

6TH GRADERS' SKILLS IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF ENGLISH:

A comparison between the students' and the teacher's opinion

Master's thesis

Janiina Ristola

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
English
March 2014

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistinen Tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kielten laitos
Tekijä – Author Janiina Ristola	
Työn nimi – Title 6th Graders’ Skills In Different Areas Of English: A Comparison Between The Students’ And The Teacher’s Opinion	
Oppiaine – Subject Englanti	Työn laji – Level Pro Gradu -tutkielma
Aika – Month and year Maaliskuu 2014	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 78 sivua ja 3 liitettä
Tiivistelmä – Abstract	
<p>Itsearviointi on tärkeässä roolissa oppimisessa ja opettamisessa, ja itsearviointi sisältyy nykyään opetussuunnitelmaan alakoulussa, sillä omien taitojen tuntemuksen on osoitettu lisäävän oppimisen tuloksia. Itsearviointiin voi linkittää metakognition, joka on oman osaamisen ja kykyjen hahmottamista ja niiden hyväksikäyttöä. Sekä oppimisessa että itsearvioinnissa on eroja sukupuolten välillä, ja näitä eroja olisi hyvä tutkia, jotta tuloksia voisi käyttää hyväksi opettamisessa. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus oli selvittää eroja eri kielen osa-alueiden välillä (lukeminen, kirjoittaminen, kuunteleminen, puhuminen) - onko jossain alueessa vahvemmin näkyvissä metakognitiiviset oppimistaidot, ja onko näissä alueissa sukupuolieroja. Tutkimuksessa tutkittiin oppilaiden omaa näkemystä omista taidoistaan sekä heidän opettajansa näkemystä.</p> <p>Tutkimus toteutettiin eräässä keskisuomalaisessa alakoulussa kevätlukukauden loppuessa, keväällä 2010. Oppilaiden osalta tiedot tutkimukseen kerättiin kyselylomakkeella, jossa heitä pyydettiin antamaan arvosanat jokaiselle kielen eri osa-alueelle, sekä vastaamaan avoimeen kommenttiin millaisena he näkevät itsensä kyseisen kielen osa-alueen oppijana. Opettajan arvosanat kerättiin avoimella haastattelulla. Tutkimuksessa oli mukana 27 kuudennen luokan oppilasta ja yksi opettaja. Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että kokonaisuutena eri kielen osa-alueiden välillä oli eroja, mutta niistä ei ollut selkeää korrelaatiota metakognitiivisiin taitoihin. Kun arvosanoja tutkittiin yksilötasolla, tutkimuksessa tuli lukemisessa ja puhumisessa viitteitä metakognitiivisesta oppimisesta. Tyttöjen ja poikien eroja tutkittaessa, erot tulivat selkeästi esiin, ja tytöt olivat ankarampia sekä omissa arvosanoissa että negatiivisempia avoimissa kommentteissaan.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tulosten pohjalta voi nähdä viitteitä metakognitiivisesta oppimisesta, mutta jotta tulokset olisivat kattavampia, pitäisi tutkimusta tutkia pidemmällä aikavälillä ja etenkin oppilaiden taitojen kehittymistä metakognitiivisten taitojen lisääntyessä. Sukupuolien välisistä eroista tuli tämän tutkimuksen tulosten perusteella ilmi se, että pojat eivät ole niin kriittisiä omille taidoilleen, ja heidän arvosanansa ovat lähempänä opettajan arvosanaa. Aiheessa olisi monia näkökulmia jatkotutkimuksille, ja tutkimusta voisi laajentaa tutkimuksiin, jotka tutkisivat monipuolisen itsearvioinnin vaikutuksista omien taitojen tuntemiseen, ja niissä ilmeneviin sukupuolien välisiin eroihin.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords Learning, Metacognition, Self-evaluation, Gender	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository Kielten laitos	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	7
2 LEARNING AND METACOGNITION	11
2.1 LEARNING	11
2.2 COGNITION AND METACOGNITION	15
2.3 THE ROLE OF METACOGNITION IN LEARNING	19
2.4 DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS.....	20
3 EVALUATION	22
3.1 TEACHER EVALUATION	22
3.2 SELF-EVALUATION.....	23
3.3 EVALUATION IN METACOGNITIVE LEARNING	24
3.4 DIFFERENCES IN SELF-EVALUATION BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS	25
4 PREVIOUS STUDIES	28
5 METHODS, DATA AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS	30
5.1 RESEARCH PROBLEMS	30
5.2 METHODS AND DATA	31
5.2.1 <i>Collecting the Data</i>	31
5.2.2 <i>Processing the Data</i>	33
5.2.3 <i>Analyzing the Data</i>	35
6 STUDENTS' AND TEACHER'S EVALUATION OF DIFFERENT SKILLS IN ENGLISH	37
6.1 READING	37
6.1.1 <i>Grades</i>	37
6.1.2 <i>Open comments</i>	39
6.1.3 <i>Differences between boys and girls</i>	43
6.2 WRITING.....	45
6.2.1 <i>Grades</i>	45
6.2.2 <i>Open comments</i>	47
6.2.3 <i>Differences between boys and girls</i>	49
6.3 LISTENING	52
6.3.1 <i>Grades</i>	53
6.3.2 <i>Open comments</i>	54
6.3.2 <i>Differences between boys and girls</i>	56
6.4 SPEAKING	59
6.4.1 <i>Grades</i>	59
6.4.2 <i>Open comments</i>	61
6.4.3 <i>Differences between boys and girls</i>	63
7 GENERAL DIFFERENCES IN THE EVALUATIONS	67
7.1 GENERAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE STUDENTS AND THE TEACHER.....	67
7.2 GENERAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GIRLS AND BOYS	70
8 CONCLUSION	75
APPENDICES	82

TABLES AND FIGURES

- Figure 1 Teacher and student evaluation of reading
- Figure 2 Students' open comments of reading
- Figure 3 Boys and girls evaluation of reading
- Figure 4 Boys and girls open comments of reading
- Figure 5 Teacher and student evaluation of writing
- Figure 6 Students' open comments of writing
- Figure 7 Boys and girls evaluation of writing
- Figure 8 Boys and girls open comments of writing
- Figure 9 Teacher and student evaluation of listening
- Figure 10 Students' open comments of listening
- Figure 11 Boys and girls evaluation of listening
- Figure 12 Boys and girls open comments of listening
- Figure 13 Teacher and student evaluation of speaking
- Figure 14 Students' open comments of speaking
- Figure 15 Boys and girls evaluation of speaking
- Figure 16 Boys and girls open comments of speaking
- Figure 17 Summary of teacher and student evaluations
- Figure 18 Summary of students' open comments
- Figure 19 Summary of teacher and girls evaluations
- Figure 20 Summary of teacher and boys evaluations
- Figure 21 Summary of boys and girls' positive comments
- Figure 22 Summary of boys and girls' negative comments
- Figure 23 The grading scale for language skills

1 INTRODUCTION

Learning foreign languages includes some awareness of the learner's own skills. To be able to learn something and link it to what is already learnt, one has to know something about one's own language skills. Since self-awareness is such a substantial part of language learning, self-evaluation ought to be somewhat accurate in order to make the learning process easier. In order for the self-assessment to be as accurate as possible, some evaluations have to be done. In classrooms, the easiest self-assessment and feedback on that is when a student does a self-evaluation and then the teacher comments on it. The teacher is not the voice of the ultimate truth, but in the classroom the teacher represents the knowledge of what should be the level of the students' language abilities. The students reflect their own opinion of their own skills on the opinion of the teacher with the belief the teacher has the best knowledge of what the language skills should be like at certain points of the learning process.

When learners are aware of their own skills and what the skills are like in comparison to what their skills should be like, the correct term for it is metacognition, which can be described as "knowing about knowing". This can also refer to "knowing about not knowing", which can occur when a learner is aware that their own language skills are not how they are expected to be like at a certain point in time. Self-evaluations are a great opportunity to put the input of the students' skills into learners' minds - they must reflect their own skills on what they think is expected of them at a specific point in time. Continuous self-evaluations make a good "road map" to learners, so their awareness of their own abilities is brought to their attention and they can reach towards better skills and possibly even more effective learning.

The self-evaluations and self-images are different among students, but there are also gender related differences . The expectations of students may have an effect on learning, and since the expectations of themselves are different among boys

and girls, it can also affect the performance and outcome of learning differently between boys and girls. Gender plays a role also in the self-evaluation, for there are differences between boys and girls in how much they put value on the external and internal factors affecting the learning and the performance of them. If much value is given for external factors in self-evaluation, evaluation can focus more on the circumstances of the learning than on the actual skills and abilities one has.

The interest in this study has arisen from my personal experiences in the classroom. Almost every student has done some type of self-evaluation in almost every subject they take at school, and some schools even have self-evaluations in their yearly reports. Thus students are expected to be aware of their own academic skills, at least to some extent. The curriculum of the sixth graders also says that the pupils must be aware of their own skills and they must be equipped to evaluate their own academic skills. The similarity or closeness of the students' own evaluations and the ones given by the teacher is not evaluated nor graded, but since the students are evaluated regularly, they have a certain sense of their own skills and how they are in line with what is expected of them, thus pushing them to become metacognitive learners.

The interest in different areas of English language skills came from my previous research, which involved ninth grade students evaluating their skills in different areas of English. I compared them to each other, and then came up with the realization that I might not be evaluating the students' realistic skills, but only their own images of them. There I came up with the idea of studying the differences of opinion between the teacher and students. Since the different areas of English are emphasized differently in the curriculum of sixth grade students, it will be interesting to see if there are any common differences in the areas and their evaluations, comparing the evaluations of the students and the ones made by the teacher.

The idea to study the sixth graders was based on my future goal to teach in elementary school someday. Therefore I wanted to study elementary school students and the sixth graders have done the most self-evaluation so far. They are also an interesting target to examine, since they do not have many reports which have numbers in the evaluations, as they most often have written evaluations, not numerical. Therefore I was interested in the fact of what grades they would give themselves, if they got to give themselves grades, not just written evaluations.

The fact that there has been studies about the awareness of metacognitive skills and the development of metacognitive skills among early learners, but no study on the link between the teacher's evaluation and the students' own evaluations, indicates there is a research gap for this type of study. When combining the comparison of gender into this study, the study brings a new element for analyzing metacognitive skills and self-evaluation.

In this study, I will first present the theoretical framework for the study in chapter 2; learning and metacognition will be explained, and the role of metacognition in the learning process is brought to attention. I will also present the differences between boys and girls in learning. Second, in chapter 3, I will discuss the role of evaluation in learning, and its effects and part in metacognitive learning. Evaluation will include both teacher evaluation and self-evaluation, and the differences between boys and girls in self-evaluation will also be analyzed. In chapter 4 I will present the previous studies.

In chapter 5, the study at hand will be presented, including the core of the study - research problems. Then I will go through the collecting of the data for this study, explaining how the processing of the data is done and then I will analyze the analysis methods, which have been used for this particular study.

In chapter 6 I will analyze the results of this study, dividing the analysis into four parts - reading, writing, listening and speaking. In each section, I will first

analyze the data with qualitative methods and charts, comparing the students' grades with the teacher's grades. Then I will go into the open comments, analyzing them with examples and charts drawn from the qualitative data. Last, I will analyze the gender differences in each area drawing conclusions from both the grades and the open comments of the students. In chapter 7, I will conclude these four areas and compare the areas of language with each other, both from the point of view of the student vs. teacher, and the "boys vs. girls" point of view. In chapter 8, I will summarize the results of this study and draw implications from these results, also presenting possibilities for further studies.

2 LEARNING AND METACOGNITION

Learning as a word implies that the learning process is something one has to make effort to do. Learning is almost never considered to be something one can do subconsciously, since there is another word for subconscious learning - acquiring. Learning as a process of language learning is a conscious act of wanting to learn. Acquiring a language can be seen as a subconscious process and more can be used to describe first language acquisition. Metacognition is somewhat conscious, somewhat subconscious, since it is knowing about knowing, learning about learning.

2.1 Learning

Learning a first language cannot be seen as a conscious learning process, but more as a process of acquiring a means of communicating with other human beings. First language learning takes place in such an early stage of child development that the understanding of how a learning process works has not yet developed in the mind of an infant. Brown and Hanlon suggest (Brown and Hanlon, 1970:51) that language learning in a child can even happen in situations where the parents talk in such complex structures that the child cannot understand, but the child can interpret it in some way and with the help of the context the child can learn some parts/structures on the language. By subconsciously connecting newly learned things to language which has been learned (or acquired) earlier, a child learns language without making the effort to learn something in particular. First language acquisition is also realizing and acquiring linguistic meanings to already existing things. For example a child has known milk for almost its whole life, but with learning to say the word milk, it gets a linguistic meaning.

In second language learning, existing things do not get a linguistic meaning, but an "alternative way of construing the same reality" (Archard and Niemeier, 2010: 6). This is why first language learning cannot be compared to second

language learning, since the differences in them are so profound. In this study, first language learning will be referred to as first language acquisition, thus making the difference clear between learning a language and acquiring a language. Second languages can also be taught in similar circumstances as first languages are acquired, but the recipient still has the first language already, and the second language that is learned is learnt mostly through the first language. There are some exceptions to this, for example if in the new language there are some words which do not exist in the learners' first language. If these words are acquired through usage, not through conscious learning, then the process is very similar to the one in first language acquisition.

Since second language learning differs so much from the acquisition of a first language, there are different ways of teaching a second language.

Stephen Krashen (1981: 1-2) described of both these terms:

"Conscious language *learning*, on the other hand, is thought to be helped a great deal by error correction and the presentation of explicit rules (Krashen and Seliger, 1975). Error correction if it is maintained, helps the learner come to the correct mental representation of the linguistic generalization.

Language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language--natural communication--in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding." (Krashen, 1981: 1-2)

Error correction as a means of learning and teaching language, in this case, the second language, is most likely a very commonly used method of teaching second languages all around the world. Even though error correction has a focus on the mistakes the language learner makes, they must not be seen as deficiencies in the learner, but "rather they can be exploited as an opportunity for both learner and teacher to react to and reflect on some of the features of (written) English" (Wallace, 1987: 219).

Wallace (1987) speaks of written language learning and error correction, but the same can also be applied to other areas of language learning and teaching as well. Languages are usually learnt as a whole, including reading, writing,

listening and speaking skills of the language. Learning a language involves all the areas within the language and none of them can be left out and, as Robinett (1978: 177) claims, learning one area of a language helps learning another area of it:

"At any rate, the end result of second or foreign language learning is the ability to comprehend and produce the second language in its spoken and/or written form. This, in turn, involves the acquisition of some or all of the receptive and productive skills traditionally categorized as listening, speaking, reading, and writing." Robinett (1978: 177)

It is obvious that learning one area of language helps the other, since for example reading and writing skills are so closely linked to each other and one cannot master one fully without having some skills in the other area. The more the learners know about the things they have learnt, the more they can link them with already learnt things and that makes the learning more powerful and this process results in more long-term learning results. One does not even have to consciously practice linking learnt things with each other, but subconscious processes link words and syntax with already learnt language and thus different areas of language help in learning other areas.

Having learnt some areas of language may be in help when learning other areas of language, but first language acquisition also has the advantage to second language learning that is has no other language as an subconscious input. For example in written language, there can be very much negative input on the learning process from the first language. For example, in Italian the spoken form of a word consists mostly of one letter corresponding one phoneme. Thus it is easy for a Finnish native speaker to hear a word and then connect it to a written form of the same word, since Finnish written form is constructed also on the same basis - one letter, one phoneme. In contrast, it is not as easy for a Finnish native speaker to start connecting French words with their written forms, since in French the phonemes can consist of many letters and letters have many phonemes, depending on the surrounding letters, etc. These difficulties

are presented by Lunberg (1999), when he speaks of "how difficult it may be to isolate the impact of orthographic regularity on reading acquisition."

Even though learning can take place in the subconsciousness of a learner, McLaughlin (1987) presents learning as a cognitive process, because the outer representation of learning is a thought reflection of the inner abilities. Internal knowledge is represented by the regulations and guidance of the learned rules of the language. When language acquisition is investigated, this representation is a mixture of language regulations and the choosing of the right grammatical rules, word choices and pragmatic selections. This is also the point Toohey makes (2006):

"Inspired by the new science of psycholinguistics, SLA research was influenced by Chomskian notions of language as a rule-governed system, of learning as an individual psychological cognitive process, and of learners as active agents formulating rules for their language outputs." (Toohey 2000: 6)

The learning process is a constant process, which evolves all the time. It is a constantly growing process and it can never be seen as "ready", since learning never stops. The process involves learning basic rules of a language, then adding of more rules and the elimination of errors, as McLaughlin (1987) puts it:

"According to Cognitive theory, second-language learning, like any other complex cognitive skill, involves the gradual integration of sub-skills as controlled processes initially predominate and then become automatic. Thus the initial stages of learning involve the slow development of skills and the gradual elimination of errors as the learner attempts to automatize aspects of performance. In later phases, there is continual restructuring as learners shift their internal representations." (McLaughlin 1987: 139)

Second language learning also differs from first language acquisition from the point of view of knowing what you are learning. In many cases a child learns to say a word or a phrase before they even know what it means. A child learns how to use their voice to get something, and this evolves to utterances and into words. This is an excellent representation of the ideology of language acquisition - learning language without knowing the actual meaning of it. It is

just a means of communication, not something to be learnt. Of course even in first language acquisition, language learners usually learn afterwards what certain words and statements mean, but that does not take away the uniqueness of first language acquisition. This is summarized well by Olson (1977: 179): "Admittedly, much of what a child learns to comprehend and express in language, he already knew cognitively before he learned the appropriate linguistic form."

The cognitive side of learning a second language differs from that of first language acquisition. Second language learning is more focused on cognitive aspects of language, when first language acquisition is more focused on cognitive aspects of communication. The argument concerning which learning style is the more efficient way of learning and how it can be measured, is not discussed in this study. This study focuses more on whether these cognitive processes should be more emphasized on second language teaching through metacognitive learning processes and learning methods.

