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Foreign Language Learning Boredom in the EFL Classroom and during Independent Language Learning:

Examining and Comparing Finnish University Students' Experiences

Aino Haikonen

Master's Thesis

The Language Specialist Degree Programme, Department of English

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Regardless of the universal nature of boredom as an academic emotion, applied linguistic research regarding the emotion has only gained prevalence during the last decade. The present study examines the emotion specifically as *Foreign Language Learning Boredom* (FLLB) in the context of Finnish bachelor's degree students studying English as a mandatory part of their degree. The study provides a comparative approach to FLLB experienced in two distinct contexts: the EFL classroom and independent language learning outside of the classroom.

In the present study FLLB among 53 bachelor's degree students was examined in terms of its intensity and common causes, as well as common coping styles and reactions related to the emotion. Intensity of FLLB was investigated statistically through quantitative data that was collected with a questionnaire that was modelled after two preexisting questionnaire tools for both studied contexts respectively. Causes of FLLB and students' common reactions to the emotion were investigated with qualitative data collection and analysis methods.

The study found that students were statistically more likely to experience higher levels of FLLB during independent language learning than they were in the EFL classroom. However, in both studied contexts FLLB scores were considered moderate at most. In both contexts common causes for FLLB were mostly attributed to the achievement setting and language tasks assigned by a teacher. Even during independent language learning which is on the surface less controlled by the teacher's authority, most FLLB could be attributed to homework tasks or other work directly related to activity in the classroom. On the contrary, students' coping styles during independent language learning demonstrated more autonomy and freedom than in the EFL classroom. Behavioral coping styles that allow students to change or exit boredom inducing situations as a consequence of their own behavior were commonly used during independent language learning, whereas common coping styles in the EFL classroom included short-term avoidance behavior, such as mobile phone usage, or cognitive reorienting of concentration towards the learning situation.

Key words: Second Language Acquisition, Achievement Emotions, Foreign Language Learning Boredom.

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BLEOS	Boredom in Learning English Outside of School Questionnaire
BPELC-R	Boredom in Practical English Classes Questionnaire – Revised
BPS	Boredom Proneness Scale
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
FLLB	Foreign Language Learning Boredom
ID	Individual difference
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language
WTC	Willingness to Communicate

1 Introduction

Boredom, one of the most frequently experienced academic emotions (Pekrun et al., 2010, 536), has remained severely understudied in the saturated field of second language acquisition (SLA) research focusing on individual difference (ID) factors. Even outside the field of SLA, the study of boredom has long been neglected in favor of studying emotions such as anxiety and anger which has partially been explained by boredom's status as a "silent" and non-disruptive emotion in educational settings (Pekrun et al., 2010, 531). Boredom in the classroom has also often been miscategorized as laziness or attributed to students' mental health struggles such as anxiety or depression (Macklem, 2015, 1).

Only in recent years has SLA research regarding ID factors such as anxiety, motivation, and learning strategies been complemented by a steadily growing number of studies focusing on *foreign language learning boredom* (FLLB). Much of this research has been conducted in the context of Polish advanced learners of English, with researchers such as Pawlak, Kruk, and Zawodniak leading the field. Research has largely focused on FLLB in the second language (L2) classroom (see Pawlak et al., 2020; Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018, etc.), with only one study explicitly examining FLLB in independent after-class learning contexts (Pawlak et al., 2022).

The present study takes a comparative approach to FLLB in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom and FLLB during independent language learning outside of the classroom setting. FLLB is examined in terms of intensity, common causes, and common coping styles. The investigation is conducted on the basis of quantitative and qualitative data collected from Finnish bachelor's degree students completing a mandatory domain specific English course. First, the study examines FLLB in the two contexts separately, after which the obtained results are compared to explore some central similarities and differences between students' experiences of FLLB in the EFL classroom and during independent language learning. While previous research has touched on the differences between boredom in instructed and independent language learning contexts (see Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018), the present study is the first of its kind to bring the comparison of students' experiences of FLLB in the EFL classroom and during independent learning into the center of the study.

Before the empirical methods and results of the present study are introduced, the central concepts and theory related to boredom and the study of FLLB in the field of SLA are

discussed in section 2. The aim of the section is to provide a definition of boredom and introduce the reader to essential research and findings regarding FLLB. The definition of boredom used in the present study follows the definition of achievement emotions used in the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2010), while further context for the emotion is provided with the introduction of the five boredom types identified by Goetz et al. (2014). The role of FLLB among ID factors is considered briefly before previous FLLB research conducted in the classroom context and in the independent learning context are discussed in separate subsections.

Once the theoretical bases for the present study have been established, the research questions, methods, and materials of the present study are discussed in section 3. This section introduces the data collection instruments as well as the data analysis methods used in the present study. Issues of participant sampling along with the final participants of the present study are also acknowledged in the section. Two preexisting questionnaire tools, the *Boredom in Practical English Language Classes Questionnaire – Revised* (BPELC-R) (Pawlak et al. 2020) and its counterpart the *Boredom in Learning English Outside of School Questionnaire* (BLEOS) (Pawlak et al. 2022), are detailed as they serve as the basis for quantitative data collection in the present study. Subsequently, the formulation and the purpose of the open-ended questions designed to elicit qualitative data are described. Once data collection methods and instruments have been established, the section provides an overview of the statistical and qualitative data analysis methods utilized to obtain results from the collected data.

The findings of the study are presented in section 4, which has separate subsections for quantitative and qualitative results. Within each subsection the presentation of the results is further structured according to the two studied contexts, with the EFL classroom results shown first and then followed by the independent language learning results. The presentation of qualitative results is accompanied with discussion, which aims to emphasize the analytical nature of qualitative research. Discussion and comparative examination of the results is continued in section 5, in which the differences and similarities between the results of the two studied contexts are identified and analyzed. Furthermore, the findings of the present study are discussed in light of previous research. The section finishes with an acknowledgement of research limitations and some suggestions for further study. The main points of the thesis are then concluded briefly in section 6.

2 Theoretical background

This section provides a theoretical framework that forms the basis for empirical analysis in the present study. The section is divided into two main subsections, the first of which deals with the concept and definition of boredom as a complex academic achievement emotion through a perspective of educational psychology. The second subsection discusses the phenomenon in the more specific context of applied linguistic research. FLLB is first discussed as part of ID factor research, after which the phenomenon is presented through previous research specific to the EFL classroom context as well as the individual language learning context.

2.1 Defining Boredom

No unanimously accepted simple definition or typology of boredom exists, but instead multiple approaches have been proposed in the diverse fields of psychology, sociology, and educational science. For the purpose of the present study, boredom is defined in the required context of SLA research, which draws heavily from the field of educational science. Thus, the general definition of boredom utilized in the present study follows the definition of *achievement emotions* used in the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2006) and its follow-up study focusing directly on boredom in achievement settings (Pekrun et al., 2010). The theory was defined as a means to introduce a general framework for the analysis of emotions in academic achievement settings, which include the language learning contexts of the present study. To highlight the complex emotional nature of boredom, descriptions of the five boredom types identified in Goetz et al. (2014) are provided.

Achievement emotions can be characterized as “emotions tied directly to achievement activities or achievement outcomes” (Pekrun, 2006, 317). Consequently, boredom is described as a negative and highly pervasive achievement emotion that reduces physiological activation (Pekrun et al., 2010, 532, 545). Boredom positions itself among achievement emotions related to achievement activity and referred to as *activity emotions* (Pekrun, 2006, 317). This is to say that boredom is generally experienced during achievement activity rather than in relation to achievement outcomes, unlike emotions such as hope, or shame. In the context of the present study, achievement activity during which boredom might arise relates to language tasks and learning behavior completed with the aim of improving English skills. In academic contexts, including language learning, boredom has been associated with

attention issues, such as difficulty concentrating, as well as lack of motivation and effort (Pekrun et al., 2010, 545).

Boredom can vary in its emotional dimensions depending on setting and individual personality differences. Goetz et al. (2014) identified five types of boredom in educational contexts among high school students and university students, building on preliminary research conducted by Goetz and Frenzel (2006). The study suggests that there is a range of within-boredom-variance, and that boredom should be understood as multiple “boredoms” that differ on the dimensions of *valence* and *arousal* Goetz et al. (2014, 413). The term *valence* refers to the *positive* or *negative* quality of an affective state, while *arousal* relates to the level of *physiological activation* or level of excitement in response to an affective state. The five boredom types are categorized based on their level of valence, with a scale from *positive* to *negative*, and their level of arousal, with a scale from *calm* to *fidgety* (Goetz et al., 2014, 413). Furthermore, the five types differ situationally, as some types occur more commonly in achievement contexts and others are more commonly connected to non-achievement contexts. The situational distribution is discussed further after a brief introduction of the five boredom types.

The proposed five boredom types are *indifferent boredom*, *calibrating boredom*, *searching boredom*, *reactant boredom*, and *apathetic boredom* (Goetz et al., 2014). The boredom types range from mildly positive valence (indifferent boredom) to extremely negative valence (reactant boredom, apathetic boredom) affective states, and their level of arousal ranges from fairly calm (indifferent boredom, calibrating boredom) to extreme fidgetiness (reactant boredom). The first four boredom types were originally identified by Goetz and Frenzel (2006) and the inclusion of apathetic boredom into the taxonomy was proposed by Goetz et al. (2014). The emotional dimensions of each boredom type are presented visually in Figure 1, which is originally from Goetz et al. (2014, 410).

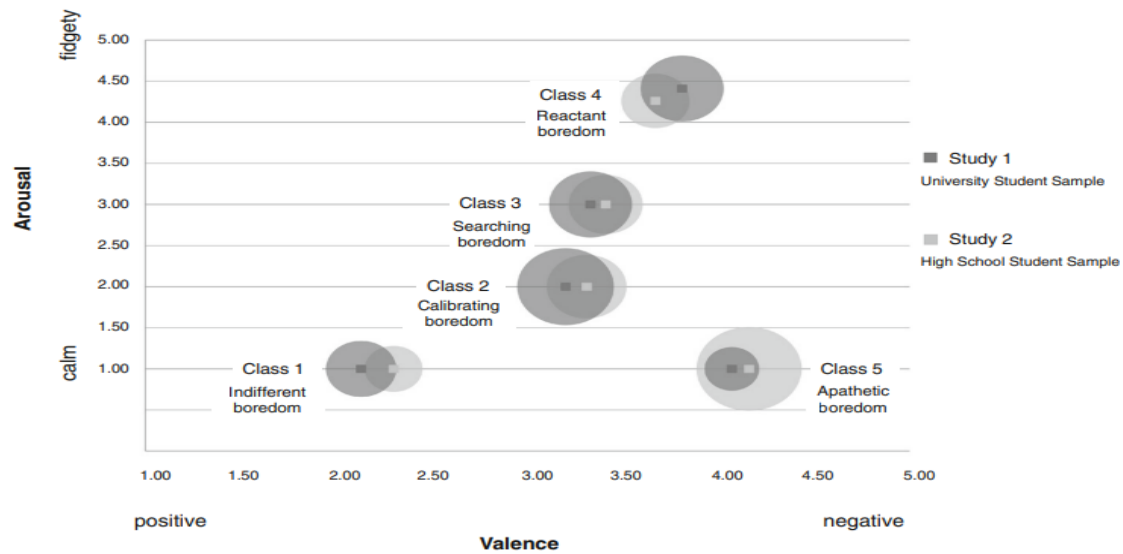


Figure 1 The Emotional Dimensions of the Five boredom types proposed by Goetz et al. (2014, 410)

As can be observed in Figure 1, the four originally proposed boredom types (Goetz and Frenzel, 2006) form a continuum from the positive valence and low arousal indifferent boredom to the negative valence high arousal reactant boredom. The continuum also reflects the “unpleasantness” of the boredom type, as indifferent boredom is experienced as the least unpleasant boredom type and reactant boredom as the most unpleasant of the four original boredom types (Goetz et al., 2014, 414). Calibrating boredom and searching boredom appear to be quite similar in their valence but the difference between the two boredom types arises from an increase in arousal. The newly identified Apathetic boredom does not fit the continuum but it is experienced as equally unpleasant as reactant boredom (Goetz et al., 2014, 414). The two boredom types with extremely negative valence are both experienced as highly aversive emotional states, but they differ greatly in their level of arousal. While reactant boredom scores high on the arousal scale and is related to highly negative emotions such as anger and anxiety, apathetic boredom is associated with very low arousal and a lack of both negative and positive emotions (Goetz et al., 2014, 411, 414). The profile of apathetic boredom can be compared to that of depression which, according to Goetz et al. (2014, 414), is supported by previous research that has shown a connection between boredom and depression. For a general description of all five boredom types, their emotional dimensions, and related behaviors and affective states, refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1 The Five Boredom Types proposed by Goetz et al. (2014)

Boredom type	Emotional Dimensions	Related Behaviors and Affective States
<i>indifferent boredom</i>	low arousal, moderately positive valence	withdrawal from activity, indifference towards activity, generally neutral or positive emotions
<i>calibrating boredom</i>	moderately low arousal, moderately negative valence	wandering thoughts, lack of knowledge about what to do in boredom inducing situation
<i>searching boredom</i>	moderately high arousal, moderately negative valence	active seeking of alternative behaviors
<i>reactant boredom</i>	high level of arousal, negative valence	significant feelings of unease or anger, avoidance of boredom inducing settings; in educational settings negative feelings towards not only classroom situation but also towards teacher
<i>apathetic boredom</i>	low arousal, negative valence	lack of positive or negative emotions, depression, helplessness in achievement settings

Research shows that the prevalence of the five boredom types differs situationally. For the present study, the most relevant situational difference in boredom types is between achievement contexts and non-achievement contexts. It has been observed that boredom types with low negative valence (e.g. indifferent boredom) are more commonly experienced in non-achievement contexts, whereas higher negative valence boredom types (e.g. reactant boredom) are more likely to be experienced in achievement contexts (Goetz et al., 2014, 404). This can be attributed to students' lesser autonomy to switch to more stimulating activity in order to avoid boredom inducing tasks or situations in achievement settings (ibid.). It is additionally suggested that boredom types have the capacity to develop into a more extreme type (e.g. lower negative valence boredom type into a high negative valence boredom type) during a boredom inducing situation (ibid.). This phenomenon is mostly relevant in achievement contexts, as learners tend to withdraw from boredom inducing activity in non-achievement contexts before the emotion has sufficient time to develop into a more extreme negative affective state (ibid.).

