What if I sound stupid?

Supporting learners' oral L2 self-confidence through teaching

Bachelor's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Vierasta kieltä ääntäessämme asetamme itsemme alttiiksi ympäröivien ihmisten arvostelulle, minkä vuoksi tämä osa-alue aiheuttaakin usein jännitystä, epävarmuutta ja jopa ahdistusta kieltä opeteltaessa. Suullinen tuottaminen on kuitenkin hyvin olennainen osa kielitaitoa, ja tämän taidon kehittämiseksi sitä tulisi harjoitella ahdistuksesta huolimatta. Kouluympäristö tarjoaa tälle harjoittelulle suhteellisen turvalliset puitteet, ja opettajan rooli oppijoiden kieliahdistuksen lievittämisessä onkin merkittävä. Opettajien tulisi kannustaa oppijoita suullisen kielitaidon harjoittamiseen luokkahuoneen turvassa, jotta nämä uskaltaisivat hyödyntää taitojaan myös sen ulkopuolella.

Tällä tutkimuksella pyrittiin selvittämään kahta asiaa aiheeseen liittyen. Ensinnäkin haluttiin tietää, kuinka merkittävänä vaikuttajana suomalaiset englanninopettajat näkivät oppijoiden mahdollisen ahdistuksen suunnitellessaan suullisen kielitaidon opetusta. Toisena kiinnostuksen kohteena olivat opettajien erilaiset tavat reagoida oppijoiden ahdistukseen suullisessa tuottamisessa ja näin tukea heidän kielellistä itsetuntoaan. Tutkimuksen pääasiallinen aineistonkeruumenetelmä oli opettajille suunnattu verkkokysely, mutta saatuja tuloksia täydennettiin myös yhdellä puolistrukturoidulla haastattelulla. Kysymyksillä kartoitettiin opettajien kokemuksia oppijoiden ahdistuksesta suullisissa harjoituksissa ja heidän tapojaan vastata näistä tunteista aiheutuviin haasteisiin.

Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että opetuksen mieluisuus oppilaille on yksi opettajien prioriteeteista suullisen kielitaidon opetuksen suunnittelussa. Tämän lisäksi opettajat raportoivat kiinnittävänsä huomiota opetuksen monipuolisuuteen, tehokkuuteen ja toteutuksen helppouteen. Tulosten avulla pystyttiin myös luomaan neljä kategoriaa, jotka kattoivat opettajien tavat vastata suullisen kieliahdistuksen aiheuttamiin haasteisiin: rohkaisevan ilmapiirin tukeminen, ongelmasta keskusteleminen, opetuksen sopeuttaminen ja rutiinin luominen. Nämä tulokset tukevat aikaisempaa tutkimusta. Kokonaisuudessaan tutkimus tuotti yksityiskohtaista tietoa aiheesta ja voi näin ollen tarjota konkreettista apua oppijoiden ahdistuksen kanssa kamppaileville opettajille.

Asiasanat – Keywords confidence, pronunciation instruction, pronunciation teaching, foreign language anxiety

Säilytyspaikka – Depository JYX

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1   INTRODUCTION

Approaches to pronunciation teaching have varied greatly throughout history and, even today, there is no one agreed-upon way to handle this part of language in education, despite relatively plentiful research on the topic. However, what previous studies have shown is that factors related to confidence and anxiety can affect students' learning processes significantly in this area by affecting their communicational behaviour (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986; Horwitz 2001; MacIntyre & Gradner 1989). It would, then, seem essential to prevent anxiety from hindering successful language learning.

Teachers' role in doing this is crucial, as research has shown how strongly teachers' actions can influence students' feelings in the classroom (e.g., Horwitz et al. 1986; Abu-Rabia 2004). Indeed, since pronunciation teaching in general appears to threaten students' self-confidence remarkably (Lintunen & Mäkilähde 2015), teachers should strive to make their instruction as unintimidating as possible. Some studies have already investigated how teachers could do this (Huang 2012; Hakkarainen 2021). They for instance emphasize the significance of an encouraging atmosphere, tolerance towards mistakes, positive feedback, and practice. However, though these findings are interesting, more detailed advice seems to be needed, at least in the Finnish context.

In Finland, pronunciation teaching has traditionally not received much attention. While the importance of good pronunciation skills is recognized in the Finnish core curricula (POPS 2014; LOPS 2019), they give hardly any concrete advice on how teachers could successfully tackle this topic that learners often find intimidating. In addition, it has been found that many teachers find their education on this topic insufficient and, perhaps due to this, studies have shown that Finnish EFL teachers implement tasks that are easily available in textbooks and do not always pay attention to their communicativeness (Tergujeff 2013; Hamm 2019). Therefore, it seems that Finnish education programs and the national core curricula do not provide enough guidance in this area.

For the reasons mentioned above, the present study aims at shedding some light on how the negative effects of foreign language anxiety could be overcome with different practices in Finnish EFL classrooms, and how learners' confidence as second-language (L2) speakers could thus be supported.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review covers previous research concerning the key concepts of the present study, the ways in which learners' anxiety can be considered in teaching, and pronunciation teaching both in general and in the Finnish context.

2.1 Key concepts

One of the key concepts in the present study is L2 self-confidence. According to Clément (1980: 147-154), it is a specific type of confidence related to second language acquisition (SLA) and consists of two elements: high perceptions of one's own communicative competence and lack of apprehension when using the target language. Second-language confidence is essential in the language classroom, as it appears to have connections to both learning motivation and proficiency (Clément 1986: 273). Based on this and the findings of other researchers (e.g., MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels 1998; Horwitz et al. 1986: 132), teachers' endeavours to support students' L2 self-confidence could enhance learning.

The correlations between L2 self-confidence and other factors of SLA have been quite widely researched by Clément and MacIntyre in cooperation with other researchers (e.g., Clément, Baker & MacIntyre 2003; Clément, Gardner. & Smythe 1980; MacIntyre et al. 1998). These studies have found correlations between L2 self-confidence and willingness to communicate (WTC), a concept first introduced by McCroskey and Baer (1985). It can be defined as the likelihood of an individual participating voluntarily in communication in the L2, and it is an important influencer in language learning (MacIntyre et al. 1998: 546-558). According to Baghaei and Dourakhshan (2012: 62), it can even be considered the chief predictor of successful SLA. More recent studies have confirmed this connection (e.g., Ghanbarpour 2016; Fatima, Ismail, Pathan & Memon 2020) but, though there seems to be significant correlation between these two factors, no causal relationships can be drawn from these studies.

Another concept related to L2 self-confidence is foreign language anxiety. As low levels of apprehension are important in the construction of L2 confidence (Clément 1980: 151), foreign language anxiety can harm this process. It refers to the feelings of tension and uneasiness when using the language and has three dimensions: communication apprehension (CA), test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz 2001: 115). Since CA is one of these dimensions, a connection between foreign language anxiety and WTC can also be found: research has shown that low levels of CA seem to correlate with higher WTC (Vevea, Pearson, Child & Semlak 2010: 5). Rahmatollahi and Khalili (2015: 30) even regard CA as the principal indicator of an

individual's readiness to approach communication in the L2. Therefore, it seems that CA, a component of foreign language anxiety, has strong relations to L2 learners' communicative behaviour and can thus disrupt learning (Baghaei & Dourakhsahn 2012). Research has also shown that foreign language anxiety in its entirety can hamper learning (MacIntyre & Gardner 1989). Consequently, it can be concluded that learners' feelings can affect their SLA remarkably.