2.2 Cognition and Metacognition

Cognition is a critical part of second language learning, since traditional second language learning can be considered a conscious learning process, which involves cognitive processes. In first language learning, cognitive abilities grow with the language learning process. Cognitive behavior also has a role in learning, when a child does not only repeat and mimic the utterances and voices that he/she hears, but uses them in a sense of communication and they have a meaning behind them. "Knowledge is acquired through the subject's actions upon, and interaction with, people and things" (Sinclair-deZwart 1973:13).

Language competence in second language learning grows with practice, but the conscious knowledge about one's own language competence is not necessarily linked with the actual competence. The more a learner practices a language, the more one becomes aware of the learning process, but the knowledge of one's

own skills is not as simple. This idea of language competence and cognitive competence is well summarized by Bourne et al. (1986: 331): "Language development and non-linguistic cognitive development interact in some way, but the precise form of the relation remains to be determined." This can be understood as a statement that the conscious knowledge about learning has a link to the language learning and development.

The link between cognition and learning has also been made by other researchers. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 18) point out that in order to achieve long-term learning results, the learner must use some strategies in the learning process and that "strategies that more actively engage the person's mental process should be more effective in supporting learning." This is called the cognitive theory of learning. In addition, Nisbeth and Shucksmith (1986: 7) state that "-- the successful learner is one who has *learned how to learn*." They also call it "*knowing about knowing*", which they define as metacognition. This can be used in language learning by making the learners aware of the things and methods through which they are learning, so the learning process is not simply input from the teacher, but also reflective learning by the learners. This would mean the language learners would be learning through metacognition. Learning through metacognition could also mean that the learner has some learning strategies and knows what the best strategy for the situation at hand is. An example of these learning strategies can be found from O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 119): a metacognitive strategy is self-monitoring; making sure of one's own comprehension of the listening excerpt of a text. A cognitive strategy is resourcing; checking unfamiliar words from a dictionary.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) had studied these learning strategies and they found out that the students who used more metacognitive strategies did overall better in the test than the ones who used cognitive strategies. This was also studied by Nisbeth and Schucksmith (1986), and the results were very similar to O'Malley and Chamot's. The successful learners were not necessarily the ones, who had the broadest vocabulary or the richest syntax usage. Usually the

definition of a successful learner was the competence to use "a range of strategies from which they are able to select appropriately and adapt flexibly to meet the needs of a specific situation" (Nisbeth and Shucksmith, 1986:6). The successful learner had to be aware of the methods most appropriate for specific situations and to suit the learner's own learning skills the best.

"Thus, successful learners are more likely to be those who are fine-tuned to the complexities of their learning style, who are perceptive of the requirements in learning, and who have developed a range of strategies which they can apply according to their own style." (Nisbeth and Shucksmith 1986: 6)

The variety of learning methods and metacognitive learning strategies do not come to learners through the subconscious mind, but they have to be taken under consideration already in the language teaching methods. The learners must be encouraged to think of the learning process as a process of conscious reflection of one's own abilities. "Firstly, we are looking for a teaching method, which encourages the learning of strategies in context and that emphasizes the value of metacognitive insights to monitor and control those strategies" (Nisbeth and Shucksmith 1986: 55). This must be brought to learner's attention in an early stage so that it can be used throughout the learning process and get the best results of the metacognitive learning process. If the learning is presented as a conscious process, the learner can from the beginning start reflecting on one's own learning methods and patterns, thus making learning more efficient. This is also stated by Nisbeth and Shucksmith (1986: 55): "A child with a good range of strategies and the capacity to produce, control and adapt them in different contexts is a flexible and effective learner."

Even though metacognitive learning processes do not usually come without consciously practicing them, children produce some sort of metacognitive competence with age. Nisbeth and Shucksmith (1986: 73) suggest that between the ages eight to ten, the cognitive reflective competence grows and can be used in metacognitive learning processes: "They are moving into a stage of increasing capacity for conscious planning and direction of their own learning". This is crucial to acknowledge early in the learning process, since the methods and

patterns of learning are learnt at an early stage and are not easily altered afterwards in adult or adolescent age. The learning processes people use in adult life are usually learnt in early age, thus making the metacognitive learning processes crucial to be learned as early as possible, so they can be used in the learning process, throughout one's educational life. In addition to the value of learning metacognitive processes in early age, it becomes more and more difficult with the level of education. The higher the education, the more task-focused the learning becomes, and the time for creative learning practices and reflective learning is smaller. This is also noticed by Nisbeth and Shucksmith (1986: 74): "Specific task-directed work does not nurture autonomous learning. Skill practice in abstraction from real contexts, and without self-monitoring, does not lead to flexibility and transfer." The importance of early introduction to metacognitive learning processes is also brought to attention by Nisbeth and Shucksmith (1986), when they state that if this opportunity is not used, it is a loss for the learner:

"... Before age ten, conscious self-direction of learning is relatively rare; by fourteen, many pupils can plan action consciously. Ten to fourteen are years of opportunity. Too often they are wasted years."(Nisbeth and Shucksmith 1986:74)

In metacognitive learning, one must be aware of one's own talents, which also include the mistakes one makes. Teaching methods in traditional teaching involve much error correction, which might help the learner to realize the errors one is making. Grades in current school system are based on the competence of students correcting their own mistakes in a correct word/form/etc. This is good, as the students become familiar with accurate and correct language, and the focus should be kept on encouraging the students to notice their errors rather than on demanding the students to know the correct way of correcting their mistakes. Nisbeth and Shucksmith (1986:44) also say that it is not the most important thing that one corrects their own mistakes, but it is even more important to be aware of one's own mistakes. One does not have to know perhaps the right answer, nor the way to correct the error one has made, but it is more important to be conscious of the fact that one has the incorrect answer,

and that is the key to good learning. Thus metacognition is very crucial to good learning, since knowing about one's own mistakes and being conscious of one's own strengths and weaknesses "is the key which enables us to gain new knowledge and strategies" (Nisbeth and Shucksmith 1986:45).

2.3 The role of metacognition in learning

In order to evaluate one's skills, one has to know what skills he or she should have mastered by a certain point in learning and how well he or she masters them. Not always do the images about one's own skills reflect the reality. Here, cognitive and metacognitive strategies play a role since metacognition is also called "*knowing about knowing*" (Nisbeth and Shucksmith, 1986: 7). If one knows about one's own learning skills, it can be useful when evaluating oneself. In evaluating oneself, one has to be aware of one's strengths and weaknesses, and it can be hard to be objective about one's own skills. It may even be impossible to be objective about one's own skills, since one does not necessarily realize one's own weaknesses for one might overlook them and concentrate more on the strengths.

"A strong and positive self-concept is conducive to healthy growth and development, and necessary if effective relationships are to be established. A poor or negative self-concept can generate feelings of insecurity and a general sense of unworthiness. Attention to the self-concept is a very important part in the learning process and some aspects of the self-concept are particularly important in the collective setting of the classroom." (Whitaker 1995: 186)

Teaching is also a part of self-perception, since teaching often sets the rules for learning strategies. Teachers can decide to teach in a way which is most effective to make the students realize their realistic abilities. For example, if one uses cognitive strategies for learning, one might not see one's realistic skills as well as might a learner who uses metacognitive strategies. Also, if learners have done much self-evaluation and gotten feedback on it, it might have created more knowledge and awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore those students may be closer to the realistic assessment of their own language ability skills.

2.4 Differences in learning between boys and girls

The learning process is usually noted to differ between some students - learning techniques and strategies have been taken under consideration even in the teacher training of Finnish Universities. The differences in learning are not only tied to the techniques one uses in learning, but some are also gender dependent. The gender differences can be seen in the effort put into the learning process, belief in which factors contribute to one's success or failure, and the way success or failure is handled.

The gender differences in learning can be seen in the effort that is put into the learning and studying of language. Skelton (2001) presents that some boys underachieve, which can affect their learning as a whole. This is not as much a problem with lower-performing boys as it is with well-performing boys. (Skelton 2001: 32-38) Because of underachievement, the students can fall into a cycle, where they do not learn as much as they could, therefore always being a little behind their actual talents and skills. This is not optimal for the learning process, since it is an active process to learn a language, and if one does not make as much effort as one could, the potential of their talents is not being used completely. This can also be the reason boys put value on the success/failure on the interior factors, since the underachievers know they have more talents for greater success, but simply choose not to live up to their talents.

Students' own beliefs in what plays a role in one's success or failure has a major role in the outcome of foreign language learning. If a student believes external skills have a big effect on the outcome on learning, it may take away the motivation to do something to improve the outcome. The attitude towards one's own skills can change the outlook on learning, to the extent that the student may feel they have no reason for studying, since the outcome is not relevant to the learning or studying the students does. Licht and Dweck (1987) have summarized it well:

"-- children who attribute their failures to factors that are stable and beyond their control (particularly insufficient ability) tend, in the face of difficulty, to lower their expectations for future successes; and they are less likely than other children to increase their efforts in order to meet such challenges." (Licht and Dweck 1987: 95)

The way girls and boys handle success and/or failure is also reflected on their learning process. Licht and Dweck (1987: 99) present an excellent example of differences between girls and boys and their perspective on their own performances:

"As discussed above, girls are inclined to see their failures as indicative of their abilities; therefore, it is their failures, which will be viewed as predictive of future outcomes. -- For boys, the situation is reversed - it is their successes, which are viewed as informative."
Licht and Dweck (1987: 99)

Since girls have some tendency of focusing more on their failures, they also see their own abilities from a negative perspective. They might know where they are good at, but since the focus is on the negative aspects, they also know where they have some room for improvement. This would make them very good metacognitive learners, if the students with this knowledge can focus on how to improve their disabilities and not on self-derogation.

3 EVALUATION

Since birth, children's behavior molds through the feedback of their environment - usually parents. Children's behavior is constantly evaluated and guided to be aware if they do something forbidden or if they act in an incorrect manner, and through the years they learn what to do and what not to do in order to behave in a suitable manner (Whitaker, 1995: 118). This evaluation and guidance is a crucial factor also in learning, since without feedback from someone; the learning process may drift pointlessly without clear direction. In elementary schools, the evaluation often comes from the teacher, who leans on the curriculum, knowing where to guide the learners. Nowadays it is not only the teacher doing this evaluation, but it is in the curriculum of elementary school students that they must be able to reflect on their own skills by doing self-evaluation.

3.1 Teacher evaluation

In the school environment, most often the teacher is the only one evaluating the students besides the students themselves. Especially in elementary school, the teacher's opinion reflects the "truth" to the students. It must be stated that the teacher's opinion is an opinion of a well-educated and objective person, and it should be based on the curriculum, but it is still not necessarily the truth. In the elementary school classroom, the students do not have the knowledge of e.g. language that the teacher does, thus the teacher is the one giving the input to the students on what is correct wording, syntax, or pronunciation of certain things in language. For the students, the reality and complexity of language comes through the teacher, and the guidance towards good language skills comes from the teacher's evaluation of the students.

The evaluation of students can also be continuous feedback in the classroom. There are many forms of feedback, such as error-correction, positive reinforcement, and positive and/or negative comments. The feedback the teacher gives to the students give a frame of rules for language, with which the

students try to build language in their own minds. This phenomenon is very close to the growing process of children, where the surrounding environment sets a frame within which the children learn to live. This is described by Whitaker (1995: 18), " The upbringing of children tends to be characterized by corrective and controlling interventions by adults based on error feedback."

Teacher evaluation is very closely linked to self-evaluation, especially in early stages of learning, when the students' knowledge is mostly based on the input the teacher has given to the students. The student's self-evaluations most likely rely on the teachers' evaluations - the students may evaluate themselves on the basis of what they think the teacher requires of them. In elementary stages, where the curriculum dominates so much of the learning pace, this is a valid evaluation criterion for self-evaluation.

3.2 Self-evaluation

In self-evaluation, students usually evaluate the skills, ability and performance of themselves and reflect this on what they think is expected of them. If students are not given any feedback or frames on what is expected of them, they have nothing to reflect their talents on. Self-evaluation is also focused on the skills and abilities the students have within themselves rather than the external factors, which may have a part in the learning process. Konzelmann Ziv (2011: 9) summarizes self-evaluation well: "The sense of ability is presented as essentially self-evaluative in that it determines the degree of involvement people take themselves to have in their lives, the degree to which they rely on themselves rather than on other agents or external forces." This definition can very easily be applied to self-evaluation in classrooms, since in learning a foreign language, there are many external factors which may interfere with the learning process, but self-evaluation keeps the students focused on their own skills and abilities, since they are the factors the students have control over.

Self-evaluation in the early stages of learning consists mostly of reflecting one's own skills and abilities on the curriculum, or in the students' perspective, the

teacher's expectations of the students. Even though the expectations of the teacher set the guideline for the students' self-evaluations, the students may also have some expectations of themselves. The expectations students have for themselves also form the self-image of one, thus molding the self-evaluations to be not only an image of what the student feels he or she is seen by others, but also an image of how the students see themselves in the framework given by themselves. Self-evaluations in schools are not only the evaluation of how students feel they are seen by the teacher, but also the evaluation of how the student sees him or herself in a particular moment of learning.

Self-evaluation is nowadays included in classrooms as a part of learning English since students' knowledge of their own language skills is very helpful in the learning process. Because of evaluations being done on a regular basis, as are self-evaluations, students are very used to doing self-evaluations, and it is nowadays even in the curriculum that students must be able to evaluate their own skills. (Esi- ja perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelma *specifically tailored for this school* 2011: 39) The students being able to evaluate their skills and to reflect them on what is possibly expected of them makes the students more aware of their own learning, and on where they should be at a certain point of time, thus practicing subconsciously metacognitive learning.

3.3 Evaluation in metacognitive learning

To be able to practice metacognitive learning, one has to be aware of one's skills and abilities, and to know the expectations. This entity includes someone setting the goals for learning, and evaluating the students' success in reaching these goals. By setting the targets for learning, the teacher gives the student some framework within which the learning is supposed to take place in a certain time of learning. By giving feedback and by evaluating the students, the teacher gives perspective for the students on where they are in the learning process and whether more is expected of them or whether they have reached their goals for the time period. Without knowing what to know and what skills must one have acquired, learning is not conscious and metacognitive learning.

Metacognition, or "knowing about knowing", relies much on evaluation and self-evaluation, and on one's perception of his or her skills and abilities. Even though evaluation combined with self-evaluation give a broad base on the student's actual skills, they still are perceptions and opinions of the current situation given by teacher and the student, not necessarily the actual talents of the student. Konzelmann Ziv (2011) gives perspective on self-evaluation and self-knowledge and their relation: "In order to assess self-evaluation we should ask, therefore, whether self-evaluation is identical with self-knowledge, or whether, perhaps, it is a specific kind of self-knowledge" (Konzelmann Ziv 2011: 11). In elementary school settings, the teacher's opinion and evaluation are considered to lie very close to the truth, thus making the student's metacognitive skills to rely on a very steady ground.

In the early stages of learning English, students are evaluated constantly, and self-evaluations are part of the curriculum of the sixth graders, but also metacognitive learning is emphasized in the learning process, since learning how to learn is also in the curriculum. It is stated as their goals to "Learn how to learn: working skills, positive attitude, self-evaluation, social skills" (Esi- ja perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelma *specifically tailored for this school* 2011: 39).

3.4 Differences in self-evaluation between boys and girls

Boys and girls have some gender-associated differences in learning, which can also affect their self-evaluation. First, there are some differences in the mindset of boys and girls, when considering internal and external factors affecting the students' self-evaluation (Hyde and Linn: 102). Second, the "self-derogation" (Hyde and Linn, 1986: 106) is different between the two genders. Third, the expectations between boys and girls of their own abilities also differ between the genders, thus affecting the self-evaluation of students (Hyde and Linn, 1986: 106-135).

Hyde and Linn (1986: 102-135) have researched that girls have a tendency to associate success more with external factors than with internal ones. Success is seen as a result of good luck than it is as the result of one's own abilities or good studying. Boys, on the contrary, think the success or failure of one is closely tied to one's skills and abilities. Boys take credit for their own success, since success is seen as being closely related to one's abilities, when girls tend to see success in e.g. learning more as of a result of good luck/easy questions etc. This can affect girls' self-evaluation so that girls do not take credit for their own success, and are possibly not aware of their own skills, or the consequences of them / lack of them.

Self-derogation is another part where girls and boys differ from another, when talking about gender-based differences in self-evaluation. Hyde and Linn (1986: 106-108) see that girls are more likely to blame themselves for failure, even though they may think that success is more affected by external factors. Again, boys may think the contrary - failure is affected by external factors, and one may not have internal factors affecting the failure, or at least not as much as the external ones may have. Since the boys do not feel their failures are caused by external factors, the self-evaluation of boys may not be accurate; the boys do not feel they lack in their language skills, but may feel the failure are caused by some factors which are not under their control.

The expectations students have for themselves also affect self-evaluation. If one does not have high expectations, one is not likely to reach very high results and vice versa. According to Hyde and Linn (1986: 107), girls may not have as high expectations of being successful as boys might have, thus affecting the performance of one in a specific test or the whole learning process: "-- women with these negative beliefs about their own ability levels would tend to see their failures as being caused by stable factors such as lack of ability, and hence they would give up easily and blame themselves for failure." Once again, differing from girls, boys are more likely to have high expectations and thus setting themselves up for success. This mindset may affect self-evaluations so that

boys' high expectations are reinforced by their possible success, thus being very satisfied with themselves. Girls, having lower expectations, may be more able to reach their expectations, but if expectations are low, one is already in a negative mindset, which can affect self-evaluation in a lowering manner.

These factors make boys' and girls' self-evaluation differ from each other. Girls can blame their success on luck and their failure on themselves. The fact that the successful experiences can be seen as "pure luck" reinforces their low expectations, thus having a negative effect on the performance and furthermore resulting more often in negative results or even failure. Boys, on the other hand, see their success being in their own hands, expecting more of themselves and if succeeding, having positive reinforcement of their own skills, thus making their next expectations possibly even higher.