The consensus of boredom as a negative and restrictive emotion has also been complemented with speculation about possible positive effects of boredom, as some studies have suggested that indifferent boredom experienced in non-restrictive non-achievement settings could promote creativity and self-reflection (Goetz et al., 2014, 414). However, it is generally

thought that the more common and intense negative effects of boredom outweigh the possible positive outcomes indifferent boredom might induce (Goetz et al., 2014, Pekrun et al., 2010). Thus, the general consensus of boredom as a debilitating academic emotion remains and boredom's disruptive nature has additionally resulted in research examining the ways in which students cope with boredom in academic contexts. Nett, Goetz, and Daniels (2010) adopt a two-dimension classification for boredom coping strategies which was originally introduced by Holahan, Moos, and Schaefer (1996) in the context of stress coping strategies. The classification relies on two dimensions: the *cognitive/behavioral*, and the *approach/avoidance* dimensions (Nett, Goetz, and Daniels, 210, 628). The cognitive/behavioral dimension specifies whether the coping strategy relies on changing the way one *thinks* or changing the way one *acts* in coping with boredom (ibid.). The approach/avoidance dimension defines whether boredom is dealt with by *solving* the boredom inducing situation or by *avoiding* the boredom inducing situation (ibid.). In the present study, this classification of boredom coping strategies is applied in the qualitative data analysis regarding students' reactions to boredom. The classification and its dimensions are discussed further in subsection 3.3.2.

2.2 Foreign Language Learning Boredom (FLLB)

The present subsection provides a more in-depth picture of FLLB and its study in the context of SLA. In subsection 2.2.1, FLLB is first contextualized in the field of ID factor research and briefly conceptualized by introducing an early study that aimed to define the notion in the specific context of language learning. Subsequently, FLLB is presented in further detail through previous research with examples from the EFL classroom context and the independent language learning context.

2.2.1 FLLB as a Part of ID Factor Research

The role of language learners' emotional and affective states has traditionally been largely ignored in the study of ID factors in SLA research (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, 9). The cognitivist approach to language learning employed by modern linguistics research has been speculated to be partially responsible for the neglect of the emotional aspects of language learning, as researchers and academics have long believed that "an individual's cognitive potential [...] is able to deal with any interfering influence from his or her affective domain" (Kebrowska, 2012, 158).

Traditionally, SLA research regarding emotions has been interested in the negative effects of negative emotions, such as anxiety which has unanimously received the most attention from researchers since the late 1970s (MacIntyre, 2017, 11). The central role of *foreign language anxiety* (FLA) in SLA research concerned with emotions is explicitly highlighted by Dewaele and Li (2020), who refer to the period between the mid-1980s and early 2010s as the *Anxiety-Prevailing Phase*. However, recently there has been a progression in the field to research a wider range of emotions, which has been called the *emotional turn* (Dewaele and Li, 2020, 4). This has drawn focus away from FLA as the sole emotional factor impacting the process of language learning, and new research topics that include both negative and positive emotions, such as anger, guilt, joy, and hope, have been introduced (Dewaele and Li, 2020, 4).

As a result of the widened interest in emotions as ID factors, the study of boredom has also slowly started gaining popularity in recent years. While SLA research regarding FLLB is still in its early stages, recent efforts in providing empirical methodology for data collection (see Pawlak et al., 2022, Kruk et al., 2022) and investigating underlying structures of FLLB (see Pawlak et al., 2022, 2020; Li, 2021; Nakamura, Darasawang, and Reinders, 2021) have opened the gates for a constantly growing number of studies interested in the phenomenon.

In one of the pioneering early studies focusing on FLLB, Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas (2017) attempt to define and conceptualize boredom in the specific context of EFL, drawing from educational psychology while simultaneously providing a pedagogical approach to boredom in the EFL classroom. By analyzing student-written diary entries, the study identified four main sources of boredom among Polish university level EFL students to form an early categorization of the structure of FLLB causes. The categories are briefly introduced in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Categories of Boredom inducing factors in the EFL classroom as proposed by Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas (2017)

Category	Description of category
1. <i>language activities</i>	repetitive, uninteresting, irrelevant, or inappropriately challenging (either too easy or too difficult) language exercises (p. 433)
2. <i>content subjects and language classes</i>	classroom content perceived to be too difficult or overbearing, dissatisfaction with how class is organized, dissatisfaction with lack of individual choice regarding courses (p. 434)
3. <i>teacher behavior</i>	lack of teacher engagement in the class, negative or unsupportive teacher attitudes, lack of instruction and feedback from the teacher (p. 434–435)
4. <i>class preparation and management</i>	chaotic or poorly organized language classes, repetitive class structure, lack of preparation from teacher (p. 435)

As can be observed from Table 2, some of the categories contain overlapping themes. For example, categories 2 and 4 both make mentions to how English classes are organized. Additionally, factors related to teacher behavior and teacher-control can be identified in categories 2, 3, and 4. Student-internal factors, such as lack of interest or physical tiredness are completely missing from this categorization, even though it could be argued that aspects of such factors are indirectly referenced in category 1, where exercises are described as uninteresting or irrelevant which might be a result of student-internal lack of interest in the content of the tasks rather than an objective quality of the exercises. However, student-internal factors are more prominently present in some of the later research discussed in subsection 2.2.2.

Overall, the study suggested that having a sense of limited autonomy as a language learner and experiencing excessive teacher-control in learning situations might be a central underlying factor responsible for FLLB (Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas, 2017, 437–438). Lack of autonomy and teacher-control can be interpreted as relating to all four identified categories behind FLLB, as in categories 1 and 2 the learner might feel that they have little to no say in which type of tasks (too repetitive, too difficult or not challenging enough) or topics (uninteresting, irrelevant) are discussed in the EFL classroom or homework. Moreover, categories 3 and 4 are related to the teacher-controlled course of learning situations and feeling unsatisfied in the way they are organized as either too repetitive or chaotic.

The encouragement of self-regulated strategies, such as setting personal learning goals and autonomous decision-making in relation to EFL studying, is suggested as one possible pedagogical solution to decreasing students' boredom and promoting the autonomy of EFL students (Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas, 2017, 437). Increased autonomy can work in reducing boredom, but it is also important to consider if decreased boredom in this case is a result of increased engagement with learning activity or a result of withdrawing from learning activity. Furthermore, interactive learning and teaching methods, as well as feedback are proposed as pedagogical approaches to battle FLLB and promote engagement, especially in the face of routine tasks (Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas, 2017, 437).

The study concludes that boredom in the academic EFL context should be considered a complex situationally varying phenomenon with multiple emotional manifestations (such as frustration, dissatisfactions, etc.) and material consequences (such as decreased interest in learning EFL, giving up on specific tasks, etc.) (Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas, 2017, 438).

The early definition of FLLB presented by Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas (2017) has later been extended upon by a growing number of studies providing further insight into the phenomenon. The following two subsections focus on presenting further research conducted in EFL classroom contexts and independent language learning contexts.

2.2.2 FLLB in the EFL Classroom

The majority of FLLB research has been conducted in classroom contexts, with multiple studies emerging from the context of Polish university students of English (See Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018; Kruk, Pawlak, and Zawodniak, 2021; Pawlak et al., 2020, Pawlak, Zawodniak, and Kruk 2020, 2022). Furthermore, research into FLLB in online EFL classrooms has been conducted among Iranian EFL students (See Kruk et al. 2022, Pawlak et al., 2021; Derakhshan et al., 2021). Generally, studies have focused on investigating the intensity and causes behind FLLB, but boredom coping has also been examined.

Kruk and Zawodniak (2018) extend on the research of possible boredom causes in the EFL classroom through an interview-based study conducted among 15 Polish students completing a BA program in English philology in a Polish university. The qualitative analysis of the collected interview data revealed similar sources for FLLB than earlier research (see Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas, 2017), with repetitiveness, lack of autonomy, lack of sufficient challenge, and uninteresting and irrelevant topics arising as the main factors inducing boredom in the EFL classroom. According to the results of the study, the students considered writing and reading tasks to be the most boredom inducing, as they were seen as monotonous and lacking variety (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018,183). The study also observed that the FLLB experienced by the interviewed students tended to intensify as the classroom session began to near its end (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018, 187–188). Additionally, it was also found that students exhibited a limited ambition to cope with their experience of FLLB in the classroom, and that popular coping styles were concerned with unrelated activity and simply waiting around for class to finish or move onto a more interesting topic (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018, 185). As stated, these results follow a similar general pattern to the results identified by Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas (2017) but provide more specific and supplementary insight into the experiences of FLLB as well as coping styles employed by individuals through the chosen method of interview data analysis.

As many of the early studies investigating FLLB had been largely conducted within the domain of qualitative research, Pawlak et al. (2020) provide a necessary quantitative

perspective to researching FLLB. The study investigated the underlying structure of FLLB in the EFL classroom, using a questionnaire tool *Boredom in Practical English Language Classes Questionnaire – Revised* (BPELC-R), which was administered among 107 Polish university students of English. A slightly modified version of the questionnaire tool is used in the empirical portion of the present study, and it is described in more detail in subsection 3.2.1. Pawlak et al. (2020) performed exploratory factor analysis to identify and propose an underlying structure for FLLB in the L2 classroom made up of two factors. Factor 1 was labelled *Disengagement, monotony and repetitiveness*, while factor 2 was given the label *Lack of satisfaction and challenge* (Pawlak et al., 2022, 5). Factor 1 is described as more *reactive*, exhibiting affections and behaviors that might be described as avoidant, disengaged and even helpless (ibid.). The study draws a possible connection between identified factor 1 and boredom types calibrating, indifferent or apathetic boredom (ibid.). Further, factor 2 is described as a more *proactive* manifestation of boredom, which is highly tied to situational factors and thus subject to change if more stimulating or sufficiently challenging activity presents itself (ibid.). It is suggested that factor 2 pertains to boredom type searching boredom (ibid.).

In addition to identifying this underlying two-factor structure of FLLB in the EFL classroom, the quantitative data analysis employed in the study found that *general boredom proneness* appeared to be a good indicator for FLLB experienced in the EFL classroom (Pawlak et al., 2020, 6–7). The boredom proneness of the respondents was measured using the Boredom Proneness Scale (BPS, 1986), a questionnaire designed to measure an individual's proneness to boredom, not based on a specific setting or activity but rather personal tendencies. Students who scored higher on the BPS tended to experience higher levels of FLLB in the EFL classroom, thus suggesting boredom proneness as an indicator of FLLB (Pawlak et al., 2020, 6–7). These findings complement earlier studies focusing on structuring the causes of FLLB (see Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas, 2017, Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018) by highlighting the fact that FLLB cannot be directly attributed to material conditions of the EFL classroom and that student-internal factors play an important role in the experience of FLLB.

Following Pawlak et al. (2020), the quantitative research of FLLB was greatly contributed to by Li (2021), as the study examined control and value appraisals as antecedents of FLLB among university students taking EFL classes in China with a mixed methods research design. To collect the quantitative portion of the data, a questionnaire was administered with a total of 2,002 responses (Li, 2021, 322), which is significant as most of the research on the

phenomenon has been conducted with smaller sample sizes and the research has largely been qualitative in nature. The quantitative data were supplemented with qualitative data which were collected through two sets of semi-structured interviews, first with 11 EFL students and then with 11 EFL teachers (Li, 2021, 322–323). The quantitative data analysis suggested that perceived control and value were negative predictors of boredom (Li, 2021, 328). That is to say that students who did not value learning English or perceived themselves as incompetent users of English tended to be more bored than those who valued learning English or perceived themselves as competent users of English (ibid.). Li (2021) draws a connection between the findings of the study and results of research investigating boredom in different domains, such as mathematics and psychology, implying that regardless of domain, control-value appraisals appear to predict achievement emotions, such as boredom (ibid.). The quantitative results of the study are supplemented by the qualitative data analysis, which further suggests that both high and low control appeared to predicate boredom in the EFL classroom (ibid.). This is to say that both overchallenging and underchallenging learning situations were deemed boredom inducing, suggesting “a curvilinear rather than a linear relationship between L2 boredom and control appraisals” (Li, 2021, 330). The study pioneers the research of L2 emotions through a Control Value Theoretical lens and thus adopts multidisciplinary methods and theory from the field of educational psychology.

With the use of the innovative Q methodology which is designed to measure an individual’s viewpoints and human behavior through a perspective that is internal to the subject, Kruk et al. (2022) investigated causes of FLLB boredom in the online EFL classroom among 37 Iranian adult learners enrolled in private online language learning institutes during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study was able to identify three factors responsible for boredom in the EFL classroom: 1) *teacher-induced boredom* 2) *student-induced boredom* 3) *activity-induced boredom* (Kruk et al., 2022, 46). Teacher-induced boredom entailed concepts such as the teacher being unsupportive or not managing to provide students with adequate challenges or variety, as well as excessive control or lack of objective on the teacher’s part (Kruk et al., 2022, 47–48). In comparison, student-induced boredom was attributed to internal characteristics of learners, ranging from disengagement, being passive, and seeing no progress in target language (TL) development (Kruk et al., 2022, 49). Finally, activity-induced boredom was defined as relating to unchallenging, repetitive, or uninteresting language tasks in EFL classes (Kruk et al., 2022, 49–50). The study provides a concise categorization for sources of FLLB and unlike many of the previously discussed studies concerned with

defining a structure for causes of boredom, this categorization directly acknowledges student-internal factors as its own category.

The online EFL classroom during the covid-19 pandemic also served as setting for Pawlak et al. (2021) who investigated students' boredom coping strategies. The study classified the used boredom coping strategies into two general categories: *facilitative strategies*, which included "conscious attempts to ameliorate the situation and get the most out of the novel online learning environment" and *debilitative strategies*, which included "frustration and hopelessness in the face of not knowing how to ward off boredom" (Pawlak et al., 2021, 15). More specifically, it was found that students utilized a number of constructive coping strategies that had to do with active learner behaviour, such as taking notes or asking questions to remain engaged with class activity, as well as attempting to maintain a positive cognitive perspective towards the learning situation (Pawlak et al., 2021, 15, 20). Nonetheless, the study additionally found that a number of students lacked the capacity to cope with their boredom completely or only managed to deal with the emotion through avoidance coping in the forms of mobile phone usage or other unrelated activity during language classes (Pawlak et al., 2021, 20). While the study was conducted in the context of online learning during the covid-19 pandemic, for the purposes of the present study, the results provide valuable context for the consideration of boredom coping strategies in the EFL classroom as well as during independent learning.

