

The Connection Between Communication Apprehension and Spoken English Goals among Finnish Higher Education Students: A Quantitative Study

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Master's Thesis

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April 2023

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Number of pages: 46 pages, 15 appendices

This MA thesis studied if and how communication apprehension (CA) and spoken language goals are connected among Finnish higher education students. The two participant groups in this study consisted of Finnish university students and Finnish polytechnic students. The aim was to discover if there is a correlation between CA and personal goals, how the two participant groups differ from each other, and if self-evaluated language skills are connected with CA. The methods used were quantitative and the main source of material was a three-part questionnaire that was sent to Finnish university and polytechnic students. 55 answers were gathered and out of those 52 were adequate. The sections in the questionnaire addressed CA by utilizing the PRCA-24 instrument, personal goals that the participants had for their language use, and finally they had to self-evaluate themselves on the CEFR-levels.

The results showed that there is a weak, but significant, negative correlation between CA and the goals students set for themselves. The comparison between university students and polytechnic students indicates that polytechnic students have higher CA and they set lower goals for themselves, which also matches the negative correlation found between those two variables. And finally, the relationship between self-evaluated skills and CA points to individuals with lower CA being more confident in themselves and evaluating themselves higher on the CEFR-levels. However, the self-evaluation section of this study proved to be somewhat confusing for the participants, which might affect the validity of those results, and any future research might want to put more focus on participants' skill levels.

Key words: foreign language learner, communication apprehension, foreign language anxiety, learner goals, higher education, quantitative study

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List of Abbreviations

FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
CA	Communication apprehension
PRCA-24	Personal Report of Communication Apprehension
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

1 Introduction

In a constantly globalising world, the role of the English language has become very central and many use English daily in their everyday life. With this current state comes the pressure to know English and to incorporate it to one's future plans and career but with pressure often comes anxiety. In this thesis I will study spoken English language goals that Finnish learners of English have, and if and how they are connected to the communication apprehension the learners experience. My research questions are as follows: 1) How are communication apprehension and personal spoken language goals related?, 2) is there a difference between a university student and a polytechnic student when it comes to communication apprehension and language goals?, and 3) how are self-evaluated language skill levels connected to communication apprehension?

Finnish higher education students from multiple faculties will be studied in this thesis. University students and polytechnic students form the two target groups that are examined. English language students in universities are not included since they are already highly skilled English users when they enrol in university and a majority of them should have high goals for themselves as English users since they are studying the language to become experts in their field and to get a career with the English language. For these reasons, the results would not be very interesting or useful. However, in other faculties the students should have different goals varying from passing the compulsory courses to making English a part of their career and perhaps even wanting to move abroad. The reason higher education students were chosen as subjects was because they are already old enough to be aware of their own goals and there are no ethical issues that would exist with younger subjects.

The method used in this study is a mostly quantitative questionnaire, but some open-ended questions are included to get more insight on student experiences in case that that is needed for results. The questionnaire is made of three sections: the background information section, the communication anxiety section (PRCA-24), and the goal section that is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The topic is relevant because there has been a lot of research on anxiety and communication apprehension in the recent years, but this thesis takes a different and new approach by focusing on how students' goals and ambitions are related to the communication

apprehension they experience. The focus of this thesis then is mostly on the oral language skills of the participants.

The thesis starts with a theoretical background section where I will introduce the theory and important terms behind this study, including foreign language anxiety, communication apprehension, and learner goals. After that the materials and methodology of this study are explained, and the choices regarding target groups, questionnaires and other aspects are justified. In the results section the quantitative results of the questionnaire are shown, and they will be discussed in more detail in the discussion section where the research questions are answered, and the findings are contrasted to some of the previous work in the field. Finally, in the conclusion section I will summarise everything, consider the possible problems the present study might have, and offer some ideas for the future studies and on how the findings could be applied to language teaching.

2 Theoretical Background

In this section I will cover previous literature and studies related to the present topic and explain how they are relevant for this study. I will start with foreign language anxiety (FLA), and after that I will switch the focus on a related performance anxiety which is communication apprehension (CA). The final aspect to be discussed in the theoretical background section is learner goals.

2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

Foreign language anxiety has been studied since 1970 (Liu and Huang 2011) but it was only in 1986 in their article *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety* that Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope gave the first definition for foreign language anxiety within the context of the theoretical and empirical work that existed then. They state that anxiety is a common feeling for many learners, and it often causes a sort of mental block that prevents learners from achieving their desired goals (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 125). The feeling of anxiety can be more general, which means that one feels slight anxiety in a variety of different contexts, or it can be limited to a specific situation, for example learning situations or test taking, which is categorized as a specific anxiety reaction (ibid.). Foreign language anxiety is one of these specific anxiety reactions. Another way to separate general anxiety and specific anxiety reactions is to use the terms trait and state anxiety: "Trait anxiety is the feeling that some people have in their everyday lives. Some people are more prone to it than others and it can be seen as a part of the personality. State anxiety, on the other hand, is anxiety that is felt in specific situations, such as when learning a language" (Ojansuu 2021, 6). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, 284) emphasize that even though FLA is most often associated with achievement situations like tests, it is related to and has a negative effect on all areas of language learning: speaking, listening, writing, reading, and learning in general. It needs to be noted that language anxiety is not limited only to foreign languages, but one can feel anxious also about their first language (Rafek et al. 2013, 91). However, this study focuses specifically on foreign language.

2.1.1 FLA in general

Ewald (2007, 123) gives a metaphor for foreign language anxiety: just like how we feel uncomfortable wearing clothes that are unfit because we do not feel like ourselves and feel like presenting in less positive version of ourselves, a foreign language can also make us feel

like a worse version of ourselves. Some people are capable of presenting themselves as equally intelligent, witty, and sensitive in a foreign language as in their first language but if that is not the case and one feels that they are an inferior version of themselves and others are perceiving this worse version, it often leads to anxiety about the language that makes one feel worse. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 125) mention that some causes for foreign language anxiety can be found from the defensive position that learner is forced into by most language teaching methods. Another point they make is that language learning directly threatens learner's identity and worldview, which can be very problematic psychologically and therefore cause anxiety (ibid.).

Early research on foreign language anxiety revealed that high levels of anxiety directly affect communication strategies students use, and anxious learners tend to avoid difficult or personal messages in the target language (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley 1999, 219). Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley (1999, 225) also claim that FLA correlates significantly with "age, prior history of visiting foreign countries, prior high school experience with foreign languages, expected overall average for current course, perceived creativity, perceived intellectual ability, perceived scholastic competence, perceived job competence, perceived appearance, perceived social acceptance, perceived level of humour, perceived self-worth, cooperativeness, value placed on competitive learning, and individualism". (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley 1999, 228). Based on this it seems that FLA is closely related to learners' beliefs and perceptions. Many of these erroneous beliefs that students may have concern communication and pronunciation: most learners believe that pronunciation is the most important part of language learning and attach great importance to speaking with 'a good' accent as well as believe that fluency can be achieved in only two years (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley 1999, 225). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope also mention that because of negative beliefs many anxious students think that a language should not be used at all before it can be done without mistakes and if they are then forced to use the target language before they feel 'ready', their feeling of anxiety gets stronger (1986, 127).

Studies with anxious learners have shown that common symptoms of foreign language anxiety are the same as with more general anxiety and other specific anxieties, such as social anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 126). Anxious language learners report experiencing apprehension and worry, having difficulties concentrating and remembering

things, sweating and having palpitations, and “exhibiting avoidance behaviour” which means that they miss classes, avoid doing homework or avoid certain communication strategies as mentioned above (ibid.).

Clinical experience at the Learning Skills Center (LSC) at the University of Texas has found two main areas of language learning that are affected by language learning anxiety: speaking and listening (ibid.). FLA is not limited to only those two, as it can affect other areas as well, for example Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope also briefly mention writing related anxiety (1986, 125). However, according to Cheng (2008, 652) even writing anxiety seems to be highly correlated to speaking anxiety. Most of the students seeking help with the LSC had anxiety related to speaking: they could produce prepared speeches or respond to drills but in situations that required spontaneous speech, such as role-plays, the students described a tendency to freeze (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 126). Listening related anxiety on the other hand, can appear as difficulties in discriminating sounds or grasping the context of the message (ibid.). The article has an example of a student who claimed that he only heard a loud buzz whenever his teacher was speaking (ibid.). As mentioned above, according to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope foreign language anxiety is commonly seen in test situations (1986, 126). An example of this would be when a student knows a certain structure/word but forgets it during an exam or an exercise (ibid.). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope point out that the student is also often self-aware of this and realizes soon after the situation has passed that they knew the correct answer but put down the wrong one due to their nervousness (1986, 126). Another phenomenon connected to test anxiety is over-studying: Because the student feels nervous and that causes them to make mistakes, they try to compensate by studying too much. This can lead to issues and frustration if the student keeps getting bad results even though they put in a lot of effort and time (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 127). Or coping mechanisms can be completely opposite, and the student starts to avoid classes and studying (ibid.).

According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 127) FLA “concerns performance evaluation in academic and social contexts so it is useful to draw parallels between it and three related performance anxieties”. These other anxieties are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (ibid.). Communication apprehension is the most relevant for the current study. James McCroskey and Michael Beatty (1986, 279) define

communication apprehension as “anxiety related to oral communication”. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 127) emphasize the relevancy of CA to the conceptualization of FLA because it highlights communication between people and groups. CA can appear as difficulties when having to orally communicate with other people, or as stage fright, or as receiver anxiety when anxiety is experienced when listening to a spoken message (ibid.). There are four different types of CA according to McCroskey and Beatty (1986), which will be looked at more thoroughly in section 2.2. To put CA simply, learners suffering from it often have difficulties speaking in class and/or social situations because they feel like they are not in control of the situation, and they are constantly monitored (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 127).

Related to the feeling of being monitored is test anxiety which, as the name implies, appears in test situations and comes from the fear of failure and the unrealistic expectations students have about themselves (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 128). A broader concept from test anxiety is the fear of negative evaluation: it is a similar fear of being evaluated but instead of in a context of tests it can occur in any social context (ibid.).

Most of FLA studies have focused on beginner level classes, which is understandable because one might not expect to find anxiety among experienced upper-level language users. However, Ewald (2007, 123) found out that upper-level students might experience even more anxiety than lower-level students because of things like teachers’ expectations, linguistic proficiency of other students, relationships with other students and teachers, and own class preparation. Ewald’s study focused on university Spanish learners and the results revealed that majority of them enjoyed the Spanish classes, but only half felt confident using the language in upper-level classes (2007, 127). The reason for the lack of confidence was found to come from increased awareness of grammatical accuracy, and the need for more grammar teaching, as well as from classmates’ perceived ability (ibid.). This matches with the findings from Cheng’s study (2008, 653) about foreign language writing anxiety where she discovered that high skilled learners have a tendency to be more unsure of their skills and if they are capable of meeting the expectations that are set to them. In addition, in Ewald’s study (2007, 129) the students studied generally reported feeling more anxious in upper-level classes than they felt in beginning and intermediate classes. These results indicate a relationship between anxiety and students’ expectations of themselves and how confident they feel. If students have

low confidence in their own knowledge, they have more anxiety, and if their confidence levels are high, they feel less anxiety, and based on the results above, it seems that high level learners are more aware of what they do not know, which lowers their confidence in their skills.

These previous studies have mostly considered FLA in a classroom context, while this study takes a more everyday-life approach. However, these studies still remain relevant for this thesis because the current target group is language learners just as in these previous studies. Another issue that should be addressed with some of the previous studies is their age. Even though some of the studies used as theoretical background are old, they are some of the founding studies in this field and are still considered applicable to this day.

This section offered a comprehensive look into FLA. Next, the symptoms it can cause and its' effect on learning are looked at in more detail.

2.1.2 Symptoms of FLA

The previous section already briefly discussed some of the symptoms of FLA but this section the symptoms are looked in more detail. This section discusses not only the basic symptoms, but also how FLA's affect can be seen in learning.

As stated previously foreign language anxiety symptoms are very similar to general anxiety symptoms, and some of the more common ones are the feeling of tension, nervousness, feeling of worry, and an arousal of autonomic nervous system which includes, for example, increased heart rate, digestion, and sweating (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 125). FLA also has some mental symptoms, for example difficulties remembering, and some anxious students report going 'blank' when having to speak the target language, which is why they choose to remain quiet in class, which in turn has a direct effect on their learning and weakens their oral proficiency (Liu and Huang 2011, 1). The effect on learning will be discussed more thoroughly below.

Symptoms of FLA can also vary depending on gender. Rafek et al. (2013) mention that males and females process their feelings and experiences differently, thus FLA might manifest differently in different genders. The results of their study indicate that males might have more self-control over their emotions, and they can more easily detach themselves from unpleasant situations, which is why their symptoms of anxiety might manifest differently

(2013, 94). Pappamihiel's (2002, 342) results confirm that females tend to have higher anxiety than males, because females lack the adequate coping mechanisms "to help them save face" in front of their peers. She adds however, that males are also less likely to admit having anxiety (ibid.), which might somewhat falsify his results.

As mentioned above, FLA has a negative effect on learning. For example, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, 285) found that anxious students learned lists of words slower than less anxious students and had more trouble remembering the already learned words. That is because anxiety splits the learners' attention between task-related cognition and self-related cognition so that the cognitive performance loses its efficiency (ibid.). Or to put it simply, the learner focuses too much on others' opinions and possible failure to fully focus on the task at hand. MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994, 297) study showed that anxious students are unable to hold discrete items in short term memory which causes issues understanding long sentences. Anxious students have also trouble in translating and understanding texts because they are afraid to guess words they might not know in fear of failure (ibid.). Other ways anxiety can affect learning are fluency of speech, lower sentence complexity, and slower identification of the language of words. FLA also causes behavioural actions, that can disturb learning and the entire classroom. For example, Ojansuu (2021, 39) mentions withdrawal from conversations and from class exercises, as well as staying quiet as one of the more common behavioural responses that came up in her study, but Ojansuu also found out that disturbing the class and dropping courses was one way anxiety manifested in her subjects.

