INVESTMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN FINNISH UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstrakti

Tämän englannin kielen maisterintutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää, miten suomalaisten lukiolaisten investoiminen (engl. *investment*) englannin kielen oppimiseen vaikuttaa heidän oppimistuloksiinsa lukion englannintunneilla. Investointi viittaa oppimisympäristön ja ryhmän normeihin sitoutumiseen oman identiteetin rakentumisen ja sosiaalisen pääoman kerryttämisen kautta.

Tutkimus toteutettiin yhdistämällä eri tutkimusmetodeja. Opiskelijoille teetettiin kysely, jonka tarkoituksena oli selvittää oppilaiden investoitumisen taso, sekä investoinnin tapoja kaikilta investoinnin osa-alueilta: sosiaalinen identiteetti, pääoma ja ideologiat. Kyselyn pohjalta oppilaiden opettajille tehtiin puolistrukturoitu teemahaastattelu, jolla kartoitettiin opettajien näkemyksiä oppijoiden investoinnista.

Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että oppimistulosten ja investoinnin välillä ei ole suoraa yhteyttä, mutta niiden suhde toisiinsa on monisyinen ja vaihtelee yksilöiden välillä. Tutkitut ryhmät olivat investoituneet luokan käytänteisiin ja oppimisen tapoihin yleisellä tasolla. Luokissa vallitsi hyvä henki, ja suurimmalla osalla on mahdollisuus oppia. Oppilaat kokivat, että voivat tuoda itsestään esiin haluamansa symbolisen pääoman. Opiskelijat kritisoivat jonkin verran koulun käytänteitä, kuten kiireistä aikataulua, sekä sitä, että koulussa opittu kieli on epäkäytännöllistä. Heillä oli paljon käyttökohteita englannin kielelle, eikä kyselyistä ilmennyt merkittävää vastustusta lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteiden tavoitteita kohtaan.

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Abstract

The aim of this master's thesis was to investigate Finnish general upper secondary school students' investment in English language learning, and if investment is connected to language learning outcomes.

The study was conducted by using mixed methods, and the students' level of investment, as well as ideologies were investigated by conducting a questionnaire. Questionnaire analyzed all the components of investment: social identity, capital, and perceived benefits and ideologies. Based on the questionnaire, a semi-structured theme interview was created for the teachers. Quantitative methods were used to report the students' level of investment. Qualitative methods were used to analyze the themes for the teacher interview. The theme interview aimed to examine the teachers' views on the themes in the students' answers.

The findings were that there is no statistically significant connection between investment and learning outcomes, but their relationship is multifaceted and varies from individual to individual. Students invest in English learning in different ways, but in general they are invested in the classroom practices and working. The students experience that they can bring out all their capital that they want, and they appreciate each other's capital: they are willing to learn and skillful. The students criticized some of the school practices, such as the busy schedule and language that is impractical for their everyday lives. However, the questionnaire did not show significant aversion towards the goals of National Core Curriculum.

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1   INTRODUCTION

In the year 1995 Bonny Norton Peirce published her article about migrant women in Canada and their relationship to and efforts on learning English. She argued that previous SLA theorists have not been able to integrate the learner and the learning environment, even though their relationship is crucial in SLA. Based on the stories of the immigrants and previous research, Norton Peirce formulated a theoretical concept to integrate language learner and the language learning context. The theory received the name of "investment". To sum up this theory, it describes how much of their own capital the learner is ready to invest in the language learning in hope of exchange value, be it material or symbolic resources.

Finland is known for its' school system. The basic education aims to promote equal opportunities to all (Perusopetuslaki [PerOpL] 1998/628, §2). However, we have a great variety in success and proficiency, and polarization seems to deepen in Finnish society. The polarization is is reflected in students' grades and in smaller numbers of students advancing to secondary school (Tilastokeskus, n.d.). Finnish government has recognized this problem, and in 2021 the compulsory education was continued until 18 years of age, until the end of upper secondary school. The weaker merits of the schooling in Finland poses a question if Finnish school system is a suitable learning context for most. Grades are an essential means of measuring students' success and proficiency: a passing grade is a gateway to the next school class, and competitive grades are a pass to higher education.

By far investment has not been studied in a regular classroom setting, but on e.g. immigrants and higher education students (e.g. Hajar 2017, Strömmer 2017, Iikkanen 2019, Norton and Gao 2008, Potowski 2004). However, in Finland first graders start studying a foreign language starting in the first grade (Kyckling, Vaarala, Ensser-Kananen, Saarinen and Suur-Askola 2019: 20). An addition was made in the year 2020 to the weekly hours of the primary education in order to fit more language lessons from the first grade. Before foreign language lessons started from the third grade. However, in practice the addition has led to 90% of children in primary school to study English from the first grade (Opetushallitus 2019). In addition, according to Eurydice, most of students in lower secondary education in the EU are learning one or more

foreign languages at school (2017). Therefore, since most young people learn foreign languages at school, they have experiences of investment. In addition, since this group of learners makes up a vast group of foreign language learners, it is important to investigate what kind of impact the notion of investment has on learning foreign languages at school.

This is why I decided to study the connection between students' grades and investment in the setting most are familiar with: compulsory education. In this case the participants are upper secondary school students on compulsory English courses. I explored the social identities and symbolic capital of these students, as well as how they are positioned in the classroom (Bourdieu 1991: 72, 77). I also investigated how committed they are to the goals of English language teaching in the National Core Curriculum of Finland (Opetushallitus 2014), as well as the value base of schooling system in Finland. I conducted a questionnaire to measure students' investment and based on their answers, I interviewed their teachers. This way I aimed to create an understanding of their level of investment, their ways of investment, as well as what are the implications regarding teaching.

The current study is, as far as I know, the first one to create a questionnaire to measure investment, and to investigate such a great number of participants regarding this theoretical framework. I hope the current study can provide learning opportunities not only for teachers and teacher trainees, but also SLA researchers and those who have been studying the theory of investment before. As this study will show, investment should not be overlooked as a part of the language learning process. I hope, also, that this study will provide a starting point for studying investment further in the Finnish, or other comparable, school system.

Note: Since school systems are not identical in every country, it can be difficult to find an equivalent terminology for each word one uses in their specific system. This is why I have had to deliberately pick the terminology I find most suitable to describe the Finnish school system. My vocabulary is based on the word choices of Finnish officials (such as the Ministry of Education and Culture) on translated pages, as well as readability. The words are explained in the grid below:

Primary school	Years 1-6 in Finnish compulsory education, ages 6-12
Lower secondary school	Years 7-9 in Finnish compulsory education, ages 13-16

Upper secondary school	After lower secondary school in Finnish compulsory education, vocational school also an option
Grade	School year in primary and lower secondary education
Grade	The final numerical value the teacher assigns a student as a result of evaluation

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The post-structuralist approach on language learning

The current study draws from the work post-structuralist conception of language, conceptualized by Bourdieu (1991) which understands language "as the locus of social organization, power, and individual consciousness, and as a form of symbolic capital" (Pavlenko and Norton 2007). Post-structuralism is not, however, one, unitary theory regarding language learning, but an umbrella term for multiple theoretical approaches which share some common conceptions of language and language learning. Post-structuralism was born to draw away from and build on structural approaches, as well as address the biases and limitations of sociopsychological approaches (Norton and Morgan 2012: 2, Pavlenko 2002: 279-281). Pavlenko outlines some of the issues in sociopsychological approaches that post-structuralism aims to shed light on, such as lack of complexity of speech communities and their membership, not understanding the ongoing cultural exchange of cultural properties and cultural impact, the problem of self-identification as a member of groups, as well as the illusion of causality of the inner attributes of a language learner in language learning success (Pavlenko 2002: 279-281). The response for these is that, in summary, post-structuralism aims to take the historical and social environment into account when inspecting success and failure in language learning, as well as the willingness of a learner to put effort into language learning, and to inspect the complexity of both social contexts and the identity of a learner when it comes to language learning.

The post-structuralist theory of language learning understands language as means of circulating discourses especially from the perspective of knowledge and power that is reflected in our practices (Norton and Morgan 2012: 1). Discourses, in this study, to describe very briefly, are ways of creating meanings: reality is not

described through meanings, but rather language is used to signify meanings for reality, and meaning making cannot exist without their social contexts (Fairclough 1992, as cited in Locke 2004: 6). In other words, language upkeeps the positions of power and what is considered knowledge via speech and texts, as opposed to structural approaches, which understands language as arbitrary conventions of a speech community (Norton and McKinney 2011: 77).

In addition, in post-structuralism, speech communities are seen as having multiple, competing claims of truth and discourses are sites of struggle, compared to structuralist views where speech communities are seen as relatively homogenous (Norton and Morgan 2012: 1-2). In an L2 classroom context this means that there might be multiple discourses in the classroom mediated by the school as an institution, the teacher, and students, and these discourses might be constructed around social class, gender, or linguistic competence. These discourses might be incompatible so that students (and teachers) are mediating different versions of reality (Pavlenko 2002: 283, Darvin and Norton 2023: 29). It is crucial to inspect speech communities as multiple and diverse, so that we can see the individual aims and goals regarding SLA (Bourdieu 1991: 194). Regarding power, teachers – and others making decisions about the teaching, such as politicians – hold more power than the students, what comes to classroom practices. The worldviews and assumptions of the teachers might be different from those of the students which can cause conflicts and resistance in a classroom (Darvin and Norton 2023, 29).

One of the theories under the umbrella of post-structural theories is the theory of investment (Norton-Peirce 1995). It aims to examine how the same social context, for example a classroom, may produce different experiences to learners with different, conflicting versions of realities drawing from their backgrounds. These experiences may shape their investment, or how much effort they are willing to put into the second language learning, affecting their learning outcomes (Pavlenko 2002, 297). The phenomenon and theory of investment is explained further in the following sections.

2.2 The theory of investment

This section explains the main idea of the theory of investment, and its relevance for the current study. The following sections will explain the components of investment in more detail, as well as address the question about the difference between investment and motivation. In the last part, we will return to the model of investment.

In the year 1995 Bonny Norton Peirce published her article about migrant women in Canada and their relationship to and efforts on learning English. She discussed the matter of despite being motivated or having reasons to learn and speak

the target language, there were often social factors affecting their willingness or "right" to speak. Furthermore, other people, often Canadians who spoke English as their L1, positioned them based on their language proficiency, and in response to this the participants either questioned the discourses they were subjects to and subjects of, or they were silenced. Norton Peirce argued that previous SLA theorists have not been able to integrate the learner and the learning environment, even though their relationship is crucial in SLA: one can not always choose the context they are studying language in, and the people they are using the target language with. The context, and experiences of agency and ownership affect the language usage greatly. This is why Norton Peirce formulated a theoretical concept regarding language learning as the construction and changing of one's identity in relation to the social world they are operating in, as well as power relations. These factors affect how much language learners are ready to make effort to acquire the target language (1995: 10). In other words, investment is about how much the learner is ready to invest in the language learning in hope of exchange value, be it material or symbolic resources.

So far investment has been studied in the context of immigrants or other bilinguals learning the majority language of their new home country, as well as university students and international students (e.g. Hajar 2017, Strömmer 2017, Iikkanen 2020, Norton and Gao 2008, Potowski 2004). However, these settings studied do not include the most regular ESL learning context: a school classroom in primary and secondary education. The current study is located in Finland, where first graders have to pick a language to study through the duration of their basic education. Even though schools should offer other languages as well, due to a lack of resources 90% of the students choose English (Kyckling, Vaarala, Ennser-Kananen, Saarinen and Suur-Askola 2019: 20, Opetushallitus 2019). This means that most Finnish young people have experiences about investment in English language learning and if investment is meaningful in terms of language learning, it would be interesting to study it in a classroom of basic education or upper secondary education, since English is compulsory in both. After all, as English is now the lingua franca, most people with access to education study English at school at some point.

Based on these notions of language learning being tightly linked to the social context, benefits the learner receives, and identity, Darvin and Norton (2015) theorized that investment comprises three main components:

1. Social identity
2. Capital
3. Ideology

The following sections will explain these three components that together constitute investment.

2.2.1 Social identity and imagined communities

Identity is a way of understanding oneself in relation to the outside world, and it has been conceptualised in many ways (see e.g. Jenkins 2014, Blommaert 2005). However, the theory of investment draws from the notion of *social identity*. Social identity is an identity, changing and affected by power relations, as well as the construction of subjectivity in social interactions (Norton and McKinney 2011: 74). Moreover, central for the post-structural theory of language is that language is a site of identity construction and negotiation (Pavlenko 2002: 284). This section aims to explain how social identity might affect the L2 learning.