2.2.3 FLLB during Independent Language Learning

While the study of FLLB has begun to gain prevalence in previous years, research has largely focused on boredom experienced in teacher-led classroom situations. The role of FLLB in independent after-class learning settings has been the focus of few studies in the context of SLA, with only one study explicitly researching the phenomenon (Pawlak et al. 2022) and a limited number of studies investigating some aspects of the phenomenon (Kruk, 2022, 2016; Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018). Consequently, only little is known about FLLB during independent language learning.

To understand the study of FLLB during independent language learning, it is necessary to understand what is meant by *independent language learning* in the context of the present study. To put it simply, independent language learning can include any language task or learning activity that is completed outside of the classroom in the interest of improving TL skills. Thus, independent language learning is not limited to completing tasks given by a

teacher, but it can also include any autonomously initiated tasks that aim at improving TL skills (Pawlak et al., 2022, 7). The aim to improve TL skills can be understood as either aiming to improve language skills in order to perform better in a classroom setting, such as examination or classroom participation, but also as an attempt to achieve any personal goals set by a learner to improve their language skills beyond what is expected in L2 classes (Pawlak et al., 2022, 7). Therefore, the definition of independent language learning settings that is used in the present study includes the completion of any tasks taking place on the learner's own time outside of the formal EFL classroom setting with the aim of improving English skills. These tasks can include homework, preparation for exams or other L2 classroom situations, reading (books, online articles etc.) in English, watching TV, movies or online videoclips in English, and talking to native speakers or other language learners in English.

The underlying structure and prevalence of FLLB in independent after-class settings was investigated in depth for the first time by Pawlak et al. (2022) in a follow-up study to Pawlak et al. (2020). The *Boredom in Learning English Outside of School Questionnaire* (BLEOS), a counterpart to the BPELC-R questionnaire introduced in subsection 2.2, in conjunction with the BPS questionnaire was administered to 107 Polish University students completing BA and MA programs in English. A slightly modified version of the BLEOS questionnaire is utilized in the data collection of the present study and it is described in more detail in subsection 3.2.1. The BLEOS items were then subjected to exploratory factor analysis and three underlying factors for FLLB during independent language learning were found and proposed. The factors were identified and labelled as 1) *unwillingness to learn English and inability to find (interesting) tasks*, 2) *lack of creativity, focus and involvement*, and 3) *altered time perception, underused language abilities and monotony* (Pawlak et al., 2022, 6). Following the model of Pawlak et al (2020), the earlier counterpart study conducted in the context of the EFL classroom, Pawlak et al. (2022) additionally examined the role of general boredom proneness as an indicator of the intensity of FLLB. The results show that individuals who are generally more prone to experience boredom are also statistically more likely to experience more intense levels of FLLB during independent language learning (Pawlak et al., 2022, 6). The detected difference between students who are more prone to boredom and students with less boredom proneness is consistent with research conducted on FLLB in the EFL classroom (Pawlak et al., 2020).

Additionally, some aspects of FLLB during independent language learning have been studied in other applied linguistics research. The results of an interview-based study focusing mainly on FLLB in the EFL classroom found that the students participating in the study were less likely to experience boredom during independent language learning than they were in classroom settings (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018, 185). This was explained by students' freedom to choose methods of study and time spent on studying outside of the classroom to match their personal specific needs and goals (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018, 185). In addition, students appeared to have more productive resources to cope with FLLB during independent learning than they did in classroom settings (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018, 185, 188). Some of the boredom coping strategies employed by the students during independent language learning included perspective change, utilizing a variety learning sources, as well as switching between tasks and taking breaks during studying (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018, 188). It is noted that the use of productive coping styles highlights students "taking charge of their own work" (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2018, 188) during independent language learning. While the study compares FLLB experienced in the two settings only briefly, these findings are highly relevant for the present study, as one of the central research goals of the study is to extend on this comparison in a more explicit and balanced manner.

In the case of Kruk (2022), FLLB, among other ID factors, was investigated in relation to independent but task based L2 learning in *Second life*, an interactive multi player virtual world. The study is a continuation of a Kruk (2016), which investigated the same ID factors in a similar virtual environment using similar methods. While these two studies focus only on FLLB during specific independently completed tasks, they provide valuable insight into boredom in independent language learning situations, as research into the phenomenon is extremely scant. The newer of the two studies is discussed here briefly. Kruk (2022) combined quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis to measure fluctuation of boredom within learning sessions and between learning sessions, in relation to other ID factors: motivation, FLA, and *willingness to communicate* (WTC). The study observed a relationship between lower levels of boredom and high levels of motivation and WTC in the specific independent L2 learning setting of virtual SL (Kruk, 2022, 207). On the contrary high levels of FLA were observed to go hand in hand with high levels of boredom (Kruk, 2022, 207). High levels of boredom were also attributed to negative social experiences in SL, while positive social experiences tended to indicate lower levels of boredom (Kruk, 2022, 208).

As noted in Pawlak et al. (2022, 7–8), FLLB during independent language learning differs from FLLB experienced in the EFL classroom as the independent language learning setting lacks explicit teacher control and the learner theoretically has full control over the completion of tasks. While aspects of FLLB in independent after-class learning settings can be tied to tasks that are superimposed on the learner by a teacher, the autonomous aspect of after-class language learning boredom separates it from FLLB in the EFL classroom (Pawlak et al., 2022, 7–8). This autonomy gives learners the authority to decide to switch to a different unrelated activity at any point during independent language learning.

The potential to switch from an independent achievement context (which might be impacted by the supervised achievement context of an L2 classroom in the form of homework etc.) to a leisurely non-achievement context (or vice versa) at a moment's notice provides for interesting speculation between the relationship of the types of boredom related to leisure contexts, such as indifferent boredom and the types of boredom more commonly related to achievement settings, such as reactant boredom. Pawlak et al. (2022, 2) hypothesizes that as a result of the autonomy to choose alternative activity and thus drop the achievement context in favor of a more leisurely non-achievement context makes indifferent boredom the most relevant type of boredom for after-class learning contexts. However, the possible impacts of other types of boredom in independent language learning contexts are also recognized (Pawlak et al., 2022, 2), as, for example, tasks that are considered mandatory to complete could contribute to building a more restricted achievement setting even during independent language learning that is in theory controlled by the learner themselves.

The necessity for further research into FLLB in independent language learning contexts is highlighted not only implicitly by the limited number of studies introduced in the present subsection but also explicitly in Pawlak et al. (2022). The present study intends to further examine the differences and similarities between students' experiences of FLLB in teacher-controlled classroom settings and during independently controlled language learning. The present study also provides a quantitative comparison of the two phenomena, building on the quantitative data collection tools provided by Pawlak et al. (2020) and Pawlak et al. (2022), and extending on the results of the qualitative comparison of FLLB in and out of class examined briefly in Kruk and Zawodniak (2018).

3 Materials and Methods

The present section is divided into three main subsections. Subsection 3.1 introduces the research questions of the study and briefly discusses the empirical steps taken to answer each question. This is followed by subsection 3.2, in which the data collection methods and the participant sampling of the present study are described in more detail. Subsection 3.3, then, focuses on the quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods that were used to obtain results from the collected data.

3.1 Research Questions

The present study aims to investigate Finnish bachelor's degree university students' experiences of FLLB during a mandatory domain specific English course. The study is interested in FLLB experienced in two separate contexts: 1) EFL classroom, and 2) independent language learning outside of the classroom. FLLB is examined in terms of intensity, common causes, as well as students' reactions to boredom and ways of coping with the emotion. The specific research questions of the present study are as follows:

1. To what extent do Finnish bachelor's degree students experience FLLB in teacher-led classroom situations and during independent language learning?
2. What are the most common causes that contribute to students' experience of FLLB in the EFL classroom and during independent language learning?
3. How do students most commonly cope with or react to FLLB in the EFL classroom and during independent language learning?

To answer the research questions presented above, the study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The intensity of FLLB is measured using quantitative statistical analysis of numeric data collected with a questionnaire consisting of two sets of Likert scale statements. Research questions 2 and 3 are answered through analysis of qualitative data. Furthermore, the study is interested in the comparative examination of the results of the two contexts to identify similarities and differences between students' experiences of FLLB in the EFL classroom and during independent learning.

3.2 Data Collection and Participants

This subsection introduces and motivates the data collection methods used in the present study. The discussion of research methods in subsection 3.2.1 progresses from the two established questionnaire tools (BPELC-R and BLEOS) and their employment in the present study, to the open-ended questions designed to elicit qualitative data. Furthermore, the sampling of participants and the anonymity of data collection are discussed in subsection 3.2.2.

3.2.1 Collecting Quantitative and Qualitative Data with a Questionnaire

The quantitative and qualitative data for the present study were collected using a questionnaire that was administered electronically in Webropol, an online survey and reporting tool. The participants filled in the questionnaire anonymously through an online link, granting them full anonymity. No directly identifying data were collected from the respondents and at no point did the researcher have access to the identity of the respondents. To avoid ambiguous interpretations of independent language learning in the context of the present study, respondents were provided with brief descriptions of what the context might entail before they filled in the questionnaire.

The quantitative data for the present study were collected on the basis of two pre-existing questionnaire tools, each respectively designed to measure FLLB in the EFL classroom context and the independent learning context. The questionnaire tool measuring FLLB in the EFL classroom is known as the *Boredom in Practical English Language Classes Questionnaire – Revised* (BPELC-R) (Pawlak et al., 2020) and its counterpart that measures FLLB during independent after-class learning is known as the *Boredom in Learning English Outside of School Questionnaire* (BLEOS) (Pawlak et al., 2022).

The BPELC-R tool consists of 23 Likert scale statements designed to measure the intensity of FLLB in the L2 classroom (Pawlak et al., 2020, 5). The instrument is a modified version of the BPELC questionnaire used in a number of previous studies (Kruk and Zawodniak, 2017; Pawlak, Zawodniak, and Kruk., 2020; 2022), but the revised version was used in the present study as it was conveniently accessed in English. The 23 BPELC-R statements are further divided into two categories based on the proposed two-factor structure of FLLB in the classroom. Factor 1, *Disengagement, monotony and repetitiveness*, consists of 14 statements and factor 2, *Lack of satisfaction and challenge*, consists of 9 statements. Example statements

are provided below in Table 3 to demonstrate the nature of the questionnaire. To access the full BPELC-R questionnaire, refer to Appendix 1.

Table 3 Examples of BPELC-R Questionnaire Statements categorized based on Pawlak et al. (2022) factor categorization

BPELC-R Questionnaire Statements	
<i>Factor 1</i>	17. It seems that English classes are the same all the time; it is getting boring. 20. During language classes, I often think about unrelated things 21. I actively participate in English classes.
<i>Factor 2</i>	3. I often have to do meaningless things in my language classes. 5. I often have to do repetitive or monotonous things in my language classes. 13. I feel that I am working below my abilities most of the time in my language classes.

The BLEOS tool was developed as a counterpart for the previously introduced BPELC-R tool and it consists of 21 Likert scale statements designed to reflect FLLB in independent learning situations (Pawlak et al., 2022, 5). The statements of the BLEOS questionnaire tool are further divided into three factors according to the three-factor structure of FLLB in after-class settings proposed by Pawlak et al. (2022). The three identified factors each consist of a different number of statements, as Factor 1, *unwillingness to learn English and inability to find (interesting) tasks*, consists of 9 statements, Factor 2, *lack of creativity, focus and involvement*, consists of 7 statements and Factor 3, *altered perception of time, underused language abilities and monotony*, consists of 5 statements. Examples of the BLEOS questionnaire statement are presented below in Table 4. To access the full questionnaire, refer to Appendix 2.

Table 4 Examples of BLEOS Questionnaire Statements Categorized Based on Pawlak et al. (2020) Factor Categorization

BLEOS Questionnaire Statements	
<i>Factor 1</i>	2. I don't really know what to learn after classes when it comes to English. 11. Even though I have some free time to learn English, I often don't feel like doing anything about it.
<i>Factor 2</i>	17. I can easily focus on activities when I learn English after classes. 18. When I learn English after classes, I often think about unrelated things. 21. I often come up with new ways of learning English when I learn it after classes.
<i>Factor 3</i>	5. Many things that I do when I learn English after classes are repetitive and monotonous. 13. I feel that I am working below my abilities most of the time after classes. 15. It seems that learning English after classes is the same all the time; it is getting boring.

For the purpose of the present study, all statements of both questionnaire tools were translated into Finnish, as it is believed that respondents produce more accurate and higher quality data if the questionnaire is in the respondent's native language (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010, 49). Some statements from the original questionnaire tools were left out of the final administered questionnaire. In some cases, the interpretation of the original or translated items was considered too ambiguous. In other cases, the translation of the items did not sufficiently reflect the original statements. Additionally, the content of some of the statements was deemed not relevant for the context of the present study. Thus, the final questionnaire that was administered to the participants featured 19 of the BPLEC-R questionnaire statement and 19 of the BLEOS questionnaire statements. Respondents were instructed to react to each statement on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree).

In addition to the Likert scale statements, the questionnaire included open-ended questions which were designed to gather qualitative data regarding common causes of FLLB and common reactions and coping styles in boredom inducing situations. The questions were designed on the basis of brevity and specificity (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010, 37–38). Like the Likert scale statements, the open-ended questions were administered in Finnish, following the belief that data produced in the respondent's native language is higher in quality (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010, 49). Unlike the Likert scale statements, the open-ended questions were directly created in Finnish and only translated in English for the purpose of presenting them in the thesis.

Each open-ended question was designed to elicit a short answer about a specific topic. The open-ended questions were constructed as counterpart pairs, where one pair included questions regarding FLLB in the EFL classroom and the other pair regarded FLLB during independent language learning outside of the classroom. Both question pairs included one question about perceived causes of FLLB and one question about reactions in boredom inducing situations. The brevity of elicited responses was achieved with specific integrated definitions for desired response length in each open-ended question. The two sets of open-ended questions were placed in the questionnaire after each set of Likert scale statements: the open-ended questions regarding FLLB in the EFL classroom were placed after the statements of the BPELC-R questionnaire and the open-ended questions regarding FLLB during independent learning were placed after the BLEOS questionnaire statements. The open-ended questions were not indicated as mandatory in the questionnaire to encourage respondents to

submit their Likert scale responses even if they did not have time or motivation to provide written responses to the open-ended questions. As a result, all respondents did not produce answers to all the open-ended questions. To provide a description of the qualitative data distribution between the open-ended question, the number of responses elicited by each question and the English translations of the questions are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5 English translations of open-ended questions and the number of responses elicited by each question

number of responses	English translation of open-ended question in the questionnaire
46	In a few (1-3) sentences, describe the most common situation or activity that makes you feel bored in English classes.
44	In a few (1-3) sentences, describe how you are most likely to act in a situation when you find yourself bored in English classes.
40	In a few (1-3) sentences, describe a situation or activity that makes you feel bored while studying English in your own time.
41	In a few (1-3) sentences, describe how you are most likely act in a situation when you find yourself bored while studying English in your own time.