Continuing with the same theme, the concept of foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) is especially relevant to the present study. It refers to the anxiety faced in L2 learning contexts and has an emphasis on speaking apprehension. Moreover, this concept intertwines with L2 self-confidence, as self-confidence is one of its components (Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert 1999: 417).

2.2   Considering learners' anxiety in teaching

Studies have shown that teachers can both increase and reduce learners' anxiety significantly in the classroom (e.g., Horwitz et al. 1986; Abu-Rabia 2004), which is a noteworthy remark for the present study. These studies report that teachers' emotional skills, such as warmth and an encouraging attitude, are key in creating a less stressful learning environment and decreasing FLCA. For instance, Abu-Rabia (2004) has found a significant negative correlation between students' positive perceptions on their teacher's attitudes and the anxiety they experience. Such studies suggest for example that test-anxiety could be reduced by modifying assessment methods and placing more emphasis on homework, and that teachers can help students cope with anxiety by presenting relaxation exercises and effective learning strategies (Abu-Rabia 2004; Horowitz et al. 1986: 131). Teachers' role in reducing students' anxiety when teaching pronunciation seems especially important, since this topic appears to be a distinct threat to learners' L2 self-confidence: studies have shown that pronunciation teaching in general can make students feel less confident (Lintunen & Mäkilähde 2015: 93). All these results imply that teachers can have an important effect on learners' feelings in the classroom.

Relating to this, the work of Huang (2012: 141-151) is relevant to the present study, as they present four concrete ways in which teachers should consider students' FLCA in teaching. The first of these responsibilities is improving teaching methods, which refers to using student-centered methods, focusing on listening and speaking, and increasing students' possibilities to practice. Secondly, teachers should change their attitudes toward students so that they are tolerant of mistakes, encourage participation, and offer praise. It is also important to create a

supportive classroom environment where students feel comfortable enough to participate, for example with humour. The fourth responsibility, adjusting language use, means that teachers should use the target language as much as possible yet ensure comprehensibility by relying on the L1 when necessary. When using the target language, teachers should pay attention to the clarity and rate of their speech.

In the Finnish context, the work of Hakkarainen (2021) is interesting. Basing their thinking on positive psychology, they list concrete suggestions on how teachers could support learners' WTC, especially those suffering from language anxiety (2021: 20). These suggestions resemble Huang's (2012) teacher responsibilities and include such things as maintaining a safe learning environment, favouring pair discussions, being tolerant of mistakes, focusing on learners' abilities, and being careful with feedback. This work, according to my readings, is the closest to the present study and provides a good framework for it: I should find out if Hakkarainen's literature-based suggestions match the experiences of the teachers participating in this study.

2.3   Methods in pronunciation teaching

In the present study, the term pronunciation teaching refers to the teaching of both segmental and suprasegmental elements. Segmental elements are the individual sounds of a language, and suprasegmental features cover stress, rhythm, intonation, tone, and juncture, all of which are important in producing intelligible speech (Derwing & Munro 2015: 3). Indeed, following the Intelligibility Principle (Levis 2005), intelligible and comprehensible speech is understood as the goal of pronunciation teaching.

As mentioned earlier, there have been many approaches to pronunciation teaching in history. Today, however, the most prominent one seems to be the Communicative Approach that emphasizes the use of communicative activities in the classroom (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 2010: 8). Along the different approaches, different methods for pronunciation teaching have also emerged, many of which are presented in Celce-Murcia et al.'s book (2010: 335-343). The most traditional methods are reading aloud and making students imitate a speaker's speech (shadowing) or a speaker's speech, gestures, and facial expressions (mirroring). In addition to the traditional methods, games and drama techniques, such as role play and improvisation, can be used. Furthermore, students' internalization of the production of utterances can be facilitated with different reinforcement techniques: visual (e.g. pictures demonstrating sounds), auditory (e.g. imitating a train when learning the /ʧ/ sound), and kinesthetic reinforcement (connecting sound and movement).

2.4   Pronunciation teaching in Finland

When discussing English pronunciation teaching in Finland, the national core curricula (POPS 2014; LOPS 2019) should be examined, as they are the foundation on which teaching is built. Though both curricula state that speaking skills should be taught, they are unclear about how this should be done and seem to give more emphasis to writing skills. LOPS (2019) pays slightly more attention to spoken communication, as it offers a module on oral skills for students and introduces one means for assessing them. It also seems more concerned about students' self-confidence, as the term "kielellinen itsetunto" (linguistic self-confidence) is mentioned (LOPS 2019: 181), accompanied with some ways to foster it (e.g., differentiating and encouraging feedback). However, the curricula provide general guidelines only, and Finnish EFL teachers can shape their pronunciation instruction quite freely.

The most comprehensive research on this topic has been carried out by Tergujeff (2013), who has studied English pronunciation teaching from primary to upper secondary level in Finland and examined the pronunciation-related tasks in Finnish EFL textbooks. They state (2013: 52-53) that Finnish EFL teachers often base their pronunciation teaching heavily on textbooks, which might be why segmental elements are emphasized over suprasegmental features. This is detrimental because suprasegmental errors can severely damage intelligibility (Derwing and Munro 2015: 59) and neglecting them does not correspond to the typical difficulties of Finnish EFL learners (Tergujeff 2013: 48). Furthermore, Finnish EFL teachers often rely on traditional task types when teaching pronunciation and rarely use communicative practices (Tergujeff 2013: 63). Consequently, many students in Tergujeff's study were dissatisfied with their pronunciation teaching, and similar results have been revealed by for example Hamm (2019). Tergujeff (2013: 53) also reports that teachers found their training in this field insufficient, which could explain these deficiencies.

According to my readings, the relationship between pronunciation teaching and learners' L2 self-confidence has not been widely researched in Finland. Some BA theses have touched this topic (e.g., Korhonen 2019; Hamm 2019), but they mostly focus on students' perceptions on the matter. One BA thesis has been conducted on teacher's attitudes towards and approaches to pronunciation teaching (Rossi 2019) but, in turn, it did not cover learners' self-confidence. Hakkarainen's (2021) aforementioned research comes the closest to the present study, but their proposals are literature-based. Therefore, the present study could produce some new and interesting information.

