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The Significance of Language Input in the Production of Output Skills

A Qualitative Content Analysis on the Beliefs of Students of English

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The topic of the thesis focuses on university students' beliefs on the significance of language input in the production of L2 English output skills. It aims to investigate participants' beliefs on how they have received extensive input from formal and informal settings and how their accessed sources of written and spoken input are significant and useful for their L2 English writing and speaking. The total number of participants is 48. The present study utilizes a questionnaire with open-ended questions as a data collection method. Qualitative content analysis is applied as the method for data analysis, which also involves coding of participants' responses. According to the results of the present study, participants had strong beliefs that receiving extensive input was preferable in informal settings both in terms of L2 writing and speaking. Participants also believe that sources of written (e.g. books, online texts) and spoken input (e.g. TV, music, and YouTube videos) were significant and useful for increasing their intrinsic motivation, improving output skills and raising awareness of how English is used and adapted in different contexts. The study managed to provide sufficient results on the significance of language input from the student belief perspective, however, there is uncertainty whether the findings can reflect the reality on a larger scale, indicating possible future directions to this topic.

Key words: input, written input, spoken input, audiovisual input, output, formal learning environment, informal learning environment, English as a second language, English as a foreign language

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Abbreviations

CF = Corrective feedback

EFL = English as a foreign language

ESL = English as a second language

IH = Interaction Hypothesis

IL = Interlanguage

L1 = First language

L2 = Second language

OCF = Oral corrective feedback

OH = Output Hypothesis

SLA = Second language acquisition

TL = Target language

WCF = Written corrective feedback

1 Introduction

Input and output are two of the most acknowledged concepts in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) research. There are notable theories that emphasize their significance: *The Input Hypothesis* by Krashen (1982, 1985) emphasizes the role of comprehensible input as an essential factor in acquisition. *The Output Hypothesis* by Swain ([1985], 1986, 1995) places emphasis on the role of output in second language (L2) acquisition and learning, creating a juxtaposition between input and output, whereas *The Interaction Hypothesis* by Long (1983, 1996) focuses on addressing their significance from the interaction perspective.
Since these theories, discussion of language input has undergone changes to the point that the focus is not only in L2 acquisition, but also in L2 learning; input is received in both conscious and unconscious processes. However, the research literature tends to discuss the concept of input interchangeably to concern both acquisition and learning. Regarding the comprehensibility of input, it is closely connected to Krashen's theory, and its significance is acknowledged by the other theories (e.g. Swain [1985] 1986, 1995; Long 1983, 1996). However, receiving input in a comprehended form is still an essential condition for producing language output.

The thesis focuses on university students' beliefs on the role of input in the production of L2 English output (writing and speaking). These beliefs stem from personal learning experiences with English as a foreign language (EFL) and attitudes towards language and learning but may also affect the process and the outcome of learning (Horwitz 1988; Ellis 2008). For instance, instruction given in the classroom can shape students' beliefs on what kind of productive activities for language learning are preferable. Students who are familiar with the concepts of input and output have beliefs that receiving input is essential for producing language output in the target language (TL). The input, whether written or spoken, depends on the resources that learning environments have in affording it (e.g. Bahrani, Tam, Nekoueizadeh 2014; Nguyen and Stracke 2021). Formal learning has its limitations in providing input due to its structured and organized nature, whereas informal learning environments have significant potential providing more opportunities to receive input through informal means.

The present study aims to investigate the beliefs of the participants on how receiving language input is significant when it comes to developing L2 English writing and speaking skills and how received input is affected by both formal and informal learning environments. The participants in this study are a group of students of English at the University of Turku,

who participated in a course focusing on SLA during spring term in 2024. The research questions of the thesis are as follows:

1. According to participants, which setting (formal or informal) is perceived as preferable for receiving better or more L2 input for developing L2 output skills and why?

2. What specific sources of language input in L2 English writing and speaking are considered significant and useful by the participants and why?

Regarding the first research question, the aim is to find out which of the two settings is preferred in terms of receiving better or more input for developing writing or speaking. As participants have different beliefs on the ideal setting for receiving better or more L2 English input, I am also interested in finding out if there are differences in the choices of the learning setting, e.g. whether a formal setting would be more favorable for receiving written input than it would be for spoken input. As I mentioned earlier, participants have individual differences due to different EFL backgrounds, and there is variation in ways they have received a sufficient amount of written and spoken input. For instance, some participants may receive all the necessary input they need for developing their writing skills by getting influenced by the writing strategies taught and practiced in the classroom and some might be driven by their motivation towards learning L2 English and seek alternative approaches to developing writing skills. The second research question focuses on the specific sources of written and spoken language input mentioned by the participants and how they explain the overall usefulness of these sources through themes that were derived from their responses.

The overall body of the thesis contains five distinctive parts, the first part being the introduction. The second part addresses the theoretical framework, in which the concepts of input and output are defined, the theories that focus on these concepts, the learning environments and how they are associated with making input available and accessible. The third part covers the methodology, introducing the data collection method, participants and the data analysis method applied for the present study. The fourth part focuses on the analysis of open-ended questions and aims to find answers for the research questions and the conclusion in the fifth part sums up the answers to the research questions and addresses the strength and limitations of this study.

2 Theoretical Framework

This section focuses on systematically introducing the theoretical framework of this thesis. There are three distinctive parts: Section 2.1 focuses on defining the concepts of *input* and *output*, both of which are the center of discussion throughout the thesis. The purpose is to provide a further understanding and explain the significance of these concepts in facilitating both L2 acquisition and learning. The following sections focus on presenting the selected theories on language input and output, which are among the most known and recognized theories in the field of SLA. Section 2.2 focuses on two hypotheses by Krashen (1982, 1985), which are part of a group of five hypotheses: *The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, The Natural Order Hypothesis, The Monitor Hypothesis, The Input Hypothesis* and *The Affective Filter Hypothesis*. The two hypotheses that I present in this thesis are *The Input Hypothesis* and *The Affective Filter Hypothesis*. Section 2.3 presents *The Output Hypothesis* by Swain ([1985] 1986, 1995), which primarily focuses on the concept of output as equally significant to input, and Section 2.4 covers *The Interaction Hypothesis* by Long (1983), which focuses on addressing the interaction which involves both concepts.

A significant reason for using these theories is that they are referred to in many input- and output-related studies and I believe they are essential in this thesis in terms of providing further explanation on the significance of these concepts. However, regarding the topic of this thesis, discussion of the theories is limited to presenting the key claims and relevant ideas. Regarding the present study, I also find the theories relevant for this study in a way that participants' responses reflect some ideas of these theories, which is pointed out in the analysis. Sections 2.5 and 2.5.1. address the first research question of the present study focusing determining the learning environments, specifically formal and informal, and how they vary in providing opportunities for making language input available and accessible. Subsection 2.5.2 is closely related to the second research question, focusing on explaining that language input, whether written or spoken, can be received from various sources that are available in different learning environments.

Because the language in question is English and L2 being the topic of discussion, it is worth mentioning that L2 can be defined as a second or a foreign language, the latter referring to any language that is not the predominant one within the given context. For instance, most participants in the present study have Finnish as their first language (L1) and have started learning EFL through formal education, which means that English is learned as a

language that is not natively spoken within the community. As for using "acquisition" and "learning", it is appropriate to address the difference between these terms: acquisition involves gaining knowledge and skills without much conscious effort, but learning is a complex process, which involves cultivation of skills and knowledge through conscious practice. Despite having distinctive meanings, they are frequently used interchangeably in literature, however, their common goal is the same, achieving proficiency in L2. Therefore, to provide clarity in the use of these terms and precision in the presented arguments, I primarily use “learning” and “L2 learner” when I generally discuss the context of learning L2 either as a second or a foreign language. However, when I refer to participants of the present study as L2 learners in the analysis onwards, I refer to L2 as a foreign language due to the participants’ EFL backgrounds. The term "acquisition" will be used in discussions of general ideas introduced in the literature of theories focusing on input and output. In addition, I use “L2 context” as a collective term, if any expressed ideas concern both acquisition and learning.

2.1 Defining ‘input’ and ‘output’

As previously mentioned, there are different beliefs among language learners on how languages are learned, and these beliefs are derived from their personal learning experiences and attitudes towards language learning. It is notable that participants in the present study are, to some extent, familiar with the key concepts of SLA and demonstrate further understanding of these concepts associated with the L2 context. Both language acquisition and learning involve a performing aspect, but Mitchell and Myles (1998, 14) assert that performing in a language not only involves speaking but also making sense of the language data we hear as well. This is also an essential aspect of performance. For language development to take place, it is necessary to interpret and process the incoming language data in some form. This language data is commonly known as *input,* which refers to the processible language or linguistic data learners are exposed to while listening or reading materials from which new information can be acquired. The part of input that is comprehended becomes intake, which according to Schmidt (1990, 149), refers to the processed language, in which the available language data has been processed into knowledge. The intake process involves conscious engagement referring to a phenomenon called *noticing,* which will be discussed further (see Section 2.3).

Unlike the participants in the present study, those who are unfamiliar with the concept of input are not aware that they receive language input as they engage with various sources in

their daily lives, e.g. social interactions with family members, friends or native speakers. As Krashen (1985, 80) calls input an essential environmental ingredient, it is quite clear that without the input L2 acquisition will simply not take place, thus its presence is crucial; however, it does not mean that it is guaranteed the acquisition will happen. Regarding the necessity of receiving input, Krashen (1985, 81) states in the *Input Hypothesis* that even if language input is required, not all the input that is heard by the learner is processed, e.g. if the input was not understood or properly attended to. Regarding the accessibility of the language input, I argue that it follows a similar principle with the claim that input is not entirely processed by the L2 learner; even if we have access to it, it does not mean it is necessarily understood.

Having established a definition for input, it is necessary to address another significant concept, *output*, which refers to the language produced by learners through productive skills: writing and speaking. Output can be seen as a link between language comprehension and production. We comprehend language through receptive skills (listening and reading) and through those skills we can express ourselves through orally by speaking or writing. Furthermore, producing writing and speaking do not only help in facilitating learners' understanding of linguistic structures, like grammar or vocabulary, but also the ways these can be applied in meaningful contexts. That is to say, the essential role of language input in the L2 context is not just important by itself but also the role of output. Hypotheses by Swain ([1985] 1986) and Long (1983) support this argument with a claim that comprehensible input alone is insufficient to the L2 acquisition. Input prerequisites output and the latter does not just help learners in achieving fluency but also has a contributing role in the learning process, particularly during interactions among L2 learners, where processes of input reception and output production take place. Further discussion of output and its functions, as proposed by Swain (1995), is presented in the upcoming section.

The belief that output can refer to any specific utterance within a given context is quite distinctive in the context of this discussion. In this regard, Hayashi (2014, 215) makes a point by providing an example about parrots who possess the skill to imitate human speech but are incapable of talking or producing output. Unlike parrots, L2 learners are able to imitate sounds and phrases in the same manner as they do. However, the difference between them is the understanding of the meanings in produced utterances. Therefore, if we produce TL without expressing any meanings, there is no language output. L2 learners express meanings

inherently while they are using the language by speaking or writing and engage with specific communicative intentions.

2.2 The Input Hypothesis and The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis developed by Stephen Krashen (1982, 1985) is one of the most influential theories in the field of SLA. It is a collective name for a theory that consists of five hypotheses but also the name of one of the hypotheses, which is discussed in this section alongside the other hypothesis, *The Affective Filter Hypothesis*. Krashen argues (1985, 80) that there are two corollaries in *The Input Hypothesis*. The first states that a produced language, like speaking, is not seen as a cause of acquisition, but its result. Speech emerges on its own and it can only be taught through building competence via comprehensible input, not directly. In other words, the claim in *The Input Hypothesis* is that humans acquire language in only one way either by understanding messages or receiving comprehensible input, which is considered as the important criterion for acquiring a language. Regarding this claim, comprehensibility of input refers to the understanding of meaning, not form. As a response to this, Liu (2022, 475) states that the learners' acquisition will not occur if they only focus on language form, which is why the focus should be drifted towards content and meaning instead. As for the second corollary, Krashen (1985, 80) mentions that if enough input has been understood, the necessary grammar is provided automatically in the right quantities and reviewed if the learners have received a sufficient amount of comprehensible input.

In addition to these corollaries, it is also claimed by Krashen (1985, 80) in *The Input Hypothesis* that the input has to be slightly above the current level of L2 learners. He (1985, 100) adds that the progress in language learning occurs in a natural order, which refers to a predictable order in which acquiring rules of language occurs. The comprehensible input they receive has to be more advanced and above the L2 learner's current level. He calls this level with the formula "i+1", in which "i" refers to the current level, the learner's IL, and "1" the next stage of acquisition. For instance, an L2 learner comes across some unfamiliar words or phrases while receiving input from the audiovisual material, e.g. by watching TV, but the context can help in figuring out their meanings.

Regarding the next hypothesis under discussion, there are certain affective factors that influence the way we learn a foreign language. Johnson (2001, 94) explains that there is a way to conceptualize this influence, which is to regard the effect as a 'filter' through which

language input has to pass before it is acquired. These *affective filters* are part of Krashen's *The Affective Filter Hypothesis* (1982), which claims that learning can be affected by emotions. In addition, Dörnyei (2009, 184) argues that emotions, especially positive can significantly enhance the L2 learner's learning process. *The affective filters* are psychological filters or mental blocks, which prevent learners from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive. According to Krashen (1985, 81), filter is 'up' when the learner is unmotivated or might understand the heard or read language. The filter is 'down' when the learner is motivated, more receptive and not concerned with the possibility of failure in language acquisition.

In response to the previous statement, implications of learners' amotivation and concerns are associated with emotions such as anxiety and motivation. These can be considered as important affective factors in language learning and can also affect the affective filter being up (anxiety) or down (motivation). Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010, 88-89) mention that what is needed for learning another language effectively is a considerable amount of concentration, effort and willpower. Furthermore, all these processes require noticing and attention, which are treated as necessary components for motivation. If anxiety is taken as a given example of emotions, according to Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010, 89), it is associated with language learning as a performative aspect is present in the language learning classrooms. In addition, MacIntyre et al. (1998, 549) state that anxiety can be affected by factors such as prior experiences, fear of assimilation towards L2 community, and the increased number of people who listen to one's L2 speaking.

Aside from anxiety, Mehmood (2018, 130) claims that other negative emotions can have a negative effect on processing the input e.g. boredom, anger, frustration or being stressed out. Such mental conditions raise the affective filter and affect learners' way of processing language input. These conditions may also arise from a certain kind of class atmosphere. Generally speaking, in the case of L2 learners, it is more likely for certain individuals to experience a certain level of language anxiety, and it can be affected by classroom climate and conditions regarding the given tasks, in which performing a task (e.g. a speaking task) causes more anxiety than another task (e.g. reading task). Mehmood (2018, 132) also mentions that language anxiety can prompt learners to apply strategies that are less challenging in nature and there is a chance that using these will be less productive for L2 learners.

If any critique on these hypotheses is worth mentioning, it is argued by Bahrani, Tam and Nekoueizadeh (2014, 1716) that Krashen only limits L2 acquisition to exposure to comprehensible input in *The Input Hypothesis* and the criticism is directed around the type of language input. They add that the reason for this is that defining the current level of each language learner by providing the same 'i+1' language input for each of them separately in the classroom makes it difficult to fulfill and there are also problems providing the input that matches their level. In addition, Krashen (1982, 21) argues that the hypothesis only concerns acquisition, not learning. It is evident in the literary works focusing on SLA (Ellis 2015; Dörnyei 2009; Johnson 2001) that comprehensible input is heavily associated with acquisition, but, in the light of the present study, I argue it is necessary to point out that the theory was established in the 1980s and it cannot be assumed that concepts on language input are only concerning the unconscious processes that are apparent in L2 acquisition.

I think it is arguable that the approach has undergone changes since Krashen's theory, leading to the point, in which the discussion on the concept of language input takes the perspective of L2 learning into account. However, there is complexity in research literature focusing on language input, including comprehensible input, due to the tendencies of using both contexts of L2 acquisition and learning interchangeably. Regardless of this complexity, I argue that receiving language input also occurs in the conscious processes and not only unconsciously. This idea aligns with the idea of acquisition and learning having the same goal in facilitating proficiency in L2, as I previously explained earlier. Receiving input is no different in acquisition or learning as both involve receiving input from the sources and material provided from different learning environments.