4 PREVIOUS STUDIES

The awareness of metacognitive skills has been studied, but mostly from the point of view of how and when metacognitive skills are developed and how well students are aware of their own learning skills and methods. The awareness of foreign language learning among young language learners was studied by Muñoz (2013), where she studied the learner's beliefs of them as learners, their awareness of their language learning and of the learning environment. Metacognition and its affect on learning was theoretically studied by Chatziapanteli et al (2013), and the gender differences in the competence and effort in learning was studied by Sheeshing Yeung (2011). These studies relate closely to the study at hand, but indicate a research gap for the study of students' self-evaluation compared with the teachers' evaluation, and the gender differences in the students' self-evaluations.

In the study done by Muñoz (2013), the learner's were interviewed with quite similar questions as the students were in the present study - they were (1) asked how they see themselves as learners, (2) how they feel about their learning of English, and (3) how they see their conditions on language learning. The participants in Muñoz's study were third graders, and also sixth graders who were Catalan-Spanish living in Spain. The results in the study were that the students' opinions on themselves as learners were reflected through the opinions of the teacher and the skills and abilities of other students. The study does not give insight into how the students' awareness of their language skills connects to their actual talents and if they have any relation.

In another study, Chatziapanteli et al (2013) made a theoretical study on the metacognitive development and its evaluation, and this was analyzed from the point of view of early education. Chatziapanteli et al concluded that metacognition is very helpful in learning and the earlier it is acquired, the more it can be used in different areas of learning. They also made a conclusion that

learners using metacognitive strategies learn more efficiently and they are more flexible in their learning. This was not tested on learners, so the actual results of metacognition and its effects on learning were not proven through an empirical study.

In a study about students' self-concept and the effort they put into learning, Seeshing Yeung (2011) studied the differences between genders. The study was performed on 2200 students in Sydney between grades three and eleven, and the students were asked to rate their competence in learning and the effort they make for learning on a scale from one to six. The conclusion of Seeshing Yeung's study was that boys rated their effort lower than girls did, which means boys do not feel they put as much effort into learning as girls do. Another conclusion of this study was that the rating for boys' competence was marginally lower than the girls', but the difference was not statistically significant.

Similarly to the study conducted by Muñoz, Seeshing Yeung studied the attitudes of the students themselves as well, and did not compare the outcome with the actual talents of the students, nor with the opinion of the teacher who has been teaching the students. Thus, there is a need for a study, which not only studies the students' beliefs and opinions of their own skills and abilities, but to compare them with e.g. the teacher's point of view. There is also a need for a study, which compares the differences of the students' self-evaluations between boys and girls, since there are theories about the differences in learning and self-evaluation between genders.

5 METHODS, DATA AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS

5.1 Research Problems

The aim of the study is to research how much the students know about their own abilities in different areas of English (which include reading, writing, listening and speaking), and how much it differs (if at all) from the opinion of their teacher, who has been teaching both the classes for 4 consecutive years. Allegedly, all the students have some idea whether they are good in English, or not so good. In addition to that, they all have strengths and weaknesses in different areas of English, and I would like to know whether there is a pattern in this. For example are there differences between the four areas of language, and do the students in general all feel they have better skills in some area than in other areas. It will also be interesting to see whether the grades the students give are in sync with the comments they have given about their own skills in different areas of English. In addition to this, I will pay attention to the differences between boys and girls, whether there are any differences or patterns.

The study focuses on the following research questions:

1. Do the students know about their own abilities in the four areas of English and how much their opinions of their abilities differ (if at all) from the opinion of their teacher?
2. Where do the students focus on, when they analyze their language abilities in the open comments for their own language skills?
3. Are there any gender-based differences in the grades the students give themselves?
4. Are there any gender-based differences in how close the boys and girls evaluate their skills compared to the teacher?
5. Are there differences between the four areas of English, in how the students and the teacher evaluate the students' abilities.

5.2 Methods and Data

5.2.1 Collecting the Data

The subjects in this study were students in two sixth grade classes in a school in Central Finland. The students were asked permission from their parents to be involved in the study and all the volunteers were included in the study. Sixth graders were chosen as the target group since they are in the beginning of their language learning, but have been practicing their skills and evaluations for many years. Thus my study, which involves the students' self-evaluations, would not be completely unfamiliar to them, but they could still be considered to be beginners as language learners. Two classes were chosen for this study to get enough participants for quantitative analysis. These two particular classes were chosen since they had the same teacher and thus their self-evaluations and teacher evaluations could be analyzed as a whole. The teacher chosen for the study was the English teacher of both two classes, and has taught both the two classes for four consecutive years, thus making herself a suitable candidate for evaluating the students of both the two classes.

The data were collected with a questionnaire from the students and with an interview from the teacher. The students had to give their whole name in their questionnaires in order for their own answers to be linked to the grades and evaluations given by the teacher. The students were told the data would be analyzed anonymously, since it would make the answering easier and more elaborate if they knew the results of the study were not going to be anywhere with their whole names on the study. The questionnaire for the students was divided into four parts - reading, writing, listening, and talking. Of each area, the students were asked to answer the following questions:

1. How do you perceive yourself as a reader / writer / listener / speaker of English.
2. How would you grade yourself as a reader / writer / listener / speaker of English. (Scale from 4 to 10)

The questions for the students were in Finnish, since it was expected they could express themselves more freely and widely in their native language, being at such an early stage of learning English. To get the most information out of the students, open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire, so that the students could elaborate their answers. This way the quantitative analysis can be broadened into qualitative analysis when taking under consideration the students' open answers about their own abilities.

In order to be able to compare the students' opinions on their own abilities with a second opinion, I wanted to include the teacher's opinion as well. This was done both by interviewing the teacher, to get qualitative analysis, and by getting the students' grades into retrospect, for the quantitative analysis, so that the data for the analysis would be most accurate. The interview with the teacher was semi-structured, constructing of discussion of each student and their abilities in the areas of English (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Of each student, the teacher was asked about their grades and if there are any specific abilities or challenges in their learning. The interview lasted almost an hour and within that time every student in the study was discussed and evaluated by the teacher.

The interview with the teacher was chosen as a method because that enables the teacher to tell about the students' particular qualities which have to be taken into account when comparing their own evaluations to the grades given by the teacher. The interview was also better than for example an open form questionnaire, since now it was possible to react to something the teacher said and she could be asked to elaborate on something essential to the study. As Tasshakkori and Teddlie (1998: 102) presents, "It provides an opportunity to ask for clarification if an answer is vague or to provide clarification if a question is not clear." To have some comparison from the teacher with the students' grades, the teacher gave the students' English grades that they have on their last report from the elementary school.

I collected the data on May 28th, when the semester was nearly over and they all had had their final exams. This was perfect timing for the study, since I got to get the latest grades from the teacher and the answers and grades both from the teacher and the students were as current as possible. This made it easy to analyze, since I knew that all the data I had collected were about the same current situation, and not from another semester, and so on. This was also good timing because the students did not know what grades they were getting, so that could not influence their own evaluations of their own abilities.

5.2.2 Processing the Data

The study is based on both quantitative analysis methods and qualitative analysis methods. The reason for doing a study based on both types of analysis methods is to get as broad an analysis as one can get. From quantitative analysis I will get the generalizations, the common features that arise from the collected data. I will get a good sense of what are the norms in grading the different areas of language. With qualitative analysis I can go deeper into the results which have been brought to attention with quantitative analysis. With specific quotes and examples of some of the answers, I can analyze the quality and the deeper meaning of the points made in the quantitative analysis. By going through the data first in the quantitative analysis and then going into details with qualitative analysis, the results can be analyzed more properly and from both angles - the group mediums and the individual answers. This makes the data more believable for the readers, as Silverman (1985: 140) says: "Instead of taking the researcher's word for it, the reader has a chance to gain a sense of the flavor of the data as a whole. In turn, the researcher is able to test and to revise his generalizations, removing nagging doubts about the accuracy of his impressions about his data."

To get a good sense of general opinions from the sixth graders about their own language skills, a quantitative analysis is the best option for this, since the bigger the take is, the more accurate the results are. That was the reason for

including two different classes into the research take. The final sample for this study was not as large as I first aspired, but though the number of volunteers for this study was not high, I did not want to expand the study. Had I wanted to expand the study, it would have meant the analysis of either study done with lower grade students, or with another teacher. In this study, the study sample was 27 students and one teacher.

The questionnaire was chosen as a method of carrying out this study for the students since this enables statistical analysis, which clearly show the nature of the students' opinions of themselves. The questionnaire was chosen as a method for collecting the quantitative data for it is an easy means of gathering specific information from the study group, and the results can be easily compared since they are collected in a similar way. The questionnaire contained attitudinal questions (Dörnyei: 102-103), where the students elaborate on their own perceptions of their own English skills. The questionnaire was constructed of numerical rating scales and open-ended sentence completion -type questions (Dörnyei: 106-107). The students both give themselves grades for it (from which the quantitative analysis will be done), and give an open comment on their skills in every specific area of English (from which the qualitative analysis will be done).

In processing the data, I put all the students and their grades (both from themselves and from the teacher) into a chart. There I calculated the average of every skill in English (reading, listening, etc.) both from the students' own grades and the ones given by the teacher. From the open questions for the students, I analyzed each of their answers and counted if they described their talents in a positive manner or negative, or if they described their talents in both positive and negative ways. Statistically one answer could have given one "vote" for the positive comments, one comment for the negative comments, or one for each positive and negative comment. One student's open comments on for example reading could count as a positive answer, a negative answer, or both. If a student described his/her talents on e.g. reading in a positive manner,

it was counted as one answer in a positive manner. If a student described their talents in e.g. speaking in both positive and negative manner, it was counted one answer in a positive manner, and one answer in a negative manner. From the students' positive and/or negative answers I calculated what was the percentage of positive answers and of negative answers in each area of English. These percentages were also drawn into charts, divided into the four areas of English. In order to quote the qualitative data, the students' answer sheets were labeled according to their gender. Girls' sheets were labeled G1, G2, G3, etc, when the boys' sheets were labeled B1, B2, B3, etc.

As stated earlier, both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods are used in this study in order to have a deep analysis on the data which has been collected for this particular study. The qualitative analysis gives depth to the quantitative analysis so that the individual answers are not only processed as a part of a big study group but as one individual data source. As Dörnyei (2007: 186) says:

" -- methodologies directed at the measurement of classroom variables in educational psychology have been mostly deductive and quantitative with little exploration of the how and why of learning; based on their experience, discerning what the various constructs mean in a particular setting necessitates qualitative methods that can uncover participant interpretations --." Dörnyei (2007: 186)

In this particular study, the data is first analyzed from the quantitative perspective, bringing forward the main points which arise from the study group. After that, the data is analyzed from the qualitative perspective, taking themes which can be seen in the single answers of the students.

5.2.3 Analyzing the Data

In the analysis, I will divide the analysis into four parts, as was the questionnaire - reading, writing, listening and speaking. Of each area of language, I will do the analysis on the students' grades, answering research questions 1. Then I will continue analyzing the open comments, answering

research questions 2. Finally, I will analyze gender differences in the specific area of English, answering research questions 3 and 4.

I will compare the medium grades of the students with the teacher's grades on the English skills of the students. Then I will present if there is some patterns between good/not so good students. After analyzing the grades, I will analyze the percentage of the positive and/or negative comments and will go into detail by demonstrating some comments given by the students themselves or by the teacher. After that I will analyze if there are some clear gender based differences on either the students' own grades, open comments, or the grades or comments given by the teacher.

Finally, I will analyze if there are any general differences in the evaluations of the students' skills, answering research question 5. E.g. if there is a specific area that almost every student thinks they are not so good at, but the teacher graded them still quite high. Also, I will analyze if there is some general differences between boys and girls.

6 STUDENTS' AND TEACHER'S EVALUATION OF DIFFERENT SKILLS IN ENGLISH

6.1 Reading

Reading, being the first area of English to be taught in the elementary school, is very likely to be the most practiced skill of the English language by the sixth grade. It is also probably the most evaluated skill, since nearly all the exams by the sixth grade have some link to reading, whether it is through reading the tasks, reading for the exam or practicing vocabulary for the exam. Reading is also emphasized in the curriculum, which is the specific for the school in this study, (*Esi- ja perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelma specifically tailored for this school 2011: 42*) thus making its role in self-evaluations also very critical.

6.1.1 Grades

Reading as an area of language skills is one of the most easily evaluated areas, since reading comprehension can be quite accurately tested with reading comprehension tasks and tests. Thus it is expected that the students' grades of their own skills in reading would be in the same range as the teacher's evaluations were. Figure 1 shows the grade average of both the students and the teacher.

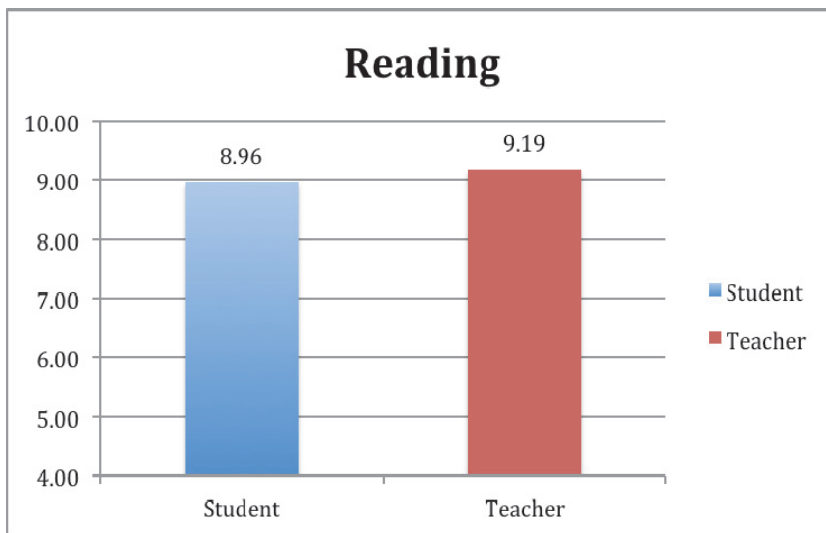


Figure 1 Teacher and student evaluation of reading (N=27)

As can be seen in figure 1, the students evaluated their skills little lower than the teacher did. The average of the students' grades was 8,96 when the teacher's grade average was 9,19. This difference between the students and the teacher was not much, but statistically significant (p-value: 0,010). The biggest difference in the evaluation of a single student's grades was one single grade unit (either above or below the teacher's grade) between the grades given by the student him/herself and the teacher. This can mean that the students and the teacher have a similar idea of the student's skills in reading English. This could be the result of the fact that reading skills have been evaluated since the 3rd grade and in the curriculum the emphasis of English skills is on reading. Also, the students have been taught by the same teacher since the 3rd grade, and according to the teacher, the students have been evaluating their language skills since the beginning of their English classes, which has made the students more aware of their actual language abilities. In total, 37% of the students gave themselves the same grade the teacher did.

The fact that every student who graded their reading skills to be a 10 (the scale being from 4 to 10) was also graded 10 by the teacher implies that students who evaluate themselves to be very good in reading are also good according to the teacher. This phenomenon is easily detected into metacognition and to the fact that students who are aware of their own skills and abilities are also often good

in those areas. Self-awareness is also a proven factor in good learning, which could be one of the reasons for the students to have a similar view of their own skills compared to the teacher, who has a professional point of view. The fact that the students graded themselves lower than the teacher did could also be the result of the students not knowing exactly what is expected of them, or them having higher expectations of themselves than the teacher has for them.

The results could be distorted by the fact that 50% of the students whom the teacher graded lower than a 10, did not take part in the questionnaire. This means that the evaluations of the less skilled students (in this case, the students whom the teacher graded between 7 and 9) cannot be taken into this analysis, and results cannot be made from the similarities in their grades.

Because the difference was so small (0,23 grade units) it can be stated that the students are very well aware of their own skills in grades, but the real insight to what the students think of themselves can be revealed through the open comments about their own skills in reading English.

6.1.2 Open comments

The open comments in the students' evaluations of themselves gave some more insight into the grades, since the manner in which they commented on their own reading skills, can reveal issues the grades do not tell. Figure 2 shows that most of the students commented on their reading skills with a positive comment, and less than half of the students commented their reading skills in a negative manner.

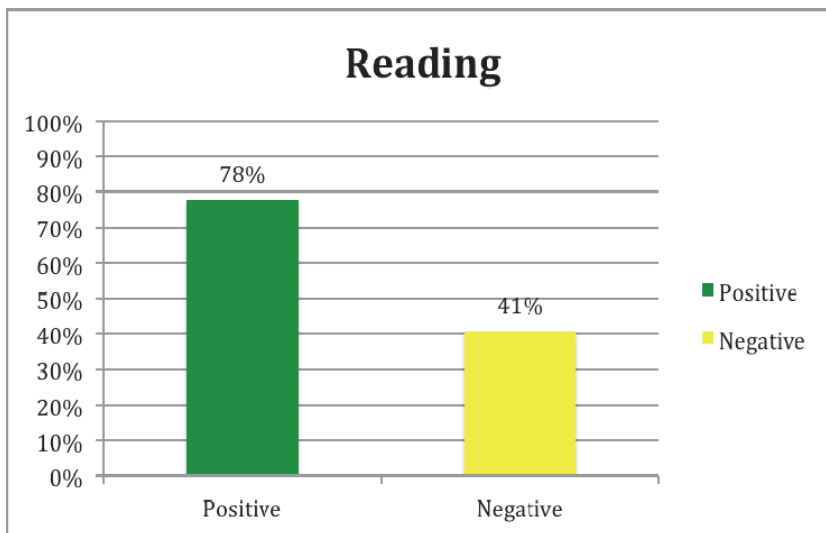


Figure 2 Students' open comments of reading (N=27)

As can be read in Figure 2, 78% of the students commented their reading skills on a positive manner and only 41% made a negative comment. This could be linked to the fact that the grade average of the students given both by themselves and the teacher was high. Since the students had high skills in reading according to both the teacher and the students, it would be irrational to comment very negatively on the skills.

