes, their boundaries are vague and there is some overlap in the themes.

Choice. Although theories on the promotion of learner autonomy differ from one another, the matter of choice is a feature they all share. Choice is a fundamental feature of learner autonomy; the commonly accepted view of learner autonomy being the ability to take charge of one's own learning implies that the learner makes independent choices about their own learning. Thus, without the possibility to make choices about learning, there is no learner autonomy. When it comes to learning and teaching in a formal setting, choices can be made on multiple levels. As became evident in the previous section, theories usually differ in their view of the level in which choices are made. For example, while Ellis and Sinclair (1989) view choices to be done on the learning level, Cotterall (2000) takes a curricular approach to the issue, arguing that learner autonomy should be taken into consideration already in course design. However, if course design is regulated with a binding curriculum that defines

the general outlines of each course, such is the case in Finland, the range of free choices is necessarily limited. Whenever choices are limited, external demands, such as curricular guidelines, ought to be made explicit for students; as Lewis and Reinders (2008: 106) point out, this will help them to regain a sense of responsibility. Otherwise, students should have a choice – or at least given alternatives – whenever possible. Since choice encompasses all aspects of learning, this theme more or less covers all the other themes.

Goals and needs. Since learning is goal-oriented behaviour, autonomous learning means that learners get to set their own goals according to their own needs. As, for example, Crabbe (1993: 446) notes, one important aspect in promoting learner autonomy is to negotiate with students the processes that underlie learning, such as problem identification, so that they become aware of their own needs and can set their own goals. Thus, this theme relates closely to metacognition, since identifying problems and setting goals requires reflection on one's own learning. In addition, since self-determined goals have been related to intrinsic motivation, this theme also relates to motivation.

Support. This theme entails two issues. Firstly, as Cornwall (1988: 247) notes, when promoting learner autonomy, the teacher and the course structure must provide guidance and support to students when their abilities are still developing. Secondly, support refers to the multiple resources and contexts the learner can make use of when necessary. Crabbe (1993: 447) refers to this kind of utilization of resources and contexts as strategies, and uses a dictionary as an example of a strategy to solve an on-the-spot problem. In addition to inanimate resources as dictionaries, other people, such as the teacher or peers, can be viewed as resources the learner can utilize. Thus, support refers to something that is offered to students in their learning and development of learner autonomy, and something they are guided to make use of independently.

Metacognition. In Benson's (2011) terms, learner-based approaches to learner autonomy concentrate especially on this theme. The aim of, for example, Ellis and Sinclair's (1989: 3) model is, by learner training, to raise students' awareness of the learning process so that they can become effective and autonomous learners. The basic assumption behind their model is that the more aware learners are about their own learning processes (i.e. metacognitive knowledge), the better they can manage their own learning. The teacher's role

in this is to make the learning process explicit. Furthermore, metacognition does not only refer to awareness of cognitive functions, but it also includes the ability to evaluate one's own cognitive functions. Thus, the teacher ought to promote self-evaluative practices among their students. Dam (2010: 46) and Lewis and Reinders (2008: 106) suggest the use of such tools as portfolios and diaries for encouraging learners to assess their own progress.

Emotional climate. As adopting a pedagogy for autonomy requires a major shift in roles and responsibilities, it is important that the teacher creates an atmosphere in which students feel willing and secure enough to accept that change. This can be done by expressing trust and appreciation in the students' abilities and viewpoints; as Kohonen (1992: 32) notes, once they feel that they are appreciated and their abilities trusted, they can gain a feeling of ownership and responsibility of their own learning. On the other hand, according to Powell (1988: 118), also the teacher needs to accept the change and be willing to share responsibility. In consequence, a classroom in which learner autonomy is promoted is based on *mutual* trust and appreciation. In addition, since the promotion of learner autonomy requires, as Crabbe (1993: 450) points out, also constant negotiation about language and learning and there is room for different points of view, there should also be an atmosphere of openness in the language classroom.

Motivation. As is evident from the previous section, there is some debate on the direction of the connection between learner autonomy and motivation. However, when it comes to promoting learner autonomy, as Spratt et al. (2002: 263) point out, enhancing learners' intrinsic motivation is important in making them willing to take responsibility of their own learning. Thus, the teacher should aim at showing their students why learning English is important by relating the language to their own life and contexts beyond the language classroom.

As can be seen, the boundaries between the themes introduced above are not clear-cut. For example, *emotional climate* requires also *support*, and awareness of one's own learning, i.e. *metacognition*, is a prerequisite in the establishment of *goals and needs*. In addition, *choice* is inherent in all the other themes. This vagueness of the issues that relate to the promotion of learner autonomy results directly from the vagueness and multidimensionality of the concept of learner

autonomy itself. Furthermore, due to the fact that empirical studies on the promotion of learner autonomy are still lacking, it is possible that this compilation is still inadequate. Nevertheless, this compilation has been used in the present study, which will be discussed in greater detail from chapter 6 onwards. First, however, some studies on the promotion of learner autonomy are discussed in chapter 5.

5 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE PROMOTION OF LEARNER AUTONOMY

As the interest in learner autonomy and, in specific, its promotion have increased lately, so have studies on the promotion of learner autonomy. There are different approaches for studying learner autonomy and its promotion. Firstly, some studies on the promotion of learner autonomy are concerned with students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy, or, as it is often referred to in the literature, their *readiness* for learner autonomy. These kinds of studies are often concerned with the beliefs, attitudes and experiences that affect students' and teachers' willingness to implement the principles of learner autonomy in learning and teaching. Secondly, while the interest in learner autonomy has increased, special programmes have been launched for developing learner autonomy among the students – consequently, the effects and effectiveness of such programmes have been studied. Thirdly, some scholars are concerned with the means by which learner autonomy could be measured, and have developed instruments for measuring learner autonomy. In this chapter, some studies on the promotion of learner autonomy will be reviewed.

Studies on students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy

The factors that contribute to learners' readiness for learner autonomy have been studied. In a study by Cotterall (1995: 195), it is argued that a major issue that affects the degree to which a learner displays learner autonomy are the learner's beliefs about language learning; beliefs and attitudes influence learning behaviour and, in consequence, the development of learner autonomy. In the study, the factors, i.e. clusters of beliefs that have an influence on the development of learner autonomy were sought to find out. With factor analysis done on the questionnaire data that was gathered from 139 adult ESL learners, a

total of six factors, i.e. clusters of beliefs, were found that contribute to the development of learner autonomy: role of the teacher, role of feedback, learner independence, learner confidence in study ability, experience of language learning, and approach to studying (Cotterall 1995: 196). Although it was admitted that the questionnaire might have been defective in some respects, since the six factors are in line with literature on the promotion of learner autonomy, it was concluded that learners' beliefs about the six factors should be taken into consideration in teaching (Cotterall 1995: 197-203). In specific, it was noted that it is through exploration and awareness of these beliefs that they can be challenged and, eventually, changed (Cotterall 1995: 203).

The basic findings of the aforementioned study were put into test in a study by Chan (2001). In specific, it was studied whether the principles of autonomous language learning could work in Hong Kong tertiary education, the students in which are traditionally described as dependent, reticent and passive (Chan 2001: 507). The basic assumption of the study was that which Cotterall (1995) found out in her study: there are various factors that affect a learner's readiness for learner autonomy, such as knowledge, attitudes and previous experiences of learning (Chan 2001: 506). When Hong Kong tertiary school students' attitudes and perceptions of learning were explored, it was found out that, despite their anti-autonomy reputation, the students exhibited autonomy in many ways and had generally fairly positive attitudes towards learner autonomy and autonomous language learning (Chan 2001: 508-514). However, as the results of the study also revealed that some students preferred explicit teacher instruction and guidance, it was concluded that in order to increase students' willingness to take more responsibility of their own learning, learner autonomy should be introduced gradually and there should be, at least in the beginning, a balance between teacher-centredness and learner-centredness (Chan 2001: 514).

Although teachers are also involved in and have an effect on learner autonomy, Benson (2008) argues for the importance of taking the learners' views into account when studying learner autonomy on the grounds of the subjectivity of the construct; whereas teachers tend to view learner autonomy in terms of practical behaviours concerned with classroom learning arrangements, learners attach autonomy with learning in a broader sense and to their own lives in general. To exemplify his point, Benson (2008: 28) reflects on his own experiences as a foreign language learner. As learner autonomy is a subjective

aspect of one's own learning, this kind of self-reflection adds to the studies on learner autonomy by revealing aspects of learning that could not be observed by anyone else than the learner him- or herself. Furthermore, as Benson could be considered an expert on learner autonomy, his self-reported learner autonomy provides interesting insights into the issue.

Firstly, Benson (2008: 28) states that his autonomy manifested itself in two important ways: first, when he decided to sign up for a course and to attend the classes in order to learn Cantonese, and second, when he felt that he was in control of the overall direction of his learning. Benson notes that in his case, especially the reasons behind his choices were central in his autonomy: as he decided to learn Cantonese in order to be able to be a part of the community in which he lived, he had a clear goal to which he was committed, which is an important aspect of learner autonomy.

Secondly, based on his own learning experiences, Benson (2008: 28-29) concludes that giving up responsibility of some aspects of learning does not necessarily imply that a person gives up on his or her autonomy. As Benson himself, for example, gave up willingly the responsibility of deciding on the learning content (due to e.g. time limitations), he did not feel that his autonomy was impaired because overall, he felt that his learning led to personal autonomy, which, according to Benson, is a crucial sign of learner autonomy. To sum up, learner autonomy is a subjective experience that might be inherent in learning even when the learner's explicit behaviour seemed in some relation teacher-dependent. That is why, as Benson concludes, learners' views should be incorporated in the studies on learner autonomy.

Although the subjective nature of learner autonomy implies that it is important to keep the learners' perspective in mind when studying the concept, it does not mean that teachers' perceptions should be overlooked. In particular, as learner autonomy can be developed within formal foreign language teaching, it is important to discover what kinds of perceptions and attitudes teachers have. In a research project by Camilleri (1999), teachers' views on the implementation of learner autonomy in classroom practice were studied. The project, which was initiated during Workshop No. 8/97 *Aspects of Teaching Methodology in Bilingual Classes at Secondary School Level* in Graz, May 1997, aimed at discovering teachers' attitudes towards learner autonomy, with the hypothesis that teachers

would consider some areas of teaching and learning as better suited for the implementation of learner autonomy than others (Camilleri 1999a: 4). The project results reveal those areas as well as the teachers' justification for the attitudes behind their views (Camilleri 1999a: 4).

The data of the study was gathered with a questionnaire from teachers around Europe, such as from Malta, the Netherlands and Poland (Camilleri 1999a: 4-5). The data from the individual countries were then compiled into a global record. The global record of the study revealed firstly that the teachers were willing to promote learner autonomy and to try out new methods accordingly and, secondly, that the teachers viewed some areas in teaching and learning to be better suited for the implementation of learner autonomy than others (Camilleri 1999b: 28-31). The areas that received the strongest support among the teachers were: selecting realia, deciding on the position of desks, deciding on the seating of students, deciding on the record-keeping of work done, encouraging learners to find their own explanations to the classroom tasks, encouraging learners to find out learning procedures by themselves, and encouraging learners to assess themselves. However, as mentioned earlier, the global results of the study also indicated that some areas of learning and teaching were considered less suitable for the implementation of learner autonomy (Camilleri 1999b: 30-31). The areas that received strongest resistance among the teachers were: selecting textbooks and deciding on when and where the lesson takes place. In the study, it is argued that those areas are traditional domains of the school system, and, therefore, not usually in the hands of the teacher (Camilleri 1999b: 30). In fact, resistance on the above-mentioned areas was often justified with built-in constraints in the school system. However, also such views as the learners' immaturity and lack of awareness and the teachers' expertise were evident behind the resistance. It was concluded that logistical and organizational constraints need to be taken into consideration when implementing learner autonomy in teaching, and that it is not necessary nor advisable to attempt to implement learner autonomy across the whole range on classroom practices (Camilleri 1999b: 32). It was also concluded that there is a need to reflect on the built-in constraints within the school system, because, as it is stated in the study, "a system with built-in constraints that preclude change, development and evolution is a fossilised system" (Camilleri 1999b: 32).

To sum up, there are many factors that affect learners' and teachers' willingness to follow the principles of learner autonomy. While generally, even in non-western cultures, learner autonomy is viewed positively, some aspects of it are more easily incorporated in teaching than others. Furthermore, as learners' and teachers' underlying attitudes and assumptions about learning might get in the way of developing learner autonomy, they should be made explicit and viewed critically.

Programmes that aim at developing learner autonomy

As the interest in learner autonomy has increased, programmes that aim at developing learner autonomy have been developed and their effects and effectiveness studied. One of such programs is the LAALE (Language acquisition in an Autonomous Learning Environment) project started in a Danish school in 1992 by Dam and Legenhausen. The LAALE project aims at developing learner autonomy among school children learning English by following the principles of autonomous language learning (Dam and Legenhausen 2010a: 267-270). Underlying the LAALE project can be seen the fundamental assumptions of learner autonomy that learners possess knowledge of language and language use already prior to formal teaching, and that instead of passing on school knowledge, the teacher should support their learners in the learning process by making them aware of sources of information and by establishing situations in which development and learning can take place.

The results of the LAALE project are promising: when the vocabulary of the students who took part in the LAALE project was compared with that of students attending a more traditional, textbook-based course, it was found out that the students from LAALE project developed their vocabulary faster and were more spontaneous in their language use (Dam and Legenhausen 2010a: 280). It was concluded that this advantage seems to result from the fact that, instead of exposing the students to the vocabulary chosen by the teacher or the writer of the textbook, the students in the LAALE project are encouraged to expand their vocabulary based on their own interests and to produce their own materials. Furthermore, as the project aims at raising their awareness of language around them, the students also notice more easily resources outside the classroom.

As the LAALE project is intended for school children, programmes for older language learners have also been developed. One such programme is the ALMS (Autonomous Language Learning Modules) programme at the Language Center at Helsinki University, Finland. The aim of the programme is to develop learner autonomy among the students by promoting reflection, self-evaluation and collaboration. The students who enroll on the programme are first involved in awareness-raising classes, and based on those classes they set their own learning objectives, make a plan to achieve those goals and keep record of and evaluate their own learning (Kijssik 1997: 36-64). Throughout the course, the students cooperate with other students and with a counselling teacher (Kijssik 1997: 58-61).

When the effects of the ALMS were studied, changes in the attitudes of the students and teachers who took part in the programme were discovered (Nordlund 1997: 67). On the grounds of data that was collected on the attitudes with e.g. questionnaires and interviews, it could be concluded that the changes in the teachers' and the students' attitudes were mainly positive: the changes in the teachers' views were related to their roles, and the changes in the students' views were related to motivation, meaningfulness of learning, responsibility of learning and learning opportunities beyond the language classroom (Nordlund 1997: 71-89). However, some students, after taking part in the ALMS, preferred teacher-led courses and saw the absence of a teacher and teacher guidance as a negative aspect.

While learner autonomy is an explicit aim of both the LAALE and the ALMS, the effects of autonomy-supportive climate and instruction have been studied also in such contexts in which learner autonomy can be considered merely a positive by-product of student-centered teaching practices. In a study by Black and Deci (2000), the effects of autonomy supportive climate as it was perceived by students attending an organic chemistry workshop were investigated. In the study, self-determination theory was used as the framework (Balck and Deci 2000: 741-742). According to the self-determination theory, contexts in which learner autonomy is supported differ from controlling contexts in how motivation is dealt with: in autonomy supportive contexts, intrinsic motivation is maintained and enhanced, whereas in controlled contexts, intrinsic motivation is undermined and the internalization of extrinsic motivation inhibited. In the study, it was hypothesized, firstly, that autonomous reasons

for studying and perceived autonomy support would lead to greater perceived competence and interest in learning as well as to lesser anxiety and grade orientation, and, secondly, that autonomy-supportive learning climate would lead to students becoming more autonomous (Black and Deci 2000: 743). From the data, which was gathered with two questionnaires (of which the other was the Learning Climate Questionnaire, to be reviewed below) from organic chemistry students attending student-centred study groups, the researchers were able to draw three conclusions (Black and Deci 2000: 744-754). Firstly, autonomous motivation predicted, just as it was hypothesized, greater perceived competence and interest in learning, and lesser anxiety and grade orientation. Secondly, according to the research findings, those students who became more autonomous during the course received better grades. Thirdly, when the students originally low in autonomous motivation perceived their instructor as supporting their autonomy, their relative autonomy increased and their course performance enhanced. Thus it would seem that autonomous motivation predicts better performance and increased interest in learning. Furthermore, especially students low in initial autonomy seem to benefit from perceived autonomy support, since it not only increases their autonomy but also their course performance.

In conclusion, it seems that programmes that aim at promoting learner autonomy not only increase language skills, but they also enhance the students' motivation to learn and their attitudes towards language learning. Furthermore, when students perceive that their teacher supports their autonomy, the students' autonomy is increased. However, as the results of the studies also indicated that not all students and teachers appreciate all the principles behind autonomous learning, individual views should be taken into account.

Measuring learner autonomy

As the interest in learner autonomy and its promotion have increased, instruments for measuring learner autonomy have also been developed. Murase (2009), for example, has developed such an instrument. In order to be able to measure whether practices that aim at developing learner autonomy have worked, Murase (2009: 1252-1253) developed the MILLA (Measuring Instrument for Language Learner Autonomy), which is a quantitative instrument for measuring the extent to which students exhibit learner autonomy. In the process of formulating the instrument, in order to be able to

grasp the multidimensional nature of learner autonomy, the construct was operationalised based on the literature on learner autonomy into four main categories: *technical*, *psychological*, *political-philosophical* and *socio-cultural* autonomy (Murase 2009: 1253). After a pilot study, the instrument was revised to be used in further studies, such as as a tool in reflecting on teaching practices and in raising students' awareness of their learning (Murase 2009: 1260).