In summary, it can be said that FLA effects all areas of learning in a negative way by making the learner want to avoid the target language and therefore the learner missing important learning possibilities. It can also cause more concrete difficulties, such as making it harder to remember things that have been learned e.g., in class. In the next section the focus is shifted to communication apprehension, which is a type of language anxiety that this thesis aims to study.

2.2 Communication apprehension (CA)

Communication apprehension (CA) has already been discussed briefly above but in this section, I will explain it in more detail since it is a fundamental concept for this study.

McCroskey and Beatty have done some of the earliest work on CA and they define it as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person/persons" (1986, 279). In a more simple manner, CA is a type of language anxiety that occurs exclusively in communicative situations. The most common and well-known case of CA is most likely public speaking apprehension (Lucas 1984, 593). McCroskey and Beatty also point out that it is important to understand that CA and shyness are not the same concept: Shyness is a behavioural tendency to feel awkward or tense in social situations which causes withdrawing from communicating while CA is a "subjective, affective experience" (ibid.).

CA is closely related to an individual's negative experiences with interpersonal relationships and communication, and because of that it is experienced highly internally, and it is difficult to measure (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 286). In fact, the only clear universal effect of CA between individuals is the feeling of discomfort (ibid.). The physical symptoms of CA have not really been studied but there have been some reports of connections between heart rate and CA scores (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 285). However, that does not necessarily mean that high heart rate is a symptom of CA as it has not been studied that well and physical reactions can be interpreted differently based on emotional responses. Someone with high CA would interpret high heart rate as anxiety while someone with low CA would probably interpret it only as excitement (ibid.).

CA can be seen more clearly in behavioural patterns in which individuals may engage in to relieve their feeling of discomfort, and McCroskey and Beatty recognize three common behavioural patterns that appear with high levels of CA: avoidance, communication withdrawal, and communication disruption (1986, 287). A much more rare behavioural response is excessive communication or overcommunication, which can be seen only in a small minority and is related to overcompensation (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 287-288). All of these behavioural patterns are based on the fight or flight idea: a choice between making the most of an uncomfortable situation or avoiding it completely (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 287). While overcommunication takes the fight path, it is much more common to flight, and avoid the situation which can manifest as switching seats in classroom, not taking part in social events, or even choosing a career with little communication (ibid.). In cases where simply avoiding the situation is not possible, for example if the situation comes

without warning, partial or complete communication withdrawal can happen (ibid.). That means speaking only what is necessary. Related to communication withdrawal is communication disruption which is caused by poor communication strategies, and which can be described as ‘I wish I had not said that’-phenomenon (ibid.).

CA can be conceptualized as trait or state CA, but can not be restricted to only pure trait- or state-orientation (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 280-281). Instead, it has been split into four categories that exist between these pure trait- and pure state-orientations: trait-like CA, generalized context CA, person-group CA, and situational CA (ibid.). These concepts will be explained only briefly in this thesis. Trait-like CA is relatively enduring type of CA that is related to learner’s personality and causes difficulties with communication in wide variety of contexts (ibid.). Basically, a person with trait-like CA has a fear of all communication in general. Similar to the trait-like CA is generalized context CA, which is also an enduring personality related orientation towards communication but the contexts in which generalized context CA appears are more specific than with trait-like CA (ibid.). When trait-like CA stays on the same level in all situations, generalized context CA is more specific and, for example, stage fright and audience anxiety are concepts that are often connected to generalized context CA (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 282). Person-group CA is not based on an individual’s personality like the previous ones but is more related to “situational constraints generated by other person or group” and while this too is somewhat enduring, it is highly more likely to change as a response to a change in the other person or group (ibid.). For example, how close the learner is with the other person or group affects how much CA they experience around them (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 283). And finally situational CA is defined as “transitory orientation toward communication with a given person/group of people” (ibid.). It is also not personality based but a response to the situational constraints that come from other people and is therefore very fluctuating unlike the previous ones. Person-group CA and situational CA can be assumed to be closely related to each other (ibid.).

There have been some studies on the development of CA. It is clear that CA is connected to “negative outcomes in interpersonal relationships” (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 286), but some work from social biologists suggests that there is possibly a hereditary contribution but nothing definitive has been found and the question remains open (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 288). More evidence is found on “reinforcement patterns from the

environment” in childhood: if the child gets punished for communicating, they communicate less, which then endorses the approach-avoidance conflict (ibid.). Another theory suggests that, if the child receives inconsistent reward and punishment, and therefore can not predict what the response to their communication attempt is, they are likely to develop anxiety related to communication (ibid.). This means that CA can develop in childhood if the child feels helpless and like they cannot control communication situations (ibid.). Another theory that has been suggested is modelling; Children (and also adults to some extent) observe their surroundings and other people in their environment and attempt to copy them, including everything communication related (McCroskey and Beatty 1986, 288). If the copying is rewarded, the child will keep doing it, or if they are denied any reward, they will stop the copying (ibid.). Finally, one suggested idea is that CA comes from the lacking development of communication skills, but there is evidence against the relationship between first language skill level and CA (ibid.). Overall, there are many ideas and speculation about how CA develops, but little research or results. In addition, all these ideas seem to focus on children instead of teens or adults who can also experience CA as foreign language learners.

The previous studies have focused on CA as a more general concept on native speakers, which is also why studies on CA development have mostly examined childhood, but this thesis aims to study the CA of foreign language users. Lucas (1984) also focuses more on the reasons why language learners might experience CA. She lists fear of being negatively evaluated, fear of failure in social situations, fear of rejection, fear of intimacy and revealing their true self and true feelings, unreal expectations about what one needs to sound like or be capable to communicate, and lack of practice as the most important factors for developing CA (1984, 594). Fear of failure in social situations means not knowing what to do or say, and fear of rejection refers to getting rejected by someone the learner cares about or by someone with authority (ibid.). Since CA comes from worry when having to perform in unfamiliar situations where the learner is forced to be the object of attention, and they are being evaluated by others they might perceive as dominant or demanding, classrooms are ideal locations for CA (ibid.). Results from Khan’s study confirm the role of a classroom as a factor for producing CA: the teacher, teacher’s methods, and stressful classroom environment were all mentioned as the main reasons EFL learners reported experiencing speech anxiety (2015, 51). Other reasons for EFL learners’ CA mentioned in Khan’s study are personality traits, self-beliefs/self-perceptions, and associating social class with language skills (ibid.).

As was with FLA, previous studies on CA have also been mostly about classroom context. There are very few studies on FLA or CA in out of classroom context which is why that is not considered on the theoretical background for this thesis even though it is the focus of the study. As FLA and CA have now been introduced, the next important term for this thesis is “goal”, which is the focus of the following section.

2.3 Learner goals

Learner goals are a complex term that is very closely related to models and motivation and there is no one clear way to define them. This section of the study will explain how goals can be defined for the purposes of this thesis, how learner goals are relevant for this thesis, and in addition it will take a look at some background on goals as they appear in the Finnish education system.

As stated above, goals are closely connected to models, and the terms can get easily mixed. They both affect learning and teaching, and they can be conscious or subconscious (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 42). A model is a form of foreign language that is considered as desirable and perhaps even as the ideal version of the target language, for example language used by a native speaker (ibid.). Models are not necessarily even meant to be reachable, but they can certainly affect the expectations that learners have for themselves. Often a standardized, and valued or respected variety of a language is used as a model for learning, for example so called “London English” or American English (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 42). Goals on the other hand are concrete (inter)phases that the learner should reach at a certain point in time, for example at the end of a course, or the end results of the entire foreign language learning process (ibid.) Goals moderate learners’ performance and achievements, and they are “mental representations of desired outputs that individuals follow in their daily lives” (Pasban and Narafshan 2020).

Lee and Bong (2019, 2) define goal as "the cognitive embodiment of a desired future state that individuals are committed to attaining, which subsequently guides their behaviour". They also state that learners’ often have multiple goals at the same time which creates a goal hierarchy where some goals are seen as more important than others and different priorities can cause conflicts between goals (ibid.). This in turn affects the anxiety learner experiences (Koul et al. 2009, 677). Kormos, Kiddle, and Csizér (2011, 496) point out that goals are also closely connected to motivation. A famous example would be Gardner and Lambert’s (1974,

in Guerrero 2015, 97) theory which establishes a relationship between motivation and orientation, which is also known as a goal. This theory separates motivation into instrumental and integrative motivation, which both include orientations that make the learner want to learn a language. For example, an integrative motivation could be wanting to get to know the target language culture, and an instrumental motivation could be wanting to get a higher salary.

As stated above, models used in teaching affect goals that learners have. In Finnish schools, the most commonly used model for English teaching in textbooks is UK or US English (Kivistö, 2005), which is why it should be considered how this type of native-like goal can be problematic. First of all, a native speaker in itself is another difficult term to define. That is because even all native speakers do not use their native language the same way because of geographical and social differences. In addition to that, we must consider what really even makes someone a native speaker? Some suggestions that have been given are that native speaker is someone who has learned the language in early childhood, and/or someone who can use the language extremely well and intuitively, and/or someone who identifies as a speaker of the language (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 44). But even these criteria are not that simple. First, they say nothing about what a native user sounds like: There are many differences in native speaker skills and how they use the language (*ibid.*). Often learner sounds closer to the standard model of pronunciation than a native speaker. Native speakers are also imperfect: they make mistakes, take long breaks, mix up their words, pronounce sounds wrong etc. (*ibid.*), so defining native speaker as someone who uses language perfectly would be incorrect. Identity as a definition for a native speaker also has some issues. Someone might have learned a language as their first language and can use it fluently, but that does not mean they identify as a user of that language (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 45). They could have, for example, lived their entire life in a different language environment, or purposefully try to separate themselves from the other speakers of their native language.

But most importantly, it is not realistic and often not even needed for a learner of foreign language to sound like a native speaker (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 44). English is used by more non-native speakers than native speakers to the point where no native speakers are involved in the majority of communication situations that happen in English and the communication between non-natives goes smoothly even if the native norms are not reached

(Juanggo 2017, 109). English has achieved the status of lingua franca and this lingua franca English has been proposed as a better model for English learning.

Every learner has the right to decide their goals and which models suit them, which also requires certain level of maturity from them (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 50) Native-like spoken language can be used as a model but it is not fit for a goal because it is so unrealistic (ibid.) and if the goals are too high and the learner aims to be perfect it can lead to getting stuck on even the tiniest of errors that will slow down the development of oral skills (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 52). Even worse, the learners' feeling of frustration and inferiority caused by an unachievable goal can lead them to give up completely as they realize that accomplishing their goal is impossible (Juanggo 2017, 112) The learner should set their goals based on the purposes they use the target language: is it enough to be understood in simple communication situations or will they need to produce flawless and fluent standard language in challenging contexts (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 54)?

In this thesis the term goal will refer to more concrete skill levels and what is the learner's aim considering their pronunciation and communication: do they want to sound as close to native speakers as possible, and be able to integrate to a target language community, or is it enough get simple messages across. Another aspect to consider is the purposes learners need the English language for. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is used to determine skill levels, or goals, for this study. The chart for qualitative aspects of spoken language use focuses on different aspects of spoken language which are range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence (Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-3-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-qualitative-aspects-of-spoken-language-use>). CEFR is also mentioned in the Finnish National Curriculum as a tool to help evaluating the students in high schools (Opetushallitus, <https://eperusteet.opintopolku.fi/beta/#/fi/lukiokoulutus/6828810/oppiaine/6830953>), and elementary schools (Opetushallitus 2014, 354). The term native-like is not mentioned in the chart, nor are there any other parts that would refer to 'the quality of pronunciation' but there are clear implications that the highest skill level, which is C2, would be considered at least very close to a native language user.

The scale goes from C2 to A1, where C2 is the highest level and basically native-like with descriptions such as “Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged”, “has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms”, “Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.”, and “Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly” (Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-3-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-qualitative-aspects-of-spoken-language-use>). At the bottom of the scale is A1 that is described as “Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.”, “Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire”, and “Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire” (ibid.). By using this scale as a basis, I will create a questionnaire for this thesis that should make it clear whether the participants’ goals are to sound native-like or if they aim lower. These results combined with CA results should tell us whether wanting to sound native-like creates pressure and causes more CA.

In this section I have presented the background theory for the present study. This includes the basis of FLA and CA, which of the latter is the one of the main focuses of this study. The other main focus is on learner goals, not from the point of view of motivation but what the learners themselves want from their language skills, on which the latter half of this section focused on. The next section will introduce the materials and methods of this study, starting from the materials, including how the participants were chosen and how the questionnaire was made, proceeding to the research questions and finally explaining the methodology behind the study.

3 Materials and Methods

In this section I will introduce research questions, the materials for this study and the methods used to analyse the materials. The materials will be covered first, and they will include participants, and a quick overview of the questionnaire. An exact copy of the questionnaire is added to the end of this study.

3.1 Research questions

This thesis aims to give answers to three research questions which are as follows:

- How are communication apprehension and personal spoken language goals related?
- What are the differences between Finnish university students and polytechnic students?
- How are the self-evaluated language skill levels connected to communication apprehension?

These three questions are the main focus of this thesis and will be highlighted when reporting the results. These are relevant questions that are worth studying because communication apprehension is common among language learners, as explained in the theory section, and while it has been studied a lot even among Finnish students, the connection between personal goals and the pressure learners personally put on themselves, and CA has not been studied before. The previous studies have also mostly focused on classroom context, while this thesis takes the focus outside of it to the everyday life and takes into account also the participants' future goals and purposes they want to use English for.

3.2 Materials

This section focuses on the materials used in this study which includes the participants and the questionnaire. I will explain what these materials are as well as explain some of the decisions related to them, such as how the participant group was chosen, or why and how, the questionnaire had to be modified for the purposes of this thesis.

3.2.1 Participants

The participant groups for this study are Finnish university and polytechnic students from all over the country who might have English courses but do not study English as their major subject. The reason for excluding English major students is that they already have a high skill

level in English when they enrol in university and their goal is to create a career with the English language, but the aim of this study is to find as much variety between skill levels and goals as possible. That is why it was decided that results from English major students would not be suitable or answer the research questions. Instead, students from other faculties have very different skill levels when they start university and they all should have at least one compulsory English course but also the possibility to make English their minor subject. This results in very different skill levels and goals differing from wanting to pass the one compulsory course to incorporating English into their career choice. Other language majors are also included since this thesis focuses on experiences on anxiety about English specifically, and not just language anxiety in any language. Another reason to include other language majors is to get as many answers to the questionnaire as possible. Since this is a quantitative study, at least 40 answers are needed (preferably more) so the questionnaire needs to be sent to as many people as possible, which is also the reason polytechnic students were included. The original plan was to focus solely on university students but since that might not get enough answers, and excludes a lot of people from social media platform where the questionnaire is shared and where potential participants could be reached, the decision was made to expand the target group. Having both the university students and the polytechnic students included also adds the potential to provide comparable data.