As for *The Affective Filter Hypothesis*, Mitchell and Myles (1998, 39) argue that the affective filter remains vague and atheoretical, giving an example that many self-conscious adolescents suffer from high filter and low self-esteem and question the extrovert adults being good language learners with a low filter or how the affective filter actually works as these are considered as vague and unexplored issues. However, the recent studies of how the affective filter works support the opposite (e.g. Bunghanoy & Sumalinog 2013; Mehmood 2018). Study by Bunghanoy and Sumalinog (2023, 12) claimed there was a correlation between the low affective filter and learning strategies; affective filter was affected by the learning strategies that English as a second language (ESL) learners used, which eventually facilitated reflection of their independent practices. Regarding high filter and low self-esteem, a study by Mehmood (2018) investigated how adult Saudi EFL learners raised their affective

filters to block the input under the influence of certain affective factors and if language motivation changes as an effect by the changes in the class environment. According to the findings of the study (2018, 139) that certain negative affective factors, e.g. low motivation, high language anxiety, negative self-evaluation and class atmosphere raised the affective filter of EFL learners to block the input in ELF classroom. If changes were to be positive in terms of classroom atmosphere, it would gradually affect learners' attitudes and lower the affective filter.

2.3 The Output Hypothesis

The Output Hypothesis (OH) refers to a theory by Merril Swain ([1985] 1986, 1995), which shifted the focus of significance from input to output. As I explained earlier in defining the concept of *output*, the hypothesis supports the idea that comprehensible input is not just the essential factor in prompting L2 acquisition or learning, but output shares the same important role. However, Liu (2022, 477) notes that the hypothesis limits input influencing learners' language acquisition, meaning that only output can promote the development of productive language abilities of learners. This is explained in a way that output makes the learners process language forms which gradually develop their language abilities.

The OH was formulated as a reaction to Krashen's claim about the role of comprehensible input and was based on a study by Swain ([1985] 1986), in which she observed French immersion students who participated in French immersion programs in Canada. These programs represented a form of bilingual education which provides opportunities for English-speaking Canadians to become proficient and bilingual in French. Izumi (2003, 169) states that the aim of these immersion programs is to achieve both academic and L2 learning through the integration of language- and content teaching. According to Shin (2013, 171), the remarkable success of the French immersion programs was proven to be effective in meeting students' language and academic achievement goals, however, immersion students often do not develop native-like proficiency in the TL (French) despite many years of participation in the program. However, Swain ([1985] 1986, 135) notes that even if there is no grammatical equivalence to native speakers, the performance of immersion students is on a similar level in terms of aspects of discourse and sociolinguistic competence. In relation to the previous argument, it is claimed by Izumi (2003, 169) that despite the efficient effect on many areas of the students' language development, students observed by Swain had been found with problems in some aspects of the TL grammar. One of the important reasons to explain this was the fact that there was too little engagement in

language production, preventing students from going beyond a functional level of L2 proficiency.

Due to the lack of output opportunities, Swain ([1985] 1986, 136) argued that the students needed 'comprehensible output', which serves as one of the key claims of OH. Regarding the significance of comprehensible output, Izumi (2003, 170) argues that it was necessary for improving students' accuracy and fluency in the IL: the requirement of output presents unique opportunities for learners for processing language that may not be necessary for comprehension. In addition to this, Hayashi (2014, 218–219) suggests that due to the lack of sufficient opportunities for producing output, language production moves learners' sufficient opportunities from the semantic use of language to the use of syntax. This means that the learners are forced to impose syntactic structures on their utterances. Therefore, when L2 learners express difficulties in producing comprehensible output, they have to make more appropriate and coherent changes in the output.

The OH was further refined by Swain (1995), proposing that output has three distinctive functions. The first function is called *Hypothesis-testing function*, which refers to the procedure involving testing of one's hypotheses about the TL. Regarding this function, Izumi (2003, 170-171) states that learners can judge the comprehensibility and linguistic well-formedness of their IL utterances against feedback obtained from their interlocutors. The second function is called *Metalinguistic function*, which refers to certain conditions and output processes in which learners do not just reveal but also reflect on their hypotheses. Izumi (2003, 170-171) adds that learners reflect on their IL and output serves a metalinguistic function, enabling them to control and internalize linguistic knowledge. Reflection may affect learners' awareness of forms, rules and form-function relationships, but this requires the communicative nature in the output production. The third function known as *Noticing function* serves as one of the key claims of the OH. Pannell, Partsch and Fuller (2017, 127–128) mention two auxiliary aspects regarding the noticing: in the production of the TL, learners may notice a gap between what they *want* to know and what they *can* say, which leads them to realize what they do not know or know partially.

In relation to *noticing*, Dörnyei (2009, 164) emphasizes its role in attending new information; learners learn from things they attend to. In order to learn such information effectively, it must be attended to at the first encounter. This is claimed in a hypothesis by Richard Schmidt, *The Noticing Hypothesis* (1990), which raises noticing as a crucial element

in the learners' language development and is closely related to the previously mentioned function. According to Schmidt (1990, 140–141), keeping a diary of his personal learning experiences with L2 Portuguese helped him to establish which features in the input he attended to consciously and examined his output to see the extent of noticed forms which turned up in the communicative speech. Ellis (2015, 182) points out that Schmidt was exposed to *noticing-the-gap,* a process in which one notices the differences between one's own attempt to produce the TL and the native-speaker input. Therefore, Swain's noticing function of output and Schmidt's hypothesis have the same principle: it is important for learning to notice the gap in L2 learner's IL when they are producing the TL.

2.4 Interaction Hypothesis

Before addressing the discussion of this theory, it is necessary to briefly define the concept of interaction. In the speaking context, interaction usually refers to a type of communication that occurs between interlocutors, whereas Masrizal (2014, 98) defines interaction as changing the sequence of social actions between individuals or groups. Interactions can take place within a classroom, between teachers and learners, but also extend to everyday communication outside of formal educational settings, e.g. between family members, friends or native speakers of L2. Learners are capable of constructing their knowledge and improving their language skills as they engage with the TL in social interactions. This gradually affects their understanding of how these skills can be applied in practice and how the awareness of various cultural contexts, norms, traditions are beneficial for effective communication. However, it is worth mentioning that interaction is not solely a social behaviour of humans; this behaviour is also found in animals as there are species who are using signals as a way of communication, e.g. alerting other members of their group of possible threats.

Interaction is emphasized as a central theme alongside comprehensible input in *The Interaction Hypothesis* (IH) by Michael H. Long (1983, 1996). It has two versions: The early version (1983) emphasizes negotiation of meaning, the process in which interlocutors discuss meanings to reach a clear understanding, and Krashen's ideas of comprehensible input. The later version (1996) emphasized noticing and environmental contribution of input, interaction and output. Regarding the significant role of comprehensible input in the early version of the IH (1983), Pannell, Partsch and Fuller (2017, 129) note that there is an indirect link between language learning and negotiation of meaning. In this regard, Ellis (2015, 154) asserts that negotiation of meaning contributes to assisting acquisition by making the language input comprehensible, e.g. by simplifying the input in interactions between non-native and native

speakers. Moreover, Ellis (2015, 154) emphasizes the importance of interactive input (input received through social interactions), instead of negotiation of meaning and comprehensible input as it is more proficient in providing information related to linguistic forms, which are problematic for learners.

Similar to Swain (1995), later version of the IH by Long (1996) emphasizes noticing, which refers to noticing the positive evidence in the received input. This also involves seeing the gap between the received input and one's IL. Moreover, Long (1996, 414) also highlights environmental contributions of input, interaction and output in L2 acquisition, which is mediated by selective attention (noticing) and the learners' developing capacity of processing L2. Regarding the role of interaction in the IH, Johnson (2001, 95) mentions that language acquisition occurs because of interaction processes involving learners, by talking with each other, meaning that the hypothesis places emphasis on the language learning environment in which face-to face interactions occur. Johnson (2001, 95) claims that both output and input have important roles in interaction, e.g. in giving feedback received either from the teacher or learners' peers.

In addition to this, there are previous studies, which emphasize the roles of input, interaction and output in their respective studies (e.g. Zhang 2009; Liu 2022). For instance, Liu (2022, 478) asserts that there is a link through which these three interact with one another: interaction is an important means of prompting the process of input to become intake and intake into output respectively, whereas output is seen as a goal or a result of input, also influencing the new stages of input. Combining these three and treating them on equal terms is essential as they can help in exploring ways of improving language acquisition. In the case study of Zhang (2009, 98-99) on oral fluency in EFL context, input, interaction and output serve imperative roles when learners expose themselves to varieties of spoken and written English. These three elements also help in understanding that language is not a subject of learning, but a means of communication.

Both input and output are affected by interaction as it provides opportunities to modify them. As presented by Long (1983), input can be simplified in interactions, e.g. between a non-native and a native speaker, however, Ellis (2015, 25) points out that interaction can also afford output opportunities for L2 learners. In the L2 classroom context, it is crucial for L2 learners to engage in interactions where they can produce writing and speaking efficiently. Ellis and Shintani (2014, 25) state that there are ways to provide opportunities to interaction, such as creating contexts in which learners have a reason to attend to language and express their own meanings. By providing opportunities for interaction, produced output can be either

modified or unmodified. Modified output results from the feedback which L2 learners are given when an error occurs in their utterances or written texts. In other words, their attempts to reformulate and correct the output make it modified, but if these attempts do not occur, the output is unmodified. In addition, Ellis (2015, 145) adds that modification can be self-initiated meaning that L2 learners may attempt to modify their utterances without being prompted by any external factors. This process does not only concern the output, but input as well, as the modification process improves comprehensible input.

2.5 Formal and Informal Learning Environments

In the educational context, a learning environment can be defined as a physical setting in which both teaching and learning take place. To make this definition more prominent, Latifah and Zulaiha (2023, 51) state in their study that language environment can be considered as a situation of a particular area where a language grows, develops, and is used by its speakers. In present-day education, the concept of learning environments in language learning has extended beyond traditional physical spaces. As a result of technology, its ongoing development and influence of globalization, drastic changes in the learning settings have eventually led to the presence of virtual settings. In addition, these settings can be integrated into a traditional classroom setting, creating a blended learning environment, which provides various opportunities for learning the language efficiently, as well as the availability and accessibility of sources and materials from which language input can be received and derived.

In the context of SLA, there are two distinctive learning settings: *formal* and *informal settings*. To clarify the use of terms "setting" and "environment", I use them as synonyms, which is evident in the present study. *Formal* refers to a setting that usually takes place in the classroom, whereas *informal* refers to a "natural" learning setting outside classroom. In the formal setting, learning is more structured and organized, which is visible and recognizable in institutions such as school or university. Learning in the formal setting involves a physical environment, in which direct interactions between the teacher and the learners take place. Regarding the formal nature of the learning setting, Latifah and Zulaiha (2023, 52-53) state that learners tend to be more directed towards mastering rules of language structure. This requires conscious involvement, meaning that the formal environment can be any environment or situation that involves conscious learners in the acquisition or learning of language. It also involves a lot of guidance and direction, especially from teachers.

As learning is intentional and occurs consciously in a formal learning environment, learning in the informal setting is incidental and occurs unconsciously without awareness of the learning process. Moreover, Bahrani, Tam and Nekoueizadeh (2014, 1717) state that

informal setting is considered as a context in which language learners are exposed to the TL outside the class environment. For instance, this setting can be home, workplace or social interaction in the street. Learning in an informal setting is described as self-directed, spontaneous and flexible. Self-direction means that learners are driven by their personal interests and needs in informal learning. The spontaneous nature of informal learning refers to the fact that it arises from the influences of everyday experiences e.g. with family members or using social media, and the use of informal learning methods tends to occur in advance without being formally structured. Flexibility refers to the adaptability to the context, which makes informal learning different from formal, because it can be conceptualized and occurs in specific situations. Because informal setting is not something that is structured or planned, Latifah and Zulaiha (2023, 53) claim that the informal learning environment occurs naturally as there is a greater frequency compared to the formal learning environment, making it more beneficial in assisting L2 learners, e.g. providing material from which language input can be received.

2.5.1 Accessibility and Availability of Input in Different Learning Environments

Contribution of both formal and informal learning environments in affording language input is undeniable. However, there are significant differences in terms of how these environments make input available and accessible to language learners. Baroto (2017, 2) states that it is crucial to make language input available for the learners but there is also a possibility to seek it independently. In informal learning environments, L2 learners are provided with more opportunities to access various sources from which they receive input. Due to the wide range of sources available, learners are exposed to more extensive input, which reflects the way L2 is used in real-life situations. Unlike informal learning environments, formal are more limited in providing sources for more input. For instance, in language classes, L2 learners need receptive skills in interacting with the teacher who provides them with language input through teacher talk, which according to Ellis and Shintani (2014, 139) emphasized in interactions in which teacher provides necessary information through instructions, especially in input-based tasks.

Regardless of the differences in both environments, Krashen (1982, 58) asserts that both learning environments have their potential in making input available and accessible, pointing out that comprehensible input is the most important criterion and the major source for it is the formal learning environments. As formal environments lack potential for providing more language input through sources, Ellis and Shintani (2014, 24) mention that

there is a possibility for affording more extensive input in the L2 classroom, which is by maximizing the use of L2. Using L2 extensively increases learners' chances of achieving high levels of L2 proficiency, however, this involves the issue of individual differences among the learners. In addition to the potential that formal learning environments possess, Krashen (1982, 59), states that it is crucial that afforded input must be comprehensible pointing out that informal learning environments have potential in supplying input extensively. However, the afforded input has to be in a comprehended form.

Given the potential of informal learning environments and the limitations of formal learning environments, both of them can be integrated, as mentioned earlier. Blended combination of these environments can indicate various opportunities for receiving extensive language input and result in better learning outcomes for L2 learners. For instance, Kim and Kim (2019, 110) mention in their study that the development of information technology has increased interconnectedness between teachers and learners, as well as the resources, materials from which language input is received. As the internet represents an informal, yet virtual learning environment, its blend with the formal learning environment can increase possibilities of utilizing multi-modal activities via computers, mobile phones and iPads, enhancing the availability of resources that provide language input, thus maximizing the learning outcomes.

In addition, a previous study with similar ideas would be a study by Nguyen and Stracke (2021), in which they express a need for combining in-class and out-of-class learning. The study focused on understanding Vietnamese EFL students' beliefs on learners' autonomy outside and in class contexts. In their study, autonomy referred to an extent to which learners can take control of their own learning. Due to the limits of formal settings providing opportunities for receiving input, learners' autonomous behavior can make up for such limitations. As both in and outside classroom settings have different resources suited for various activities, Nguyen and Stracke (2021, 326-328) claimed that the students had their preferences for activities in in-class and outside-class learning. They valued activities involving supervision and instruction from the teacher but were also able to engage in social activities e.g. hobbies and interests outside classroom and create opportunities for them. It is quite evident that the study illustrates possibilities of combining the efforts of both learning environments, which would be prominent for L2 learners' output production. Formal learning environments have their limits and L2 learners can seek various ways to access extensive input through their autonomous behavior.

2.5.2 Receiving Input in Different Learning Environments

In the L2 context, sources and materials in different learning environments can provide either *written input*, which is received through means of reading written materials or *spoken input*, which is received through means of listening. In terms of formal learning environments, written input can be received from written materials used for teaching purposes, as well as from text- and workbooks used in language classes. As a result of technological development and the integration of virtual environments, written input can also be received via electronic devices, such as laptops or iPads from which L2 learners can access digitally stored texts. In addition to sources that are available in formal learning environments, there are more opportunities to receive written input through informal means, e.g. by reading books such as novels or online texts, e.g. news articles or academic texts from online libraries.

There are previous studies, which support the idea that accessing sources of written input in both learning environments can increase one's vocabulary (e.g. Cho & Krashen 1994; Webb & Chang 2015) and grammar (e.g. Nguyen 2024). In terms of vocabulary, Cho and Krashen (1994, 662) mention that reading extensively and voluntarily can contribute to L2 learner's literacy. However, written input received from various texts can be authentic, comprehensible and catch reader's interest, but may also be difficult because of unknown vocabulary. In this regard, Webb and Chang (2015, 652-653) claim that vocabulary develops through exposure to unknown and partially known words and that L2 learners have less opportunities for receiving written input than from spoken input. According to Nguyen (2024, 17), reading comprehension level correlates with the grammar gains of the L2 learner; by reading extensively, L2 learners can receive meaningful grammar portions from the written input.