As most of the instruments that have been developed are concerned with the extent to which a learner is autonomous, as is the case with the instrument developed by Murase (2009), not as many instruments have been developed for measuring the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted. Nevertheless, such instruments exist; one of them is the Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ), which was used in the study by Black and Deci that was reviewed earlier. The instrument, which was developed by Williams and Deci (1996), aims at measuring the extent to which students perceive their instructor as supporting their autonomy (Williams and Deci 1996: 770). The questionnaire consist of 15 items or statements, to which students are asked to express their opinion on five-point Likert-scales. As for the authors supporting autonomy means "a person in an authority role taking the other's perspective, acknowledging the other's feelings and perceptions, providing the other with information and choice, and minimizing the use of pressure and control" (Williams and Deci 1996: 767), the statements of the questionnaire are mainly concerned with strategies that aim at enhancing emotional climate and increasing mutual respect and trust.

The development of such instruments as the MILLA and the LCQ enables teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and to find out whether some aspects of teaching could be revised. However, as Benson (2011: 65-68) points out, while the notion that there are different degrees of autonomy implies that measuring learner autonomy should, in principle, be possible, there are some problems in measuring learner autonomy. Firstly, as learner autonomy is a multidimensional and complex construct that comprises of various aspects, none of which are the same as learner autonomy itself, it is difficult to decide on the fundamental aspects of autonomy that ought to be measured. Secondly, learner autonomy entails such issues as motivation, language awareness, learner beliefs and metacognition, which have "their own integrity in the research literature" (Benson 2011: 66). When measuring learner autonomy, the

connection between these constructs and learner autonomy should be considered carefully. Lastly, as learner autonomy is an innate capacity rather than a range of observable behaviours, it cannot be assessed solely based on observable aspects of learning; a student might well be using strategies associated with autonomous behaviour but still lack autonomy, and vice versa. As a consequence, when creating instruments for measuring learner autonomy, the multidimensional and context-bound nature of the construct should be taken into consideration. In this respect, the LCQ, in particular, is rather defective, as it only measures how supportive of autonomy the learning climate is; as was concluded in section 4.2, *Emotional climate* is merely one of the six themes that, based on the literature, seem to be present in the promotion of learner autonomy. As a consequence, while the LCQ might measure the extent to which learning climate supports learner autonomy, it does not measure the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted *as a whole*.

In addition, the studies on the promotion of learner autonomy are also on some occasions defective: in the light of the aforementioned problems related to measuring learner autonomy, it seems that a number of studies tend to view learner autonomy rather narrowly. As is often the case with studies on students' and teachers' readiness for learner autonomy, learner autonomy is often equated with a set of right kinds of attitudes; however, while attitudes are connected to the implementation of learner autonomy, they do not in themselves lead to greater learner autonomy. Furthermore, as was the case with, for example, the study by Black and Deci (2000), some studies equate learner autonomy with having intrinsic motivation, whereas according to the literature on learner autonomy, motivation plays only a part in learner autonomy. On the other hand, in some studies learner autonomy is assessed on the grounds of observable behaviours. However, as was mentioned earlier, if a student seems to be using strategies associated with autonomous behaviour, it does not automatically mean that he or she is autonomous. As a consequence, studying learner autonomy and its promotion is not an easy task. But when it is done, it is important firstly to take the learners' view into account and, secondly, not to view learner autonomy too narrowly.

6 DATA AND METHODS

Learner autonomy has received an increasing amount of attention, reasons for which were discussed earlier when defining the term. In particular, it was shown that the practical implementation of learner autonomy in formal contexts such as formal foreign language teaching has given rise to numerous theories and studies that have elaborated on the issue. However, since learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept with various interpretations, its promotion still requires further research. This particular study aims at offering an additional viewpoint to the issue by studying the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted in formal English teaching in Finland.

The methodology of the present study will be described in the following sections. In the first section, the reasons behind this study as well as the research questions will be discussed. In section 6.2, the participants of the study will be described. Finally, data collection and the means by which data was analyzed will be described in section 6.3.

6.1 Motivating the study and research questions

As was noted earlier, the promotion of learner autonomy in formal contexts has recently caught the attention of numerous scholars and practitioners. In particular, the focus has increasingly been on the practical implementation of learner autonomy and, in specific, practices that aim at fostering learner autonomy in classroom contexts. Special programmes have been designed to promote students' autonomy, and in some cases the promotion of learner autonomy has even been incorporated in formal teaching as an explicit curricular goal. As was discussed in chapter 5, the effects of such programmes have proven positive (Dam and Legenhausen 2010; Kjisik 1997).

Although the promotion of learner autonomy has been studied in contexts in which it is set as an explicit goal (for more information on previous studies, see chapter 5), studies on other contexts are, quite logically, somewhat lacking. In specific, studies on the issue in such contexts in which learner autonomy is merely implicit in other related concepts, such as in formal English teaching in Finland, are even non-existent. However, as became evident in the sections on formal foreign language teaching in Finland (see sections 3.1 and 3.2), although

not explicitly formulated as a goal of foreign language teaching in Finland, the promotion of learner autonomy is implied on multiple levels. Firstly, at least in subject teacher training in the University of Jyväskylä such themes related to learner autonomy as active citizenship, societal equality, inclusive pedagogy and intercultural understanding are valued explicitly (Aineenopettajan koulutuksen opettajan pedagogisten opintojen opetussuunnitelma 2010-2013: 1). Thus the seeds of learner autonomy are planted already in the training of English language teachers in Finland. Secondly, in the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools learner autonomy is introduced through such ideas as participatory citizenship, life-long learning and self-development (LOPS 2003: 12). In addition, promoting readiness for spontaneous, self-directed learning and enhancing metacognitive skills, both of which are important features of learner autonomy, belong to the aims of foreign language education (LOPS 2003: 100). In conclusion, although not necessarily explicitly stated, learner autonomy is at least implied on several occasions and on multiple levels in the official aims of foreign language education in Finnish upper secondary schools. In this respect, it is rather surprising that studies on learner autonomy in formal English teaching in Finland are lacking. The present study aims at filling that gap.

The approach adopted in the present study to the promotion of learner autonomy in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland is twofold. First of all, since learner autonomy is, as was mentioned earlier, implied in the official aims of English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland, the present study aims at revealing the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted in that context. In particular, this issue is approached from the students' perspective. Second of all, this study aims at finding out how satisfied the students are with the extent to which learner autonomy is in their opinion promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. The degree of satisfaction in relation to the perceived promotion of learner autonomy might reveal whether learner autonomy is in students' opinion promoted *enough*, or, for that matter, even *too much*. Furthermore, the effects of certain variables on the answers were looked at. The variables that were included were: the participants' gender, age, self-assessment on how autonomous English learners they are, and their last English grade. The reason to include information on the participants' demographic background was that it was of interest to see whether they have any effects on the answers. Executive

functioning, for example, has been proven to develop late (Reynolds 2008: 879), and since it is connected to learner autonomy (see section 2.1), it was of interest to see whether the oldest participants view the promotion of learner autonomy differently than the younger participants. Furthermore, information on the participants' last English grade and autonomy self-assessment grade were included in the study in order to find out possible connections between the two grades and the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived to be promoted. Firstly, it was hypothesized that, given that the participants were accurate in their self-assessment, the participants' autonomy self-assessment grade would correlate with the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted. Furthermore, as became evident earlier in chapter 5, autonomy supportive climate has been proven to enhance course performance (Black and Deci 2000: 744-745): if the participants' course grade correlated with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy, that would be the case in this study, as well. For these reason, the participants' course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade were not compared with the students' satisfaction – it was not of interest.

On the basis of the aforementioned reasons, the following research questions were formulated:

1. In the students' opinion, to what extent is learner autonomy promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland?
 - 1a. In the students' opinion, are some aspects of learner autonomy promoted more than others?
 - 1b. Do such variables as gender, age, self-assessment of learner autonomy and English grade have an effect on or a connection to the answers?
2. How satisfied are the students with the extent to which they think learner autonomy is promoted in upper secondary school English teaching in Finland?
 - 2a. Are the students more satisfied with the extent to which they think some aspects of learner autonomy are promoted than they are with others?

2b. Do such variables as gender and age have an effect on the answers?

3. Are there any connections between the perceived promotion of learner autonomy and the degree of satisfaction?

These research questions will be answered by analyzing the data that was collected with a questionnaire (see Appendix 1). As the focus of this study is on the students' opinions, the questionnaire was distributed among upper secondary school students in three different schools. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked to express their opinion on statements that represent the actions that their English teacher can take in order to promote learner autonomy. After the data was collected, it was analyzed quantitatively. The participants of the study, data collection and the means by which the data was analyzed will be discussed in greater detail in section 6.2.

The students' perspective was chosen for three reasons. Firstly, due to the fact that teachers' explicit assessments on their own teaching practices can be biased and even misleading (Senge 1994, cited in Ruohotie-Lyhty 2006: 26) more accurate information on the perceived teaching practices can be obtained from students. Secondly, as various studies have shown that students and teachers perceive teaching practices differently (Benson 2011: 79-81), if a teacher thinks that he or she is using a certain strategy, it does not automatically mean that their students are actively engaged in those strategies. Thirdly, when studying student-centred methods, it is only logical to approach the issue from the students' point of view. As learner autonomy is all about the students taking charge of their own learning, they should also get their voices heard in the studies concerning the teaching they encounter.

6.2 Participants

The participants of the study consisted of upper secondary school students attending a 2nd or 3rd year level English course. 2nd and 3rd year students were selected as participants for two reasons. The first reason relates to the timing of data collection: since the data was collected in the beginning of the academic year, students in their 1st year of upper secondary school might have lacked in experience on English teaching in upper secondary school. The second reason

derives from neuropsychological research on executive functioning: executive functioning, which means the self-regulatory functions related to cognitive processes such as learning, develop late (Reynolds 2008: 879). Research findings such as these imply that the older the students, the more accurately they can reflect on their learning and teaching, which is exactly why second and third year students were selected as participants.

A total of 107 upper secondary school students participated in this study. Male and female students were fairly evenly represented in this study (see Figure 1).

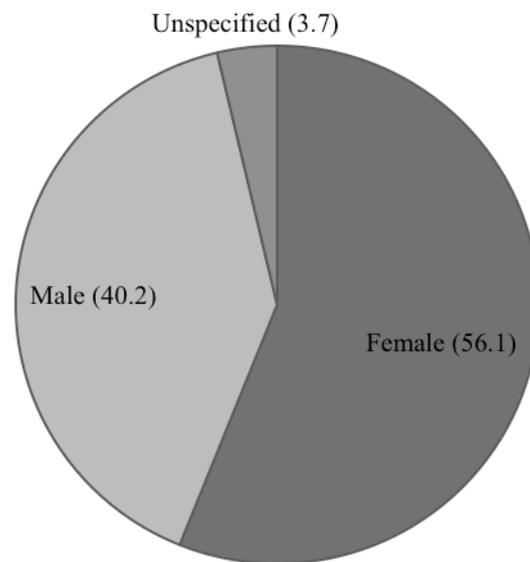


Figure 1. The participants by gender (%)
(n = 107)

Of the participants 60 were female and 43 male; four participants did not specify their gender. The participants' age ranged from 16 to 19; however, since there were only two 19-year-old participants, in data analysis 18- and 19-year-olds were treated as a uniform group, which will be referred to as *the over 18-year-olds* (see Figure 2).

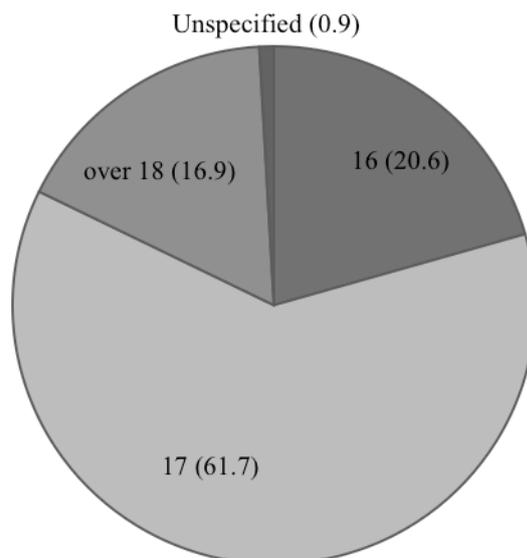


Figure 2. The participants by age (%)
(n = 107)

As can be seen in Figure 2, different age groups were rather unevenly represented in this study: most of the participants were 17 years old, while the fifth of the participants were 16 years old and only 16 participants were over 18 years old. Furthermore, one participant did not report his or her age. The predominance of 17-year-old participants was due to the timing of data gathering: as the data was gathered in the beginning of the school year, there were 17-year-old students both in the 2nd as well as in the 3rd year school level. The scarcity of over 18-year-old participants, on the other hand, resulted from the fact that unfortunately, only one group of 3rd year level students were included in this study.

In addition to gender and age, the participants were asked to mark the grade of their last English course as well as evaluate how autonomous learners of English they thought they were by using school grading from 4 to 10 (see Figure 3).

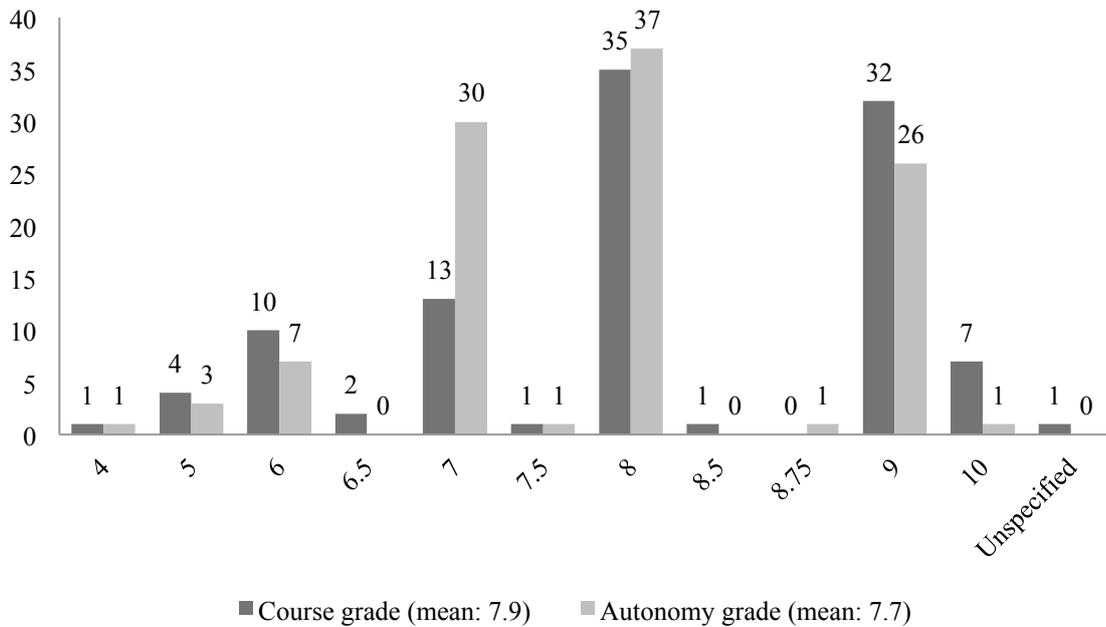


Figure 3. The participants by grades (n = 107)

Both the participants' last English grade and their autonomy self-assessment grade varied from 4 to 10, with 8 being the most popular grade in both cases. In some cases, the participants' reported grade included fractions; in such cases, the reported grade was not rounded but used in the analysis of the data as such.

6.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was chosen as the instrument in the collection of data, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, a questionnaire can yield a large amount of data when time and resources are limited (Dörnyei 2009: 6), as was the case in the present study. Secondly, while for example individual interviews can offer in-depth insights into an issue from a specific point of view, a questionnaire allows for the collection of larger amount of data and, therefore, more generalizable results (Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara 2007: 190), which were the aim of the present study.

The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from the Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ) by Williams and Deci (1996). However, as was noted in chapter 5, as the LCQ in itself measures mostly aspects of the promotion of learner autonomy related to the theme *Emotional climate*, the questionnaire needed to be adapted so that it covers the multidimensional nature of learner

autonomy and its promotion. When adapting the questionnaire, the literature on learner autonomy and, in specific, the promotion of learner autonomy was used as a reference. As was mentioned earlier in chapter 4 in relation to the theories on the promotion of learner autonomy, different scholars tend to approach the issue from varying viewpoints. This is why a compilation of different theories was chosen as the theoretical framework of the study instead of one specific theory: a compilation was thought to provide a wider understanding of the issue instead of one viewpoint. Before the LCQ could be adapted to fit the aims of the present study, the concept of the promotion of learner autonomy needed to be operationalized, i.e. given a measurable definition. Since the promotion of learner autonomy is, as was illustrated in chapter 4, a multidimensional issue with various strategies and features of classroom discourse affecting it, it first needed to be divided into meaningful sub-sections. In this process of operationalization, it was found out that the promotion of learner autonomy seems to consist of six themes. In addition to the theme *Emotional climate* already mentioned above, the themes included *Choice*, *Goals and needs*, *Support*, *Metacognition* and *Motivation* (for more detailed information on the themes, see section 4.1). The questionnaire was then built around these themes so that it was divided into six sections that represented the aforementioned themes. Since learner autonomy is a multidimensional issue with different sides of it interfacing with each other, there was also some overlap in the sections. The first section, *Choice*, for example, more or less encompasses features from all the other sections.