3.2.2 Participants

The participants for the present study were chosen on the principle of *opportunity sampling* (Dörnyei, 2011, 98). This sampling method falls under the category of *non-probability sampling* (ibid.) and in the case of the present study is based on the accessibility of the respondents to the researcher. Non-probability sampling does not provide a *representative* sample of a full population, but the method is commonly used in applied linguistics research for convenience reasons (ibid.). It is also considered more suitable for research that includes qualitative aspects in addition to quantitative analysis (ibid.), as is the case for the present study.

Sampling in the present study was not purely opportunity based, seeing as the surveyed population needed to fulfill certain criteria. First, the established questionnaire tools were evaluated to select a suitable surveyed population that could provide meaningful data by filling in the questionnaires. For example, it was important that the respondents had present or very recent experience of EFL classroom learning, as the BPELC-R questionnaire exclusively consists of statements regarding students' experiences in an EFL classroom. Additionally, some form of independent language learning had to occur for students to be able to respond to the statements of the BLEOS questionnaire. To simplify the data collection process, it was

also desired that respondents be over the age of 18, so that the extra step of requesting permission from students' guardians before data collection could be omitted. Based on these criteria, it was decided that the most suitable and conveniently accessible population for the present study were university students taking an English course as a part of their degree. The potential respondents were approached through English teachers in charge of mandatory English courses meant for bachelor's degree students. At no point did the researcher have access to any directly identifying information about students partaking in the English courses from which the respondents volunteered to fill in the questionnaire. Thus, the respondents filled in the questionnaire voluntarily and completely anonymously.

The final participants of the present study are 53 university students completing a bachelor's degree in one Finnish university. The students partake in the study during a mandatory domain specific English course, and they were instructed to provide answers to the questionnaire based on experiences during that course. The respondents' main domains of study exist within the broader umbrella of human and social sciences. The present study was not interested in comparing results between different domains, which is why the respondents' specific field of study was not collected in the questionnaire. The domains of the respondents were restricted to include a broad range of human and social sciences by approaching English teachers in charge of courses aimed at students completing bachelor's degrees in those fields of study.

Respondents' ages ranged from 18–45, with the most common age of respondents being 20 and the average age of respondents being 21.4. The age range adequately represents the ages of students completing a bachelor's degree, as most students are in their late teens or twenties, with a smaller number of students completing a bachelor's degree at a later age. The present study did not aim to restrict the age of respondents to create a more age-specific group of respondents as the surveyed population was not chosen on the basis of age, but sampling was done based on status as a bachelor's degree student.

3.3 Data Analysis methods

This subsection describes the data analysis methods used in the present study. As the present study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods, the discussion of methods is divided into two separate subsections. Quantitative methods are discussed first in subsection 3.3.1 and qualitative methods are discussed in subsection 3.3.2.

3.3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis Methods

The quantitative data were transferred from Webropol into Excel in numeric form. The data were then checked manually, and necessary adjustments were made before data analysis could take place. This process included recoding the responses of the statements that were worded negatively and checking data for any irregularities. As the data collection instrument did not allow partially filled questionnaires to be sent, the complete quantitative dataset did not lack any data points.

As the collected quantitative dataset was designed to measure FLLB through several different data items, *composite scores* were calculated. This was done by calculating the sum of the scores collected from each statement in the questionnaire. Composite scores were additionally calculated for each identified factor in the questionnaire tools to get a more detailed picture of FLLB and the factors responsible for the intensity of students' experience of FLLB. Additional *mean composite scores* were also calculated to facilitate comparison between scores of factors composed of different numbers of statements.

After the data had been processed in Excel, it was transported to SPSS where all statistical analysis took place. Before any statistical tests were chosen and carried out, all data and subsections of data (i.e., factors of FLLB scores) were tested for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test and the criteria $p > .05$. All collected data fell under the category of normal distribution.

To compare and investigate the statistical significance of differences between the FLLB scores, paired sample t-tests and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for correlated samples were used. The paired sample t-test is meant for comparing two scores from the same group of respondents and in the present study it was used to analyze the difference between factor level FLLB scores as well as the overall FLLB scores in the two studied contexts. One-way ANOVA for correlated samples is used to analyze the difference between three or more scores. In the case of the present study, it was carried out for factor level analysis of FLLB scores in the context of independent language learning. To examine the correlation between the FLLB score in the EFL classroom and the FLLB score during independent language learning, Pearson's correlation analysis was carried out. The suitable statistical tests that were used in the analysis of Likert scale data were chosen on the basis of Dörnyei (2011, 215, 224) and Boone and Boone (2012).

3.3.2 Qualitative Data Analysis Methods

Responses to each open-ended question were transferred from Webropol to a Word document to form datasets for the qualitative analysis. As the qualitative data were already in written form, highly specific to the research questions, and included little irrelevant data instances, the process of analysis was started immediately with no need to transcribe or clean out the data. Initial coding of the data consisted of highlighting individual relevant instances in the data and giving them specific labels that describe the content of the highlighted text (Dörnyei, 2011, 251). The initial coding process was repeated for each set of qualitative data. After initial coding, the code labels were revised, and similar labels were unified to create a more systematic code (Dörnyei, 2011, 252). The revision of labels was done cyclically, and multiple possible coding alternatives were tested to achieve an efficient set of labels that could be categorized conveniently.

The categorization of boredom causes in the present study was based on some of the previously identified typologies. The early classification of boredom inducing factors consisting of 1) language activities, 2) content subjects and language classes, 3) teacher behavior, and 4) class preparation and management (Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas, 2017, 433) was used in modeling the categorization of labels along with the three factor classification of boredom sources consisting of 1) teacher-induced boredom, 2) student-induced boredom, and 3) activity-induced boredom (Kruk et al., 2022, 46). As it could not be said for certain that the collected data would fit any previously existing typology, no previous categorization was adopted and used directly. The aim of the qualitative analysis was to find a categorization of data instances that is based on previously identified typologies, but it was also important to take into consideration the unique requirements of the data collected in the present study. The final categorization of labels was kept simple, as the aim of the classification was to provide a framework for discussion of the more specific patterns of boredom sources within the categories.

In the present study, the categorization of students' reactions and coping styles in boredom inducing situations was based on the established dimensions of boredom coping strategies (Nett, Goetz, and Daniels, 2010) cited briefly in subsection 2.1. The coded data instances were additionally coded with the approach/avoidance dimension and the cognitive/behavioral dimension labels. Based on these labels, the data instances were categorized into 1) cognitive approach coping, 2) behavioral approach coping, 3) cognitive avoidance coping, and 4)

behavioral avoidance coping. Within the dimensions, the data labels were further categorized in order to find more specific patterns of coping and provide a more nuanced look into the different ways students commonly react to FLLB. The dimensions of the classification are presented and described in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Classification of boredom coping strategies. Adapted from Nett, Goetz, and Daniels (2010, 628)

<i>type of coping</i>	approach coping	avoidance coping
<i>cognitive</i>	Changing thinking to change the perception of the boredom inducing situation	Thinking of something unrelated to the boredom inducing situation.
<i>behavioral</i>	Changing behavior or taking action to change the boredom inducing situation	Taking action that is unrelated to the boredom inducing situation.

Even though some of the identified data instances did not directly fit the classification, the dimensions were regarded highly beneficial for the identification of boredom coping styles in the data. The data instances outside of the categorization are additionally acknowledged and discussed as part of the results. Some instances were identified as a combination of multiple coping styles, whereas some instances were identified completely outside of the classification.

4 Results

The results of the present study are presented in two main subsections. First, subsection 4.1 presents the quantitative findings of the study. Then, in subsection 4.2 the qualitative results of the present study are presented and discussed simultaneously keeping with the nature of qualitative research.

4.1 Quantitative Results

In the following three subsections, the quantitative results of the present study are presented. Results are initially presented separately for both studied contexts in subsections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 after which a statistical comparison of the results is provided in subsection 4.1.3. All effect sizes for statistical tests are interpreted following Sawilowsky (2009).

4.1.1 Intensity of FLLB in the EFL Classroom

The quantitative results regarding FLLB in the EFL Classroom are presented as sum composite scores as well as mean composite scores to facilitate comparison between factors composed of different numbers of statements. A higher score correlates to a higher level of FLLB. In Table 7 below, the full FLLB score is presented alongside FLLB scores for both factors individually.

Table 7 Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of FLLB scores in the EFL Classroom.

Sum composite scores are presented first, and the mean composite score is in parentheses. The calculated statistical midpoints for the sum composite scores are 50.0 for the full FLLB score, 32.5 for factor 1, and 20.0 for factor 2. The midpoint for each mean composite score is 3.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>FULL (19 statements)</i>	46.98 (2.47)	9.15 (.48)
<i>Factor 1 (12 statements)</i>	28.45 (2.37)	6.26 (.52)
<i>Factor 2 (7 statements)</i>	18.53 (2.65)	3.66 (.52)

Factor 1 = Disengagement, monotony and repetitiveness
Factor 2 = Lack of satisfaction and challenge

The respondents' levels of FLLB experienced in the EFL classroom can be interpreted as moderately low, as the FLLB score does not reach its statistical midpoint. The composite scores calculated for both identified factors are also below their statistical midpoints.

To achieve comparable score values the mean composite scores were used in the statistical comparison of scores between factors. A paired samples t-test was carried out to compare the

FLLB scores for Factor 1 and Factor 2. A significant difference was found in the scores for Factor 1 ($M = 2.37$, $SD = .52$) and Factor 2 ($M = 2.65$, $SD = .52$), $t(53) = 4.81$, $p < .001$. While the difference is found to be statistically significant, effect size Cohen's $d = .66$, suggest that there is only a moderate ($.5 < |d| < .8$) difference between the two FLLB scores.

Nevertheless, the result suggests that respondents' FLLB in the EFL classroom was more closely related to *lack of satisfaction and challenge* than it was to *disengagement, monotony and repetitiveness*.

4.1.2 Intensity of FLLB during Independent Language Learning

The quantitative results regarding FLLB during independent learning are presented as sum and mean composite scores of the BLEOS questionnaire responses. A higher score correlates to a higher level of FLLB. In Table 8 below, FLLB scores are presented for the full questionnaire and for all three factors individually.

Table 8 Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of FLLB scores during independent learning

Sum composite scores are presented first, and the mean composite score is in paratheses. The calculated statistical midpoints for the sum composite scores are 50.0 for the full FLLB score, 25.0 for factor 1, 17,5 for factor 2 and 12.5 for factor 3. The midpoint for each mean composite score is 3.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>FULL (19 statements)</i>	57.92 (3.04)	13.01 (.68)
<i>Factor 1 (9 statements)</i>	27.17 (3.02)	6.88 (.76)
<i>Factor 2 (6 statements)</i>	19.51 (3.25)	4.48 (.75)
<i>Factor 3 (4 statements)</i>	11.25 (2.81)	3.07 (.77)

Factor 1 = unwillingness to learn English and inability to find (interesting) tasks

Factor 2 = lack of creativity, focus and involvement

Factor 3 = altered perception of time, underused language abilities and monotony

The score for FLLB in independent language learning settings could be described as moderate as it does reach its statistical midpoint but only narrowly. The same can be stated for Factors 1 and 2 whereas the score for Factor 3 does not reach the statistical midpoint calculated for it. The highest comparative score is identified for Factor 2, *lack of creativity, focus and involvement*.

As the structure of FLLB during independent language learning is made up of three factors, the statistical comparison of the scores between factors was carried out using one-way ANOVA for correlated samples. Statistical comparison of means was performed with comparable mean composite scores. With Mauchly's test, it was indicated that the assumption

of sphericity had not been violated. Thus, the results of the one-way ANOVA for correlated samples shows that the FLLB scores calculated for the three factors were statistically significantly different ($F(2, 104) = 13.909, p < .05$).

As a significant difference between the factors was found, we can look at the more specific factor level differences through post hoc comparison. In the case of the present study t-tests with Bonferroni correction were used. A significant difference was found between FLLB scores of Factors 1 and 2 ($p < .005$). Additionally, a significant difference was identified between Factors 2 and 3 ($p < .001$). However, no significant difference was found between FLLB scores of Factors 1 and 3 ($p > .005$). Thus, we can see that the FLLB score of Factor 2 was significantly different from the two lower scores, but that these lower scores did not significantly differ from each other. Based on this comparison we could highlight *lack of creativity, focus and involvement* as a more significant source of boredom during independent language learning than *unwillingness to learn English and inability to find (interesting) tasks* and *altered perception of time, underused language abilities and monotony*.

4.1.3 Statistical Comparison of EFL Classroom Results and Independent Language Learning Results

Simply by observing the results presented in the two previous subsections it is evident that respondents reported higher FLLB scores in the context of independent learning than they did in the context of teacher-led classroom learning. However, to draw statistically significant conclusions about the difference between scores, further statistical testing is necessary.

A paired sample t-test was carried out to compare the FLLB score in the EFL classroom and the FLLB score during independent language learning. A significant difference was found between the EFL classroom FLLB score ($M = 2.47, SD = .48$) and the independent learning FLLB score ($M = 3.05, SD = .68$), $t(53) = 6.95, p < .001$. Effect size Cohen's $d = 0.95$, suggests a strong ($.8 < |d| < 1.2$) effect size for the scores. This suggests that the respondents of the present study were statistically more likely to experience more intense levels of FLLB during independent language learning than in the EFL classroom.

The statistical comparison of the FLLB scores in the two studied contexts has shown that the respondents of the present study reported statistically higher levels of FLLB during independent language learning than in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, if we compare the respondents' FLLB scores on an individual respondent level, 45 out of the 53 respondents

reported higher scores from the independent language learning questionnaire and only 8 respondents scored higher in the EFL classroom questionnaire.

In addition to the statistically significant difference between the FLLB scores in the two studied context, the present study was interested in the possible correlation between the FLLB scores. Thus, statistical correlation analysis was carried out to examine the correlation between the FLLB score in the EFL classroom and the FLLB score during independent language learning. A linear positive correlation between the two scores was found ($r = .510$, $p < .001$). The intensity of the observed association can be characterized as approximately moderate. This suggests that there is a moderate correlation between the intensity of FLLB experienced in the EFL classroom and during independent language learning, i.e., students who tend to feel more bored in the EFL classroom are also more likely to feel more intense levels of FLLB during independent language learning and vice versa. The pattern of correlation can also be observed in Figure 2 below. The Figure demonstrates that the moderate positive association between FLLB in the two contexts allows for variety and quite a few outliers.