3 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

My aim was to examine Finnish EFL teachers' views on the significance of learners' anxiety in pronunciation instruction and discover how teachers can react to these feelings and support learners' L2 self-confidence in pronunciation. I hoped to generate knowledge that would benefit both future and current teachers struggling with this issue. The scarcity of research on this topic together with the discrepancies revealed by Tergujeff (2013) indicate that research providing Finnish EFL teachers with some methodological guidance concerning pronunciation teaching is needed. The present study aimed at responding to this need, at least on a preliminary level, and focused on two research questions:

1. *To what extent do Finnish EFL teachers consider learners' possible feelings of anxiety when planning their teaching of pronunciation?*
2. *What procedures can Finnish EFL teachers take to support learners' L2 self-confidence in pronunciation?*

4 DATA AND METHODS

In this section, I describe the target group of the present study as well as the data and how it was collected. Lastly, I discuss the methods of data analysis.

4.1 Participants

Finnish EFL teachers were chosen as the target group, as few studies have been conducted on this issue in the Finnish context, and those few studies have mostly concentrated on students' views. In addition, as I wanted to get detailed information about the procedures used to support learners' L2 self-confidence, it seemed suitable to target teachers instead of students, since students might have had difficulties in recognizing pedagogical procedures. I intended to target around 50 teachers from different levels of education to get a multifaceted picture of the issue.

Participation was completely voluntary, and the participants were recruited by publishing the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) in a Facebook group of 4,200 members intended for Finnish EFL teachers. In addition, the association of Finnish EFL teachers (Suomen englanninopettajat ry) agreed to share my research invitation on their Facebook page. In the end, a surprisingly high number of 91 teachers chose to participate. Of these respondents, a vast majority of 86 identified themselves as female, 4 as male, and one did not want to share this information. The respondents' teaching experience ranged from less than one year to over ten years, and all levels

of teaching from primary school to tertiary education were covered. However, most participants reported having experience from primary, lower secondary, and/or upper secondary schools.

At the end of the questionnaire, teachers who were also willing to take part in a short interview could leave their contact information. Ten teachers volunteered, and one of them was randomly selected for an interview. The interviewee, Venla (not their real name), had graduated in the turn of the year 2017 and had altogether 3-4 years of teaching experience, mostly form lower secondary school but also form primary and upper secondary schools.

4.2 Data and data collection

The primary goal was to understand teachers' views and experiences on the topic, not to get widely generalizable results, which is why the gathered data was mostly qualitative. However, some closed-ended questions were also asked, and answers to those provided quantitative data. In its entirety, the data consisted of the questionnaire answers of 91 teachers and an interview with one of them. The data was collected during weeks 4-6 in 2022.

Of the two methods used, the questionnaire was the main method of data collection. This was convenient considering the goals of the study, as questionnaires allow recruiting large groups of participants and can be used to gather attitudinal and behavioural information (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2010: 5-9). Another benefit in using questionnaires is that participants can answer whenever it suits them. This was especially beneficial because my target group consisted of teachers, who are often busy. The questionnaire created for the present study consisted of both closed- and open-ended questions. For example, questions like "Based on your experiences, do oral tasks cause uncertainty in your students?" had ready-made options for answering, while more freedom was given in questions about the teachers' reactions to specific situations. All in all, three such situations were introduced to the teachers: a talented student who is not participating in oral tasks due to lack of confidence (question 10), a student providing a comprehensible yet ungrammatical answer to the teacher's question (question 11), and a reserved group that needs to practice their pronunciation but finds oral tasks stressful (question 12).

However, there are some downsides in using questionnaires. First, the respondents answer the questions independently, and the researcher cannot prevent misunderstandings or ask follow-up questions. Consequently, the questions must be simple, and questionnaires do not produce very profound information. Furthermore, motivating participants can be challenging (Dörnyei

& Taguchi 2010: 7–9; Mligo 2016: 90–91). Acknowledging these problems, I piloted the questionnaire beforehand and conducted one semi-structured interview to complement the data.

Venla's interview took place on Zoom and lasted for 35 minutes. Our conversation allowed me to deepen my understanding of Venla's experiences by asking follow-up questions and raising issues that the questionnaire did not cover. The frame of the interview can be found in Appendix 2 (not all the questions were asked, since some topics came up otherwise). As this was a semi-structured interview, the order of the topics was similar to that of the questionnaire. The interview enriched the research data, but the possible interviewer bias must be acknowledged, as this can be a challenge when conducting interviews (Mligo 2016: 86-90).

Regarding ethical issues, all survey participants were informed about their rights and the use of their answers in the study. In addition, the GDPR privacy notice was introduced to Venla before the interview and, by signing the research permit form, they agreed to let me use their answers as research data. It was also made clear that withdrawing answers was possible at any point before May the 8th, when the thesis was submitted. The interview was video recorded but, having transcribed our discussion, I deleted the video and audio files permanently. To secure the interviewee's privacy and anonymity, they were given a pseudonym and all recognisable information was deleted or replaced with general terms.

4.3   Methods of analysis

Since the present study focused on the teachers' experiences and opinions, or in other words, on the *content* of their answers, data-driven qualitative content analysis was chosen as the principal method of analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 117). The answers to the closed-ended questions were analysed quantitatively, in terms of descriptive statistics. It should be noted here that, when doing qualitative content analysis, the researcher acts as an interpreter, and their own views inevitably affect the analysis to some extent (Willig 2012: 45). So, despite my efforts to remain impartial, the results are unlikely to be purely objective, which should be considered when reading them. Nevertheless, this method made it possible to analyse the data freely and develop new ideas.

To be more precise, the data was coded to find the most significant factors relating to the research questions. Especially the answers to question 6 about the reasons for choosing certain teaching techniques provided useful information concerning research question 1. For research question 2, the different procedures teachers mentioned were classified into categories based on their approaches to the issue. Especially the answers to question 9 (In your opinion, how

could these feelings (of anxiety) be prevented?) and teachers' reactions to specific situations (10. talented but insecure student, 11. comprehensible but ungrammatical utterance, and 12. reserved group needing practice) guided this classification. In the end, 4 categories were constructed: *supporting an encouraging learning environment*, *addressing the problem through conversation*, *adjusting teaching techniques*, and *creating tolerance*. I attempted to create enough categories to cover the phenomenon as exhaustively as possible, and paid attention to the homogeneity within and heterogeneity between categories, which are important factors in categorization (Chenail 2008: 74).

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here I describe the findings of the present study and consider their connections to previous research. I start by presenting general remarks, after which the results are discussed in relation to the two research questions.