Another factor that affected the decision to focus on university and polytechnic students was their age. Higher education students are all at least 18 years old, which means that there are no issues with ethical aspects such as permissions, and the participants are more mature and therefore more aware of their goals and skill levels they aim to achieve. Another early option was to study Finnish high school students who probably would have had wide variety skill levels and goals, but there would have been many ethical challenges as permissions would have been needed from both schools and parents. The third-year high school students would have been of legal age to give their own permission, but it would have once again limited the target group quite significantly, and it would have been difficult to gather answers since the last year of high school includes only one or two English courses, has the matriculation exams, and the students have their reading vacation very early in the spring. Because of this it would have been challenging to find enough students taking an English class during the time period this study was conducted.

The participants were found by sharing the link to the questionnaire on social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook) and WhatsApp group chats from where people forwarded the link to other chats. This approach was chosen over email lists because social media feels more personal, which makes the questionnaire more approachable. From personal experience I know that questionnaires sent via university email often get just ignored. Participating was not compulsory, and the participants could quit answering in the middle of the questionnaire if they wanted to.

3.2.2 Questionnaire

Quantitative methods, which are used in this thesis, are considered to be grounded on the positivist assumption that human behaviour can be predicted, explained, and generalizations about it can be made on the basis of scientific data (Tuomivaara 2005, 29). They examine a limited group of variables from which quantitative materials can be obtained (Tuomivaara 2005, 30). The goal of quantitative methods is to produce empirically tested and theoretically organized knowledge of the correlations between the variables (ibid.). To put it simply, quantitative methods describe the studied phenomenon as numeric information (Kalaja, Alanen and Dufva 2011, 19). One of the most common instruments to gather this type of data is a questionnaire (Alanen 2011, 146).

A questionnaire was chosen as a method for this study because it is a highly effective tool and offers the easiest and quickest way to gather a lot of data from a large group of people (Alanen 2011, 160). Questionnaires are also very versatile as in they can be used to gather data about a variety of different aspects such as participants' background information, their attitudes, and their stance towards claims about any topic. (Alanen 2011, 147)

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of three sections. The first section asked participants their background information. The total number of questions in this section was eight, which included questions related to age, gender, whether they study at a university or polytechnic school, which year of their studies they are in, major subject, whether English is their minor subject, and whether they had spent longer periods in an English-speaking country. Since the questionnaire is anonymous, nothing that could potentially identify the participants was asked. The anonymous aspect is discussed in more detail later.

The second section of the questionnaire focused on the levels of CA the participants experience, and to do that, the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) instrument was used. To be more specific, the most recent version, PRCA-24, was the one chosen for this study. It is the most commonly used instrument to study CA (McCroskey et al. 1985, 165) even though it is an old tool. The reasons for its popularity are that it is highly reliable with an alpha regularly of $>.90$, and “has very high predictive validity” (McCroskey 1982). Unlike the previous versions, PRCA-24 is based on four communication contexts that McCroskey and Richmond (1980) consider the most relevant for CA, which are public speaking, speaking in small groups, speaking in meetings, and speaking in pairs (McCroskey et al. 1985, 167). The instrument has 24 statements in total and each previously mentioned context is represented by 6 items (ibid.) Out of these 6 items per context, 3 are positively worded and 3 are negatively worded to “avoid response bias” (McCroskey et al. 1985, 169). However, the context specific scores are noticeably less reliable than the overall PRCA-24 scores because the number of items is smaller (McCroskey 1982). According to McCroskey (1982), there are better instruments for people interested in CA in specific contexts, such as PRPSA that focuses only on public speaking anxiety.

For the present study PRCA-24 was chosen because the aim is to study CA generally in multiple contexts and the 24 items do just that. The contexts specific scores will be presented briefly, but they are not taken into account when attempting to answer the research questions of this study unless something very interesting is found in them since the focus is on general CA levels. Other reasons for choosing PRCA-24 have already been listed above: reliability, and predictivity.

Because the target group is Finnish students, the items in PRCA-24 needed to be translated from English to Finnish. The translating was done manually by the researcher, and the translated items were reviewed by a fellow English student to make sure they were understandable and worded as neutrally as possible. The original number of statements, 24, was kept since all the statements were valued as relevant for the current study and removing something would mess with the already existing scoring system. The statements were answered using the 5-point Likert scale. The five alternatives in the present study stood for *fully disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *neither disagree nor agree* (3), *agree* (4), and *fully agree* (5).

The third section of the questionnaire focused on participants' goals regarding their own oral English skills. There was no existing frame for this section, so the items had to be made specifically for this study. The basis used for this section was The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This section consisted of ten statements in total of which six were based on the CEFR skill level descriptions, for example *I aim to sound as close to a native English user as possible* and *I do not mind if the influence of my native language can be heard when I speak English*. The remaining four statements in this section focused on participants' goals in future and for what purposes they want to know how to speak English. The 5-point Likert scale was utilized again with this section. Connected to this section also had a question regarding participants' current English skill level where they were shown the general descriptions of CEFR levels from A1 to C2 and they had to pick the one they considered closest to their level. The A-levels would mean that the participant evaluates themselves a very basic English user, the B-levels are meant for independent users, and finally someone that would pick the C-levels would consider themselves a proficient user (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>). Many participants pointed out however, that they have very different levels in different areas of English, for example listening and speaking, and that's why they had difficulties choosing the CEFR level for themselves. Finally, there was also an open-ended question where the participants could say anything they wanted relating to the questionnaire and the current study.

The questionnaire was created and hosted on Webropol. Webropol was chosen for this because of prior experience with the platform, it is easy to use, easy to distribute, and it makes analysing the results somewhat easier too by offering automatic reports. Webropol also offers an anonymous mode for questionnaires and anonymity was wanted with this questionnaire. The participants were told clearly that their answers would be anonymous already when posting the link to the questionnaire, and in addition they were offered a privacy notice on the first page of the questionnaire. Before sending out the final product there was a pilot questionnaire that was sent to a couple of friends to ascertain how long answering would take and if the questions worked as intended and could be understood. The pilot questionnaire was successful and the only changes that needed to be done were some wording choices and including the question about participants' current language skill level that was not in the pilot

version. It took the pilot participants about 10 minutes to finish the questionnaire, which was ideal since a longer questionnaire could repel potential participants.

This section presented the materials of this study which included participants and the ways the data was obtained. The following section present the research questions in a clear manner and provides an explanation for their relevancy.

3.3 Methods

Since this thesis is concerned with correlation between groups and uses a quantitative questionnaire as a material gathering method, the methods used to analyse those results also need to be quantitative. This typically means using different tables and graphs that show numbers, percentages, and correlations that are obtained from the results (Kalaja, Alanen and Dufva 2011, 19). The goal is making generalisations (ibid.) In this section the methods to scoring the questionnaire are explained, and then the tools used to help with the analysis are introduced.

The scoring for PRCA-24 section has been originally made by McCroskey (1982) and since it is a functional method and there were no changes made to the original statements in this case, there was no need to make changes to the scoring either. According to McCroskey, “Scores can range from 24-120. Scores below 51 represent people who have very low CA. Scores between 51-80 represent people with average CA. Scores above 80 represent people who have high levels of trait CA.” (McCroskey 1982). Strongly agreeing with a statement gives five points, agreeing is worth four points, not agreeing or disagreeing is three points, disagreeing grants two points, and by strongly disagreeing participant gets only one point. Scoring then happens by using the following formula:

“Group discussion: $18 - (\text{scores for items } 2, 4, \& 6) + (\text{scores for items } 1, 3, \& 5)$

Meetings: $18 - (\text{scores for items } 8, 9, \& 12) + (\text{scores for items } 7, 10, \& 11)$

Interpersonal: $18 - (\text{scores for items } 14, 16, \& 17) + (\text{scores for items } 13, 15, \& 18)$

Public Speaking: $18 - (\text{scores for items } 19, 21, \& 23) + (\text{scores for items } 20, 22, \& 24)$ ” (ibid.)

The total score, which this thesis focuses on, can then be obtained by simply combining the sub-scores. According to McCroskey (1982), scores obtained from PRCA-24 can range from 24-120 and scoring below 51 indicates that the participant has very low CA, while scoring somewhere between 51-80 points indicates having average CA, and scores higher than 80 points indicate high levels of (trait) CA. The scores were calculated manually with the help of a calculator, following the formula above. They were counted multiple times to avoid errors (twice if the same result was achieved both times and three times, or more, if the results did not match on different counting times) and the final results were then imported to Excel for analysis and tabling.

The scoring for spoken English goals section of the questionnaire had to be done manually starting from creating the scoring formula because there was no existing framework for this section. The scoring formula was created by giving the statements negative or positive value, for example the statement “I want to sound as close to a native speaker as possible” was considered a positive statement to which agreeing with indicates high goals, and the statement “I want to sound like a second language user” was considered a negative statement and agreeing to that would indicate that the participants’ goals for their English skills are lower. The scores matched the 5-point Likert scale, so with positive statements fully disagreeing (1) is one point and fully agreeing (5) is five points. With negative statements it goes the other way so fully disagreeing is 5 and fully agreeing with the statement gives one point. This makes sure that the higher the participants’ scores, the higher their goals for their English skills. The maximum points that one could get from this section were 50.

As can be seen with all the scoring formulae above, analysing quantitative data can be laborious, but there are programmes that can be used to aid the analysis and those were used in this study too. One of those tools was Webropol, which was also used to make the questionnaire. Webropol is able to create an automatic report of the results which offers the basic information such as percentages of different answers to every question, and the results can be filtered to certain groups based on, for example, age, gender, or how they answered to a certain question. However, Webropol’s own report is very limited and does not go far if you want to do anything with the data so for that reason Excel and SPSS were also used to analyse the data in this study. Webropol does offer a way to import the analysis to other programs, but

it turned out not helpful with this study because the different sections had to be scored manually.

Excel is a spreadsheet software program that was used in this study mostly to make tables and other graphs that help visualize the results. In addition, averages and total sums of the scores obtained from different sections were calculated with the help of Excel. There are other programs that do the same thing as Excel but Excel was chosen to be used in this analysis because it performs its intended purpose, and is easy to access with the university licence.

The other program utilized in the analysing of results is the IBM SPSS statistics program, which is “a powerful statistical software platform. It offers a user-friendly interface and a robust set of features that lets your organization quickly extract actionable insights from your data. Advanced statistical procedures help ensure high accuracy and quality decision making. All facets of the analytics lifecycle are included, from data preparation and management to analysis and reporting.” (<https://www.ibm.com/products/spss-statistics>). SPSS is used in this study to find correlations and connections in the results. It was chosen for this purpose because the University of Turku offers their students a free license, thus it was also easy to access. It is also a valid and reliable program.

In this section I offered a look into the materials and methods of this thesis. The materials were introduced, and it was justified why certain choices, such as limitations to the participant group and changes to the questionnaires, were made. In addition, this chapter presents the research questions clearly and rationalizes what makes them relevant and important to study. Finally, the methods used to analyse the results have been displayed. In the next section the results acquired from the questionnaire are presented.

4 Results

In this chapter the results obtained from the questionnaire are reported. The first section focuses on the background information of the participants, the second section concerns PRCA-24 results, and finally the results from the spoken language goals are presented. The open-ended answers are also presented. The results are shown both as a unified group and separately for both target groups, but the actual comparing and contrasting, and answering the research questions happens below in the discussion section since this section focuses on the raw data and numbers.

4.1 Background

The total number of participants was 55, but three participants answered that they are not currently studying in any higher education school, which meant that they needed to be filtered out and the number of sufficient participants decreased from 55 to 52. 31 of these participants were university students, and 21 were polytechnic students, which means that the groups were more even than was at first expected. The background section consisted of eight questions that were all mandatory to answer.

Out of these 52 participants 27 belonged to the age group of 18-24 years old (51.9%) making it the largest age group in this study. The second largest age group was 25-29 years olds, which included 20 participants (38.5%). Only three participants (5.8%) were aged 30-34 years, and the smallest group, which was 35+ years old, consisted of only two participants (3.8%). The age groups of university students were distributed very similarly to the distribution of total group: 45.2% of the university students were 18-24 years old, 38.7% were 25-29 years old, 9.7% were 30-34 years old, and 6.4% were older than 35 years. In comparison, the polytechnic students were notably younger: 61.9% of them answered being 18-24 years old and as many as 38.1% were 25-29 years old. There were no over 30-year-olds among the polytechnic students.

67.3% of the participants identified as women making women the clear majority in the present study. To be more exact, 77.4% of the university students, and 52.4% of the polytechnic students stated that they identified as women. Only 17.3% of the participants were men (10% of the university students and 28.6% of the polytechnic students), 13.5% identified as other genders that were not specified further in this questionnaire as it was not

considered important (9.7% of the university students and 19.0% of the polytechnic students), and one participant did not want to state their gender at all, which makes them 1.9% of the total group and 3.2% of the university group in which they belonged to.

As mentioned above, the exact number of university students was 31 while the number of polytechnic students was 21 making the difference only 10 participants. When put into percentages that means that 59.6% of the participants were studying at a university and 40.4% studying at polytechnic schools. This distribution between university and polytechnic students was much better than was assumed when sending out the questionnaire. Because the questionnaire was shared via more personal channels there was a distinct possibility that polytechnic students might not be reached as well as university students because the student circles often tend to focus on people on a similar academic path. Luckily, that did not happen though. This was also the question where three participants said that they are currently not studying anywhere, which led to them being disqualified from the study and their answers to not be taken into account in any other questions either.