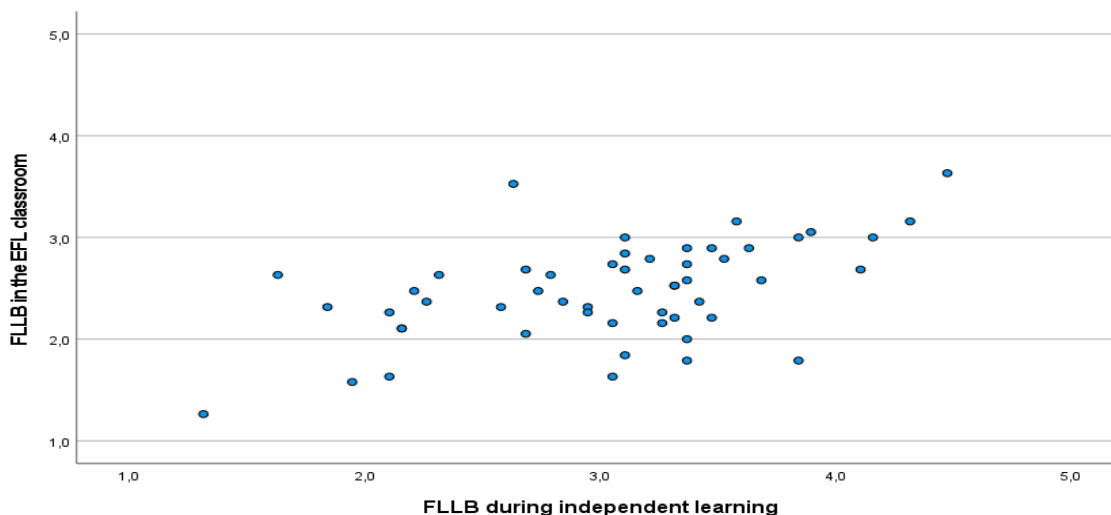


Figure 2 Pattern of correlation between FLLB scores in the EFL classroom and during independent language learning.

4.2 Qualitative Results

Qualitative results are presented in two main subsections, one focusing on the context of the EFL classroom and the other on the context of independent language learning outside of the classroom. Results are presented and discussed concurrently as this is best seen to fit the nature of qualitative results that aim to highlight the individual respondent level as well as the bigger picture.

4.2.1 Results of Qualitative Data Analysis: EFL Classroom Data

Qualitative results regarding FLLB in the EFL classroom are presented in two subsections to keep the initial discussion of common causes of boredom and boredom coping strategies distinctly separate. The aim of the qualitative results is to present the bigger picture interpreted from the data while also highlighting the individual respondent level.

4.2.1.1 Causes of FLLB in the EFL Classroom

The sources of students' FLLB in the EFL classroom were categorized into 4 main classes. The classes are presented in brief in Table 9 below. The number of data instances categorized into each class is indicated in parentheses.

Table 9 Categorization of FLLB causes in the EFL Classroom and the more specific patterns identified within the categorization. Number of data instances is indicated in parentheses.

Cause of FLLB	Specific patterns of FLLB causes
1. <i>boredom arising from <u>language tasks</u></i>	specific task types (reading, vocabulary etc.), repetitive tasks, uninteresting tasks/material, unchallenging tasks, too challenging tasks (27)
2. <i>boredom arising from <u>learning/teaching methods</u></i>	specific learning activity (group work etc.), mismatch between desired learning activity and learning activity carried out in class, non-interactive teaching (12)
3. <i>boredom arising from <u>temporal structure of class</u></i>	length of class, having to wait for the next activity, too few tasks for own pace of study (11)
4. <i>boredom arising from <u>student-internal factors</u></i>	cognitive/affective states, lack of creativity (6)

The data analysis highlighted a great number of instances where respondents commonly attributed their FLLB to language tasks completed in the EFL classroom. Many respondents reported a specific task type (i.e., reading tasks, vocabulary tasks, etc.) as the most common source of boredom, but repetitive or uninteresting contents of language tasks were also common among data instances highlighting boredom sources related to language tasks. The

level of challenge attributed to the language tasks was also among commonly reported sources of FLLB in the EFL classroom. Especially tasks that were considered too easy or tasks that did not provide enough challenge were prominent in the data. At the same time, one respondent reflected on the positive effects of easy language tasks as a factor contributing to a “relaxed atmosphere in the classroom”. Some responses additionally reflected an understanding of the importance of enduring repetitive and uninteresting tasks that aid in developing academic English skills. In some responses students also recognized the fact that the goals of the course cannot be perfectly suited for each individual learner and that not all tasks will necessarily serve their personal development as English users.

The FLLB arising from learning or teaching methods used in class could be described in three main patterns. Many respondents described a specific learning activity in English classes as boredom inducing. Among these learning activities or methods, group work was most prevalent in the data. Additionally, other methods of learning such as going through correct responses one by one in class or doing individual work silently in class were highlighted as boredom inducing by individual respondents. Some respondents expressed a “mismatch” between learning or teaching methods used in English classes and the preferred or more effective methods respondents deemed more relevant for language learning. These data instances highlighted the respondents’ desire for interactive learning behavior instead of mechanical completion of language tasks. One respondent also reflected on preferred methods encountered in past cases of language learning. Additionally, non-interactive teaching was further highlighted as boredom inducing by a number of respondents.

A number of respondents highlighted the difference between their own pace of study and the temporal structure of English classes as causing FLLB. In many instances respondents describe a situation where they take less time to complete language tasks given by the teacher than the time that is given to complete these tasks. This leads to a situation where students feel they have nothing to do for a portion of the class and that they are forced to simply wait for the next language task or activity. This phenomenon was observed in the data in regard to individual language tasks as well as group work. Long English classes and the slow passing of time in English classes were also reported as temporal causes of FLLB in the EFL classroom by individual respondents.

The student-internal factors that were reported as boredom inducing consisted of cognitive/affective states, and lack of creativity. In the data, lack of creativity appears in

association to group work. One respondent reflects on collective loss of discussion during group discussions, while another respondent reflects on individual inability to come up with meaningful responses to group discussion prompts. Additionally, one respondent described a situation where the group members' motivation and ability to come up with meaningful answers during group discussion do not match, which leads to a situation where a student with higher level of motivation is forced to work according to the motivational level of the less motivated students. In the data, the cognitive and affective states attributed to causing FLLB in the EFL classroom included tiredness, difficulty focusing for long periods of time, and anxiety about possible upcoming activity in class. The identified occurrences of student-internal factors in the data are scant and no clear patterns can be drawn. Nonetheless, they highlight the experiences of individual respondents and the varied causes of FLLB in the EFL classroom.

The data analysis additionally highlighted students' *lack* of FLLB in the EFL classroom. Several respondents reported never feeling bored or not experiencing significant amounts of boredom during English classes. The data analysis highlights domain specific interest in discussed topics, appropriate level of challenge, satisfying pace of study, and satisfying variety of tasks as the principal reasons explaining respondents' perceived lack of boredom. The results reflecting students' lack of FLLB are additionally interesting from the point of view of the present study as they mirror some of the common reasons responsible for FLLB according to the findings. For example, while unchallenging tasks were commonly reported as a source of boredom in the EFL classroom, a satisfying level of challenge was perceived as a factor contributing to the lack of FLLB in English classes.

Overall, the analysis suggests that in the case of the present study, FLLB is most commonly attributed to certain language tasks or specific learning activity in class. This suggests that FLLB is closely related to some situational factors that are subject to variation rather than FLLB being inherent to learning English in a classroom environment. In many cases, FLLB arises from tasks or learning activity that does not match the language proficiency of the individual learner, especially in cases where tasks are deemed too easy or irrelevant for own language learning. Easy or irrelevant tasks are often also connected to an unsatisfying pace of study which causes students to feel that for periods of time they have nothing to do but wait for new language tasks or activity. Additionally, the mismatch between the interests or preferred learning methods of individual students and the methods employed in English classes lead to FLLB. This mismatch might exist in regard to the contents of language tasks,

but also the pedagogical methods applied by the teacher. These identified reasons behind FLLB can be tied to students' lack of control over the tasks that are done in class and the manner in which teaching is organized.

4.2.1.2 Boredom Coping Strategies in the EFL Classroom

Table 10 below presents brief descriptions of the coping patterns that emerged from the qualitative data within the framework of boredom coping strategies (Nett, Goetz, and Daniels, 2010). To represent the distribution of boredom coping strategies in the data, the number of identified data instances categorized into each class is indicated in parentheses. The different coping strategies and specific behavioral and cognitive patterns identified in the data are then presented and discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs. Furthermore, data instances that were not categorized into any of the four categories of boredom coping are discussed briefly at the end of the subsection.

Table 10 Emerging patterns of behavior and cognition within the boredom coping dimensions (Nett, Goetz, and Daniels, 2010) in the EFL classroom data. Number of data instances in parentheses.

type of coping	approach coping	avoidance coping
<i>behavioral</i>	seeking alternative/extra language tasks, social language activity (8)	use of mobile phone or laptop in class, alternative social activity in class, alternative unrelated studying in class, other unrelated activity, "giving up" (35)
<i>cognitive</i>	conscious perspective change, using mental resources to aid concentration (13)	wandering thoughts / "getting lost in thought", consciously shifting focus to unrelated thoughts (12)

According to the results of the qualitative analysis of the EFL classroom data, students tend to favor avoidance coping strategies, and especially diverse behavioral avoidance coping strategies appear in the data commonly. These strategies include behavior geared toward an unrelated activity to avoid boredom inducing situations. Most common behavioral avoidance coping strategies are directly linked to student's use of smartphones or laptops in class, as "smartphone usage" was the single most commonly observed behavior in the collected data. One respondent reflected on smartphone usage as "very common in English classes". The strong presence of smartphone usage as a likely reaction to FLLB in the data supports and highlights the commonality and convenience of smartphone usage as an "easy out" in boredom inducing situations. Additionally, smartphone usage in the classroom is fairly undistruptive to fellow students which is reflected in one response in which smartphone usage is described as a likely reaction to FLLB "assuming it does not disrupt other students".

The second most common avoidance behavior emerging in the data is also related to the use of electronic devices. Laptop usage is directly and indirectly referenced in a multitude of responses. Laptop usage as an avoidance behavioral coping strategy is presented in the data as any kind of unrelated activity or activity related to other courses that is completed in the EFL classroom during boredom inducing activity. As a result of the digitalization of education, laptops are commonly used in the classroom as tools to take notes, access material or otherwise support learning. This makes it convenient to quickly switch to unrelated activity on a laptop in boredom inducing situations and then switch back to learning activity once a more stimulating learning situation arises. The strong presence of electronic device usage in the data highlights the central role of technology in the educational context of today as it can serve as both a tool to learn and a tool to battle boredom.

Additionally, behavioral avoidance coping strategies present themselves in the data as students' tendency to complete tasks related to other courses during English classes. Similarly, some respondents reported that they plan their schedule in English classes during boredom inducing activity. Moreover, some respondents simply stated that they switch to completing an unrelated activity, without clarifying what that activity might be. One respondent commented on avoidance behavior as only taking place partially, wherein focus is partially kept on the learning activity at hand, but something unrelated, such as checking emails, is done simultaneously.

The data also includes instances of students dropping boredom inducing activity completely with no alternative activity to replace it with. This results to withdrawal from all activity. Based on the way this withdrawal is described in the responses, it could either be considered avoidance behavior, or cognitive avoidance if it is considered as students "getting lost in thought". The present study based the categorization on whether students described the withdrawal in terms of action or thought. It is still worth noting that in many cases it is difficult to separate action from thought and some strategies grouped into different categories can appear quite alike in the classroom setting.

Another avoidance behavioral coping strategy appearing in the data consists of unrelated social behavior in class. This type of behavior was observed in the data in the form of chatting with friends or using boredom inducing situations as an opportunity to get to know classmates better and forming new friendships within the group. Unlike the previously discussed behavioral avoidance coping styles, social avoidance behavior is directed outward to the

people around the individual. This means that social avoidance behavior is also more noticeable to outsiders and potentially, depending on context, could also be disruptive to the learning of other students, unlike many of the previously described avoidance behaviors.

Two main patterns of behavioral approach coping arose in the data. Students reported seeking or requesting additional material or language tasks to combat boredom inducing situations in English classes. This search for additional tasks was described in the data as either fully independent or directed towards the teacher to provide additional material. Additional tasks combat boredom in cases where students take less time to complete tasks than others, but it requires deliberate action from the student. One respondent noted this in their response as they explained they were likely to take action to complete additional language tasks as a response to FLLB if they felt they had sufficient energy to do so. The second pattern of behavioral approach coping that emerged from the data is composed of social language activity in class. This included behavior such as offering to help other students as well as initiating or maintaining conversation in English during group activity in class. The identified social approach behaviors in English classes are thus either independently initiated (offering to help) or based on maintaining tasks given by the teacher (maintaining group conversation).

Cognitive approach coping strategies in the data can be identified in two patterns of cognition. The first cognitive pattern can be characterized in terms of students using their mental resources to aid focus/concentration during boredom inducing learning activity in English classes. One respondent described this reorientation as “forcing” oneself to refocus on the tasks at hand to not disrupt other learners in class. Other respondents described refocusing in terms of “conscious mental effort”. The second cognitive approach pattern consists of mentally reframing one’s perspective of the learning situation. Respondents reported attempting to remind themselves to “value teaching” when faced with FLLB in English classes but also cultivating patience to battle experiences of boredom.

The last of the four categories of boredom coping, cognitive avoidance, consisted of two separate but related patterns of cognition identified in the data. The first and more commonly observed pattern can be described in terms of “subconscious loss of focus” and “wandering thoughts” during boredom inducing activity in English classes. This pattern was discussed before in the context of avoidance behavior as it shares similarities with the pattern of avoidance behavior where students “give up” on boredom inducing activity but do not necessarily replace it with other type of activity. A closely related pattern categorized into

cognitive avoidance coping can be explained in terms of “consciously shifting focus away from boredom inducing situations” and “allowing oneself to focus on unrelated thoughts”. What differentiates this pattern from the first identified pattern, is the more conscious approach to shifting focus from boredom inducing situations rather than just letting thoughts wander. However, both patterns of coping center around thinking about unrelated matter during boredom inducing learning situations in the EFL classroom. Like many of the behavioral avoidance coping strategies, cognitive avoidance is undisruptive in most cases.