The positive comments of the students were extremely positive and one feeling which arose from the open comments was the students' satisfaction with themselves and with their abilities in reading. The answers from the students were originally in Finnish, and now roughly translated into English:

- (1) G16: "Lukemisessa ei mitään vaikeuksia "
(No problems with reading.)
- (2) B2: "Osaan lukea täydellisesti koska asuin Sveitsissä 2,5 vuotta."
(I can read perfectly, since I lived in Switzerland for 2 and a half years.)
- (3) G12: "Ymmärrän kaiken lukemani. "
(I understand everything I read.)

These comments had some similarities in the message they have - all the comments had a message there is nothing they are not able to read. The students were completely satisfied with their skills at the moment and felt there

is nothing they are not able to read. This could be the result of good metacognitive learning - they know what they are supposed to have learnt and since they feel they have learnt that, they feel they have reached what is expected of them.

Another theme, which is seen in the comments, is the feeling that reading is easy and/or fun. Quite many of the students gave comments in which they describe reading to be easy or that they have no troubles with reading.

(4) G14: " Englannin kielen lukeminen on mielestäni kivaa ja helppoa."

(I think reading English is fun and easy.)

(5) B8: "-- sanat ja kielioppiasiat ovat helppoja."

(-- words and grammar are easy.)

(6) G4: "Englannin lukeminen on mielestäni mukavaa ja helppoa, eli olen mielestäni olen [sic] aika hyvä lukemaan sitä."

(I think Reading English is nice and easy, so I feel I'm quite good at reading it.)

Even though most of the comments were positive, some students gave a negative comment on their reading skills. In the negative comments there can be seen two clear themes - one part of the comments are very vague, when other comments are very analytical and specify exactly what is difficult in reading. The vague comments mainly stated that they could be better at reading, but not much more is specified:

(7) B6: "Parempiki vois olla."

(-- I could be better.)

(8) B7: "On parannettavaa."

(There is room for improvement.)

(9) G1: " Voisin parantaakkin."

(I could do better)

In contrast to the vagueness in some of the negative comments, there were also some comments, which analyzed the reasons for the difficulty of reading in more depth:

(10) G3: " Uudet sanat, joita en tiedä vaikeuttavat lukua."
(New words, which are unfamiliar, make the reading difficult.)

(11) G9: "Jos en tunne jotain sanaa päättelen sen. (yleensä)"
(If I don't know a word, I'll figure it out. (usually))

(12) G12: "-- mutta joitain sanoja en tiedä. Siinä tapauksessa lausun sanan mielessäni ja mietin olenko kuullut sitä esim. leffassa tai musiikin yhteydessä"
(-- But some words I don't know. In that case I say the word in my mind and think if I've heard it e.g. in a movie or in some music.)

The fact that some students still gave negative comments on their reading skills is relatively normal to evaluating one's own skills. That is also a good quality since when one knows the areas, which need further practice; the self-image of a learner grows, making the learner an even better learner. Even better is the fact that some of the students are able to analyze the difficulties in their learning, and the example G12 gives is a textbook -example of good metacognitive learning. The student recognized the difficulties and had learnt a good method of finding a way to solve them.

The students had good skills in reading and they were aware of the fact. This is a proof of metacognitive learning skills and knowing about knowing - when the students are well aware of their own skills, they learn better and easier, which makes them even better learners of language. Since reading is the skill which is most practiced since the early stages of English language learning, it is expected that the students have a realistic sense of their abilities after studying and practicing it for four consecutive years. Analyzing their own abilities is also a skill which they have learnt through their language learning, and thus they are able to make analysis of their own abilities - what is easy and what is more difficult.

6.1.3 Differences between boys and girls

The grade averages of boys and girls differed from the ones given by the teacher. Figure 3 shows the grade average differences between boys and girls and how the teacher's grades differed from them.

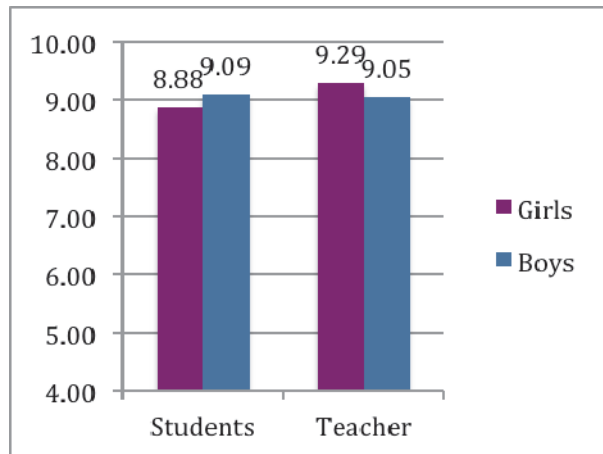


Figure 3 Boys and girls evaluation of reading (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

As can be seen in Figure 3, the girls graded themselves relatively much lower than the boys graded themselves. The girls graded themselves an average 8.88, when the boys' grade average was 9.29, the difference being 0.41 gradeunits. The teacher graded girls and boys to be almost at the same level in grades, but boys graded themselves quite much higher (+0.24 gradeunits) and girls somewhat lower (-0.21 gradeunits). The difference between the boys' grades and the teacher's grades is statistically not significant (p-value: 0,072), neither is the difference between the girls and the teacher (p-value: 0,075).

The differences in the open comments looked even more radical than in the grades the students gave themselves. Figure 4 indicates the manner in which the students gave comments on their reading skills.

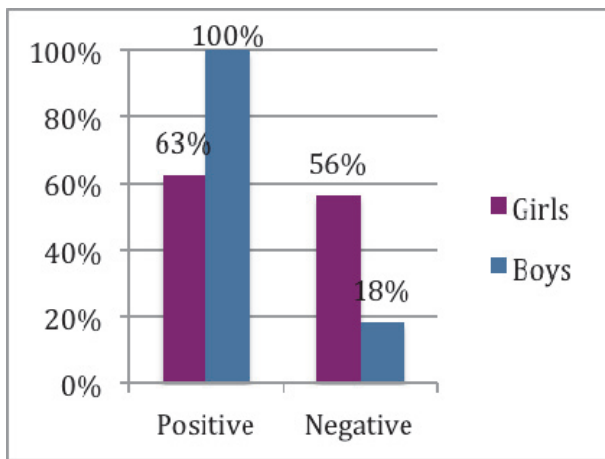


Figure 4 Boys and girls open comments of reading (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

The gender differences in the open comments the students gave themselves can be clearly seen in Figure 4. The first thing which stands out in the figure is that all of the boys commented on their reading skills in a positive manner. This is in sync with the grades they gave themselves, since the grade average was also very good (9.29), thus it was expected their comments on their own skills would be in quite a positive tone. On the contrary, the girls did not comment on their skills nearly as positive as the boys did, since only 63% of girls made a positive comment on their reading skills. This is also in sync with their grades compared to the boys, but while their own grade average was still quite high (8.88), it is somewhat surprising that the positive comments were not more popular. Statistically these differences are not significant (p-value: 0,279).

Similar to the positive comments, there is a clear difference between the boys and girls also in the negative comments. Very few of the boys (18%) have given a negative comment on their reading skills, when more than half the girls (56%) have given a negative comment on their reading skills. Statistically the difference is very significant (p-value: 0,000). This difference in the amount of negative comments could result from the fact that girls do not feel they are responsible for their own failure or even difficulties when boys feel external factors have a greater effect on failure. This can be seen in some of the open comments the girls and boys have given of their reading skills:

(13) G2: "En ymmärrä paljoakaan aina lukemaani."
(I don't understand much of what I read.)

(14) B7: "Olen ihan hyvä mutta on parannettavaa."
(I am okay but there is room for improvement.)

In reading, the girls evaluated themselves to have lower skills than the boys, and the open comments were also concentrated more on the negative points on the girls' skills. The boys evaluated their skills to be higher than the girls did, and the open comments of the boys were very positive.

6.2 Writing

Writing is an area of language, which can easily be evaluated, especially at such an early stage as the sixth grade, when the students have been learning English for only four years. Evaluating writing at such an early stage consists mostly of correcting the spelling of words and syntax. In such an early level there is not much focus on different tones and meanings of language, but it mostly consists of simple syntax and enlarging the vocabulary, thus the interpretation of meanings has not taken much space in writing evaluation. Therefore the students should have quite a similar idea of their writing skills as the teacher has, since the correction of the skill has been in very accurate and unambiguous.

6.2.1 Grades

Since writing can be evaluated (by both the teacher and the students themselves) so accurately and easily, it is expected that the evaluations of the students and the teacher be very close to each other. The grade averages of both the students and the teacher can be seen in Figure 5.

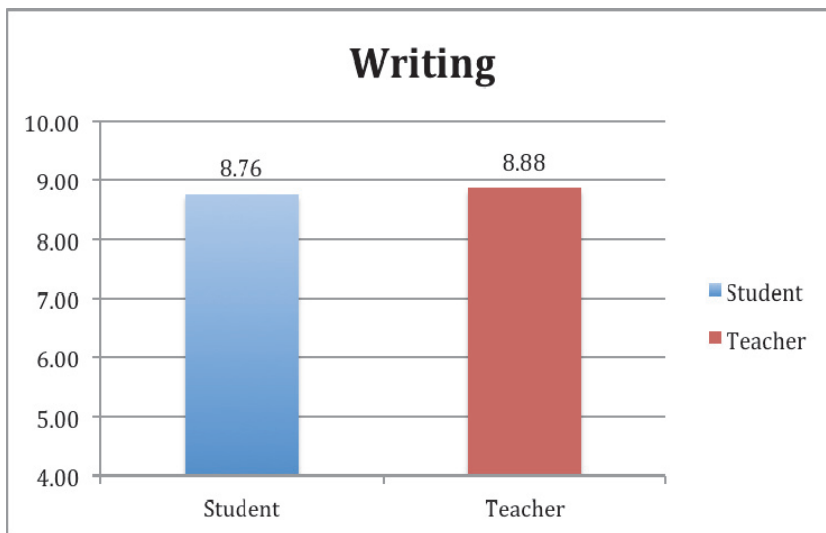


Figure 5 Teacher and student evaluation of writing (N=27)

Figure 5 shows that the students and the teacher's grade average were not far away from each other. The students' grade average was 8.76, when the grade average given by the teacher was 8.88. The difference between the students' and the teacher's grades in writing was only 0.12 grade units, which is statistically almost significant (p-value: 0,126). In this skill, there was more difference in individual students' grades; both in the student grading one's skills higher than the teacher and in grading one's skills lower than the teacher.

The students who graded themselves higher than the teacher did have one similarity - all students who the teacher gave a grade of 8 or lower gave themselves either the same grade or a higher grade. This could indicate that the students are not aware of what is expected of them, or they feel they have succeeded better than the teacher feels they have. This would be a proof of metacognitive learning's effectiveness if the students who the teacher graded 9 or 10 gave the same grade as the teacher did. This was not the case, since many of the students given a 10 by the teacher graded themselves lower, and some even significantly lower - only one of the students who the teacher graded to have the grade of 10 from reading gave him/herself a 10.

These differences in the grades given by the teacher and the students indicate that the students are not aware of their own abilities, since so many of the

students gave a different grade to themselves than the teacher did. Only 25% of the students gave themselves the same grade as the teacher did, which is not expected, since evaluating writing skills is not very difficult, and one would think that after four consecutive years of studying and evaluation, the students would be more in line with the grades given by the teacher.

Again, these results could be distorted by a significant percentage (52%) of the students graded 7 or 8 by the teacher did not take part in the study, but since such a big percentage of the students did not give the same grades to themselves as the teacher did, it can be said that all in all, the students and the teacher did not agree on the students abilities in writing.

6.2.2 Open comments

Since the grades given by the teacher and the students differed so often from each other, it is interesting to see the open comments of the students, if they give some more insight into the grades given by the students. Figure 6 represents the percentage of the positive and/or negative comments given by the students of their writing skills.

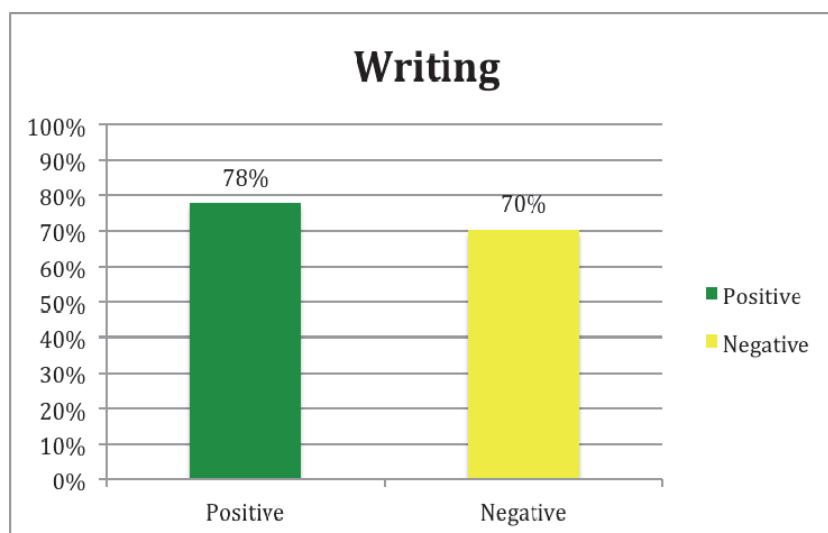


Figure 6 Students' open comments of writing (N=27)

Even though both the students' own grade averages and the grades given by the teacher in writing were lower than the ones in reading, the percentage of

students who commented their writing skills in a positive manner was quite high (78%). The percentage of students who commented on their writing skills with a negative comment was significantly high, 70%, and almost as high as was the percentage of the students who gave a positive comment. This could explain the fact of the grade differences between the students and the teacher being so vast in evaluating the students' writing skills. The students could be confused of their abilities, thus grading themselves differently than the teacher and thus giving comments with both positive and negative comments.

When the theme in the positive comments on the students' reading skills was mostly satisfied and happy, the positive comments on the writing skills were neither as elaborate nor over flowingly proud of themselves. The common theme seemed to be very satisfied of their own talents:

(15) B9: "Ihan hyvänä. Kirjoitan englantia ihan sujuvasti."
(Quite good. I write English quite fluently.)

(16) G2: "Osaan kirjoittaa kohtalaisen hyvin."
(I can write adequately well.)

Even though most of the students were not very elaborate in their positive comments on writing, some students gave more in their analysis, mostly focusing on the spelling of the words. This was quite expected since at this stage of English skills, the main focus on the evaluation of writing is mostly on spelling and grammar, not yet in the deeper meanings of the text nor the usage of the correct form for certain contexts.

The negative comments were very common in the open comments on writing skills, since the high percentage of 70 of the students commented on their writing skills with a negative comment. Similar to the positive comments on writing skills, many of the negative comments were vague, saying there is room for improvement, but not specifying more where. One theme that appeared in most of the negative comments is spelling. The students comment on their difficulties in spelling some words:

(17) G15: "-- unohdan sanoista joskus joitain kirjaimia."
(-- sometimes I forget some letters of words.)

(18) G12: "Ihan hyvä, mutta c ja s ovat vaikeita, esim: Peace, Please, yms."
(I'm okay, but c and s are difficult, for example Peace, Please, etc.)

Another point that arose from the open comments was the difficulties in grammar:

(19) G4: "Välillä tulee pienissä sanoissa virheitä (esim. at, on)."
(At times, I have mistakes in small words (for example at, on).)

(20) G5: "-- mutta ongelmaa on joskus artikkeleiden kanssa."
(-- but sometimes there is a problem with articles.)

(21) G9: "--joskus sanajärjestys temppuilee, (harvoin)--"
(-- sometimes syntax gives me a hard time (rarely)--)

The fact that the students gave very many positive and negative comments, but did not elaborate on their answers, gave the impression that they may have an idea of whether they are good or not so good in writing English, but they cannot pinpoint why they are good/not so good. Neither can they explain in depth what are their strengths or weaknesses, which gives the impression that perhaps they have not done as much evaluation on writing skills as they have done on reading.

6.2.3 Differences between boys and girls

The grades given by the students and the teacher differed between both boys and girls. Figure 7 shows the grade average differences between genders.

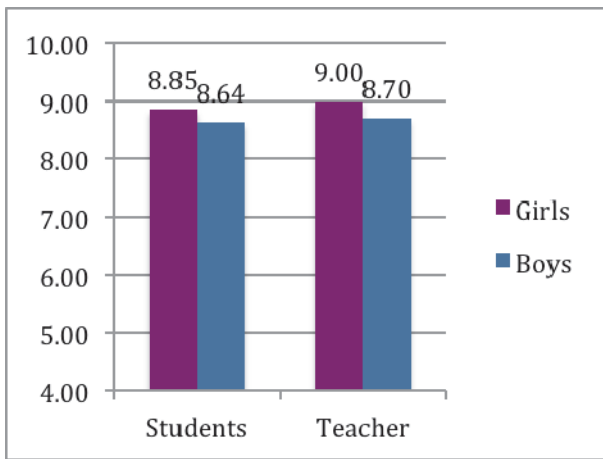


Figure 7 Boys and girls evaluation of writing (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

In contrast to the reading skills grading, in the writing skills grades the girls graded themselves higher than the boys. The grade average of the girls was 8.85 when the one of the boys was 8.64. The differences between the teacher and the boys and girls were not significant (boys' p-value: 0,665; girls' p-value: 0,681). The biggest difference in this was the fact that almost half the boys (45%) gave the same grade themselves on writing as the teacher did. The same number for the girls was only 18%, which does not back up the metacognitive learning that the ones who are aware of their own talents and abilities succeed more in the subject, since the teacher graded the girls to have a higher grade average. Interesting was also the fact that the two students who graded themselves furthest from the teacher's grade were both girls, and the teacher gave a 10 as their grade.

The number of positive and negative comments made a clear difference between the boys and the girls. Figure 8 shows the percentage of positive and negative comments given both the girls and boys.