The distribution between how many years the participants had been studying was also even. First-year and second-year students made up 11.6% and 11.5% percent of the total number which made them the smallest groups while the largest group was third-year student who were 23.1% of the total number of participants. The number of fourth- and fifth-year students was also matching with both being 17.3% of the total. The final group consisted of sixth-year students and those who have studied longer than six years and this group made up 19.2% of the total of the participants, which was a surprisingly large amount. Below are tables showing in more detail how the answers in this question are distributed when they are split between university and polytechnic students.

Table 1 Years studied in university.

University year	n	%
1	2	6,4
2	2	6,5
3	3	9,7
4	7	22,6
5	9	29
6 +	8	25,8

Table 2 Years studied in polytechnic.

Polytechnic year	n	%
1	4	19,1
2	4	19,0
3	9	42,9
4	2	9,5
5	0	0
6 +	2	9,5

As can be seen in the Tables 1 and 2, the younger age of polytechnic students reflects how many years they have studied as the number of earlier year students is notably higher than with university students who are mostly towards the end of their studies.

The major subjects of the participants varied a lot. In Tables 3 and 4 below are listed all the major subjects from both university and polytechnic students and in addition the tables show in brackets how large of a percentage each subject is from the total number of participants. As can be seen in the tables, none of the major subject groups are a clear majority and even the biggest group, which is social services, is less than 10% of the total number of participants. This means that the results cover a wide variety of fields but also that it is not possible to compare different fields or make any generalisations such as ‘field X students have a tendency for high CA’.

Table 3 Major subjects of the university students

University subject	n	%
Medicine	3	9.68% (5.77%)
Economics	3	9.68% (5.77%)
History	2	6.45% (3.85%)
Russian	2	6.45% (3.85%)
German	2	6.45% (3.85%)
Environmental technology	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Latin	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Physics	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Psychology	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Theology	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Craft science	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Social work	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Marine biology	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Finnish	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Genetics and molecular bioscience	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Digital language studies	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Biomedical imaging	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Film and television producing	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Japanese	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Information science	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Comparative literature	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Media studies	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Chemistry	1	3.23% (1.92%)
Cultures, communities and change	1	3.23% (1.92%)

Table 4 Major subjects of polytechnic students

Polytechnic subject	n	%
Social services	5	23.81% (9.62%)
Nurse	4	19.05% (7.69%)
Radiography	2	9.52% (3.85%)
Game design	2	9.52% (3.85%)
Community educator	1	4.76% (1.92%)
Vehicle engineering	1	4.76% (1.92%)
Horticulture	1	4.76% (1.92%)
Culture and arts	1	4.76% (1.92%)
Mechanical engineering	1	4.76% (1.92%)
Business economics	1	4.76% (1.92%)
Business information	1	4.76% (1.92%)
Civil engineering	1	4.76% (1.92%)

Only 5.8% of the total number of participants had English as their minor subject. That is 3.2% of the university students and 9.5% of the polytechnic students. However, since Finnish higher education institutions require their students to partake in language studies and English is the most popular choice, it can be assumed that the majority of the participants have had at least some English courses during their higher education. According to university of applied sciences legislation, “every graduate of university of applied sciences knows at least two languages used in Europe in addition to their own mother tongue” and “In the university of applied sciences degree the target level of English studies is defined as level B2 and Swedish studies as level B1 as they are in the Common European Framework of Reference” (<https://www.samk.fi/opiskelu/opintojen-aikana/kielten-ja-viestinnan-opinnot-samkissa/amk-tutkintoon-kuuluvat-kieli-ja-viestintaopinnot/>).

Even though the participants were asked about their previous English studies, they were not asked how long they have studied English. This is because it can be assumed that they have gone through the Finnish basic education system that would imply that they have started studying a foreign language in the 3rd grade of elementary school at the latest (this changed to the 1st grade in 2020) since studying a foreign language is included in the national core curriculum and is therefore compulsory. Although the student and their family are allowed to choose any language that is taught in their school, and it is not compulsory to start studying English per se, English is by far the most common choice of foreign language with 90% of the 3rd graders in 2019 choosing it (The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland).

Lastly, the participants were asked if they had spent a longer period of time in an English-speaking country to which only five participants (9.6% of the total number) answered yes. Three of them were university students (9.7% of the number of university students) and two were polytechnic students (9.5% of the number of polytechnic students). They were asked to specify which country they had been to and how long the period of time was they had spent there. Four out of the five participants had spent time in England. Two of them had taken a language course of which one lasted for two weeks and the other three weeks. The other two had lived in England for multiple years. The first participant had lived there for 10 years and the other for six to seven years. The fifth participant had spent four months in Australia but did not specify the reason for their stay.

To summarise the background information of the participants, majority of the participants are women in their early 20s and in the first few years of their higher education careers. The distribution of university and polytechnic students is somewhat even, and the participants come from a wide variety of major subjects and almost none of them have English as a minor subject. Only a few of the participants had also spent longer periods of time in any English-speaking country. In the next section, I will introduce the results from the PRCA-24 statement section of the questionnaire.

4.2 Communication Apprehension Questionnaire

This section presents the results obtained from the PRCA-24 part of the questionnaire. To understand how these results were calculated see 3.2.2.

4.2.1 PRCA-24 scores of the whole group

In total the average score for the entire group of participants was 74, which places them to the high end of average levels of CA. The differences between CA subgroups were small: average score for group discussion was 19, meetings score was 18, interpersonal score 18, and public speaking score 19.

As stated above the differences between scores were very small. The highest average score came from the group discussion category, which was 19.2 points to be exact, while the interpersonal category caused the least CA to the participants with 17.6 points, so this means that the difference between the highest and the lowest score was less than 2.

Differences between individuals were more significant though. There was one participant who achieved the maximum scores for all subcategories, but also those who scored almost the minimum score. The highest individual score was 120, while the lowest was 27.

A collection of all individual scores can be found in appendix 3 at the end of this thesis.

4.2.2 PRCA-24 scores for polytechnic and university student groups

If the PRCA-24 scores between university and polytechnic students are compared, it shows that university students experience notably lower CA than polytechnic students. The university students' mean total score of all sub-categories was 67.4 while the same score for polytechnic students was 83.0. This, according to McCroskey, would mean that the university students have normal levels of CA while polytechnic students have high levels of CA.

Not only the total average but also the averages for every sub-category were remarkably lower for university students. University students scored an average of 18 for group discussion, 17 for meeting, 16 for interpersonal, and 17 for public speaking. In contrast, polytechnic students' average scores for group discussion were 21, meeting was 21, interpersonal 20, and public speaking 21. This shows that, not only the scores themselves were unequal/varied between the two groups, but also the distribution of scores was different between the two participant groups. University students experienced group discussions as the most CA inducing context and felt the least CA in interpersonal situations. Instead, polytechnic students had the highest scores regarding public speaking and all the other sub-categories were very close to each other in average scores. Even though the distinctions were small, interpersonal subcategory had lowest CA scores for polytechnic students as well.

Below can be found tables of the scores between these two groups in more detail. The tables show the gender, education, and scores from all categories for each participant, as well as their total score. In the end of each table is also the total scores for the entire participant group for each category and the averages.

Table 5: PRCA-24 scores for university students

Gender	Education	Group discussion	Meetings	Interpersonal	Public speaking	Total score
unknown	uni	28	26	29	26	109
F	uni	16	10	13	16	55
F	uni	22	23	22	23	90
F	uni	22	23	19	21	85
F	uni	6	6	6	9	27
F	uni	23	20	19	17	79
F	uni	23	22	19	20	84
F	uni	13	7	9	11	40
F	uni	10	9	17	8	44
F	uni	21	19	20	18	78
F	uni	22	22	15	16	75
F	uni	11	9	11	12	43
F	uni	30	30	30	30	120
F	uni	16	13	14	16	59
F	uni	28	30	29	26	113
F	uni	22	24	18	16	80
F	uni	15	12	11	8	46
F	uni	8	6	7	6	27

F	uni	25	27	16	27	95
F	uni	24	24	26	28	102
F	uni	24	20	22	18	84
F	uni	22	7	7	11	47
F	uni	8	12	6	10	36
F	uni	25	23	19	25	92
F	uni	18	14	12	15	59
M	uni	18	22	18	18	76
M	uni	14	13	10	22	59
M	uni	10	7	8	8	33
Other	uni	25	24	22	19	90
Other	uni	6	6	7	9	28
Other	uni	10	6	9	9	34
Total scores		565	516	490	518	2089
Average		18.23	16.64	15.81	16.71	67.39

Table 6: PRCA-24 scores for polytechnic students

Gender	Education	Group discussion	Meeting	Interpersonal	Public speaking	Total score
F	polytechnic	24	24	25	23	96
F	polytechnic	15	16	15	18	64
F	polytechnic	30	30	28	29	117
F	polytechnic	28	28	27	26	109
F	polytechnic	13	13	13	17	56
F	polytechnic	25	25	24	25	99
F	polytechnic	30	30	30	28	118
F	polytechnic	21	22	21	17	81
F	polytechnic	25	24	22	29	100
F	polytechnic	26	28	27	29	110
F	polytechnic	29	25	27	29	110
M	polytechnic	18	18	18	18	72
M	polytechnic	7	9	12	9	37
M	polytechnic	18	18	19	15	70
M	polytechnic	8	9	9	17	43
M	polytechnic	20	20	18	20	78
M	polytechnic	18	23	19	20	80
Other	polytechnic	27	29	26	29	111
Other	polytechnic	26	24	25	25	100
Other	polytechnic	8	6	6	7	27

Other	polytechnic	15	15	16	20	66
Total		431	436	427	450	1744
Average		20.52	20.76	20.33	21.43	83.05

As can be seen in the tables above, a clear majority of the university students that answered the questionnaire identified as women. This is something that might have affected the results and the differences between genders could be studied further in the future.

4.3 Spoken English Goals

The entire group scored an average of 42 points out of the maximum 50 meaning that the overall goals for the participants are high, and they aim to use English on their future careers and want to sound very native-like. However, differences between university students and polytechnic students are quite notable. University students scored 43, which is even higher than the entire group's average, while polytechnic students scored a lower average score of 31. The individual scores can be seen in the table 7 below.

Table 7: Individual scores from the spoken English section.

University	Polytechnic
34	40
32	34
35	20
37	37
31	23
39	24
30	31
40	18
42	39
41	38
36	28
23	32
32	39
41	47
45	31
23	25
42	35
31	23
42	29

42	24
28	38
46	
41	
45	
36	
50	
42	
38	
32	
40	
38	

The biggest differences were found in questions related to sounding similar to a native-like English user. It seems that polytechnic students care remarkably less about how their English sounds like and whether they can be identified as Finnish based on their pronunciation, when instead sounding native-like is considered quite important for university students. Both groups agreed on wanting to move abroad or wanting to incorporate English into their careers, and therefore needing to have good enough skills to be able to communicate fluently in these types of higher-level situations. The connection between PRCA-24 scores and spoken language goals will be discussed further in the discussion section.

4.4 Self-evaluating

As mentioned above in the materials and methods section, this section of the questionnaire consisted only of one question where participants had to choose a CEFR level that they felt describes their oral language skills. However, since this section was added in a hurry just before sending out the questionnaire, it turned out that more focus should have been put into this section. The question itself did not include that the focus was on oral skills, and as few of the participants pointed out, they feel like they have different skill levels in different language use contexts, which made this part difficult to answer.

The questions included brief descriptions of the CEFR levels from A1 to C2, or in other words from a very basic English user to a proficient user.

Only one participant felt like their skills were on A1 level and no-one stated that an A2 description matched their English skills. Most of the participants chose a description from

B-level: 11 participants felt that they fit the B1 description, and 18 evaluated themselves as a B2 level English user. 14 participants chose the C1 level and 8 evaluated themselves as the highest level C2 English users. Therefore, it could be claimed that based on this sample, the Finnish higher education students feel confident about their English skills.

Separating university students and polytechnic students reveals that university students self-evaluate themselves somewhat higher on the CEFR levels than polytechnic students. In the Tables below are shown the results of self-evaluation for both target groups separately.

Table 8: Self-evaluated CEFR levels of university students

CEFR level	n	%
A1	0	0
A2	0	0
B1	5	16.1
B2	11	35.5
C1	9	29
C2	6	19.4

Table 9: Self-evaluated CEFR levels of polytechnic students

CEFR level	n	%
A1	1	4.8
A2	0	0
B1	6	28.6
B2	7	33.3
C1	5	23.8
C2	2	9.5

The tables above show that a clear majority of the university students tend to evaluate themselves on the highest three CEFR levels, while majority of the polytechnic students placed themselves in the middle of the skill-levels. The differences are small, but they indicate that university students are slightly more confident in their English language skills than polytechnic students.

4.5 Open-ended question

The open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire asked for any additional information relating the topic and was voluntary, thus it did not result in many answers. Only nine participants answered.

Overall, the open-ended question did not provide much information. They repeated the same themes and most of them were only a sentence or two. Some decided to elaborate on their language backgrounds, for example someone informed that they have gone through most of their education in English. Most of the answers said the same thing: The participants felt that they could understand English (written and spoken) without any issues in almost all contexts but producing fluent English was challenging. This was also why the last part of the questionnaire was difficult to answer since they experienced that their skill levels were so different on different areas of language. However, a few comments stood out. One participant stated that they felt comfortable and relaxed when speaking English with foreigners but getting confused and freezing up (they described it as "*mennä solmuun*") when speaking English with other Finns, which is something that matches with the finding of Liu and Huang (2011) on their study on mental symptoms of FLA. This particular participant stated that this was because of trauma caused by the Finnish elementary school. A couple of participants pointed out that their background as Finnish people affected their English usage. The other stated "since I am a Finnish person, presentations and strangers make me nervous but not English as such". The other one had an issue with speaking grammatically correct English because they "never think before speaking" which is not a problem with Finnish syntax and word order to which they are used to, but English is not as "merciful", and they feel that they "run into dead-ends when speaking English".

This section presented the results acquired from the questionnaire that was sent to the participants. These results were presented in a very quantitative way as numbers and percentages put into tables. In the next chapter these results presented above are looked into in more detail. The research questions are answered based on the data presented in this chapter and I will draw connections between these results and some of the already existing studies from the same field of research.