In the context of formal settings, it is also worth mentioning that L2 learners are able to receive input from *corrective feedback* (CF) as a source of input, which gradually prompts the production of spoken and written output. Feedback can be seen as an interaction process between the one who gives feedback (teacher or a native speaker) and the one who receives it (the L2 learner or a non-native speaker), which reflects the roles of input and output in interaction. Frankly speaking, language input is received in a form of input-providing feedback that aims to correct errors in L2 learners' output. Feedback can be either oral (OCF) or written (WCF). According to Bitchener and Storch (2016, 1), *written corrective feedback* (WCF) refers to a written response to an error that has been made when L2 learners produce written text. Its purpose is to correct inaccuracies in written text or provide information about

the cause and location of the error, whereas *oral corrective feedback* (OCF) focuses on errors in produced speech but can also be implemented in corrections of written output.

Regarding the WCF received from a teacher, a study by Al-Ahmadi and Khadawardi (2024), which emphasizes it as an important means of improving writing skills. The study focused on Saudi EFL students' beliefs on corrective written feedback in EFL writing classes. According to the findings of their study (2024, 38), the EFL students expressed their preference on grammar and spelling errors as well as the teacher's focus on negative aspects of their writing instead of positive ones. Focus on grammatical errors in written output is quite common in terms of WCF as grammar acts as a structural foundation of a language but also involves the role of vocabulary as an essential aspect in L2 learners' grammatical errors, e.g. using incorrect words in written texts. As for the OCF, previous studies have emphasized a positive correlation between oral error corrections and ESL/EFL classroom (e.g. Oladejo 1993; Zhu & Wang 2019). In the findings of the study by Oladejo (1993, 78-79), it is stated that teachers' corrections should focus on frequent errors such as grammatical, vocabulary and pronunciation errors. However, Zhu and Wang (2019, 157) point out that there are different preferences and attitudes towards CF in educational context, e.g. students' expectations on how errors are corrected by their peers or how CF affects confidence in producing output.

Similar to sources of written input, there are also possibilities to receive spoken input from both learning environments. As previously mentioned by Ellis and Shintani (2014, 139), teacher talk is one of the most important sources of spoken input in the L2 classroom, as L2 learners interact with the teacher when instructions are given. In addition, the social interaction that occurs between teacher and L2 learners exposes learners to interactive input (Ellis, 2015), which according to Bahrani, Tam and Nekoueizadeh (2014, 1719) is considered as authentic input, referring to any material that is not made for teaching purposes. Aside from the spoken input received in formal learning environments, there are also sources of spoken input that provide it through electronic devices, e.g. TV, radio, videos and music. This kind of spoken input is called *audiovisual input*. These sources expose L2 learners to the language that reflects ways how language is used in real-life situations.

Moreover, audiovisual input sources can enhance one's vocabulary incidentally (e.g. Neumann & Koskinen 1992; Mannarelli & Serrano 2024). Neumann and Koskinen (1992, 96) claim that TV is beneficial for two reasons: First, pictures and sounds helped in understanding words and meanings, second, TV is an easy medium to access rather than texts.

Study by Mannarelli and Serrano (2024, 2) claims that there is a correlation between vocabulary gains and explicit instruction, believing that learners can focus more while listening. However, they admit that there are limitations in aligning these findings to activities that take place outside the classroom. However, as stated by Baroto (2017, 3), the input received through informal means (e.g. by watching TV or listening to music) is non-simplified, which refers to the language used by competent speakers without features that could simplify the input. This contrasts with the idea of simplified input, as mentioned by Ellis (2015) that is received through formal means, as it involves grammatical and lexical modification of the input in order to improve the comprehension, e.g. in teacher talk, in which teacher can simplify the input to make it more understandable to the L2 learners (e.g. Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

3 The Present Study

This section introduces the methodology of the present study, which consists of three distinct parts: the first part focuses on presenting the questionnaire, the second part introduces the participants of the study and the third covers the discussion on the method applied for the data analysis. Before the methodology is further discussed, it is relevant to address the focus of the present study. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the aim is to investigate students' beliefs on the significance of language input for developing L2 English writing and speaking skills and how both formal and informal learning environments have their contribution in providing sources of language input.

As a reminder, the focus in the first research question is to find out which of the two settings is preferable for receiving better or more input gradually affecting the development of L2 writing and speaking. The second research question is focusing on finding out what specific sources participants mention in their responses and how they articulate the overall usefulness of these sources in terms of L2 writing and speaking development. Moreover, both research questions are linked to the open-ended questions presented within the questionnaire: Open-ended question 1 corresponds to the first research question and open-ended questions 2 and 3 focus on the latter question respectively. The open-ended questions are addressed further in the following section.

3.1 Questionnaire

In this section, I present the questionnaire, which was applied as the primary data collection method for this study. Prior to the process of administering the questionnaire, a pilot survey was administered to anticipate potential response patterns and challenges. The participants in the pilot survey were English majors, who were working on their respective MA Theses. The aim was to refine the questionnaire prior to its administering to the participants of this study. Regarding the format, an electronic format was utilized for the pilot testers using a Webropol survey whereas a pen-and-paper format was used in the actual questionnaire respectively. The latter format was chosen to ensure successful answering rates and effective engagement among the participants. The questionnaire was conducted in English and the participants were required to write their responses in the respective language. As for the issue regarding research ethics and privacy, the questionnaire was designed to be anonymous meaning that no personal information was needed. Furthermore, to inform the participants of their anonymity, a data protection notice was issued before answering the questionnaire (see Appendix 2).

There were two notable parts to the questionnaire: background questions and the open-ended questions. The background questions were as follows:

1. What is your L1?
2. At what age did you start English at school (as a second language)?

The initial purpose of the background questions was to acquire the necessary knowledge about the participants. In the first background question, the participants were asked to name their L1 whereas the second background question required them to specify the age when they started English at school. In terms of open-ended questions, Dörnyei (2007, 107) states that they include items that do not offer any response options for the participants to choose from. However, he explains that a reason for choosing open-ended items is due to the unawareness of the range of possible answers and cannot provide pre-prepared response categories. In each of the open-ended questions, participants were required to provide responses of approximately 50 words or three to five long sentences. As for the duration of time, they were given 15 minutes to respond to the questions. Due to the given time frame, it gradually affected the formulation and length of participants' responses.

Because the present study is qualitative in nature, using open-ended questions is ideal for gaining a deeper understanding of participants' beliefs on the topic of this study. The open-ended questions were formulated as follows:

1. Do you think you have received more or better input from informal than formal settings in terms of writing and speaking skills?
2. Are there any specific sources of language input that developed your a) writing and b) speaking skills in L2 English?
3. Why were these specific sources of spoken/audiovisual and written input useful?

As previously stated, the first open-ended question correlates with the first research question of this study, aiming to find out whether participants prefer informal or formal settings for receiving better or more input for developing L2 English writing and speaking skills. In the second question, the participants were asked to name specific sources that contributed to providing written and spoken input, giving valuable information on how these sources are beneficial for the participants. The third question is directly linked to the second question, in which the participants were asked to define the usefulness of the specific sources. Both the

second and the third open-ended question are associated with the second research question of this study. The purpose of these aforementioned questions is to provide, to some degree, an understanding of how useful the sources are for receiving language input.

3.2 Participants

The total number of participants in this study was 48, all of whom were university students studying English. The criterion for choosing the participants was that course they took part in was integral to the intermediate studies introducing the key concepts of SLA and factors related to L2 acquisition and learning. Given that the participants were completing the course, they may have, to some extent, beliefs on the significance of language input in producing L2 output skills. Their personal learning experiences reflect their beliefs, which are articulated to some extent in their responses. The following table presents the L1s of the participants:

Table 1. L1 of the participants

L1	**N= 48**	**%**
Finnish	38	79%
Japanese	3	6%
French	2	4%
Spanish	1	2%
German	1	2%
Danish	1	2%
Korean	1	2%
Thai	1	2%

As presented in Table 1, most participants (38 out of 48) have Finnish as their first language. Because the information presented in the table does not include information whether the participating students of English are majors, minors or exchange students, it can be assumed, but not entirely, that the rest of the participants (10 out of 48) with diverse L1s represent the exchange students. The other L1s besides Finnish are Japanese, French, German, Spanish, Danish, Thai and Korean. Despite the number of these languages, their representation is relatively small as there is only one representative for each language except Japanese, which

has 3 representatives. The following table presents the age of participants when they started learning L2 English at school:

Table 2. Starting age of L2 English at school

Age	**N=48**	**%**
3-5	2	4%
6-7	3	6%
8-9	37	78%
10-12	6	12%

Table 2 illustrates that all the participants have different linguistic backgrounds in terms of starting English (EFL) at school. Most of the participants began learning English at the ages of eight and nine (N=37). Six participants started between the ages of 10 and 12, which is relatively late compared to most of the participants in the present study. As there are participants whose L1 is not Finnish, this could indicate the differences in the starting point of EFL in different countries. In addition, four participants reported starting their English education prior to elementary school. An interesting finding is that one L1 Finnish participant started learning English at the age of three while in kindergarten. An explanation for this early exposure to English was that the language skills were further enhanced by the attendance at an English language school system in Finland.

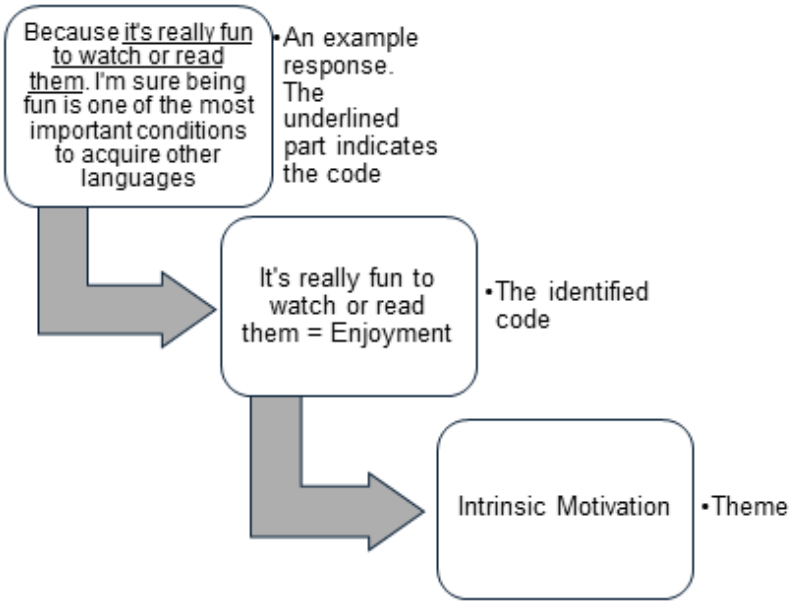
3.3 Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis method that is applied in the present study is qualitative content analysis. Dörnyei (2007, 245) asserts that content analysis is closely aligned with qualitative research, in which qualitative categories are not pre-determined but derived inductively from the analyzed data. This method was particularly appropriate for this study, as the questionnaire included open-ended questions that allowed participants to provide more comprehensive responses. Given the qualitative nature of the study, Dörnyei (2007, 38) emphasizes that qualitative research focuses on individuals and their subjective opinions, feelings and experiences as the approach of research aims to be fundamentally interpretive. Therefore, it is essential for this study to engage in subjective interpretations of the findings and follow the principles of qualitative research.

In practice, the data analysis process in this study contained several distinctive phases, the first being the data preparation. After the questionnaire was administered, the participants' responses collected via pen-and-paper format were systematically stored in separate Microsoft Word and Excel files. Regarding the storing of data, Dörnyei and Dewaele (2022, 82) recommend that questionnaire data is most useful when it is stored digitally allowing further analysis and data management. The second phase involved reading through the responses and reflecting on the interpretations derived from them. This phase aimed to enhance understanding of the participants' answers and how these could be taken into further analysis to address the research questions. This process was repeated multiple times to ensure the identification of relevant findings from the collected data.

The following phase in the data analysis involved *coding,* which according to Mackey and Gass (2012, 223), refers to a process in which raw data is organized into themes that assist data interpretation. A *code* on the other hand can refer to names or symbols, which stand for a particular group of items, ideas or phenomena found from the data. As quantitative coding is rather numerical in nature, Mackey and Gass (2012, 223) state that qualitative coding is more interpretive compared to quantitative, as it involves further interpretation and re-reading of the data, which makes the analysis "rich" and "deep". Coding in the present study concerned the open-ended question 3: "Why were these specific sources of spoken/audiovisual and written input useful?" and its association with the second research question. The following figure illustrates an example of the coding process:

Figure 1**.** An example of the coding process



As presented in Figure 1, codes were identified by highlighting the parts that could indicate possible codes. Before identifying and choosing the codes, participants' responses were carefully analyzed and reviewed multiple times. The coding process was carried out in both Microsoft Excel and NVivo. Mackey and Gass (2012, 222) mention that the latter is useful software for assisting in managing the data and carrying out qualitative analysis. Excel was primarily used in storing the original data which was then transferred to NVivo for the actual coding process. Moreover, highlighting of the codes from the responses occurred in NVivo. The highlighted codes were taken from NVivo to Excel, which was used for facilitating color coding of identified codes to enhance clarity in organizing similar concepts. Codes were marked with different colors and categorized into their respective groups. The final phase following the coding involved categorizing the identified codes into themes that explain the overall usefulness of the spoken/audiovisual and written input sources. The themes were visually organized into a figure to help in interpreting them in the analysis (see Figure 4 in Section 4.2.3).

As the questionnaire was utilizing open-ended questions, there were challenges in the data analysis. One of these was that participants' responses required a deeper interpretation and understanding to analyse. Despite the rich and valuable data provided for the present study, some participants appeared to have difficulties in providing proper answers to the questions, e.g. some of them were unaware of the definition of input and answered either vaguely or partially to the given questions. Another challenge was the time given to the participants during the answering process, which prevented proper elaboration of their responses. Moreover, this created inaccuracies in participants' responses and risks, especially for the coding process as it is dependent on the given context. Coding itself was also challenging as it breaks down the collected data into smaller parts, which increases risks of overlooking relevant and commonly occurring codes. Therefore, by using NVivo and Microsoft Excel significant effort was made during the process of identifying the codes and excluding the irrelevant findings.

4 Analysis

This section presents the content analysis of the open-ended questions and aims to provide relevant findings that are essential for solving the research questions. Regarding the overall body of the analysis, Section 4.1 and its subsections (4.1.1-4.1.3) focus on addressing the first open-ended question by presenting participants' preferences to both formal and informal settings. To clarify the use of the term "setting" in this analysis, I use it as a synonym of the learning environments. Moreover, the sections contain tables and figures, which help in visualizing and presenting the information that holds particular relevance to the analysis. Section 4.2, including 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, presents the findings of open-ended question 2, in which participants were required to name specific sources of written and spoken/audiovisual input. As mentioned earlier in Section 2.5.2, it is necessary to remind that audiovisual input refers to spoken input, but it is retrieved from electronic devices, e.g. by watching TV or listening to music on mobile phone. Subsection 4.2.3 covers the analysis of open-ended question 3, which focuses on discussing the themes that were derived from the participants' responses.

The analysis of these two open-ended questions is associated with the second research question of the present study. Instead of embedding the findings into the analysis, the overall findings are separately presented in Section 4.3, which aims to address the answers to the research questions. Regarding the analysis of the responses, as participants have provided answers which express similar ideas and beliefs, the primary focus is to provide a sufficient overview of the findings. Therefore, some of their responses, which reflect their personal L2 English (EFL) learning experiences, are used as examples to support the arguments in the analysis.

4.1 Preferences for Receiving Input in Different Settings

In the present study, there are beliefs among the participants that both formal and informal settings are preferable and beneficial in terms of receiving better or more input. By "better or more" I refer to receiving extensive input. Participants were asked to briefly express and elaborate their preference regarding the setting, which was beneficial in providing more or better input. Moreover, the responses reflect their individual EFL learning experiences as they specify their preferences. In addition, reflections on previous experiences provide valuable information of their beliefs, which is essential for the analysis. Below, the numerical data of the responses to the open-ended question 1 are presented as follows:

Table 3. More or better input in terms of L2 writing

Preference	**N=48**	**%**
Formal setting	16	33%
Informal setting	22	46%
Both settings	9	19%
No answer	1	2%

To briefly address the descriptions in Table 3, most participants (N=22) believe that informal setting was preferable for receiving better or more written input, whereas another group of participants (N=16) clearly showed preferences for receiving written input through formal means. However, nine participants and their responses indicate an equal preference for both settings, but one participant did not provide any significant response to this question, which is also evident in Table 4. The following table presents the participants' preferences for the settings in terms of L2 speaking:

Table 4. More or better input in terms of L2 speaking

Preference	**N=48**	**%**
Formal setting	6	13%
Informal setting	32	66%
Both settings	9	19%
No answer	1	2%

L2 speaking-wise, most of the participants (N= 32) preferred the informal setting, which is also the most preferred setting in terms of total responses, however, only a small group of participants (N=6/48) preferred the formal setting being beneficial for receiving spoken input. Regarding the preferences for both settings, the number of responses is the same as in Table 3 and the explanation for this is that there were participants who mentioned both settings and emphasized their significance in terms of both L2 writing and speaking.