5.1 General observations

Overall, the importance of pronunciation teaching seemed to be recognized, as 69.2% of the participants reported giving it the same amount of attention as reading, writing and listening. This is interesting considering previous findings that have revealed Finnish students' dissatisfaction with their pronunciation teaching (Tergujeff 2013; Hamm 2019). When combining these findings, it seems that the source of dissatisfaction has not been the amount of pronunciation teaching, but rather its content. Indeed, Tergujeff (2013) reports that Finnish EFL teachers often rely on textbooks and traditional activities when teaching pronunciation, which could also be seen in the present study: many teachers reported using tasks presented in textbooks, and reading aloud and shadowing were among the most popular task types. Nevertheless, as figure 1 shows, all suggested methods in question 5 were used, and for example games and drama techniques were popular as well. Regarding working arrangements, pair work was favoured over individual and group work.
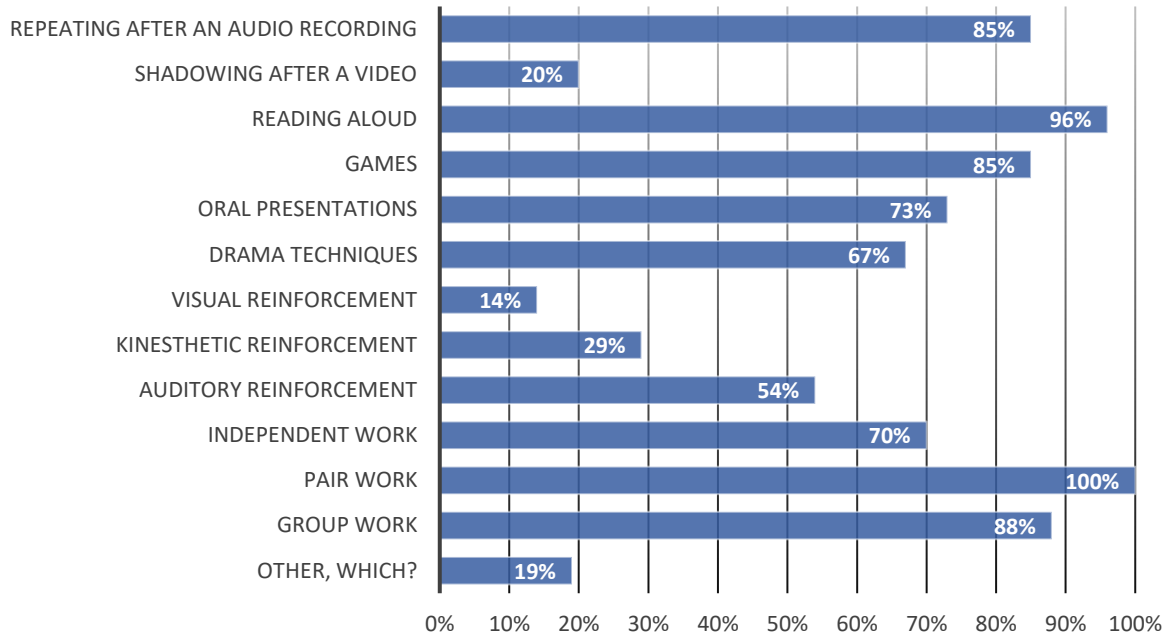
Figure 1: Finnish EFL teachers' (n=91) answers to Question 5: *Which of the following techniques do you use in your teaching of pronunciation? (Choose all the suitable options.)*

Similarly to previous findings (Tergujeff 2013), many teachers in the present study (47.2%) felt that they had not received sufficient training concerning pronunciation teaching. Venla, too, stated that this kind of training was almost non-existing at university and pointed out that, as language studies and pedagogical studies are treated as separate entities, hardly any field-specific advice is given.

In addition, foreign language anxiety seems to be quite a common phenomenon in Finnish EFL classrooms, as none of the participants chose option 'never' when asked if they had noticed oral tasks causing such feelings in students. Over half of the participants answered 'sometimes', but some also reported noticing anxiety 'often', 'almost always' or 'hardly ever'. Teachers could also identify many ways how anxiety shows, such as reluctance, nervousness, facial expressions, fooling around, and even panic attacks. These findings imply that most teachers face such situations during their careers, which strengthens the feeling that the present study could be helpful.

5.2   Learners' feelings in the planning of pronunciation teaching

The things the teachers take into consideration in the planning process were first inquired in the questionnaire, where they were asked to reason their choices of teaching methods. The reasons that appeared the most were *the multifacetedness of teaching, the effectiveness of teaching*, *the ease of implementation*, and *the pleasantness of teaching for learners*. Multifacetedness refers

to using various methods, effectiveness to focusing on the most necessary issues and aiming at progressing efficiently, ease of implementation to the accessibility of materials and the feasibility of tasks, and pleasantness for learners to using methods that learners find enjoyable and unintimidating. It should be noted that, while these four types of reasoning are treated separately here, they are connected to each other, and different aspects were mentioned side-by-side. Nevertheless, I attempted to perceive an order of importance among them to see how the pleasantness aspect places in relation to the other three.

Based on the questionnaire, the four aspects seem almost equally important: multifacetedness was mentioned 40 times, pleasantness 35 times, effectiveness 34 times, and ease of implementation 33 times. Moreover, 74.7 % of the participants either completely or somewhat disagreed with the statement *"The efficiency of pronunciation teaching is more important than its pleasantness."* These, however, do not indicate any straightforward order of importance since, as stated above, the four aspects were interrelated in the answers: some for example mentioned that using various methods allows different learners to find a form of learning that suits them. To get an explicit order of importance, Venla was asked to rank these from the most to the least important (Extract 1).

> *(1) No varmaan tärkein on se mieluisuus oppilaille. [--] kyllä se on arjessa varmaan niin että sitten se toteuttamisen helppous on toka ehkä. Ja sit varmaan kolmantena monipuolisuus ja sitten se tehokkuus ehkä viimesenä [--].*
>
> *Well, probably the most important one is the pleasantness for learners. [--] yes, in day-to-day life it is probably so that the ease of implementation maybe comes in second. And then the multifacetedness would probably be on third place, and the efficiency would maybe come in last [--].*

Of course, this is a personal preference of one teacher, and no definitive conclusions can be made based on this. Nevertheless, when combining Venla's ranking with the aforementioned answers, pleasantness for learners appears to be a significant factor in the planning of pronunciation teaching.

5.3 Procedures to support learners' L2 self-confidence

As mentioned in section 4, teachers' answers to questions 9-12 and Venla's interview were used to form four categories under which the procedures to reduce learners' anxiety and support their confidence could be labelled: *supporting an encouraging learning environment*, *addressing the problem through conversation*, *adjusting teaching techniques*, and *creating tolerance*. All

categories came up both in the context of a talented but insecure student (question 10) and in the context of a reserved group needing pronunciation practice (question 12), but there were differences in their significance. The categories partly resemble those created by Huang (2012) and include things suggested by Hakkarainen (2021), but some complementary information was also found. Table 1 shows what was included in each category.

Table 1: Contents of the four categories of procedures that Finnish EFL teachers use to support learners' L2 self-confidence in pronunciation

Supporting an encouraging learning environment	Addressing the problem through conversation	Adjusting teaching techniques	Creating tolerance
Providing positive feedback and complements Allowing mistakes and not focusing on them Using humour Being strict about not allowing mocking	Emphasizing the importance of pronunciation skills Discussing the normalcy of anxiety in oral communication Sharing one's own experiences Discussing the difference between spoken and written communication Bringing forth different accents	Paying attention to the forming of pairs/groups Not forcing Providing alternative ways to perform a task Starting small and gradually increasing the level of demand (in both tasks and testing) Using interesting and fun communicational tasks that motivate learners (role play and games)	Familiarizing learners with oral tasks Getting used to pair and group work

5.3.1 Supporting an encouraging learning environment

Based on the questionnaire, an encouraging learning environment requires a positive and relaxed attitude from the teacher, positive feedback, and a humorous and safe atmosphere, where errors are not emphasized and mocking is strictly forbidden. Indeed, error correction became an important theme in this category, which is why the answers to question 11, where participants were asked if they would correct a student's understandable yet ungrammatical answer, were observed in relation to this category. Most participants would bring forth the correct form with recasts, meaning that they would repeat the student's utterance correctly in a responsive manner without explicitly correcting the error. Some reported that they would not correct the utterance at all while others would correct it gently, partly depending on the focus

of the task (communication vs. grammar). Overall, most teachers seemed to be against extensive correction of speech errors, as 98.9% either strongly or somewhat disagreed with the statement "All errors should always be corrected in students' speech". It was also agreed upon that these errors should be corrected in a constructive and positive manner.