5 Discussion

In this section the results presented above are discussed more thoroughly and are compared to previous existing studies. However, since there are not many studies done about this topic, drawing comparisons between the current study and previous ones turns out to be difficult and the comparisons focus more on the CA part of the results instead of learner goals. The discussion is split in four parts; the first three sections aim to answer the research questions given at the very beginning of this thesis while mirroring the findings to already existing studies, and the final section goes through all the other noteworthy findings.

5.1 Correlations between CA and personal language goals

The correlations between the points from CA and personal language goals questionnaires were calculated using the SPSS program. A Pearson’s *r* correlation between the participants PRCA-24 total scores and their scores from personal language goals found that the correlation was $-.286$ that indicates a weak negative relationship between the two variables. The results are significant because two-tailed p -value = $.040$ that is less than the selected alpha level of 0.05 . In the table below are the exact numbers that SPSS calculated. The Pearson *r*, also known as correlation coefficient, is found on the Pearson Correlation row, Sig. (2-tailed) shows the two-tailed p -value, and N stands for the sample size.

Correlations			
		PRCA-24	Goals
PRCA-24	Pearson Correlation	1	$-.286^*$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		$.040$
	N	52	52
Goals	Pearson Correlation	$-.286^*$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	$.040$	
	N	52	52

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 1: Statistical output from SPSS

What these numbers mean is that while there is only a weak correlation between the variables, it is a significant weak correlation and is most likely not caused by a random sampling error. Therefore, it can be confidently stated that the weak correlation that was found is real and because of that the null hypothesis can be rejected. The conclusion then is

that the correlation is statistically significant. In other words, the sample data indicates that the relationship also exists in the population.

Thus, to answer the research question, there is a weak correlation between the CA the participants experience and the goals they have regarding their language skills. However, the correlation is negative, which means that when one variable increases, the other decreases. For example, when a learner experiences strong CA, they have lower goals for themselves. This correlation is significant so it can be claimed to be accurate in the general population, but it also needs to be noted that the sample size was relatively small, which could affect the results.

There are few existing studies that these results could be mirrored to, for example Koul et al. (2009) examined Thai students' self-perceived foreign language anxiety and their goals, and they found a connection between them. They discovered that instrumental goals, such as wanting a better job, were associated with increased anxiety while cultural goals indicated decreased anxiety (Koul et al. 2009, 685). Another somewhat relevant point Koul et al. (2009, 686) make is that especially identification goals are connected to high levels of FLA. They say that, for example, learners who aim to "emulate an English-speaking foreigner" struggle with their identity, and trying to balance their identity as an English speaking person and as a speaker of their native language (ibid.). This conflict of identities might cause increased FLA.

Other study done by Lileikienė and Danilevičienė (2016, 19) discovered that individuals with strong intrinsic goals experience less anxiety and older students tend to have stronger intrinsic goals than younger students. They also state that FLA is a strong predictor of demotivation (Lileikienė and Danilevičienė 2016, 23) that would agree with the above findings of this study that the correlation between CA and goals is negative because just like Lileikienė and Danilevičienė's findings indicate that strong FLA means less motivation (or lower goals if we decide to treat motivation and goals as a similar term), the findings from the current study imply that strong CA would mean lower goals, and if the other variable decreases, the other increases.

5.2 Differences between university students and polytechnic students

The differences between the two target groups were mentioned briefly already in the results above, but they will be discussed now in more detail.

As mentioned above, the target groups were fairly similar in terms of size. The main difference between the groups' backgrounds was that the polytechnic students had fewer academic years (average 2.8) while university students had been studying longer (average 4.4 years). Despite the differences in years of studying in higher education establishments, both target groups were mostly 18-24 years old. The difference in age was that the university students were more evenly spread among all the age categories, while none of the polytechnic students were over 30, and more than two thirds were 18-24. Both target groups consisted of mostly females. This might have affected the results, as females tend to have higher anxiety and males are also less likely to admit their anxiety (Pappamihiel 2002, 342), thus the CA results might have been somewhat different if the group was more balanced in terms of gender. These differences are not exactly meaningful scientifically but could prove useful when trying to explain and understand other findings.

Regarding CA, the groups had bigger differences. The polytechnic students experienced notably more CA in general, which goes against the expectations I had before writing this thesis. The hypothesis I had was that the university students, especially language students, would experience more CA since they are studying and using more languages, which presumably would make them more knowledgeable about languages, and as the saying goes "ignorance is a bliss". This hypothesis is also confirmed by Ewald (2007) who discovered that awareness of things like grammatical accuracy increase anxiety, and Cheng (2008) who stated that high skilled learners are less confident in their skills. Therefore, it would make sense that students who know a lot about languages would feel more anxious about them. Another example that supports this hypothesis would be that teachers, and therefore most likely teacher students, report experiencing increased language anxiety because they believe that foreign language teachers should know everything about the language they teach and do not think that they personally achieve that (Kim and Kim 2004, 178).

Concerning the differences between the groups' spoken language goals, it turned out that university students had remarkably higher expectations for themselves. This applied especially on the aspect of sounding native-like, which the university students felt was important and a priority, while the polytechnic students felt that it is not a problem even if they sound clearly Finnish users of English. The issue of sounding native-like has been discussed already in the theoretical background of this thesis, but to revise it is unrealistic (Lintunen and

Dufva 2019, 50). Unrealistic goals can lead to slowing down of skill development (Lintunen and Dufva 2019, 52) and even go as far as to causing the learner to give up completely once they realize their goal is impossible (Juanggo 2017, 112). On the other hand, both groups had high goals for their careers and incorporating the English language into that, which are considered extrinsic goals and if we once again take into consideration the results from Lileikienė and Danilevičienė (2016, 19), these extrinsic goals should cause more anxiety, or CA, than intrinsic goals, such as aiming to have good relationships with other people, would cause.

So, in order to summarise and give a clear answer to the research question, the polytechnic students had higher CA and lower goals for themselves than university students, which proves the negative correlation found between CA and personal goals that was established in the section above. The following section aims to discuss the final research questions concerning the relationship between self-evaluated skills and CA.

5.3 How are the self-evaluated language skills related to CA?

As we have established, the university students that participated in this study experience less CA and have higher goals for themselves than polytechnic students. They also evaluated themselves notably higher on the CEFR scale. This would point to having lower CA meaning also having higher confidence in one's own skills and therefore being less strict with evaluating oneself.

These findings match with claims from Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley (1999, 225) about how FLA correlates with self-perception and how FLA is closely related to learner beliefs and perceptions. While Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley speak about FLA, those both claims can be assumed to be valid for CA also since the terms are closely related, especially Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley (1999, 225) highlight how these beliefs commonly concern especially oral skills and communication. Also, Ewald (2007, 129) agrees with these claims. His findings imply that high-level learners are more aware of what they know resulting in higher confidence, and therefore they feel less anxiety. High confidence and awareness of own skills would match with the university students in this study who self-evaluated themselves high. In addition to these two previous works, Khan's (2015, 51) study also supports the connection between self-perception and CA. Taking these previous studies and the findings from this thesis into consideration, it would make sense that polytechnic students

then would feel less confidence and self-evaluate themselves lower on the CEFR scale because they experience higher CA than the university group.

5.4 Other noteworthy aspects

One of the more interesting aspects that came up in this study was the lower confidence of polytechnic students regarding the English language. They had notably higher CA levels, lower expectations towards their own language skills, and additionally they self-evaluated themselves lower than their university peers. One possible explanation to this could be that there were more language students in the university group, but they were only eight out of 31 and none of them studied English as their major or minor subject. This could be an interesting focus for future studies. Other interesting aspects came up in the open-ended section. The clear theme with them was that the participants were not comfortable with producing English but considered themselves high skilled when it came to receiving language (reading, listening). This could be connected to the fact that many courses in academic contexts are in English, and the students often need to understand their lecturer and course related books. In addition, much of the media and pop culture consumed comes in English even in Finland, which also helps to develop these receptive skills throughout life. This is however a subject for a completely different study.

As mentioned in the theoretical background, Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley (1999, 225) claimed that foreign language anxiety is closely connected to prior history of visiting foreign countries (among other aspects), which is something that was asked of the participants in the background questionnaire. There were five participants who had spent longer periods of time in English speaking countries, and they all evaluated themselves as fairly high skilled English users (C2-B2). The participants all scored over 50 points from the PRCA-24 questionnaire, two of them scoring as high as 84 and 85 points, meaning that they all experience at least average CA. These participants scored relatively high scores in the personal language goals section too with the exception of one polytechnic student who scored only 25. The others scored 31, 40, 41, and 37. Overall, the results from these participants are somewhat all over the place, and they lack a clear uniformity that could support any claims regarding how spending time in English speaking countries affects experienced CA or forming personal goals. Perhaps with a larger sample size something could be found.

5.5 Limitations

There were some difficulties that transpired during the making of this thesis. The main one was that the self-evaluating section of the questionnaire was not thought out properly and could have been more polished. It was meant to ask about self-evaluated skill levels regarding oral English skills which was unfortunately not specified clearly enough. This caused some confusion among the participants, and in addition probably affects the reliability of the results, as the participants understood the question incorrectly or weren't completely sure about their skill levels as they thought they had different skills in different areas of language.

Due to the size of this thesis and wanting to get as many participants as possible, there was not enough space for more open-ended questions, which would have been interesting and could have provided more information. For example, it would have been interesting to ask if the participants felt that their increased knowledge (especially of languages for the language students) increased the CA they experienced. But that was not exactly relevant for this study and would have made the questionnaire longer, therefore potentially repelling participants, so that, among other possible open-ended questions, needed to be disqualified. The other issues were mainly caused by the author and their lack of experience regarding applying quantitative study methods. With no prior SPSS knowledge, and with Excel skills that were basic at best, the analysis of the results turned out to be challenging.

The next section of this thesis is the conclusion and therefore is also the final part. The conclusion will offer a summary of this study, answers briefly to each of the research questions, and gives suggestions for any possible future studies regarding this, or a similar, topic.

6 Conclusion

The present study set out to examine whether there exists a connection between communication apprehension and goals that Finnish learners of English set for themselves. This was done by conducting a quantitative study for which the materials were gathered with a three part questionnaire. The questionnaire was shared to Finnish higher education students and 52 applicable participants were obtained.

The three research questions were then answered based on the answers from the questionnaire. The first question aimed to discover if there were correlations between PRCA-24 results and the participants' language goals. The discovered correlation was weak and negative ($r=-0.286$) but it was significant (p -value of 0.040) so the weak negative correlation can be applied to the general public. The second research question aimed to find out the differences in the CA levels and personal goals between the university and polytechnic students. The results showed that polytechnic students had remarkably higher CA, but they also set lower goals for themselves. Both groups considered English important to incorporate into their future plans, and the biggest difference in setting goals was that university students valued sounding native-like notably more. The last question dealt with self-evaluated language skill and if they had any connection to CA. The results indicate a connection between the two aspects since the university students with low CA self-evaluate themselves higher on the CEFR scale than the polytechnic students with higher CA. Because CA is strongly connected to self-perceptions and beliefs these findings would indicate that less CA implies more confidence, which can be seen in more positive self-evaluation. These claims are also supported by multiple already existing studies.

In future studies related to this or a similar topic, more focus could be put on participants' skill levels. Perhaps a more detailed self-evaluating questionnaire could be made or even go as far as to make an actual test for the participants to assess their actual skill levels. Another thing that could be considered is including subjects outside of university and polytechnic schools. Comparing people who have not received higher education to those who have could lead into some interesting findings. In addition, this participant group was notably female dominant, and it could be fruitful to get a more evenly divided group regarding gender, if someone was to study the same topic.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

1. Ikä?
2. Sukupuoli?
3. Opiskeletko korkeakoulussa?
4. Mones opiskeluvuotesi tämä on?
5. Mikä on pääaineesi?
6. Onko englanti sivuaineesi?
7. Oletko viettänyt pidemmän ajanjakson englanninkielisessä maassa?
8. Jos vastasit edelliseen kysymykseen kyllä, missä maassa olet ollut ja kuinka kauan?
PRCA-24 (Likert-asteikko)
9. En tykkää osallistua ryhmäkeskusteluun englanniksi.
10. Yleensä koen oloni mukavaksi osallistuessani ryhmäkeskusteluun englanniksi.
11. Olen jännittänyt ja hermostunut osallistuessani ryhmäkeskusteluun englanniksi.
12. Tykkään osallistua ryhmäkeskusteluun englanniksi.
13. Ryhmäkeskusteluun osallistuminen englanniksi uusien ihmisten kanssa saa oloni jännittyneeksi ja hermostuneeksi.
14. Olen rauhallinen ja rentoutunut osallistuessani ryhmäkeskusteluun englanniksi.
15. Yleensä olen hermostunut joutuessani osallistumaan tapaamiseen englanniksi.
16. Yleensä oloni on mukava joutuessani osallistumaan tapaamiseen englanniksi.
17. Oloni on rauhallinen ja rentoutunut kun minua pyydetään ilmaisemaan mielipiteeni englanniksi tapaamisessa.
18. Minua pelottaa ilmaista itseäni englanniksi tapaamisissa.
19. Englanniksi kommunikoiminen tapaamisessa saa oloni yleensä epämukavaksi.
20. Koen olevani rentoutunut vastatessani tapaamisessa kysymyksiin englanniksi.
21. Tunnen oloni hermostuneeksi keskustellessani englanniksi uuden tuttavuuden kanssa.
22. En pelkää olla äänessä keskustelussa englannin kielellä.
23. Tavallisesti koen oloni erittäin jännittyneeksi ja hermostuneeksi englanninkielisessä keskustelussa
24. Tavallisesti olen erittäin rauhallinen ja rentoutunut englanninkielisessä keskustelussa.
25. Jutellessani uuden tuttavuuden kanssa englanniksi, olen erittäin rentoutunut.
26. Pelkään olla äänessä keskustelussa englanniksi.