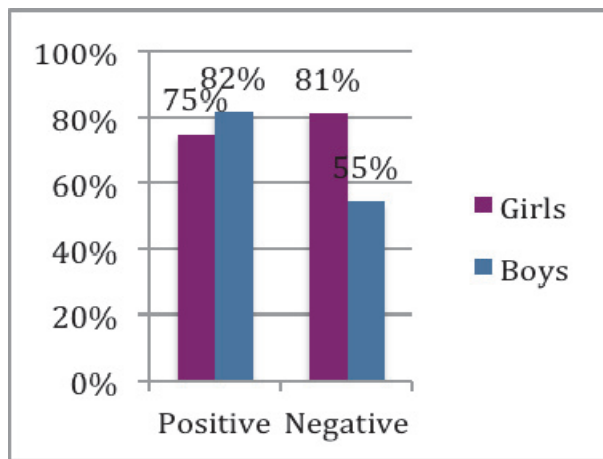


Figure 8 Boys and girls open comments of writing (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

The percentages of positive comments between the two genders were not as different as it was with comments in the reading skills. 75% of the girls commented on their writing skills with a positive comment when the percentage of positive comments among the boys was 82%. Statistically this difference is insignificant (p-value: 0,783).

A clearer difference between the boys and girls was seen in the number of the negative comments on the students' own writing skills. 81% of the girls commented on their writing skills with a negative comment, which was even higher than the percentage of the positive comments. From the boys, only 55% gave a negative comment on their writing skills. This difference between boys and girls was statistically almost significant (p-value: 0,038). This difference between the genders was not in line with the grades the students gave themselves, since the girls' grade average was higher than the one of the boys.

The biggest difference in the open comments between the boys and girls was the percentages of positive and negative comments they gave in their open comments. Over half the boys (54%) gave an open comment, which consisted only of positive comments on their writing skills. The corresponding percentage for the girls was only 18%. The girls commented their skills in a positive manner, but usually they also commented something about their difficulties or problems with writing:

(22) B5: "Olen ihan hyvä kirjoittamaan. Aina paranee."
(I am quite good at writing. It gets better all the time.)

(23) G6: "Joskus on pieniä virheitä kirjoittamisessa mutta olen kuitenkin tyytyväinen itseeni."
(Sometimes I have small mistakes in writing but I am satisfied with myself nevertheless.)

In writing, the girls gave themselves higher grades than the boys did, but still the open comments were not as positive as were the ones written by boys. The boys commented on their skills more positively and not as many boys gave any negative comments on their writing skills, as the girls did.

6.3 Listening

Multicultural environment has become a part of Finnish everyday living, and being regularly exposed to hearing different languages before school is very normal. Different languages come to Finnish everyday living through music, television, Internet, and the people in the surrounding environment. Since being exposed to hearing other languages than Finnish, it is expected that children starting to learn second language at school are very adaptive to learning to understand spoken languages nowadays.

Evaluating listening skills is possibly not as easy as evaluating reading or writing. Listening and especially understanding speech depends also on the speaker; the speech can be blurred, the accent or dialect can affect understanding, or the speech can be hard to understand in different ways over which the listener may not have control. The evaluation of listening skills is not very easy, especially for children, since it can be difficult to distinguish when the speech is simply hard to understand, and when the listener lacks skills to understand the speech. The students in this study graded their listening skills, and so did the teacher.

6.3.1 Grades

As listening is a difficult skill to evaluate, it was not expected that the students' and the teacher's grade would be as close to each other as they were in evaluating reading and writing skills. Figure 9 shows the grade average of both the students and the teacher for the listening skills.

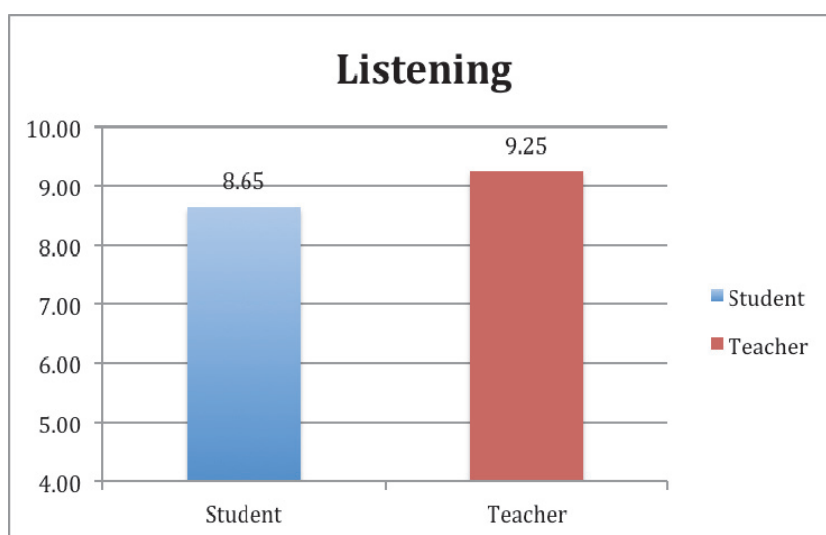


Figure 9 Teacher and student evaluation of listening (N=27)

As can be seen in Figure 9, the difference in the average grades between the students and the teacher was quite notable. The students graded themselves with an average of 8.65, when the teacher gave the grade average of 9.25. The difference between these grade averages was as much as 0.60, which is statistically very significant (p-value: 0,001). This vast difference between the grades indicates that the students feel their listening skills being lower than the teacher feels them being. The fact that most of the students graded themselves lower than the teacher did could be because of the fact that the students do not understand what is their own effect on their listening skills, and what are the external factors which can affect learning, thus not being a part of the students' own abilities.

Those students who graded their listening skills with the mark 10 were also given the grade 10 by the teacher. Again, this can be the result of metacognitive abilities, i.e. being aware of one's own skills makes learning easier.

Nevertheless, the teacher gave the grade 10 to 48% of the students, which means 69% of the students who received a grade 10 from the teacher did not give themselves the same grade, but lower. Among these students, the scale of difference between the grade given by the teacher and the one given by the student was from 0.3 to 2.3. In addition to this, the two students who gave themselves the lowest grades of the whole study group were given a 9 by the teacher. The difference in the grades in these two cases was 3.0 and 3.5, which is a clear difference.

In contrast to those two students who graded themselves to have the lowest grades of the whole study group, the students who were given the lowest grades (7 or 8) by the teacher, graded their listening skills with the same grade as the teacher did or one grade higher or lower. Thus, it can be said that the students who have the lowest skills in listening (according to the teacher) would be more aware of their abilities than the ones who were given a 9 or a 10 by the teacher. This could be resulting from the students not knowing what is expected of their skills at this stage of learning.

6.3.2 Open comments

The open comments from the students gave some insight into the grades they gave themselves. Figure 10 shows the percentages of the students' positive and negative comments on their listening skills.

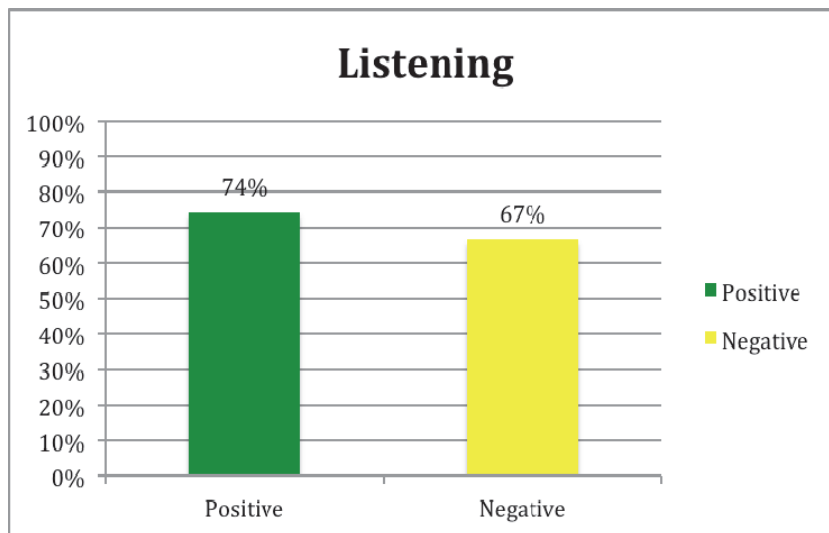


Figure 10 Students' open comments of listening(N=27)

The students' own grades for their own listening skills being so low, it is peculiar that the percentage of positive comments on their skills was quite high (75%). The amount of negative comments (67%) is not very surprising, considering the grades the students gave themselves. Since the percentages of the negative and positive comments were so close to each other, the contents of the comments told more of the actual evaluations of the students, and how they saw their listening skills to be. There were two clear themes in the open comments of the students, one being the evaluation of one's own understanding of words, clauses and meanings. The other one was evaluating one's skills in different contexts of listening - hearing unfamiliar accents, listening to blurred or very fast speech, etc.

Some students commented positively on their abilities to understand words and clauses, when some students, in contrast, analyzed their difficulties in listening especially with understanding some words and meanings in the speech:

(24) G12: "Sanat on helppo hahmottaa."
(Words are quite easy to figure out.)

(25) G6: "Joskus on sanoja mitä en aina ymmättä, ja minulla olisi siinä kyllä parannettavaa."
(Sometimes there are words that I don't always understand, and I have some improvement to do in that.)

(26) G10: "Silloin, kun kuuntelen joitakin sanoja, niin ymmärrän että mitä sanoja siellä on, mutta joskus en ymmärrä että mitä joskut lauseet tarkoittavat."
(When I listen to some word, I understand what words there are, but sometimes I don't understand the meaning of some sentences.)

In addition to commenting their abilities to understand single words or clauses, some comments focused more on understanding speech in different context - different accents of dialects and hearing blurred or very fast speech. This could result from the curriculum, since it is in their sixth grade curriculum (Esi- ja perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelma *specifically tailored for this school* 2011: 40) that they get familiar with traveling, different cultures and to internationality. Being one of the themes at the sixth grade, the students must have been exposed to different accents and dialects of English. This was seen in the comments of the students, when evaluating their listening skills:

(27) B7: "On vaikea kuunnella jos on vaikea aksentti."
(It's difficult to listen if a difficult accent.)

(28) G11: "Yleensä ymmärrän kuulemani, mutta joskus jos puhutaan liian nopeasti tai epäselvästi en ymmärrä..."
(Usually I understand what I've heard, but sometimes, if the speech is too fast or unclear, I don't understand...)

Many of the students commented on their abilities on understanding different accents rather than the actual words and clauses. This indicates that the students hold quite a value on understanding dialects and accents, possibly more than the teacher requires them to understand. This can be the reason the students gave themselves such low grades, if they do not feel they understand dialects and accents as well as they think they should.

6.3.2 Differences between boys and girls

The difference between the genders was clearly seen in the grade averages of the students' grades versus the ones given by the teacher. Figure 11 shows the differences between the boys and the girls; in the grade averages they gave themselves and the grade averages the teacher gave them.

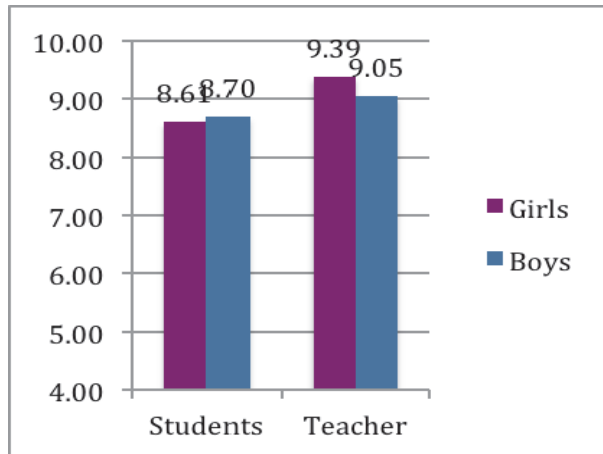


Figure 11 Boys and girls evaluation of listening (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

As can be seen in Figure 11, the grade average of the girls was lower than the one given by the boys. In contrast, the teacher's grade average was higher for the girls than for the boys. The girls graded themselves 0.78 gradeunits lower than the teacher did. The difference of the boys and the teacher was very vast as well (0.35), but not statistically significant (p-value: 0,474). The difference that the girls have compared to the grade average given by the teacher was very big as well, but it was not statistically significant (p-value: 0,445). The boys were closer to the teacher's grades both as a group but also as individuals. 36% on the boys gave their listening skills the same grade as the teacher did. Only 18% of the girls gave the same grade for their listening skills as the teacher did.

There was a clear difference in the grades the boys and girls gave themselves, but also in the number of the positive and/or negative comments. Figure 12 demonstrates the percentages of both genders and their positive and negative comments on their listening skills.

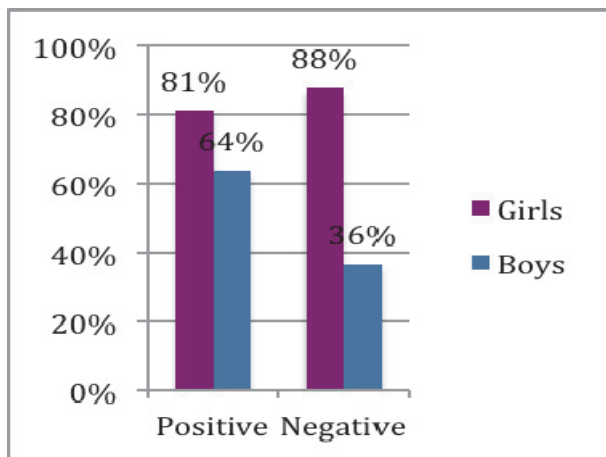


Figure 12 Boys and girls open comments of listening (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

The percentage of positive and negative comments differed between the boys and the girls. 81% of the girls commented on their listening skills with a positive comment, when the percentage for the boys was only 64%. This difference is statistically insignificant (p-value: 0,147). Contrary to that, 88% of the girls gave a negative comment on their listening skills, when only 36% of the boys commented negatively on their listening skills, and this difference was statistically very significant (p-value: 0,000). The biggest difference in these percentages was that the boys gave only either positive or negative comments, when 56% of the girls gave both positive and negative comment. This does not necessarily mean the girls see their skills to be lower than the boys do, since it can be seen in their open comments that they analyze their skills with more depth than the boys do. This is demonstrated well through an example of one boy and one girl, who have both graded their skills with a grade 9:

(29) B8: " Hyvänä, ymmärrän englantia hyvin."
(Good. I understand English well.)

(30) G15: " Mielestäni olen hyvä kuuntelija, mutta jos joku puhuu nopeasti tai vahvalla aksentilla, en aina ymmärrä kaikkea."
(I think I am a good listener, but if someone talks fast or with a rich accent, I don't always understand everything.)

The differences in the percentages of the negative comments can also be because of the differences in self-evaluation of the girls and boys. Boys might feel the accent is an external factor, which does not have a role in their own

listening skills. They girls, on the other hand, put more value on the external factors affecting the result, and thus evaluating their affect as well on their listening skills.

In total, the grades between boys and girls were not very far from each other, but the difference was seen again in the open comments of the students. Once again, the girls commented on their skills more in a negative manner than the boys did.

6.4 Speaking

Since speaking English includes the production of language and the use of both syntax and grammar, it can be seen as more challenging skill than e.g. listening, which consists more of receiving language and analyzing it. In the curriculum of the sixth graders, the demands of speaking are not as high as they are in listening or reading. This means that the students may have lower skills in speaking than in listening, but still receive the same grades in both, because they are expected to have more advanced skills in listening.

The fact that the mistakes one makes in speaking are not as easy to correct without anyone noticing may make the evaluation of speaking more demanding. This might also cause students to be more intimidated to speak English, since all the mistakes they make are heard by the teacher and some or all of the classmates. This could also result in the students knowing more of their mistakes, since most of the speaking which is done in the class is also heard by the students, when they may learn not only from their own mistakes but also from other students' mistakes and successes. Thus the students may be very well aware of their skills in speaking.

6.4.1 Grades

Since the teacher has corrected the students speaking (word-correction and syntax), the students have received feedback from their skills most likely very

often, if not on every English class they have had since third grade. If metacognitive skills are reflected in this area of language, the students are very likely to grade their skills very close to the teachers' grades. Figure 13 has the grade averages of both the students and the teacher in speaking.

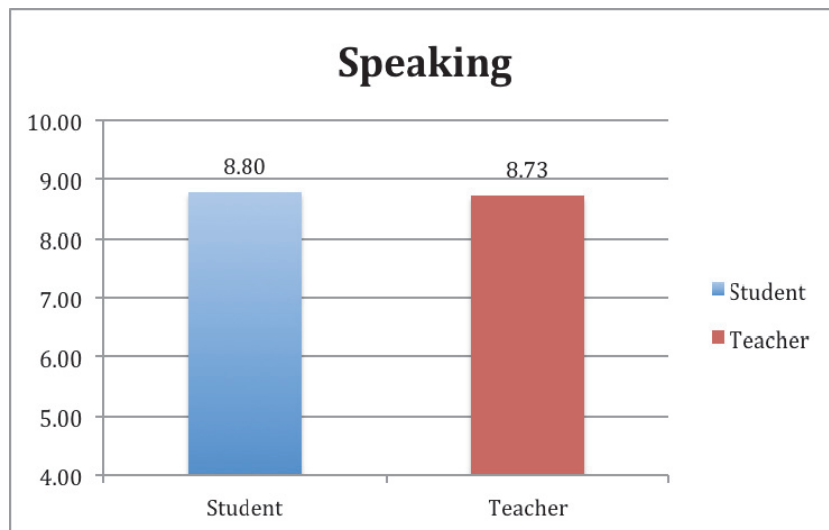


Figure 13 Teacher and student evaluation of speaking (N=27)

In Figure 13 it was seen that the grade averages of the students themselves and the teacher were very close to each other. The students gave their speaking skills a grade average of 8.80, when the grade average given by the teacher was 8.73. The difference between the grade averages was only 0.07, which was not statistically significant (p-value: 0,910). The biggest difference between the student's own grade and the grade given by the teacher was 2.0 grade units, but 63% of the students graded themselves within less than 1.0 grade units' difference to the grade given by the teacher, but there was some difference in this between the students who the teacher graded 9 or 10 and the students who the teacher graded 8 or 7.