The data instances that were not categorized into any of the four dimensions of boredom coping strategies included patterns of behavior that were identified as emotional reactions to FLLB. A few individual respondents reported that once faced with FLLB they were likely to get “frustrated” or “feel restless in the classroom”. These data instances were few in the data, but they highlight an individual level emotional reaction to boredom that exists outside the dimensions of coping strategies.

Overall, students have few opportunities to actually change the boredom inducing situation in teacher-led English classes. This leaves them with the opportunity to either change the way they view the situation (e.g. promoting concentration or positive perspectives towards the learning situation) or ignore the boredom inducing activity in favor of unrelated activity or thought (e.g. using electronics in class, doing tasks related to other studies, or letting thought wander). This being said, to an extent students do have the freedom to affect the “flow” of English classes with their own behavior, which is demonstrated by the identified behavioral approach strategies (e.g. seeking additional/alternative tasks, social language activity) in the data. However, according to the results of the present study students tend to overwhelmingly deal with their FLLB in the EFL classroom through avoidance coping.

4.2.2 Results of Qualitative Data Analysis: Independent Language Learning Data

The qualitative results regarding FLLB during independent language learning are presented in two separate subsections. First, the results concerned with common causes of FLLB during independent language learning are detailed in subsection 4.2.2.1, which is followed by the presentation of results regarding boredom coping in subsection 4.2.2.2. Results are accompanied by discussion to support the nature of qualitative research.

4.2.2.1 Causes of FLLB during Independent Language Learning

Following the classification of FLLB sources in the EFL classroom, a similar four-class categorization of boredom sources was identified for FLLB during independent language learning. The classification is introduced in Table 11 below. The number of data instances are reported in parentheses to demonstrate the distribution of boredom sources. Any data instance in which respondents described the content of the language task to be a source of boredom was categorized into class 1, whereas boredom arising from tasks or activities that were considered too laborious or too time consuming were categorized into class 3. Each class and its more specific sub-classes are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

Table 11 Categorization of FLLB causes during independent language learning and the more specific patterns identified within the categorization. Number of data instances are indicated in parentheses.

Cause of FLLB	Specific patterns of FLLB causes
1. <i>boredom arising from <u>language tasks</u></i>	specific task type (vocabulary, reading etc.), repetitive tasks, monotonous tasks, uninteresting contents of tasks, meaningless/pointless tasks, unchallenging tasks, too challenging tasks (40)
2. <i>boredom arising from <u>learning methods</u></i>	specific learning activity (following recorded lectures etc.), specific learning behavior (mechanic study etc.) (4)
3. <i>boredom arising from <u>temporal factors</u></i>	homework requires too much time, homework that doesn't allow "getting into the flow" (7)
4. <i>boredom arising from <u>student-internal factors</u></i>	not knowing what to study (2)

Table 11 shows that the respondents of the present study commonly attributed FLLB during independent learning to language tasks they had received as homework. Many respondents reported specific language tasks to be commonly boredom inducing, among which vocabulary and reading tasks were most prevalent in the data. Grammar, writing, and general homework tasks were additionally observed in the data. Furthermore, inappropriately challenging tasks were perceived as common sources of boredom. Specifically, respondents' experiences of tasks that were too challenging emerged as a common source of FLLB during independent language learning. Moreover, monotonous, repetitive, uninteresting, and pointless tasks were also attributed to causing feelings of FLLB. Some respondents reflected on the importance of completing difficult and boredom inducing tasks as they provide valuable possibilities to develop as a language user. The central role of language tasks as a cause of FLLB during independent language learning is further reflected by some respondents who note that their independent language learning was restricted to only completing homework tasks given by the teacher.

Data instances categorized into the other three classes were observed in the data in significantly fewer numbers. Data instances categorized into class 2, included specific learning activity such as following a recorded lecture or watching assigned video material. Furthermore, some respondents commonly attributed their FLLB during independent language learning to mechanic learning behavior such as actively sitting down to complete routine language tasks. Different boredom inducing learning methods were not commonly identified in the data, but they highlight the experiences of individual respondents.

A subset of the data instances emphasized the effects of temporal factors on the experience of FLLB during independent language learning. In a variety of ways respondent describe time-consuming and long tasks as unproductive and boredom inducing. When respondents feel that laborious and time-consuming studying leads to no meaningful learning results, the studying is deemed a “waste of time” and taking from more meaningful studying related to other courses that are maybe more closely related to the student’s main domain of study. One respondent also reported experiencing boredom as a result of having to complete many short tasks that “do not allow getting into the state of flow” as this makes time pass slower during independent language learning.

A small number of respondents additionally reported the lack of knowing what to study as most commonly causing them to feel bored during independent language learning. These responses could reflect a situation where students have the motivation to study English outside of the classroom, but they lack the necessary study skills to go further than simply completing the mandatory homework tasks given by the teachers. This issue could be addressed by including study skills as a more explicit part of language teaching.

In addition to causes of FLLB, respondents’ *lack* of FLLB during independent language learning was reflected in the data. Lack of FLLB was closely attributed to respondents who described partaking in individually motivated language learning that was not directly related to the ongoing English course. For example, respondents described the use of English as a tool in other studies, social situations, or online as a meaningful way to improve language skills. Furthermore, lack of FLLB during independent language learning was attributed to relevant language tasks and interesting topics.

Even though in the data collection instrument independent language learning was introduced to respondents as including learning activity both related and unrelated to the ongoing English course, the analysis of the present study suggests that among the respondents FLLB during

independent language learning is heavily attributed to language tasks or learning activity that is superimposed on the learner by the teacher. Tasks were deemed boredom inducing either directly or through a temporal aspect tied to the time they require to be completed. On the contrary, according to the data, independently motivated language learning unrelated to course work appears in close relativity to the lack of experiencing FLLB.

4.2.2.2 Boredom Coping Strategies during Independent Language Learning

The boredom coping dimensions and more specific patterns within them are presented in a concise format in Table 12. The number of data instances are provided in parentheses to demonstrate the distribution of coping styles in the data. Coping styles and their behavioral and cognitive profiles are discussed in further detail in the following paragraphs. The data also included patterns of coping that could not be directly categorized into one of the classes. These data instances are also presented and discussed in the subsection.

Table 12 Emerging patterns of behavior and cognition within the boredom coping dimensions (Nett, Goetz, and Daniels, 2010) in the independent learning data. Number of data instances in paratheses.

type of coping	approach coping	avoidance coping
<i>behavioral</i>	seeking new/more suitable methods to learn, choosing to complete tasks that are less boredom inducing, adding a physical element to studying (11)	stopping learning activity/giving up, switching to unrelated activity, using mobile phone (16)
<i>cognitive</i>	using mental resources to aid concentration (8)	loss of focus/wandering thoughts (1)

Based on the observation of boredom coping strategies in the independent language learning data, respondents appeared to favor behavioral strategies when experiencing FLLB during independent study. This reflects students' freedom to control the learning situation and their own behavior within the situation. This freedom gives students the opportunity to change or completely avoid learning situations with their own behavior based on their own motivations and preferences.

Behavioral avoidance coping was observed in the data slightly more commonly than behavioral approach coping. The most common avoidance behavioral pattern observed in the data can be described as "withdrawal from learning activity". This behavioral pattern was reported by respondents in a variety of ways. One respondent reflected on the facility of giving up as they feel a lack of "external pressure" to complete tasks at home. One respondent

stated that they do not wish for language learning to become “tedious or unpleasant” and that in cases of FLLB during independent learning they would prefer to give up rather than let it get to a place of unpleasantness. A closely related pattern of behavior identified in the data entailed students switching to a more interesting or stimulating unrelated activity during language learning. Additionally, a small number of respondents reported that they were likely to use their mobile devices during independent language learning to battle FLLB.

As discussed above, in addition to avoiding boredom inducing situations, independent language learning settings allow students to *change* boredom inducing situations with their own behavior. A number of students reported that in boredom inducing independent language learning settings they were likely to seek for or come up with alternative methods to learn English. Methods found in the data included speaking to oneself in English, independently sourcing interesting texts to read in English, and socializing in English. A related behavioral approach coping style consisted of planning independent studying around tasks that were deemed the least boredom inducing. What differentiates this from the first pattern of approach behavior is that the tasks are chosen from the homework tasks given by the teacher instead of coming up with alternative ways to learn to replace boredom inducing homework tasks. In addition to the two major behavioral approach coping patterns identified in the data, one respondent described adding a physical element to learning to battle FLLB as they reported walking around while studying instead of just sitting down at a desk completing tasks.

Some data instances identified as behavioral coping were not clearly categorized as either avoidance or approach coping. A number of respondents reported that they complete tasks quickly or halfheartedly in order to be done with studying as fast as possible. In the moment, students change their own behavior as a result of feeling bored, but the final goal of this approach is to be able to avoid boredom inducing learning situations. Thus, this behavior cannot easily be categorized into either category. Respondents additionally reflected on how this behavior might affect the learning results, as some respondents openly acknowledged the lessened learning results of studying that is done quickly and halfheartedly.

Cognitive coping strategies appear significantly more scarcely in the data. The only clear pattern of cognitive approach coping identified in the data can be described as “using mental resources to reorient focus to language learning”. Data instances classified under this label included motivating oneself to try again and mentally “forcing” oneself to focus on the tasks at hand. Similarly, some students stated they would only complete tasks that were mandatory

to get out of boredom inducing learning situations as quickly as possible. The goal of this is to be able to avoid boredom inducing situations but the tasks are still completed due to a sense of responsibility. This behavior was categorized under cognitive approach coping, as the perspective of the situation as mandatory is what keeps the student completing tasks even when they are a source of FLLB. However, this cognitive perspective does not necessarily lead to a lessened experience of FLLB but rather helps the student complete the tasks in spite of feeling bored. Moreover, only one data instance was identified as a realization of cognitive avoidance coping. An individual respondent stated experiencing loss of focus and wandering thoughts during boredom inducing independent language learning.

One additional coping style commonly identified in the data could be described in terms of “taking a break to complete tasks later in a better mindset”. On the surface this behavior appears to be avoidance behavior as the student withdraws from learning activity, even if just temporarily. However, the goal of this behavior is to be able to complete the tasks with a better mindset to achieve more meaningful learning results. Ultimately, it is not certain that the student will eventually be able to reach a cognitive perspective that allows for more meaningful studying, but the goal alone sets this apart from the students simply avoiding the tasks completely. In some ways, this behavior could also be associated with procrastination, if in the end the tasks are completed in the same unenthusiastic or unmotivated state of mind in which they were originally placed on hold.

In conclusion, students’ freedom to construct, change, or avoid independent language learning situations with their own behavior is at the center of ways in which the respondents of the present study described dealing with FLLB during independent learning. The freedom and independence of independent language learning covers the contents of what is done or left undone during studying, but also temporal factors, such as when and for how long studying takes place. As a consequence of this freedom, studying that is deemed boredom inducing requires a lot of self-control to complete. In these cases, the indirect control and authority of the teacher assigning homework tasks is commonly a motivating force helping students complete tasks that are seen as boring. It could be stated that the indirect teacher control complements the freedom students experience during independent language learning and forms a sort of framework for much of the independent language learning that students end up completing.

5 Discussion

The results of the study are discussed in the present section. The discussion draws comparisons between the results obtained from the two studied contexts. Additionally, the results are reflected to previous research findings. The limitations of the present study as well as the need for further research on the topic are also addressed in the section.

5.1 Discussing and Comparing the Findings

According to the results of the present study, students were more likely to feel more intense levels of FLLB during independent language learning than in the EFL classroom. However, it is important to note that the calculated FLLB scores could not be described as significantly *high* in either context. These results are in direct contradiction to those of Kruk and Zawodniak (2018), who found that among their sample of interviewed students, participants experienced *less* boredom in independent learning settings than they did during English classes. It is good to note, that unlike in the present study the explicit focus of Kruk and Zawodniak (2018) was not to compare FLLB in the two contexts, and that the comparison was included only as a small portion of the interview study focusing largely on FLLB experienced in the classroom. A significant difference in methods and sample sizes might also partly explain the difference in results. Additionally, as already stated above, according to the results of the present study, FLLB was not experienced as significantly high in either context. Moreover, while the difference between the scores was deemed statistically significant, it is not *extreme* by any means.

The results also showed that a moderate correlation between FLLB scores existed, which suggests that the same individuals are more likely to feel the most intense FLLB in the EFL classroom and during independent learning. This could suggest that the experience of FLLB is likely tied not only to situational factors but also to students' personal tendencies in relation to language learning, which is supported by the findings of Pawlak et al. (2020) and Pawlak et al. (2022), who showed that FLLB is parallel to students' general boredom proneness.

It is interesting to note, that according to the results regarding the more specific factor level FLLB scores, in both contexts the factor concerned with some experience of monotony appeared to have the lowest calculated score among the factors. In the EFL classroom, the score for factor 1 (*disengagement, monotony and repetitiveness*) was statistically lower than the score for factor 2 (*lack of satisfaction and challenge*). This contradicts the results of

Pawlak et al. (2020), as within their sample the score for factor 1 were statistically higher. As for independent language learning, among the three factors, the FLLB score was the lowest for factor 3 (*altered perception of time, underused language abilities and monotony*). While the factorial structures of the two questionnaire tools are not identical and thus it is difficult to draw direct comparisons between the more detailed structures of FLLB intensity, it is still interesting to note that in the case of the present study, the experience of monotony cannot be described as the *main* cause of boredom in either of the studied contexts.

Based on the results concerned with boredom intensity as well as the identified patterns of students' reactions to FLLB in the present study, it can be hypothesized that the most relevant boredom types (Goetz et al., 2014) for the two studied contexts are indifferent boredom, calibrating boredom, and searching boredom. Indifferent boredom is more relevant in the case of FLLB during independent learning as permanent or temporary withdrawal from activity as a result of boredom was a commonly identified pattern of boredom coping in that context. These behaviors are commonly linked to indifferent boredom and additionally the boredom type is often discussed in connection to non-achievement settings which could include independently controlled language learning. Nonetheless, as acknowledged in the discussion regarding students' reactions to boredom in the previous section, aspects of the achievement setting are present during independent learning as a result of homework and other tasks that are seen as mandatory and superimposed on the learner by the teacher. Based on this simultaneous existence of aspects of achievement and non-achievement settings, calibrating boredom and searching boredom appear to also be relevant for FLLB during independent language learning. Indicators of these boredom types can be found from the identified patterns of boredom coping which include temporary loss of focus (including instances where user reorients focus through conscious mental effort), as well as seeking new alternative learning activity or alternative unrelated activity. This interpretation of the relevance of boredom types in relation to independent language learning is in line with the hypothesis discussed in Pawlak et al. (2022).