In the view of social identity, a person's identity is under a continuous state of change regarding what the person is experiencing and how they get to express themselves – and how other people talk about them. Regarding social identity, Norton has drawn from Weedon's theory of subjectivity, in which identity is multiple, a site of struggle, and changing over time (Weedon 1987, as cited in Peirce 1995: 15). Central for the view of subjectivity is that an individual is diverse, contradictory, and decentred, and the subjective sense of self is constructed in the use of language, making social identity a site of struggle, where one must negotiate in social environments via language use and learning. Identities and positions within an individual might also be multiple and even contradicting (Peirce 1995: 18). Language and discourses act as a site of identity construction and negotiation because the learner is positioned and positions themselves in different discourses (Pavlenko 2002: 284). In addition to this, identity as a multiple and changing over time is interesting for the theory of investment, since individuals' identities can change during SLA, favourably or unfavourably regarding language learning (Peirce 1995: 18). Sometimes the identities or position offered by the target language is not ideal, and the learner might resist it by staying on a basic level or refusing to study the language any further (Pavlenko 2002: 285). Thus, language learning can be affected by this contradictory, struggling, and changing subjectivity (Peirce 1995: 15).

As already mentioned, the social identity is affected by how other people talk about the learner, and how they are treated in social practices. The use and learning of language happen in social sites which are affected by power relations, and individuals have various roles (Peirce 1995: 15). In interactions where language and discourses are used, a person can be a subject of and subject to discourses (Peirce 1995: 16). Power relations are related to social identity, since people and institutions in powerful positions – scholars, politicians, native speakers etc. – can impose rules of usage, proper forms of language and grant or deny entry or the right to speak (Peirce 1995:

18, Darvin & Norton 2023: 32). This way the powerful others affect the positioning of the L2 learner and affects the learners' social identities, since the subjectivity is affected by these positions. However, the subject is not considered passive: the subject is an agent in the subject positions (Peirce 1995: 15). *Positioning* is explained further in the next section.

A concept related to social identity is *imagined community*. An imagined community is a community, to which a person might relate to or might want to belong to through the use and learning of a certain language. It is imagined, since we rarely meet everyone belonging to this group, e.g., English speakers, yet we feel like we belong to this group (Kanno and Norton 2009: 241-242; Pavlenko and Norton 2007: 590). Regarding imagined communities, a common assumption to cause the willingness to study an additional language in previous theories has been the aspiration to acculturate to a certain group who speak the target language, or the acculturation model (Pittaway 2004: 208). Additionally, this view implicates that if someone does not speak the way the group they are supposed to relate to, they have failed in learning the language like a native (Pavlenko 2002: 295). This is, however, rarely the case anymore, especially in a classroom setting and now when technology allows us to be in contact with different people and groups, imagined communities might have nothing to do with ethnicity or multiculturalism in a way that we previously understood (Pavlenko 2002: 295). The imagined communities the language learner relates to might be very specific and this is why conceptualising language learning from the perspective of imagined communities can shed light on students' investment.

What is interesting in terms of investment from the point of view of imagined communities are the teacher's curriculum goals and the classroom as a community. As has already been established, the students' social identities are multiple and changing over time, and the imagined communities they want to feel related to can be specific and differ greatly from student to student. In this case, if their imagined communities are not acknowledged by the teacher or the teacher's goals disjuncture with learners' desires, it may cause non-participation in class (Norton 2014: 170). To avoid this, teacher can take the classroom community, the target language community, and the students' imagined communities into account while teaching. This can be done by being aware of the diverse experiences that the students might have e.g. regarding race, gender, or ability, and how ideas of these are expressed through language (e.g. Bucholtz 2016: 273-290). Regarding the classroom community, the teacher should make sure to make it as safe and supportive as possible, since in an unsafe environment the students might not be able to speak the target language, compromising their language learning. Aligning the curriculum goals and the students' unique goals and imagined communities might help with this as well, since disjuncture might cause resistance and conflict (Norton and Gao 2018: 118).

Identities and imagined communities have been studied for example in Chinese learners of English, and they play a big role in a learner's feeling of "ownership" of the language (Norton and Gao 2018: 111). For example, Norton and Gao (2018) discussed a study, which investigated a students' club for English language learning in China. Participation in the group did not only improve the students' language skills, but they also felt like they belonged to a group of "Chinese elite", instead of a certain English target language group. In another study, a Chinese English learner found it more convenient to learn English if she converted to Christianity. She joined the church, finding it to provide a better access to her desired target English language group. These examples show that the target language groups and imagined communities can be diverse, and different imagined communities benefit different learners.

The current study will not dig deep into the identity or imagined communities of each participant. Instead, it is interesting if the students feel as if they are a part of the classroom as an imagined community, and if they feel like they are allowed to show their identities in there.

2.2.2   Capital and positioning

Another central concept regarding investment is *capital*: what the learners think they will achieve with studying an additional language. Learner invests their time and effort to language learning, hoping to gain exchange value in return: capital can be symbolic or material, and the learner perceives it otherwise unattainable and valuable enough to pursue through language learning (Norton Peirce 1995: 17, Norton 2013: 245, Bourdieu 1991: 77). In respect of the matter of capital, Norton takes inspiration from Bourdieu's view on capital: there is of course economic capital, but also cultural and social capital, which can be obtained through language learning. Cultural capital is knowledge and certain cultural forms, and social capital refers to networks and power (Darvin and Norton 2015: 44). Some forms of cultural capital have a higher exchange value compared to others in some contexts (Peirce 1995: 17). In other words, capital is the perceived benefits of the language learning. It must be noted, however, that the desire to acquire cultural capital is not the same as instrumental motivation. Instrumental motivation refers to something fixed that only the speakers of the target language have the right to possess, but investment is about describing the changing identity of the learner in relation to social world (Peirce 1995: 17).

To illustrate the concept of capital, here are a couple of examples. First is the story of Natalia from Iikkanen's study (2019). Natalia is a migrant in Finland, who went from being a stay-at-home-mom who had quit nursing studies to an entrepreneur in three years, and learning Finnish language was a crucial step in this process:

by learning Finnish she was able to start a small business, earning money for herself, while being able to spend time with her child as well (Iikkanen 2019: 11). This way, studying Finnish gave her not only cultural capital to work in the Finnish speaking environment, but also material capital, indirectly. Another story in the same study is about Katherina who wants to stay in Finland for her son's benefit. In her case, studying Finnish is crucial for her family life in Finland, and she is later happy to use Finnish in her job (Iikkanen 2019: 15-16). This way studying Finnish gave her cultural and social capital to ensure her child's happy life in Finland.

Students do not come to class without any capital, however, but they have many kinds of resources in changing amounts as well as goals regarding their language learning – or goals regarding return on their investment. To engage investment, teachers should leverage students' identities in their personal goals and growth (Pittaway 2004: 2016). Here Pittaway's analogy about learner as an investor and the teacher as a broker is useful (2004: 205). As in investing money, where knowledge about the stock market and the amount of money one can invest are crucial, students have different amounts of capital, both in terms of knowledge about studying as well as linguistic capital. The teacher can help the student to create realistic long-term goals regarding the resources they put into studying. Mapping out goals can help the students see the return on their investment in the long run, but shorter-term goals also help in staying motivated and not be discouraged by a goal that seems completely out of reach.

A concept linked to both capital and social identity in the theory of investment is *positioning*. It is the action of locating the learner within a classroom related to other people based on their capital and people can be both subject to and subject of discourses, meaning that in relation to different power relations and situations the learner and people around them might give them different positions (Peirce 1995: 15). Some learners can be positioned in the centre and granted access to resources and the right to speak, whereas others can be positioned in the periphery (Darvin 2019: 255). Positioning might happen before the person even speaks based on their race or gender, for example (Darvin and Norton 2015: 43-44). A person can have multiple identities and can speak from multiple positions as well, e.g. a doctor might be very knowledgeable about medical information, thus having a strong position and the right to speak about it and everyone agrees. On the other hand, she might take a less knowledgeable and listening position what comes to sewing: regarding this topic she might be silenced and positioned differently (Peirce 1995: 32). As mentioned earlier, positioning is not done only by the powerful others but also by the language learners themselves. They can practice their own agency by rethinking their position and resisting the object positions (Peirce 1995: 18).

Darvin and Norton provide an example of learners being positioned and having varying degrees of capital in a form of two case studies (2015: 48-51). Henrietta is a

student from Uganda, whose income-per-capita is less than 1 dollar/day. She participated in a study where she was able to access internet with a computer. She found the experience a good learning experience not only about the task they had, but she also said that she wants to use the internet to learn, to communicate with people from other countries and to become "a knowledgeable person". She has positioned herself out of the imagined community of "knowledgeable people", and her socioeconomical position makes it even more difficult for her to access these affordances. In contrast, a young Pilipino living in Vancouver, Ayrton, who has at least two mobile devices of his own and his father being a wealthy entrepreneur, has no difficulties in accessing these kinds of affordances. For him, technology is not about reaching a vague group of people, but to be in contact to people he already knows. In addition to this, he is aware, that all the information he would need is within his reach. This way Ayrton, compared to Henrietta, has all the economic, social, and cultural capital to be able to participate in many imagined communities.

As mentioned in the previous section, the current study does not aim to make individual analyses of the students. However, the current study is interested in what kind of capital the students report to be gaining from the classes and what kind of capital they bring to the classroom. In addition, the study aims to find out that do they feel equally valid speakers in the classroom. If there are stark power inequalities, it poses a risk for some student to not be able to participate e.g. in the oral exercises.

2.2.3 Ideologies

The third main component regarding investment is the notion of *ideology* which regards the existing and conflicting ideologies in social contexts where the learning happens. Ideology is a very broad concept and defined differently across theoretical frameworks. Blommaert distinguishes between two categories of ideology: first there are well known ideologies, so called isms, such as feminism, communism, and so forth (2005: 158). They are very specific sets of symbols and ideas, by specific groups for specific purposes. There is a second category, however, that is more difficult to define, since they describe the cultural ideational systems in social, political, and historical context. The following quote summarizes the idea of this second category well.

> --- ideology is common sense, the normal perceptions we have of the world as a system, the naturalised activities that sustain social relations and power structures, and the patterns of power that reinforce such common sense. (Blommaert 2005: 159)

In the theory of investment ideologies are thought to belong in this second, broader category of ideology and they are normative sets of ideas that are always being realized through teaching and learning in a classroom (Darvin and Norton 2023: 43). By

analysing ideologies related to language learning we can better inspect the power relations between interlocutors, and it is important for language learners to know whose interests the rules of a language serve (Peirce 1995: 18). Ideologies can privilege and marginalize students, and they are visible in the social practices, impacting the students' right to speak and to be heard. By analysing social practices, we can inspect what kinds of ideologies there are behind them (Darvin and Norton 2023: 36).

One way of ideologies manifesting themselves are *systemic patterns of control*. They mean the repeated action of reproducing the ideologies in practice. Even though in learning sites practices and communication can have multiple and competing ideologies, the ideologies in power persist when they are repeated and collectively agreed on. The patterns of control can be brought under critical inspection by the learners, and they can recognize how they challenge or reproduce the patterns of control (Darvin 2019: 254). One example of a systemic pattern of control in a classroom could be summative evaluation in a form of tests. They are a way of posing an ideology of importance of testing the students' abilities after a period of studying in contrast to an idea of continuous or formative evaluation of learning (Hamp-Lyons 2016: 21).

The ideologies interesting for the current study are the ones incorporated in the National Core Curriculum crafted by the National Agency of Education of Finland and those of the teacher. According to Darvin and Norton, ideology is "a layered space where ideational, behavioral, and institutional aspects interact and sometimes use, contradict one another" and is rather a process, than a static worldview (2023: 44). In a classroom, the curriculum and teacher's pedagogical choices construct a way of thinking that dominate the classroom and its practices (Darvin and Norton 2023: 36). However, the students' views might be different from the ideologies imposed on them, and crucial for the investment is how they and their capital are positioned from the point of view of these ideologies and how they position themselves (Darvin and Norton 2023: 36).

As the national curriculum sets the base for all curricula in Finnish public education, we can think that the National Board of Education is a legitimated authority, creating the practices of a classroom through these policies. The National Core Curriculum states the following to be the goals of learning in English in the Finnish general upper secondary school (*lukio* in Finnish):

- language learning skills and building language identity

- English as a global language

- English language and culture as means of creative expression

- English language as a means of influencing

- A sustainable future and science

- English in further studies and working life (the National Agency of Education of Finland, 2019)

The National Agency of Education seems to promote individualism through building a language identity and encouraging creative expression, but values such as globalism, sustainability and societal influence are also central. These ideologies are not decided by the students, but they still shape the positioning of learners and their resources at school, affecting how they are able to participate from their own backgrounds and worldviews (Darvin and Norton 2023: 36). Hence, these ideologies can position students so that they are silenced or granted the right to speak, because they have different backgrounds and, therefore, inequal chances to participate. Students have agency; however, they can reject these prevalent ideologies and/or express competing and contradicting ideologies (Darvin and Norton 2015: 44).