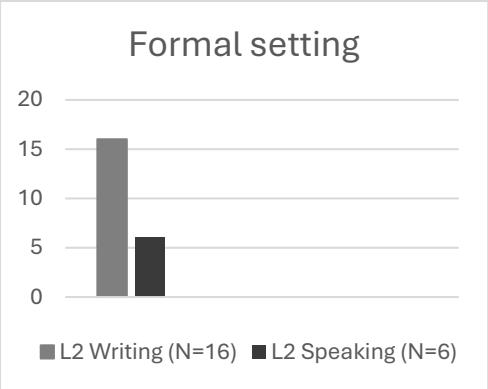
I argue that the tables help in illustrating the overall preferences for both settings, however, it is necessary to explain these preferences further. The preferences for each setting are presented in their own subsections: 4.1.1 covers the responses that prefer a formal setting, 4.1.2 focuses on comparing the preferences for the informal setting in terms of L2 writing

and speaking and 4.1.3 addresses the responses in which both settings were equally preferred. In addition to examples of participants' responses, the analysis is also encompassed with figures, which present the number of responses previously shown in the tables, except for the analysis of responses in 4.1.3. At this point, it is necessary to point out that some examples of the participants' responses do not specify which output skill (writing and speaking) they are referring to, except mentioning the preferred setting. Therefore, to avoid misinterpretations, these responses are used simultaneously to refer to both L2 English writing and speaking. In addition, as mentioned earlier regarding the challenges in data analysis, there are some responses in which participants are not entirely aware of the meaning of input, which gradually affects the interpretation of these particular responses.

4.1.1 Formal Setting

There are participants that believe formal setting is a preferable learning environment and beneficial for receiving more or better input, thus playing an important role in facilitating the development of both L2 English writing and speaking. The following figure presents the distribution of participants' responses:

Figure 2. The number of participants receiving input through formal means



As presented in Figure 2, most participants (N=16) preferred a formal setting in terms of L2 writing perspective. This indicates beliefs that this setting is beneficial to receive more or better written input through formal means, which is quite evident in the following extract from one of the participants:

> (1) [...] For writing skills, formal settings such as school lessons and lectures have provided better input. (Participant 3)

This example (1) illustrates the idea that formal settings such as lessons at the secondary/upper secondary school level and lectures at the university level are beneficial for

providing better input. This can be explained in the sense that learning, which occurs in these particular institutions, is more structured and organized. Lessons and lectures represent environments which are beneficial for providing an important basis for L2 English writing development and through formal means it gradually affects one's proficiency. If Krashen's ideas (1982) were to be mentioned at this point, the input that participants receive and implement through materials used during lessons and lectures can be understood as comprehensible input, which is the most important criterion for producing output. In other words, the input has to be comprehended in interactions that occur during lectures and lessons. However, even if the input is in a comprehensible form, it is not considered to be authentic, which is the characteristic of input that is received through informal means (e.g. Bahrani, Tam, Nekoueizadeh 2014).

Regardless of the authenticity of language input, it is arguably evident that participants have preferences for written input provided through formal instruction. This can be related to the idea that writing in L2 is something that cannot be easily learned on its own without the support of formal instruction. In this regard, some participants believe that formal settings are preferable for developing grammar and vocabulary, as presented in the following examples:

(2) I think the formal setting input was better because it actively increased my vocabulary. (Participant 37)

(3) [...] formal input has consisted more of academic language which has helped with grammar [...] (Participant 27)

These participants put emphasis on receiving better or more written input formally as it is essential for enhancing vocabulary and grammar, which are both needed in writing. In the L2 learning context, writing is a challenging skill in language production and its complexity stems from the fact that writing in a language is not acquired in the same manner as speaking as it requires L2 learners to constantly learn and practice this skill. Learning L2 English formally in the classroom does not only provide opportunities for practicing writing but also enhances vocabulary and grammar.

Regarding the EFL background of the participants, example (3) indicates that improving grammar through formal means in the classroom is beneficial in learning that is more structured. Through formal grammar instruction, L2 learners can engage in efficient communication in their writing. In terms of grammar teaching, Bandar and Gorjian (2017, 89) state that it enables L2 learners to avoid misunderstandings and express thoughts and ideas effectively. Given that the participants are university students, writing is one of the

most needed skills. At the university level, academic writing is encouraged by written assignments, such as essays and research papers, through which university students practice their extensive use of grammar, as well as vocabulary and adapt their writing accordingly. Refining them over time through continuous practice gradually develops their fluency and confidence in L2 writing.

Among the participants, some believe that receiving input in the form of feedback was beneficial in a formal setting as presented in the next example:

> (4) I think I have received better input in formal settings because there I could get direct feedback on the things I did well and what I need to work on. (Participant 16)

As explained earlier, there are some challenges in understanding the meaning of input, which is evident in this example. I argue that the participant emphasizes the importance of feedback, believing that it is required to receive better input and gradually affects the development of L2 output skills. The direct feedback in this case aligns with the idea of corrective feedback (CF). As explained earlier in Section 2.5.2, CF can be considered as a source of input that aims to correct and identify errors found in the produced writing, as well as in speech. The example reflects the importance of feedback as claimed in the later version of IH by Long (1996); given feedback influences the way new information is received. Regarding the type of feedback, participants (including the participant in the given example) do not specify any other types of feedback except error correction by the teacher, which they emphasize in their responses.

Writing is a challenging skill, which is why participants have strong beliefs that their L2 writing can be improved by the received feedback. From the perspective of student beliefs, I argue that the participants in the present study have similar beliefs to the participants in a study by Al-Ahmadi and Khadawardi (2024); they believe WCF is an important means of improving their writing skills and emphasize the error corrections from teacher, especially in grammar and spelling. I argue that WCF increases the possibility of identifying and correcting the errors in the written output, which is more likely to occur in interactions where formal instruction is given, thus explaining the preferences of participants. In addition, receiving feedback based on the errors in written output affects receiving better language input and therefore guides one's language development and helps in building confidence.

Moreover, as the later version of IH by Long (1996) emphasizes the purpose of feedback in guiding and enhancing the L2 learners' language development, I argue that example (4) also has implications to Swain's ideas (1995) of the three functions of output and how one's output can be modified. For instance, in terms of *hypothesis-testing function*, feedback received from the interlocutors can help L2 learners in judging the way they produce written output. *Metalinguistic function* on the other hand helps in reflecting their IL output and internalizing the linguistic knowledge they use in L2 writing, whereas in terms of *noticing function* WCF helps the L2 learners realize the gap in what they already know in L2 writing and what needs to be worked on.

In comparison to the other responses shown in Figure 2, only six participants believe that receiving more or better input through formal means is beneficial for enhancing L2 English speaking skills. For instance, the following response supports this belief:

> (5) For speaking skills, I think I received more and better input in formal setting at school. I was in an English-speaking class all through cut middle school and the lessons were in English. (Participant 8)
>
> (6) I've received more input in formal than informal setting. Back in Japan, I've not had any chance to receive output & input in informal in casual situations. But I got ones in the classroom. (Participant 39)

Despite the small number of preferences for formal setting in terms of L2 speaking, I argue that these few participants' beliefs align with the beliefs of participants who preferred formal setting in L2 writing development. Similar to the previous example (1), participant in example (5) emphasizes the belief that school as a representative of a formal setting gives a good basis for receiving more and better input to develop L2 speaking. Participant's experience in an English-speaking class at a certain school level can give some implications on the use of language policies in the classroom.

Regarding the Finnish EFL context, it is stated in the MA thesis by Garner (2021, 32-33) that teacher's overall approach to the use of English in the EFL classroom determines the language of instruction. However, concerning the example (5) as well, teachers' choices in language policies are affected by the language that students use (either L1 or L2), which influences the language of instruction, and the utilized materials in the classroom practices. In terms of the EFL background, it is arguable that the participant (whose L1 is Finnish) was strongly exposed to English as it was used as the language of instruction. In this regard, Ellis and Shintani (2014, 24) state that learning strategies utilized in the English-speaking

classroom by the teacher can maximize the use of L2 (English), which enhances the communication between teacher and the L2 learners. This aligns with Krashen's idea in *the Input Hypothesis* (1982, 1985) that languages are better learned in practical use; the more input is provided in TL (English), the more there is output in that language.

As most participants have Finnish as their L1, the example (6) illustrates that there are differences in the educational L2 context of different countries. This participant's L1 is Japanese and has received prior EFL experience through formal education in Japan. Regarding the educational situation, due to the influence of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan, MacWhinnie and Mitchell (2017, 2) state that there has been a shift towards communication-based classroom, which indicates a teacher-centered approach in Japanese EFL classroom, e.g. utilizing materials which requires memorization and understanding through studying. In addition, Kurita (2017, 15) mentions that communication-based approach aims to enhance the communication abilities of L2 learners in order to convey information more accurately in English. The participant's example and its connection to the Japanese EFL context could indicate that availability of more input through formal and communicative means plays a significant role in developing L2 speaking skills. As English is taught as a subject in the Japanese classroom, it is arguable that developing L2 speaking skills in English poses its own challenge as L2 learners need to possess various knowledge and skills that are necessary components needed in communication with teacher and other interlocutors, non-native or native speakers of English.

Regarding the Japanese EFL context, I argue that perceived preference for more language input through teacher-centered education is beneficial for developing L2 speaking, given the status of English as it is not widely spoken among Japanese natives in the community. This eventually leads to the lack of involvement with L2 English between native speakers or those who have fluency in the language. In terms of teacher-centered approach in Japanese EFL classroom, I believe that there are implications to Swain ([1985] 1986) and her findings on the French immersion students in a sense that receiving language input in a formal setting can cause difficulties in developing the communicative competence. In the EFL classroom, practices that are systematically structured or controlled will prevent the learners' true potential in enhancing their output, if the focus is only on practicing oral communication in English. Representing an individual case, the example (6) raises awareness on the fact that there can be limitations in the use of TL in the community affecting the individual's chances of developing L2 proficiency and receive enough, if any, language input

through informal means, e.g. the Japanese participant in the present study received spoken L2 English input through formal instruction given by the teacher but sought for sources to receive English input by watching movies in English with the support of subtitles.

In terms of the participants' responses, there were also preferences for receiving input-providing corrective feedback orally (OCF) through formal means, which is believed to be beneficial for developing L2 speaking skills. As a reminder, similar to WCF, OCF focuses on identifying errors in produced speech and can also be implemented in correcting written output and influence the process of receiving new information (written input). A belief that oral feedback is beneficial for adjusting speaking skills to be more accurate and prevent making mistakes such as in speaking tasks is implied in the following example:

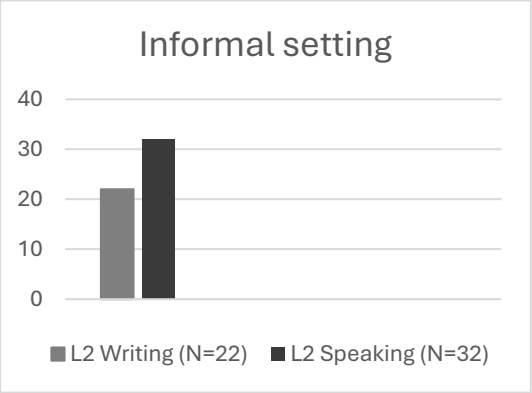
> (7) I think formal settings have been more useful to me. This is because I have gotten corrections which I haven't really gotten in the informal settings. (Participant 13)

It is necessary to note that the example does not specify what types of corrections are under discussion, or if the focus is either on L2 writing or L2 speaking. Regardless, it is appropriate to focus on error corrections in L2 speaking perspective. The example indicates positive attitudes towards CF, which means that input-providing corrections from the teacher are more desirable in proper output prompting in L2 speaking. However, the lack of opportunities to receive OCF outside the classroom could indicate that the error corrections are not properly attend to, e.g. when interacting with non-natives or native speakers of English or the engagement to corrections was minimal. I argue that some participants, including the participant in (7), tend to prefer a teacher-centered approach in receiving more language input through feedback. This idea is reflected in previous studies, which emphasize teachers' role in giving OCF (e.g. Oladejo 1993; Zhu and Wang 2019). The participant has expectations on how errors should be corrected and has positive attitudes towards receiving corrections to errors in speech through formal means, which is beneficial for producing one's spoken output.

4.1.2 Informal Setting

In terms of numbers of responses, majority of the participants believe that informal setting is the most prominent setting for receiving better or more input in terms of both L2 writing and speaking, which can be indicated in the following figure:

Figure 3. The number of participants receiving input through informal means



According to Figure 3, those who preferred the setting in terms of L2 writing (N=22) believe that more or better input is available in informal settings rather than those who preferred input through formal means. As explained in the theoretical section, the reason for preferring this setting is because there is a range of opportunities compared to a formal setting that has limited opportunities for making input available and accessible. For instance, some participants believe that sufficient amount of input received from the writing activities outside the classroom setting enhanced their L2 writing skills, which can be seen in the following examples:

(8) I received more input for writing in informal settings as I started to write stories on the internet in my free time in middle school. (Participant 10)

(9) As for writing, I have been doing it as a hobby for a long time therefore a lot more has been happening outside of the classroom. (Participant 21)

Both participants mention that engaging in writing activities during spare time has gradually affected their development of L2 writing. However, it is necessary to point out that writing outside classroom is about producing output without being instructed. As producing output via writing is challenging, formal instruction has a crucial role in giving a good basis of knowledge on grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. The examples emphasize the creative writing that occurs outside the classroom, which according to Stillar (2013, 165) allows writers to individually express themselves and share experiences. Regarding writing activities in informal settings, the internet has become a widely used space, which motivates the engagement in various writing activities, such as writing fan fiction or diaries. Engagement in informal writing through accessing the internet can provide alternative ways for writing as there are sources that provide extensive reading as well as writing tips,

introducing different styles and techniques that can be implemented in one's writing without the constraints of perceived rules in formal writing.

According to Figure 3, the most responses of participants (N=32) indicate that receiving better or more input through informal means was beneficial for L2 English speaking development. This can be explained by the potential that an informal learning environment has in providing opportunities for receiving spoken input extensively. There are various ways participants can access to more spoken input, which are closely connected to activities they engage outside formal environments as presented in the following response:

> (10) For speaking skills, informal settings have provided better input, for example tv shows, movies or conversations with native speakers. (Participant 5)
>
> (11) I've received more input through informal means, and I feel that it's a more realistic situation to use English. Informal settings help use and learn real world English. (Participant 24)

It is evident in the presented examples that receiving spoken input through informal means provides a more natural and realistic way of learning L2 English. Participants are driven by their personal interest and needs which motivate them to access sources from which they can receive better or more input in a meaningful way. In example (11), watching TV shows and movies in English are meaningful activities, from which the participant receives more extensive spoken (audiovisual) input and exposes themselves to the speech that reflects the way English is used in real-life situations. Furthermore, these activities indicate the engagement in incidental learning, the characteristic of informal settings, in which learning consciously is not the main focus, e.g. while listening, vocabulary unknown to the L2 learner can be acquired incidentally.

In addition to TV shows and movies, social conversations that occur outside the classroom are essential in providing spoken input. Informal settings are quite flexible in terms of adapting to different contexts and they are also spontaneous in a way that they are influenced by the social conversations that occur in our everyday lives. Whether in formal or informal settings, social conversations are concrete evidences of the connection between input and interaction, as well as output, as argued in IH by Long (1983, 1996). By interacting with others, whether non-native or native speakers of English, is the most efficient and authentic way of developing L2 speaking through practical use.

Regarding the social conversations, some participants also believe that interacting with others in English can enhance one's L2 self-confidence in speaking, as suggested in the following example:

> (12) More and better input in informal settings at least considering speaking skills, as I feel more confident in speaking too when I hear others doing it in informal settings. (Participant 9)

In this context, L2 self-confidence refers to one's confidence in using the L2, which eventually affects one's L2 learning. Example (12) implies that receiving spoken input by interacting with others increases one's confidence to speak, but it is possible that this eventually reduces one's anxiety to speak. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, anxiety is a negative emotion and an affective factor, which is associated with the performance aspect in speaking (e.g. Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010) and can also affect the filter being 'up' (e.g. Krashen 1985) and prior speaking experiences (e.g. MacIntyre et al. 1998). However, participant does not specify if there were any negative emotions or experiences in speaking English with others.