Similar things were raised by Venla when asked how they would start building a positive learning environment. Venla also stressed the importance of humour, as Extract 2 shows.

> *(2) Kyllä mä aattelen et huumori on niinku tosi tärkee osa sitä opetusta [--] siis todella paljon niinku viljelen sellasta ihan puujalkahuumoria mistä ne (oppilaat) on ihan niinku sillee silmiään pyöritellen että "Voi morjens miten toi tolleen höpöttää!". Mut että sitte ku jos ne kuitenki välillä se niiden cool ulkokuori rakoilee ja ne saattaa siellä nauraa nii sit se on sillee että "Jes!", et nyt tää niinku onnistu.*
>
> *I do think that humour is a very important part of that teaching [--] I mean I cultivate that kind of dad jokes that makes them (the students) roll their eyes and be like "Oh no, why are they being so silly!". But then if sometimes that cool image of theirs breaks a little and they might laugh, then it's like "Yes!", now this was successful.*

What Venla deemed the most important in making the atmosphere positive was making the students feel that their teacher likes them and enjoys teaching them. According to Venla, this can be done by regularly asking students how they are doing and thanking them after nice classes.

Altogether 60 teachers mentioned things relating to an encouraging learning environment when asked how feelings of uncertainty and anxiety could be prevented on a general level, which made it the most significant category concerning this question. In the more specific contexts of questions 10 and 12, it received the second highest number of mentions. In the situation of one talented and insecure student, the importance of individual praise and encouragement was especially prominent, while more attention was given to group dynamics when dealing with a reserved group.

These findings seem to confirm the results of previous research. Regarding Huang's teacher responsibilities (2012: 141-151), this category includes changing attitudes toward students and creating a supportive learning environment. As for Hakkarainen's suggestions for supporting learners' WTC (2021: 20), creating a safe and encouraging learning environment, accepting mistakes (both the students' and one's own), not correcting students in front of the whole class, concentrating on learners' strengths, and giving positive feedback are all compound in this category.

5.3.2 Addressing the problem through conversation

The second category is called *addressing the problem through conversation*, where the word 'problem' refers to learners not participating in oral activities. The participants' answers showed that this conversation can be approached in different ways: it can be had either with the whole class or individually, and it can touch different aspects of the problem.

Some teachers mentioned highlighting the importance of pronunciation skills in real life to motivate learners, while others focused on discussing nervousness being normal when speaking in foreign languages and shared their own mishaps to encourage students. Another topic of conversation was the difference between written and spoken communication: when speaking, it is common to make mistakes while more attention should be paid on grammar in written communication. This included trying to make the students understand that no one's speech is completely grammatically correct, not even in their L1. It was also deemed important to bring forth different accents to show that English can be pronounced in many ways. One teacher presented an interesting example relating to this: they reported speaking heavily accented Finnish ('hoono soomi') to their students to make them understand that accent itself does not affect the intelligibility of speech, and that native English speakers will most likely understand their speech similarly as they understood the teacher's 'hoono soomi'. This technique is supported by earlier research showing how strongly accented speech can still be completely intelligible (Derwing and Munro 2015: 5).

This theme did not come up in the interview, but its importance is visible in the questionnaire answers. When generally listing how anxious feelings could be prevented, 28 teachers mentioned discussion, which made this the third most prominent category regarding this question. Conversation seemed to be more commonly used with one unsecure student than with a reserved group, as it was the third most significant in the former context and the fourth most significant in the latter. Differences of execution also appeared, as individual conversations were emphasized when dealing with one insecure student, and whole group discussions and inspirational speeches came up more in the context of a reserved group.

Though this category seems important based on the above-mentioned findings, both Huang (2012) and Hakkarainen (2021) cover it quite superficially. Huang merely states that students should be encouraged to participate and Hakkarainen suggests that students should be reminded that they are allowed to make mistakes and need not sound native-like. Hence, it seems that the benefits of discussion have not been widely recognized in previous work.

5.3.3   Adjusting teaching techniques

The third category, *adjusting teaching techniques,* refers to enabling alternative ways to perform a task without forcing, progressing with small steps, using motivating, communicational tasks, and forming the working pairs/groups carefully. The first of these means that a student who feels uncomfortable talking in front of others is allowed to practice outside the classroom, submit oral tasks by sending voice messages to the teacher, or give their oral presentations privately to the teacher. Progressing slowly refers to starting with easy-going tasks that do not demand much, such as reading aloud or shadowing, and gradually increasing the amount of improvised speech. To make the tasks fun and motivating, the participants suggested considering students' wishes, rehearsing real-life situations, and using games and role play. All these subcategories were prominent, but the most mentioned was the careful formation of working pairs/groups. Teachers seemed to find it especially important that each student feels safe with the other person(s) they are assigned to work with.

Progressing with small steps and allowing students to give presentations privately also came up in the interview, and pairing students was something to which Venla gave a lot of thought as well. They explained that, in addition to helping students feel safe, deciding the pairs beforehand allows the teacher to match students based on their skill levels and leaves no student feeling that no one wants to be their partner, which supports the positive atmosphere.

One theme that was not covered in the questionnaire but was included in the interview was assessment. As test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are factors of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz 2001: 115) and some questionnaire participants reported testing students' oral skills, this topic was added to the interview. Venla mentioned that pronunciation tests can make students nervous, especially those who are used to succeeding in traditional tests by learning things by heart and therefore find it threatening to only rely on their existing language skills in a test. Their solution was to test pronunciation annually, starting with a less demanding format and gradually moving forwards. According to Venla, this slowly decreases anxiety related to such tests by familiarizing students with them. They also reported only giving verbal feedback on pronunciation and emphasizing communicativeness. However, Venla stated that all the existing assessment criteria can be interpreted very subjectively and wished they had received more education on objective pronunciation assessment.

In general listings of procedures, 50 teachers mentioned adjusting teaching. As for specific teaching methods, pair work was the most favoured option, and traditional exercises like

reading aloud or repetition were seen as good, low threshold starting points. Moreover, games and role play were mentioned as ways to liberate the atmosphere and make tasks more interesting. Role play was also recommended because it allows students to hide behind a role, making trying less threatening: if they fail, they fail as the character they are playing. Adjusting teaching received the most mentions in both specific contexts, and the importance of pair/group divisions was emphasized in both. While alternative ways to perform a task came up more in the context of one insecure student, progressing slowly was more commonly used with a reserved group.