In the Finnish school system, individual upper secondary schools have autonomy in creating their own curricula within the requirements of the National Core Curriculum. Upper secondary school students take the compulsory courses, as well as optional studies to prepare for the matriculation examinations at the end of their studies. Matriculation examinations measure their general level of sophistication, but also work as a gateway to higher education institutes (Ylioppilastutkintolautakunta, n.d.)

As these ideologies are realized via teaching, the current study aims to find out if the students deem the values and themes in the National Core Curriculum important. This is interesting, because if the students disagree with the values of the ones created the curricula, it might cause aversion or disinterest towards learning at school.

2.2.4 Investment and motivation – what is the difference?

Motivation and investment might sound interchangeable, as both concepts investigate the "willingness" to study a language. The notion of investment might even be regarded meaningless in terms of language learning when motivation is so well researched. This section explains why investment is meaningful in explaining language learning success alongside with motivation.

Investment and motivation both answer the same question: "Why does a learner choose to learn a language?" (Darvin and Norton 2015: 37). Darvin summarizes the differences between motivation and investment:

> While motivation research accounts for individual differences such as language aptitude, learning styles, and capacity for self-regulation, investment examines the performance of multiple identities, the negotiation of linguistic and cultural capital, and the enactment of one's agency. (Darvin 2019: 254).

Motivation has been studied a great deal in L2 learning contexts but as Norton argues, it is not in itself sufficient in explaining the success and failure in language learning.

Previous theories about motivation do not integrate the learner to the language learning context but draw, arguably an artificial, distinction between them (1995: 10, 12). Instead, investment aims to describe how the learner is positioned in the classroom by others and themselves, showing how the learners' success is always dependent on the social and historical context. Moreover, according to Norton and Darvin, motivation does not necessarily affect the access to the language learning contexts and often learners are not able to choose if they can participate in the contexts where the speakers of the target language are (Norton 1995: 12, Darvin and Norton 2023: 32).

In other words, the context one learns the language in can affect with whom and where the learner gets to use the language, and sometimes powerful others may gatekeep or position the learners so that their opportunities to be heard and to speak are limited. This aspect is not explained by motivation since motivation only refers to attributes of the learner. In addition to this, investment allows us to examine how particular social contexts might have different investments that shape and reshape, causing in very different outcomes despite the same social environment (Pavlenko 2002: 297).

2.2.5   Model of investment

Figure 1 Model of investment (Darvin and Norton 2015, 42).

These three aspects – capital, identity, and ideology – bring us to the model of investment by Darvin and Norton (2015, 2023), and it has three more components that fall between the three main aspects that are positioning, affordances and systemic patterns of control. The model is illustrated in the graph (Darvin and Norton 2015: 42), which shows that they are all intertwined and together they create the investment.

The variables affecting investment are too manifold to be all covered in a single study. The current study primarily focuses on the some of the variables that most likely occur in a classroom and affect most of the students there:

1. Social identity at school: positioning, commitment to classroom practices
2. Capital acquired through studying and perceived benefits of the language lessons
3. Ideologies in the class: systemic patterns of control, curricula, teacher, students

Together these aspects build the model of investment, which aims to inspect the language learner's identity throughout the learning process, and how he/she is positioned in the sites of communication. It aims to answer the question of "Why is the learner studying the language?" through identity work and perceived benefits of the learner which may or may not make the learner invest in the language learning by committing to the practices of the learning environment.

For the current study, the following quote is a relevant summary of investment:

> Conceptualized by Peirce (1995, 2000, 2013) in the 1990s, investment can be defined as the commitment to the goals, practices, and identities that constitute the learning process and that are continually negotiated in different relations of power. (Darvin 2019: 245.)

In a classroom setting this means that throughout the learning process the students must negotiate if their goals and identities align with the ones in power, and this can lead to different levels of commitment in the classroom practices. This can produce different outcomes.

The current study is interested in whether investment in a regular classroom setting is significant for learning outcomes. The aim of students and teachers in a classroom, and the very mission of schooling in Finland, is to ensure adequate learning outcomes for all students, so that they can advance from a grade to the following one with sufficient skills and knowledge, as well as thrive in further education, as is decreed in the law (PerOpL 3:2§). Norton suggests expanding the question "whether the learners are invested in the language practices" to more specific questions about investment in identities, perceived capital, and systemic patterns of control (2018: 4). The current study, however, is going to study exactly the question if the students are invested to the language practices, because 1) if they are, does it matter regarding their learning outcomes and 2) what does this mean in terms of teaching?

2.3 Investment and learning outcomes

This section will critically discuss the former research from the point of view of the current research topic: investment and learning outcomes. Most of the literature and research about investment in language learning focus on conceptualizing learners' identities and subjectivity, ideologies, and perceived benefits, as well as the

investments of a teacher or a parent. There is only little, if any information about how learning outcomes might be tied to the level of investment. Studying the direct connection is challenging, since one cannot prove investment to be the only variable affecting the learning outcomes; motivation, leisure time activities, talent, and diligence etc. are all meaningful in terms of producing a certain learning outcome. In addition, it is common knowledge that the same learning environment produces different learning outcomes. Otherwise, all students taught by same teachers from the same school would achieve the same results. This is why the current study aims to find out if investment has anything to do with learning outcomes to begin with.

2.3.1 Learning outcomes and assessment in Finnish education

There is not just one, simple approach to the term "learning outcome". Learning outcomes in language learning can be measured, assessed, and tested in multiple ways, which means that it is rather difficult to provide an all-encompassing definition for "learning outcomes" in a thesis this short. Outcomes and evaluation (*arviointi* in Finnish) are intertwined, and "outcomes" cannot be discussed without mentioning evaluation, because in most contexts the learning outcomes are determined via evaluation or assessment. I use the word "evaluation" because it refers to defining a value for something, and that is what teachers essentially do when determining a grade for a student. "Assessment", in turn, is a broader term for the actions a teacher does to gauge and help students' learning (Hamp-Lyons 2016: 13-14). This section will set the word "outcome" to the context where it matters for the current study and will go through the main characteristics of evaluation and grades in the Finnish upper secondary education.

The assessment of students is based, fundamentally, in the Finnish law about upper secondary education (Lukiolaki [LL] 5:34§). The main points in the law are that the assessment should be versatile and support the student's learning. The students should be encouraged to, and they should be given the opportunity to self-evaluation. The assessment itself is based on the goals in the curriculum, and there is a separate notion that in language studies the oral skills should be evaluated as well. The law states that after completing the studies, the students will receive a final grade for their skills and knowledge.

The grades are presented in the following table (original in italics).

Table 1 Grading in general upper secondary school

10	outstanding
	erinomainen

9	commendable
	kiitettävä
8	good
	hyvä
7	satisfactory
	tyydyttävä
6	moderate
	kohtalainen
5	passable
	välttävä
4	fail
	hylätty

(The National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education by the Finnish Agency of Education 2019: 47)

This way, the Finnish general upper secondary school assessment and testing takes the approach of assessing achievement and not proficiency in language learning outcomes (Hamp-Lyons 2016: 14). Therefore, only the qualities and skills that are linked to formal learning should be evaluated. According to the National Core Curriculum of the upper secondary education the final grade for a course is based on how well the student met the goals of a certain course. What is interesting, is that evaluation must be based on multifaceted proof of the student's performance, learning, and working. However, the student's values and attitudes, or other personal qualities should not affect the assessment. As the assessment is done at the end of a certain course, and the grades are given based on the overall performance on a certain course, the assessment is summative (Hamp-Lyons 2016: 21). It should be noted, also, that schools and municipalities, as well as teachers themselves, have quite a lot of sovereignty over the criteria of the evaluation through curriculum work and planning the courses.

2.3.2 Connection between investment and learning outcomes

Some scholars have conceptualized how investment can affect learning outcomes. First and foremost, a classroom setting is an environment where everyone is not equally positioned by others and themselves with their capital, which causes different investments and, ultimately, outcomes (Pavlenko 2002: 297, Darvin and Norton 2015: 37). This is because the power relations in social contexts are experienced differently based on students' backgrounds, since the ideologies might not be equal considering gender, sexual orientation, social class, race, etc. The social practices in certain learning

contexts are always indexical of ideologies, imposing power dynamics on the learners (Darvin and Norton 2023: 36). These experiences cause different investments which affect students' actions and learning in class, leading to different learning outcomes. In addition to this, all students do not invest equally among all skills that are being studied in class: some might be more invested in literature, whereas others want to focus to oral skills (Pavlenko 2002: 297).

If the learner feels marginalized or not heard, there is a risk that despite being motivated, they might no longer be invested. As already established, the perceived benefits and material and symbolic capital are the reasons why students decide to study a second language (e.g. Darvin and Norton 2023: 31). That is why, even though they would primarily be motivated, the ideologies and positioning of certain students in the class might cause that, in this particular social context, they might not have the access to the resources they would be interested in investing to. This accentuates the notion that access to resources is not always in the hands of the learner themselves, but that people in power, such as teachers should be ready recognize and renegotiate their own power and privilege in the class and to create an environment where everyone could be invested (Darvin and Norton 2023: 37). When the different backgrounds and diverse identities are recognized, the access to resources could be better addressed and facilitated in a classroom when reflected in the classroom practices, causing students to invest in learning the way they feel the best.

I argue that to produce more equal learning outcomes, the learning environment should position the students as equally as possible, regarding power. This means, that the teacher should be aware of the unequal power relations that the positioning of the students produce and aim to provide possibilities for everyone to be heard. Norton and Gao have argued that if the community, where the learning happens, is safe and supportive, language learners are more likely to speak the target language (2018: 118). This is important to note, because especially now when communicative skills are the main point of interest in language education, it is important that the learners have opportunities to practice the target language enough. Therefore, if the classroom is unequal and positions students on the periphery – and the students accept their position – it might be that they do not receive many opportunities to practice oral and communicational skills. A great example of different positionings of two seemingly similar students is provided in the dissertation of Kayi-Aydar, where she analyzes the cases of Ahmad and Hashim (Kayi-Aydar 2012). Briefly summarized, these two were chosen as case examples, because they both took a lot of turns and expressed power in their interactions, often in a disruptive way for the flow of the class. However, Hashim ended up being more appreciated and taken into the group by others, and Ahmad ended up being ignored as an outsider. This way Hashim had more opportunities to practice oral skills, whereas Ahmad was silenced. The reasons behind this

trajectory were complex, but it shows how the teacher and classmates can affect certain students' opportunities to participate and learn.

Kayi-Aydar did not investigate learning outcomes, but this example shows that despite similar behavior, positioning by others can be crucial from the point of view of classroom dynamics. The current study aims to investigate this matter from the point of view of learning outcomes as well.

3 THE CURRENT STUDY

This section will introduce the research design of the current study, including participants, data collection, and methods of analysis. The ethical concerns will also be discussed in this section.

3.1 Research questions

As mentioned above, the relationship between investment and learning outcomes has not been studied directly. However, as established, the relationship between the learner and the social and historical context, manifesting itself in the form of high or low investment, is crucial for language learning in many ways. Language learning effort and, therefore, success is tied to social identity, imagined communities, perceived benefits and ideologies enacted in the classroom. This is why I want to study a) whether investment matters in an English language classroom in Finnish general upper secondary education and, if it does, b) what the teachers and educators could do to bring the best investment out in the students.

The current research aims to find the answers to following questions:

1. How are learning outcomes related to investment?
2. How are students invested in English learning?
3. What are the implications for teaching regarding students' investment?

3.2 Participants

I gathered participants from two different upper secondary schools. Group X (n=24) are a group of first year students and group Y (n=17) consists of second year students. Participants were obtained by opportunity/convenience sampling: the groups of participants were conveniently accessible for the researcher both geographically and at the time the research had to be conducted. The groups were from different schools with different resources and policies. This is how I tried to ensure the diversity of the groups, so that I could minimize any biases and get as representative sample as possible. Due to time and length restrictions, I was not able to study more than two groups. However, I aim to analyse the groups qualitatively, as well as quantitatively, so two groups is plenty regarding the limitations of this thesis assignment.

In addition to the students, I will research their teachers. It is important to study the teacher regarding students' investment because they usually have the most institutional power in the classroom, as well as power over the classroom policies, the schedules, topics, classroom work and so on. In addition to this, they are the ones to realize the curriculum, which is crafted by the Ministry of Education on a national level. Therefore, studying the teachers' views and making them consider the matter of investment in their classroom will be beneficial for them and their students.