In the questionnaire (see Appendix 1), under each theme statements were presented. These statements, a total of 50, represent the actions an English teacher can take in order to promote learner autonomy among his or her students. The participants were asked to express their opinion on each statement in two different ways; first, on a scale from 1 to 5, **how often a statement is true**; and second, on a scale from 1 to 4, **how satisfied they are with how often a statement is true**. For the first question, the Likert-type scale from 1 to 5 represented a scale from *never* (1) to *always* (5), whereas for the second question, the range was from *not at all satisfied* (1) to *completely satisfied* (4). There are reasons for the unequal lengths of the scales. Justification to either include or to omit the middle point is often based on the possibility for the participants to express uncertainty: advocates of the scales with uneven numbers (i.e. with a middle point) argue for the participants' right to express

uncertainty, whereas advocates of even-numbered scales (i.e. no middle point) argue that respondents tend to rely on the middle point as expressing *undecided* too easily because it does not force them to think about how they really feel (Dörnyei 2009: 28). I agree with the advocates of even-numbered scales, which is why, in this study, the participants were asked to express their satisfaction on a four-point scale. On the other hand, the other scale in the questionnaire is five-point; in this scale, it was reasonable to include the middle point, because it measures the perceived *frequency* of a statement, and the middle point *sometimes* in that scale expresses frequency rather than uncertainty. In addition, under each theme there was space for the participants to comment on their answers.

In addition to the statements to which the participants were asked to react on Likert-type scales as well as the comment spaces below each theme, at the end of the questionnaire the participants were asked to fill in information on their gender and age, as well as the grade of their previous English course. In this part the participants were also asked to evaluate how autonomous English learners they thought they were by using school grading from 4 (*not at all autonomous*) to 10 (*fully autonomous*). Under the self-assessment there was space for the participants to justify their choice of grade. To help the participants in this self-assessment, the following summary of the concept was provided (original in Finnish):

Learner autonomy is a learner's trade, which means being in control of one's own learning (for example, learning of English), i.e. the ability to set goals, act according to those goals and evaluate progress.

As the participants of the study were Finnish, Finnish was chosen as the language of the questionnaire to minimize any ambiguity. Furthermore, to ensure the clarity and functionality of the questionnaire, it was first piloted with a small sample. After piloting, the questionnaire was revised and, especially, its layout improved and clarified. Furthermore, piloting made it possible to evaluate how long it takes approximately for the participants to fill in the questionnaire; this was an important piece of information in the collection of data, as will be explained later.

The two questions (i.e. the perceived frequency of a statement and satisfaction in the perceived frequency of a statement), to which the participants were asked

to answer by using the Likert-type scales, aimed at eliciting information on the participants' opinions on the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. The aim of the comment spaces under each theme was to elicit comments that would elaborate further on the participants' views. Furthermore, it was hoped that the demographic information (i.e. age, gender) and other background information (course grade, autonomy self-assessment grade) on the participants would elaborate on the possible differences in the answers.

6.4 Data collection and analysis

The data of the study was gathered in September, 2013, from three different schools, two of which were located in Central Finland and one in Eastern Finland. Furthermore, the data was collected from courses taught by five different teachers. It was important to collect data this way because the participants were asked to evaluate issues related to teaching; if all the answers were collected from groups taught by the same teacher, the possible differences in the answers would have probably derived from other aspects than teaching. Thus, by collecting data from courses that were taught by different teachers, it was safe to assume that the possible differences in the answers (at least in the ones that were related to teaching practices) derived from differences in teaching practices and not, for example, differences in perception.

With the teachers' consent, the data was collected during class. In order to ensure an efficient collection of data and an adequate amount of participants, I was present when the participants filled in the questionnaire. This proved useful also when further clarifications needed to be made, since I was able to elaborate on the issue and to answer urgent questions concerning the questionnaire. In each case, the data collection took approximately 20 minutes, which was in accordance with the piloting. This tight schedule was important for two reasons. Firstly, since the teachers who allowed me to collect data during class had already a tight schedule, they probably would not have volunteered if data collection had taken more time than that. Secondly, since the topic of the study had a low salience from the participants' perspective (as became evident in one participant's comment), more than half an hour would have been too long (Dörnyei 2009: 12). With a relatively short questionnaire, the

participants' interest in filling in the questionnaire did not suffer, which can be seen in the fact that none of the participants left the questionnaire unfinished. A total of 107 students answered the questionnaire, and only individual items in some questionnaires were left unanswered, which did not have too drastic effects on data analysis.

After the data was collected, all responses except the participants' comments were coded into numeric form and entered in Microsoft Excel to allow for quantitative analysis of the data. The data of the study was analyzed quantitatively because quantitative analysis is best suited for determining relationships between factors (Dörnyei 2009: 9), which was the aim of this study. As the participants left comments rather sparingly, the participants' comments were made use of only when elaborating on the results, as will become evident in chapter 8.

After the data was entered in Excel, the numerical values of the answers were calculated in the Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Firstly, such basic values as frequencies and mean values were calculated. In addition, in order to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach Alpha coefficients were calculated for each theme and by the two questions (i.e. the perceived frequency of a statement and the satisfaction with the perceived frequency of a statement)(see Table 3).

Table 3. Cronbach Alpha coefficients of both questions by theme

Theme	Perceived frequency	Satisfaction
Choice	0.737	0.889
Goals and needs	0.795	0.870
Support	0.835	0.875
Metacognition	0.850	0.909
Emotional climate	0.887	0.910
Motivation	0.839	0.889

The closer the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is to 1, the more reliable an instrument is. Furthermore, an instrument can be considered reliable only if the value exceeds 0.700. All of the themes received in both questions a value well above 0.700; the coefficient was in some cases even close to or above 0.900. In this respect, the results can be considered fairly reliable.

Secondly, in order to describe the connections between questionnaire items, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. In particular, correlation coefficients were calculated between the mean values of themes concerning the question **how often a statement was true** and the participants course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade, as well as between the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted and satisfaction with the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted, both on the level of individual statements and on the level of themes in general. When correlation coefficients were calculated, the linear connection between the two items was interpreted in the following way:

- <0.300 = non-existent
- >0.300 = weak
- >0.500 = moderate
- >0.700 = fairly strong
- >0.900 = very strong.

Thirdly, in order to find out the possible differences between the answers of different groups, variance analysis was done on the data. In specific, the mean values of the themes and answers by gender and age were looked at in this respect. The results of variance analyses were treated as follows:

- >0.05 = statistically insignificant
- <0.05 = statistically almost significant
- <0.01 = statistically significant
- <0.001 = statistically very significant.

Finally, the results of these calculations were grouped by the research questions of the study.

The means by which the data for the present study was collected and analyzed were introduced in this chapter. In the following chapter, the results of the study will be reported.

7 RESULTS

While the previous chapter concentrated on what needed to be first done in order to answer the research questions, in this chapter the results of the study will be reported. This will be done in accordance with the research questions of the study, which were introduced in greater detail in section 6.1. The first section of the questionnaire consisted of statements that represented the actions an English teacher can take in order to promote learner autonomy among his or her students. The participants were asked to express their opinion on these statements on two Likert-type scales: first, the participants were asked to answer **how often a statement was true** by using a scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*), and second, the participants were asked to answer **how satisfied they were with how often a statement was true** on a scale from 1 (*not at all satisfied*) to 4 (*completely satisfied*). As the first research question was concerned with the extent to which learner autonomy was in the students' opinion promoted in teaching English in upper secondary schools in Finland, the participants' answers to the first question (as they were expressed in the scale from 1 to 5), were considered to provide information on the first research question. Hence the results concerning the participants' answers to the question **how often a statement was true** will be reported first. In addition, the possible effects of such background variables as age, gender, course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade were of interest. These results will be reported in section 7.1. As the second research question was concerned with the students' satisfaction with the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived to be promoted in teaching English in upper secondary schools in Finland, the participants' answers to the second question, i.e. **how satisfied they were with how often a statement was true** (as they were expressed on a scale from 1 to 4), were

considered to provide information on the second research question. Also in this case the possible effects of the background variables were of interest. Section 7.2 is dedicated to the results concerning these issues. The last research question was concerned with the connection between the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted and satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy. In the last section the results concerning this connection will be reported.

7.1 The extent to which learner autonomy was promoted

The first section of the questionnaire consisted of statements to which the participants were asked to react on two Likert-type scales. The first scale was to be used in answering the question **how often a statement was true**. The scale used was a five-point Likert-type scale, in which 1 represented *never* and 5 represented *always*, the middle point representing *sometimes*. As the statements in the questionnaire derive directly from the literature on the promotion of learner autonomy and they represent the actions an English teacher can take to promote learner autonomy among his or her students, the results concerning the question **how often a statement was true** indicate the extent to which learner autonomy was in the students' opinion promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. Furthermore, as it was found out in the literature on the promotion of learner autonomy that the strategies to promote learner autonomy comprise distinct themes, i.e. *Choice, Goals and needs, Support, Metacognition, Emotional climate* and *Motivation*, the combined results from the statements clustered under each theme represent the extent to which the theme in question was perceived as being promoted. In this section, the results concerning the aforementioned question will be reported as they were expressed on the five-point Likert-type scale. The responses to the statements will be reported first by theme. Second, the mean values of the themes will be compared with each other in order to see whether the participants evaluated some aspects of learner autonomy to be promoted more often than others. Last, the possible effects of the background variables (i.e. age, gender, course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade) will be reported.

The perceived promotion of learner autonomy – the results by theme

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of statements that were grouped according to the themes mentioned earlier. The results concerning the theme *Choice* (Table 4) are reported first.

Table 4. How often a statement was true - *Choice*

Statement	Response alternatives (n)					N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)		
My english teacher...							
1. allows me to choose working methods that suit me best.	4 (3.7)	32 (29.9)	48 (44.9)	21 (19.6)	2 (1.9)	107	2.86
2. allows me to take part in the planning of schedules.	21 (19.6)	49 (45.8)	25 (23.4)	16 (11.2)	-	107	2.26
3. allows me to set personal goals and to work according to them.	2 (1.9)	11 (10.3)	25 (23.4)	47 (43.9)	21 (19.6)	106	3.70
4. offers various task alternatives, from which I can choose the one that suits me best.	18 (16.8)	46 (43.0)	34 (31.8)	8 (7.5)	1 (0.9)	107	2.33
5. offers me the possibility to influence the course contents (e.g. which topics/grammar items/book chapters are discussed in the course).	45 (42.1)	41 (38.3)	18 (16.8)	2 (1.9)	-	106	1.78
6. allows me to adjust the tasks' level of difficulty according to my skills.	22 (20.6)	36 (33.6)	30 (28.0)	17 (15.9)	1 (0.9)	106	2.42
7. does not direct my choices too much.	10 (9.3)	17 (15.9)	30 (28.0)	34 (31.8)	14 (13.1)	105	3.24

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

Firstly, only one statement was evaluated by the majority of the participants as being true either *often* or *always*. Statement 3 (*My English teacher allows me to set personal goals and to work according to them*) was thought to be true either *often* or *always* by 63.5 % of the participants. However, although statement 7 (*My English teacher does not direct my choices too much*) received more mixed responses, it was still evaluated more often as being true either *often* or *always* (44.9 %) than *rarely* or *never* (25.2 %).

Secondly, most of the statements were evaluated by the majority of the participants as being true either *rarely* or *never*. In statement 5 (*My English teacher offers me the possibility to influence the course contents (e.g. which topics/grammar items/book chapters are discussed in the course)*) the participants were most unanimous: 80.4 % of the participants evaluated that the statement was true either *never* or *rarely*. In addition, statements 2, 4 and 6 were also thought to be true either *rarely* or *never* by the majority of the participants. Although statement 1 (*My English teacher allows me to choose working methods that suit me best*) was evaluated with the response alternatives *rarely* and *never* (33.6 %) more often than with *often* or *always* (21.5 %), almost half of the participants thought that the statement was true *sometimes*, resulting in a mean value somewhat more positive than those of statements 5, 2, 4 and 6.

To sum up, almost all of the statements concerning the theme *Choice* were evaluated more often negatively than positively: only one statement (statement 3) was thought to be true either *often* or *always* by the majority of the participants, while the majority of the statements (statement 2, 4, 5 and 6) were thought to be true either *rarely* or *never* by a clear majority of the participants. In conclusion, it seems that the participants' English teacher made use of most of the strategies related to the theme *Choice* either *rarely* or *never*.

The second theme in the questionnaire was *Goals and needs*, and the results concerning it will be reported next (see Table 5).

Table 5. How often a statement was true - *Goals and Needs*

Statement	Response alternatives (n)					N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)		
My english teacher...							
1. helps me in finding out my personal (learning) needs.	16 (15.0)	27 (25.2)	40 (37.4)	18 (16.8)	6 (5.6)	107	2.73
2. helps me in setting personal goals.	5 (4.7)	5 (4.7)	29 (27.1)	35 (32.7)	33 (30.8)	107	3.80
3. supports me in setting and achieving personal goals.	7 (6.5)	22 (20.6)	39 (36.4)	24 (22.4)	12 (11.2)	104	3.12
4. makes sure that I understand other-determined goals (e.g. curricular goals).	4 (3.7)	17 (15.9)	26 (24.3)	38 (35.5)	22 (20.6)	107	3.53

5. allows me to approach tasks in my personal way.	6 (5.6)	13 (12.1)	38 (35.5)	36 (33.6)	13 (12.1)	106	3.35
6. offers me possibilities to work on my weaknesses, e.g. by offering tasks that work on my weaknesses.	6 (5.6)	16 (15.0)	34 (31.8)	34 (31.8)	16 (15.0)	106	3.36
7. allows me to work according to my personal goals even if they do not match my English teacher's goals.	13 (12.1)	37 (34.6)	41 (38.3)	12 (11.2)	2 (1.9)	105	2.55

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

Firstly, only two statements were evaluated as being true either *often* or *always* by the majority of the participants. A total of 63.5 % of the participants thought that statement 2 (*My English teacher helps me in setting personal goals*) was true either *often* or *always*. In addition, statement 4 (*My English teacher makes sure that I understand other-determined goals (e.g. curricular goals)*) was also evaluated as being true either *often* or *always* by the majority of the participants (56.1 %).

Secondly, statements 3, 5 and 6 were evaluated as being true either *often* or *always* more often than *rarely* or *never*. Statement 5 (*My English teacher allows me to approach tasks in my personal way*) and statement 6 (*My English teacher offers me possibilities to work on my weaknesses, e.g. by offering tasks that work on my weaknesses*) were both thought to be true either *often* or *always* by nearly half of the participants. Statement 3 (*My English teacher supports me in setting and achieving personal goals*), on the other hand, received more mixed responses: while a third of the participants thought that the statement was true either *often* or *always*, almost as many (27.1 %) thought that the statement was true either *rarely* or *never*. In addition, as somewhat over a third of the responses were given to response alternative *sometimes*, statement 3 received rather mixed responses.

Thirdly, statements 1 (*My English teacher helps me in finding out my personal (learning) goals*) and 7 (*My English teacher allows me to work according to my personal goals even if they do not match my English teacher's goals*) received answers to the response alternatives *rarely* and *never* more often than on *often* and *always*. However, since in both cases almost 40 % of the participants thought that the

statement was true *sometimes*, the results concerning these two statements were not as clear-cut as the results concerning statements 2 and 4 reported earlier.

To sum up, the statements related to the theme *Goals and needs* received rather mixed results. While only two statements (2 and 4) were thought to be true either *often* or *always* by the majority of the participants, in the rest of the statements the participants were not as unanimous. Nevertheless, the statements were evaluated more often positively than negatively, as can be seen in the mean values of the statements. In conclusion, it seems that the participants' English teacher made somewhat frequent use of most of the strategies related to the theme *Goals and needs*.

The results concerning the statements related to the third theme of the questionnaire, *Support*, will be reported next (see Table 6).

Table 6. How often a statement was true - *Support*

Statement	Response alternatives (n)					N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)		
My english teacher...							
1. encourages me to ask for help and advice.	-	4 (3.7)	15 (14.0)	41 (38.3)	47 (43.9)	107	4.22
2. offers help when I need it.	-	3 (2.8)	8 (7.5)	27 (25.2)	68 (63.6)	106	4.51
3. is thorough and intelligible when helping me.	1 (0.9)	4 (3.7)	18 (16.8)	44 (41.1)	40 (37.4)	107	4.10
4. encourages the students to ask for help from one another when necessary.	2 (1.9)	12 (11.2)	34 (31.8)	34 (31.8)	25 (23.4)	107	3.64
5. encourages me to help other students when necessary.	12 (11.2)	23 (21.5)	35 (32.7)	26 (24.3)	10 (9.3)	106	2.99
6. allows me to work with a partner/in groups.	1 (0.9)	1 (0.9)	10 (9.3)	63 (58.9)	31 (29.0)	106	4.15
7. makes sure that when working in groups, everyone participates in a way that suits their skills best.	4 (3.7)	25 (23.4)	40 (37.4)	27 (25.2)	11 (10.3)	107	3.15
8. offers me reference materials (e.g. dictionaries, internet sites).	13 (12.1)	17 (15.9)	53 (49.5)	20 (18.7)	4 (3.7)	107	2.86

9. offers me guidance in using reference materials.	14 (13.1)	34 (31.8)	35 (32.7)	18 (16.8)	6 (5.6)	107	2.70
10. offers tasks with different levels of difficulty, so that I can choose a task that suits my skills best.	17 (15.9)	37 (34.6)	39 (36.4)	12 (11.2)	2 (1.9)	107	2.49

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

Firstly, a total of five statements (statement 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6) were evaluated as being true either *often* or *always* by the majority of the participants. Statement 2 (*My English teacher offers help when I need it*) was evaluated with the response alternative *often* or *always* by 88.8 % of the participants, and 63.6 % of the participants thought that the statement was true *always*. Also statements 1, 3 and 6 were evaluated as being true *often* or *always* by a clear majority of the participants: statement 1 by 82.9 %, statement 3 by 78.5 %, and statement 6 by 87.9 % of the participants. While statement 4 (*My English teacher encourages the students to ask for help from one another when necessary*) was also thought to be true either *often* or *always* by the majority of the participants (55.2 %), it received more mixed responses than the other aforementioned statements.