Regarding the issue of self-confidence, it is argued by MacIntyre et al. (1998, 549) that a lack of anxiety alongside perceived competence (one's feeling of having a capacity to communicate effectively) are the underlying components of self-confidence in L2. In addition, the participant's feeling of confidence in speaking with others in social conversations could imply something about willingness to communicate, which MacIntyre et al. (1998, 547) define as a readiness to enter into discourse with specific people. For instance, perceived desire of participants to communicate with others in L2 English is driven by their motivation as they believe it is beneficial for developing speaking skills through practical use. In addition to motivation, their self-confidence and communicative competence in English determine their individual willingness to communicate, regardless of the environment in which they interact.

4.1.3 Both Settings

From the perspective of both writing and speaking, there are nine participants who preferred both settings. Instead of preferring one setting over another, the participants believe that the contribution of both settings was significant as they have received an equal amount of written and spoken input through formal and informal means, as presented in the given example:

> (13) I think I have learned grammar better formally but vocabulary informally. The formal setting for grammar was better because I had a teacher to instruct

> me. The informal setting was better for vocabulary as the words were learned in a context that was interesting for me. (Participant 44)

The participant in example (14) claims that accessibility of input is possible through distinctive environments. Both formal and informal settings vary in terms of resources they have in affording better or more input, which affects developing grammar and vocabulary. There are limitations to what a formal setting can afford through formal instruction compared to the informal. One can develop grammar better through formal instruction and vocabulary through informal means, e.g. by reading books or watching TV compared to the informal, from which more extensive language input can be received e.g. reading books or watching tv shows could enhance one's vocabulary.

Among the participants, the equal preference of both settings was explained in a way that they were significant during a certain period of time:

> (14) In school we learnt the basics and formal writing, then I have been living in private academies that mostly focused on formal input. However, during my adolescence I started watching all movies in English and I could say I acquired all my informal grammar and vocabulary from those. (Participant 41)

The equal preference can be interpreted in a way that there was emphasis on formal input during the time spent in educational institutions, which gave the required basis for writing and speaking in English. However, during the adolescent years, the proficiency in both skills was dependent on sources, which provided extensive input, e.g. watching movies in English. The example by the participant, whose L1 is Spanish, has similarities with the L1 Japanese participant in example (6) as both lacked opportunities to receive extensive input in English besides the necessary input from the classroom. Both examples also represent cases of language learners with different EFL backgrounds, which has affected the way their L2 proficiency has developed in different ways compared to other participants of this study.

4.2 Sources of Input Used by the Participants

In the open-ended question 2, participants were asked to name specific sources of language input which were significant for developing their L2 English writing and speaking, whereas open-ended question 3 required them to explain the overall usefulness of these sources and reflect their personal learning experiences. Both questions aim to find solutions to the second research question of the present study. The aim of the following subsections, 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 address the analysis of open-ended question 2, presenting the named sources

and materials of written and spoken/audiovisual input in their respective tables, including the numerical data of the responses. Subsection 4.2.3 covers the open-ended question 3 presenting the themes derived from the identified codes in participants' responses, in which responses from the participants are used to support the arguments in the analysis.

4.2.1 Sources of Written Input

In the open-ended question 2, participants were asked to name specific sources of written input. Based on the participants' responses, there were 8 identified sources, from which the participants have received written input: *books, written material (for formal teaching purposes), written texts (found online), formal- and informal writing practices, writing tips, lyrics, subtitles*, and *comics.* These identified sources emphasize the various ways participants have developed their L2 English writing as they access to sources of written input in different learning environments. The following table presents the sources in an order frequency:

Table 5. Sources for receiving better written input in order frequency

Source	**N=48**	**%**
Books	24	50 %
Written material (used in formal teaching)	14	29%
Written texts (found online)	10	21%
Formal writing practices (in classroom)	9	19%
Informal writing practices (outside classroom)	8	17%
Writing tips	5	10 %
Lyrics, subtitles	4	8 %
Comics	2	4 %

According to Table 5, books (N=24) were among the most preferred sources of written input. Many of the participants did not specify the literature they read, however, there were few responses in which participants mentioned reading novels such as fiction and young adult

novels, and academic literature, which is quite evident given the participants status as university students. Academic books are an instance of materials from which we can search for written information, but can also be utilized for teaching purposes, similar to text- and workbooks used in EFL classroom. In addition, as a result of the possibilities provided by technology, novels, including academic literature, can also be found and accessed in digital form such as audiobooks on mobile phone or from various online libraries, meaning that their availability is beyond physical settings. The responses preferring books could indicate the participants' belief that reading works of literature in English is crucial for receiving written input. Reading exposes them to various writing styles that can be encountered in books as well as other written texts, which can influence and improve their writing. For instance, novels have many unique styles, which determine the ways authors use sentence structures, literary devices and dialogues, whereas academic literature has its respective distinctive style, which enhance the output of university students (academic writing).

Participants (N=14) also preferred other written materials beside books, which were those used in formal teaching. Preference for these materials could indicate that school as an educational institution serves as an important medium for providing written input, which participants emphasize in terms of vocabulary and grammar, which are essential in language production. These materials can be used in formal teaching practices, which were also preferred by nine participants. For instance, an L1 Japanese participant mentioned using templates as a material in memorizing vocabulary for Eiken, an English step test in Japan. Moreover, another participant mentioned Quizlet being beneficial in enhancing vocabulary, which represents an instance of a learning tool and a virtual environment that can be integrated to formal language teaching leading to efficiency in practicing one's writing skills.

Ten of the participants showed particular preference to texts accessed online, indicating the significance of online sources for receiving written input, e.g. by reading news articles, posts from online forums such as Reddit, and fan fiction works on Archive of Our Own, a website in which users can post and write fan fiction. Similar to utilizing formal written materials in formal writing practices, texts found from online sources can be used for writing practices outside classroom, which was also preferred by eight participants. Writing tips were also considered important for providing instructive written input to influence the writing of five participants, e.g. in writing diaries or fan fictions. The other significant sources of written input include lyrics and subtitles, which four participants considered essential in supporting the comprehensibility of the received audiovisual input, especially English subtitles or lyrics

in English speaking movies, tv shows and songs. In this regard, Lindgren and Muñoz (2013, 107) state that subtitles in English-speaking movies can be beneficial for acquiring vocabulary incidentally, which can affect positively to the exposure of EFL. Participants' use of subtitles and lyrics can help in comprehending the L2 English audiovisual input, e.g. when unknown words or phrases are encountered. Two participants mentioned using comic books, e.g. Japanese manga comics, as an instance of medium, which conveys written information such as dialogues or narratives with drawings.

Regarding the sources of written input, participants in the present study believe that their language skills, most notably vocabulary, has been increased through formal means (intentionally) and informal means (incidentally), which is given a strong emphasis in their responses. In addition, this is also supported in previous studies (e.g. Cho & Krashen 1994; Webb & Chang 2015). By reading extensively to receive written input, participants believe that it contributes to their literacy despite the difficulties in coining new, but unknown words. Despite the beliefs among participants that developing vocabulary was essential for their L2 English proficiency, there were also mentions of the importance of grammar. This is reflected in the ideas of a previous study by Nguyen (2024) regarding the correlation between one's grammar gains and reading comprehension level. This could imply that by engaging in extensive reading, participants may have, to some extent, received written input with meaningful grammar portions from the written texts.

4.2.2 Sources of Spoken/Audiovisual Input

As participants were asked to name sources from which they have received written input, they were also asked to name sources from which they received spoken/audiovisual input. As mentioned earlier in Section 2.5.2, I refer to spoken input when it is received from speech in face-to-face interactions, whereas audiovisual input is used in referring to receiving spoken input from various electronic devices such as TV or social media platforms, e.g. YouTube and TikTok. The following table presents the sources named by the participants:

Table 6. Sources for receiving spoken/audiovisual input in order frequency

Sources	**N=48**	**%**
TV	37	77 %
Music	21	44 %
YouTube	20	42%

Movies	18	38%
Social conversations	15	31%
Podcasts	15	31%
Video games	10	21 %
Audiobooks	5	10 %
Formal speaking practices	3	6 %
TikTok	2	4 %
Musicals	1	2 %

As presented in Table 6, participants named 11 sources: *TV, music, movies, YouTube, Social conversations (in English), podcasts, video games, audiobooks, speaking practices (in classroom), TikTok* and *musicals*. Participants believe that these particular sources of spoken and audiovisual input have supplied them with extensive amount of spoken input that has been necessary for developing their L2 English speaking skills, especially acquiring new vocabulary, e.g. in example (11). Most participants (N=37) believe that watching TV (mostly TV series) was the most prominent source of audiovisual input. In addition to watching TV, English-speaking movies (N=18) were also considered significant. Regarding these sources, Lin (2014, 164) argues that using popular media in English is beneficial for EFL eventually leading L2 learners to gain greater exposure to language input outside the classroom by accessing these audiovisual input sources. The input that is received through watching TV or movies is authentic as it reflects the real-life use of the language in different contexts.

Regarding the example (11), previous studies have shown that the role of TV is significant in affecting L2 learners' incidental learning of vocabulary (e.g. Neumann & Koskinen 1992; Lindgren & Muñoz 2013). Progress in one's vocabulary becomes quite evident when it occurs outside formal learning environments. As Neumann and Koskinen (1992, 96) claimed, TV is a more accessible medium compared to written texts as it provides pictures and sounds to help in understanding the words and meanings. I argue that TV being an easy medium was the most efficient way for participants to engage in receiving extensive spoken input and develop one's vocabulary. As for the movies, Hoinbala (2022, 3–4),

emphasized movies as an example of sources that provide authentic spoken input. L2 learners experience visual and sound information from the movies (as well as TV) and language plays a determinant role in connecting it, which benefits L2 learners output production if they were to receive spoken input.

The previously mentioned can be applied to videos found on YouTube, which was also named as an important source of audiovisual input by the participants (N=20). In this regard, Wang and Chen (2020, 334) emphasize that YouTube has a potential role in promoting one's self-regulation as an online environment in which people around the globe, including the L2 learners, are part of the participatory culture, e.g. as content creators or viewers etc. According to their findings (2020, 343), the participants in their study watched English-speaking videos to increase their attention to learning, find resources and learn about cultures. In the case of the participants of the present study, I agree with Wang and Chen (2020, 343) on the fact that the students' goals are the driving force in watching YouTube videos, which can be applied to the participant of the present study, whatever reason there is behind watching the videos, e.g. for learning purposes or entertainment. It is necessary to address that most participants did not specify what types of videos they watched, except two responses named interview and educational videos. The latter can be implemented in EFL classroom, which according to Hoinbala (2022, 4) benefits learners in terms of listening comprehension skills and improving speaking performance in L2 English.

Among the participants, music (N=21) was also considered significant and the second most named source of audiovisual input. I briefly address that some participants also mentioned music videos, which integrate music with a video that contains visual performance and can be accessed e.g. from YouTube. The relevance of music as a source of input can be explained in a way that it can also enhance one's vocabulary skills (e.g. Mannarelli & Serrano 2024). However, despite the correlation between vocabulary gains and explicit instruction, they express (2024, 2) limitations on the potential of songs in promoting vocabulary and that the lack of correlation between vocabulary knowledge and listening to songs is due to the fact that learners are not required to show effort or attention, the latter being involved in noticing, which is crucial in receiving input (e.g. Schmidt 1990).

The other mentioned audiovisual input sources included podcasts (N=15). Regarding the efficiency of this source, Meier (2015, 78) mentions that podcasts enable listening materials, which are beneficial for receiving meaningful and authentic input extensively, but they can be utilized in educational contexts, e.g. giving speeches, lectures or creating podcasts for storytelling or specifically for L2 learners in TL. In addition, Meier (2015, 80)

states that podcasts have potential in extending to informal environments and in the amount of input they can afford to learners. Like podcasts, five participants considered audiobooks significant, and these sources have similarities in the way they afford audiovisual input. By using applications on the mobile phone, such as BookBeat and Storytel, one can access listening materials that afford input to similar extents as podcasts.

Ten participants named video games as their significant source believing that they eventually affected their L2 proficiency, e.g. learning vocabulary incidentally. For these participants, video games are part of their spare time activities and meaningful to some degree and, according to Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012, 302-303), engaging such activities in these cognitively challenging environments can indicate one's motivation towards the games, which provide relevant L2 input. Video games represent a virtual environment, which can be essential for communication, especially in massively multiplayer online and -role playing games. Thorne, Fischer and Lu (2012, 281) call them rich environments, in which players are provided opportunities for using the language in a meaningful way as they share a common space for interaction. As multiple players share knowledge in their interactions, they also engage in meaningful negotiation of meanings, reflecting the ideas of IH by Long (1983), which eventually affects one's L2 proficiency.

Two participants believe that TikTok can be treated as a learning medium from which they have received authentic spoken input. Mulyanah, Amarullah and Ishak (2024, 1266) mention that TikTok has a great demand in various groups due to its status as a popular social media platform. It can extend to informal environments as it can be used through mobile phone anywhere and anytime. In addition to its role as a source of input, Mulyanah, Amarullah and Ishak (2024, 1271) mention it can also increase the L2 learners' motivation as a social medium. However, TikTok also has potential to be used in a formal learning environment (e.g. Canani & Zulli 2022; de-La Peña & Chaves-Yuste 2024). For instance, de-La Peña and Chaves-Yuste (2024, 54) claim that TikTok can be integrated into classroom, e.g. for instructed information searching, group meetings, and also for digital narrative creation purposes, which could provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking. Moreover, Canani and Zulli (2022, A181) assert that TikTok is a valid method for traditional language teaching and is beneficial for lowering the affective filter of learners and enhancing their proactivity. However, despite the potential these studies present on TikTok in the class context, it is still debatable whether these can be applied in EFL classrooms to some extent. One participant expressed the significance of musicals as a source of spoken input. However,

it is not specified whether this participant refers to a live performance from which meaningful spoken input is received or if musicals are shown on TV or other social media platforms, indicating exposure to audiovisual input. Nonetheless, in terms of this participant, musicals have potential in providing necessary input.

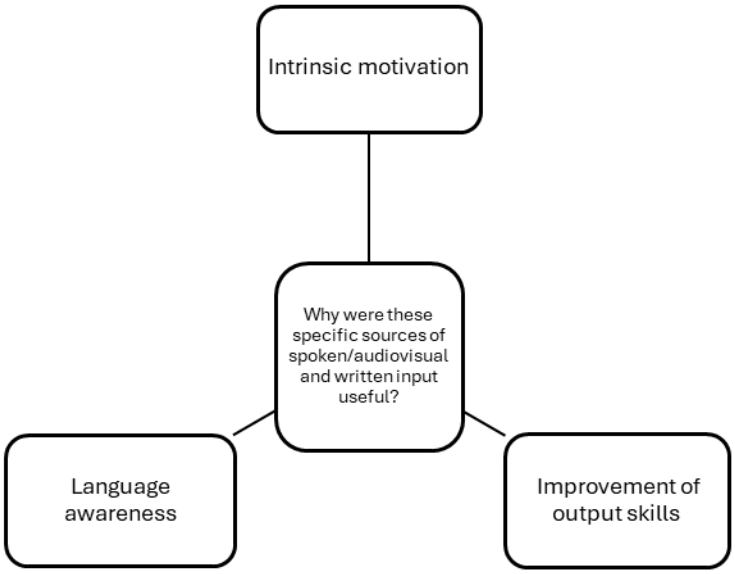
Until this point, I have addressed the sources of audiovisual input named by the participants, but there were also those who believe that social conversations in English (N=15) and for three participants the formal speaking practices in a formal learning environment were also significant sources of spoken L2 English input. As previously mentioned regarding the ideas of Krashen's *The Input Hypothesis* (1982, 1985), languages are better learned through practical use and, in terms of the ideas presented by Swain (1995), participants have opportunities to produce output in a meaningful way as they engage in conversations with others in English. These ideas concern interactions that occur in both formal and informal learning environments. Among the three participants, one participant, whose example (6) was previously introduced, mentions formal speaking practices as a significant source believing that receiving authentic spoken input through formal means has been beneficial for developing the L2 English speaking. The perceived significance of spoken input through formal means relates to this participant's limited opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom, given the EFL background in the home country (Japan).

However, fifteen participants' interactions from which they have received authentic spoken input involve conversations with family members, friends and native speakers of English. Regarding the role of family members in providing spoken input, Shin (2017, 220) mentions that parents, as well as older siblings, can inspire the younger siblings' way of using and speaking a language. In addition, Sorenson Duncan and Paradis (2020, 1002) state that older siblings can affect the younger siblings' exposure to interactive L2 input and support the emerging L2 abilities. Furthermore, some participants believe that speaking with native speakers in English was a great asset for receiving authentic practice. For instance, some participants highlighted the importance of living abroad, which according to Hessel (2019, 496) provides students with opportunities to engage in intercultural interactions in L2. For instance, one participant mentioned living in Ireland as an exchange student through ERASMUS program, which gradually affected their L2 proficiency in a native speaker environment.