I ended up discarding the data collected from my first intended group of participants due to the small number of responses: the answers were not representative of the whole group and using them could have put the privacy of the respondents at risk. I managed to obtain a permission to study another group in their stead.

First and second year-students have compulsory English courses, or "modules", and modules 1-6 are all compulsory. After these the students can choose to take courses e.g. about oral communication, and revision for the matriculation examination.

The upper secondary school setting is quite new for the first-year students since at the time of this study they have just started in their upper secondary school. This is both beneficial and detrimental for the data collected: beneficial because the students might be able to view the interaction and their social identity in the group without any restrictions or roles they have previously had. However, this novelty and lack of established relationships and roles might also make it more difficult to analyse the social environment and one's position in it. In defence of such setup, this might be the case with years two and three as well, since in most upper secondary schools the students get to choose to complete the courses and modules as is suitable for their own schedule. Therefore, there is not necessarily one fixed group they would be studying in.

The reason why I decided not to study students in primary school or lower secondary school is that it is easier to get the permission to study older students, and they more mature to give the permission themselves. According to the Finnish Board on

Research Integrity (TENK), if a participant is 15 years of age or older, and the research will not cause any personal harm to the participant, the permission of the guardians is not needed, and the participants are able to give their informed consent for participation in the research (TENK 2019: 16-18). In addition, participants at the age of 15-17 are most likely able to comprehend the questionnaire items. Therefore, the reasons for choosing this age group are very much practical, but also might be helpful for the students themselves: as I study their investment at the early stages of their upper secondary education, the teacher might be able to make changes that benefit their learning.

3.3   Data collection

In this section I will explain my methods for data collection. Data was collected in two parts to accurately investigate answers to all my research questions. First, conducted a questionnaire for the students to find out the overall ways of investment of the group, as well as their ways of investment and their grades. Based on the students' answers, I conducted an interview for the teacher regarding their views on the investment of the group and the teacher's experiences about working with the group.

By using a mixed methods approach I aim to complement each part of my data with the other: this way we can inspect both the students' and teachers' views on the same phenomenon: student investment (see Hashemi 2019).

3.3.1   Student questionnaire

The role of the questionnaire was to create a basic understanding of the ways how the students are invested in English and if the investment is related to their grades. The questionnaire will have questions on all aspects of investment: identity, perceived capital, and identity. See appendix 2 for reference.

I presented the questionnaire to each class personally. Before giving the link to the questionnaire I explained the nature of the study, as well as the contents in the information sheet and the privacy notice. After the explanations and collecting the consent forms, the students were allowed to fill out the questionnaire. The information and the questionnaire were all in Finnish, since the language of teaching in these schools is Finnish (LL 2018/714, §14).

The questionnaire aimed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and had four types of questions in it: 1) Personal information (name, class/group, and latest grade in English) 2) Likert-scale question, 3) multiple choice-questions and 4) open-ended questions. The questionnaire required the participants' names so that I could

match the consent forms (which are on paper) with the online questionnaires to know who had given their permission to use their data.

Quantitative data consisted of students' grades and their mean of investment. The students reported their latest grade in English either from basic education or upper secondary school, depending on the group. The Likert-scale questions posed statements about language learning and classes, such as:

- *I dare to speak in the class if I have something to say* (section A: positioning*)*

- *I think that learning English at school is important* (section C: ideologies)

The answer options were on scale from 1=disagree to 5=agree. I also included an option 3=not relevant. From the answers I calculated the mean of each student. With these two figures – grade and level of investment – I aimed to find out the connection, if there is any.

Qualitative data consisted of answers to the multiple-choice questions and the open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions were based on the previous studies and conceptualizations of investment. Questions were formulated as follows, for example:

Factors that prevent me from talking in class are… (choose as many as you need)

Answer options included:

- *being unsure of my language skills*

- *being unsure of my capabilities*

- *someone else will answer*

- *I am not interested in the topics etc.*

They also included the option of writing one's own answer if they could not find it from the list. Clarification questions and short answer questions shed light on the reasons behind their investment or the lack of it in ways that the researcher could not predict (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2002: 34-36). This was also the reason for including long answer open-ended questions, because in there the participants had the chance to write more openly about the topics that the researcher wanted to examine. Here are some examples of the open-ended questions that I used:

- *How does the group support/how does it not support your learning?*

- *How would English lessons be more interesting to you?*

- *What kind of personal interests would you like to express on English lessons? etc.*

All sections, A, B, and C had all types of questions in them. However, as mentioned above, their foci regarding investment were a bit different. In the A-section, I investigated e.g. the experienced positioning in the classroom and permission to speak, as well as the perceived significance of the group in their learning experiences. Section B explored the questions of capital, asking e.g. about how interesting the classes are, if the students can bring up everything, they consider important or interesting.

The third section, C, was formed around the importance of learning English at school, as well as the goals of National Core Curriculum. For instance, there was a statement *I think that studying English at school is important*. Also, they voted what are important topics to cover in English classes based on the goals of the Core Curriculum to find out if their ideologies align with those of the school and Ministry of Education. To ensure similar questionnaires between groups, I could not personalize the questionnaires to fit the rules and local curricula of each school. It was based on the National Core Curriculum since it is a common factor between the groups.

Because I am studying subjective views, and the formatting and wording of a single questionnaire item can make a great difference, I treat some of the questions as multi-item scales. I have multiple questions investigating the same matter, they are just worded slightly differently, so that multiple items give a more realistic understanding of the participant's view about the matter at hand (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2002: 24, 94).

The greatest limitations of conducting a questionnaire about this topic are possibly unmotivated respondents and misunderstanding the questions, as well as biases, such as social desirability bias, which makes the respondents answer the way might be socially acceptable, or acquiescence bias, which makes the respondents agree with the questionnaire (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2002: 9). I aim to minimize these biases by emphasizing the voluntary participation, making the questionnaire as concise as possible, as well as making the questionnaire easy to read, with tangible questions (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2002: 94).

3.3.2 Teacher interviews

After analysing the responses from the students, I interviewed the teacher about how they see the investment and positioning of their students, as well as upon hearing about the students' opinions, ways of better considering their investment in everyday classroom practices. Even though the aim of a qualitative interview is not to state facts, but rather interpret the informant's speech (Warren 2001: 83), teachers' perceptions of the class give information about the investment of the student (see e.g. Tierney and Dilley 2001: 489). A reason for studying this is that a part of students' investment is also the teacher being positioned by the students in the classroom context, usually in

a more powerful position, and the teacher positions the students as well (Darvin and Norton 2023, 29). In addition, I want to find out the teachers' point of view because the teacher is more aware of the assessment and grading processes, which I hope to give insight on how the students' investment might affect their grades. In addition, it is beneficial for the whole group if the teacher gets to hear the groups' opinions on the teaching so that the teacher will be able to improve.

Interview is a special kind of conversation, which aims to, in this case, produce empirical data (Holstein and Gubrium 2003: 67). I conducted a semi-structured interview for which I created themes based on the students' questionnaire answers under the different aspects of investment (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2010: 66). By categorising the questions to themes I make sure that I cover all the important aspects, so the interview is a systematic information gathering tool, but that the participants can talk about other thoughts related to these categories in addition to my questions. The interviews aim to answer my research questions from the teacher's perspective.

The process of a semi-structured interview or a theme interview is described below:
> 1) the participants have experienced a certain situation,
> 2) the researcher is familiar with the phenomenon and has certain presuppositions about the consequences of the situation for the participant,
> 3) the structure of the interview is based on this information the researcher has gathered,
> 4) and the questions will investigate the subjective views of the participants about the situation the researcher has analysed beforehand.
> (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2010: 47, see also Warren 2001, Mann 2016: 103)

The interviews were recorded and transcribed, so that I can closely inspect the data reliably and repeatedly in my data analysis stage (see Mann 2016: 199-205). I deleted the recordings after transcribed them, to minimize the risk of the teacher being recognized from the voice recordings.

3.4   Methods of analysis

The data analysis consists of three parts: a quantitative analysis of the questionnaires, a qualitative analysis of the questionnaires to conduct the interview structure for the teacher interviews, as well as the analysis of the teacher interviews.

3.4.1 Quantitative data

As mentioned above, questionnaires collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was collected to find out if there is a measurable connection between the students' level of investment and grades. Qualitative data was collected to find out more about the students' way of investment, as well as their opinions about and hopes for the teaching regarding investment.

Before further explaining the data analysis, I do have to point out a few changes in my plan, to make the process more transparent. The questionnaire originally had nine Likert-scale questions, which I intended to calculate the mean from, and use this mean as the level of investment. I ended up, however, discarding the question B7: *I think I will get better grades if the classes are interesting*, because the question was too abstract, and did not elicit answers about the students' current experience in the class, and investment there but, rather, required using imagination to be able to answer. Therefore, I had eight questions that I measured the students' investment with: A1, A3, A7, B1, B5, C1, C2 and C3.

In addition to having to discard a question, I decided to change the handing of the data from my original plan. My intention was to divide the data into four categories regarding investment (1, 2, 3 and 4), and two categories regarding their grades (below 7 and above 7), and conduct a chi-square test with them, my null hypothesis being "there is no connection between investment and grades" (Levon 2010: 71). However, the data ended up skewed towards the higher end of each variable: investment means that would round to 3 and 4 were in the majority, as well as grades 9 and 10. I analysed each grade individually because respondents had grade 6-10 and dividing them into two categories as mentioned above would have been too unbalanced to draw useful conclusions from.

Thus, is why I decided to conduct a Pearson correlation test instead and keep two decimals on the mean values of the investment. Pearson correlation coefficient is used to see if there is a connection between two variables (Rugg 2007: 90, Cramer and Howitt 2011, 105-106). It might not have been ideal, since the scattergram did not suggest a linear curve between the two variables, and due to the data being skewed there were a lot of outliers. However, this gave me an understanding of the statistical connection between these two variables.

It must be noted that neither phenomena, learning outcomes or investment, can be operationalized, and measured objectively, thus, the data of the current study consists of two rather arbitrary numerical values, which are assigned by a person. Therefore, albeit having assigned them according to their best judgement, other people might find them insufficient or even flawed. However, to describe these phenomena for the sake of investigation, I had to choose a way to measure them in some way. The

way I have chosen to investigate these phenomena in this thesis can be debatable and can be corrected or complemented in future studies.

3.4.2 Qualitative data

With all my qualitative data, I have an inductive approach (Mann 2016: 211). I will draw inductive conclusions from the qualitative data based on thematic analysis or applied thematic analysis and categorisation (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2010: 137, Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012). Thematic analysis aims to identify ideas in the data by putting the data in smaller pieces, categorizing them. These implicit and explicit, often repeated, ideas are called themes (Guest et al. 2012: 10, Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2008: 144). It is an ideal analytic method for my data since I aim to study subjective experiences and views. Guest et al. summarize applied thematic analysis as follows:

> To summarize, the ATA approach is a rigorous, yet inductive, set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible. Our method draws from a broad range of several theoretical and methodological perspectives, but in the end, its primary concern is with presenting the stories and experiences voiced by study participants as accurately and comprehensively as possible. (Guest et al. 2012, 15-16)

Regarding the questionnaire, my analysis objective was to find similarities in the students' answers to interview the teacher based on the themes in the questionnaires (Guest et al. 2012, 22). I categorized similar answers from throughout the questionnaire and grouped them underneath theme labels (Mann 2016, 212, Guest et al. 2012, 10). The themes were topics and ideas that both the qualitative and quantitative data supported, and I formulated them into theme interview questions for the teachers.

Interviews were also analysed in an inductive thematic analysis. I read and familiarizes myself with the interview transcriptions, coding the data, or conceptualizing the contents of the utterances by giving them labels (Mann 2016, 212). I categorized and grouped these labels underneath titles from the model of investment: identity, capital, and ideologies (Darvin and Norton 2015: 42). This approach is different from the thematic analysis in the questionnaires because my aim is to go back to the themes defined in the background theory instead of forming new themes from patterns in the data (see Mann 2016, 211-212). This way, eventually, I aim to answer my research questions: the analysis will produce different themes from those in the interview structure itself (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2010: 147).

3.5 Ethical considerations

This section will discuss the ethical considerations of this study, and how they are handled. Main concerns regarding the current study are handling personal information, small amount of participants as well as most of the participants being under 18.

Researching on human participants always requires respect for human rights, the participants have to be able to trust the research and the researcher must not harm the participants (TENK 2019: 8). The data handling will comply with the law about handling personal information of Finland (Tietosuojalaki 2018/1050). The participants are 16-18 years old, which makes them old enough to give an informed consent of their own (TENK 2019: 11). Before conducting the questionnaire, the participants will be informed about the study, what it is about, there is a possibility for an interview, how their information will be handled, and that it is voluntary to take part to this research (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2010: 20). Since one's experiences about classroom interaction can be sensitive, and I will be collecting their personal information I am going to stress the confidentiality of the data and the researcher will be the only one to see the individual questionnaire answers and the names of the participants. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2010: 115). The data will also be anonymised as soon as possible when I have analysed the questionnaires (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2002: 16-17). Until then the data will be stored in a password-secured account in Webropol, and the reports will be in a password-protected cloud service, the OneDrive of the University of Jyväskylä. Also, even though the questionnaire will be administered at their school, participation is voluntary.