As for FLLB in the EFL classroom, the most relevant boredom types appear to be calibrating boredom and searching boredom. Similar indicators can be found in the results regarding boredom coping during English classes as described above for independent language learning. Especially behaviors such as, wandering thoughts, loss of focus, seeking of alternative learning activity as well as alternative unrelated activity could be associated with common realizations of the two boredom types. No clear patterns of more extreme negative emotional

reactions to boredom were identified in the data, which suggests that reactant boredom and apathetic boredom did not appear to be significantly relevant in describing the FLLB experienced in either of the studied contexts. This is also reflected in the relatively low levels of FLLB identified as a result of the quantitative analysis. This is not to say, however, that these boredom types could not be relevant to some aspects of experiences of individual respondents who expressed frustration and anxiety as common emotional reactions to FLLB or reported higher FLLB scores in the quantitative questionnaire items.

In the comparison of common sources of boredom and respondents' common reactions to boredom in the two studied context, it is important to identify and discuss the contextual differences of the two learning environments. One important aspect that sets apart language learning in the EFL classroom and during independent learning is *time*. In the EFL classroom students have a set finite amount of time every week where they are expected to focus on studying English, whereas time set aside for independent language learning is organized autonomously by the students themselves. Students have the freedom to spend as little or as much of their free time studying English outside of the EFL classroom as they wish. They are also free to study at any time, whether that be at a set time every week or irregularly whenever they feel like it. This temporal difference between the two studied contexts can be likened to the type of tasks respondents reported as boredom inducing, as easy tasks where more commonly attributed to causing boredom in the EFL classroom and difficult tasks during independent language learning. In the EFL classroom easy tasks that are completed quickly leave more time for sitting around with nothing meaningful do, whereas during independent learning tasks that are completed quickly allow students to move onto other activity. Difficult tasks then take more time to complete and require students to spend more of their free time on completing language tasks.

Another important contextual difference between the two studied contexts has to do with teacher control and autonomy. In the EFL classroom studying is largely organized by the teacher who prepares the structure and materials of the classroom session. Independent language learning is in theory organized autonomously by the student based on their personal goals and needs as a language learner. However, in the case of the present study, independent language learning and especially the FLLB experienced during independent language learning is still highly tied to the contents of the English course. In most cases, the studying that takes place outside of the classroom is in some way related to classroom activity, such as homework tasks given by the teacher that students see as mandatory. Based on the collected

data, FLLB in both contexts is largely based on tasks and topics decided by the teacher and the perceived lack of control over tasks and activity is a source of boredom during independent language learning as much as it is in the EFL classroom.

Nonetheless, students' control over independent language learning does become evident in their freedom to change or completely avoid boredom inducing language learning activity through their own behavior. This was observed in the data regarding students' reactions to FLLB, as students tended to favor behavioral coping strategies during independent language learning. It could be argued that generally students cope with their boredom in more productive ways during independent language learning, whereas in the EFL classroom unproductive short-term avoidance coping, such as mobile phone usage, prevailed in the collected data. This analysis aligns with that of Kruk and Zawodniak (2018) who observed that the interviewees of their study tended to have more adequate tools to deal with their boredom during independent language learning.

It is also important to note that respondents who described completely independent language learning outside of the course syllabus found it to be a meaningful and fulfilling way to develop as a language user. This suggests that while FLLB is tied to experiences of limited autonomy, the lack of FLLB is commonly attributed to autonomous language learning arising from personal goals and ambition. These findings mirror those of Zawodniak, Kruk, and Chumas (2017), who identified lack of autonomy and excessive teacher control as some of the very central sources of FLLB and proposed the promotion of self-regulated strategies which includes autonomous goal setting as a pedagogical tool to help students deal with FLLB.

While the study was able to identify common situational and student internal causes for FLLB in the EFL classroom and during independent language learning, the results of the present study also reflect the variety of perceived causes of boredom among individual learners. It is also good to note that the aim of the study is not to rank learning activities or language tasks based on how *boring* they are. Additionally, the present study does not intend to evaluate the pedagogical value of language tasks or learning activities that are commonly boredom inducing according to the results of the study. The importance of enduring boredom in manageable portions is even reflected in some of the students' responses. Rather, the study was interested in the general patterns of situational factors that the respondents were most likely to deem boredom inducing.

5.2 Research Limitations and Suggestions for Further Study

One central limitation of the present study lies in the number of respondents. While 53 respondents were deemed sufficient for the purposes of the present study and its mixed methods research design, especially the quantitative examination of FLLB intensity would have benefited from a larger group of respondents. The limited number of respondents restricts the possibility to interpret the quantitative results as generalizable to the larger population of Finnish university students. Thus, the present study interprets them as mostly specific to the studied sample and at most as providing a suggestion of possible tendencies among the larger population.

Additionally, as participation in the study was completely voluntary and required some level of initiative from the students, it is possible that the final sample of respondents lacks representation for less motivated and ambitious students. It is good to keep this possibility in mind when interpreting the results especially in the case of the present study as boredom, the subject of the study, could also be a factor that affects whether a student took the time and initiative to participate in the study. In future research, a larger and more representative sample could provide more generalizable results and comparison regarding the FLLB intensity experienced in the EFL classroom and during independent language learning.

The qualitative analysis of the present study could only provide general patterns of boredom causes and ways of coping with FLLB. The qualitative data collection instrument used in the study was designed to elicit brief, specific, and concentrated responses based on situations or experiences students saw as occurring *most commonly* in relation boredom. The nature of the data allows general analysis of common patterns which provides a sufficient basis for compiling the “big picture” of boredom causes and coping. Deeper analysis into the more varied nature of situational factors causing FLLB or ways in which students deal with their experiences of boredom would require more intricate data about students’ experiences regarding specific boredom inducing situations. Additionally, more concrete investigation into the causes of FLLB and boredom coping styles in relation to their specific contexts of the EFL classroom or independent language learning would require different kind of qualitative data, such as interview data or long-term diary data.

6 Conclusion

The present study has found that students were statistically more likely to experience more intense levels of FLLB during independent language learning than they were in the EFL classroom. However, students' FLLB did not appear particularly intense in either context, and at most students' FLLB levels during independent language learning could be described as moderate. Similarly, a moderate statistical correlation between FLLB in the two studied contexts was found.

In both of the studied contexts, tasks given by the teacher were commonly responsible for causing students to experience FLLB. Generally, many of the most common causes of FLLB were associated with students' lack of autonomy in organizing the material and the methods used during language learning. While independent language learning appears on the surface to be more autonomous, much of the FLLB during independent learning was still largely associated with the completion of mandatory tasks or learning activity superimposed on the learner by the teacher of the English course. On the contrary, personal and autonomously motivated language learning unrelated to formal language classes was closely associated with the lack of FLLB.

The study found that students tended to favor avoidance coping strategies to deal with their FLLB in the EFL classroom, whereas behavioral coping strategies were favored during independent language learning. The emerging differences between coping patterns could be partially explained by the different levels of control students have over the learning situation. Less control over changing the learning situation in the EFL classroom encourages students to cope with FLLB with short-term avoidance behavior such as, mobile phone usage. On the contrary, during independent language learning students have a more significant opportunity to change the learning situation with their own behavior or exit it completely, whether that be temporarily to take a break or entirely with no intention of returning to studying.

As the study of FLLB is still in its early stages, further research into the phenomenon is necessary. The present study has provided a useful perspective to the differences and similarities in students' experiences of FLLB in formal classroom settings and in independent learning settings, but more detailed comparative analysis is required in the future to provide a more concrete understanding of the central causes affecting the differing experiences.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 BPELC-R questionnaire

(Statements omitted from the present study are in parentheses.)

1. Time always seems to be passing slowly in my language classes.
2. I often find myself at loose ends in a language class.
3. I often have to do meaningless things in my language classes.
4. (I always feel entertained in my English language classes.)
5. I often have to do repetitive or monotonous things in my language classes.
6. It takes more stimulation to get me going in English classes than most students from my group.
7. I get a kick out of most things I do in a language class.
8. I am seldom excited about my English language classes.
9. (I can usually find something interesting to do in my language classes.)
10. I often do not feel like doing anything in English classes.
11. It would be very hard for me to find an exciting task in language classes.
12. I would like to have more challenging things to do in my English classes.
13. I feel that I am working below my abilities most of the time in my language classes.
14. (I am more interested in other subjects than English classes.)
15. (If I am not doing something interesting/exciting during English classes, I feel tired and bored.)
16. It takes a lot of change and variety to keep me really satisfied during my English classes.
17. It seems that English classes are the same all the time; it is getting boring.
18. It is easy for me to concentrate on the activities in my English language classes.
19. During language classes, I often think about unrelated things.
20. Having to listen to my English language teachers present material bores me tremendously.
21. I actively participate in English classes.
22. Much of the time I just sit around doing nothing in my English language classes.
23. In situations where I have to wait (e.g., for everyone to finish their task), I get very restless.

Appendix 2 BLEOS questionnaire

(Statements omitted from the present study are in parentheses.)

1. Time always seems to be passing slowly when I study English after classes.
2. I don't really know what to learn after classes when it comes to English.
3. It often happens that I can't find things to do with English after classes that would make a deeper sense to me.
4. I can easily find something to learn in English after classes.
5. Many things that I do when I learn English after classes are repetitive and monotonous.
6. When learning English after classes, I need more motivation than most of my friends.
7. Most of the things that I do while learning English after classes give me a lot of fun.
8. Learning English after classes rarely excites me.
9. In most situations related to learning English after classes I can usually find some interesting tasks to do.
10. I can patiently wait for the effects of learning English on my own.
11. Even though I have some free time to learn English, I often don't feel like doing anything about it.
12. It would be very difficult for me to find a task that would be exciting enough for me to do after classes.
13. I feel that I am working below my abilities most of the time after classes.
14. (Many people would say that I am a creative and imaginative person when it comes to learning English after classes.)
15. It seems that learning English after classes is the same all the time; it is getting boring.
16. (When I was younger (e.g., in junior high school or senior high school), I used to find learning English after lessons monotonous and tiresome.)
17. I can easily focus on activities when I learn English after classes.
18. When I learn English after classes, I often think about unrelated things.
19. I am very active when it comes to learning English after classes.
20. For most of the free time that I devote to learning English I just sit around doing nothing.
21. I often come up with new ways of learning English when I learn it after classes.

Appendix 3 Finnish Summary

Suomenkielinen tiivistelmä: Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvä tylsyyys englannin oppitunneilla ja itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana

Pro gradu -tutkielma käsittelee vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää tylsyyttä (engl. Foreign Language Learning Boredom). Kielenoppimiseen liittyvä tylsyyys ja sen tutkiminen vieraan kielen oppimisen kontekstissa ovat osa yksilöllisten erojen tutkimusta. Tylsyyden tutkiminen on osa viime vuosien aikana yleistynyttä trendiä tutkia kielenoppijoiden tunteita ja niiden vaikutusta kielenoppimisen aikana. Tylsyyys on pitkään pysytellyt tutkimuksessa taka-alalla, mutta viime vuosikymmenen aikana sen asema osana yksilöllisten erojen tutkimusta kielenoppimisen alalla on vahvistunut.

Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa osaltaan uuden näkökulman tylsyyden tutkimukseen vertaamalla opiskelijoiden tylsyyden kokemuksia kahdessa erillisessä kielenoppimiskontekstissa, jotka ovat opettajajohtoinen luokkahuoneympäristö ja luokkahuoneen ulkopuolella tapahtuva itsenäinen kielenopiskelu. Tutkimus toteutettiin suomalaisessa yliopistossa alempaa korkeakoulututkimusta suorittavien opiskelijoiden keskuudessa pakollisen alakohtaisen englannin kurssin aikana. Tutkimuksessa hyödynnetään sekä määrällisiä että laadullisia tutkimusmenetelmiä, joiden avulla tylsyyttä analysoidaan kolmesta keskeisestä näkökulmasta. Määrällisillä tutkimusmenetelmillä mitataan opiskelijoiden kokeman tylsyyden määrää ja intensiteettiä molemmissa tutkituissa konteksteissa. Laadullisilla tutkimusmenetelmillä selvitetään sekä opiskelijoiden yleiseksi kokemia syitä tylsyydelle kielenopiskelun aikana että toimia, joihin opiskelijat tarttuvat tilanteissa, joissa he kokevat tylsistyvänsä opiskellessaan vierasta kieltä. Vaikka kielenoppimiseen liittyvän tylsyyden eroja luokkahuoneessa ja itsenäisen opiskelun aikana on sivuttu aikaisemmissakin tutkimuksissa, tämä tutkimus on ensimmäinen, jossa kahden kontekstin välinen vertailu on nostettu tutkimuksen keskiöön. Tutkimus on myös ensimmäinen laatuaan, joka on toteutettu Suomessa.

Teoreettista taustaa

Tylsyyys on yksi yleisimmistä akateemisissa konteksteissa koetuista tunteista. Se on yleisesti määritelty negatiiviseksi fysiologista aktivaatiota vähentäväksi tunnetilaksi, jolla on useita ilmenemismuotoja. Tylsyyys voi yksilöstä ja tilanteesta riippuen ilmetä joko hieman epämiellyttävänä tuntemuksena, josta on helppo selvittää tarjoamalla itselleen uutta stimuloivampaa tekemistä tai jopa lamauttavan ahdistavana tunnetilana, joka vaikuttaa

kokonaisvaltaisesti ihmisen toimintaan. Tylsyyden ja sen intensiteetin ilmeneminen voi riippua tilanteen rajoittavuudesta. Esimerkiksi tylsyyden rajumpia muotoja koetaan todennäköisemmin tilanteissa, joissa yksilöllä on vain vähän vapauksia vaikuttaa tilanteen kulkuun ja joissa yksilön odotetaan toimivan tietyllä tavalla. Tällainen konteksti voi olla esimerkiksi opettajajohtoinen luokkahuonetilanne. Lievempiä tylsyyden muotoja koetaan todennäköisemmin vapaamuotoisissa tilanteissa, joissa yksilö voi toimillaan vaikuttaa tilanteen kulkuun.