Secondly, only one statement was evaluated as being true either *rarely* or *never* by the majority of the participants: 50.5 % of the participants thought that statement 10 (*My English teacher offers tasks with different levels of difficulty, so that I can choose a task that suits my skills best*) was true only *rarely* or *never*. In addition, statement 9 (*My English teacher offers me guidance in using reference materials*) received more answers to the response alternatives *rarely* or *never* (44.9 %) than on *often* or *always* (22.4 %). However, as nearly a third of the participants thought that the statement was true *sometimes*, the responses on statement 10 were fairly mixed.

Thirdly, statements 5, 7 and 8 were not clearly evaluated as being promoted either *rarely* or *never* or *often* or *always*. While the responses to statements 5 and 7 were distributed quite evenly between the positive and negative response alternatives and *sometimes*, the participants were more unanimous in statement 8 (*My English teacher offers me reference materials (e.g. dictionaries, internet sites)*), since it was evaluated by nearly half of the participants as being true *sometimes*.

To sum up, the statements concerning the theme *Support* were quite often evaluated clearly positively, which is reaffirmed with a mean value of either close to or above *often* of statements 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6. In addition, only statement 10 was evaluated negatively by the majority of the participants, and statement 9 was evaluated negatively more often than positively. For the rest of the statements, the general opinion was not as clearly positive or negative, but either mixed evenly or representing the response alternative *sometimes*. Thus it seems that the participants' English teacher made frequent use of most of the strategies related to the theme *Support*.

The fourth theme of the questionnaire was *Metacognition*, and the results concerning it will be reported next (Table 7).

Table 7. How often a statement was true - *Metacognition*

Statement	Response alternatives (n)					N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)		
My english teacher...							
1. helps me in finding out which learning styles suit me best.	10 (9.3)	27 (25.2)	47 (43.9)	22 (20.6)	1 (0.9)	107	2.79
2. allows me to try out different working methods.	6 (5.6)	22 (20.6)	49 (45.8)	26 (24.3)	4 (3.7)	107	3.00
3. allows me to work according to the learning styles that suit me best.	5 (4.7)	21 (19.6)	43 (40.2)	32 (29.9)	6 (5.6)	107	3.12
4. pays attention to the process of learning (instead of the outcome) in evaluation.	15 (14.0)	35 (32.7)	33 (30.8)	20 (18.7)	2 (1.9)	105	2.61
5. allows me to correct my tasks/ tests/ written assignments myself.	44 (41.1)	38 (35.5)	20 (18.7)	5 (4.7)	-	107	1.87
6. makes me notice my mistakes and helps me in correcting them.	-	10 (9.3)	29 (27.1)	53 (49.5)	15 (14.0)	107	3.68
7. helps me in discovering my strengths and weaknesses.	7 (6.5)	32 (29.9)	45 (42.1)	20 (18.7)	3 (2.8)	107	2.81
8. allows me to work on my weaknesses e.g. by letting me choose tasks that practice my weaknesses.	9 (8.4)	43 (40.2)	38 (35.5)	15 (14.0)	2 (1.9)	107	2.61

9. allows me to bring out my strengths e.g. by letting me help other students.	10 (9.3)	32 (29.9)	38 (35.5)	23 (21.5)	4 (3.7)	107	2.80
10. allows me to evaluate my process myself.	8 (7.5)	28 (26.2)	44 (41.1)	19 (17.8)	8 (7.5)	107	2.92
11. offers guidance in the evaluation of the learning process with the help of e.g. portfolios and learning diaries.	50 (46.7)	37 (34.6)	16 (15.0)	4 (3.7)	-	107	1.76

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

Firstly, statements were evaluated as being true either *rarely* or *never* more often than they were evaluated as being true either *often* or *always*. Statements 5 (*My English teacher allows me to correct my tasks/tests/written assignments myself*) and 11 (*My English teacher offers guidance in the evaluation of the learning process with the help of e.g. portfolios and learning diaries*) were evaluated by a clear majority of the participants as being true either *rarely* or *never*: both of the statements received nearly half of the answers to the response alternative *never*. In addition, statements 4 (*My English teacher pays attention to the **process** of learning (instead of the **outcome**) in evaluation*) and 8 (*My English teacher allows me to work on my weaknesses e.g. by letting me choose tasks that practice my weaknesses*) were evaluated as being true either *rarely* or *never* by nearly half of the participants.

Secondly, only one statement was thought to be true either *often* or *always* by the majority of the participants. Statement 6 (*My English teacher makes me notice my mistakes and helps me in correcting them*) was evaluated by nearly half of the participants as being true *often*, and as 14.0 % of the participants thought that the statement was true *always*, a total of 63.5 % evaluated the statement positively.

Thirdly, the rest of the statements were evaluated most frequently as being true *sometimes*. Over 40 % of the participants thought that statements 1, 2, 3, 7 and 10 were true *sometimes*. Statement 9 (*My English teacher allows me to bring out my strengths e.g. by letting me help other students*) received the most mixed responses: while somewhat over a third of the participants thought that the statement was true *sometimes*, a fourth of the participants thought that it was true either *often* or *always* and 39.2 % of the participants evaluated it as being true either *rarely* or *never*.

In summary, the statements related to the theme *Metacognition* were most frequently evaluated as being true *sometimes*. In addition, they were more often evaluated negatively (i.e. as being true either *rarely* or *never*) than positively. Thus, in the participants' opinion, their English teacher made use of the strategies related to the theme *Metacognition* mostly *sometimes*.

The results concerning the statements related to the fifth theme of the questionnaire, *Emotional climate*, will be reported next (see Table 8).

Table 8. How often a statement was true - *Emotional climate*

Statement	Response alternatives (n)					N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)		
1. My English teacher takes criticism on teaching well.	2 (1.9)	9 (8.4)	25 (23.4)	43 (40.2)	26 (24.3)	105	3.78
2. I feel that I can be open towards my English teacher.	3 (2.8)	9 (8.4)	16 (15.0)	50 (46.7)	28 (26.2)	106	3.86
3. Expressing feelings (both positive and negative) to my English teacher is easy.	8 (7.5)	17 (15.9)	29 (27.1)	32 (29.9)	20 (18.7)	106	3.37
4. I can question the practices that do not work well in my opinion.	7 (6.5)	11 (10.3)	34 (31.8)	32 (29.9)	23 (21.5)	107	3.50
5. My English teacher responds to feedback in teaching.	3 (2.8)	12 (11.2)	36 (33.6)	41 (38.3)	14 (13.1)	106	3.48
6. My English teacher encourages me to take part in decision-making.	9 (8.4)	26 (24.3)	38 (35.5)	25 (23.4)	8 (7.5)	106	2.97
7. My English teacher encourages me to ask questions.	1 (0.9)	6 (5.6)	29 (27.1)	35 (32.7)	34 (31.8)	105	3.90
8. My English teacher accepts me the way I am.	3 (2.8)	4 (3.7)	9 (8.4)	31 (29.0)	58 (54.2)	105	4.30
9. My English teacher understands me and my viewpoint.	4 (3.7)	4 (3.7)	34 (31.8)	39 (36.4)	25 (23.4)	106	3.73

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

Firstly, most of the statements were evaluated as being true either *often* or *always* by the majority of the participants. As can be seen from its mean value, statement 8 (*My English teacher accepts me the way I am*) was thought to be true

most frequently: as over half of the participants thought that the statement was true *always* and nearly a third evaluated it as being true *often*, the two positive response alternatives were chosen by a total of 83.2 % of the participants. In addition, statements 1, 2, 7 and 9 were evaluated by a clear majority of the participants as being true either *often* or *always*. Furthermore, approximately half of the participants thought that statements 3, 4 and 5 were true either *often* or *always*.

Secondly, statement 6 (*My English teacher encourages me to take part in decision-making*) received rather mixed responses. While somewhat over a third of the participants thought that the statement was true *sometimes*, nearly as many thought that it was true either *rarely* or *never* (32.7 %), or *often* or *always* (30.9 %).

In summary, most of the statements were evaluated positively by the majority of the participants. In other words, in the participants' opinion, their English teacher made frequent use of a clear majority of the strategies related to the theme *Emotional climate*.

The last theme in the questionnaire was *Motivation*, and the results concerning it will be reported next (Table 9).

Table 9. How often a statement was true - *Motivation*

Statement	Response alternatives (n)					N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)		
My English teacher							
1. helps me in finding out what motivates me in learning English .	10 (9.3)	32 (29.9)	38 (35.5)	25 (23.4)	2 (1.9)	107	2.79
2. motivates me.	11 (10.3)	23 (21.5)	39 (36.4)	29 (27.1)	5 (4.7)	107	2.94
3. helps me understand why learning English is useful.	1 (0.9)	9 (8.4)	24 (22.4)	48 (44.9)	24 (22.4)	106	3.80
4. allows me to incorporate other areas of my life in learning English.	7 (6.5)	18 (16.8)	32 (29.9)	31 (29.0)	17 (15.9)	105	3.31
5. encourages me to use English in other areas of my life, such as in free time.	2 (1.9)	10 (9.3)	18 (16.8)	40 (37.4)	37 (34.6)	107	3.93

6. connects English studies with my life e.g. by using topics that are relevant to me.	12 (11.2)	29 (27.1)	28 (26.2)	27 (25.2)	10 (9.3)	106	2.94
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Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

Firstly, two statements were evaluated as being true either *often* or *always* by a clear majority of the participants. Statement 3 (*My English teacher helps me understand why learning English is useful*) and statement 5 (*My English teacher encourages me to use English in other areas of my life, such as in free time*) were both evaluated by approximately 70 % of the participants as being true either *often* or *always*.

Secondly, the rest of the statements received rather mixed results. While the answers related to statements 2 and 6 were distributed quite evenly between *sometimes* and the positive (i.e. *often* and *always*) and negative (i.e. *rarely* and *never*) response alternatives, there was some imbalance in the answers related to statements 1 and 4. First, statement 1 (*My English teacher helps me in finding out what motivates me in learning English*) was evaluated more often as being true either *rarely* or *always* (39.2 %) than it was evaluated as being true either *often* or *always* (25.3 %). This tendency towards a more negative evaluation resulted in the mean value of statement 1 to fall somewhat below *sometimes*. Second, statement 4 (*My English teacher allows me to incorporate other areas of my life in learning English*) was more often thought to be true either *often* or *always* (44.9 %) than it was thought to be true either *rarely* or *never* (23.3 %). Again, this tendency was reflected in the statements' mean value, which was in this case somewhat above *sometimes*.

To sum up, as most of the statements received rather mixed responses, the participants were not as unanimous in the theme *Motivation* as they were in the other themes. However, as can be seen from the mean values of the statements, all the statements had a mean value of either above or close to *sometimes*. Thus it could be concluded that in the participants' opinion their English teacher used strategies related to *Motivation* mostly *sometimes*.

The perceived promotion of learner autonomy – comparison of the themes

As became evident when the results concerning individual statements were reported, the statements differed from one another in how often they were evaluated as being true. Furthermore, as there were differences in the

statements within the themes, there were also differences across the themes: for example, as the participants evaluated that their English teacher makes frequent use of the strategies related to the theme *Support*, the statements under the theme *Choice* were not evaluated as positively as often. In order to see whether there were any differences in the extent to which each theme was evaluated as being promoted overall, the themes' overall mean values (see Table 10) were calculated.

Table 10. How often a statement was true – thematic mean values

Theme	Mean value
Emotional climate	3.66
Support	3.48
Motivation	3.29
Goals and needs	3.20
Metacognition	2.72
Choice	2.65

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

As can be seen from Table 10, the themes were evaluated as a whole as being promoted either somewhat below or above *sometimes*. However, there were some differences in the extent to which each theme was perceived as being promoted. The theme *Emotional climate*, for example, had the highest mean value: with a mean value close to 4, *Emotional climate* was evaluated as a whole as being promoted close to *often*. The themes *Choice* and *Metacognition*, on the other hand, both had a mean value below 3, meaning that they were evaluated as a whole as being promoted less frequently than *sometimes*. Consequently, in the participants' opinion, some aspects of learner autonomy were promoted more often than others.

In order to see whether the themes' mean values differed from one another statistically, they were compared to each other (see Table 11).

Table 11. How often a statement was true - statistical significances of the differences in thematic mean values

Theme \ Theme	Choice	Goals and needs	Support	Meta-cognition	Emotional climate	Motivation
Choice	-	0.000***	0.000***	0.156	0.000***	0.000***
Goals and needs	0.000***	-	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.251
Support	0.000***	0.000***	-	0.000***	0.005**	0.003**
Metacognition	0.156	0.000***	0.000***	-	0.000***	0.000***
Emotional climate	0.000***	0.000***	0.005**	0.000***	-	0.000***
Motivation	0.000***	0.251	0.003**	0.000***	0.000**	-

* = statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference

As the highest level of statistical difference is 0.05, nearly all the themes differed from one another in their mean values statistically. Furthermore, as the level of statistically significant difference is 0.01 and the level of statistically very significant difference 0.001, most of the themes' mean values differed from one another either *statistically significantly* or even *statistically very significantly*. For example, as was mentioned earlier, the theme *Emotional climate* was evaluated as being promoted more frequently than all the other themes; the comparison of mean values indicates that all except one theme were evaluated as being promoted less often with a *statistically very significant difference*. The theme *Support* was evaluated as being promoted less often than *Emotional climate* with a *statistically significant difference*. Only in two cases was there no statistical difference between how often the themes were in the participants' opinion promoted: *Choice* and *Metacognition* did not differ from one another in their mean values, and neither did *Goals and needs* and *Motivation*. In conclusion, some aspects of learner autonomy were in the participants' opinion promoted more often than others, and in most cases, even statistically very significantly so.

The perceived promotion of learner autonomy – comparisons by the background variables

In order to see whether there were any significant differences in the answers of different groups concerning the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted, the results were compared with the participants' background information elicited in the second section of the questionnaire. In this study, the participants formed groups according to their gender, age, last English course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade. The results of these comparisons will be reported next.

Gender

When comparing the answers by gender, the female and male participants' answers did not differ in most cases and in thematic mean values. However, some statistical differences were found on the level of individual statements (see Appendix 2). First, the female and male participants differed in their answers to statement 1 of the theme *Goals and needs* (*My English teacher helps me in finding out my personal (learning) needs*): while both the female and male participants evaluated the statement as being true somewhat more rarely than *sometimes*, the female participants' mean value (2.90) of the statement differed *statistically almost significantly* from the male participants' mean value (2.84), meaning that they evaluated the statement as being true statistically almost significantly more often than the male participants. Second, there was also a difference in the two groups' answers to statement 6 of the theme *Support* (*My English teacher allows me to work with a partner/in groups*): as the female participants evaluated the statement somewhat above *often* (with a mean value of 4.29) and the male participants somewhat below *often* (with a mean value of 3.98), the female participants evaluated the statement *statistically almost significantly* more positively than the male participants. Third, also statement 9 of the theme *Support* (*My English teacher offers me guidance in using reference materials*) elicited a difference in the two groups' answers: in this case, with a mean value barely below *sometimes* (2.95), the male participants evaluated the statement more positively than the female participants who evaluated the statement with a mean value of 2.52 more clearly below *sometimes*. This difference in the female and male participants' answers was *statistically almost significant*. Thus, although the female and male participants of the study were in general in agreement with each other, some statistically almost significant

differences in the two groups' answers existed. In consequence, it seems that on the level of some specific strategies, the female and male participants perceived the promotion of learner autonomy somewhat differently.

Age

Individual statements per theme. The results were also compared by the participants' age in order to find out whether there were any differences in the answers by the 16-, 17- and over 18-year-old participants (see Appendix 3). Firstly, the participants' age seemed to have an effect on their answers concerning some individual statements. In specific, when statistical differences were found, in all the cases the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed from the answers by the younger participants. Within the theme *Choice*, the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed statistically from the answers by both the 16- and 17-year-old participants concerning statement 1 (*My English teacher allows me to choose working methods that suit me best*), from the answers by the 17-year-old participants concerning statement 4 (*My English teacher offers various task alternatives, from which I can choose the one that suits me best*), and from the answers by the 16-year-old participants concerning statement 7 (*My English teacher does not direct my choices too much*). As in all the cases the over 18-year-old participants had evaluated the statement as being true less often than the younger participants, it seems that the over 18-year-old participants were statistically more critical than the younger participants.

In addition, the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed from the answers by the younger participants also within the theme *Emotional climate*. Firstly, the answers by over 18-year-old participants differed from the answers by both the 16- and 17-year-old participants concerning statement 1 (*My English teacher takes criticism on teaching well*) and statement 4 (*I can question the practices that do not work well in my opinion*). Secondly, the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed from the answers by the 16-year-old participants concerning statement 2 (*I feel that I can be open towards my English teacher*) and statement 9 (*My English teacher understands me and my viewpoint*). Thirdly, the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed from the answers by the 17-year-old participants concerning statement 5 (*My English teacher responds to feedback in teaching*). As was the case with statements related to the theme *Choice*, the over 18-year-old participants were more critical than the younger participants in their answers concerning the statements related to the theme

Emotional climate, meaning that they evaluated some strategies as taking place less often than what the younger participants estimated.

Furthermore, two statements related to the theme *Motivation* elicited statistical differences in the answers by the younger participants and the answers by the over 18-year-old participants. First, concerning statement 2 (*My English teacher motivates me*), the over 18-year-old participants evaluated the statement as being true statistically less often than the 17-year-old participants. Second, the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed from the answers by the 16-year-old participants statistically concerning statement 4 (*My English teacher allows me to incorporate other areas of my life in learning English*). As the over 18-year-old participants evaluated the statement also in this case as being true less often than the 16-year-old participants, it could be concluded that when statistical differences were found in the answers of the different age groups, the 18-year-old participants were more critical about the frequency of the strategy in question.

Themes. When the different age groups' answers were compared on the level of themes (i.e. thematic mean values), the participants' age seemed to have an effect on the answers concerning the theme *Emotional climate*: as the over 18-year-old participants' mean value of the theme was lower than the 16- and 17-year-old participants' mean values, the over 18-year-old participants evaluated the theme *Emotional climate* as being promoted as a whole statistically less frequently than the younger participants. To conclude, the oldest participants were more critical in their evaluation of the frequency of specific strategies and they perceived learner autonomy as being promoted less often, especially the theme *Emotional climate*.