4 FINDINGS

This section will present the findings from the data. First, I will introduce the overview of the dataset, and what I observations I have made from both groups and teachers. After the overview I will go into more detail with the individual groups and teachers. The aim of this section is to give an understanding of the data gathered, before proceeding to the discussion and conclusions in next chapters.

4.1 Student questionnaires

First, I will cover the student questionnaires, going through the quantitative data first and then I will introduce the qualitative data, followed by the themes I found from the data for the teacher interviews.

4.1.1 Overview

To better understand the questionnaire and its contents, I recommend opening the questionnaire while reading this section (appendix 2). The participant number in the student questionnaires was 41 in total, group X being n=24 and group Y n=17. In appendix 1 the grades and levels of investment of each student are listed to illustrate the data I have used to calculate the results. "Participant" is the code I have assigned to a student, "grade" is their latest reported grade in English, and "investment" is the mean of the Likert-scale question answers.

Analyzing all students together, the difference in investment was not apparent depending on their grades. To illustrate this in figure 2, where the mean of investment (y-axis) of each group divided by grades (x-axis) we can see that the picture is almost flat. However, the difference in investment between grades 6 and 10 seems to be a bit larger than the differences in between the extremes.
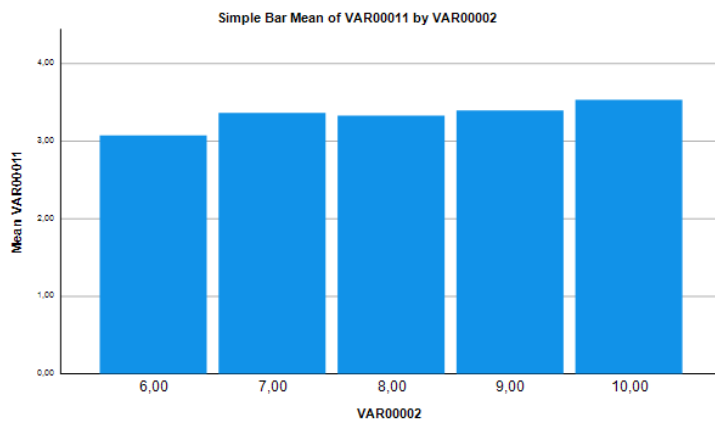
Figure 2 Means of investment by grade.

When I compared the two groups of participants, I noticed that in group Y the difference between grade 6-group and grade 10-group was even more noticeable (Figure 3). As mentioned above, since the data from group X is skewed towards grade 10, the data from group X might not be reliably generalizable.
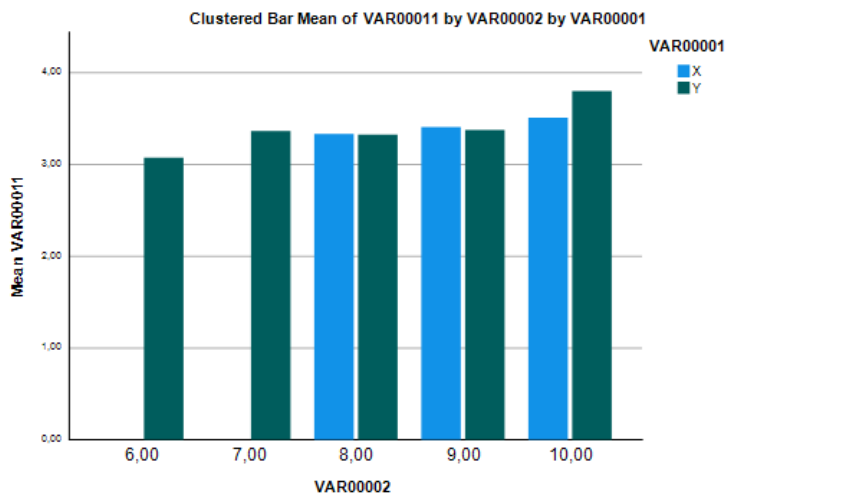
Figure 3 Means of investment by grade, groups separated.

After running the Pearson correlation in SPSS, the correlation is .335, which is considered weak. Also, the two-tailed significance is more than 0,001, which makes it statistically not significant (Cramer and Howitt 2011, 109).

Table 2 Pearson correlation, all participants.

		VAR00002	VAR00011
VAR00002	Pearson Correlation	1	,335[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,032

			41	41
VAR00011	Pearson Correlation		,335[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,032	
	N		41	41

First, Section A investigated the students' positioning and relationship to the group. Everyone felt like they are allowed to speak in class (in QA1 100% answered *mildly agree* or *agree*), however, when asked about daring to speak (QA3) in the class, some students (17,6%) reported that they don't necessarily dare to. In multiple-choice questions A4 and A5 about factors promoting their speaking in the class, most popular answers were *confidence in my capabilities* (56,1%) and *my own interest* (53,7%). On the contrary, the factors holding students back from speaking were *insecurity of my own capabilities* (61%) and *insecurity of my language skills* (58,5%). Moreover, two respondents had added "social anxiety" in the open box. Also, some students had reported increased interest in English learning compared to lower secondary school, despite identifying as "weak" English speakers. However, the data shows that with these groups the group itself does not seem to cause anxiety or insecurities: to the statement A7 *The group supports my learning*, 53,7% had replied *agree* and 39% *mildly agree*. In the open-ended question *How does the group support/how does the group not support learning?* the respondents gave reasons how the group supports them, e.g. the group is helpful and supports the weaker students, and the group has a positive attitude towards learning overall. N=3 decided not to answer, and n=2 reported that they felt insecure in the classroom because of other students.

Table 3 Questions A4 and A5.

Promoting factors	Hindering factors
exercise types 37%	*not interested in the exercises* 7%
support from others 46%	*attitude of the group* 15%
support from the teacher 29%	*attitude of the teacher* %
my interest 54%	*not interested in the topics* 24%
confidence in my language skills 44%	*insecurity of my language skills* 58,5%

confidence in my capabilities	insecurity of my capabilities
56,1%	61%
nobody else will answer	someone else will answer
17%	37%
something else, what	something else, what
5%	7%

Second, section B asked more about how interested the students are in the classes and what kinds of personal interests they would like to bring up or they can bring up in the classroom. In other words, the perceived benefits, and the capital they feel like they can bring to class. Most students felt that English lessons have topics important to them (QB1, 73,2% *agrees* or *mildly agrees*). When asked in a multiple choice-question B2, about what kinds of aspects they can bring up in the classroom, 58,5% chose *identity*, 73,2% chose *personal topics of interest*, and 56,1% *difficulties with learning*. Open-ended question, B3, supported this: most students reported that they are happy with their current self-expression in the class. When asked about if the classes are interesting, B5, the vast majority 82,0% agreed that the classes are interesting. However, the open-ended question *What kind of teaching would you find more interesting?* elicited answers from most students. Answers were mostly about making the language learning more practical, beneficial for everyday life, more games and action for the classes, as well as more challenge and discussion with friends.

Table 4 Question B2.

In the class, I can express the following
my identity
59%
my interests
73%
difficulties in learning
56%
difficulties in concentration
27%
none of the above
7%

Last, section C covered the ideological aspects in upper secondary school teaching. Overall, the attitudes towards school learning seem positive. This comes close to the

notion of capital as well: in a multiple-choice question that asked about the possibilities or support that English language learning provides for different aspects of life outside school, C4, the most popular answers were *future (education, work),* (95,1%) and *traveling* (87,8%). On the third place, there was *social relationships* (68,3%), which was supported in the open-ended question about benefits of English, as well. As a last compulsory question, C6, I had a multiple-choice question where I had listed the topics of five compulsory modules of English in upper secondary school, with the statement "*In English classes, I think it is important to talk about…*". The most popular answers were *English as a world language* (70,7%), *English as a means of influencing* and *self-expression and culture* (both 65,9%). Regarding ideologies overall, the open-ended questions had a significant amount of criticism towards topics in the class, that are directly or indirectly tied to the National Core Curriculum or the practices of the school, e.g. impracticality of the language, rushed schedule in learning, and having to study the same themes as in lower secondary school.

Table 5 Question C4.

In my opinion, studying English supports…
future (education, work)   95%
social relations 68%
hobbies 42%
traveling   88%

Table 6 Question C6.

In English classes, I think it is important to cover
Sustainable development 39%
Science 42%
Self-expression and culture 66%
English as a world language 71%
English as a means of influencing

66%
None of the above
3%

4.1.2 Group X

In group X, the distribution of grades was quite narrow. Moreover, the data was skewed: 54% had grade 10. Moreover, 25% had grade 9, and just 21% had grade 8. In figure 5 we see the mean of investment of each group by their grade and on average students with 10 have ever so slightly higher mean of investment than the students with grade 8.
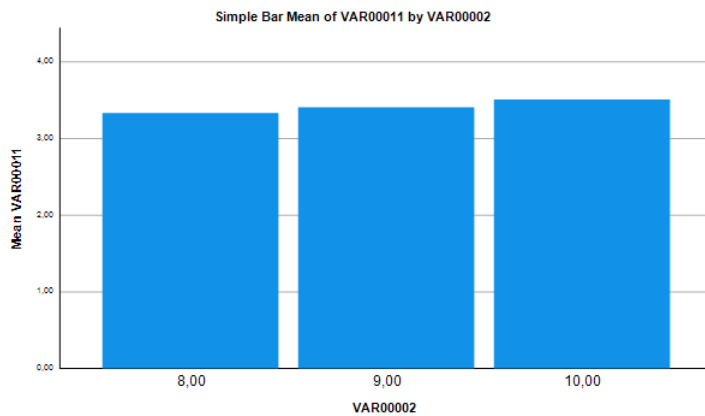

Figure 4 Means of investment by grade, group X.

However, if we examine the scatter plot (Figure 5), the means of investment of the ones with 10 are distributed on the scale of the mean of investment of the whole group. Moreover, the weakest investment, as well as the strongest investment seem to belong to students with grade 9. Therefore, it does not seem that there is any connection between the two variables in this group.
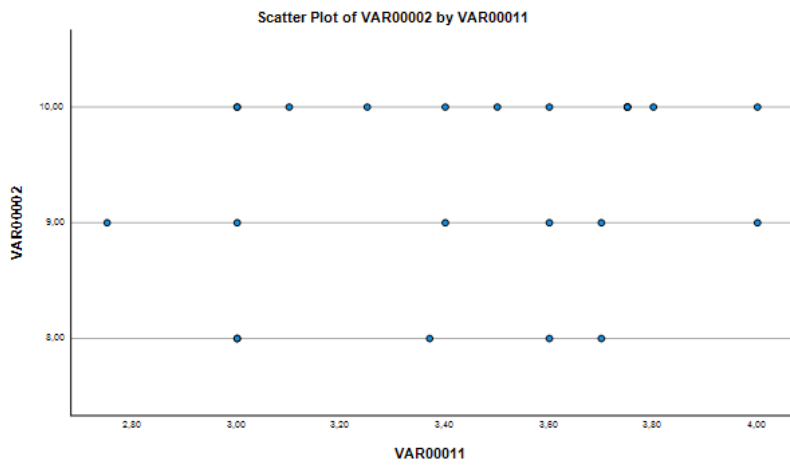
Figure 5 Scatter plot for correlation of grades and investment, group X.

These observations are supported by statistical calculations as well: ran through SPSS, Pearson's correlation seems to be weak as well, .206 (Table 7).

Table 7 Pearson correlation group X.

VAR00002	Pearson Correlation	1	,206
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,333
	N	24	24
VAR00011	Pearson Correlation	,206	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,333	
	N	24	24

As mentioned above, in the qualitative analysis I started by categorizing the answers throughout the whole questionnaire and then grouped them underneath main four themes. These themes also worked as the base of interviewing the teacher.

First, the group as a good working environment was a prevalent theme. In question A4, the most popular factors to promote speaking were *confidence in my own skills* and *support from others*. In addition, in question A7, *The group supports my learning*, most had chosen *mildly agree* or *agree*, as n=1 had chosen *not relevant*. In the open-ended question A8 everyone had told reasons why the group does support learning, e.g. the group is learning-oriented and talented, they never put a classmate down and it is easy to communicate with others in English.