27. En pelkää puheen pitämistä englanniksi.
28. Kehoni tuntuu jännittyneeltä ja kankealta pitäessäni puhetta englanniksi.
29. Tunnen oloni rentoutuneeksi pitäessäni puhetta englanniksi.
30. Ajatukseni ovat sekavia ja solmussa pitäessäni puhetta englanniksi. *
31. Lähestyn puheen pitämistä englannin kielellä itsevarmasti.
32. Pitäessäni puhetta englanniksi olen niin hermostunut, että unohdan tietämiäni faktoja.
Suullisen kielen tavoitteet (Likert-asteikko)
33. Tavoitteenani on kuulostaa mahdollisimman paljon äidinkieliseltä englannin kielen puhujalta.
34. Pyrin kuulostamaan puhujana siltä, että Englanti on vieras/toinen kieleni.
35. Haluaisin, ettei minua pysty erottamaan äidinkielisestä englannin puhujasta.
36. Haluan, että minut pystyy erottamaan äidinkielisestä englannin puhujasta.
37. Minua ei haittaa oman äidinkieleni vaikutuksen kuuluminen englannissani.
38. Minua haittaa, jos oma äidinkieleni kuuluu englannin puhumisessani.
39. Riittää, että pystyn suullisesti tuottamaan yksinkertaisia lauseita, joilla kuvailen itseäni (missä asun, kuinka vanha olen jne.) ja mielenkiintoni kohteita.
40. Haluan pystyä puhumaan englanniksi luonnollisesti ja tarkasti vaikeammassakin kommunikaatiotilanteissa (esim. akateemisissa tai työhön liittyvissä asioissa).
41. Riittää, että pärjään englanniksi arkipäiväisissä tilanteissa ja pääsen läpi pakollisista kursseista.
42. Haluan muuttaa ulkomaille ja/tai tehdä töitä englannin kielellä, joten minun on pystyttävä puhumaan englantia näiden tavoitteiden vaatimalla tasolla.
Itsearviointi
43. Minkä seuraavista kuvauksista arvioisit sopivan parhaiten omaan englannin kielen taitotasoon?
44. Haluatko lisätä vielä jotain kyselyyn liittyvää?

Appendix 2 Open-ended answers

Haluatko lisätä vielä jotain kyselyyn liittyvää?

Vastaajien määrä: 9

Vastaukset
Viimeinen kysymys oli hankala, sillä ymmärrän niin paljon enemmän, kuin tuotan itse, joten valitsemani kohta ei ole täysin osuva, mutta se oli lähimmäksi sopiva. Myöskin yleisesti ero siihen puhunko suomalaisten kanssa englantia vai ulkomaalaisten kanssa englantia eroavat toisistaan radikaalisti, sillä suomalaisten kesken en halua edes yrittää ja menen aivan solmuun, mutta ulkomaalaisten kanssa saatan olla jopa melkein rento ja puhua melkein sujuvasti. Tämän aiheuttaa suomalaisen peruskoulun aiheuttama traumatausta.
Tässä täytyy ehkä tarkentaa, että lukeminen ja kirjoittaminen on paljon helpompaa ja pätee tähän tasoon, mutta spontaani keskustelu vaatii ponnistelua, erityisesti, jos aihe on kielellisesti vaativa.
Englannin puhuminen ei pelota koska olen hyvä siinä mutta olen kuitenkin suomalainen niin esitelmät/vieraat ihmiset jännittää, mutta ei englanti
Olen todella hyvä kirjallisessa englannissa, ja lukiossa kirjoitinkin L:n. Myös töissä joudun aktiivisesti lukemaan haastavaa tieteellistä tekstiä ja tekemään omia kirjoitelmia niiden pohjalta. Ongelma on ainoastaan englannin puhumisessa. Ulkomailla lomaillessa käytän englantia suhteellisen varmasti arkipäiväisessä kanssakäymisessä. Suomessa englannin puhuminen etenkin koulussa/työpaikalla on äärimmäisen epämukavaa. Lausuminen tökkii pahasti ja koska niin vähän tulee puhuttua englantia ongelma pahenee.
Opiskelin (juuri valmistumassa) englanninkielisessä maisteriohjelmassa, alemman tutkinnon tein suomeksi. Kuitenkin kävin jo lukion englanniksi.
Luettuani 15 vuotta liki yksinomaan englanninkielisiä kirjoja ja lähipiirini sisältäessä useammankin natiivin sekä epänatiivin puhujan väitän ymmärtäväni liki kaiken englannista, miinus järeän skottiaksentin. Ainoa iso ongelmiani on puheentuottamisen oikeaoppisuus lausetasolla, sillä en koskaan ajattele mitä sanon ennenkuin ääntä alkaa jo pulputa, ja siinä missä suomen lauserakenne on tällaiseen ilmaisutapaan erittäin armollinen, jättää englannin tiukempi vastaava höpöttäjän usein umpikujaan.
Ymmärrän englantia erittäin hyvin, mutta puhuessa ja kirjoittaessa en saa itsestäni juuri mitään irti. Kielioppi etenkin tuottaa hankaluuksia puhuessa ja kirjoittaessa, vaikka lukiessa ja kuunnellessa ymmärrän lähes kaiken.
Välillä kysymyksiin vastaaminen tuntui haastavalta, sillä koen olevani hyvä ja sujuva englannin taitaja eri osa-alueissa, mutta silti välillä sitä vähättelee omia taitojaan ja jännittää suotta. Itselläni on esiintymisjännitystä ja arkuutta puhua vieraalla kielellä erityisesti opiskeluympäristössä (kun ei voi olla täysin varma ymmärtääkö kaiken oikein englanninkielisestä opetuksesta ja vieraista termeistä jne.), vaikka töissä hanskaankin englanninkielisen puhumisen pienen jännityksen kautta luontevasti. Siksi olisin toivonut jotain kohtaa, jossa voi vähän avata vastauksiaan.
Todella mielenkiintoinen kysely, tsemppiä gradun työstämiseen! Tämän työn kyllä lukisin erittäin suurella mielenkiinnolla :)
Viimeiseen kysymykseen on hiukan haastava vastata, sillä ymmärtäminen ja tuottaminen on yhdistetty yhteen kysymykseen. Itselläni tulee nykypäivänä harvoin vastaan englanniksi puhuttuna tai kirjoitettuna mitään niin vaikeaa asiaa ettenkö ymmärtäisi tietoa ja löytäisi mahdollisia piilomerkitä, akateemisessa maailmassa tai sen ulkopuolella. Puheen tuottaminen taas spontaanisti, sujuvasti ja täsmällisesti on huomattavasti haastavampaa.

Appendix 3 All the scores from the questionnaire

Education	Gender	Age	Group discussion	Meetings	Interperson	Public speakin	Total PCRA-24	Oral goals	CEFR
uni	F	25-29	16	10	13	16	55	34	B2
uni	M	35+	18	22	18	18	76	32	B2
uni	NB	25-29	25	24	22	19	90	35	C1
uni	F	18-24	22	23	22	23	90	37	C1
uni	F	18-24	22	23	19	21	85	31	B2
polytech	NB	25-29	27	29	26	29	111	40	B1
uni	F	25-29	6	6	6	9	27	39	C2
none	NB	25-29							
polytech	F	18-24	24	24	25	23	96	34	B2
uni	F	25-29	23	20	19	17	79	30	B1
uni	F	18-24	23	22	19	20	84	40	C2
polytech	M	18-24	18	18	18	18	72	20	B1
uni	F	25-29	13	7	9	11	40	42	C2
uni	M	25-29	14	13	10	22	59	41	B2
uni	NB	30-34	6	6	7	9	28	36	C1
uni	F	35+	10	9	17	8	44	23	B2
uni	F	18-24	21	19	20	18	78	32	B2
uni	F	25-29	22	22	15	16	75	41	C2
none	M	25-29							
none	F	25-29							
uni	F	18-24	11	9	11	12	43	45	C2
uni	F	18-24	30	30	30	30	120	23	B1
polytech	F	18-24	15	16	15	18	64	37	B2
polytech	M	18-24	7	9	12	9	37	23	C1
polytech	M	25-29	18	18	19	15	70	24	C1
polytech	F	25-29	30	30	28	29	117	31	B1
polytech	F	18-24	28	28	27	26	109	18	A1
uni	F	18-24	16	13	14	16	59	42	B2
uni	F	25-29	28	30	29	26	113	31	B1
polytech	F	18-24	13	13	13	17	56	39	B2
polytech	F	18-24	25	25	24	25	99	38	C1
polytech	M	25-29	8	9	9	17	43	28	B2
polytech	NB	18-24	26	24	25	25	100	32	B2
polytech	F	18-24	30	30	30	28	118	39	C1
polytech	NB	18-24	8	6	6	7	27	47	C2
uni	M	25-29	10	7	8	8	33	42	C1
polytech	F	18-24	21	22	21	17	81	31	B2
uni	F	18-24	22	24	18	16	80	42	B2
uni	F	18-24	15	12	11	8	46	28	B2
polytech	M	25-29	20	20	18	20	78	25	C1
uni	F	30-34	8	6	7	6	27	46	C1
uni	F	25-29	25	27	16	27	95	41	B1
uni	F	25-29	24	24	26	28	102	45	B1
uni	F	18-24	24	20	22	18	84	36	C1
uni	NB	18-24	10	6	9	9	34	50	C2
polytech	F	18-24	25	24	22	29	100	35	B1
uni	F	25-29	22	7	7	11	47	42	C1
uni	didnt say	18-24	28	26	29	26	109	38	B2
uni	F	18-24	8	12	6	10	36	32	C1
polytech	M	18-24	18	23	19	20	80	23	B2
polytech	F	25-29	26	28	27	29	110	29	B1
polytech	F	25-29	29	25	27	29	110	24	B1
uni	F	18-24	25	23	19	25	92	40	B2
polytech	NB	25-29	15	15	16	20	66	38	C2
uni	F	30-34	18	14	12	15	59	38	C1
Total			996	952	917	968	3833	1809	
Average			19,15384615	18,307692	17,63461538	18,61538462	73,71153846	34,7884615	

Johdanto

Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena oli selvittää yhteys viestintäarkuuden ja oppijan omien tavoitteiden välillä. Tämä aihe valittiin, koska vaikka viestintäarkuus ja oppijataavoitteet ovat molemmat paljon tutkittuja teemoja, niiden yhteyttä toisiinsa ei juurikaan ole vielä tutkittu.

Tutkimuskysymyksiä oli kolme: 1. Miten viestintäarkuus ja oppijan omat tavoitteet ovat yhteydessä toisiinsa, 2. Onko yliopisto-opiskelijoiden ja ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijoiden välillä eroja? ja 3. Miten itsearvioidut kielitaitotasot liittyvät muihin tuloksiin?

Teoreettinen viitekehys

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys keskittyy kolmeen termiin ja niiden selittämiseen lukijalle. Nämä termit ovat kieliahdistus, viestintäarkuus sekä oppijataavoitteet.

Kieliahdistus on aihe, jota on tutkittu paljon ja jonka tutkimus aloitettiin jo 1970, mutta ensimmäinen määritelmä sille annettiin vasta 1986 Horwitz, Horwitz ja Copen artikkelissa *Foreign Language Anxiety*. Heidän mukaansa ahdistus on yleinen tunne kielen oppijoilla ja se aiheuttaa usein päänsisäisen esteen, joka estää tavoitteiden saavuttamista ja kieliahdistus eroaa yleisestä ahdistuksesta esiintymällä tietyssä kontekstissa, joka tässä tapauksessa on kielen oppiminen (Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope 1986, 125). MacIntyre ja Gardner (1994, 284) tarkentavat, että vaikka kieliahdistus yhdistetään useimmiten suoritustilanteisiin kuten kokeet, se liittyy ja vaikuttaa negatiivisesti kaikkiin kielen oppimisen osa-alueisiin. Lisäksi Rafek et al. (2013, 91) lisäävät, että kieliahdistus voi koskea vieraan kielen lisäksi myös äidinkieltä. Tämä tutkimus keskittyy kuitenkin vain vieraan kielen ahdistukseen.

Syinä kieliahdistukseen on ehdotettu mm. ”puolustava asema” johon oppija joutuu vieraan kielen luokassa (Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope 1986, 125) ja sitä, että vieras kieli uhkaa oppijan kieli-identiteettiä (ibid.). Onwuegbuzien, Baileyn and Daleyn (1999, 228) tutkimuksen mukaan myös oppijan näkemyksestä itsestään voi ennustaa kieliahdistusta. Erityisesti oppijan odotukset omista saavutuksista, näkemys omasta arvosta ja näkemys akateemisesta kompetenssista vaikuttavat kieliahdistukseen (ibid.). Tämän perusteella voitaisiin väittää, että kieliahdistus on yhteydessä erityisesti oppijan uskomuksiin ja

näkemyksiin ja useimmiten nämä virheelliset uskomukset liittyvät kielen lausumiseen ja kommunikaatioon (Onwuegbuzie et al. 1999, 225).

Kieliahdistuksen oireet ovat usein lähes samoja kuin yleisen ahdistuksen (Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope 1986, 126). Näihin kuuluvat negatiiviset tunteet kuten arkuus ja huoli, hankaluudet keskittyä ja muistaa asioita, hikoilu, sydämen tykytys ja ahdistusta aiheuttavien tilanteiden välttely (ibid.).

Valtaosa kieliahdistukseen liittyvistä tutkimuksista on keskittynyt aloittelijatasen oppijoihin, mutta Ewald (2007, 123) selvitti tutkimuksessaan, että kokeneemmat oppijat saattavat kokea jopa enemmän kieliahdistusta opettajien odotuksien, muiden oppijoiden korkeamman tason ja oman tietoisuuden lisääntymisen vuoksi. Myös Chengin (2008, 653) tutkimus tukee näitä löydöksiä.

Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope (1986, 127) mainitsevat, että kieliahdistus koskee suorituksen arvostelua akateemisissa ja sosiaalisissa tilanteissa, joten on hyödyllistä erottaa kieliahdistus kolmesta muusta samankaltaisesta suoritusahdistuksesta. Nämä kolme muuta samankaltaista ahdistusta ovat viestintäarkuus, koeahdistus sekä negatiivisen arvioinnin pelko (ibid.).