Course grade

In order to see whether the participants' answers were connected to their last English grade, correlations between the results by theme and the participants' course grade were calculated. The participants' course grade did not correlate with any of the themes as the correlation coefficient was in all cases under 0.300. In conclusion, the participants' course grade was not connected to their answers.

Autonomy self-assessment grade

When correlations were calculated between the results by theme and the participants' autonomy self-assessment grade, correlation coefficient was above 0.300 only in one case: the correlation coefficient of autonomy self-assessment grade and the theme *Motivation* was 0.488, which means that the correlation between the two was weak. In other cases, the correlation coefficient was either clearly below or somewhat below the lowest level of correlation, which means that the correlation was insignificant. Thus it seems that the participants' opinion on the level of their own autonomy was connected to the extent to which they perceived the theme *Motivation* as being promoted.

The results reported in this section indicated that the participants thought that learner autonomy was in general promoted fairly frequently. In the next section, the results concerning the participants' satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy will be reported.

7.2 Satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy

The first section of the questionnaire consisted of statements to which the participants were asked to react on two Likert-type scales. The participants were asked to use the second scale when answering **how satisfied they were with how often a statement had been true**. The scale used was a four-point Likert-type scale, in which 1 represented *completely unsatisfied* and 4 represented *completely satisfied*. As the statements in the questionnaire derive directly from the literature on the promotion of learner autonomy and they represent the actions an English teacher can take to promote learner autonomy among his or her students, the results concerning the participants' **satisfaction with how often a statement had been true** indicate how satisfied the participants were with the extent to which learner autonomy had been perceived as being promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. Furthermore, as it was found out in the literature on the promotion of learner autonomy that the strategies to promote learner autonomy comprise distinct themes, i.e. *Choice, Goals and needs, Support, Metacognition, Emotional climate* and *Motivation*, the combined results from the statements clustered under each theme represent satisfaction with the extent to which the theme in question had

been perceived as being promoted. In this section, the results concerning the participants' satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy will be reported as they were expressed on the four-point Likert-type scale. However, as the participants were asked to express their satisfaction on the grounds of the perceived frequency of a statement, the results concerning the participants' satisfaction with how often a statement had been true are more meaningful when compared to those concerning the question how often a statement was true. That is why, in this section, the results concerning the question **how satisfied the participants were with how often a statement had been true** will be mainly reflected upon the results concerning the question **how often a statement was true** (for more detailed information on the results concerning this question, see section 7.1).

In this section, the responses to the statements will be reported first by theme. Second, the most intriguing results will be reported in more detail. Third, the mean values of the themes will be compared with each other in order to see whether the participants were more satisfied with the perceived promotion of some aspects of learner autonomy than others. Last, the effects of the participants' gender and age will be reported; contrary to research question 1, the connections between the participants' satisfaction and their course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade were not of interest, the reasons for which were introduced earlier in chapter 6.

Satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy – the results by theme

In most cases, the participants were clearly more often satisfied with how often a statement had been true than they were unsatisfied. Firstly, concerning the statements related to the theme *Choice*, in all the cases over half of the participants said that they were either *somewhat* or *completely satisfied* with how often a statement had been true. Furthermore, over 80 % of the participants said that they were either *somewhat* or *completely satisfied* with how often statement 7 (*My English teacher does not direct my choices too much*) had been true.

Secondly, over half of the participants said that they were either *somewhat* or *completely satisfied* with how often a statement had been true also in all the cases related to the theme *Goals and needs*. Furthermore, 84.1 % of the participants said that they were either *somewhat* or *completely satisfied* with how often statement 2 (*My English teacher helps me in setting personal goals*) had been true.

Thirdly, the majority of the participants were satisfied also with the frequency of all the statements related to the theme *Support*. However, as statement 10 (*My English teacher offers tasks with different levels of difficulty, so that I can choose a task that suits my skills best*) divided the participants in half, with 49.5 % of the participants expressing dissatisfaction and 50.5 % expressing satisfaction with how often the statement had been true, the results concerning statement 10 were not as clear-cut as the results concerning other statements related to the theme *Support*.

Fourthly, over half of the participants were satisfied with the frequencies of almost all the statements related to the theme *Metacognition*. However, as a third of the participants said that they were *somewhat unsatisfied* and nearly a fifth of the participants said that they were *completely unsatisfied* with how often statement 4 (*My English teacher pays attention to the **process** of learning (instead of the **outcome**) in evaluation*) had been true, a total of 52.3 % of the participants were unsatisfied with the frequency of statement 4. Nevertheless, in most cases the participants were satisfied with how often the statements related to the theme *Metacognition* had been true.

Fifth, concerning the statements related to the theme *Emotional climate*, in all the cases over 70 % of the participants said that they were either *somewhat* or *completely satisfied* with how often a statement had been true. Furthermore, in four cases (statements 2, 7, 8 and 9), nearly or over 90 % of the participants were satisfied with how often a statement had been true.

Lastly, over half of the participants were also satisfied with the perceived frequencies of all the statements related to the theme *Motivation*. In the light of these results, it could be concluded that in general, the participants were fairly consistently and across the themes satisfied with the perceived frequencies of strategies. Next, the most intriguing results will be reported in greater detail.

Highest degree of satisfaction

Although the participants were in general mostly satisfied with how often the statements had been true, the participants were more satisfied with the frequency of some statements than they were with others. The statements with the frequencies with which over 90 % of the participants were satisfied were

most often related to the theme *Support*: statement 1 (*My English teacher encourages me to ask for help and advice*), statement 2 (*My English teacher offers help when I need it*) and statement 6 (*My English teacher allows me to work with a partner/in groups*). When these results were compared with the results concerning the question **how often a statement was true** (see Table 6), a conclusion could be drawn that the participants were satisfied with these statements having been true either *often* (statements 1 and 6) or *always* (statement 2).

In addition, over 90 % of the participants were satisfied also with statement 8 related to the theme *Emotional climate* (*My English teacher accepts me the ways I am*). As this statement had been evaluated as being true *often* (see Table 8), it seems that the participants were satisfied with the frequent use of this strategy.

Lowest degree of satisfaction

The participants were more often unsatisfied than satisfied with only one statement. A total of 52.3 % of the participants were either *somewhat* or *completely unsatisfied* with how often statement 4 related to the theme *Metacognition* (*My English teacher pays attention to the **process** of learning (instead of the **outcome**) in evaluation*) had been true. With a mean value of 2.61, this statement had been evaluated as being true more rarely than *sometimes* (see Table 7). Consequently, the participants were somewhat unsatisfied with this strategy taking place in their teaching of English fairly infrequently.

Satisfaction with infrequent use

As was mentioned earlier, in all the cases except one (introduced above) the majority of the participants were satisfied with how often a statement had been true. However, as became evident in section 7.1, in which the results concerning the question **how often a statement was true** were reported, some statements were evaluated as being true either *rarely* or *never* by the majority of the participants. As a consequence, it seems that the participants were often satisfied with how often a statement had been true even if a statement had been evaluated as taking place infrequently. Next, the statements that had been (according to the mean value when rounded) evaluated as being true less frequently than *sometimes*, but with which the participants were nevertheless satisfied, will be reported.

Firstly, related to the theme *Choice*, statements 2 (*My English teacher allows me to take part in the planning of schedules*), 4 (*My English teacher offers various task alternatives, from which I can choose the one that suits me best*), 5 (*My English teacher offers me the possibility to influence the course contents (e.g. which topics/grammar items/book chapters are discussed in the course)*) and 6 (*My English teacher allows me to adjust the tasks' level of difficulty according to my skills*) had been evaluated by the majority of the participants as being true either *rarely* or *never* (see Table 4). Nevertheless, over half of the participants were satisfied with how often these statements had been true. In consequence, some of the participants were satisfied with their English teacher making infrequent use of these strategies.

Secondly, related to the theme *Goals and needs*, statement 7 (*My English teacher allows me to work according to my personal goals even if they do not match my English teacher's goals*) had been more often evaluated as being true either *rarely* or *never* than *often* or *always* (see Table 5) but, nevertheless, over half of the participants were either *somewhat* or *completely satisfied* with how often the statement had been true. Consequently, it seems that some of the participants were satisfied although the strategy in question had not been used by their English teacher very often.

Thirdly, related to the theme *Support*, while a clear majority of the participants (63.5 %) were satisfied with how often statement 9 (*My English teacher offers me guidance in using reference materials*) had been true, it had been evaluated more often as being true either *rarely* or *never* than *often* or *always* (see Table 6). Consequently, some of the participants were satisfied with the infrequent use of the strategy.

Fourthly, related to the theme *Metacognition*, over half of the participants were satisfied with how often statements 5 (*My English teacher allows me to correct my tasks/tests/written assignments myself*), 8 (*My English teacher allows me to work on my weaknesses e.g. by letting me choose tasks that practice my weaknesses*) and 11 (*My English teacher offers guidance in the evaluation of the learning process with the help of e.g. portfolios and learning diaries*) had been true, even when they had been evaluated as being true more often either *rarely* or *never* than *often* or *always* (see Table 7). Furthermore, as a clear majority of the participants had evaluated statements 5 and 11 as being true less often than *sometimes* and approximately 70 % of the participants were satisfied with how often these statements had

been true, the participants were fairly clearly satisfied with their English teacher not making frequent use of these strategies.

To sum up, the participants were fairly satisfied with the perceived frequency of almost all of the statements. In most cases, when comparing the results with the results concerning the question **how often a statement was true**, it became evident that the participants were satisfied with the frequent use of the strategy in question. However, in some cases, some of the participants were satisfied even if a strategy had been used fairly infrequently. As a consequence, while the participants favored the use of most strategies, some of the participants were also in some cases satisfied when a strategy had *not* been used.

Satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy – comparison of the themes

As became evident when the results concerning individual statements were reported, in most cases the majority of the participants were more often satisfied with how often a statement had been true than they were unsatisfied. Furthermore, the majority of the participants were satisfied even when a statement had more often been evaluated as being true either *rarely* or *never* than *often* or *always*. In order to see whether there were any differences in the level of satisfaction with each theme as a whole and whether the participants were less satisfied with those themes that had been evaluated as being promoted less frequently, mean values were calculated by theme (see Table 12).

Table 12. Satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy – thematic mean values

Theme	Mean value
Emotional climate	3.19
Support	3.15
Motivation	3.03

Goals and needs	2.93
Metacognition	2.80
Choice	2.70

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

Firstly, the participants were more or less *somewhat satisfied* with the extent to which each theme had been promoted. However, there were some differences in the degree of satisfaction with each theme. As the participants were most satisfied with the extent to which the theme *Emotional climate* had been promoted, they were least satisfied with the extent to which the theme *Choice* had been promoted. When comparing these results to the results concerning the question **how often a statement was true** and, in specific, to the thematic mean values concerning that question (see Table 10), one can see that *Emotional climate* had the highest and *Choice* had the lowest mean value in both. These results imply that there was a connection between the mean values; this connection will be reported in greater detail in section 7.3.

In addition, the thematic mean values show that as the participants were satisfied with the rather infrequent use of some strategies related to the theme *Choice*, the theme had, nevertheless, the lowest mean value, meaning that the participants were as a whole least satisfied with the extent to which the theme had been promoted. In addition, the theme *Metacognition* also entailed some strategies that had been used infrequently but with which the participants were satisfied; as the theme *Metacognition* had the second lowest mean value, the participants were, as a whole, less satisfied with the extent to which the theme had been promoted than they were with the extent to which *Goals and needs*, *Motivation*, *Support* and *Emotional climate* had been promoted.

As the thematic mean values concerning the satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy differed from one another, in order to see whether the differences had any statistical significance, the mean values were compared to each other (see Table 13).

Table 13. Satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy – statistical significances of the differences in thematic mean values

Theme Theme	Choice	Goals and needs	Support	Meta- cognition	Emotional climate	Motivation
Choice	-	0.000***	0.000***	0.043*	0.000***	0.000***
Goals and needs	0.000***	-	0.000***	0.002**	0.000***	0.067
Support	0.000***	0.000***	-	0.000***	0.297	0.055
Metacognition	0.043**	0.002**	0.000***	-	0.000***	0.000***
Emotional climate	0.000***	0.000***	0.297	0.000***	-	0.004**
Motivation	0.000***	0.067	0.055	0.000***	0.004**	-

* = statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference

As can be seen from Table 13, nearly all the themes differed from one another in their mean values either *statistically significantly* or *statistically very significantly*. Only in three cases was the difference statistically insignificant: the mean values of *Goals and needs* and *Motivation*, *Support* and *Emotional climate*, and *Support* and *Motivation* did not differ from one another statistically, which means that the participants were equally satisfied with the extent to which they had been perceived as being promoted. In all the other cases the participants were not equally satisfied with the extent to which the themes had been perceived as being promoted. As a consequence, it seems that the participants were less satisfied with the extent to which some aspects of learner autonomy had been evaluated as being promoted, and in most cases even statistically very significantly so.

Satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy – comparisons by the background variables

In order to see whether there were any significant differences in the answers of different groups concerning satisfaction with the extent to which learner autonomy had been perceived as being promoted, the results were compared

according to the participants' background information elicited in the second section of the questionnaire. Concerning the participants' satisfaction, the results were compared by the participants' gender and age. The results of these comparisons will be reported next.

Gender

When comparing the results by gender, some statistical differences could be found in the female and male participants' answers, both on the level of individual statements (see Appendix 6) as well as on the thematic level (see Appendix 7). In all the cases, the male participants' mean value was higher, meaning that when differences were found, the female participants were less satisfied with either how often a single statement had been true or how often a theme had been perceived as being promoted as a whole.

Individual statements per theme. Firstly, related to the theme *Goals and needs*, the female and male participants' satisfaction with how often statement 5 (*My English teacher allows me to approach tasks in my personal way*) had been true differed from one another *statistically almost significantly*. Secondly, related to the theme *Metacognition*, *statistically almost significant differences* could be found concerning statements 4 (*My English teacher pays attention to the **process** of learning (instead of the outcome) in evaluation*), 7 (*My English teacher helps me in discovering my strengths and weaknesses*) and 11 (*My English teacher offers guidance in the evaluation of the learning process with the help of e.g. portfolios and learning diaries*), meaning that the female participants were less satisfied with the frequency with which these strategies had been used. However, it should be noted that as statement 11 had been evaluated by both the female and male participants as being true less often than *rarely*, these results indicate that the male participants were more satisfied with the infrequent use of the strategy in question. Thirdly, related to the theme *Motivation*, the female and male participants' satisfaction with the perceived frequency of statement 2 (*My English teacher motivates me*) differed from one another *statistically almost significantly*.

Themes. On the thematic level, the male participants were *statistically almost significantly* more satisfied than the female participants with how often the theme *Motivation* had been perceived as being promoted as a whole. When the corresponding results concerning the question **how often a statement was true**

were reviewed, the female and male participants did not differ in their evaluation of how often the aforementioned statements had been true, neither did they differ in their evaluation of how often the theme *Motivation* had been promoted as a whole. As a consequence, it seems that the male participants were more satisfied than the female participants even though they had perceived the frequencies of these items similarly.

Age

The results were also compared by age in order to find out whether there were any differences in the answers by the 16-, 17- and over 18-year-old participants firstly concerning individual statements, and secondly concerning the themes.

Individual statements per theme. Firstly, age seemed to have an effect on the satisfaction with the frequency of some individual statements (see Appendix 8). In specific, when statistical differences were found, in all the cases the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed from the answers by the younger participants. Within the theme *Choice*, the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed statistically from the answers by the 17-year-old participants concerning statement 6 (*My English teacher allows me to adjust the tasks' level of difficulty according to my skills*) and from the answers by the 16-year-old participants concerning statement 7 (*My English teacher does not direct my choices too much*). As in all the cases the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied with the perceived frequency of the statements, it seems that the over 18-year-old participants were more prone to discontent. Furthermore, when these results were compared to the corresponding results concerning the question **how often a statement was true** (see Appendix 3), it appeared that the over 18-year-old participants had evaluated statement 7 as being true less often than the 16-year-old participants had evaluated. In this respect, the fact that the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied with the frequency of statement 7 seemed to be related to them having perceived that strategy as taking place less often.

Differences between the oldest and the youngest age groups' answers were found also within the theme *Goals and needs*. Firstly, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied than the younger participants with the perceived frequency of statement 5 (*My English teacher allows me to approach tasks in my personal way*). Secondly, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied

than the 17-year-old participants with the perceived frequency of statement 7 (*My English teacher allows me to work according to my personal goals even if they do not match my English teacher's goals*). When these results were compared to the corresponding results concerning the question **how often a statement was true**, there were no statistical differences between the age groups' answers concerning that question. As a consequence, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied with the perceived frequencies of the aforementioned statements although they had perceived them as being true as often as the younger participants had.

In addition, the answers by the over 18-year-old participants differed from the answers by the younger participants also within the theme *Metacognition*. The over 18-year-old participants were firstly less satisfied than the younger participants with the perceived frequency of statement 2 (*My English teacher allows me to try out different working methods*), and secondly less satisfied than the 17-year-old participants with the perceived frequency of statements 5 (*My English teacher allows me to correct my tasks/tests/written assignments myself*) and 9 (*My English teacher allows me to bring out my strengths e.g. by letting me help other students*). Again, these results were compared to the corresponding results concerning the question **how often a statement was true**. However, as there were no statistical differences in the answers by the different age groups concerning the perceived frequency of the statements, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied with the frequencies of the statements although they had evaluated them as being true as often as the younger participants had evaluated.