Second, regarding social identity and capital, a theme that got highlighted in their replies was the students' own personal interests and how to make the lessons more interesting. As was with the whole sample, group X, overall, is content with their

self-expression and in QB2 83% chose *my interests* when asked what they can bring out in the class. Second popular choice was *my identity*. In the open-ended questions of section B (B4 and B6), many of the students did not feel the urge to bring up anything else in the class that would not have been brought up before. However, in QB6, most did want something more from the classes to themselves: more challenge, discussion, games, action-based learning, practicality, and actuality to the themes. I picked this critique as a theme for the teacher interview alongside with the personal interests and identity.

The last theme that I observed from the answers was the students' orientation for practical benefits. This came up especially in section C. In QC4 multiple-choice question the most popular answers were *future and travelling* (96% both). *Hobbies* (46%) and *social relationships* (67%) were less popular answers. In QC6 this group deemed the most important *English as a world language* (83%), as well as *self-expression and culture* and *English as a means of influencing* (67% both). The open-ended questions showed that the students have a lot of variety in the benefits they perceive in English learning: one can consume more media, learning is good for your brain, cultural knowledge increases, possibilities of communication with friends, relatives, and strangers increase, metalinguistic skills improve, one gets better grades at school, it opens possibilities for the future and gives confidence.

4.1.3 Group Y

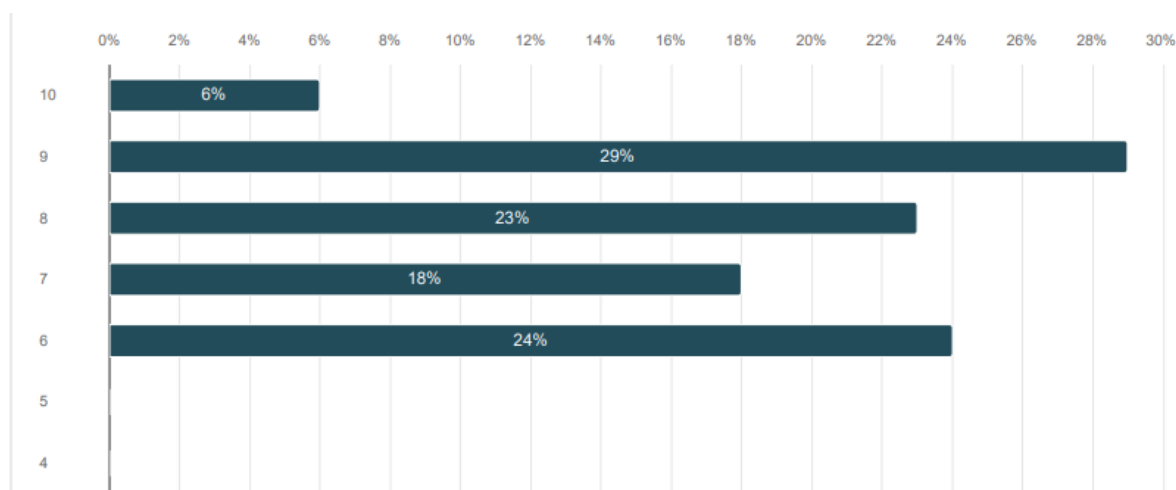Group Y had more distribution in grades.

Figure 6 Distribution of grades, group Y.

When we compare figure 7 with figure 2 above, we can see that the difference between the mean of investment with those with grade 6 and grade 10 is more noticeable than

in the picture of group X. In between, however, there is hardly any difference in investment between grade 7-9.
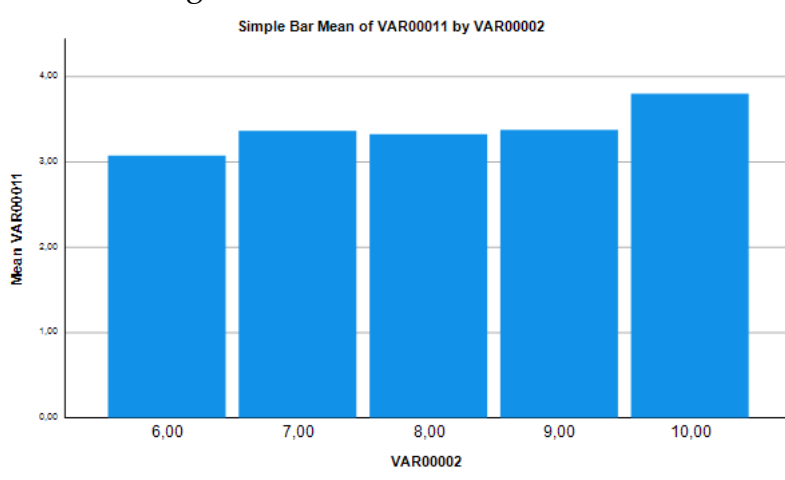
Figure 7 Means of invesment by grade, group Y.

The scatter plot, however, would seem to show a slight emphasis of the lower levels of investment in those who have a grade 6. However, the lowest level of investment seems to belong to some of those/that one who have grade 8, and the highest to some of those/that one with grade 9.

Figure 8 Scatter plot, group Y.

The Pearson correlation seems to be somewhat stronger in group Y than it was in group X, but it is still weak. In the scatter plot we can see a great deal of outliers.

Table 8 Pearson correlation, group Y.

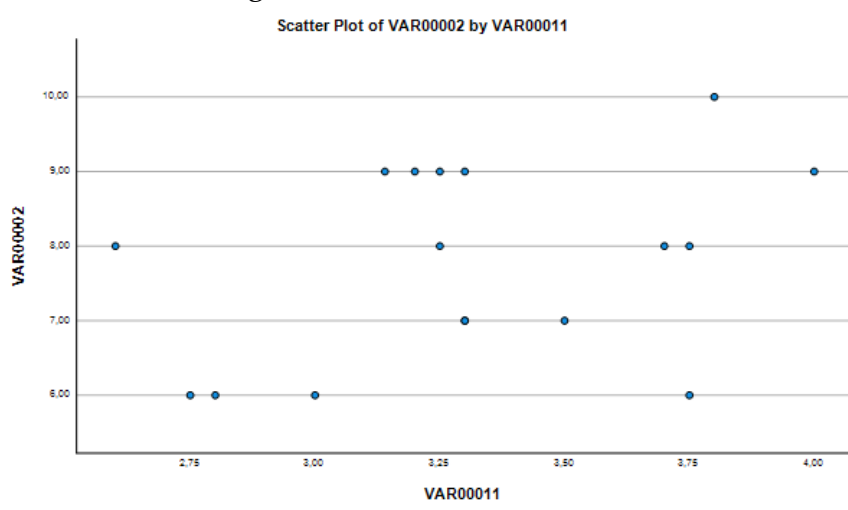|		VAR00002	VAR00011
VAR00002	Pearson Correlation	1	,371
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,143
	N	17	17
VAR00011	Pearson Correlation	,371	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,143	
	N	17	17

Most likely due to the questionnaire itself and the questions in it, the qualitative analysis of this group had very similar results and themes as the previous group.

First theme I found from the answers was the feeling of safety in the group. In question A1, everyone had replied *agree* or *mildly agree*, when asked if they feel like they are allowed to express themselves in the classroom, but in A3 almost a quarter of the students had reported that they don't necessarily dare to speak. Overall, when asked about the factors that promote speaking in A4, the replies were more scattered than in group X: on average an individual student had chosen multiple factors from the list. However, in question A5, when asked about the factors deterring their speaking, being insecure with one's language skills and capabilities were the most popular answers, 71% for each. Also, in the A5 open box two respondents had brought up "social anxiety". However, most students (almost 90%) report that the group supports their learning and n=13 supported this with their answers to the open-ended question A8, writing that the group is supportive, helpful, the atmosphere is open and kind. In addition, in B2 the students had all reported that they can bring up aspects in themselves, such as challenges in learning (76%), personal interests (59%), as well as identity (53%). Moreover, the teacher got praise in some open-ended answers for their support.

Second theme brought up in the data was practicality of the language and the rushed schedule. Even though most had reported in question B1 to agree with the statement *Classes have topics that are important to me*, third of the students reported that they *mildly disagree*. In open-ended questions B4 and B5, the students reported that they would like to have more games and discussion, as well as more practical and interesting topics. In these, as well as in the last (optional) question D1, the students complained about the rushed schedule, which causes them to only rush through the exercises without thinking or learning much.

The last theme I picked up from the questionnaire answers was the personal points of use for English language. All students agreed that they learn English at school (C1), and most considered the English learnt at school important (C2) and reported to benefited from learning English at school (C3). In two latter ones, n=2 had replied *slightly disagree*. In the multiple-choise question C4, when asked about the points of benefiting from English, the most popular answer was *future (education, job)* (94%), as well as *traveling* (71%) and *social relationships* (71%). The open-ended question about how English is beneficial (C5), there was a wide range of different uses: friends, media, summer job, future, culture, as well as self-expression and metalinguistics were mentioned. In question C6 about the topics from National Core Curriculum, all topics had around 50-65% of the votes, which means that on average each of them considers more than two of the goals in National Core Curriculum important.

4.2   Teacher interviews

This section will introduce the finding from the teacher interviews. Findings from each interview are analyzed separately. However, any discussion, implications and inductive conclusions are introduced in the next chapter after the data has been introduced.

As mentioned above, the interviews are analyzed from the point of view of the model of investment (Darvin and Norton 2015, 42). To note, as well, the interviews were conducted in Finnish, so the researcher has translated the illustrative quotes herself.

4.2.1   Teacher X

Regarding social identity and positioning, teacher X identified students who have a strong language identity which causes them to be confident on the English lessons. Language identity is significant for language classes, e.g. linguistically confident students are also more daring to ask questions. She pointed out two distinct groups regarding their effort on English learning: on one hand there are students who study so diligently so that they risk their own wellbeing, and she reminds these students to not wear themselves out. On the other hand, there are students who identify so strong at English that they won't put any effort on learning, which might also be troublesome at some point.

This learning group quite new, however, the teacher has not noticed any kind of bullying of underestimating of others. The teacher feels that sometimes when she must assign groups or pairs to those who do not find those to themselves, it might stir uncomfortable feelings in the self-conscious students. She pointed out, that as the class

becomes more familiar with each other, they will also become more daring to speak English in front of each other and this is illustrated in quote 1 below.

> Quote 1:" The more they are in contact with each other, they sort of learn to know each other better, and they start to feel more secure: then language, especially oral language skills, they require trust, a leap of faith to overcome that you have never heard me speak. Still I'm going to speak in this language. – [The social environment] is most certainly significant, because one has to be able to trust that others accept me with the language skills I have."

> Original transcript: *Mitä enemmän heillä on sit kontaktia toisiinsa nii se tietynlainen niiku tun – toisten tunteminen lisääntyy, se turvallisuus lisääntyy, rentous lisääntyy ja kieli, varsinkin se suullinen kielitaito vaatii sitä luottamuksellista hyppyä siihen, et sä et oo ikinä kuullu et miten mä puhun. Silti mä avaan suuni tällä kielellä. --- Et sillä on ihan taatusti merkitystä [kielenoppimiseen], koska siinä pitää voia luottaa siihen mut hyväksytään just sillä kielitaidolla mikä mulla on.*

The teacher wants to be an adult at school who is easily approachable and communicates clearly: she tells the student the goals and expectations, as well as the grading methods, and aims to encourage everyone to ask questions when needed. She wants to learn to know the students' needs and personalities. Upon hearing about the questionnaire results, she said to be happy that the students identify as legitimate speakers of English.

When asked about capital and affordances, the teacher expressed that she does not think that the students have many opportunities to express their own personal interests in the classroom. However, if the topic at hand allows, the teacher aims to elicit conversation about the personal experiences of, or importance of English, as well as bring the topics and phenomena discussed closer to the context the students live in. To make the teaching more meaningful, the teacher imparts the benefits of learning certain themes and tries to come up with immediate uses outside of school. This is illustrated in quote 2. Moreover, the teacher said that with her experience of teaching English allows her to recognize the points where the students need to pay extra attention.

> Quote 2: " And I told them that [tag questions] is a phenomenon in spoken language, your oral skills will get more agile when you learn this. It is done too little, wording out the benefits of a topic, every time. That is the moment when I get the eyes up from the computers and mobile phones, when I tell them that this is beneficial."

> Original: *Mä sanoin et [tag questions] on puhutun kielen ilmiö, te saatte notkeammaksi teidän suullista kielitaitoa kun te opitte tän asian. Ja mä näin, että osa siinä kohtaa oikeesti katto mua, koska mä sanallistin sen hyödyn. Et sitä tulee tehtyä liian vähän, et sanallistaa joka kerta sen hyödyn siihen asiaan. Koska se oikeesti on vasta se millon ne katseet nousee sieltä koneesta tai puhelimesta, kun sanoo et tästä on hyötyä.*

Other affordances the teacher identified in the interview were learning a new, formal register of English, gateway to studying other languages, higher education and job and English as a way of obtaining information. The teacher also spoke about how she wants the students to benefit of the teaching and classmates, while they are in the class.