Furthermore, Venla introduced another situation where adjusting teaching could prove useful. They reported that when students are doing pair work and most pairs have finished, the pairs that are not yet done tend to also stop working because they do not want the others to hear their speech. A technique suggested in the questionnaire answers could help here: playing some background music.

Adjusting teaching is discussed in Huang's (2012) and Hakkarainen's (2021) work, but perhaps not in as much detail as in the present study. Huang states that teachers should use student-centred methods and use the target language as much as possible, whereas Hakkarainen mentions preferring pair and small group discussions, using different activities, and focusing on different character strengths. The present study confirms these results while also giving concrete advice on how pronunciation teaching could be adjusted.

5.3.4 Creating tolerance

The fourth category, *creating tolerance*, entails familiarising learners with both oral tasks and working with others. In other words, the amount of oral exercise is kept high despite possible reluctance, so that learners get used to speaking English and experience successful communication, which can gradually decrease their anxiety. This procedure was raised in the questionnaire as well as in the interview and, when asked which procedure they found the most efficient, Venla's answer reflected this procedure (Extract 3).

> *(3) No varmaan vaan se että niitä pitää, vaikka se on aika brutaalia, niin vaan niinku totuttaa siihen. Ja et ne huomaa, et vaikka se jännittää, nii sitte siitä voi selvitä ja ehkä se ei niinku jännitä seuraavalla kerralla sit enää ihan niin kauheen paljon.*
>
> *Well probably that they must, even though it's quite brutal, like just be accustomed to it. And that they notice that, even though it makes them anxious, they can survive it, and maybe they will no longer be as terribly anxious the next time.*

However, many stated that this familiarization should be started early to achieve optimal efficiency. Venla agreed and stated that it would be extremely difficult to establish a routine later, in upper secondary school for instance. Thus, as opposed to the other procedure categories, creating tolerance works as a precautionary way to decrease learners' anxiety.

In the questionnaire, 25 teachers mentioned things related to this category when generally listing procedures. Between the two specific situations, creating tolerance was significantly more prominent in the context of a reserved group. Indeed, an interesting dichotomy appeared here between creating tolerance and adjusting teaching: while some teachers emphasized the importance of creating a routine through practice, others stated that no student should be forced to do something they feel uncomfortable doing, especially when dealing with individual students. Therefore, this approach seems to be particularly suitable for reserved groups of young learners.

Regarding previous research, Huang (2012) includes increasing students' possibilities to practice in the responsibility of improving teaching methods, and Hakkarainen (2021) suggests that pronunciation should be rehearsed often. However, they do not explicitly state that this is done to create tolerance. Thus, the present study both confirms earlier findings and illuminates the aims behind increased pronunciation practice.

6   CONCLUSION

This study aimed at examining the level of importance that Finnish EFL teachers give to learners' feelings of anxiety when planning their pronunciation teaching. Another goal was to find out how these teachers act to decrease learners' anxiety when teaching pronunciation, thus supporting their oral L2 self-confidence. This topic was chosen, as previous research has shown that foreign language anxiety can hamper language learning significantly and is often stronger when pronunciation is involved. Therefore, studying how teachers could relieve these feelings was deemed necessary.

Based on the findings, learners' feelings play an important role in the planning of pronunciation teaching, as many participants mentioned pleasantness for learners when reasoning their choices of teaching methods in the questionnaire. Venla, the interviewee, even ranked it the most important factor guiding their planning. As for the procedures teachers took to support learner's L2 self-confidence, four categories were created: *supporting an encouraging learning*

environment, *addressing the problem through conversation*, *adjusting teaching*, *and creating tolerance*.

These findings support and complement previous research. The amount of consideration teachers gave to learners' feelings seems to reflect the correlations found between pronunciation teaching and foreign language anxiety, and foreign language anxiety and achievement (e.g. Lintunen & Mäkilähde 2015; Baghaei & Dourakhsahn 2012). The participants also appeared to understand the important role they as teachers have in reducing this anxiety, established by for example Abu-Rabia (2004). Furthermore, the procedure categories resemble Huang's (2012) teacher responsibilities in decreasing FLCA and include similar things as Hakkarainen's (2021) list of ways to support learners' WTC.

Nevertheless, there are some limitations to the present study. As stated in section 4, the chosen research methods pose challenges: questionnaires often fail to produce detailed information, since the questions must be simple enough to prevent misunderstandings, interviewer bias can hamper the objectivity of the interview answers, and qualitative content analysis allows subjective interpretation. Moreover, the study focused solely on the point of view of teachers, and no evidence of the efficiency of the found procedures was provided. Consequently, future research could use classroom observations to get a more realistic image of this phenomenon, study learners' experiences on this topic to see if they match those of teachers, and take a more empirical approach to examine the actual effects these procedures have.

Despite these limitations, the study reached its goals. The sample was surprisingly comprehensive, as 91 teachers from primary to tertiary levels of education chose to participate, and supplementing the questionnaire answers with an interview resulted in plentiful data. Altogether, the study complements earlier, student-centred research, and provides information that is can be directly useful to teachers struggling with learners' anxiety when teaching pronunciation. The results also imply that pronunciation practice should be started as early as possible, as routine appears to prevent anxiety relating to it.

To conclude, it must be noted that teachers should always base their choice of procedures on the taught group. After all, as one participant put it, *there's no one size fits all*.

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APPENDICES

Here you can find the questionnaire created for the present study (Appendix 1) and the frame of the interview (Appendix 2)

Appendix 1: The questionnaire

Tutkimus englannin kielen suullisten kielitaitojen opetuksesta Suomessa

Arvoisa osallistuja,

Olen tehnyt tämän kyselyn kandidaatintutkielmaani varten, joka käsittelee suomalaisten englanninopettajien käsityksiä ja kokemuksia liittyen suullisen kielitaidon opettamiseen. Huomaathan, että olen kiinnostunut juuri Sinun kokemuksistasi, eikä kyselyssä ole oikeita tai vääriä vastauksia. Toivonkin, että vastaat kysymyksiin mahdollisimman rehellisesti.

Kysely on anonyymi, eikä tiettyjä vastauksia siis ole mahdollista yhdistää tiettyyn vastaajaan. Alun taustatietokysymyksistä saatava tieto auttaa minua tulosten tilastollisessa vertailussa, mutta muuhun tarkoitukseen en niitä käytä.

Itse kysely koostuu neljästä lyhyestä osasta, jotka sisältävät sekä suljettuja että avoimia kysymyksiä. Yhteensä kyselyyn vastaaminen vie noin 15 minuuttia, riippuen vastauksiesi laajuudesta. Saatuja vastauksia tullaan käyttämään ainoastaan tässä Jyväskylän yliopistolle tehdyssä kandidaatintutkielmassa, minkä jälkeen ne hävitetään asianmukaisesti.

Mikäli olet kiinnostunut osallistumaan lisäksi lyhyeen haastatteluun, voit jättää sähköpostiosoitteesi kyselyn loppuun.