Furthermore, a total of six statements related to the theme *Emotional climate* elicited statistical differences in the answers by the younger participants and the answers by the over 18-year-old participants. First, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied than the younger participants with how often statement 1 (*My English teacher takes criticism on teaching well*) and statement 9 (*My English teacher understands me and my viewpoint*) had been true. Second, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied than the 16-year-old participants with the perceived frequency of statements 3 (*Expressing feelings (both positive and negative) to my English teacher is easy*) and 4 (*I can question the practices that do not work well in my opinion*). Third, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied than the 17-year-old participants with how often

statements 5 (*My English teacher responds to feedback in teaching*) and 6 (*My English teacher encourages me to take part in decision-making*) had perceived as being true. As statements 1, 4, 5 and 9 had also been evaluated by the over 18-year-old participants as being true statistically less often than what the younger participants had evaluated (see Appendix 3), it seems that they were less satisfied with these statements because they had also thought that the statements were true less often. No other statements elicited statistical differences concerning the question **how often a statement was true**; hence, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied with them despite the fact that they had thought similarly about the frequencies of the statements as the younger participants.

Themes. When the different age groups' satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy was compared on the level of themes (i.e. thematic mean values), the participants' age seemed to have an effect in some cases (see Appendix 9). Firstly, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied than the 17-year-old participants with how often the themes *Goals and needs* and *Metacognition* had been perceived as being promoted as a whole. Secondly, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied than the younger participants with how often the theme *Emotional climate* had been perceived as being promoted as a whole. As became evident in section 7.1, the younger participants had evaluated the theme *Emotional climate* as being promoted more often than the over 18-year-old participants; as a consequence, the over 18-year-old participants seemed to be less satisfied with the promotion of the theme *Emotional climate* because they had perceived it as being promoted less often.

In conclusion, the results concerning the question **how satisfied the participants were with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy** indicated that in general, the participants were satisfied firstly with how often individual strategies had been perceived as being used, and secondly with how often the themes had been perceived as being promoted as a whole. However, as there were some differences among individual strategies and the themes in general, there were also some differences in the degree of satisfaction by the participants' gender and age. Furthermore, when the participants' satisfaction was compared with the results concerning the question **how often a statement was true** (which were discussed in greater detail in section 7.1), it was found out that although in general the participants were satisfied with the frequent

use of strategies, they were also in some cases satisfied even when a strategy had not been used frequently. The results concerning the connection between the perceived promotion of learner autonomy and the satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy will be reported next.

7.3 Satisfaction in relation to the perceived promotion of learner autonomy

In section 7.1, the results concerning the question **how often a statement was true** were reported. As became evident, some specific strategies were perceived as being used and some aspects of learner autonomy were perceived as being promoted more than others. In section 7.2, the results concerning the participants' satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy were reported. As it turned out, the participants were more satisfied with the perceived frequency of some strategies and themes than they were with others. In most cases, they seemed to be satisfied with the frequent use of the strategy in question. However, in some cases, there was even satisfaction with the infrequent use of specific strategies. As these results indicated, there seemed to be a connection of some sort between the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted and the degree of satisfaction. However, while the comparison of the results merely implied a connection, research question 3 was particularly concerned with the connection between the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted and the satisfaction with the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted. In this section, the results concerning that connection will be reported.

Connections on the level of individual statements

In order to find out whether the participants' answers concerning the question **how often a statement was true** and the participants' answers concerning the question **how satisfied they were with how often a statement had been true** were connected to each other, correlations were calculated for each statement. It turned out that in most cases the answers correlated with each other, meaning that when the participants had thought that their English teacher made frequent use of the strategy in question they were also satisfied with the frequency of the strategy, and vice versa. With a correlation coefficient exceeding 0.800, the statements with the highest correlation were statement 3 related to the theme

Support (My English teacher is thorough and intelligible when helping me), statement 4 related to the theme Emotional climate (I can question the practices that do not work well in my opinion), and statement 5 also related to the theme Emotional climate (My English teacher responds to feedback in teaching).

On the other hand, the perceived frequency of a strategy and the degree of satisfaction with the perceived frequency of a strategy did not correlate positively with each other in two cases. Firstly, with a correlation coefficient of 0.248, the answers concerning statement 5 related to the theme *Choice (My English teacher offers me the possibility to influence the course contents (e.g. which topics/grammar items/book chapters are discussed in the course))* were not connected to each other. Secondly, the perceived frequency and the degree of satisfaction did not correlate positively with each other in statement 5 related to the theme *Metacognition (My English teacher allows me to correct my tasks/tests/written assignments myself)*, as its correlation coefficient was 0.256.

Furthermore, interestingly the correlation coefficient was negative in one case: with a correlation coefficient of -0.027, the perceived frequency and the degree of satisfaction concerning statement 11 related to the theme *Metacognition (My English teacher offers guidance in the evaluation of the learning process with the help of e.g. portfolios and learning diaries)* correlated with each other negatively. As was reported in section 7.2, the majority of the participants said that they were either *somewhat* or *completely satisfied* with how often the statement had been true even though it had been evaluated as being true either *rarely* or *never* by the majority of the participants. However, since the negative correlation was very weak, it could not be concluded that there was a connection of any kind.

To sum up, in most cases there was a clear positive correlation between the perceived frequency of a strategy and the degree of satisfaction with the perceived frequency of a strategy. Thus it would seem that in general, the participants were satisfied when a strategy had been perceived as being used frequently and, conversely, less satisfied when a strategy had been perceived as being used infrequently. Only in the few aforementioned cases was the connection not as linear.

Connections on the level of themes

In order to see whether the results concerning individual statements were reflected on a more general level of the promotion of learner autonomy, correlations were also calculated for each theme (see Table 14).

Table 14. Correlation by theme

Frequency Satisfaction	Choice	Goals and needs	Support	Meta- cognition	Emotional climate	Motivation
Choice	0.620**	0.504**	0.494*	0.504**	0.433*	0.437*
Goals and needs	0.500**	0.725***	0.488*	0.528**	0.436*	0.497*
Support	0.564**	0.596**	0.802***	0.591**	0.492*	0.510**
Metacognition	0.503**	0.643**	0.607	0.706***	0.511**	0.546**
Emotional climate	0.595**	0.716***	0.677	0.664**	0.886***	0.570**
Motivation	0.489*	0.501**	0.486*	0.506**	0.419*	0.798***

* = weak linear connection, ** = moderate linear connection, *** = fairly strong linear connection, **** = very strong linear connection

As can be seen from Table 14, the extent to which a theme was perceived as being promoted and the degree of satisfaction with the extent to which a theme had been perceived as being promoted correlated fairly strongly in all cases except one: concerning the theme *Choice*, the correlation was moderate. Thus it could be concluded that the more a theme had been perceived as being promoted as a whole, the more satisfied the participants were, and vice versa.

In conclusion, the results of this study showed that firstly, in the participants' opinion, learner autonomy was in general promoted fairly frequently. In addition, some aspects of learner autonomy were perceived as being promoted more often than others. Secondly, the participants were fairly satisfied with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy. In specific, the more they perceived learner autonomy as being promoted, the more satisfied they were. In addition, the results indicated some individual differences among the participants. In the

next chapter, these findings will be discussed in more detail and in the light of the previous studies.

8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to discover students' opinion on the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. In particular, the study aimed at finding out firstly, the extent to which learner autonomy is in students' opinion promoted, and secondly, whether students are satisfied with the extent to which learner autonomy is in their opinion promoted. A compilation of the theories on the promotion of learner autonomy was used as the framework of the present study in order to ensure a broad understanding of the issue.

As the results of this study were reported in the previous chapter, in this chapter the findings will be discussed and elaborated further one research question at a time. In particular, the results of this study will be compared to those of previous studies on the promotion of learner autonomy. By doing so, the topic will hopefully be placed in a wider context.

The extent to which learner autonomy is promoted

The first research question was concerned with the extent to which learner autonomy is in students' opinion promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. It turned out that the participants thought that in general learner autonomy was promoted fairly frequently, and that their English teacher made frequent use of most of the strategies related to the promotion of learner autonomy. Although the term *learner autonomy* is not explicitly mentioned in the official aims of upper secondary school education in Finland, it is implied firstly in the official aims of upper secondary school teaching in general and foreign language teaching in specific (LOPS 2003: 12, 100-106), and, secondly, in English teacher training at least in the University of Jyväskylä (Aineenopettajan koulutuksen opettajan pedagogisten opintojen opetussuunnitelma 2010-2013: 1). Since learner autonomy can be considered an aim of English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland, it came as no

surprise that learner autonomy was generally perceived as being promoted in that context. Furthermore, when teachers' views of learner autonomy have been studied, the results have shown that teachers view the concept generally very positively and are willing to promote it in teaching (Camilleri 1999b: 28-31). According to the findings of this study, this seems to be the case also in English teaching in upper secondary schools Finland.

Although the results of this study indicated that in the students' opinion learner autonomy was in general promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland, they also revealed that some aspects of learner autonomy were promoted less than others, and that some strategies were used less frequently than other strategies. According to the participants of this study, while the theme *Emotional climate* was promoted as a whole most frequently, the themes *Choice* and *Metacognition* were perceived as being promoted as a whole less often than *sometimes*. In the light of the previous studies, this uneven promotion of learner autonomy is not uncommon; as Camilleri (1999b: 30-31), for example, found out, teachers tend to view some areas in teaching and learning to be better suited for the implementation of learner autonomy than others. This seems to be reflected also in the results of the present study. The participants' comments elaborated on these findings: in particular, some of the participants felt that they were not given enough *choices* concerning their learning, as can be seen in the comments below:

(1) Opettajilla on omat tapansa opettaa asioita, joten yleensä tunnit menevät heidän mukaansa. Oppilailla ei paljoa sanomista tehtäviin tai muihin (paitsi ryhmä- tai paritöissä).

Teachers have their own teaching methods, so usually classes go by them. The students have not much to say about tasks and other things (except when working in groups or with a partner). (7)¹

(2) Työskentelytavat on yleensä niukat ettei valinnanvaraa ole.

Working methods are usually so scarce that there is not much to choose from. (48)

(3) Vaihtoehtoja ei ole koskaan.

There are never any options. (82)

¹ The participants' number

However, as the participants were not obliged to comment on their answers, it is possible, probable even, that only those participants who felt negatively or were otherwise dissatisfied commented on their answers, whereas those participants who felt good about the teaching practices felt no need to leave a comment.

As the teachers' views were not studied, reasons behind these results and why some aspects were promoted less than others can only be guessed. Camilleri (1999b: 30), for example, found out that resistance can usually be traced to the built-in logistical and organizational constraints in the school system. However, perceptions about constraints are often rather steep when compared to the reality, as can be seen in a comment by one participant, in which she comments the question **how often a statement is true** under the theme *Choice*:

(4) Outo tämä ensimmäinen laatikko. Eihän opettajatkaan voi kauheasti päättää mitä asioita ne opettaa, kun on valmiit kurssikirjat ja opetussuunnitelmat.

This first scale is odd. Teachers cannot decide much what they teach, as there are course books and curricula. (10)

It is often thought, as can be seen in the participant's comment, that course books and the curriculum constrain teachers to a large degree; however, a teacher can choose which course book to use or whether a course book is used at all, and the curriculum is fairly loose and defines only the general outline of the course. Thus teachers are not so restricted by the course book or the curriculum, at least not to the extent that the participant seemed to think. Furthermore, as the strategies included in this study were not related to the unalterable organizational structures Camilleri (1999b: 30) is referring to, reasons behind the uneven promotion of learner autonomy were probably related to other factors. For example, such views as the learners' immaturity and lack of awareness and the teachers' expertise can sometimes underlie their resistance to implement the principles of learner autonomy in teaching (Camilleri 1999b: 30).

Another possible reason why some aspects of learner autonomy were perceived as being promoted less frequently than others could be the lack of time and resources. The students who participated in this study seemed to be aware of

the limited resources, as they surprisingly often defended their teacher for not making use of certain strategies, as can be seen in the following comments:

(5) Opetuksessa ei kiinnitetä yksilöihin huomiota varmaan ajanpuutteen takia.

Individuals are not considered in teaching probably due to lack of time. (61)

(6) Isoissa ryhmissä hiukan mahdotonta.

Somewhat impossible in big groups. (90)

Whatever the reasons behind the uneven promotion of learner autonomy, these results show that teachers clearly need to reflect on their teaching practices in order to see whether they are promoting learner autonomy evenly. In particular, as students and teachers often perceive teaching practices differently (Benson 2011: 79-81), the teaching practices should be discussed openly and both students' and teachers' viewpoints should be taken into consideration. Differences in perceptions might simply result from a lack of open discussion and awareness, as the following comment by one participant exemplifies:

(7) Mistä minä voin tietää antaako opettaja minulle e.m. mahdollisuuksia, kun en pääse hänen päänsä sisään, eikä tuollaisista asioista koskaan edes puhuta.

How would I know whether the teacher offers me the these possibilities, since I do not know what she is thinking, and we do not ever even discuss these issues. (10)

Furthermore, discussion and openness about teaching practices might reveal both the teacher's and the students' underlying beliefs about and attitudes toward learning and teaching and their roles in the classroom, and when those are made explicit, the possibly malign beliefs and attitudes become open for change (Cotterall 1995: 203).

In relation to the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted, the effects of the participants' background variables, such as gender, age, course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade, were studied. Whereas the participants' gender had an effect only on some individual statements, the participants' age had an effect on a much wider scale. As it was concluded based on the results that the oldest participants (e.g. over 18-year-olds) were

more critical than the younger participants in all the cases where differences were found, it seems that they perceived learner autonomy as being promoted less often compared to the younger participants' perceptions. This difference between the age groups' answers could be related to *executive functioning*, which refers to the neuropsychological basis of the self-regulatory functions of cognitive processes such as learning (Barkley 2004: 304). As these self-regulatory functions have been proven to develop late (Reynolds 2008: 879), it could be that the oldest participants' self-regulatory and metacognitive skills were more mature, which would have resulted in different perceptions of teaching practices. However, as the sample of this study was rather small (107) and, in consequence, the age groups quite unevenly distributed, the age group of over 18-year-olds was smaller than the other two age groups. Furthermore, as only one group of 3rd year level students (i.e. over 18-year-olds) was included in this study, all the oldest participants were from a course given by the same teacher. Therefore, the differences in their answers might have resulted from actual differences in teaching practices. However, as there was only one group of 3rd year level students in this study, it is impossible to tell what the reasons behind these differences are. In future studies, the age groups should be more evenly divided, with students from different school groups in each age group.

Lastly, in relation to the first research question, the aim was to find out whether the participants' course grade and autonomy self-assessment grade would correlate with the extent to which learner autonomy was promoted. In a study by Black and Deci (2000: 744-754), it was found that autonomy supportive instruction increases students' autonomy and course performance, especially among those students who are initially low in autonomy. The results of this study showed no such connection. Only the participants' autonomy self-assessment grade and the perceived promotion of the theme *Motivation* correlated with each other, but even in that case the connection was weak. Furthermore, as Benson (2011: 66) concludes, finding a correlation between motivation and learner autonomy does not in itself prove anything yet, as motivation seems to be a distinct domain that relates to all aspects of learning. In addition, as the direction of the connection between the two constructs has caused some debate in the literature (Spratt et al. 2002: 262), conclusions should be drawn with caution. As a consequence, it could not be concluded that the extent to which learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted had increased the participants' course performance or self-assessed autonomy.

To conclude, based on the results of this study, the answer to the first research question is that learner autonomy was in the students' opinion promoted fairly often in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. However, as some aspects of learner autonomy were in the students' opinion promoted more often than others, reflection on and open discussion of teaching practices could reveal whether some aspects of teaching could be improved.

Students' satisfaction with the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted

The second research question was concerned with how satisfied the students are with the extent to which learner autonomy is in their opinion promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. It turned out that the students were all in all fairly satisfied with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy. Thus it seems that the participants' teachers succeeded in taking their students' views into account in their teaching practices.

Although the participants were in general fairly satisfied with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy, they were quite clearly less satisfied with the perceived promotion of some aspects of learner autonomy than others. While the promotion of the theme *Emotional climate* brought about most satisfaction, the participants were most dissatisfied with the perceived promotion of the theme *Choice*. When these results were compared with the corresponding results related to the first research question, it could be seen that these themes ranked similarly in their perceived frequency and satisfaction, with *Emotional climate* being at the top and *Choice* being at the bottom in both. This correspondence between the results implied a connection, which was later verified in relation to the last research question.

The participants' comments seemed to support the finding that the participants were dissatisfied with how much they felt they had choices and could affect their own learning. In particular, they often justified the inclination to be able to influence more on the grounds that it would increase variety. The comments below exemplify this issue:

(8) Kurssin tehtäviin ei oikein voi vaikuttaa ja ne on aina jotain paritehtäviä eli joskus olisi kiva tehdä muutakin.

The tasks done on the course cannot be really influenced, and as they usually require pair work it would be nice to do something else sometimes. (90)

(9) Olisi kiva jos voisi vaikuttaa enemmän, jolloin opettajan kursseilla olisi enemmän vaihtelevuutta.

It would be nice to be able to influence more, so that there would be more variation in the teacher's courses. (33)

In addition to these comments, many of the comments already introduced in relation to the first research question reflect the participants' dissatisfaction with how much *choices* they had been given concerning their own learning.

Interestingly, the findings concerning the second research question revealed that as the students were mostly satisfied with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy, some of them were also satisfied when a strategy had *not* been used. In particular, strategies related to the themes *Choice* and *Metacognition* elicited such results. Furthermore, two participants had commented on their answers and explained why they were satisfied even though they had thought that a strategy/strategies had been used rather infrequently:

(10) Ei paljoa vaikuttamista, mutta se ei haittaa ollenkaan.

I don't get to influence much, but it doesn't matter at all. (4)

(11) En varmasti haluaisi tehdä yhtään mitään ylimääräistä vapaa-ajalla kuten jotain tyhmää portfolioa.