One of the reasons why the students cannot bring up many of their own interest in class is that there are time restrictions, within which the learning contents should be covered, and the teacher does not have power over them. Regarding ideologies and patterns of control, the teacher stressed that even though the upper secondary school aims to train the students for matriculation examinations, it is not the incentive she wants to use when teaching. She believes that giving sustainable reasons and goals for English learning is more valuable for the students in the long run. This is why she also words out the expectations and goals for the modules, as well as imparts the benefits of the topics learned in class. This is also a question of believability for her, as illustrated in quote 3.

> Quote 3: "So I don't really say what the greater value is, but I want that when the student sits there [in my class] for 75 minutes, there would be a genuine benefit, it would be believable, the thing they are focusing to, what they are practicing."

> Original: *Ni mä en oikeastaan sano et mikä se on se isompi arvo siellä, mut mä haluan että kun se oppilas istuu siinä sen 75 minuuttia, nii sille ois siitä oikeesti joku hyöty, se ois uskottavaa se mihin se panostaa, mihin se keskittyy, mitä se harjoittelee.*

As the students in group X are first year students, the teacher was not surprised that they did not find many of the goals in National Core Curriculum personally significant. She notifies that they are still quite young and might understand the significance of the goals later.

4.2.2 Teacher Y

Social identity and positioning were apparent in the teacher Y's speech when talking about the confidence level of the students and meaning of that regarding studying. On one hand, the self-conscious students don't dare to speak, while the confident ones are the ones speaking in class and asking questions. This behavior creates a vicious cycle, where those who need the most practice in oral skills are not improving, since they stay silent. Teacher Y says she notices them and tries to encourage them to speak. On the other hand, some students have strong skills in English, but according to the teacher they are the minority. The teacher tries to, however, take everyone into account by challenging those who identify as strong language users, and allowing those who do not, to stay in the basics. When doing oral exercises, students get to work with their friends, because teacher won't force the shy students to work with others in order to avoid anxiety.

> Quote 4: "-- I aim to prevent those situations, and the pair exercises can be done with your own, nice friend or group, so [the environment] should be pretty safe, because they get to choose their own partners and I'm not forcing anyone."

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However, as these students are second year students, their confidence to ask for clarifications has increased. Moreover, the teacher says that some students have taken responsibility in their own learning, and they are improving their grades. The teacher encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning, and to ask if they have anything on their mind: teacher can't know if someone is having difficulties with learning, or just not interested in the schoolwork.

Working with friends is also a matter of capital and affordances, because classmates can offer great social and linguistic capital, when they support each other and create a safe environment for self-expression in a foreign language. Teacher Y wants to use the time in class to the activities and topics where the class environment and other people bring value to the learning, e.g. when multiple students have made the same mistake, it is beneficial to talk about it in class. However, the teacher also mentions that the school environment holds limitations as well: the schedule is rushed, the materials might not be optimal for all students and the classroom itself is cramped, which prevents them from doing kinesthetic learning. However, the teacher mentioned that because she does not identity as someone who has a lot of cultural capital regarding English language, it is great that the books contain materials that can provide cultural knowledge, which is illustrated in quote 5. The teacher identifies as a strong linguist, however, which allows her to bring metalinguistic knowledge to the students, and thus illustrate how learning a language is beneficial for so many other studies as well.

Quote 5. " Then the culture section for myself, I do not have much experience of it myself. I have been speaking broken English for my whole life, in working life as well, and I've told this to [my students] as well."

Original: *Sitten no se kulttuuriosio mun puolelta niin englanninkielinen kulttuurihan, mulla ei ole itselläni siitä hirveästi kokemusta, että mä oon tätä broken englishiä puhunut koko elämäni ja työelämässä niin sitä käyttänyt toki senkin kertonut [oppilaille].*

According to the teacher, the classes do not offer many opportunities for the students for free self-expression or bringing out their own personal interests. However, the teacher wants to make the classes meaningful within the limitations of their schedule, pointing out that the feeling of purpose and language skills are very much tied to each other, as she says in quote 6. Affordances that the teacher identified were matriculation examinations, working life and further studies.

Quote 6:" The feeling of meaningfulness of the lessons is tied to [student's] skills – I do try to make it easier – For some in this group, English is very difficult, they are on level 6 with their grades and English in here, in upper secondary school is very difficult. So of course, I try to make the lessons meaningful."

Original: *--toi tuntien mielekkyyshän on vähän ja menee käsi kädessä myös sen taitojen kanssa -- mä yritänkin tavallaan, niin kun helpottaa sitä sitä vaikeuden tuntua --- Osalle on englanti tässä ryhmässä on todella vaikeata, että ne on niinku oikeasti niinku semmoisen kutosen tason oppilaita ja tää lukion englanti on on vaikeaa. Niin toki mä yritän tehdä niistä tunneista mielekkäitä--*

Regarding ideology, success in matriculation examinations as the main studying incentive for the students is not something that the teacher embraces. However, she feels that it is necessary to mention it the classes and many of the students are, in fact, preparing for the examinations. Teacher points out, however, that the goals of the National Core Curriculum are somewhat interesting and practical, what comes to English use.

Quote 7:" We are doing this for [the board of assessment of matriculation examinations] so write it for them. The English teaching in high school is a bit – even though they write that it should be practical and speech and things like that: communication. But we still prepare just for the examinations, pretty much, and the vocabulary is not everyday vocabulary.

Original: *-- me teemme teemme tätä YTL:ää varten, että sinne kirjoitatte sen, niin elikkä tää lukion englannin opetus on kuitenkin pikkaisen, niinku, ehkä vaikka se onhan ne tavoitteet niinku toki sillä kirjoitettu kaikki, että olisi, niinku, jotenkin käytännöllistä ja puhetta ja tällaista kun, niinku, viestintää. Mutta kyllähän sitä aika paljon prepataan vaan kirjoituksiin, -- sanasto ei ole semmoista, niinku, joka päivän sanastoa.*

5 DISCUSSION

As the data has been introduced in the previous chapter, in this chapter I will discuss the findings from the point of view of my research questions and make conclusions.

5.1 How are learning outcomes related to investment?

According to the data, there is hardly any connection between investment and learning outcomes. The Pearson correlation coefficient hardly supports any connection between the two variables. Even though the connection is slightly stronger with group Y, there is no statistical significance. This indicates that students with any level of investment can be on any level of proficiency, according to their grades. It might be that some of the students that reported low investment in class might be highly invested in English on another area of life, such as hobbies, consuming media, or attaining and maintaining social relationships.

Based on my analysis, there are four groups of students: a) those who are invested and have high grades b) low investment and high grades c) high investment and low grades d) low investment and low grades. This indicates that some students consider school learning important and are invested to it, but the level of investment does not define their success with grades. However, as teacher Y told and the answers to open-ended questions implied, a type of increase in investment can also lead to better grades, as has happened to some of the students in the data. However, if one is highly invested to schoolwork, but does not engage in language learning and using practices outside school, e.g. consume English media in their free time, it is likely that they will not use their skills in practice and will not learn as much as those who are invested in English in extracurricular activities as well, and they might end up with a weaker language identity, as well (Norton and McKinney 2011: 46).

Teacher X identified students who are very invested to the point they might wear themselves out, as well as those who are too confident and prefer not to put effort in school learning. The latter group have obtained good grades at school and probably will in the future, too. However, their lack of investment is a real concern for the teacher, as overconfidence might throw them off-track: this way their lack of investment in school learning can be detrimental for their studies, despite their talent and otherwise strong language identity. There is also a group who is not very invested and get weak grades as well: they might either not be interested in English (or school) at all, or they have given up on trying to get on track.

All in all, the answer to my first research question is that learning outcomes and investment might be intertwined, but in distinctive ways that vary from individual to individual. *How* the students are invested is my next research question and will be discussed in the next section, but as already stated, the grades do not correlate with the level of investment. However, investment should not be overlooked in English language teaching, since it seems that it might give us a great deal of information on how to make the classes more meaningful, who needs more encouraging or engagement in the class, and who might not be using their full potential in class.

5.2   How are the students invested in English language learning?

All the components of investment – identity, capital, and ideologies – are interconnected when discussing how the students are invested. This section will discuss all of them together, while answering my second research question.

Firstly, students' social identities are affected by their skills and investment in the English class, and this affects their willingness to engage in classroom activities. Students seem to have a strong sense of their skills and capabilities and position themselves in class accordingly. Their conception might not always be objectively accurate, since they position themselves and get positioned also compared to other students, compared to their previous grades and success at school, and how well they succeed in other subjects, as well. The most popular reason not to speak was being self-conscious: only when one is completely sure about their knowledge, they can speak out loud. Regarding social identities, the students themselves, and the teachers identified those who are good at English, and it is "their thing", as well as those students who are weaker at English, and probably insecure because of that. This identity influences how invested the student is. The ones with strong language identity can answer out loud in class, ask questions and support the ones that are not so strong English speakers. They can also think that English at school poses no challenge for them, thus being uninvested and seeking challenge elsewhere. On the contrary, a weak language

identity can prevent the student from speaking in class in front of other students and the teacher. They can feel either hopeless, because English is so challenging, or as some students reported, they want to improve, despite their angst. In addition, both teachers positioned students strongly according to their skills. They identified students with "strong language identity" and the "shy ones" or those who are "insecure", and these positions affect how teachers interact with the students: they encourage, challenge, engage, discuss and joke differently according to the student's position.

The students are invested in English learning, on the group level. None of them reported an investment lower than 2,6 (on a scale 1-4), and the teachers' interviews supported this. Both teachers said that their groups have a great atmosphere, they have not witnessed any bullying or such, and the teachers are doing their best to make the group to feel safe. It is important for investment that the teacher does not undermine anyone's identities in the class (Pavlenko and Norton 2007: 598) According to the data, one could also say that the students are invested *in the group*. In open ended question it was apparent that the students care about each other in a positive way, helping one another and keeping the class atmosphere calm and learning-oriented. I argue that it is because the groups are rather homogenic: they are mostly the same age, they are mature enough to know the consequences of their actions, they are aiming to matriculation examination, there is only little cultural diversity – at least nothing came out in the data –, and they are all invested in the classroom as a group, because not being invested or bullying would cause harm to everyone.

This matter of differences in skills and investment to the group is also a matter of capital, and regarding this group, a resource. Students are invested to the group differently, but overall, it seems that the group has a positive effect on investment and learning. Even though many of the students report that insecurity and self-consciousness – even social anxiety – might hinder their speaking in class, there are stronger and invested students, who can help and correct their language in pair and group assignments. Teacher X told that she assigns people to groups and pairs, since her philosophy is that when at school, students engage in activities they could not do at home by themselves. Teacher Y also mentioned the importance of school environment but told that she does not force students to speak with anyone, which can also be due to many of the students being very insecure and anxious in her group. However, teacher Y and teacher X both reported that they want the students to benefit from the teacher's expertise and experience in pedagogy and language. Thus, the teachers can create conditions where each student can benefit from the group and the teacher according to their needs, and this creates investment to the group.

Students' investment in the topics and working in class is a bit controversial in the data. This is a matter of capital and perceived benefits, and close to every student's experience in the class: learning material, assignments and working practices. On one

hand the students reported that the topics in class are meaningful to them, and the classes are interesting. On the other hand, the topics and practices received criticism, when asked separately. This would suggest, I argue, that the students no not question the methods or topics in the class. In addition, due to their high investment in the practices in school in general they do not experience a need to go against what is discussed and done in the class. Moreover, because they have goals regarding school, or at least want to get through each module to advance to the next, they do not even consider criticizing the topics, because it is not for them to decide what topics can be addressed in the class. The teacher interviews supported this view: there are only few opportunities for the students to bring up their own ideas and topics of interest. However, teacher X emphasized the feeling of meaningfulness of the classes, as well as bringing variety to students' day at school. Even though both teachers were quite pessimistic about the students' own interests in school, overall, it looks like that the students are happy with the topics of the classes, as well as their opportunities to do schoolwork.

Moreover, they reported that they can bring out aspects of themselves, and their identity, interests and difficulties are considered. In addition, they do not have anything else they would like to bring out in the class, with few exceptions. This might be, because they have not really thought about it, as one student said in the open-ended question, but also this indicates that the students can bring their own capital to the class, and not feel any pressure to be anything else that they are. This indicates that the students indeed invest their personal symbolic capital in English learning (Darvin and Norton 2018, 4). In addition, the questionnaire answers show that the students do not have much aversion towards the school system or learning English at school. However, the rushed schedule and the goals of learning were criticized to some level. This indicates that school learning is something they can invest their own symbolic capital to, however, practical issues make it more difficult.