The students for whom the teacher gave the grade 9 or 10 were relatively close to the teacher with their own grades for speaking. 74% of those students gave themselves a grade which differed less than 1.0 grade units from the grade given by the teacher. This indicated that the students who are good at speaking English also know they are good. In contrast, the students, who got a grade of 7

or 8 from the teacher, did not grade themselves as close to the teacher's grade as did the students who got a higher grade from the teacher. 63% of the students who the teacher graded 7 or 8, graded themselves with a grade which was 1.0 grade units or more different from the teacher's grade, and only 37% of the students gave themselves a grade which differed less than 1.0 grade units from the teacher's grade. This would indicate that even in speaking, where the averages of the grades given by the teacher and the students were very close to each other, the not-so-skillful students were the ones who graded themselves furthest from the teacher's opinion. More insight into the grades given by the students is revealed in the open comments they gave for their speaking skills.

6.4.2 Open comments

The students' open comments on their speaking skills broadened the view whether the students really were aware of their own skills, or if their focus on their own skills was not on the same areas of speaking, as was on their curriculum, and thus on their teacher's grades. Figure 14 shows the percentages on the students' positive and negative comments.

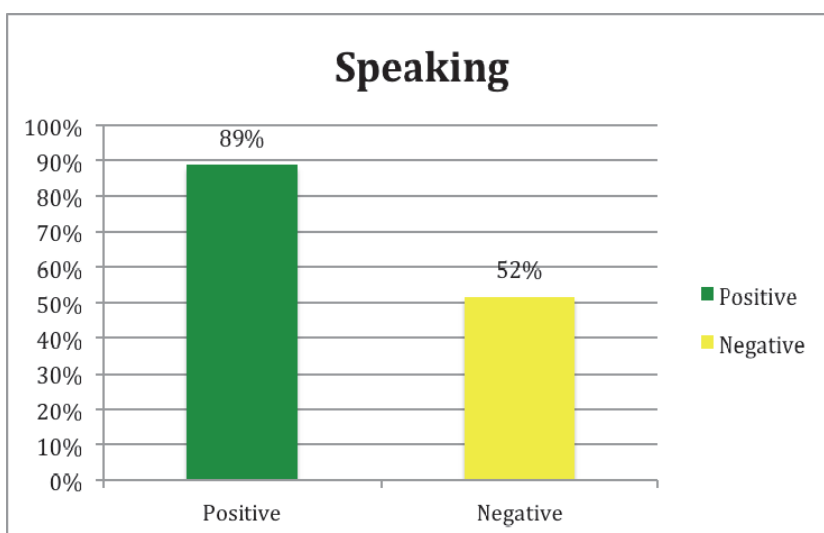


Figure 14 Students' open comments of speaking (N=27)

The percentage of the positive comments indicated that the students were overall quite pleased with their speaking skills, since 89% of the students gave a positive comment on their speaking skills. The percentage of negative

comments supports this, since the percentage of negative comments was only 52%. Three themes could be seen in the comments: some of the students focused on their pronunciation, some commented on their fluency in speaking and forming sentences, and some comments reflected their own skills on others understanding their speech.

In many of the open comments, there rose a theme of commenting on the student's abilities in pronouncing English. This may be because of the teacher's teaching habits, since she told it was her teaching habit to correct mistakes in pronunciation immediately, so that the students learn the correct way of pronouncing words from the beginning. In the curriculum of sixth graders it was not emphasized that all words must be pronounced correctly, but perhaps the feedback from the teacher has given the students the impression that pronunciation is emphasized in the sixth grade, since all the comments given on pronunciation were negative:

(31) B6: "En osaa oikein lausua aina sanoja."
(I don't always know how to pronounce words.)

(32) G16: "Jotkin sanat voivat olla vaikeita ääntää, mutta muuten puhun sujuvasti."
(Some words can be hard to pronounce, but otherwise I speak fluently.)

In addition to pronunciation, the students commented on their fluency in speaking. This was quite expected, since in the sixth grade the students were expected to speak some sentences, basic phrases, and to be able to communicate in short situations. Fluency is accentuated in speaking, since every time the students stop to think their speech, it means a pause in the conversation they are having, and in written language there is not as many such situations in schools. The students' comments on their fluency were both negative and positive:

(33) G3: "En tiedä tarkkaan. Joskus ongelmia tuottavat sanojen muistaminen/lausuminen ja sanojen järjestys."

(I don't know exactly. Remembering/pronouncing words and syntax give me trouble sometimes.)

(34) G15: "Puhun mielestäni hyvin, koska äännän sanat yleensä oikein ja pystyn puhumaan hyvin kokonaisuuksia en vain yksittäisiä sanoja."

(In my opinion, I speak well because my pronunciation is usually correct, and I can speak of the big picture, not just single words.)

Some of the open comments did not focus merely on the accuracy of the pronunciation, syntax or words, but they highlighted the fact that they speak well if they are understood. This is an interesting point, since the single most important thing in speaking skills is to be understood by the person you are talking to. Some of the students held that as a criteria for their own speaking skills, and brought it up in the open comments:

(35) B8: "Hyvänä, puhun englantia niin että muut saavat siitä selvää."
(Good, I speak English in a way others can understand it.)

(36) G6: "Mielestäni osaan puhua englantia aika hyvin, koska jos puhun toiselle en usein joudu toistamaan sanomaani."
(I think I speak English quite well, because if I speak to someone, I usually do not have to repeat what I say.)

Many of the students commented on their abilities to pronounce words correctly or the usage of correct words or having the right syntax, i.e. they basically commented on their abilities to speak grammatically correctly. Only some students commented on their abilities to speak in a way they were understood, which implies that the students may feel that speaking with correct language is more important to speak understandably.

6.4.3 Differences between boys and girls

The differences between the grades for boys and girls were seen in the grades the students gave themselves as well as in the grades the teacher gave the students. Figure 15 presents the grade averages for the speaking grades given by the students and the teacher.

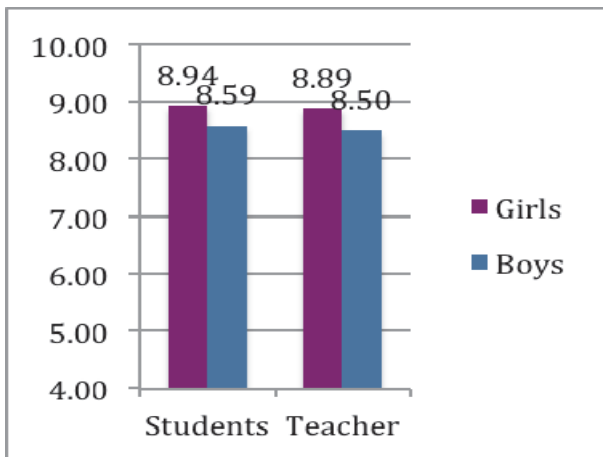


Figure 15 Boys and girls evaluation of speaking (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

As can be seen in Figure 15, the grades girls gave themselves are very close to the grades the teacher gave the girls. Girls' grade average for themselves was 8.94, when the teacher's one for the girls was 8.89, the difference being as small as 0.06 gradeunits, not statistically significant (p-value: 0,750). Similarly, the boys grade average (8.59) was very close to the teacher's grade average for the boys (8.50), the difference being only 0.09 gradeunits and not statistically significant (p-value: 0,744). Still, there were clear gender differences in the single student's grades given by the students and the teacher. 63% of the boys gave themselves the same grade for speaking as the teacher did. The similar number for the girls was only 12%, and especially the well-performing girls gave themselves lower grades than the teacher did. 50% of the girls, who got the grade 10 or 9 from the teacher, graded themselves lower than the teacher did, whereas the percentage for boys was only 16%. The difference was not only in the grades the students gave themselves, but also in the open comments they gave on their speaking skills.

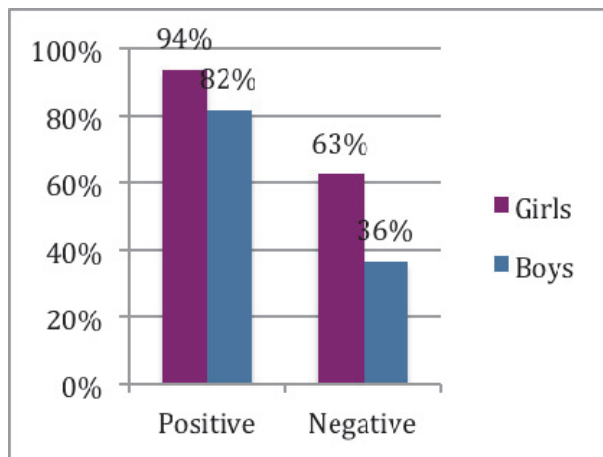


Figure 16 Boys and girls open comments of speaking (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

The grade averages of boys and girls in speaking skills were very close to each other, and so were the percentages of the positive comments. 94% of the girls commented on their speaking skills in a positive manner, and 82% of the boys did the same. The small difference in these percentages was statistically insignificant (p-value: 0,847). More of a difference was seen in the negative comments the girls and boys gave on their speaking skills: 63% of the girls commented negatively, and only 36% of the boys gave a negative comment on their speaking skills. This difference is statistically almost significant (p-value: 0,016). The biggest difference in the open comments was the depth they analyzed their skills, and the points they commented on. The boys were not very elaborate in their answers, but merely answered whether they were good or not so good in speaking English, and they analyzed the skills they had or did not have. Girls gave more examples on their difficulties or successes with speaking, and also analyzed their abilities to be understood when they spoke:

(37) B10: "Ihan hyvänä. Joskus on joitakin sanoja vaikeampi ääntää."

(Okay. Sometimes there are some words that are harder to pronounce.)

(38) G5: "Puhun mielestäni aika sujuvaa ja ymmärrettävää englantia."

(In my opinion, I speak fluent and understandable English.)

As was seen in the percentages of the comments, girls tended to comment more negatively on their speaking skills, even though they gave higher grades than the boys did.

7 GENERAL DIFFERENCES IN THE EVALUATIONS

In the evaluations the students had for themselves and given by the teacher, there were some differences between the four different areas of English which were to be evaluated - reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In order to have an overall analysis on what the differences between these four areas are, the grade averages and the comments are now analyzed and compared. First, the analysis is done between these four areas of language, and how the grades and comments differ from each other, and whether there are some themes between these areas of language. Second, the grades and comments are analyzed and compared from the point of view of gender.

7.1 General differences between the students and the teacher

When looking at the grades the students gave themselves in total, the common factor is that the students graded themselves lower than the teacher did. The only exception in this is speaking, in which the students gave themselves higher grades than the teacher did.

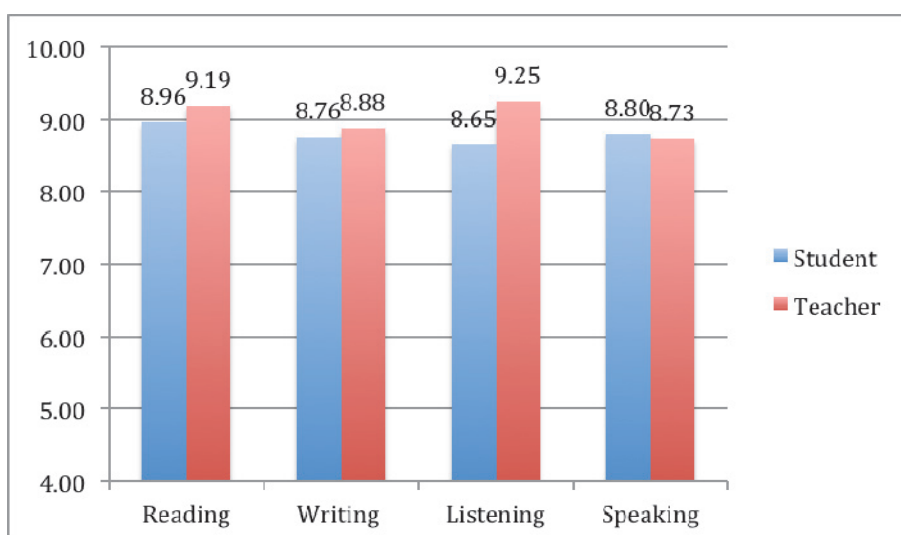


Figure 17 Summary of teacher and student evaluations (N=27)

Figure 17 shows the differences between the grades given for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. One point which stood out from these different areas of

language skills was that the differences between the students themselves and the teacher was bigger in reading and listening. The difference in reading was 0.23 gradeunits (p-value: 0,010, statistically significant) and the difference in listening is as high as 0.6 gradeunits (p-value: 0,001, statistically very significant). Compared to writing and speaking this is quite significant, since in writing the difference is only 0.12 gradeunits (p-value: 0,126, statistically almost significant), and in speaking the difference is as small as 0.07 gradeunits (p-value: 0,910, statistically insignificant). The essence in these two skills are similar, since both reading and listening comprehension and skills are harder to evaluate for the actual talent is in the student's own mind, when in writing and speaking, the talents and skills in the areas is shown through some output - text or speech. The final product in reading and listening consists more of the input and the understanding of it, than in writing and talking, when the product of the skills is more of an easily evaluated "output". The evaluations of these skills are not as forward and unambiguous as the evaluation of writing and talking is. This can result to the students' or the teacher herself not actually being able to analyze the students' skills in these areas of language.

The biggest and most statistically significant difference in these grade averages was seen in the listening grade averages. The teacher graded the students with a grade average of 9.25, when the grade average given by the students' was only 8.65. The grade average given by the teacher was the highest of all these four areas of language, when the one given by the students was the lowest of all the four areas. The reason for such significant difference could be seen in the open comments the students gave, since many of the comments involved the understanding of different accents and dialects. In Appendix 1, the level that is required for the sixth grade students is explained, and it includes understanding of simple sentences in general language. Perhaps the students are not aware of what is expected of them, since so many of the negative comments on their listening skills were about their difficulties to understand different accents and dialects.

The small difference and the statistical insignificance in the evaluations of the students' speaking skills (0.07 grade units) indicate that the students are very aware of their own skills and also what is expected of them. This could be because of the teacher's teaching habits and the continuous habit of correcting the speech of students. The fact that the teacher graded the speaking skills of students to have the lowest grade average of all the four areas of language is interesting, especially since this area was the one where the students and the teacher graded closest to each other.

Even though the grades the students gave themselves give some idea as to where they saw their talents being compared to their expectations, the open comments give a deeper insight into their attitudes towards their skills and talents. Figure 18 summarizes the open comments in all four areas of English which the students evaluated.

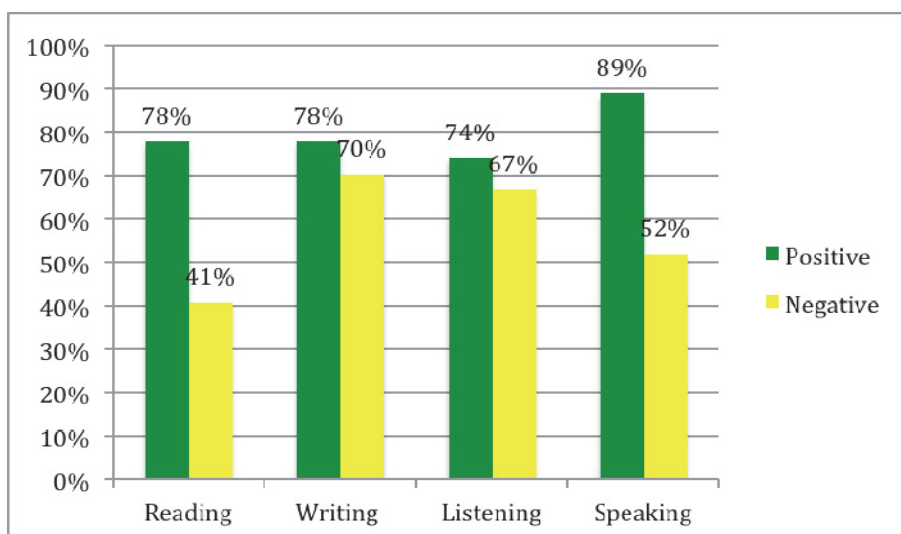


Figure 18 Summary of students' open comments (N=27)

As can be seen in Figure 18, the percentage of positive comments was very high in all four areas of English - the percentage varied from 74% of the students up to 89% percentage. The number of negative comments does not have a correlation to the positive comments, since for example speaking skills were commented with the most positive comments out of all four areas, but still got more negative comments than for example reading did. The number of

negative and positive comments do not have a clear correlation to each other, but some of these percentages have a link to the grades the students have given themselves.

The lowest percentage in negative comments was in reading skills, and reading skills were graded with the highest grade average from the four areas of English. The fact that the percentage of positive comments was only 78%, could be because the students are aware of their skills and know that there is still more to learn. Another link between the open comments and the grade averages can be seen in the writing skills, and the number of the negative comments - the percentage for negative comments was the highest in writing skills, whilst the grade average for writing was also the lowest from the students' grade average for themselves.

7.2 General differences between girls and boys

As there were many differences between the four language areas, and the grades given by the students and the teacher, there were differences between the boys and the girls as well. The differences can be seen in both the grade averages and the differences between them when compared to the grades given by the teacher, and in the percentages of positive and negative comments, which were given of the four areas of English. Figure 19 summarizes the grade averages of girls, given by both the students and the teacher.