Jos sinulla on kysyttävää tutkimukseeni liittyen, voit ottaa minuun yhteyttä sähköpostitse: milja.lm.naskali@student.jyu.fi

Suurkiitos osallistumisestasi!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Milja Naskali

Vastaamalla tähän kyselyyn vakuutat olevasi vähintään 18-vuotias ja annat luvan vastaustesi käyttämiseen yllä mainitussa kandidaatintutkielmassa. Lisäksi vakuutat kuuluvasi kohderyhmään ja vastaavasi kyselyyn vapaaehtoisesti. Kyselyn keskeyttäminen on mahdollista

missä vaiheessa tahansa, eivätkä vastaukset tallennu ennen lopun "Lähetä"-painikkeen klikkaamista.

* * *

Study on the teaching of English pronunciation in Finland

Dear participant,

I have created this survey for my Bachelor's thesis that deals with Finnish EFL-teachers' views and experiences concerning pronunciation teaching. Note that I am interested in Your experiences only, and there are no right or wrong answers in the survey. Therefore, I hope that you answer the questions as honestly as possible.

The survey is anonymous, and it is not possible to connect specific answers to specific participants. The information gathered in the background section will help me in statistical comparison, but I will not use it for any other purposes.

The questionnaire itself consists of four short sections that include both closed- and open-ended questions. In total, it takes about 15 minutes to complete the survey, depending on the depth of your answers. The gathered results will only be used in this Bachelor's thesis done for the University of Jyväskylä, after which they will be disposed appropriately.

In case you are also interested in participating in a short interview, you can leave your e-mail address at the end of the questionnaire.

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact me via e-mail:

milja.lm.naskali@student.jyu.fi

Thank you very much for participating!

Kind regards,

Milja Naskali

By answering this questionnaire, you confirm that you are at least 18 years old and allow your answers to be used in the Bachelor's thesis described above. You also confirm that you belong to the target group and answer the questionnaire voluntarily. It is possible to quit the questionnaire at any point, and your answers will not be saved until you click the "Lähetä"-button at the end.

* * *

TAUSTATIEDOT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. **Sukupuoli / Gender**

O Nainen / Female

O Mies / Male

O Muu / Other

O En halua kertoa / I don't want to say

2. **Opetan tai olen opettanut englantia… (voit valita useita) / I teach or have taught English… (you can choose multiple options)**

☐ alakoulussa / in primary school

☐ yläkoulussa / in lower secondary school

☐ lukiossa / in upper secondary school

☐ ammattikoulussa / in vocational school

☐ ammattikorkeakoulussa / at polytechnic

☐ yliopistossa / at university

3. **Opetuskokemukseni / My teaching experience**

O alle 1 vuosi / less than 1 year

O 1-5 vuotta / 1-5 years

O 5-10 years / 5-10 years

O yli 10 vuotta / more than 10 years

* * *

OSIO 1/4 / PART 1/4

4. **Arvioi seuraavia väittämiä / evaluate the following statements**

	Täysin eri mieltä / Completely disagree	Jokseenkin eri mieltä / Somewhat disagree	En osaa sanoa / Can't say	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä / Somewhat agree	Täysin samaa mieltä / Completely agree
Suullinen kielitaito saa saman verran huomiota opetuksessani kuin muut kielen osa-alueet (lukeminen, kuunteleminen, kirjoittaminen). Pronunciation receives the same amount of attention in my teaching as other skills (reading, listening, writing).	O	O	O	O	O
Suullisen kielitaidon opetuksessa tehokkuus on tärkeämpää kuin miellyttävyys. The efficiency of pronunciation teaching is more important than its pleasantness.	O	O	O	O	O
Pyrin aina huomioimaan oppilaideni mahdolliset epävarmuuden tunteet suunnitellessani suullisen kielitaidon opetusta. I always try to take my students' possible feelings of uncertainty into account when planning pronunciation teaching.	O	O	O	O	O
Opettajan asenteella on suuri vaikutus ryhmän oppimiseen. The teacher's attitude has a great impact on the learning of a group.	O	O	O	O	O
Oppilaiden puheesta tulisi aina korjata kaikki virheet. All errors should always be corrected in students' speech.	O	O	O	O	O
On tärkeää panostaa hyvän oppimisilmapiirin luomiseen, vaikka se veisi aikaa muulta opetukselta. It is important to put effort into creating a positive learning	O	O	O	O	O

environment, even if this takes time away from other teaching.					
Opettajan tehtävä on varmistaa, että oppilaat luottavat omaan suulliseen kielitaitoonsa. It is the teacher's job to make sure that students trust their own pronunciation skills.	O	O	O	O	O
Olen saanut riittävästi koulutusta suullisen kielitaidon opettamiseen liittyen. I have received enough training relating to teaching pronunciation.	O	O	O	O	O

* * *

OSIO 2/4 / PART 2/4

5. **Mitä seuraavista menetelmistä käytät suullisten kielitaitojen opetuksessasi? (Valitse kaikki sopivat vaihtoehdot.) / Which of the following methods do you use in your teaching of pronunciation? (Choose all options that apply.)**

☐ Ääninauhan perässä toistaminen / Repeating after an audio recording

☐ Videon jäljittely (ääni + eleet, ilmeet ja liikkeet) / Mirroring after a video (voice + gestures, faces and movements)

☐ Ääneen lukeminen / Reading out loud

☐ Pelit / Games

☐ Suulliset esitelmät / Oral presentations

☐ Draamatekniikat (esimerkiksi roolileikit, improvisaatio, äänen muuntelu jne.) / Drama techniques (for example role play, improvisation, voice manipulation etc.)

☐ Visuaalinen vahvistaminen (esim. äänteitä havainnollistavat kuvakortit) / Visual reinforcement (e.g., picture cards representing different sounds)

☐ Kinesteettinen vahvistaminen (esim. äänteen liittäminen johonkin tiettyyn liikkeeseen) / Kinesthetic reinforcement (e.g., connecting a certain sound to a certain movement)

☐ Äänteisiin liittyvät mielikuvat (esim. junan äänen matkiminen /tʃ/-äännettä opeteltaessa) / Auditory reinforcement (e.g., imitating a train when learning the /tʃ/ sound)

☐ Yksilötyöskentely / Independent work

☐ Parityöskentely / Pair work

☐ Ryhmätyöskentely / Group work

☐ Muu, mikä? / Other, which? _____

6. Miksi olet valinnut käyttää näitä menetelmiä? / Why have you chosen to use these methods?

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$* * *$

OSIO 3/4 / PART 3/4

7. Kokemuksiesi perusteella, aiheuttavatko suulliset tehtävät ahdistuksen tai epävarmuuden tunteita opppilaissasi? / Based on your experiences, do oral tasks cause feelings of anxiety or uncertainty in your students?

O Lähes aina / Almost always

O Usein / Often

O Joskus / Sometimes

O Hyvin harvoin / Hardly ever

O Ei koskaan / Never

8. Miten tämän voi huomata? / How can this be noticed?

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9. Miten näitä tunteita voisi mielestäsi ehkäistä? / In your opinion, how could these feelings be prevented?