Students expect and want practical benefits from English classes and are invested to the English classes mainly via the perceived benefits that bring value to their personal lives. English is not studied to belong to any fixed ethnic group, but rather it is needed to survive in and enjoy the world (see e.g. Pavlenko 2002: 279). Students do find meaning to studying English not only for leisure time activities and media, but also for getting to know more people and their future aspirations. I would argue that success in life, social relations and sophistication are something they consider important in their lives and in society in general. Most of the complaints were about English language studied in the upper secondary school being impractical and boring. However, many chose and came up with many benefits they can get by studying English, most popular perhaps being traveling, social relations, media, as well as future regarding studying and job. This shows how English has become almost a crucial part

in our culture and society for participation and success, which affects students' investment in different ways. There is no longer a single speech community that English could be affiliated to, but due to modern technology and the position of English as a lingua franca, English has become a bare necessity (see e.g. Norton and Gao 2008:114).

Perceived benefits overlap with the notion of ideologies in class: values behind ideologies define what is considered important and beneficial. Classroom practices are also indexical of the ideologies (Darvin and Norton 2015: 42). Both teachers mentioned matriculation examinations in the interviews. If I understood correctly, neither of the teachers want matriculation examinations to be the most significant incentive in language learning, and teacher X had even made the resolution to not use matriculation examinations to motivate the students. Teacher Y, for her part, said that even though she does not necessarily like it, she uses matriculation examinations as a reason for the students to study English. However, the students did not mention matriculation examinations in their questionnaire answers (with exception of one student). I would still argue that when students chose future as one of the reasons to study English, they were, at least to some level, referring to success in matriculation examinations, because they do know that it is inevitable.

Lastly, via classroom working and attending the English lessons, it seems that the students are invested in the goals of National Core Curriculum (referred to as NCC from now on). Due to their young age and studying history, I would argue that most of the student have not been thinking about or questioning their own ideologies, or the ideologies of the school, what comes to English language learning. In addition, the position of English language is established well in the NCC, and these language policies are difficult to resist (Darvin and Norton 2018: 4). According to the choices the students made when asked about the importance of the NCC goals, we can see that they appreciate the usability of English above all, and next comes individuality. According to Blommaert language use always follows a set of rules, which are indexical of ideologies and used in certain speech communities (2006: 520). The speech community that the students are a part of – the school – might appreciate these aspects of language learning and they are something that the students are invested to via language practices in the class.

5.3 What are the implications for teaching regarding students' investment?

The third research question addresses more the teachers' part in students' investment, however, many of these themes have already been covered in the previous sections. I draw conclusions from the data at hand, however, as most of the students were quite

invested in English learning, I will also speculate what would possibly be the case with students with a lower investment.

First, to encourage investment, the teacher should create a safe learning environment to everyone and a warm relationship with the learners. Both groups studied were invested to the group and its' practices in English learning. Teacher X reported herself that she aims to be a safe adult in the class and show example for open and respectful communication. Teacher Y was praised in the students' open-ended question answers, which means that she has a good relationship with the students. Moreover, the teachers and groups reported that the groups are friendly and do not hinder learning. As said before, teachers hold power in the classroom, so they also have a great impact on how safe the environment will be: if they show example on how to be kind, respectful, and compassionate towards different people with different skill levels and preferences in social interaction, it gives better conditions for the students to act that way, as well.

Second, teachers should pay attention to how they position students, and how it affects their views and behavior in class. This is a pedagogical implication that Darvin and Norton also mentioned in their paper (2008: 6). Teachers have their own histories, ideologies, experiences, and philosophies, that might cause conflicts with those of the students. Teacher can also work as a 'centring institution', with the function of indexing the 'central values' of a group, in this case the class, aiming to reduce differences between the students (Blommaert 2006: 520). The process of centring values creates a speech community and makes the members in it 'belong' via certain practices and attributes that are considered acceptable. The teachers interviewed for this study were highly aware of how they view their students, and how they deal with their individual skillsets, social behavior, and motivation. I would argue that this kind of positioning is a part of a teacher's professionalism, which helps them to plan activities, solve problems, and help individual students accordingly. However, in the worst-case scenario this could lead to a situation, where the positioning of a student could lead to profound negative effects on the student's social identity: they might notice a pattern where they are continuously ignored, silenced, expected to do things they cannot do and being embarrassed or maybe they must support the whole group when no one else knows the answer or is not brave enough to answer etc. (Norton and Gao 2018: 115).

This can also be prevented by being interested in the student's individual ways of investment, as a teacher. As mentioned above, students have individual ways of investment, and it is not necessarily tied to the skills. These groups also had little problems with their investment, but the teachers seemed to be genuinely interested in their individual needs. By analysing who is invested and how, the teacher can engage, encourage, rein in, and challenge students in a way that is individually beneficial for

them, and in ways that would promote better investment to the group and practices of the school. This aspect should not be mixed with motivation, however. A student might show low investment in class despite being highly motivated. E.g. in the open-ended questions a student reported that they really want to study English and they consider English learning at school important, however, they do not want to engage in group or pair work. This student could be labelled as not motivated, when in fact they are just not invested in the group's practices. Same notion was made by Duff, 2002, when in a classroom with native English-speakers and English learners, the L2 learners did not want to speak: in fact, they did not feel they had enough cultural capital, thus not invested in the classroom practices (as cited in Norton and McKinney 2011: 75).

Last, the teachers can better word out the benefits, reasons, and reasoning behind the topics, learning contents, and pedagogy in the classroom. There was a slight mismatch in the data regarding this, however, both teachers were again aware of the pedagogical practices they use in their lesson designs and the pedagogical reasoning behind their choices regarding what topics to cover in class, what kind of homework the students get, how and with whom the exercises are done in the class etc. Teacher X told that when she has a topic, she knows from experience to cause difficulties to most students, she explicitly says it out loud, and gets her students' attention. In the questionnaire answers the students had a plethora of reasons to study English. This is why teachers could use more metalanguage in their classes, to discuss and state the practices and goals of the teaching, so that the students have more to reflect on, and possibly invest more that they know what the teacher thinks that they are investing in.

6   CONCLUSION

This study aimed to capture the social identity and ideologies of the regular Finnish upper secondary school student in their everyday language learning environment – school. As Darvin and Norton conceptualized, the notion of investment is important to answer the questions about why learners choose to learn a language and invest in the practices of a language learning community (2015: 37).

The data showed that there are power hierarchies in the classroom and that students are positioned according to their language skills and social interaction. This is crucial since speaking is an important part of language learning and use. However, luckily in these classes the teacher and the group work as resources for everyone to learn and even develop a stronger language identity. In addition, the current study found out that the participants can bring their own social capital to the class, as well as talk about topics important to them. Moreover, they are not opposed to the school's ideological perspectives, which can promote investment and participation (Norton 2014: 170).

Investment as a concept in the school world is not well known, as it has previously been studied a great deal on immigrants, bilingual students, as well as higher education students. The reason for investment being less known in the field of SLA is that it is so complex to conceptualize. This study shows that it is, however, very tangible through real-life experiences, as well as meaningful in the school environment. In terms of teaching, it is important to be aware of investment as a concept and not label the phenomena of behavior and participation as matters of motivation. Of course, most teachers are concerned with the students' well-being and participation, but the concept of investment would give more tools to analyze it in one's own teaching groups, and understanding investment could even help in solving problems in students' behavioral problems.

The current research, as most research, has its limitations. As far as I know, investment has never been studied quantitatively on this many participants, and in a

school context. The questionnaire tool itself could be developed further to measure the students' investment more accurately. Usually, investment is studied with in-depth qualitative methods with a small amount of participants, thus this method in this theoretical framework is rare, even debatable. Moreover, the data posed challenges for reliability of this study: the students were highly motivated, in general, since they are in upper secondary school, which is not suitable or comfortable for students who cannot commit to academic work. Also, as the sample had a lot of highly proficient students, it skewed the data towards the higher end.

Overall, this is a beginning of studying investment in SLA in a regular school setting in Finland and comparable school systems. This study is not fully generalizable to all upper secondary schools in Finland, not to mention basic education. In the future, many questions regarding investment still wait for answering, such as if the cultural diversity of a group affects investment, what kind of imagined communities the students are invested to, and how student investment could be improved in a classroom context. However, I hope this study will give something to start from, as I studied investment from many perspectives and with many participants. The reason to study learning outcomes and grades was the importance of them from the perspective of school as an institution: without passing grades, the students cannot advance from a level of education to the other. And education is the gateway to jobs, which, in turn, benefit the whole society. Of course, language classes are not the only classes at school, but as mentioned above, English is a gateway language to many places and positions nowadays, and most fields cannot be studied and practiced without English.

When I am writing this, the PISA-results have also been published a month ago. Even though the recent PISA-test was mainly focused on mathematics, could the notion of investment provide some answers for improving the learning outcomes in Finland? With increased individualism, and undesirable, outdated, and incredible power hierarchies, rules, and goals at school institution, combined with even deepening polarization between students, could the teachers make the school world a little easier to navigate by creating genuine investment to school and its' goals? In addition, all the way since the law of basic education was decreed in the 70s', discipline in schools has been a debated topic. If the practices at school were something everyone could benefit from, would they also invest in it?

Of course, as long as there are people at school, there will be diversity, different viewpoints, experiences, values, and behaviors. The main takeaway from this study to everyone at school could be that the teacher and groups are always responsible of creating a learning environment, where no one is overlooked or silenced. In turn, an individual has the responsibility of recognizing their own investments and position-ing, speaking up for themselves, as well as harming others as little as possible. These

two cannot be separated, but people in powerful positions can guide the atmosphere and practices towards inclusivity and investment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Participant	Grade	Investment
X1	10	3,8
X2	9	4
X3	8	3,7
X4	10	3,75
X5	10	3
X6	8	3,37
X7	10	3,6
X8	9	3
X9	10	3,75
X10	10	3,75
X11	8	3
X12	8	3
X13	10	3,75
X14	10	3,4
X15	10	3,25
X16	10	3
X17	8	3,6
X18	9	3,4
X19	9	2,75
X20	9	3,6
X21	10	4
X22	10	3,5
X23	10	3,1
X24	9	3,7
Y1	9	3,14
Y2	8	2,6
Y3	7	3,3
Y4	6	2,8
Y5	9	3,25
Y6	9	3,2
Y7	7	3,3

Y8	**9**	**4**
Y9	**8**	3,7
Y10	**10**	3,8
Y11	**6**	3,75
Y12	**9**	3,3
Y13	**6**	2,75
Y14	**6**	3
Y15	**8**	3,75
Y16	**7**	3,5
Y17	**8**	3,25

APPENDIX 2

Student questionnaire (conducted in Finnish, translated by the author for the sake of appendix)

Note: "disagree-agree" means a Likert scale question, where the options were disagree, slightly disagree, not relevant, slightly agree and agree.

Basic information:

- Name, class and school

- The latest grade in English

A1: I am allowed to express myself in the classroom in Finnish, English and/or other languages

agree-disagree

A3: I dare to speak, when I have something to say in Finnish and English (e.g. answer teacher, ask for help, express my opinion)

agree-disagree

A4. What promotes your speaking in the class? Choose as many as you need.

- Exercise types

- Support from others

- support from the teacher

- my own interest

- confidence in my language skills

- confidence in my capabilities

- nobody else will answer

- something else, what?

A5. What hinders your speaking in the class? Choose as many as you need.

- not interested in the topics

- not interested in the exercises

- insecurity in my language skills

- insecurity in my capabilities

- someone else will answer

- the group's attitude towards learning

- teacher's attitude

- something else, what?

A7. The group supports my learning

agree-disagree

A8. How does it support/how does it not support?
open box

B1. There are important topics to me in the classes.
agree-disagree

B2. I can express the following in the class: (choose as many as you need)

- my identity

- my interests

- difficulties in learning

- difficulties with concentration

- none of the above

B4. What kind of interests/aspects of yourself would you like to express in the English classroom?

open box

B5. Teaching in the English classes is interesting

agree-disagree

B6. How could teaching be more interesting to you?

open box

C1. I learn English at school

agree-disagree

C2. I consider studying English at school important

agree-disagree

C3. I think that English learning has provided more opportunities for me

agree-disagree

C4. I think that studying English supports… (choose as many as you need)

- future (education, work)

- social relationships

- hobbies

- traveling

- none of the above

C5. How else does English language learning at school benefit you?

open box

C6. I think the following topics are important on English lessons (choose as many as you need)

- sustainable development

- science

- self-expression and culture

- English as a world language

- English as a means of influencing

- none of the above

D1. Is there anything else you would like to tell about your interest in English lessons?
open box