Näistä kolmesta viestintäarkuus on oleellisin termi tälle tutkimukselle. McCroskey ja Beatty (1986, 279) ovat tehneet ensimmäisiä tutkimuksia viestintäarkuudesta ja he määrittävät viestintäarkuuden ahdistuksena tai pelkona, joka on yhteydessä suulliseen kommunikaatioon. Kommunikaatiotilanteen ei tarvitse olla oikea tai sillä hetkellä tapahtuva, vaan myös tuleva ja odotettavissa oleva kommunikaatiotilanne voi aiheuttaa ahdistusta tai pelkoa (ibid.). Lisäksi McCroskey ja Beatty (1986, 279) korostavat eroa viestintäarkuuden ja ujouden välillä: ujous on käytöksellinen taipumus kiusallisuuteen tai jännittyneisyyteen, kun taas viestintäarkuus on subjektiivinen ja tunnepitoinen kokemus. Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope (1986, 127) painottavat viestintäarkuuden olennaisuutta kieliahdistuksen käsitteellistämiseen, koska se korostaa ihmisten ja ryhmien välistä viestintää. Viestintäarkuus voi ilmentyä vaikeutena viestiä suullisesti muiden kanssa, esiintymiskuumeena tai vastaanottajan ahdistuksena, jolloin ahdistuminen ilmenee puhuttua viestiä kuunnellessa (ibid.). Yksinkertaistettuna viestintäarkuudesta kärsivillä on usein vaikeuksia puhua sosiaalisissa tilanteissa, koska he

eivät koe hallitsevansa tilannetta (ibid.), mutta McCroskey ja Beatty (1986) jakavat viestintäarkuuden neljään eri lajiin.

McCroskeyn ja Beattyn (1986, 280–281) mukaan viestintäarkuus voidaan jakaa neljään eri kategoriaan: piirrettyypinen viestintäarkuus, kontekstisidonnainen viestintäarkuus, henkilö- tai ryhmäsidonnainen viestintäarkuus ja tilannekohtainen viestintäarkuus (ibid.). Piirrettyypinen viestintäarkuus on pysyvä ominaisuus, jolloin yksilö kokee pelkoa kaikissa sosiaalisissa tilanteissa (ibid.). Kontekstisidonnaisessa viestintäarkuudessa ahdistus ja pelko esiintyvät tietyssä sosiaalisessa tilanteessa (esim. puheen pitäminen), vaikka henkilö muuten kokisi olevansa rento viestintätilanteissa. (McCroskey ja Beatty 1986, 282). Henkilö- tai ryhmäsidonnainen viestintäarkuus on toinen melko pysyvä ominaisuus, jolloin ahdistus yhdistyy tiettyjen ihmisten tai ihmisryhmien läsnäoloon. Ja viimeisenä tilannekohtainen viestintäarkuus on suht ohimenevää ja liittyy väliaikaiseen tilannetekijään (ibid.). Viestintäarkuus on läheisesti yhteydessä yksilön negatiivisiin kokemuksiin ihmissuhteissa ja viestinnässä ja siksi se on erittäin henkilökohtainen ja sisäisesti koettu asia, jota on hankala mitata (McCroskey ja Beatty 1986, 286). Ainoa selkeä universaali viestintäarkuuden vaikutus on epämukavuuden tunne (ibid.). Viestintäarkuuden fyysisiä oireita ei juurikaan ole tutkittu, mutta on viittauksia siitä, että korkea syke voisi olla yksi viestintäarkuuden oire (McCroskey ja Beatty 1986, 285). Sen sijaan viestintäarkuus näkyy selkeämmin käyttäytymismalleissa, joilla viestintäarat yksilöt pyrkivät helpottamaan oloaan (McCroskey ja Beatty 1986, 287). Kolme yleisintä tällaista mallia ovat välttäminen, viestinnästä vetäytyminen ja viestinnän häiriintyminen (ibid.). Neljäs, mutta selvästi harvinaisempi, malli on ylikommunikaatio, jolloin yksilö pyrkii ylikompensoimaan helpottaakseen ahdistustaan (McCroskey ja Beatty 1986, 287–288).

Sytä viestintäarkuuden kehittymiseen on tutkittu ja McCroskeyn ja Beattyn (1986, 286) mukaan selkein syy on ihmissuhteiden negatiiviset tulokset mutta on myös viitteitä siihen, että viestintäarkuus voisi jossain määrin olla periytyvää ja tiettyjen käyttäytymismallien vahvistaminen lapsuudessa vaikuttaisi viestintäarkuuden kehittymiseen (McCroskey ja Beatty 1986, 288). Olemassa olevat teoriat viestintäarkuuden kehittymisestä ovat kuitenkin vain teorioita eikä varsinaista tutkimusta ole tehty aiheesta, jonka lisäksi ne keskittyvät lähes poikkeuksetta lapsuuteen, vaikka myös teinit ja aikuiset voivat myös kokea viestintäarkuutta vieraan kielen oppijoina.

Aiemmat tutkimukset ovat keskittyneet lähinnä viestintäarkuuteen äidinkielisillä puhujilla, mutta tämän tutkimuksen kohteena ovat vieraan kielen oppijat, joita myös Lucas (1984) on tutkinut. Hän mainitsee viestintäarkuuden johtuvan yksilön huolesta suoriutua vieraassa tilanteessa ja listaa mahdollisiksi syiksi vieraan kielen oppijan viestintäarkuudelle mm. negatiivisen arvioinnin pelon, sosiaalisissa tilanteissa epäonnistumisen pelon, torjutuksi tulemisen pelon, epärealistiset tavoitteet ja harjoittelun puutteen (Lucas 1984, 594). Hän toteaa myös luokkahuoneen olevan ideaali ympäristö viestintäarkuuden kehittymiselle.

Viimeinen tälle tutkimukselle olennainen teoreettinen konsepti on oppijan tavoitteet. Tavoite on hankala termi, joka on tiukasti yhteydessä malleihin ja motivaatioon ja jolle on vaikea antaa yhtä selkeää määritelmää. Lintusen ja Dufvan (2019, 42) mukaan tavoitteet ovat konkreettisia (väli)vaiheita, jotka oppijan tulisi tavoittaa tietyinä ajankohtana, esimerkiksi kurssin lopussa, tai ne voivat olla koko oppimisprosessin lopputulos. Tavoitteet moderoivat oppijan suorittamista ja saavutuksia (Pasban ja Narafshan 2020). Lee ja Bong (2019, 2) määrittävät tavoitteen tavoitellun tulevaisuuden kognitiivisena ruumiillistumana, jonka saavuttamiseen yksilö on omistautunut ja joka ohjaa yksilön käyttäytymistä. He lisäävät, että oppijalla on yleensä useita tavoitteita samanaikaisesti, joka muodostaa tavoite hierarkian, jossa jotkut tavoitteet nähdään tärkeämpinä ja priorisointi voi aiheuttaa konflikteja tavoitteiden välille (ibid.).

Kuten mainittu, mallit liittyvät usein tavoitteisiin ja vaikuttavat siihen, millaisia tavoitteita oppijat asettavat itselleen. Suomalaisissa kouluissa opetuksessa käytetyt mallit ovat useimmiten englanninenglanti tai amerikanenglanti (Kivistö 2005), mutta äidinkielen kaltainen malli voi olla ongelmallinen tavoitteiden muodostuksen kannalta. Ensinnäkin äidinkielistä kielen käyttäjää on vaikea määritellä, koska äidinkielisetkin puhujat käyttävät kieltä eri tavoin sosiaalisista ja maantieteellisistä syistä. Lisäksi täytyy miettiä sitä, kuka edes on äidinkielen kielen käyttäjä. On ehdotettu, että äidinkielen käyttäjä on joku, joka on oppinut kielen aikaisessa lapsuudessa ja/tai osaa käyttää kieltä erittäin hyvin ja intuitiivisesti ja lisäksi identifioituu kyseisen kielen puhujaksi, mutta mikään näistä kriteereistä ei varsinaisesti kerro, miltä äidinkielen puhuja kuulostaa eikä huomioi sitä, että myös äidinkielen käyttäjä ei ole täydellinen (Lintunen ja Dufva 2019, 44). Toinen ongelmallisuus liittyy äidinkielen mallin epärealistisuuteen ja tarpeettomuuteen (ibid.), koska englantia käyttää viestintään enemmän ei-äidinkieliset käyttäjät kuin äidinkieliset ja ei-äidinkielisten

välinen viestintä on sujuvaa, vaikkei äidinkielen normin malleja saavuteta (Juanggo 2017, 109). *Lingua franca* englantia onkin ehdotettu paremmaksi malliksi kielen oppimiselle. Jokaisella oppijalla onkin oikeus valita omat tavoitteensa ja mallit, jotka sopivat heille (Lintunen ja Dufva 2019, 50). Äidinkielistä puhuttua kieltä voidaan käyttää mallina, mutta se ei ole sopiva tavoitteeksi, koska se on epärealistinen ja liian korkeat tavoitteet jarruttavat suullisten taitojen kehittymistä (Lintunen ja Dufva 2019, 52). Oppijan kannalta olisikin parasta asettaa tavoitteet omien kohdekielen käyttötarpeiden mukaan.

Tässä tutkimuksessa termi tavoite viittaakin konkreettisempaan taitotasoon, jonka oppija pyrkii saavuttamaan sekä siihen, mikä on oppijan tavoite kielen käytön ja viestinnän suhteen: haluaako oppija kuulostaa mahdollisimman äidinkielen käyttäjän kaltaiselta ja sulautua osaksi vieraskielistä yhteisöä vai riittääkö yksinkertaisten arkisten viestien välittäminen. Eurooppalaista viitekehystä hyödynnetään tässä tutkimuksessa tavoitteiden määrittämiseen. Viitekehysten taulukko puhutun kielen laadullisista aspekteista keskittyy kielen vaihteluun (*range*), tarkkuuteen (*accuracy*), sujuvuuteen (*fluency*), vuorovaikutukseen (*interaction*) ja yhtenäisyyteen (*coherence*). Viitekehystä käytetään myös suomalaisessa opetussuunnitelmassa työkaluna oppijoiden arviointiin. Viitekehysten alin taso on A1 ja korkein C2 ja tätä skaalaa käytetään tutkimuksen kyselyn tavoite osion luomiseen, jolloin saadaan selville, asettavatko osallistujat tavoitteensa äidinkielen käyttäjän tasolle. Näiden tulosten yhdistäminen viestintäarkeus tuloksiin pitäisi kertoa meille, aiheuttavatko oppijan korkeat tavoitteet korkeaa viestintäarkeutta.

Tutkimuksen aineisto ja metodit

Tutkielman osallistujat olivat suomalaisia korkeakouluopiskelijoita, jotka eivät opiskelleet englantia pääaineenaan. Syinä tähän ryhmään rajaamisessa oli se, että korkeakouluopiskelijat ovat täysi-ikäisiä, joten ei tarvitse huolehtia lupa-asioista, sekä se, että korkeakouluopiskelijat ovat tarpeeksi vanhoja tiedostaakseen omat tavoitteensa. Englantia pääaineenaan opiskelevat taas olisivat olleet liian ennalta-arvattava ryhmä, koska heillä oletettavasti olisi korkeat tavoitteet englannin kielensä suhteen sekä heidän kielitaitonsa taso olisi oletettavasti korkealla. Muita aineita opiskelevilta korkeakouluopiskelijoilta pitäisi saada kerättyä monipuolisempaa dataa. Sekä yliopiston että ammattikorkeakoulun sisällyttäminen kohderyhmään mahdollisti myös vertailevan näkökulman.

Kysely tehtiin Webropolilla ja jaettiin kohderyhmälle lähinnä sosiaalisen median välityksellä. Linkki kyselyyn julkaistiin Facebookiin ja Twitteriin, joista etenkin jälkimmäinen osoittautui tehokkaaksi keinoksi ja julkaisu keräsikin useita kymmeniä jakoja. Linkkiä jaettiin myös Whatsappin ryhmäkeskusteluissa. Nämä keinot valittiin perinteisten sähköpostilistojen sijaan, koska ne tuntuivat henkilökohtaisemmilta ja kynnys vastata saattaisi tuntua siksi matalammalta. Oman kokemuksen mukaan sähköpostilistoille tulevat kyselyt hukkuvat usein muiden sähköpostien sekaan ja jäävät vastaamatta. Kyselyyn osallistuminen oli vapaaehtoista ja osallistujat pystyivät jättämään kyselyn kesken missä tahansa vaiheessa.

Tutkimuksen aineistona toimi kysely, joka koostui kolmesta osiosta. Ensimmäinen osio koostui kahdeksasta kysymyksestä, joissa selvitettiin osallistujien taustatietoja kuten ikä, sukupuoli, koulutus ja ovatko he viettäneet pidempiä aikoja englannin kielisessä maassa. Koska kysely oli anonymi, mitään mistä voisi tunnistaa osallistujia ei kysytty. Toinen vaihe pyrki selvittämään osallistujien viestintäarkuuden tason hyödyntämällä McCroskeyn (1982) PRCA-24 kyselyä. Vaikka PRCA-24 kysely on vanha, sitä käytetään edelleen paljon, se on erittäin luotettava ja sillä on erittäin vahva ennustava paikkansapitävyys. PRCA-24 kysely koostuu 24 väitteestä, jotka koskevat neljää eri kontekstia (julkinen puhuminen, pienryhmät, puhuminen tapaamisissa ja parikeskustelut) ja näihin väittämiin vastataan Likert-asteikon mukaan valitsemalla itseensä sopiva kohta väliltä 1 = täysin eri mieltä ja 5 = täysin samaa mieltä (McCroskey et al. 1985, 167). Alkuperäiseen kyselyyn ei tehty muutoksia tätä tutkimusta varten, mutta väitteet jouduttiin kääntämään suomeksi kohderyhmän suomalaisuuden vuoksi. Kääntäminen tehtiin manuaalisesti ja käännetyt väitteet annettiin arvioitavaksi kanssaopiskelijalle, joka tarkisti niiden ymmärrettävyyden ja neutraaliuden.