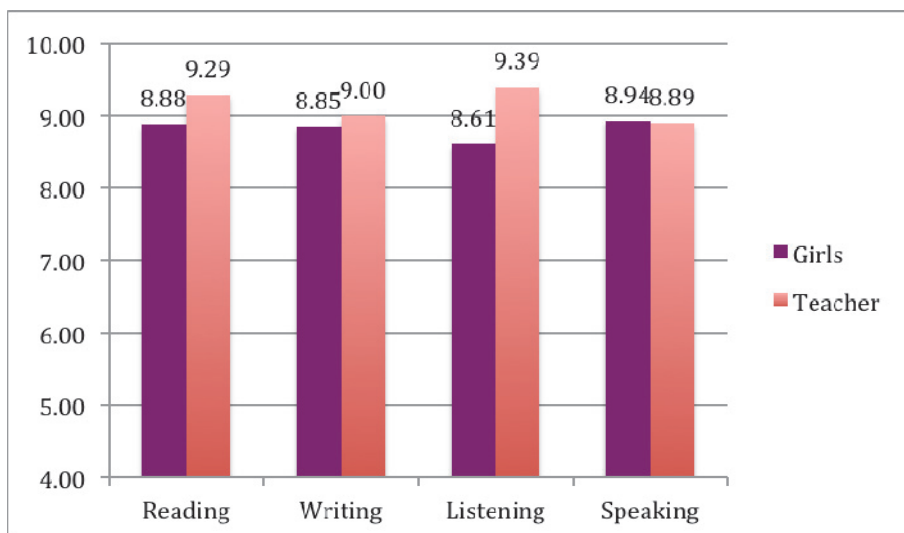


Figure 19 Summary of teacher and girls evaluations (N=16)

The biggest single thing which draws attention in Figure 19 is the difference in the grades for listening skills - the grade average of the girls' own grades was 8.61 when the teacher's grade average for the girls was as high as 9.39. Girls graded their listening skills significantly lower than what the teacher graded, and the difference was 0.78 grade units (p-value: 0,445, statistically insignificant). A similar difference can also be seen in reading skills, where the girls' grade average for their reading skills was 8.88 and the teacher's one was 9.29, again the difference being quite big - 0.41 grade units (p-value: 0,075, statistically insignificant). The girls' humble opinions on their reading skills was seen in the open comments on listening, where the focus in negative comments was in understanding English spoken in different accents and dialects. As this skill is not yet in the curriculum, the teacher might not feel the students are supposed to have acquired the ability to do so, but the girls may feel that if they do not understand different accents, it affects their skills and abilities, in other words, putting more value on external factors on their abilities.

The girls and their grades had some interesting points, and Figure 20 has the summary of boys and their grade averages for the four areas of English.

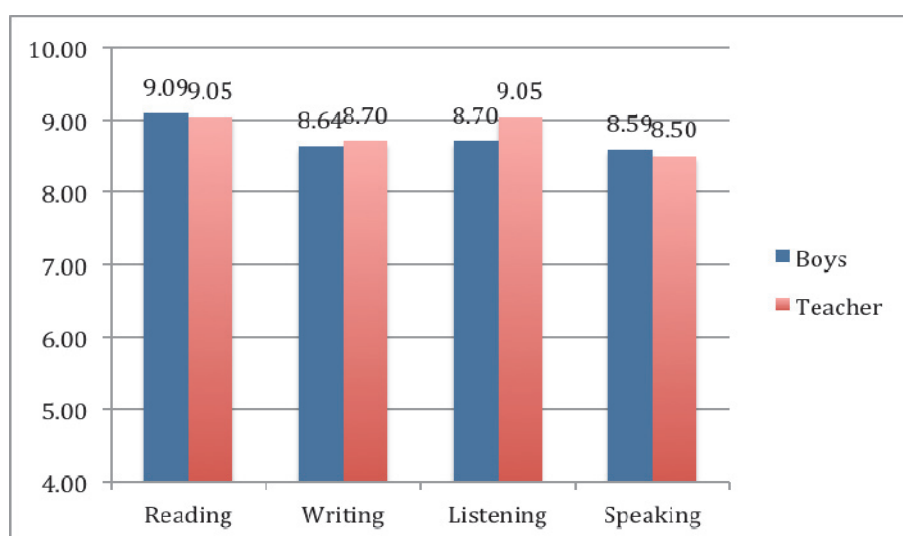


Figure 20 Summary of teacher and boys evaluations (N=11)

Compared to the figure of the girls and their grade averages, it can be seen in Figure 20 that the boys did not have as broad differences to the grades given by the teacher. The biggest difference that the boys have compared to the teacher was in listening, similar to the girls. The boys' grade average for their own listening skills was 8.70 and the teacher's grade average for them was 9.05, the difference being 0.35 gradeunits (p-value: 0,474, statistically insignificant). Compared to the girls, the boys were still much closer to the teacher's grade average, and this might be because of the fact that the boys did not analyze their difficulties as much in the open comments as the girls did. The lack of depth in the analysis can be caused by the boys not feeling that they are responsible for their difficulties in listening English. Since the girls analyzed their difficulties with different accents, the boys might feel that it is not in their own hands if someone speaks with a difficult accent, thus taking only into consideration those skills over which they have control.

In total, the boys graded their skills very close to the teacher's grade averages, the biggest difference being in the listening skills (0.35 gradeunits), and the other differences being between 0.04 and 0.16 gradeunits (reading p-value: 0,072, writing p-value: 0,665, speaking p-value: 0,744). The girls graded their writing and speaking skills close to the teacher's grade average (writing: difference 0.15 gradeunits, speaking: difference 0.05 gradeunits) (writing p-value: 0,681, speaking p-value: 0,750), but their reading skills were 0.41 grade units lower than the teacher's grade average (p-value: 0,075) and especially their grades for listening skills were far from the teacher - 0.78 gradeunits (p-value: 0,445). Since the teacher graded the girls to have higher English skills in any area than the boys, it does not back up the metacognitive learning and knowing about knowing.

The girls and boys had some differences in the grades given for their skills, and the differences in the open comments the differences between the genders can also be seen quite clearly. Figure 21 summarizes the percentages of positive

comments in all the four areas of English which were evaluated by the girls and the boys.

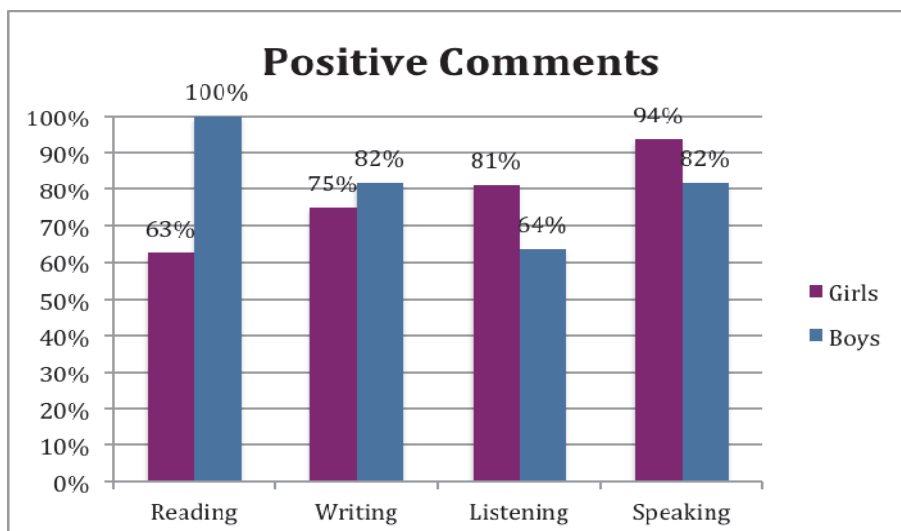


Figure 21 Summary of boys and girls' positive comments (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

The first thing that stands out in Figure 21 were the percentages of positive comments on reading and the differences in it between boys and girls. 100% of the boys commented their reading skills positively, when the similar percentage for girls was only 63%. This difference was not statistically significant (p-value: 0,279).

Another difference, which can be seen in Figure 21 were the percentages of positive comments in the students' listening skills. 81% of the girls commented on their listening skills positively, and 64% of the boys did the same. This difference is not statistically significant (p-value: 0,147). The fact that the girls tended to analyze their skills in more depth, especially their difficulties in the four areas of language might explain the fact, that the girls did not give themselves very good grades in listening, but still commented positively on their listening skills, and the percentages for negative comments may give some more insight to this peculiarity. Figure 22 summarizes the percentages for negative comments for the four areas of English, given by both girls and boys.

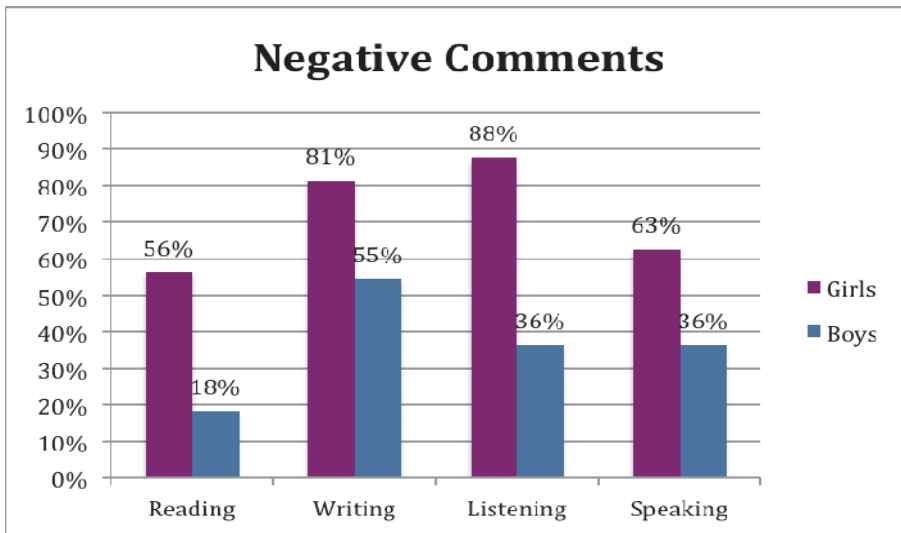


Figure 22 Summary of boys and girls' negative comments (Girls, N=16, Boys, N=11)

Figure 22 indicated clearly that the girls commented on their skills negatively with much higher percentage than the boys did. In the number of positive comments, listening was not in line with the grades the girls and boys gave themselves, but the number of negative comments explains it. This difference is statistically very significant (p-value: 0,000). Girls had a lower grade average in listening than the boys a higher percentage in positive comments, but also higher percentage in negative comments.

In total, the girls commented all the areas of English more negatively than the boys did. In all the areas the percentage for negative comments of girls was more than 56%, when the highest percentage of negative comments given by the boys was only 55%. This indicates that the girls were either more critical of their own talents, saw their talents in a worse light than the boys, or analyzed their talents from different perspectives than the boys did. This can also be because the girls may tend to focus more on their failures than on their success, thus feeling not as successful as the boys may feel.

8 CONCLUSION

In this study, I was expecting to see some differences between good students and not so good students, simply because of metacognition, which is presented in the theory background. If one is aware of one's own skills, one is a better learner than one who is unaware of his/her own skills. This is turned into the fact that maybe students who get lower grades are not that aware of their own skills and thus are not making studying easier, thus making it even harder to get good grades. Differences between the genders were also expected, especially in the open comments by the students, since the self-evaluations of the students were so different from each other.

It was also expected that in listening and reading, the students might be more critical of their own skills, since these two areas of language skills are emphasized in the curriculum of the sixth graders. Sixth graders are expected to have more established skills in reading and listening than in writing and speaking, thus the students may feel the higher expectations of them in reading and listening. The emphasis is shown in the figure below, which is in the curriculum of the sixth grade students. The scale for evaluating language skills is as an appendix (Appendix 1).

	kuullun ymmärtäminen	puhuminen	tekstin ymmärtäminen	kirjoittaminen
Englanti	A2.1	A1.3	A2.1	A1.3
muut kielet	A1.3	A1.2	A1.3	A1.2

Figure 23 The grading scale for language skills

All in all, the study gave some interesting results in the students' own evaluations of their English skills and the differences in them, when compared to the evaluations of the teacher. When the results were analyzed as a whole, the metacognitive skills did not show in the results of the students, but when one looked at individual students and their abilities to evaluate their own skills,

there were some differences between the well-performing students and the students, who did not have as advanced skills. In addition, there were significant differences when comparing the grades and open comment between the genders, and these could be seen in both the grades and in the open comments given by the students.

In the grades, the teacher graded the students to have highest grades in listening skills, but the students' grade average in listening was the lowest of all the four areas of language skills and the difference between these grades was the widest of all the areas which were evaluated. In contrast, the teacher graded the students' speaking skills with the lowest grade, and the students' difference to this grade average was the smallest of all the areas. Metacognitive skills do not show in this group analysis, but when taken into consideration what individual students graded themselves compared to the teacher, metacognitive skills come more visible in some areas of language.

In reading and speaking, the students whom the teacher graded high graded themselves with high grades, thus some indications of metacognitive learning could be seen. In these areas it was also seen that the students whom the teacher graded with lower grades were not as aware of their talents as the students with higher grades were. This would prove that there is some connection between metacognitive skills and good English skills and abilities. In contrast, in writing and listening it was the opposite: the students whom the teacher evaluated to be well-performing students did not feel they were as good as the teacher did. In addition, in writing and listening it was the students whom the teacher graded with lower grades, who seemed to be aware of their skills.

The differences between boys and girls were quite obvious and unambiguous. The boys seemed to grade their talents closer to the teacher's grades than the girls did, and the negativity in the girls' self-evaluations was much more emphasized in the open comments than it was in the boys' comments. The fact that girls' focus was more on their own failures was visible in the open

comments the girls gave on their skills in English. Also, the attitude on what affects the language performance and abilities was also proven by the study: the girls commented more on external factors, when they evaluated their own language skills, whereas the boys focused more on their own skills and how they affect their language abilities.

All in all, this study did not give full proof for metacognitive skills affecting language learning and abilities. There were some signs of it in reading and speaking, but since it was not visible in writing and listening, we would need a larger study to make a connection with metacognitive skills and good learning skills. To show clear causality between the language skills of students and the metacognitive skills, one could do a large qualitative study on the students' own awareness of their own skills and to study the actual skills of the students. This study was a comparison between the teacher's evaluations and the student's self-evaluations, and thus the actual skills of the students were not measured, and the link between the students' skills and their awareness of their skills is based on the teacher's opinion on the students' skills.

The differences between girls and boys were proven by this study, and it was clearly seen in the grades and the percentages in the negative comments on the students' language skills. The fact, that the significances of the results were not as high as expected gives possibilities for future studies, since the four areas of language could be studied in a wider quantitative study, where the statistical significances would most likely be different. To go deeper into this part of the analysis, it could be studied how the teacher's evaluations affect the girls' and boys' learning, and thus their evaluation; is either gender treated differently, and does it have an affect on the actual talents, or perhaps on the way they evaluate their own skills.

The study was carried out as first was planned, and the data for the thesis was collected in an early stage of this study. Feedback for this study and the methods of analysis were altered with the help of feedback. Even though the

schedule for the study and the analysis has been longer than first expected, the study resulted in a well-rounded and versatile analysis in this thesis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archard, M. and Niemeier, S. (2004). *Studies on Language Acquisition 18: Cognitive Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Teaching*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Arnot M. and Weiner, G. (1987). *Gender and the politics of schooling*. London: The Open University.

Bourne, L.F., Dominowski R.L., Lotus, E.F. and Healy, A.F. (1986). *Cognitive Processes, Second Edition*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall International Editions.

Brown, R. and Hanlon, C. Derivational complexity and order of acquisition in child speech. In J.R. Hayes (eds.), *Cognition and the development of language*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Chatzipanteli, A., Grammatikopoulos, V. and Gregoriadis, A. Development and evaluation of metacognition in early childhood education. *Early Child Development and Care*. [online]. <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/doi/full/10.1080/03004430.2013.861456> (16 February 2014)

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hayes, J.R. (1970). *Cognition and the development of language*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Halliday, M.A.K, Gibbons, J. and Nicholas, H. (1987). *Learning, Keeping and Using language*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Harris, M. and Hatano, G. (1999). *Learning to Read and Write*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hyde, J. S and Linn, M.C. (1986). *The Psychology of gender*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Esi- ja perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelma *specifically tailored for this school* 2011 [online]

https://www.norssi.jyu.fi/opetus-ja-opiskelu/opetussuunnitelma/ops_perusopetus/Jyvaeskylaen_normaalikoulun_esi-ja_perusopetuksen_opetussuunnitelma_2011x.pdf. (1 December, 2013)

- Konzelmann Ziv, A., Lehrer, K. and Schmid, H. (2011). *Self-Evaluation: Affective and Social Grounds of Intentionality*. London: Springer.
- Krashen, S. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press. [online] (29 October 2007)
http://www.sdkrashen.com/SL_Acquisition_and_Learning/index.html
- Licht, B. and Dweck, C. (1987). Sex differences in achievement orientations. In M. Arnot and G. Weiner (eds.), *Gender and the politics of schooling*. London: The Open University.
- Lundberg, I. (1999). Learning to read in Scandinavia. In M. Harris and G. Hatano (eds), *Learning to Read and Write*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Macnamara, J. (1977). *Language learning and thought*. New York: Academic Press.
- McLaughlin, B. (1987). *Theories of second-language learning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Moore, T.E. (1973). *Cognitive Development and the Acquisition of Language*. New York: Academic Press.
- Muñoz, C. (2013). Exploring young learners' foreign language learning awareness. *Language awareness* [online] 20 (1-2), 24-40.
<http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/doi/full/10.1080/09658416.2013.863900> (16 February 2014)
- Nisbet, J. and Shucksmith, J. (1986). *Learning strategies*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Olson, D.R. (1977). The contexts on language acquisition. In J. Macnamara (eds.), *Language learning and thought*. New York: Academic Press.
- O'Malley, J.M. and Chamot, A.U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinett, B.W. (1978). *Teaching English to speakers of other language*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Seeshing Yeung, A. (2011). Student self-concept and effort: gender and grade differences. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*. [online] 31 (6), 749-772.
<http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/doi/full/10.1080/01443410.2011.608487> (16 February 2014)

- Silverman, D. (1985). *Qualitative Methodology & Sociology*. Hants: Gower Publishing Company.
- Sinclair-deZwart, H. (1973). Language Acquisition and Cognitive Development. In T.E. Moore (eds), *Cognitive Development and the Acquisition of Language*. New York: Academic Press.
- Skelton, C. (2001). *Schooling the Boys. Masculinity and primary education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Tashakkori, A. & C. Teddlie. (1998). *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. California: Sage Publications.
- Toohey, K. (2000). *Learning English at School : Identity, Social Relations and Classroom Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Zimmerman, B.J and Schunk, D.H. (1989). *Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement - Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York: Springer Verlag.
- Wallace, C. (1987). Learning to Read in a Second Language: A Window on the Language Acquisition Process. In M.A.K. Halliday, J. Gibbons and H. Nicholas (eds.), *Learning, Keeping and Using language*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Whitaker, P. (1995). *Managing to learn - Aspects of reflective and experiential learning in schools*. London: Cassell.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Kielitaidon tasojen kuvausasteikko

Kuvausasteikko on Suomessa laadittu sovellus asteikosta, jotka sisältyvät Euroopan neuvoston toimesta kehitettyyn Kielten oppimisen, opettamisen ja arvioinnin yhteiseen eurooppalaiseen viitekehykseen.