4.2.3 Usefulness of the Input Sources

As previously mentioned in the methodology, the responses in open-ended question 3 underwent a coding process via NVivo and Microsoft Excel in order to identify codes. These codes were later categorized into themes that could explain the overall usefulness of the sources of written and spoken/audiovisual input named by the participants in the open-ended question 2. After the coding process, there were three distinctive themes identified from the responses: *intrinsic motivation, improvement of language skills* and *language awareness,* as presented in the following figure:

Figure 4. Themes explaining the usefulness of L2 input sources



As Figure 4 suggests, one of the three themes explaining the usefulness of the sources is that they increased the participants' motivation, particularly *intrinsic motivation* towards receiving input. As briefly mentioned on multiple occasions, motivation is one of the important affective factors as the driving force in improving L2 learners' language learning. Based on the participants' responses, there are implications of a belief that language input sources are linked to their personal interests, which is evident in the following examples:

> (15) The sources of spoken input are useful because they are related to topics I'm interested in, so I have motivation to receive the input. (Participant 17)
>
> (16) Because I was really keen on these series, so I really wanted to learn from them to be able to understand everything. (Participant 42)
>
> (17) I was able to learn the language with materials that were already intriguing to me, so language learning was sometimes a 'secondary' profit. In this way, it

> wasn't stressful, and I enjoyed learning as I was doing something that I liked alongside it. (Participant 14)

Example (15) implies that sources of language input associated with activities related to one's personal interests can correlate positively with the individual's intrinsic motivation towards receiving the input. This corresponds with the definition of intrinsic motivation, which according to Deci and Ryan (2000, 55-56) refers to being motivated from activities that are interesting and enjoyable. Participants have their individual differences with things that motivate them intrinsically; some may find the sources intrinsically more motivating than others, because they maintain the participants' interests to some extent, and they pay more attention to those sources from which they receive the input.

The other example (16) is quite similar to the previous, emphasizing that the source (TV series), from which the participant inherently receives audiovisual input affects attention and maintains self-interest towards learn L2 English. By watching TV series and listening to the extensive input received from it can increase one's L2 speaking significantly and adapt one's speech in different contexts. The example could indicate that the participant was motivated to learn more extensively and go beyond the current level, reflecting Krashen's (1982, 1985) i+1-formula in a way that the audiovisual input received by watching is above the current level, but it can be independently figured out from the context. Presenting similar ideas to the other examples, the participant in example (17) acts on the enjoyment that stems from the use of materials that also maintain interest in things that are meaningful. In other words, meaningful activities in which language input is received are primarily significant for the participant and learning is of secondary importance, which I believe refers to the characteristics of informal setting, where learning occurs unconsciously.

Regarding the second theme, participants believe that the sources are useful for simply improving their output skills. Engagement with the input sources is the essential criterion for developing one's vocabulary size and grammar skills to achieve L2 proficiency in English, which is emphasized in the following examples:

> (18) My vocabulary improved the more I used these sources. Especially books were a great source of new words. (Participant 2)

> (19) They taught me grammar and word order without being so formal. (Participant 15)

> (20) They provided more opportunities for me to learn outside of a classroom. Had I been constricted to formal settings; I probably would not be so good. (Participant 23)

It is quite evident that the examples put emphasis on utilizing sources that are available in informal settings. Example (18) emphasizes that the sources were useful for developing vocabulary. In the open-ended question 2, the participant mentioned receiving written input from reading novels for young adults, which was beneficial for learning new words, therefore extensive reading has facilitated the development of one's vocabulary (e.g. Cho & Krashen 1994). Despite the emphasis on books, the participant also mentioned watching TV series and YouTube videos and listening to music, indicating their significance and usefulness in developing vocabulary incidentally (e.g. Wang & Chen 2020; Mannarelli & Serrano 2024).

Despite the significant role of formal settings in providing a good basis for formal grammar, the participant in example (20) believes that grammar can be developed through informal means. The participant reflects this response from the sources that were named in the questionnaire, which were sources of audiovisual input: TV series, YouTube videos, audiobooks, podcasts and music. As mentioned earlier, the input received from these particular sources reflects the way how English is used in real-life and in different ways. Some grammatical structures may differ from the ones taught in the EFL classroom, influencing one's use of these structures in contexts which are not formal in nature. Example (20) supports the idea of informal settings having a wide range of resources for providing opportunities to receive both written and spoken input. Participant's response is supported by the previous response in open-ended question 2, naming sources which have enhanced L2 writing and speaking: reading and writing of fan fictions, video games and music. Through informal and natural means, these sources have eventually provided opportunities for making progress in one's output production. Moreover, participant shows awareness of the limits of classroom environment as it can affect one's development of communicative competence and tendency to use L2 English through formal means.

As for the third and last theme identified from the responses, participants believe that the sources were useful in raising their *language awareness*. The awareness in the context of this study refers to being aware of how languages are used in different contexts and that there is variation in ways how it is used in real-life situations. This is quite evident in the case of following responses:

(21) They show how English is really spoken in real life, and they show the concrete ways some things are. (Participant 18)

(22) They helped in learning to understand language in different settings and adapting my own language to fit those settings. (Participant 28)

Example (21) indicates a positive correlation between the use of sources and raising language awareness. It is necessary to point out that there is always variation in the way languages are used, e.g. differences in pronunciation and intonation differences or writing styles in written texts. Raising awareness of how languages are used in real-life situations is essential for those who wish to achieve L2 proficiency. In addition, adapting one's own language to fit different contexts is an important aspect regarding language awareness, as suggested in the example (22). In terms of writing, the participant mentioned using writing tips, which is a convenient tool to adapt one's writing, whereas video games, watching TV and YouTube videos provide spoken input in which there is variation, e.g. in pronunciation and the use of vocabulary and grammar, which can be adapted, to some extent, in one's L2 English speech. By adapting language, gained vocabulary and the grammar structures become meaningful in interactions, which occur between language users both in formal and informal settings.

4.3 Discussion of Overall Findings

In terms of the responses in open-ended question 1, most participants (N=16) believe that formal setting was preferable for receiving better or more written input. For instance, participants believe that educational institutions, e.g. upper secondary school and university are beneficial for providing extensive input as learning has structured and organized characteristics in these settings. Some participants preferred receiving written input through formal means as it enhanced their vocabulary and grammar, both essential in L2 writing. Moreover, some believed that receiving extensive written input through WCF in a formal setting was beneficial for their L2 English writing, which reflects the idea of modification and enhancement of output as presented in the hypotheses by Swain (1995) and Long (1996).

There was also a belief among six participants that receiving spoken input through formal means was preferable. Notable emphasis was given to the role of formal setting in providing a good basis for L2 English speaking and extensive input. This was particularly evident in an example, in which the participant's preference was affected by the EFL background of the home country (Japan), which emphasized the communication-based approach in the EFL classroom (e.g. MacWhinnie & Mitchell 2017; Kurita 2017). This

example raises awareness that EFL context is different in different countries, which gradually affects the way participants have developed their L2 writing and speaking skills in English to achieve the L2 proficiency. There was also a belief in receiving more opportunities for feedback (OCF) through formal than informal means as the received feedback from the errors made in their L2 English speech could guide them towards the right direction, the idea which is supported in previous studies (e.g. Oladejo 1993; Zhu & Wang 2019).

Based on the number of responses, participants strongly believe that informal settings are the most preferred settings in terms of both L2 writing and L2 speaking, the latter having the most preferences. Participants (N=22) preferred receiving written input through informal means, e.g. in terms of informal writing activities, in which participants engaged during their spare time. Formal instruction plays an essential role in these activities due to the challenges of L2 writing. Most participants (N=32) who preferred receiving extensive spoken input through informal means, considered informal settings crucial for developing their vocabulary and grammar. For instance, they believe that the most efficient way of receiving authentic spoken input is by watching TV and movies as they reflect the use of English in real life and provides more opportunities for developing speaking skills. In addition, participants also believe that engaging in informal settings can affect their overall self-confidence, motivation and one's willingness to communicate in interactions with others in L2 English. Furthermore, there were nine participants who believe that both settings were equal in providing extensive input. For instance, participants emphasized significance of both settings in developing vocabulary or grammar differently in writing and speaking and that certain settings were preferable during a specific period of time.

In responses to open-ended question 2, the number of specific sources shows that there are many ways participants have received written and spoken input through formal and informal means. Regarding the sources of written input, participants apparently believe that books were the most significant source the other being materials used in formal teaching and online texts that can be accessed via the internet. These sources enable receiving extensive written input through extensive reading, which has, for most participants, enhanced their vocabulary incidentally. As for the sources of spoken and audiovisual input, sources of audiovisual input were the most significant sources for most participants, TV receiving most responses and the other being music, YouTube videos and movies. By accessing these sources, participants believe that authentic L2 English input can be received as they reflect how English is used in different ways in real-life situations, eventually affecting their

speaking skills. Similar to the sources of written input, these sources were also preferred for developing their vocabulary through informal means.

Regarding the themes identified in the responses in open-ended question 3, participants believe that the written and spoken input sources were useful for increasing their intrinsic motivation towards L2 English, improving the development of their output skills and raising language awareness of variation in the use of English. Sources were maintaining their attention as they were associated with their personal interests leading the participants to receive input in a meaningful way. Throughout the analysis, participants have expressed their preferences for receiving input through formal and informal means, which has developed their vocabulary and grammar skills in different ways, implying that the sources have inevitably affected their ways of achieving L2 proficiency in English. Participants believe that the sources helped in becoming aware of how English is used in different contexts, which has affected the way how they adapt their own writing and speaking accordingly.

5 Conclusion

The present study aimed to find answers to the research questions by using the open-ended question responses from the questionnaire, the total number being 48. First research question investigated the participants' preferences for formal and informal settings in terms of receiving better or more input. Participants had strong preferences for the informal setting in terms of L2 writing and speaking. Furthermore, some participants expressed equal preferences for both settings. As for the second research question, the focus was to find out what sources of written and spoken/audiovisual input were significant for the participants. For instance, the most significant source of written input included books, as well as the materials used in formal teaching and online texts whereas as sources of spoken/audiovisual input included TV, YouTube videos, music and movies respectively.

In terms of the overall usefulness of mentioned sources, participants believed that they were useful for increasing their intrinsic motivation, as they supported their personal interests eventually affecting their attention towards the input sources. Another theme to explain the usefulness was the improvement of output skills as participants emphasized that the sources were useful for developing their vocabulary, which is essential in both L2 writing and speaking. The third theme was raising language awareness in terms of how English is used in different contexts and how they can adapt their own language in interactions with others.

Regarding strength and limitations of the present study, it managed to find answers to the research question. The strength of this study was its qualitative nature and the use of questionnaire as an appropriate data collection method to investigate university students' beliefs. In addition, the total number of participants (N=48) was sufficient to produce relevant responses to the open-ended questions, eventually affecting the formulation of answers to the research questions. The present study has its limitations. One of the notable limitations in this study is that there are not many previous studies from the perspective of student beliefs, which affected the overall body of the thesis. Limitations are also related to the difficulty of determining whether participants' responses reflect reality as the aim of the present study was to provide an overview of the findings limiting argumentation in the analysis. In addition, another notable limitation is the perspective of EFL background among participants as most participants had L1 Finnish background, which predominantly emphasizes their EFL context and limits the perspective of those with diverse number of L1s.

The present study has shown positive implications to future directions of further studies. For instance, participants emphasized input being essential in developing their vocabulary, which could indicate a study that could focus more on the significance of input on their vocabulary instead of L2 writing and speaking. As for the participants with different EFL backgrounds, further studies could give more emphasis on the diversity of different EFL backgrounds, leading to more interesting findings on the topic, e.g. comparing responses from a group of L1 Finnish university students with the responses of students with German as L1. Moreover, as the study has presented a correlation between previous learning experiences and student beliefs, this could be beneficial e.g. for teachers in the sense that student beliefs help them realize the potential of the various sources of input that help in facilitating students' L2 proficiency and that these sources could provide them with opportunities to strategies, in which these sources are integrated into language teaching, which could provide extensive input to the students.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire for MA thesis research

Research Information

I am a sixth-year English major in the University of Turku and currently working on my MA thesis, which focuses on the significance of the role of language input in L2 English writing and speaking. This research focuses on your learning experiences on L2 English and its purpose is to analyze the participants' answers on questions related to the thesis topic. The questionnaire is carried out anonymously and your responses will be confidential. No personal information is asked or required. The collected data will be used for this research only and will not be used for other purposes outside this research.

Background Questions

In this section, answer briefly to the following questions.

1. **What is/are your L1(s)?**_____

2. **At what age did you start English at school (as a second language)?**_____

Open-ended Questions

Instructions

The following section will contain 4 open-ended questions where you have been given some examples to help you formulate your answers. You are required to produce an answer with a maximum of ***50 words*** *or* ***three*** *to* ***five*** *long sentences. Make sure to read the questions carefully and answer to all the questions. Please note that the L2 in question is ENGLISH.*

1) Do you think you have received more or better input from informal than formal settings in terms of writing and speaking skills?
(For example, if you think you received better or more input from formal settings, explain why the formal setting was better than informal?)

2) Are there any specific sources of language input that developed your a) writing and b) speaking skills in L2 English?

A) Sources of Written Input *(e.g. writing tips, exercise materials on vocabulary and grammar, online sources like Duolingo or Grammarly.)*

B) Sources of Spoken Input *(e.g. TV, podcasts, music videos, video games.)*

3) Why were these specific sources of spoken/audiovisual and written input useful?

Appendix 2 Data Protection Notice

Kuvaus henkilötietojen käsittelystä tieteellisessä tutkimuksessa/Tietosuoja-asetus EU (679/2016) 12–14, 30 artikla

TIETOSUOJAILMOITUS TUTKIMUKSESTA TUTKIMUKSEEN OSALLISTUVALLE
Kevät 2024

Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista, eikä tutkittavan ole pakko toimittaa mitään tietoja, tutkimukseen osallistumisen voi keskeyttää.

1. Pro gradu -tutkielman "The Significance of Language Input in the Production of Output Skills: A Qualitative Content Analysis on the Beliefs of Students of English" TUTKIMUSKYSELYSSÄ KÄSITELTÄVÄT HENKILÖTIEDOT, TUTKIMUKSEN LUONNE JA KESTO

Tutkimus koostuu kyselystä. Tämä kysely on osa Turun yliopiston kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitoksella tehtävää opetusta ja tutkimusta. Kerätystä tutkimusmateriaalista kirjoitetaan pro gradu -tutkielmaan tarkoitettu aineisto. Tuloksia käytetään anonyymissä muodossa. Tutkittavalle annetaan mahdollisuus tutustua tietosuojailmoitukseen ennen tutkimukseen osallistumista. Koehenkilölle tutkimukseen osallistuminen on kertaluontoinen.

2. MIHIN HENKILÖTIETOJEN KÄSITTELY PERUSTUU
EU:n yleinen tietosuoja-asetus, artikla 6, kohta 1
☒ **Tutkittavan suostumus**

3. TUTKIMUKSESTA VASTAAVAT TAHOT
Tutkimuksen tekijä(t):
- yliopisto-opiskelija Oskari Saarinen, ojsaar@utu.fi, Englannin kieli, Kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitos, 20014 Turku
- professori Pekka Lintunen, pekka.lintunen@utu.fi, Turun yliopisto, Kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitos, 20014 Turku

4. TUTKIMUKSEN TAUSTA JA TARKOITUS
Tutkimuksen avulla on tarkoitus selvittää, miten merkittävä rooli kielisyötteellä (language input) on ollut L2 englannin oppimisessa. Tutkimukseen osallistuvat ovat englannin pääaine- ja sivuaineopiskelijoita ja mahdollisesti vaihto-opiskelijoita, jotka ovat suorittamassa Second Language Acquisition-kurssia. Kurssiin osallistuvilla opiskelijoilla on kurssin jälkeen yleisiä käsityksiä toisen kielen oppimisesta ja siihen liittyvistä käsitteistä. Tutkimuksessa käsitellään vain välttämättömiä koehenkilön kielitaustaan liittyviä tietoja, jotka koskevat osallistujan äidinkieltä ja L2 englannin aloitusikää.
Tutkimusaineisto ei sisällä erityisiin henkilötietoryhmiin kuuluvia tietoja (rotu tai etninen alkuperä, poliittinen mielipide, uskonnollinen tai filosofinen vakaumus, ammattiliiton jäsenyys, terveyttä koskevat tiedot, seksuaalinen suuntautuminen tai käyttäytyminen, geneettiset tai biometriset tiedot henkilön tunnistamista varten). Pilottikysely on kerätty Webropol-kyselylomakkeella ja tutkimuksen varsinainen aineisto kerätään paperiselle kyselylomakkeelle.