I would most definitely not want to do anything extra on my free time such as some stupid portfolio. (72)

As the examples show, it was fairly clear that some of the participants were satisfied with the infrequent use of a strategy when the implementation of the strategy in question would have required them to do something extra such as to participate in the planning of schedules, to correct their own assignments/ tests/ written assignments, or to do a portfolio, such as was the case with student 72 in the example above. However, as Benson (2008: 28-29) concludes based on his own experiences, if a person gives up willingly his or her freedom of choice of some aspect of learning, it does not automatically mean that the person gives up his or her autonomy: as long as it is the person's own choice to

hand over the responsibility to choose to someone else (for example, due to lack of time), autonomy as a whole is not necessarily impaired.

In addition to the time-consuming or otherwise resources-demanding strategies, some strategies that were used infrequently but with which some participants were satisfied were related to choosing and adapting either course contents or individual tasks according to one's own needs and skills. While these results were not explicitly commented on by any of the participants, in the light of the previous studies they might be related to the learner's *beliefs* about language learning, such as those relating to the role of the teacher, learner confidence in study ability, or previous experience of language learning (Cotterall 1995: 196). It might be that those participants who were satisfied with the infrequent use of the strategies thought that they were the teacher's responsibility and that the teacher had a better judgment over those issues. However, as the participants' views behind their answers were not explicitly studied, the reasons behind their answers can only be guessed.

In relation to the second research question, the effects of the participants' gender and age were studied. According to the results, the female and male participants differed in their answers concerning some individual statements. Furthermore, on a more general level, the male participants were more satisfied with the perceived promotion of the theme *Motivation*. Interestingly, studies on motivation have consistently shown that there are gender differences in relation to language learning motivation, but not the kinds this study implies: various studies have shown that there are differences in how male and female language learners orient towards language learning, and that women tend to score higher on motivation scales and are more committed to language learning than men (Dörnyei and Csizér 2002: 448). Research findings such as these, when combined with the findings of this study, would seem to show that not only are women more motivated, but they are also more critical concerning strategies that aim at improving their motivation. Another interpretation of the findings of this study could be that the female participants were more motivated in the first place, and thus viewed the promotion of the theme *Motivation* as less important to them. Whatever the reasons, as was mentioned earlier in relation to the findings concerning the first research question, conclusions concerning the theme *Motivation* should be drawn with caution since motivation is a

distinct domain, and its connection to learner autonomy is not yet clear (Benson 2011: 66).

As was the case with the first research question, the participants' age had an effect on their answers. In particular, the over 18-year-old participants were less satisfied with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy than the younger participants, both on the level of some individual statements and on a more general level concerning the themes of the questionnaire. In most cases, the oldest participants had also perceived learner autonomy as being promoted less often; in some cases, however, they had perceived learner autonomy as being promoted as often as the younger participants had, but they were still less satisfied. Furthermore, the oldest participants were less satisfied with the perceived promotion of the themes *Goals and needs*, *Metacognition* and *Emotional climate*. As was the case with age-related differences concerning the first research question, these differences in the different age groups' satisfaction might relate to *executive functioning* and the maturation of self-regulatory functions such as metacognition. However, the same problems that were mentioned in relation to the findings concerning the first research question apply also here: the age group of over 18-year-olds was smaller than the other two age groups and derived from the same teacher's group. As a consequence, further studies in which larger and more even samples are used would show whether the age-related findings of this study are in fact related to age and not, for example, to teaching practices.

In conclusion, based on the findings of this study, the answer to the second research question is that the students were fairly satisfied with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy. However, as some of the participants were satisfied with the infrequent use of some strategies, especially learners' beliefs about language learning should be explored and discussed so that they can be challenged and, if necessary, changed. Furthermore, as there were some differences related to the participants' gender and age, teachers should take individual views into account.

The connection between the perceived promotion of learner autonomy and satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy

The third research question was concerned with the connection between the findings of the first research question and the second research question. In

particular, it sought to find out whether the perceived promotion of learner autonomy correlated with the participants' satisfaction. It turned out that the more learner autonomy was perceived as being promoted, the more satisfied the participants were. In other words, there was a clear linear connection between the two. In most cases (i.e. concerning most of the themes), the connection was even fairly strong.

The finding that the participants viewed the promotion of learner autonomy positively is supported by the previous studies on the issue. When the effects of programmes that aim at promoting learner autonomy, such as the ALMS (see chapter 5), have been studied, the results have shown that students in general view the promotion of learner autonomy positively (Nordlund 1997: 67). However, the results of such studies have also shown that some students prefer teacher guidance and instruction to autonomous learning (Chan 2001: 514, Nordlund 1997: 71-89).

As was discussed earlier in relation to the second research question, also in this study some students seemed to prefer their teacher taking responsibility of some aspects of learning. However, when these findings were studied in greater detail in relation to the third research question, it was found that as the correlation coefficient was not clearly negative in any of the cases, the tendency of some of the participants to be satisfied with the infrequent use of a strategy was not reflected on the results as a whole. As a consequence, although individual differences between the participants were found, the participants were in general satisfied when learner autonomy had been perceived as being promoted.

It should be noted that as the perceived promotion of learner autonomy correlated with the satisfaction with the perceived promotion of learner autonomy, this connection worked also the other way round: when the participants thought that learner autonomy was not promoted, they were not satisfied either. In conclusion, the answer to research question 3, in consequence, is that although individual differences exist, in general the participants were satisfied when they felt that learner autonomy was promoted, a view that is also supported by the previous studies on the issue.

As the promotion of learner autonomy has not been studied much, especially not in the context of formal foreign language teaching, this study most definitely responded to a need. However, as the topic is fairly new in research, it was rather difficult to start basically from scratch, which can be seen especially in the downsides of this study. As the promotion of learner autonomy has not been measured earlier, at least not as comprehensively as in this study, the instrument was to a large extent self-made. In retrospect, the questionnaire could have been better. In particular, for future studies, the functionality of the questionnaire could be enhanced; as the questionnaire was rather long and complicated, it should be simplified. The main reason behind the questionnaire's complexity was that it sought to find answers to too many questions in one format. If this study were to be repeated, different methods of data gathering could be used when seeking answers to the research questions: in this way the questionnaire could be made simpler. However, as learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept, a questionnaire that covers the whole of learner autonomy is required when studying its promotion, and that is exactly what was aimed at with the instrument of this study. As a consequence, while the questionnaire could have been simpler in some respects, when it comes to the operationalization of the promotion of learner autonomy, a simpler questionnaire would not have covered the whole issue.

In addition to the more general issues with the instrument, in retrospect it was found out that the questionnaire had also some problems on a more detailed level. Firstly, statement 7 concerning the theme *Choice* (*My English teacher does not direct my choices too much*) was problematic for some participants, as became evident from the participants' requests for clarification when the data was gathered and from the participants' written comments. As a consequence, if this study were to be repeated the statement should either be revised or left out altogether from the questionnaire. Secondly, as the questionnaire included some *double-barreled questions* (Dörnyei 2009: 42), which sought to find answers to multiple items at once (such as statement 6 related to the theme *Metacognition: My English teacher makes me notice my mistakes and helps me in correcting them*), there is no certainty which of the two items the participants were thinking about when answering the question. Thus the questionnaire should be revised so that double-barreled items were separated. Thirdly, as there were no reversed items in the questionnaire, there is the possibility that some participants tended to use only one side of the Likert-type scales (Dörnyei

2009: 43). As a consequence, if this study were to be repeated, the questionnaire should be revised not only on a more general level, but also some details should be revised.

While it was of interest whether the perceived promotion of learner autonomy correlated with the participants' learner autonomy self-assessment grade, the reliability of the results concerning this connection could be questioned. First of all, although students' self-evaluation of their language proficiency has been proven to correlate with the results of more objective measures (Dam and Legenhausen 2010b: 124), the same kind of connection has not been studied nor proven in relation to self-evaluation of learner autonomy. As a consequence, the participants' accuracy in their self-evaluated learner autonomy cannot be considered reliable. Secondly, based on the participants' written justification for their self-evaluation, it seems that the participants were not entirely sure what the concept meant, even though they were provided with a definition of learner autonomy. As a consequence, in further studies the students' learner autonomy self-assessment grade should be elaborated on by using an instrument intended for measuring learner autonomy, such as the MILLA (see chapter 5).

In addition, as the findings of this study revealed interesting differences between the answers of the oldest participants and the younger participants, it had to be concluded that these findings were not necessarily generalizable as the sample was too small. In particular, as the group of over 18 year-olds was smaller than the other age groups, and the participants of that group derived from the same teacher, in future studies the sample should be larger and more evenly divided so that it could be concluded whether the differences were in fact age-related and not, for example, related to differences in teaching practices.

As the study elicited some interesting findings, it would have been interesting to study the reasons behind those findings. That is why, in the future when the promotion of learner autonomy is studied, it would be fruitful to incorporate other data gathering methods such as classroom observation and follow-up interviews when studying the issue. Furthermore, as the findings of this study only reveal the extent to which learner autonomy was promoted in *the students' opinion*, future research should aim at forming an overall understanding of the issue by incorporating both the teachers' and the students' views. This kind of

approach would also reveal whether teachers and students perceive the promotion of learner autonomy differently.

As the promotion of learner autonomy is a multidimensional and complex issue, when research is done with limited resources, as was the case with this study, it is bound to be defective in some respects. Nevertheless, considering the limited resources, this study also succeeded in many respects. Firstly, as many of the previous studies on the promotion of learner autonomy tend to view the issue rather narrowly (see chapter 5), this study succeeded in viewing the promotion of learner autonomy more broadly: while most of the previous studies have concentrated on one aspect of the issue, in this study a total of six aspects were identified and researched. Although, as was mentioned earlier in relation to the theme *Motivation*, also this study had some issues related to the operationalization of the concept, it is clear that this study managed to take account of the multidimensional nature of learner autonomy. In this respect, the validity of this study was better than that of the previous studies. Secondly, although there were some issues related to the questionnaire used in the gathering of data, the instrument proved to be reliable when Cronbach Alpha coefficients were calculated to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire: the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was in most cases either close to or even above 0.900. As an attitude scale is considered to be well-developed when the coefficient approaches 0.800 (Dörnyei 2009: 94), the instrument used in this study was well over that level. Thirdly, and most importantly, this study managed to answer all the research questions and generate interesting findings.

Furthermore, this study has some important implications. Firstly, as the findings of this study revealed that some aspects of learner autonomy were promoted more than other, there is clearly a need to reflect on teaching practices in order to see whether they could be improved in some respects. Secondly, as the findings of this study implied that there were individual differences among the students in how they perceived the promotion of learner autonomy, teachers should take account of those individual differences among their students. In particular, as it was shown that some of the students were satisfied with the infrequent use of some strategies that aim at promoting learner autonomy, there is clearly a need for both teachers and students to engage in an open discussion about their beliefs and attitudes behind learning, because such an exploration makes it possible to challenge and, eventually,

change the possibly malign beliefs that affect the willingness to implement the principles of learner autonomy (Cotterall 1995: 203). Furthermore, although it could not be concluded that the age-related differences were in fact related to the participants' age, students' psychological maturity should nevertheless be taken into account when implementing the principles of learner autonomy, and strategies adjusted accordingly.

As learner autonomy and its promotion are interesting topics that have not yet been studied much, it would be interesting to elaborate on the findings of this study more. While the instrument used in this study proved to be reliable, if it were to be used in further studies it should be revised in some respects, as was mentioned earlier. Furthermore, further studies could also make use of additional instruments such as the MILLA (see chapter 5). In addition, as this study elicited some interesting findings, in future studies some additional methods of data gathering could elicit more in-depth information on the topic. In specific, as was discussed earlier, follow-up interviews could help in finding out the reasons behind the participants' answers. Furthermore, it would be interesting to incorporate the teachers' in future studies, as it would show whether teachers and students view the promotion of learner autonomy differently.

In conclusion, as has been argued throughout this study, there are several reasons why learner autonomy should be promoted in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland. First of all, as research findings have shown, autonomous learning leads firstly to greater motivation to learn a language (Nordlund 1997: 71-89), and secondly, to improved language proficiency (Dam and Legenhausen 2010a: 280). Secondly, the idea of learner autonomy is entailed in the official aims of upper secondary school education in Finland in general (LOPS 2003: 12), as well as on a more detailed level, in the aims of foreign language teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland (LOPS 2003: 100-106). As a consequence, English teachers in upper secondary schools in Finland should promote learner autonomy not only because it improves their students' motivation and language proficiency, but also because it is stated so in the official aims of upper secondary school education. Third, as learner autonomy leads to personal autonomy, attending to the development of students' learner autonomy is a prerequisite for a working society, in which everyone respects each other's personal autonomy and freedom (Benson 2011:

53-56). In other words, learner autonomy is the foundation of basic human rights. The aforementioned reasons offered merely a glimpse of the wide implications of learner autonomy. As if there were not enough reasons to promote learner autonomy in English teaching in upper secondary schools in Finland, in the light of the findings of this present study, there seems to be one more: the students want it.

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APPENDIX 1

Hei!

Opiskelen Jyväskylän yliopistossa englannin kieltä ja teen tutkimusta aiheesta oppijan autonomisuus.

Oppijan autonomisuus on oppijan piirre, jolla tarkoitetaan oman oppimisen (esim. englannin kielen oppimisen) hallintaa eli kykyä asettaa tavoitteita, toimia näiden tavoitteiden mukaisesti ja arvioida omaa etenemistä.

Vaikka autonomisuus onkin oppijan sisäinen piirre, pystyvät koulu ja opettajat omalla toiminnallaan edistämään oppijan autonomisuutta. Tämän kyselyn avulla pyrin selvittämään, mitä mieltä lukiolaiset ovat oppijan autonomisuuden tukemisesta englannin opetuksessa; etenkin, **missä määrin englannin opettaja tukee autonomisuutta ja kuinka tyytyväisiä lukiolaiset ovat tilanteeseen.**

Tähän kyselyyn antamasi tiedot ovat luottamuksellisia ja vastaajan henkilöllisyys ei paljastu tutkimuksen missään vaiheessa. Tarvittaessa minut tavoittaa sähköpostilla osoitteesta anni.m.ikonen@student.jyu.fi.

Vastauksista kiittäen,
Anni Ikonen

OHJEET KYSELYN TÄYTTÄMISEEN:

Kysely on jaettu kuuteen teemaan. Kukin osio sisältää väittämiä, joihin sinun tulee ottaa kantaa merkitsemällä mielipidettäsi parhaiten vastaava vaihtoehto tarjotuilta asteikoilta. Ota kuhunkin väittämään kantaa kahdella tavalla:

- a.)** vasemmanpuoleisella asteikolla kerro, **kuinka usein** väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa
- b.)** oikeanpuoleisella asteikolla kerro, **kuinka tyytyväinen** olet siihen kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa.

Vastatessasi mieti **viimeisintä** lukioaikaista englannin kurssiasi ja sen opettajaa.

Esimerkki:

	Kuinka usein väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa?					Kuinka tyytyväinen olet siihen, kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa?			
	ei koskaan	harvoin	joskus	usein	aina	en lainkaan tyytyväinen	melko tyytymätön	melko tyytyväinen	täysin tyytyväinen
Englannin opettajani... antaa minun valita minulle sopivimmat työskentelytavat.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

Esimerkin vastaajan mielestä väite pitää paikkansa harvoin, ja hän ei ole lainkaan tyytyväinen siihen että väite pitää paikkansa harvoin.

1. VAIKUTUSMAHDOLLISUUDET

Englannin opettajani...		Kuinka usein väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa?					Kuinka tyytyväinen olet siihen, kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa?			
		ei koskaan	harvoin	joskus	usein	aina	en lainkaan tyytyväinen	melko tyytymätön	melko tyytyväinen	täysin tyytyväinen
1.	antaa minun valita minulle sopivimmat työskentelytavat.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
2.	antaa minun osallistua aikataulujen suunnitteluun.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
3.	antaa minun asettaa itselleni tavoitteita ja edetä niiden mukaan.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
4.	tarjoaa useita tehtävävaihtoehtoja, joista minä saan valita itselleni sopivimman.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
5.	antaa minulle mahdollisuuden vaikuttaa tavalla tai toisella kurssin sisältöihin (esim. mitä aiheita/kielioppiasioita/kappaleita kurssilla käydään läpi).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
6.	antaa minun säädellä tehtävien vaativuutta taitojeni mukaan.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
7.	ei ohjaile valintojani liikaa.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

Kommentit:

2. TAVOITTEET JA TARPEET

Englannin opettajani...		Kuinka usein väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa?					Kuinka tyytyväinen olet siihen, kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa?			
		ei koskaan	harvoin	joskus	usein	aina	en lainkaan tyytyväinen	melko tyytymätön	melko tyytyväinen	täysin tyytyväinen
1.	auttaa minua selvittämään henkilökohtaiset (oppimis)tarpeeni.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
2.	antaa minun asettaa henkilökohtaisia tavoitteita.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
3.	tukee minua henkilökohtaisten tavoitteideni asettamisessa ja saavuttamisessa.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
4.	pitää huolen siitä, että ymmärrän muiden minulle asettamat tavoitteet (kuten esim. opetussuunnitelmassa määritellyt tavoitteet).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
5.	sallii minun lähestyä tehtäviä omalla tavallani.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
6.	tarjoaa minulle mahdollisuuksia työstää omia heikkouksiani esim. heikkouksiani harjoittavien tehtävien avulla.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
7.	antaa minun työskennellä omien henkilökohtaisten tavoitteideni suuntaisesti, vaikka ne eivät vastaisikaan opettajani tavoitteita	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

Kommentit:

--

3. TUKI

		Kuinka usein väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa?					Kuinka tyytyväinen olet siihen, kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa?			
		ei koskaan	harvoin	joskus	usein	aina	en lainkaan tyytyväinen	melko tyytymätön	melko tyytyväinen	täysin tyytyväinen
Englannin opettajani...										
1.	rohkaisee minua kysymään apua ja neuvoja	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
2.	tarjoaa apua sitä tarvitessani.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
3.	minulle tarjoama apu on perusteellista ja ymmärrettävää.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
4.	rohkaisee oppilaita kysymään tarvittaessa neuvoa toisiltaan.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
5.	rohkaisee minua auttamaan muita oppilaita tarvittaessa.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
6.	antaa tehdä tehtäviä pareittain ja/tai ryhmissä.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
7.	pitää huolen siitä, että ryhmätyöskentelyssä kaikki osallistuvat taidoilleen sopivimmalla tavalla.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
8.	tarjoaa käyttööni erilaisia tukimateriaaleja (esim. sanakirjoja, nettisivuja).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
9.	opastaa erilaisten tukimateriaalien käytössä.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
10.	tarjoaa eritasoisia tehtäviä, jolloin saan valita taitotasoini parhaiten vastaavan vaihtoehdon.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

Kommentit:

--

4. METAKOGNITIIVISET TAILOT

		Kuinka usein väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa?					Kuinka tyytyväinen olet siihen, kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa?			
		ei koskaan	harvoin	joskus	usein	aina	en lainkaan tyytyväinen	melko tyytymätön	melko tyytyväinen	täysin tyytyväinen
Englannin opettajani...										
1.	auttaa minua löytämään minulle sopivimmat oppimistyylit ja -tavat.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
2.	antaa minun kokeilla erilaisia toimintatapoja.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
3.	antaa minun työskennellä minulle sopivimpien oppimistyylien ja -tapojen mukaisesti.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
4.	kiinnittää arvioinnissa huomion oppimisprosessiin (oppimistulosten sijaan).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
5.	antaa minun korjata tehtäväni/kokeeni/kirjoitelmani itse.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

Englannin opettajani...		Kuinka usein väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa?					Kuinka tyytyväinen olet siihen, kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa?			
		ei koskaan	harvoin	joskus	usein	aina	en lainkaan tyytyväinen	melko tyytymätön	melko tyytyväinen	täysin tyytyväinen
6.	kiinnittää huomioni tekemiini virheisiin ja auttaa niiden korjaamisessa.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
7.	auttaa minua selvittämään omat vahvuuteni ja heikkouteni.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
8.	antaa minun työskennellä omien heikkouksieni eteen esim. antamalla minun valita heikkoja kohtiani harjoitettavia tehtäviä.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
9.	antaa minun tuoda esille omia vahvuuksiani esim. antamalla minun auttaa toisia oppilaita.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
10.	antaa minun arvioida omaa etenemistäni itse.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
11.	opastaa oman etenemiseni arvioinnissa esim. portfolioyöskentelyn ja/tai oppimispäiväkirjojen avulla.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

Kommentit:

5. ILMAPIIRI

		Kuinka usein väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa?					Kuinka tyytyväinen olet siihen, kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa?			
		ei koskaan	harvoin	joskus	usein	aina	en lainkaan tyytyväinen	melko tyytymätön	melko tyytyväinen	täysin tyytyväinen
1.	Englannin opettajani osaa ottaa vastaan opetusta koskevaa asiallista kritiikkiä.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
2.	Koen pystyväni olemaan avoin englannin opettajaani kohtaan.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
3.	Tunteiden (niin positiivisten kuin negatiivistenkin) ilmaiseminen englannin opettajalleni on mielestäni helppoa.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
4.	Saan kyseenalaistaa mielestäni toimimattomat toimintatavat.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
5.	Englannin opettajani ottaa oppilaiden palautteen huomioon opetuksessa.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
6.	Englannin opettajani rohkaisee minua osallistumaan päätöksentekoon.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
7.	Englannin opettajani rohkaisee minua esittämään kysymyksiä.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
8.	Englannin opettajani hyväksyy minut juuri sellaisena kuin olen.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
9.	Englannin opettajani ymmärtää minua ja minun näkökulmani.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

Kommentit:

6. MOTIVAATIO

Englannin opettajani...		Kuinka usein väite pitää mielestäsi paikkansa?					Kuinka tyytyväinen olet siihen, kuinka usein väite pitää paikkansa?			
		ei koskaan	harvoin	joskus	usein	aina	en lainkaan tyytyväinen	melko tyytymätön	melko tyytyväinen	täysin tyytyväinen
1.	auttaa minua löytämään, mikä minua motivoi englannin opiskeluun.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
2.	motivoi minua itsessään.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
3.	auttaa minua näkemään, miksi englannin opiskelu on hyödyllistä.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
4.	sallii minun liittää muita elämänalueitani englannin opiskeluun.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
5.	rohkaisee minua käyttämään englantia useilla elämänalueilla, kuten esim. vapaa-ajalla.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
6.	liittää englannin opiskelun minun elämäni esim. minulle läheisten aiheiden avulla.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

Kommentit:

YLEISET KYSYMYKSET

Sukupuoli:

nainen mies

Ikä: _____

Oppijan autonomisuus on oppijan piirre, jolla tarkoitetaan oman oppimisen (esim. englannin kielen oppimisen) hallintaa eli kykyä asettaa tavoitteita, toimia näiden tavoitteiden mukaisesti ja arvioida omaa etenemistä.

Kuinka autonominen oppija olet mielestäsi englantia opiskellessasi? Arvioi kouluarvosanalla 4-10 (4 = en lainkaan autonominen, 10 = täysin autonominen).

Arvosana: _____

Perustelusi:

Viimeisin englannin kurssiarvosana: _____

APPENDIX 2

Statement		Mean value	Statistical significance
My English teacher... helps me in finding out my personal (learning) needs.	Female	2.90	0.036*
	Male	2.84	
allows me to work with a partner / in groups.	Female	4.29	0.026*
	Male	3.98	
offers me guidance in using reference materials	Female	2.52	0.045*
	Male	2.95	

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

= statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference

APPENDIX 3

Statement		Mean value	Statistical significance (when compared to over 18)
My English teacher...	16	3.14	0.004**
	17	2.92	0.013*
	over 18	2.33	-
allows me to choose working methods that suit me best.	16	-	-
	17	2.45	0.041*
	over 18	1.89	-
offers various task alternatives, from which I can choose the one that suits me best.	16	3.62	0.009**
	17	-	-
	over 18	2.67	-
does not direct my choices too much.	16	4.05	0.015*
	17	3.89	0.029*
	over 18	3.06	-
takes criticism on teaching well.	16	3.86	0.002**
	17	3.62	0.009**
	over 18	2.56	-
I can question the practices that do not work well in my opinion.	16	4.23	0.029*
	17	-	-
	over 18	3.39	-
I feel that I can be open towards my English teacher.	16	3.95	0.025*
	17	-	-
	over 18	3.11	-
My English teacher understands me and my viewpoint.	16	-	-
	17	3.63	0.043*
	over 18	2.94	-
My English teacher responds to feedback in teaching.	16	-	-
	17	3.12	0.020*
	over 18	2.39	-
motivates me.	16	3.59	0.015*
	17	-	-
	over 18	2.71	-
allows me to incorporate other areas of my life in learning English.	16	-	-
	17	-	-
	over 18	-	-

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

* = statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference

APPENDIX 4

Theme		Mean value	Statistical significance (when compared to over 18)
Emotional climate	16	3.87	0.003**
	17	3.74	0.005**
	over 18	3.09	-

Response alternatives: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

* = statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference

APPENDIX 5

Choice

Statement	Response alternatives (n)				N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)		
My english teacher...						
1. allows me to choose working methods that suit me best.	14 (13.1)	24 (22.4)	53 (49.5)	16 (15.0)	107	2.66
2. allows me to take part in the planning of schedules.	19 (17.8)	29 (27.1)	46 (43.0)	13 (12.1)	107	2.50
3. allows me to set personal goals and to work according to them.	5 (4.7)	21 (19.6)	40 (37.4)	40 (37.4)	106	3.08
4. offers various task alternatives, from which I can choose the one that suits me best.	13 (12.1)	44 (41.1)	39 (36.4)	11 (10.3)	107	2.45
5. offers me the possibility to influence the course contents (e.g. which topics/ grammar items/ book chapters are discussed in the course).	14 (13.1)	35 (32.7)	45 (42.1)	11 (10.3)	105	2.50
6. allows me to adjust the tasks' level of difficulty according to my skills.	15 (14.0)	29 (27.1)	43 (40.2)	19 (17.8)	106	2.62
7. does not direct my choices too much.	8 (7.5)	11 (10.3)	53 (49.5)	33 (30.8)	105	3.06

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

Goals and needs

Statement	Response alternatives (n)				N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)		
My english teacher...						
1. helps me in finding out my personal (learning) needs.	9 (8.4)	27 (25.2)	52 (48.6)	18 (16.8)	106	2.75
2. helps me in setting personal goals.	2 (1.9)	14 (13.1)	47 (43.9)	43 (40.2)	106	3.24
3. supports me in setting and achieving personal goals.	2 (1.9)	29 (27.1)	46 (43.0)	26 (24.3)	103	2.93

4. makes sure that I understand other-determined goals (e.g. curricular goals).	3 (2.8)	22 (20.6)	46 (43.0)	35 (32.7)	106	3.07
5. allows me to approach tasks in my personal way.	7 (6.5)	14 (13.1)	51 (47.7)	33 (30.8)	105	3.05
6. offers me possibilities to work on my weaknesses, e.g. by offering tasks that work on my weaknesses.	3 (2.8)	24 (22.4)	45 (42.1)	30 (28.0)	102	3.00
7. allows me to work according to my personal goals even if they do not match my English teacher's goals.	14 (13.1)	33 (30.8)	47 (43.9)	10 (9.3)	104	2.51

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

Support

Statement	Response alternatives (n)				N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)		
My english teacher...						
1. encourages me to ask for help and advice.	2 (1.9)	8 (7.5)	35 (32.7)	62 (57.9)	107	3.47
2. offers help when I need it.	2 (1.9)	8 (7.5)	23 (21.5)	74 (69.2)	107	3.58
3. is thorough and intelligible when helping me.	3 (2.8)	12 (11.2)	36 (33.6)	55 (51.4)	106	3.35
4. encourages the students to ask for help from one another when necessary.	3 (2.8)	13 (12.1)	49 (45.8)	42 (39.3)	107	3.21
5. encourages me to help other students when necessary.	3 (2.8)	14 (13.1)	53 (49.5)	36 (33.6)	106	3.15
6. allows me to work with a partner / in groups.	2 (1.9)	4 (3.7)	27 (25.2)	72 (67.3)	105	3.61
7. makes sure that when working in groups, everyone participates in a way that suits their skills best.	3 (2.8)	21 (19.6)	60 (56.1)	23 (21.5)	107	2.96
8. offers me reference materials (e.g. dictionaries, internet sites).	6 (5.6)	24 (22.4)	57 (53.3)	20 (18.7)	107	2.85
9. offers me guidance in using reference materials.	6 (5.6)	33 (30.8)	50 (46.7)	18 (16.8)	107	2.75

10. offers tasks with different levels of difficulty, so that I can choose a task that suits my skills best.	15 (14.0)	38 (35.5)	42 (39.3)	12 (11.2)	107	2.48
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Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

Metacognition

Statement	Response alternatives (n)				N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)		
My english teacher...						
1. helps me in finding out which learning styles suit me best.	13 (12.1)	31 (29.0)	51 (47.7)	12 (11.2)	107	2.58
2. allows me to try out different working methods.	10 (9.3)	31 (29.0)	50 (46.7)	16 (15.0)	107	2.67
3. allows me to work according to the learning styles that suit me best.	7 (6.5)	28 (26.2)	49 (45.8)	23 (21.5)	107	2.82
4. pays attention to the process of learning (instead of the outcome) in evaluation.	20 (18.7)	36 (33.6)	37 (34.6)	12 (11.2)	105	2.39
5. allows me to correct my tasks/ tests/ written assignments myself.	11 (10.3)	16 (15.0)	46 (43.0)	34 (31.8)	107	2.96
6. makes me notice my mistakes and helps me in correcting them.	4 (3.7)	18 (16.8)	50 (46.7)	35 (32.7)	107	3.08
7. helps me in discovering my strengths and weaknesses.	8 (7.5)	30 (28.0)	52 (48.6)	16 (15.0)	106	2.72
8. allows me to work on my weaknesses e.g. by letting me choose tasks that practice my weaknesses.	9 (8.4)	40 (37.4)	42 (39.3)	15 (14.0)	106	2.59
9. allows me to bring out my strengths e.g. by letting me help other students.	6 (5.6)	16 (15.0)	57 (53.3)	28 (26.2)	107	3.00
10. allows me to evaluate my process myself.	3 (2.8)	21 (19.6)	61 (57.0)	22 (20.6)	107	2.95
11. offers guidance in the evaluation of the learning process with the help of e.g. portfolios and learning diaries.	7 (6.5)	28 (26.2)	43 (40.2)	29 (27.1)	107	2.88

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

Emotional climate

Statement	Response alternatives (n)				N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)		
1. My English teacher takes criticism on teaching well.	6 (5.6)	10 (9.3)	45 (42.1)	43 (40.2)	104	3.20
2. I feel that I can be open towards my English teacher.	7 (6.5)	6 (5.6)	41 (38.3)	51 (47.7)	105	3.30
3. Expressing feelings (both positive and negative) to my English teacher is easy.	8 (7.5)	15 (14.0)	44 (41.1)	38 (35.5)	105	3.07
4. I can question the practices that do not work well in my opinion.	10 (9.3)	17 (15.9)	43 (40.2)	36 (33.6)	106	2.99
5. My English teacher responds to feedback in teaching.	7 (6.5)	19 (17.8)	47 (43.9)	32 (29.9)	105	2.99
6. My English teacher encourages me to take part in decision-making.	6 (5.6)	22 (20.6)	47 (43.9)	30 (28.0)	105	2.96
7. My English teacher encourages me to ask questions.	2 (1.9)	3 (2.8)	59 (55.1)	41 (38.3)	105	3.32
8. My English teacher accepts me the way I am.	3 (2.8)	4 (3.7)	26 (24.3)	71 (66.4)	104	3.59
9. My English teacher understands me and my viewpoint.	6 (5.6)	3 (2.8)	49 (45.8)	47 (43.9)	105	3.30

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

Motivation

Statement	Response alternatives (n)				N	Mean value
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)		
1. helps me in finding out what motivates me in learning English .	7 (6.5)	27 (25.2)	48 (44.9)	24 (22.4)	106	2.84

2. motivates me.	10 (9.3)	20 (18.7)	54 (50.5)	23 (21.5)	107	2.84
3. helps me understand why learning English is useful.	1 (0.9)	13 (12.1)	51 (47.7)	41 (38.3)	106	3.25
4. allows me to incorporate other areas of my life in learning English.	5 (4.7)	18 (16.8)	46 (43.0)	36 (33.6)	105	3.08
5. encourages me to use English in other areas of my life, such as in free time.	5 (4.7)	13 (12.1)	38 (35.5)	51 (47.7)	107	3.26
6. connects English studies with my life e.g. by using topics that are relevant to me.	9 (8.4)	22 (20.6)	43 (40.2)	32 (29.9)	106	2.92

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

APPENDIX 6

Statement		Mean value	Statistical significance
My English teacher... allows me to approach tasks in my personal way.	Female	2.92	0.045*
	Male	3.26	
pays attention to the process of learning (instead of the outcome) in evaluation.	Female	2.27	0.045*
	Male	2.64	
helps me in discovering my strengths and weaknesses.	Female	2.58	0.037*
	Male	2.91	
offers guidance in the evaluation of the learning process with the help of e.g. portfolios and learning diaries.	Female	2.73	0.042*
	Male	3.09	
motivates me.	Female	2.68	0.022*
	Male	3.07	

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

* = statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference

APPENDIX 7

Theme		Mean value	Statistical significance
Motivation	Female	2.92	0.034*
	Male	3.19	

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

* = statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference

APPENDIX 8

Statement		Mean value	Statistical significance (when compared to over 18)
My English teacher...	16	-	-
	17	2.83	0.004**
	over 18	2.06	-
allows me to adjust the tasks' level of difficulty according to my skills. 6	16	3.29	0.025*
	17	-	-
	over 18	2.06	-
does not direct my choices too much. 7	16	3.14	0.034*
	17	3.20	0.006**
	over 18	2.39	-
allows me to approach tasks in my personal way.	16	-	-
	17	2.66	0.019*
	over 18	2.11	-
allows me to work according to my personal goals even if they do not match my English teacher's goals.	16	2.68	0.043*
	17	2.83	0.004**
	over 18	2.06	-
allows me to try out different working methods. 2	16	-	-
	17	3.09	0.047
	over 18	2.50	-
allows me to correct my tasks/ tests/ written assignments myself. 5	16	-	-
	17	3.17	0.005
	over 18	2.50	-
allows me to bring out my strengths e.g. by letting me help other students. 9	16	3.50	0.003**
	17	3.32	0.013*
	over 18	2.44	-
takes criticism on teaching well. 1	16	3.45	0.040*
	17	3.41	0.046*
	over 18	2.78	-
understands me and my viewpoint. 9	16	3.32	0.044*
	17	-	-
	over 18	2.56	-
Expressing feelings (both positive and negative) to my English teacher is easy. 3	16	3.23	0.029*
	17	-	-
	over 18	2.39	-
I can question the practices that do not work well in my opinion. 4	16	-	-
	17	3.16	0.011*
	over 18	2.39	-
responds to feedback in teaching. 5	16	-	-
	17	3.13	0.036*
	over 18	2.44	-
encourages me to take part in decision-making. 6	16	-	-
	17	3.13	0.036*
	over 18	2.44	-

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

* = statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference

APPENDIX 9

Theme		Mean value	Statistical significance (when compared to over 18)
Goals and needs	16	-	-
	17	3.04	0.027*
	over 18	2.62	-
Metacognition	16	-	-
	17	2.87	0.047*
	over 18	2.49	-
Emotional climate	16	3.33	0.003**
	17	3.28	0.005**
	over 18	2.71	-

Response alternatives: 1 = completely unsatisfied, 2 = somewhat unsatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = completely satisfied

* = statistically almost significant difference, ** = statistically significant difference, *** = statistically very significant difference