Koska tylsyyden on yleisesti määritelty negatiivisena tunnetilana, sen tutkimukseen kuuluvat myös tavat, joilla yksilöt pyrkivät sopeutumaan ja selviämään tylsyydestä ja sen vaikutuksista. Yksi lähestymistapa tylsyydestä selviytymiseen jaottelee sopeutumistavat kognitiivisiin ja toiminnallisiin sekä ongelmaa lähestyviin ja ongelmaa vältteleviin sopeutumistapoihin. Tätä sopeutumistapojen luokittelua hyödynnetään myös tämän tutkimuksen analyysissä, kun perehdytään opiskelijoiden tapoihin toimia tilanteissa, joissa he kokevat tylsistyvänsä kielenopiskelun aikana.

Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää tylsyyttä on tutkittu erityisesti sen mahdollisten syiden ja muodostumisen rakenteiden näkökulmasta, mutta myös ilmiön yleisyyden ja tylsyyden intensiteetin kannalta. Lisäksi opiskelijoiden tapoja hillitä ja sopeutua tylsyyteen on tutkittu jonkin verran. Suuri osa ensimmäisistä tutkimuksista on toteutettu laadullisin tutkimusmenetelmin ja analysoitavaa dataa on kerätty esimerkiksi haastattelemalla tai päiväkirjamuodossa. Myös määrällisen tutkimuksen työkaluja, erityisesti kyselymuotoisia instrumentteja, on kehitetty ja hyödynnetty tutkimuksessa. Tässäkin tutkimuksessa hyödynnetään kahta vakiintunutta kyselyinstrumenttia mittaamaan tylsyyden määrää englannin oppitunneilla ja itsenäisen englanninopiskelun aikana. Valtaosa vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvään tylsyyteen keskittyvästä tutkimuksesta on toteutettu luokkahuoneopetuksen kontekstissa ja vain muutama tutkimus on perehtynyt syvällisemmin ilmiöön itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana.

Tylsyyden syitä vieraan kielen oppimisen aikana on määritelty kielenoppimistilanteen erilaisista tekijöistä, kuten oppimismateriaalien sisällöistä ja piirteistä tai oppimistilanteen organisoinnista. Tämän lisäksi syitä on johdettu opiskelijoiden sisäisistä taipumuksista ja piirteistä. Liiallinen opettajan kontrolli sekä opiskelijan vähäinen itseohjautuvuus ja autonomia ovat identifioituneet keskeisiksi tekijöiksi monen tilannesidonnan tylsyystekijän taustalla. Tämän vuoksi tylsyyden minimalisoimiseksi pedagogisin keinoin on ehdotettu

esimerkiksi itseohjautuvien oppimisstrategioiden tukemista, produktiivisen opettajapalautteen lisäämistä sekä interaktiivisia opetus- ja oppimiskeinoja.

Tutkimusmenetelmät ja -materiaalit

Tutkimuksessa hyödynnetään sekä määrällisiä että laadullisia datankeruu- ja analysointimenetelmiä. Dataa tutkimukseen kerättiin anonymilla Webropol-kyselyllä, jonka täytti 53 vapaaehtoista suomalaisessa yliopistossa alempaa korkeakoulututkintoa suorittavaa opiskelijaa. Opiskelijat osallistuivat tutkimukseen tutkintoon kuuluvan alakohtaisen englannin kurssin aikana. Potentiaalisia vastaajia lähestyttiin englannin kurssien opettajien välityksellä. Kyselyyn vastaaminen oli täysin vapaaehtoista ja anonymia, eikä tutkimuksen toteuttajalla ollut missään tutkimuksen vaiheessa tietoa yksittäisten vastaajien henkilöllisyydestä.

Määrällistä dataa kerättiin kahdella kyselytyökalulla, jotka on suunniteltu mittaamaan tylsyyden määrää ja intensiteettiä vieraan kielen oppimisen aikana joko luokkahuonekontekstissa tai itsenäisen kielenoppimisen kontekstissa. Vastaajia pyydettiin reagoimaan väitteisiin kokemuksista vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvästä tylsyydestä asteikolla 1 = Täysin eri mieltä, 2 = Eri mieltä, 3 = Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä, 4 = Samaa mieltä, 5 = Täysin samaa mieltä. Vastausten yhteispisteet ja keskiarvo laskettiin edustamaan opiskelijoiden tylsyydenkokemusten yleisyyttä ja intensiteettiä. Syvemmät päätelmät ja vertailu tulosten välillä perustui tilastollisiin testeihin, joilla verrattiin esimerkiksi havaittujen erojen merkittävyyttä ja tulosten välisiä mahdollisia riippuvuussuhteita.

Määrällisen datan lisäksi vapaaehtoisilta tutkimukseen osallistuvilta opiskelijoilta kerättiin tiiviissä muodossa kirjallista dataa, jonka laadullisella analyysillä pyrittiin selvittämään yleisiä tylsyyden syitä. Lisäksi datasta selvitettiin opiskelijoiden käyttämiä tylsyyden hillitsemiskeinoja ja tapoja, joilla he yleisesti toimivat tilanteissa, joissa he kokevat tylsistyvänsä. Tätä dataa kerättiin neljällä avokysymyksellä, joihin vastaajat saivat kirjoittaa lyhyen vapaamuotoisen vastauksen. Kaikki avovastaukset kerättiin yhteen muodostamaan kysymyskohtaiset analysoitavat aineistot. Aineistoista analysoitiin syitä tylsyyden kokemuksiin ja identifioidut syyt kategorisoitiin aikaisempien kategorisointien perusteella vastaamaan kerätyn datan vaatimuksia. Tylsyydenhillitsemiskeinot ja opiskelijoiden yleiset toimintatavat tylsyyden kokemuksen aikana kategorisoitiin aikaisemmin esitellyn sopeutumiskeinojen kategorisoinnin mukaan neljään kategoriaan, jotka ovat kognitiivinen ongelmaa lähestyvä sopeutumistapa, toiminnallinen ongelmaa lähestyvä sopeutumistapa,

kognitiivinen ongelmaa välttelevä sopeutumistapa ja toiminnallinen ongelmaa välttelevä sopeutumistapa.

Tulokset ja päätelmiä

Tutkimuksen perusteella opiskelijat kokivat todennäköisemmin intensiivisempiä tylsyyden tuntemuksia itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana kuin englannin oppitunneilla. Ero opiskelijoiden tylsyyden kokemusten välillä oli tilastollisesti merkittävä, mutta tylsyyden kokemukset eivät olleet kummassakaan kontekstissa erityisen intensiivisiä. Enimmillään tuntemuksen intensiteettiä tutkimuksen vastaajajoukossa voisi kuvailla kohtuulliseksi. Lisäksi tulokset osoittavat, että englannin oppitunneilla koetun kielenoppimiseen liittyvän tylsyyden ja itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikaisen tylsyyden välillä havaittiin kohtalaisen vahva positiivinen riippuvuussuhde. Tämä indikoi, että ne opiskelijat, jotka kokevat voimakkaampia tylsyyden tuntemuksia englannin oppitunneilla, kokevat myös todennäköisemmin intensiivisempiä tylsyyden tuntemuksia itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana.

Tylsyyden yleisimmät syyt englannin oppitunneilla kategorisoitiin neljään yläluokkaan, jotka olivat kielenoppimistehtävät, oppimis- ja opetustavat, oppituntien ajankäytöllinen rakenne ja opiskelijoiden sisäiset tekijät. Erityisesti erilaiset tehtävät (esim. lukemis- ja sanastotehtävät) ja tehtävien piirteet (esim. yksitoikkoiset, sisällöltään epäkiinnostavat ja liian helpot tehtävät) nousivat esiin yleisinä tylsyyttä aiheuttavina tekijöinä. Ryhmätyöskentely ja opiskelijaa passivoiva vuorovaikutukseton opetus nousivat esiin tylsyyttä aiheuttavina oppimis- ja opetustapoina. Ajankäytöllisiin tylsyyttä aiheuttaviin tekijöihin yhdistettiin esimerkiksi oppituntien pitkä kesto sekä tehtävien liian vähäinen määrä suhteessa käytössä olevaan aikaan, mikä johtaa siihen, että opiskelijat joutuvat odottamaan seuraavaa tehtävää tai aktiviteettia. Opiskelijoiden sisäisistä tekijöistä tylsyyden syiksi identifioitiin esimerkiksi opiskelijoiden kognitiiviset tai emotionaaliset tilat opetuksen aikana sekä luovuuden puute tehtäviä tehtäessä.

Myös itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana koetun tylsyyden yleisimmät syyt kategorisoitiin neljään pääluokkaan, jotka olivat pienten oppimiskontekstien eroavaisuuksien seurauksena: kielenoppimistehtävät, oppimistavat, ajankäytölliset tekijät sekä opiskelijan sisäiset tekijät. Kuten englannin oppitunneilla myös itsenäisen opiskelun aikana reilusti suurin osa tylsyyden syistä liittyivät tiettyihin tehtävätyyppeihin (esim. sanasto- ja kielioppitehtävät) ja tehtävien piirteisiin (esim. yksitoikkoiset, turhat ja liian helpot tai liian vaikeat tehtävät). Vain muutama vastaaja kertoi kokevansa oppimistavat keskeisinä syinä tylsyyden kokemuksille. Myös

opiskelijoiden sisäisiin tekijöihin liittyvät tylsyyden syyt olivat harvinaisia datassa. Ajankäytöllisistä tekijöistä erityisesti paljon aikaa vievien, mutta yksinkertaisten tehtävien teko koettiin yleisinä syinä tylsistymiseen itsenäisen opiskelun aikana. Tehtävien keskeinen rooli tylsyyden aiheuttajana itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana osoittaa, että tylsyys ja sen syyt ovat vahvassa yhteydessä opettajan antamiin tehtäviin ja kurssin sisältöihin, eivätkä esimerkiksi opiskelijoiden sisäisiin ominaispiirteisiin tai tapoihin opiskella.

Englannin oppitunneilla käytetyistä tylsyyden hillitsemis- ja sopeuttamistoimista suurin osa kategorisoitiin toiminnallisiin ongelmaa vältteleviin toimiin. Erityisesti älypuhelimien ja muiden elektroniikkalaitteiden käyttäminen oppituntien aikana ilmenivät datassa yleisinä keinoina selvitä tylsyyden kokemuksista englannin oppitunneilla. Datasta identifioitiin myös kognitiivisia ongelmaa vältteleviä sopeutumistoimia, joista yleisimpiä olivat harhailevat ajatukset sekä ajatusten ja keskittymisen tietoisempi siirto muihin kiinnostuksen kohteisiin tylsien hetkien aikana. Ongelmaa lähestyvistä sopeutumistavoista yleisimpiä olivat kognitiiviset lähestymistavat. Monet opiskelijat kertoivat hyödyntävänsä henkisiä voimavarojaan tukeakseen keskittymistä ja aktiivisempaa osallistumista, mutta myös tietoinen positiivisemmän ja avoimemman näkökulman luominen oppimistilanteisiin ilmensivät näitä sopeutumistapoja datassa. Toiminnallisia ongelmaa lähestyviä sopeutumistapoja datassa ilmensivät esimerkiksi vaihtoehtoisten kielenoppimiseen liittyvän tekemisen etsiminen sekä englanninkielinen sosiaalinen kanssakäyminen luokkatovereiden kanssa. Yleisesti voi sanoa, että ongelmaa välttelevien toimintatapojen yleisyys kertoo mahdollisesti opiskelijoiden vähäisestä vapaudesta vaikuttaa oppitunnin kulkuun opettajajohtoisissa luokkahuonetilanteissa.

Itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana yleisimpiä tylsyyden hillitsemiskeinoja olivat erilaiset toiminnalliset tavat. Tämä viestii opiskelijoiden laajemmasta vapaudesta vaikuttaa oppimistilanteen kulkuun omalla käytöksellään, minkä saattoi huomata erilaisina toiminnallisina ongelmaa lähestyvinä tapoina (esim. vaihtoehtoiset oppimistavat, kiinnostavampien tehtävien priorisointi) datassa. Opiskelijoilla on myös vapaus vetäytyä oppimistilanteista pois, mikä ilmeni ongelmaa välttelevien toiminnallisten tapojen (esim. kesken lopettaminen) yleisyytenä datassa. Kognitiivisista sopeutumistavoista yleisimpiä olivat ongelmaa lähestyvät tavat, erityisesti keskittymisen tukeminen henkisillä voimavaroilla.

Tulokset osoittavat, että molemmissa tutkituissa oppimiskonteksteissa erilaiset kielenoppimistehtävät ovat opiskelijoiden yleisimmiksi kokemia syitä tylsyydelle

kielenoppimisen aikana. Erityisesti itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana tehtävien rooli on mittava. Sen sijaan englannin oppitunneilla myös ajankäytöllisillä tekijöillä ja opetustavoilla on tehtävien ohella keskeisempi rooli tylsyyden syinä. Vaikka itsenäiset kielenoppimistilanteet ovat teoriassa opettajan kontrollin ja auktoriteetin ulkopuolella, tutkimus osoittaa, että suuri osa opiskelijoiden kokemasta tylsyydestä itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana on seurausta kurssin sisältöihin ja vaatimuksiin liittyvistä tekijöistä. Voidaan siis todeta, että molemmissa oppimiskonteksteissa opiskelijoiden vaikutusmahdollisuuden ja vapauden puutteella on keskeinen rooli tylsyyden kokemusten muodostumiseen.

Opiskelijoiden vapaus ja autonomia itsenäisen kielenoppimisen aikana ilmenevät kuitenkin selvemmin opiskelijoiden hyödyntämissä tylsyyden hillitsemiskeinoissa. Opiskelijat voivat vaikuttaa oppimistilanteen kulkuun omalla toiminnallaan, esimerkiksi priorisoimalla kiinnostavampia tehtäviä tai kehittämällä itselle sopivampia oppimismateriaaleja tai -tapoja. Tämän ohella opiskelijoilla on myös suurempi vapaus lopettaa opiskelu kesken tylsyyden seurauksena. Vastaavasti englannin oppitunneilla opiskelijat turvautuvat tylsistyessään todennäköisemmin lyhytkestoisiin ongelmaa vältteleviin toimintatapoihin, kuten älypuhelimien käyttöön. Voidaan siis todeta, että pohjimmiltaan monet keskeiset syyt opiskelijoiden kielenoppimisen aikana kokemalle tylsyydelle ovat samankaltaisia molemmissa oppimiskonteksteissa, mutta tavat, joilla tylsyyteen tavallisimmin suhtaudutaan ja sitä pyritään hillitsemään eroavat tilanteiden välillä.