5. TUTKIMUKSEN TOTEUTTAMINEN KÄYTÄNNÖSSÄ
Tutkimukseen osallistuminen kestää noin 15 min. Koehenkilö osallistuu tutkimukseen täyttämällä kyselylomakkeen.

6. TUTKIMUKSEN MAHDOLLISET HYÖDYT JA HAITAT TUTKITTAVILLE
Tutkimus tuottaa tietoa kielten opiskelijoiden käsityksistä siitä, minkälaisista puhutuista ja kirjoitetuista lähteistä osallistujat ovat saaneet kielisyötettä (language input) tehostaakseen L2

englannin tuottamista. Tämän lisäksi tutkimus tuottaa tietoa osallistujien käsityksistä kielisyötteen merkityksellisyydestä L2 englannin puheen ja kirjoittamisen tuottamisessa ja siitä, kuinka merkityksellisyys korostuu heidän aikaisemmissa oppimiskokemuksissaan. Tutkimukseen osallistumisesta ei ole haittaa tutkittavalle.

7. HENKILÖTIETOJEN SUOJAAMINEN

Tutkimus on täysin anonyymi ja kerättyjä tietoja sekä tutkimustuloksia käsitellään luottamuksellisesti tietosuojalainsäädännön edellyttämällä tavalla. Tietojasi ei voida tunnistaa tutkimukseen liittyvistä tutkimustuloksista, selvityksistä tai julkaisuista.
Aineisto säilytetään tutkimuksen tekemisen aikana siten, että vain yllä mainitulla tutkijoilla ja mahdollisesti myöhemmin tutkimuksessa työskentelevillä Turun yliopiston tutkijoilla on pääsy aineistoon. Tutkittavien nimiä ei esiinny säilytettävässä materiaalissa.
Tutkimusaineistoa säilytetään Turun yliopiston käsittelyä koskevien tietoturvakäytänteiden mukaisesti.

8. TUTKIMUSTULOKSET

Tutkimuksesta valmistuu tutkittava aineisto pro gradu -tutkielman tekemiseen ja tuloksia käytetään tutkimusongelman selvittämiseen.

9. TUTKITTAVAN OIKEUDET JA NIISTÄ POIKKEAMINEN

Tutkittavalla on oikeus peruuttaa antamansa suostumus, kun henkilötietojen käsittely perustuu suostumukseen. Jos tutkittava peruuttaa suostumuksensa, hänen tietojaan ei käytetä enää tutkimuksessa. Tutkittavalla on oikeus tehdä valitus Tietosuojavaltuutetun toimistoon, mikäli tutkittava katsoo, että häntä koskevien henkilötietojen käsittelyssä on rikottu voimassa olevaa tietosuojalainsäädäntöä. (lue lisää: http://www.tietosuoja.fi).

Tutkimuksessa ei poiketa muista tietosuojalainsäädännön mukaisista tutkittavan oikeuksista.

10. HENKILÖTIETOJEN SÄILYTTÄMINEN JA ARKISTOINTI

Tutkimuksen päätyttyä aineistoa säilytetään noin 6 kuukautta, jonka jälkeen se hävitetään.

11. REKISTERÖIDYN OIKEUKSIEN TOTEUTTAMINEN

Jos sinulla on kysyttävää rekisteröidyn oikeuksista, voit olla yhteydessä tutkimuksen yhteyshenkilöön ja tutkimuksen tekijöihin (ks. yhteystiedot yllä).

Description of the processing of personal data in scientific research/Articles 12-14, 30 of the EU Data Protection Regulation (679/2016)

DATA PROTECTION NOTICE TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Spring 2024

Participation in the study is voluntary, and the subject is not obliged to provide any data, participation can be discontinued.

1. Personal data to be used in the research questionnaire "The Significance of Language Input in the Production of Output Skills: A Qualitative Content Analysis on the Beliefs of Students of English" NATURE AND DURATION OF THE RESEARCH.

The study consists of a questionnaire. This survey is part of the teaching and research activities at the Department of Language and Translation Studies at the University of Turku. The collected survey material will be used to write the material for a PhD thesis. The results will be used in an anonymous form. The researcher will be given the opportunity to read the privacy notice before participating in the research. For the subject, participation in the study will be a one-off event.

2. WHAT IS THE BASIS FOR THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

EU General Data Protection Regulation, Article 6(1)

☒ **Subject's consent**

3. THE PARTIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STUDY

Researcher(s):

- University student Oskari Saarinen, ojsaar@utu.fi, English Language, Department of Language and Translation Studies, 20014 Turku, Finland

- Professor Pekka Lintunen, pekka.lintunen@utu.fi, University of Turku, Department of Language and Translation Studies, 20014 Turku

4. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of language input in L2 English learning. The participants in the study are English majors and minors and possibly exchange students who are taking a Second Language Acquisition course. Students participating in the course will have general understandings of second language learning and related concepts after the course. Only the necessary information related to the language background of the participant will be included in the study, concerning the participant's mother tongue and the age at which the participant started L2 English.

The survey data will not contain any information relating to specific categories of personal data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health information, sexual orientation or behaviour, genetic or biometric data for the purpose of identification). The pilot survey is collected using a Webropol questionnaire and the actual survey data is collected on a paper questionnaire.

5. PUTTING THE SURVEY INTO PRACTICE

Participation in the survey will take approximately 15 minutes. The subject participates in the study by filling in a questionnaire.

6. THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND HARMS OF THE STUDY FOR THE SUBJECTS

The study will provide information on language learners' perceptions of the types of spoken and written sources that participants have used to provide language input to enhance their L2 English production. In addition, the study will provide information on participants' perceptions of the relevance of language input to their production of spoken and written L2 English and how relevance is highlighted in their prior learning experiences. There is no harm to the participant from taking part in the study.

7. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

The study is completely anonymous, and the data collected, and the results of the study will be treated confidentially in accordance with data protection legislation. Your data cannot be identified in the results, reports or publications related to the study. The data will be stored during the study so that only the researchers mentioned above and any researchers from the University of Turku working on the study at a later stage will have access to the data. The names of the researchers will not appear in the material to be preserved.

The research material will be stored in accordance with the University of Turku's data security practices.

8. RESEARCH RESULTS

The research will produce material for a doctoral thesis and the results will be used to address the research problem.

9. RIGHTS OF THE PERSON UNDER INVESTIGATION AND DEROGATION FROM THEM

The data subject has the right to withdraw his or her consent where the processing of personal data is based on consent. If the subject withdraws his/her consent, his/her data will no longer be used in the research. The subject has the right to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman if the subject considers that the processing of personal data concerning

him or her has infringed the applicable data protection legislation (for more information, see: http: //www.tietosuoja.fi).

The investigation does not derogate from other rights of the data subject under data protection law.

10. RETENTION AND ARCHIVING OF PERSONAL DATA

After the end of the study, the data will be kept for about 6 months, after which it will be destroyed.

11. EXERCISE OF THE RIGHTS OF THE DATA SUBJECT

If you have any questions about the rights of the data subject, you can contact the research contact person and the researchers (see contact details above).

Appendix 3 Finnish Summary

Pro gradu –tutkielma keskittyy selvittämään englantia opiskelevien yliopisto-opiskelijoiden uskomuksia kielisyötteen (engl. *language input*) merkityksellisyydestä englannin kielen tuottamisessa. Tutkielmassa on kaksi tutkimuskysymystä, joista ensimmäisessä pyritään selvittämään, minkälaiset oppimisympäristöt ovat suotuisia kielisyötteen saamiseksi, kun taas toisessa tutkimuskysymyksessä pyritään selvittämään, miksi kielisyötteen lähteet ovat merkittäviä ja hyödyllisiä tutkimuksen osallistujien näkökulmasta. Tutkielman teoreettisessa osuudessa tarkastellaan syötteen (engl. *input*) sekä tuotoksen (engl. *output)* käsitteitä. Syötteellä tarkoitetaan kieltä, jota vastaanotetaan kuuntelemalla tai lukemalla, kun taas tuotoksella puolestaan viitataan tuotettuun kieleen eli kirjoittamiseen ja puhumiseen.

Käsitteiden lisäksi tutkielman teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä esitetään toisen kielen oppimisen (engl. *Second Language Acquisition)* kannalta merkittäviä teorioita, joiden tarkoituksena on luoda ymmärrystä kielisyötteen merkittävästä roolista kielen oppimisessa sekä avata myös tuotoksen merkitystä. Krashenin viiden teorian ryhmästä kaksi ovat tarkastelun kohteena: *The Input Hypothesis* ja *The Affective Filter Hypothesis*. *The Input Hypothesis*-teoriassa (1985) on kaksi keskeistä päätelmää: ensimmäinen on kielisyötteen ymmärrettävyys (engl. *comprehensible input*), jota Krashen pitää kielen oppimisen edellytyksenä; kieli, jota vastaanotetaan, tulee olla ymmärrettävässä muodossa. Toinen päätelmä on se, että vastaanotettava syöte tulisi olla hieman toisen kielen oppijan nykyisen tason yläpuolella, jota Krashen kuvaa kaavalla: "*i+1"*: ensimmäinen osa viittaa nykyiseen, kun taas jälkimmäinen seuraavaan tasoon. Krashenin *The Affective Filter Hypothesis* (1985) nostaa esille termin *affective filter,* joka viittaa psykologiseen esteeseen, joka estää ymmärrettävän syötteen vastaanottamisen: filtteri on päällä, kun toisen kielen oppija ei ole motivoitunut, kun taas motivaatiolla itsessään on vaikutusta filtterin laskemiseen. Filtteriin vaikuttavat siis oppijan tunnetilat, kuten motivaatio ja ahdistus, jotka vaikuttavat merkittävästi kielen oppimiseen.

Krashenin lisäksi käsiteltävänä teoriana on Swainin ([1985], 1986) *The Output Hypothesis* (OH), jossa tuotos nostetaan merkittäväksi tekijäksi kielen oppimisessa (ymmärrettävän) syötteen ohella. Teorian mukaan toisen kielen oppijoiden tulisi saada tuottaa ymmärrettävää kieltä merkityksellisellä tavalla. OH:n uudelleenmuotoillussa versiossa (1995) esitetään tuotoskielen kolme funktiota: ensimmäinen funktio *(Hypothesis-testing function)* viittaa siihen, että kielenoppijat muodostaisivat hypoteeseja omista kohdekielen tuotoksistaan

annetun palautteen perusteella. Toinen (*Metalinguistic function*) viittaa tilanteisiin, jossa oppijat heijastavat tuottamaansa kielestä tehtyjä väitteitä, kun taas kolmas funktio (*noticing function*) viittaa kykyyn huomata eroja siinä, mitä oppijat ennalta tietävät ja mistä he eivät ole tietoisia. Huomaamista (engl. *noticing*) pidetään keskeisenä tekijänä kielen oppimisessa ja uuden tiedon (syötteen) vastaanottamisen edellytyksenä.

Kolmannessa teoriassa *The Interaction Hypothesis* (IH), Long nostaa vuorovaikutuksen (engl. *interaction*) keskeiseksi tekijäksi ymmärrettävän kielisyötteen rinnalle. Teorian ensimmäinen versio (1983) korostaa keskusteluja, joissa pyritään saamaan ymmärrys merkityksistä (engl. *negotiation of meaning*) sekä Krashenin korostamaa ymmärrettävää kielisyötettä. Merkityskeskustelujen uskotaan vaikuttavan kielisyötteen ymmärrettävyyteen, kun syötettä yksinkertaistetaan natiivien tai ei-natiivien kohdekielen puhujien väliseen vuorovaikutukseen sopivaksi. IH:n viimeisimmässä versiossa (1996) korostetaan huomaamista sekä vuorovaikutuksen, syötteen ja tuotoksen välistä merkitystä. Syötteellä ja tuotoksella on keskeinen tehtävä vuorovaikutuksessa, joka näkyy erityisesti palautteen antamisessa; annettu palaute auttaa kielenoppijoita muokkaamaan omaa tuotettua kieltä vaikuttaen myös uuden tiedon vastaanottamiseen.

Teoreettisessa osuudessa tarkastellaan myös oppimisympäristöjen roolia kielisyötteen vastaanottamisen näkökulmasta, jolla pyritään luomaan katsausta tutkielman ensimmäiseen tutkimuskysymykseen. Oppimisympäristöt voivat olla muodollisia (esim. luokkahuone) tai epämuodollisia (mikä tahansa luokkahuoneen ulkopuolinen ympäristö) ja vaikuttavat siihen, miten kieltä voidaan vastaanottaa eri tavoin. Muodolliset oppimisympäristöt ovat jäsentyneempiä ja organisoituja epämuodollisin verrattuna. Epämuodollisia ympäristöjä korostaa spontaanisuus, joka määräytyy arkipäiväisten kokemuksien perusteella, joustavuus, jolla viitataan kykyyn mukautua tiettyihin tilanteisiin, ja itseohjautuvuus, mikä viittaa epämuodollisten ympäristöjen kykyyn tukea oppijan omia mielenkiinnon kohteita ja tarpeita. Muodollisten ja epämuodollisten oppimisympäristöjen välillä on eroja siinä, minkälaisia resursseja niillä on tarjota kielisyötettä. Epämuodollisilla oppimisympäristöillä on suhteellisen enemmän mahdollisuuksia kuin muodollisilla, koska syötettä voidaan tarjota monipuolisesti erilaisten saatavilla olevien lähteiden kautta. Muodollisessa ympäristössä (esim. kieliluokassa) syöte rajoittuu niihin materiaaleihin, joista kohdekieltä on saatavana kuten oppikirjat sekä kirjoitus- ja puheharjoitukset. Toisaalta teknologian kehityksen ja virtuaalisten oppimisympäristöjen myötä sekä muodollisia että epämuodollisia ympäristöjä

voidaan integroida toisiinsa mahdollistaen parempia mahdollisuuksia kielisyötteen saamiseksi.

Muodollisista ja epämuodollisista ympäristöistä saatava kielisyöte voidaan luokitella kirjoitettuun- (engl. *written input*) ja puhuttuun syötteeseen (engl. *spoken input*). Kirjoitettua syötettä voidaan saada lähteistä, joissa kieltä on saatavilla kirjoitetussa muodossa, esimerkiksi romaanit ja tieteelliset julkaisut. Puhuttua syötettä saadaan niissä yhteyksissä, jossa kielenkäyttäjä vastaanottaa puhetta, esimerkiksi keskustellessaan natiivin tai ei-natiivin kanssa kohdekielellä. Puhuttu syöte, jota vastaanotetaan elektronisten laitteiden avulla, kuten TV:n, radion tai älypuhelimen avulla kutsutaan audiovisuaaliseksi syötteeksi (engl. *audiovisual input*). Epämuodollisissa ympäristöissä vastaanotettua syötettä voidaan pitää autenttisena kielenä (esim. Bahrani, Tam & Nekoueizadeh 2014), jota ei ole muokattu yksinkertaiseen muotoon toisin kuin syöte, jota vastaanotetaan esimerkiksi vieraan kielen oppitunneilla puhe- ja kirjoitusharjoitusten yhteydessä.

Näiden lisäksi, korjaavan palautteen (engl. *corrective feedback*) antamisella voidaan katsoa olevan vaikutuksia kielenkäyttäjän kirjoittamisen sekä puheen tuottamiseen kuin myös uuden tiedon vastaanottamiseen. Tämä on keskeistä muodollisissa ympäristöissä, erityisesti opettajilla, joilla on merkittävä tehtävä korjaavan palautteen antamisessa. Suullista tai kirjallista palautetta voidaan pitää ikään kuin kielisyötteenä, joka pyrkii korjaamaan tuotetun kielen virheitä ja saa kielenkäyttäjän kiinnittämään huomiota tiettyihin asioihin, kun kieltä tuotetaan. Kaiken kaikkiaan, kirjoitetun ja puhutun kielisyötteen lähteillä on huomattavia vaikutuksia kielenkäyttäjän sanastoon ja kielioppiin kehittäessään kirjoitus- ja puhetaitoaan kohdekielessä. Aiemmissa tutkimuksissa on erityisesti korostunut sanaston kehittyminen epämuodollisissa ympäristöissä, kun puhuttua syötettä vastaanotetaan (esim. Neumann & Koskinen 1992; Cho & Krashen 1994; Webb & Chang 2015; Mannarelli & Serrano 2024). Tämä korostuu myös tutkimukseen osallistuneiden opiskelijoiden vastauksissa.