Kyselyn kolmas osio käsitteli osallistujien omia tavoitteita heidän kielen käyttönsä suhteen. Tälle osiolla ei ollut olemassa valmista pohjaa, vaan väittämät piti luoda erikseen tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksiin ja pohjana käytettiin eurooppalaista viitekehystä. Tämä osio koostui 10 väittämästä, joista kuusi pohjautui viitekehysten taitotasoasteikkoihin, esimerkiksi *”Tavoitteenani on kuulostaa mahdollisimman paljon äidinkieliseltä englannin kielen puhujalta”* ja loput neljä väittämää koskivat osallistujien tulevaisuuden tavoitteita ja sitä, mihin tarkoitukseen he haluavat englantia käyttää. Näihinkin väittämiin vastattiin samalla Likert-asteikolla kuin PRCA-24 väittämiin. Tähän samaan osioon oli liitetty itsearviointi kysymys vastaajien nykyisestä kielitaidosta. Heidän tuli valita suullista kielitaitoaan parhaiten

kuvaava taso eurooppalaisen viitekehysten kielitaitotasojen joukosta. Lisäksi kyselyn lopussa oli mahdollisuus kommentoida mitä tahansa muuta mitä vastaajille tuli mieleen liittyen kyselyyn tai yleisesti tutkielman aiheeseen.

Tutkielmassa käytetyt menetelmät olivat määrällisiä, joten niiden analyysiin käytettiin myös määrällisiä keinoja. PRCA-24 ja kielitavoite osioiden pisteytykset jouduttiin laskemaan manuaalisesti käyttäen perinteistä laskinta ja lisäksi Exceliä ja SPSS:iä hyödynnettiin tuloksien laskemisessa. Excelin avulla laskettiin tuloksien kokonaispisteet ja keskiarvot sekä tehtiin tarvittavat grafiikat tulosten esittelyyn ja SPSS avulla selvitettiin tulosten korrelaatioita.

Tutkimuksen tulokset

Vastauksia kyselyyn tuli 55, joista 52 olivat kelvollisia. Syynä epäkelvollisuuteen kaikissa kolmessa muussa oli se, että vastaaja ilmoitti, ettei opiskele missään korkeakoulussa.

Taustatieto-osion tulokset paljastivat, että 52 kelvollisesta osallistujasta 31 opiskelivat yliopistossa ja 21 ammattikorkeakoulussa. Suurin ikäluokka olivat 18–24-vuotiaat, joita oli 51,9 % eli 27 vastaajaa ja pienin taas yli 35-vuotiaat, joita oli vain kaksi ja he muodostivat 3,8 % koko ryhmästä. 25–29-vuotiaita oli 38,5 % ja 30–34-vuotiaat muodostivat 5,8 % koko ryhmästä. Kun ryhmä jaettiin korkeakoulun mukaan, yliopisto-opiskelijoiden ikäluokat jakautuivat jotakuinkin samoin kuin koko ryhmän, mutta ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijat olivat merkittävästi nuorempia: 61,9 % vastasi olevansa 18–24-vuotiaita ja kaikki loput olivat 25–29-vuotiaita.

Naiset olivat selkeä enemmistö sukupuolista: koko ryhmässä 67,3 % vastasi olevansa naisia (77,4 % yliopisto-opiskelijoista ja 52,4 % amk-opiskelijoista), 17,3 % vastasi olevansa miehiä (10 % yliopistosta ja 28,6 % amk:sta) ja 13,5 % ilmoittivat itsensä muunsukupuoliseksi (9,7 % yliopistosta ja 19,0 % amk:sta). Lisäksi yksi yliopisto-opiskelija ei halunnut ilmoittaa sukupuoltaan lainkaan.

Vastaajien opiskeluvuosissa näkyi heidän ikänsä. Amk-opiskelijat olivat selkeästi aikaisemmassa vaiheessa opiskeluaan, kun taas yliopisto-opiskelijoissa selkeä enemmistö opiskeli neljättä, viidettä tai kuudennetta vuottaan. Vastaajien pääaineista ei löytynyt selvästi yleisintä alaa vaan vastaajat opiskelivat erittäin laajaa määrää aloja. Lisäksi vain 5,8 % koko ryhmästä opiskeli englantia sivuaineenaan. Vain viisi osallistujaa ilmoitti viettäneensä

pidemmän ajan englannin kielisessä maassa, ja heistä kolme olivat yliopisto-opiskelijoita ja kaksi amk-opiskelijoita. Heitä pyydettiin myös tarkentamaan missä he olivat olleet ja kuinka kauan.

PRCA-24 kyselystä saadut pisteet kertovat kuinka korkea viestintäahdistusta vastaajat kokevat. Pisterajat tälle kyselylle ovat 24–120 (McCroskey 1982) ja jos saadut pisteet jäävät alle 51, voidaan väittää, että vastaajalla on matala viestintäahdistus. 51–80 pistettä viittaa normaaliin viestintäahdistukseen ja enemmän kuin 80 pistettä viittaa korkeaan viestintäahdistukseen. Koko tutkimusryhmän pisteiden keskiarvo oli 74, joka asettaa heidät normaalin viestintäahdistuksen yläpäähän, mutta yksilöiden välillä pisteet vaihtelivat ääripäästä toiseen: yksilötasolla alimmat pisteet olivat 27 ja korkeimmat täydet 120. Kun taas tarkastellaan pisteitä yliopisto- ja amk-opiskelijoiden välillä, voidaan huomata, että yliopisto-opiskelijat kokevat huomattavasti matalampaa viestintäarkuutta. Yliopisto-opiskelijoiden keskiarvo tulos oli 67,4, kun taas amk-opiskelijoilla oli 83.

Tavoite osion tulokset jouduttiin laskemaan manuaalisesti ja laskukaava jouduttiin myös kehittämään itse. Se tehtiin antamalla vastauksille positiivinen tai negatiivinen arvo ja tämän arvon perusteella määräytyi vastausten numeerinen arvo, esimerkiksi jos oli täysin samaa mieltä (Likert-asteikolla luku 5) negatiivisen väitteen kanssa sai vain yhden pisteen ja jos taas oli täysin samaa mieltä positiivisen väitteen kanssa, vastaaja sai viisi pistettä. Suurin mahdollinen pistemäärä tästä osiosta oli 50 ja koko ryhmän keskiarvo pisteet olivat 42, mikä osoittaisi korkeisiin tavoitteisiin kielen käytön suhteen. Ryhmäkohtaiset erot olivat kuitenkin taas selkeitä: yliopisto-opiskelijat saivat 43 pistettä ja amk-opiskelijat 31. Isoimmat erot tulivat väitteistä, jotka koskivat äidinkielen käyttäjän kaltaisuutta. Amk-opiskelijat vaikuttavat välittävän merkittävästi vähemmän äidinkielen kaltaisuudesta verrattuna yliopisto-opiskelijoihin. Molemmat ryhmät asettavat itselleen korkeat tavoitteet tulevaisuutensa suhteen: he haluaisivat sisällyttää jossain muodossa englannin kielen uraansa ja muuttaa ainakin väliaikaisesti englanninkieliseen maahan, jonka vuoksi heillä on tavoitteena selvittää englanniksi hankalammistakin viestintätilanteista.

Itsearviointi osiossa suurin osa osallistujista arvioi itsensä B-tasoiseksi: 11 osallistujaa vastasi olevansa B1-tasoisia käyttäjiä ja 18 sanoi olevansa B2-tasolla. Vain yksi arvioi itsensä B-tasoa alemmas A1-tasolle. 14 osallistujaa vastasi olevansa tasolla C1 ja 8 sanoi olevansa C2. Tämän datan perusteella voidaan siis väittää, että suomalaiset

korkeakouluopiskelijat ovat melko itsevarmoja englannin taidoistaan. Ryhmiä verratessa nähdään, että yliopisto-opiskelijat arvioivat itsensä hieman korkeammalle tasolle kuin amk-opiskelijat.

Kyselyn avoin kysymys oli vapaaehtoinen, joka lienee syynä siihen, että vain yhdeksän osallistujaa vastasi siihen. Avoimet kysymykset eivät tarjonneet kovin oleellista informaatiota ja suurin osa ilmaisikin vain, kuinka heillä oli vaikeuksia vastata itsearviointikysymykseen, koska he kokevat olevansa eri tasolla englannin eri osa-alueilla. Itsearvioinnissa olisikin pitänyt tarkentaa, että kyse oli nimenomaan suullisista taidoista. Muutama vastaaja tarjosi myös lisää infoa heidän kielitaustastaan. Pari kommenttia kuitenkin erottui joukosta. Yksi osallistuja kertoi kokevansa olonsa mukavaksi puhuessaan englantia ulkomaalaisten kanssa, mutta ahdistui käyttäessä englantia muiden suomalaisten joukossa ja toinen osallistuja mainitsi hänen suomalaisuutensa johtavan siihen, että kielen sijaan vieraat ihmiset yleisesti ahdistavat.

Pohdinta ja yhteenveto

Vastauksena ensimmäiseen tutkimuskysymykseen korrelaatiot viestintäahdistuksen ja tavoitteiden välillä laskettiin käyttämällä SPSS, joka näytti, että korrelaatio muuttujien välillä oli heikkoa, mutta merkittävää, joten voimme hylätä nollahypoteesin ja väittää, että korrelaatio löytyisi myös väestöstä. Korrelaatio on kuitenkin negatiivinen, joka tarkoittaa sitä, että kun toinen muuttuja lisääntyy, toinen vähenee. Samankaltaisia tuloksia löysivät myös Koul et al. (2009, 685), jotka löysivät yhteyden tavoitteiden ja vieraan kielen ahdistuksen väliltä ja Lileikienė and Danilevičienė (2016, 23), jotka taas todistivat tuloksillaan vieraan kielen ahdistuksen ja epämotivoitumisen yhteyden.

Toinen tutkimuskysymys koski kohderyhmien eroja, joita käsiteltiin jo lyhyesti tuloksissa. Amk-opiskelijoilla oli korkeampi viestintäahdistus kuin yliopisto-opiskelijoilla, joka yllättäen sotii ennakko-odotuksia vastaan. Hypoteesina tutkimusta aloittaessa oli, että yliopisto-opiskelijoilla olisi korkeampi viestintäahdistus, koska ”tieto lisää tuskaa” ja oletuksena oli, että yliopisto-opiskelijat käyttäisivät enemmän englantia opinnoissaan ja olisivat tietoisempia kielistä. Myös Ewaldin (2007) ja Chengin (2008) tutkimukset tukevat tätä hypoteesia. Ewald selvitti, että tietoisuus kielellisistä seikoista kuten kieliopillinen tarkkuus, lisää ahdistusta, kun taas Cheng toteaa korkeatasoisten oppijoiden olevan

vähemmän varmoja taidoistaan. Toinen merkittävä ero ryhmien välillä tuli esille tavoiteosiossa, jossa ilmeni, että yliopisto-opiskelijat asettivat korkeammat tavoitteet itselleen. He myös arvottivat äidinkielen kaltaiselta kuulostamisen huomattavasti korkeammalle kuin amk-opiskelijat. Kuten teoriassa jo mainittiin, äidinkieliseltä käyttäjältä kuulostaminen on huono tavoite, koska se on epärealistinen ja voi siten aiheuttaa taitojen kehityksen hidastumista (Lintunen ja Dufva 2019, 52) ja oppija voi jopa luovuttaa kokonaan (Juanggo 2017, 112). Molemmilla ryhmillä oli myös korkeat tavoitteet tulevaisuutensa suhteen ja he haluavat käyttää englantia urallaan, jotka luokitellaan ulkoiseksi tavoitteeksi ja aiheuttaa Lileikienén ja Danilevičienén (2016, 19) mukaan enemmän ahdistusta kuin sisäiset tavoitteet kuten ihmissuhteiden kehittäminen.

Viimeinen tutkimuskysymys koski itsearviointin yhteyttä viestintäarkuuteen. Kuten todettu, yliopisto-opiskelijoilla on vähemmän viestintäarkuutta ja korkeammat tavoitteet kuin amk-opiskelijoilla, jonka lisäksi he asettivat itsensä korkeammalle eurooppalaisen viitekehysten taitotasoasteikolla. Tämä viittaisi siihen, että matalampi viestintäarkuus tarkoittaisi parempaa itseluottamusta omiin taitoihin ja siten olevan vähemmän tiukka omien kykyjensä arvioinnissa. Nämä löydökset sopivat yhteen Onwuegbuzien, Baileyn and Daleyn (1999, 225) väitöksiin siitä, että kieliahdistus korreloisi näkemykseen itsestä ja oppija uskomuksiin. Myös Ewaldin (2007, 129) ja Khanin (2015, 51) tutkimukset tukevat yhteyttä kommunikaatioahdistuksen ja omakuvan välillä.

Muita mielenkiintoisia tutkimuksissa esille tulleita asioita oli amk-opiskelijoiden yleisesti matalampi itsevarmuus englannin kielen suhteen, sekä avoimista kysymyksistä esille tullut osallistujien epämukavuudesta englannin kielen tuottamisen suhteen. Vaikka osallistujat arvoivat itsensä korkealle eurooppalaisessa viitekehyksessä, he kokivat olonsa mukavaksi vain kieltä vastaanottaessaan eli lukiessa ja kuunnellessa. Tämä saattaisi johtua esimerkiksi suomalaisten korkeakoulumateriaalien englannin kieli painotteisuuteen, joten opiskelijat nimenomaan vastaanottavat paljon tietoa englanniksi, mutta heille ei tarjoudu tilaisuuksia tuottaa, etenkin suullisesti, englantia. Lisäksi pidempään englanninkielisessä maassa oleskelleiden osallistujien vastaukset osoittautuivat mielenkiintoisiksi, koska he kaikki arvioivat itsensä keskiarvoa paremmiksi englannin käyttäjiksi, mutta heillä oli koko joukon keskiarvoa korkeampi viestintäahdistus. Tämän perusteella englanninkielisessä maassa

oleskelleet osallistujat voisivat olla kiinnostava erillinen ryhmänsä tutkia, mutta vain viiden hengen joukosta on mahdotonta vetää mitään johtopäätöksiä.

Tutkimuksen suurimpana ongelmana oli kyselyyn viime tingassa lisätty itsearviointi kysymys, joka aiheutti hämmennystä vastaajien joukossa ja saattaa vaikuttaa tulosten luotettavuuteen. Tulevaisuudessa voisikin olla kannattavaa lisätä tarkempi itsearviointiosio ja jos resurssit antavat periksi, kenties jopa teettää tasokoe osallistujilla. Useampi avoin kysymyskin olisi voinut tuottaa enemmän ja hedelmällisempää dataa, mutta tämän tutkimuksen koko ja pyrkimys saada mahdollisimman paljon osallistujia pakotti minimoimaan avoimet kysymykset.