Taitotaso A1 Suppea viestintä kaikkein tutuimmissa tilanteissa

	Kuullun ymmärtäminen	Puhuminen	Luetun ymmärtäminen	Kirjoittaminen
A1.1 Kielitaidon alkeiden hallinta	<p>-Ymmärtää erittäin rajallisen määrän tavallisimpia sanoja ja fraaseja (tervehdyksiä, nimiä, lukuja, kehotuksia) arkisissa yhteyksissä.</p> <p>-Ei edes ponnistellen ymmärrä kuin kaikkein alkeellisinta kielialinesta.</p> <p>-Tarvitsee erittäin paljon apua: toistoa, osoittamista, käännoästä.</p>	<p>-Osaa vastata häntä koskeviin yksinkertaisiin kysymyksiin lyhyin lausein. Vuorovaikutus on puhekumppanin varassa, ja puhuja turvautuu ehkä äidinkieleen tai eleisiin.</p> <p>-Puheessa voi olla paljon pitkiä taukoja, toistoja ja kakkoksia.</p> <p>-Ääntäminen voi aiheuttaa suuria ymmärtämisongelmia.</p> <p>-Osaa hyvin suppean perussanaston ja joitakin opeteltuja vakioilmaisuja.</p> <p>-Puhuja ei kykene vapaaseen tuotokseen, mutta hänen hallitsemansa harvat kaavamaiset ilmaisut voivat olla melko virheettömiä.</p>	<p>-Tuntee kirjainjärjestelmän, mutta ymmärtää tekstistä vain hyvin vähän.</p> <p>-Tunnistaa vähäisen määrän tuttuja sanoja ja lyhyitä fraaseja ja osaa yhdistää niitä kuviin.</p> <p>-Kyky ymmärtää entuudestaan tuntematon sana edes hyvin ennakoitavassa yhteydessä on erittäin rajallinen.</p>	<p>-Osaa viestiä välittömiä tarpeita hyvin lyhyin ilmaisin.</p> <p>-Osaa kirjoittaa kielen kirjaimet ja numerot kirjaimin, merkitä muistiin henkilökohtaiset perustietonsa ja kirjoittaa joitakin tuttuja sanoja ja fraaseja.</p> <p>-Osaa joukon erillisiä sanoja ja sanontoja.</p> <p>Ei kykene vapaaseen tuotokseen, mutta kirjoittaa oikein muutamia sanoja ja ilmauksia.</p>
A1.2 Kehittyvä alkeiskielitaito	<p>-Ymmärtää rajallisen määrän sanoja, lyhyitä lauseita, kysymyksiä ja kehotuksia, jotka liittyvät henkilökohtaisiin asioihin tai välittömään tilanteeseen.</p> <p>-Joutuu ponnistelemaan ymmärtääkseen yksinkertaisiakin lausumia ilman selviä tilannevihjeitä.</p> <p>-Tarvitsee paljon apua: puheen hidastamista, toistoa, näytännistä ja käännoästä.</p>	<p>-Osaa viestiä suppeasti joitakin välittömiä tarpeita ja kysyä ja vastata henkilökohtaisia perustietoja käsittelevissä vuoropuheluissa. Tarvitsee usein puhekumppanin apua.</p> <p>-Puheessa on taukoja ja muita katkoksia.</p> <p>-Ääntäminen voi aiheuttaa usein ymmärtämisongelmia.</p> <p>-Osaa hyvin suppean perussanaston, joitakin tilannesidonnaisia ilmaisuja ja peruskielopin aineksia.</p> <p>-Alkeellisessakin vapaassa puheessa esiintyy hyvin paljon kaikenlaisia virheitä.</p>	<p>-Ymmärtää nimiä, kylttejä ja muita hyvin lyhyitä ja yksinkertaisia tekstejä, jotka liittyvät välittömiin tarpeisiin.</p> <p>-Tunnistaa yksinkertaisesta tekstistä yksittäisen tiedon, jos voi lukea tarvittaessa uudelleen.</p> <p>-Kyky ymmärtää entuudestaan tuntematon sana edes hyvin ennustettavassa yhteydessä on rajallinen.</p>	<p>-Osaa viestiä välittömiä tarpeita lyhyin lausein.</p> <p>-Osaa kirjoittaa muutamia lauseita ja fraaseja itsestään ja lähipiiristään (esim. vastauksia kysymyksiin tai muustilappuja).</p> <p>-Osaa joitakin perussanoja ja sanontoja ja pystyy kirjoittamaan hyvin yksinkertaisia päälauseita.</p> <p>-Ulkoa opetellut fraasit voivat olla oikein kirjoitettuja, mutta alkeellisimmassakin vapaassa tuotoksessa esiintyy hyvin paljon kaikenlaisia virheitä.</p>

	Kuullun ymmärtäminen	Puhuminen	Luetun ymmärtäminen	Kirjoittaminen
A1.3 Toimiva alkeis-kielitaso	<p>-Ymmärtää yksinkertaisia lausumia (henkilökohtaisia kysymyksiä ja jokapäiväisiä ohjeita, pyyntöjä ja kieltoja) rutiinimaisissa keskusteluissa tilanneyhteyden tukena.</p> <p>-Pystyy seuraamaan yksinkertaisia, välittömiin tilanteisiin tai omaan kokemukseensa liittyviä keskusteluja.</p> <p>-Yksinkertaisenkin viestin ymmärtäminen edellyttää normaalia hitaampaa ja kuulijalle kohdennettua yleiskielistä puhetta.</p>	<p>-Osaa kertoa lyhyesti itsestään ja lähipiiristään. Selviytyy kaikkein yksinkertaisimmista vuoropuheluista ja palvelutilanteista. Tarvitsee joskus puhelukumppanin apua.</p> <p>-Kaikkein tutuimmat jaksot sujuvat, muualla tauot ja katkokset ovat hyvin ilmeisiä.</p> <p>-Ääntäminen voi joskus tuottaa ymmärtämisiongelmiä.</p> <p>-Osaa rajallisen joukon lyhyitä, ulkoa opeteltuja ilmauksia, keskeisintä sanastoa ja perustason lauserakenteita.</p> <p>-Alkeellisessakin puheessa esiintyy paljon peruskielioppivirheitä.</p>	<p>-Pystyy lukemaan tuttuja ja joitakin tuntemattomia sanoja. Ymmärtää hyvin lyhyitä viestejä, joissa käsitellään arkielämää ja rutiinitapahtumia tai annetaan yksinkertaisia ohjeita.</p> <p>-Pystyy löytämään tarvitsemansa yksittäisen tiedon lyhyestä tekstistä (postikortit, säätiedotukset).</p> <p>-Lyhyenkin tekstipätkän lukeminen ja ymmärtäminen on hyvin hidasta.</p>	<p>-Selviytyy kirjoittamalla kaikkein tutuimmassa, helposti ennakoitavissa arkisiin tarpeisiin ja kokemuksiin liittyvissä tilanteissa.</p> <p>-Osaa kirjoittaa yksinkertaisia viestejä (yksinkertaisen postikortin, henkilötiedot, yksinkertainen sanelu).</p> <p>-Osaa kaikkein tavallisimpia sanoja ja ilmauksia, jotka liittyvät omaan elämään tai konkreetteihin tarpeisiin.</p> <p>-Osaa kirjoittaa muutamia yksilauseisia virkeitä.</p> <p>-Alkeellisessakin vapaassa tuotoksessa esiintyy monenlaisia virheitä.</p>

Taitotaso A2 Välttämättömän sosiaalisen kanssakäymisen perustarpeet ja lyhyt kerronta

	Kuullun ymmärtäminen	Puhuminen	Luetun ymmärtäminen	Kirjoittaminen
A2.1 Peruskielitaidon alkuvaihe	<p>-Pystyy ymmärtämään yksinkertaista puhetta tai seuraamaan keskustelua aiheista, jotka ovat hänelle välittömän tärkeitä.</p> <p>Pystyy ymmärtämään lyhyiden, yksinkertaisten, itseään kiinnostavien keskustelujen ja viestien (ohjeet, kuulutukset) ydinsisällön sekä havaitsemaan aihepiirin vaihdokset tv-uutisissa.</p> <p>-Yksinkertaisenkin viestin ymmärtäminen edellyttää normaalilla nopeudella ja selkeästi puhuttua yleiskielistä puhetta, joka usein täytyy lisäksi toisaa.</p>	<p>-Osaa kuvata lähipiiriään muutamien lyhyin lausein. Selviytyy yksinkertaisista sosiaalisista kohtaamisista ja tavallisimmista palvelutilanteista.</p> <p>Osaa aloittaa ja lopettaa lyhyen vuoropuhelun, mutta kykenee harvoin ylläpitämään pitempää keskustelua.</p> <p>-Tuottaa sujuvasti joitakin tuttuja jaksoja, mutta puheessa on paljon hyvin ilmeisiä taukoja ja väärää aloitusta.</p> <p>-Ääntäminen on ymmärrettävää, vaikka vieras korostus on hyvin ilmeistä ja ääntämisvirheistä voi koitua satunnaisia ymmärtämisiongelmiä.</p> <p>-Osaa helposti ennakoitavan perussanaston ja monia keskeisimpiä rakenteita (kuten menneen ajan muotoja ja konjunktioita).</p> <p>-Hallitsee kaikkein yksinkertaisimman kieliopin alkeellisessa vapaassa puheessa, mutta virheitä esiintyy yhä paljon perusrakenteissakin.</p>	<p>-Ymmärtää yksinkertaisia ja kaikkein tavanomaisinta sanastoa sisältäviä tekstejä (yksityiskirjeita, pikku-uutisia, arkisimpia käyttöohjeita).</p> <p>-Ymmärtää tekstin pääajatuksen ja joitakin yksityiskohtia parin kappaleen pituisesta tekstistä. Osaa paikantaa ja verrata yksittäisiä tietoja ja pystyy hyvin yksinkertaiseen päätelyyn kontekstin avulla.</p> <p>-Lyhyenkin tekstipätkän lukeminen ja ymmärtäminen on hidasta.</p>	<p>-Selviytyy kirjoittamalla kaikkein rutiininomaisimmista arkitilanteista.</p> <p>-Osaa kirjoittaa lyhyitä, yksinkertaisia viestejä (henkilökohtaiset kirjeet, lappuset), jotka liittyvät arkisiin tarpeisiin sekä yksinkertaisia, luettelomaisia kuvauksia hyvin tutuista aiheista (todellisista tai kuvitteellisista henkilöistä, tapahtumista, omista ja perheen suunnitelmista).</p> <p>-Osaa käyttää perustarpeisiin liittyvää konkreettista sanastoa ja perusaikamuotoja sekä yksinkertaisia sidossanoja (ja, mutta) liitettyjä rinnasteisia lauseita.</p> <p>-Kirjoittaa kaikkein yksinkertaisimmat sanat ja rakenteet melko oikein, mutta tekee toistuvasti virheitä perusasioissa (aikamuodot, taivutus) ja tuottaa paljon kómpefoita ilmaisuja vapaassa tuotoksessa.</p>

	Kuullun ymmärtäminen	Puhuminen	Luetun ymmärtäminen	Kirjoittaminen
A2.2 Kehittyvä peruskielinto	<p>-Ymmärtää tarpeeksi kyetäkseen tyydyttämään konkreetit tarpeensa. Pystyy seuraamaan hyvin summittaisesti selväpiirteisen asiapuheen pääkohta.</p> <p>-Pystyy yleensa tunnistamaan ympärillään käytävän keskustelun aiheen. Ymmärtää tavallista sanastoa ja hyvin rajallisen joukon idiomeja tuttuja aiheita tai yleistietoa käsittelevässä tilannesidonnaisessa puheessa.</p> <p>-Yksinkertaisenkin viestin ymmärtäminen edellyttää yleispuhekieltä, joka äännetään hitaasti ja selvästi</p> <p>Toistoa tarvitaan melko usein.</p>	<p>-Osaa esittää pienen, luettelomaisen kuvauksen lähipiiristään ja sen jokapäiväisistä puolista. Pystyy osallistumaan rutiinomaisiin keskusteluihin omista tai itselleen tarkeista asioista. Voi tarvita apua keskustelussa ja vältellä joitakin aihepiirejä.</p> <p>-Puhe on välillä sujuvaa, mutta erilaiset katkokset ovat hyvin ilmeisiä.</p> <p>-Ääntäminen on ymmärrettävää, vaikka vieras korostus on ilmeistä ja ääntämisvirheitä esiintyy.</p> <p>Osaa kohtalaisen hyvin tavallisen, jokapäiväisen sanaston ja jonkin verran idiomaattisia ilmaisuja. Osaa useita yksinkertaisia ja myös joitakin vaativampia rakenteita.</p> <p>-Laajemmassa vapaassa puheessa esiintyy paljon virheitä perusasissa (esim. verbien aikamuodoissa) ja ne voivat joskus haitata ymmärrettävyyttä.</p>	<p>-Ymmärtää pääasiat ja joitakin yksityiskohtia muutaman kappaleen pituisista viesteistä jonkin verran vaativissa arkisissa yhteyksissä (mainokset, kirjeet, ruokalistat, aikataulut) sekä faktatekstejä (käyttöohjeet, pikku-uutiset).</p> <p>-Pystyy hankkimaan helposti ennakoitavaa uutta tietoa tutuista aiheista selkeästi jäsenellystä muutaman kappaleen pituisesta tekstistä. Osaa päätellä tuntemattomien sanojen merkityksiä niiden kieliasusta ja kontekstista.</p> <p>-Tarvitsee usein uudelleen lukemista ja apuvälineitä tekstikappaleen ymmärtämiseksi.</p>	<p>-Selviytyy kirjoittamalla tavanomaisissa arkitilanteissa.</p> <p>-Osaa kirjoittaa hyvin lyhyen, yksinkertaisen kuvauksen tapahtumista, menneistä toimista ja henkilökohtaisista kokemuksista tai elinympäristönsä arkipäiväisistä puolista (lyhyet kirjeet, muistilaput, hakemukset, puhelinviestit).</p> <p>-Osaa arkisen perussanaston, rakenteet ja tavallisimmat sidoskeinot.</p> <p>-Kirjoittaa yksinkertaiset sanat ja rakenteet oikein, mutta tekee virheitä harvinaisemmissa rakenteissa ja muodoissa ja tuottaa kömpelöitä ilmaisuja.</p>

APPENDIX 2 Questionnaire for the students

Tutkimuskysely

Kysymykset jatkuvat sivun kääntöpuolelle

Nimi: _____

Salanimi: _____

Sukupuoli (tyttö/poika): _____

1a. Millaisena näet itsesi englannin kielen **lukijana**?

1b. Minkä arvosanan antaisit itsellesi englannin **lukemisesta**? (arvosana 4-10) _____

2a. Millaisena näet itsesi englannin kielen **kirjoittajana**?

2b. Minkä arvosanan antaisit itsellesi englannin **kirjoittamisesta**?(arvosana 4-10) _____

3a. Millaisena näet itsesi englannin kielen **kuuntelijana**?

3b. Minkä arvosanan antaisit itsellesi englannin **kuuntelemisesta**?(arvosana 4-10) _____

4a. Millaisena näet itsesi englannin kielen **puhujana**?

4b. Minkä arvosanan antaisit itsellesi englannin **puhumisesta**?(arvosana 4-10) _____

APPENDIX 3 Permission slip for the students

Kyselykirje Normaalikoulun vanhemmille

Hei,

Olen 24-vuotias englannin kielen opiskelija Jyväskylän yliopistosta ja olen tekemässä parhaillaan graduani, jonka olen suunnitellut valmistuvan jouluksi 2010. Tutkimusaiheenani on tutkia Jyväskylän Normaalikoulun oppilaita ja heidän käsityksiään itsestään kielenoppijina. Jotta voisin graduuni liittää tutkimusmateriaalia, toivoisin, että saisin teidän lupanne tehdä kyselyn lapsillenne, eli Normaalikoulun 6. luokan oppilaille, englannin tunnilla. Olen saanut luvan tehdä tutkimustani sekä rehtori Sari Keinonselta että opettaja Anna Laukkariselta. Olemme Anna Laukkarisen kanssa sopineet, että saan tehdä tutkimuksen perjantaina 28.5. olevalla englannin tunnilla.

Kysely koostuu neljästä kysymyksestä: Millaisena koet itsesi englannin kielen lukijana/kuuntelijana/kirjoittajana/puhujana? Tämän lisäksi oppilaat antavat itselleen suurpiirteiset arvot sanat jokaisesta edellämainitusta osa-alueesta. Vastaukset kerään oppilaiden omilla nimillä, mutta tulokset analysoin oppilaiden itse keksimillä salanimillä. Oppilaiden vastaukset ja koko kyselylomakkeet tulevat ainoastaan minun käyttöni. Graduni valmistuttua lähetän yhden kopion Normaalikoululle. Toivoisin, että mahdollisimman moni oppilas saisi luvan osallistua tutkimukseeni, jotta saisin mahdollisimman kattavia tutkimustuloksia.

Kesäisin terveisin,

Janiina Ristola
janiina.ristola@jyu.fi
050-3600468

Lapsen nimi _____

Lapseni SAA osallistua tutkimukseen

Lapseni EI SAA osallistua tutkimukseen

Huoltajan allekirjoitus _____

Huoltajan nimenselvennys _____