Tutkimus oli luonteeltaan kvalitatiivista (laadullista), jossa aineistonkeruumenetelmänä käytettiin kyselyä, mikä oli aineiston laadullisen tarkastelun kannalta keskeistä. Ennen virallista tutkimuskyselyä laadittiin pilottikysely mahdollisten korjausten havaitsemiseksi. Kysely luotiin sähköisessä muodossa Webropolissa ja sen vastaajina toimivat englannin kielen maisterivaiheen opiskelijat. Virallinen tutkimuskysely suoritettiin paperisten kyselomakkeiden avulla, mikä mahdollisti korkean vastausprosentin ja opiskelijoiden aktiivisen osallistumisen kyselyyn. Vastaamiseen varattu aika oli 15 minuuttia ja vastausten

tuli olla noin 50 sanan pituisia. Kyselyn vastaukset tuli kirjoittaa englanniksi. Tutkimukseen osallistuminen oli vapaaehtoista ja suoritettiin anonyyminä, minkä vuoksi osallistujien henkilökohtaisia tietoja ei tarvittu. Ennen kyselyyn vastaamista, osallistujat tutustuivat tietosuojailmoitukseen, jossa heille kerrottiin tietoa muun muassa tutkimuksen perimmäisestä tarkoituksesta sekä osallistujien anonymiteetin suojaamisesta.

Tutkimuskysely koostui taustakysymyksistä ja avoimista kysymyksistä. Taustakysymykset koskivat lähinnä tutkimukseen osallistujien äidinkieltä ja englannin oppimisen aloitusikää. Avoimia kysymyksiä oli kolme, joiden vastauksilla pyrittiin ratkaisemaan asetettuja tutkimuskysymyksiä. Vastauksissaan opiskelijat hyödynsivät aikaisempia kokemuksia oppiessaan englantia vieraan kielenä, joiden kautta pyrittiin saamaan jotakin konkreettista heidän uskomuksistaan siitä, miten merkittävä rooli kielisyötteellä on. Ensimmäisessä kysymyksessä opiskelijoiden tuli määrittää mieltymyksensä tiettyyn oppimisympäristöön, josta he uskoivat saavansa enemmän tai parempaa kielisyötettä ja pohtia tätä kirjoittamisen ja puhumisen näkökulmasta. Toisessa kysymyksessä osallistujien tuli nimetä kielisyötteen lähteitä, joista he ovat saaneet kirjoitettua ja puhuttua syötettä kehittääkseen kielitaitoaan, kun taas kolmannessa kysymyksessä tuli selittää näiden mainittujen lähteiden yleistä hyödyllisyyttä omassa oppimisessaan.

Tutkimukseen osallistui 48 englannin kielen opiskelijaa, joilla oli tausta englannin oppimisesta vieraana kielenä. Kyselyyn vastaus hetkellä opiskelijat olivat suorittamassa kurssia, joka perehdytti heidät toisen kielen oppimiseen ja sen keskeisiin peruskäsitteisiin. Oletuksena oli, että kurssin kautta saamilla tiedoilla he kykenisivät osoittamaan ymmärrystään siitä, mitä kielisyötteellä tarkoitetaan ja kuinka merkittävä sen rooli on ollut omassa englannin kielen oppimisessa. Taustakysymysten perusteella enemmistö osallistujista oli äidinkieleltään suomalaisia, kun taas kymmenen osallistujaa edustivat muita vieraita kieliä, jotka olivat japani, ranska, saksa, espanja, tanska, thai ja korea. Englannin oppimisen aloitusiän perusteella suurin osa on aloittanut englannin 8–9 vuoden ikäisenä. Osallistujista kuusi olivat aloittaneet suhteellisen myöhemmällä iällä (10–12 vuoden ikäiset), kun taas loput osallistujista aloittivat alle 7-vuotiaina.

Kerättyä aineistoa analysointiin laadullisen sisällönanalyysin keinoin. Aineiston säilyttämisen varmistamiseksi se siirrettiin erillisiin tiedostoihin Microsoft Excel-ohjelmassa. Sisällönanalyysia varten aineistoa jouduttiin koodaaman, erityisesti 3. avoimessa kysymyksessä tuotettuja vastauksia. Koodaus prosessi tapahtui ensin NVivossa, jossa

avoimista vastauksista löydettiin kysymyksen kannalta olennaisia koodeja. Löydetyt koodit vietiin jälkeenpäin värikoodattavaksi Microsoft Excel-tiedostoon, mikä helpotti löydettyjen koodien kategorisointia tiettyihin ryhmiin. Tämä varmisti myös sen, ettei vastausten olennaisia koodeja jätetty huomioimatta. Koodaukseen liittyviä haasteita olivat muun muassa vastausten tarkkuus sen suhteen, mitä kysytään. Tähän vaikutti myös osallistujien omien vastausten riittävä pohdinta. Osalla vastaajista oli vaikeuksia ymmärtää mitä kielisyötteellä tarkoitetaan, mikä tuotti haasteita muun muassa vastausten koodaamiselle, sillä aineisto pilkkoutuu pienempiin osiin, jolloin se luo riskejä olennaisten asioiden löytämiselle.

Analyysiosiossa 1. avoin kysymys vastasi tutkielman ensimmäiseen tutkimuskysymykseen. Tuotettuja vastauksia käytettiin esimerkkeinä havainnollistamaan niistä tehtyjä päätelmiä. Esimerkkien lisäksi käytettiin myös taulukkoja ja kaavioita, joiden kautta analyysin kannalta keskeistä tietoa pyrittiin kuvaamaan visuaalisin keinoin. Osallistujilla oli vahvoja uskomuksia siitä, että muodolliset oppimisympäristöt olivat suotuisia paremman syötteen saamiseksi. Kirjoittamisen näkökulmasta, muodollisista ympäristöistä saadulla kielisyötteellä uskottiin olevan merkittäviä vaikutuksia osallistujien sanaston ja kieliopin kehittymiseen. Tämän lisäksi osallistujat uskoivat saavansa parempaa kielisyötettä muodollisista ympäristöistä muun muassa siksi, että opetusta järjestävät instituutiot kuten, peruskoulu ja yliopisto tarjoavat pohjan sekä englannin oppimiselle, että kunnollisen kielisyötteen saamiseksi. Kirjoittaminen itsessään on haasteellinen taito, jota on vaikea kehittää ilman muodollisen oppimisen keinoja. Palautteella katsottiin olevan myös keskeinen rooli paremman syötteen saamiseksi, kun opettajalta saatu palaute vaikuttaa sekä omaan kirjoittamiseen, että myös uuden tiedon (syötteen) vastaanottamiseen. Palautteen merkitys heijastuu Longin (1996) teoriassa kuin myös Swainin (1995) teoriaan tuotetun kielen funktioista siinä mielessä, että osallistujat ovat kyenneet muokkaamaan tuotostaan annetun palautteen ja muodostamiensa päätelmien mukaan.

Osallistujista kuusi suosi muodollista ympäristöä puhetaidon näkökulmasta. Osallistujat uskoivat saaneensa parempaa syötettä luokkahuoneympäristössä, joka näin ollen tehosti heidän englannin kielensä kehittymistä. Samalla osallistujien vastauksissa korostui opettajakeskeinen opetus. Merkittävin huomio oli äidinkieleltään japanilaisen osallistujan vastauksessa, jossa mainittiin muodollisen ympäristön olevan merkittävä siksi, että mahdollisuudet saada parempaa puhutun kielen syötettä epämuodollisissa ympäristöissä olivat vähäiset, mikä puolestaan johtuu englannin kielen asemasta japaninkielisessä puhujayhteisössä. Tämä luo itsessään haasteita ja rajoittaa kielitaidon kehittymistä

kohdekielessä. Kuuden osallistujan joukossa korostui myös suullisen korjaavan palautteen (engl. *oral corrective feedback*) merkitys, jolla on vaikutusta paremman syötteen saamisessa kuin myös puheen tuottamisessa. Tähän liittyy myös ajatuksia osallistujien odotuksista siitä, millä tavalla virheitä tulisi korjata ja kenen tehtävä on korjata virheitä muodollisessa ympäristössä.

Enemmistö osallistujista uskoi saaneensa parempaa syötettä epämuodollisissa ympäristöissä sekä kirjoittamisen että puhumisen näkökulmasta. Osallistujat, jotka painottivat epämuodollista ympäristöä paremman kirjoitetun syötteen saamiseksi, mainitsivat harrastavansa kirjoitusaktiviteetteja, joihin lukeutui esimerkiksi englanninkielisten fanifiktioiden kirjoittaminen ja lukeminen. Tässä korostuu kuitenkin muodollisen opetuksen rooli, sillä kirjoittamisen harjoittaminen epämuodollisissa ympäristöissä on haastavaa, jossa opittuja taitoja on osattava jossain määrin hyödyntää. Kirjoitettua syötettä voidaan kuitenkin saada lukemalla esimerkiksi kaunokirjallisia tekstejä, fanifiktioita tai etsimällä kirjoituvinkkejä internetistä, joilla voidaan vaikuttaa oman kirjoitustaidon kehittymiseen. Puhumisen näkökulmasta osallistujat uskoivat saaneensa parempaa puhuttua kielisyötettä audiovisuaalisin keinoin esimerkiksi katsomalla tv-sarjoja ja elokuvia. Englanninkieliset tv-sarjat ja elokuvat koetaan mielekkäiksi aktiviteeteiksi siinä mielessä, että ne heijastavat tapaa, jolla kieltä käytetään jokapäiväisessä arjessa. Näiden lisäksi kielen käyttäjien välisellä vuorovaikutuksella on keskeinen merkitys muodollisen ympäristön ulkopuolella. TV:n ja elokuvien tavoin sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus englannin kielellä koetaan autenttiseksi tavaksi saada puhuttua syötettä, joka korostuu Longin IH teoriassa (1996). Osallistujien keskuudessa on noussut uskomuksia siitä, että puhumiseen liittyvä itsevarmuus nousisi, kun keskustelua käydään muiden kanssa kohdekielellä, mikä näin ollen vaikuttaisi myös kielen käyttöön kohdistuvan ahdistuksen vähenemiseen ja laskevan filtteriä perustuen Krashenin (1985) *the Affective Filter Hypothesis*-teoriaan. Itsevarmuuteen vaikuttavat merkittävästi kielenkäyttäjän oma motivaatio sekä tahto kommunikoida toisten kanssa.

Sekä muodollisen että epämuodollisen ympäristöjen suhteen oli myös niitä osallistujia, jotka pitivät molempia ympäristöjä merkittävinä sekä kirjoittamisen että puhumisen näkökulmasta. Toisin sanoen, vastauksista nousi uskomuksia siitä, että sekä kirjoitettua että puhuttua syötettä oli saatu tasavertaisesti molemmista ympäristöistä. Esimerkiksi osallistujat olivat maininneet saaneensa enemmän hyötyä syötteestä muodollisissa ympäristöissä muun muassa kieliopin suhteen, kun taas epämuodollisissa ympäristöissä saadulla syötteellä oli merkitystä sanaston kehittymiseen. Kaiken kaikkiaan tämä on ollut osallistujille ratkaisevinta

sekä kirjoittamisen että puhumisen kannalta. Osallistujat olivat osoittaneet molempien ympäristöjen olevan merkityksellisiä tiettynä ajankohtana, esimerkiksi erään osallistujan vastauksessa oli korostettu epämuodollisen ympäristön merkitystä aikuisiällä, kun taas muodollista ympäristöä painotettiin nuoremmalla iällä englanninkielisen syötteen saamiseksi.

Muut avoimet kysymykset pyrkivät löytämään vastauksia toisen tutkimuskysymyksen ratkaisemiseksi. Avoin kysymys 2:ssa nousi esille tiettyjä puhutun ja kirjoitetun kielisyötteen lähteitä, joita osallistujat pitivät merkittävinä aikaisempien oppimiskokemustensa perusteella. Kirjoitetun syötteen lähteitä olivat muun muassa kirjat, sarjakuvat, kirjoitusvinkit ja opetuksessa käytetty kirjallinen materiaali, kirjoitusharjoitukset sekä internetistä tai sähköisistä kirjastoista löytyvät tekstit. Puhutun syötteen lähteitä keskeisiä olivat sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus englannin kielellä natiivien ja ei-natiivien kanssa sekä puheharjoitukset osana kielenopetusta, kun taas audiovisuaalista puhuttua syötettä saatiin esimerkiksi englanninkielisistä TV-sarjoista, elokuvista, musiikista ja YouTube-videoista. Myös podcastit, äänikirjat, videopelit, TikTok sekä musikaalit koettiin itselle merkityksellisiksi lähteiksi.

Avoin kysymys 3:ssa nousi esille kolme keskeistä teemaa, joilla osallistujat selittivät mainitsemiensa lähteiden yleistä hyödyllisyyttä omassa oppimisessaan. Teemat oli muodostettu koodeista, jotka oli löydetty osallistujien vastauksista NVivo- sekä Microsoft Excel-ohjelmien avulla. Osallistujat uskovat, että lähteet olivat hyödyllisiä siksi, että ne vahvistivat sisäistä motivaatiota (engl. *intrinsic motivation*) oppia englantia. Lähteet olivat suorassa yhteydessä osallistujien mielenkiinnon kohteisiin ja ylläpitivät heidän motivaatiotaan kielen oppimisessa. Toinen esille noussut teema oli se, että osallistujat uskoivat lähteiden parantavan heidän kielitaitoaan merkittävästi, erityisesti sanastoa sekä kielioppia, kun taas kolmas teema liittyi kielitietoisuuden (engl. *language awareness*) vahvistamiseen. Tällä tarkoitetaan tietoisuutta siitä, että kielessä on variaatiota ja sitä käytetään eri tavalla eri yhteyksissä. Tietoisuus vahvistuu, kun kohdekielen kanssa ollaan tekemisissä arkipäiväisissä tilanteissa. Tämän myötä osallistujat uskovat sopeuttavansa omaa kieltään tiettyihin tilanteihin sopivaksi joko kirjoittaessaan tai puhuessaan.

Tutkimuksessa kyettiin löytämään konkreettisia vastauksia tutkimuskysymyksiin. Sen vahvuuksina olivat muun muassa tutkimuksen kvalitatiivinen luonne, tutkimuskohteena olevien osallistujien määrä sekä siihen sopivan tiedonkeruumenetelmän käyttö, sillä avoimilla kysymyksillä saatiin syvempää ymmärrystä tarkasteltavasta aihepiiristä. Vahvuuksista

huolimatta tutkimuksella oli myös haasteensa ja rajoituksensa. Näihin lukeutuvat esimerkiksi aiemman tutkimuksen vähäisyys oppilaiden uskomusten näkökulmasta sekä vaikeus määrittää, missä määrin osallistujien vastaukset heijastavat todellisuutta eikä niitä näin ollen voida yleistää koskemaan suurta joukkoa. Tämän lisäksi sisällönanalyysissa keskityttiin yleiskuvan saamiseen, joka rajoitti vastauksista tehtäviä päätelmiä. Tutkimuksen rajoituksiin lukeutui myös osallistujien tausta englannista vieraana kielenä. Syynä tähän on se, että suurin osa osallistujista oli äidinkieleltään suomalaisia, mikä näin ollen korosti enemmän heidän oppimistaustaansa toisin kuin niiden, joiden äidinkielenä oli jokin muu kieli.

Kaiken kaikkiaan tutkimus antoi merkittävää tietoa oppilaiden uskomuksista siitä, miten merkittävä rooli kielisyötteellä on kielen tuottamisen suhteen luoden samalla mahdollisuuksia jatkotutkimuksille. Esimerkiksi, osallistujien vastauksissa esiin nousseet asiat, kuten sanaston kehittyminen, voisi toimia keskiössä kirjoittamisen ja puhumisen sijaan. Tämän lisäksi tuleva tutkimus voisi ottaa huomioon eri englantia vieraana kielenä oppineita opiskelijoita, jolloin tutkimuksessa voisi vertailla kahta eri äidinkielistä kohderyhmää ja niiden tuottamia vastauksia. Koska tutkimuksesta on noussut esille merkittävää tietoa opiskelijoiden uskomuksista, näistä uskomuksista olisi hyötyä muun muassa kielenopettajille siinä mielessä, että ne auttavat ymmärtämään kielisyötteen lähteiden merkityksen ja kehittämään strategioita, joiden avulla oppilaiden olisi mahdollista saada syötettä tehokkaammin kohdekielellä.