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* * *

OSIO 4/4 / PART 4/4

MITEN REAGOISIT SEURAAVISSA TILANTEISSA? / HOW WOULD YOU REACT IN
THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS?

10. **Taitava oppilas on epävarma suullisesta kielitaidostaan, minkä vuoksi hän sulkeutuu
suullisia harjoituksia tehtäessä. / A talented student is uncertain about their
pronunciation skills, which is why they do not participate in oral tasks.**

11. **Ymmärrät oppilaan vastauksen kysymykseesi, mutta huomaat tämän puheessa
useita kielioppivirheitä. / You understand a student's answer to your question, but
notice several grammatical errors in their speech.**

12. **Opettamasi ryhmä on hiljainen ja varautunut, ja huomaat suullisten tehtävien
aiheuttavan heissä stressiä. He kuitenkin tarvitsisivat harjoitusta tällä saralla. / The
group you are teaching is reserved and finds oral tasks stressful yet they would need
practice in this area.**

* * *

Jos olet halukas osallistumaan tämän kyselyn lisäksi lyhyeen haastatteluun, voit jättää sähköpostioioitteesi tähän: / If you are willing to also take part in a short interview, you can leave you email address here:

HUOM! Sähköpostiosoitettasi EI yhdistetä muihin antamiisi vastauksiin. Sitä käytetään ainoastaan mahdollista yhteydenottoa varten. / NB! Your email address will NOT be connected to your responses. It will only be used for a possible contact.

Appendix 2: The frame of the interview

Lämmittely / Warm-up:

Kertoisitko vähän opettajan urastasi? / Could you briefly describe your career as a teacher?

- Kuinka kauan olet toiminut englanninopettajana? / How long have you worked as a teacher?
- Minkä ikäisiä oppijoita olet urallasi opettanut? / What age have your students been?

* * *

Varsinainen haastattelu / The actual interview:

1. Kuinka usein harjoitat suullista kielitaitoa opetuksessasi? / How often do you practice pronunciation in your teaching?

- Miten suunnittelet tätä opetusta? / How do you plan this teaching?
  - Millaisia asioita otat huomioon? / What kind of things do you consider?
  - Kyselylomakkeella esiin nousivat erityisesti opetuksen monipuolisuus, opetuksen mieluisuus oppilaille, toteuttamisen helppous sekä opetuksen tehokkuus. / In the questionnaire answers, especially the multifacetedness of teaching, the pleasantness of teaching for learners, the ease of implementation and the efficiency of teaching came up.
    - Mihin tärkeysjärjestykseen laittaisit nämä neljä? / How would you rank these from the most to the least important?

- o Mikä on opetuksesi tavoite (esim. kokeeseen valmistautuminen, puhumaan tottuminen, ymmärrettävä puhe, natiivitasoinen puhe…)? / What is the aim of your teaching (e.g. preparing for a test, learning how to speak on the L2, intelligible speech, native-like speech…)?
- Arvioitko oppilaidesi suullista kielitaitoa jotenkin? / Do you assess your students' pronunciation somehow?
  - o Pidätkö esim. suullisia kokeita tai arvioitavia suullisia esitelmiä? / Do you for example use oral tests or assess oral presentations?
  - o Miksi olet valinnut arvioida tai olla arvioimatta? / Why have chosen to assess or not to assess?
    - ▪ Millaisia vaikutuksia tällä on oppilaisiin? / How does this affect students?

2. Kuulostivatko kyselyssä esitellyt tilanteet tutuilta? / Did the situations mentioned in the survey sound familiar to you?

- Kyselylomakkeella monet ratkoivat haasteita antamalla mahdollisuuden itsenäiseen työskentelyyn ja esim. äänittämiseen. Kokemuksiesi perusteella, onko tällä vaikutusta oppilaan itsevarmuuteen vuorovaikutuksellisissa tehtävissä? / In the questionnaire, many solved problems by letting students work independently or record their speech. Do you think this affects students' confidence in interactional tasks?
- Jotkut vastaajista olivat sitä mieltä, että suullisia tehtäviä on vain teetettävä enemmän ja luotava rutiinia, kun taas toiset painottivat, ettei ketään saa pakottaa. Kumpaa mieltä itse enemmän olet? / Some participants though that the amount of oral practice should be increased to create routine while others emphasized that no one should be forced to do oral tasks. Which one of these approaches do you find better?

3. Onko oppilaiden itseluottamuksen puute aiheuttanut muunlaisia haasteita suullisia taitoja käsiteltäessä? / Has students' lack of confidence caused other kinds of problems when dealing with pronunciation skills?

- Millaisia? / What kind?
- Miten olet vastannut haasteisiin? / How have you reacted to these challenges?
  - o Minkä reagointitavan olet kokenut onnistuneimmaksi? / Which procedure have you found the most successful?
    - ▪ Miksi? / Why?

4. Kyselylomakkeella positiivinen oppimisilmapiiri nousi yhdeksi tärkeäksi tekijäksi epävarmuuksien hälventämisessä. / In the questionnaire answers, positive learning environment was mentioned as an important factor in decreasing uncertainty.

- o Miten lähtisit itse sellaista rakentamaan? / How would you start building such an environment?
- o Kyselylomakkeella korostui myös suullisiin harjoituksiin totuttaminen jo varhain. Entä jos näin ei ole toimittu, onko oppilaita mahdollista totuttaa vielä myöhemmässä vaiheessa? / The participants also emphasized that, when it comes to oral tasks, it is important to create a routine early on. If this has not been done, is it possible to establish a routine later?

5. Olet opettanut englantia alakoulussa, yläkoulussa ja lukiossa: / You have taught in primary school, lower secondary school, and upper secondary school:

- Onko eri ikäisten oppijoiden suhtautumisessa suullisiin tehtäviin eroja? / Are there differences in how students of different age react to oral tasks?
  - o Onko epävarmuus yleisempää jollakin tietyllä asteella? / Is uncertainty more common on some specific school level?
- Reagoitko eri tavalla eri ikäisten oppijoiden epävarmuuteen? / Do you react differently to the uncertainty of students according to their age?
  - o Miten? / How?

6. Kyselyssä lähes puolet vastasi "Täysin eri mieltä" tai "Jokseenkin eri mieltä" väitteeseen suullisen kielitaidon opetukseen liittyvän koulutuksen riittävyydestä. / In the questionnaire, almost half of the participants either completely or somewhat disagreed with the statement that their education on pronunciation teaching has been sufficient.

- Mitä mieltä itse olet? / What do you think?
- Minkä suhteen erityisesti toivoisit lisää koulutusta? / What would you especially like more education on?

7. Oletko saanut koulutusta siitä, miten ottaa oppilaiden kieliahdistus huomioon opetuksessa? / Have you received any education on how students' foreign language anxiety could be taken into account in teaching?

- Toivoisitko tällaista koulutusta? / Would you like to have this kind of education?

- Mistä olet keksinyt tavat reagoida ahdistukseen? / How have you come up with the procedures you use to react to students' anxiety?