

Attitudes towards the Role of English and Their Effect on Performance: A Comparative Study of Non-Finnish and Finnish Language Background EFL Learners

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In this master's thesis, the attitudes towards the role of English in Finland of learners with a non-Finnish and Finnish language background were studied. Additionally, given the well-established connection between attitudes and performance, another aim of this study was to see whether the attitudes of the learners with two different language backgrounds reflect their performance in English.

The participants of the study consisted of two groups of 9th graders: 27 learners with a non-Finnish language background (N-FLB) and 27 learners with a Finnish language background (FLB). The participants filled a questionnaire with three parts: questions related to their background information, attitudinal statements (utilizing a Likert-scale and two open-ended questions) and a vocabulary test, which was used as a measurement of performance in English. Attitudinal statements consisted of three categories: the importance of English in personal life, the role of English in Finnish society and the future of English in Finland. The data were analysed statistically and by using qualitative content analysis.

The results of the study indicated that learners from both groups had positive attitudes towards the role of English in their personal lives and society and that there are very few significant differences between the groups. Learners also agreed that the role of English will grow in Finland in the future. There were some differences between the groups, however. Additionally, when analysing whether the attitudes correlate with the performance, the results show that there was a stronger positive correlation between variables for learners from FLB.

Even though there were only a few significant differences between the groups, the learners from N-FLB had more positive views about the role of English in Finland. These results suggest that despite the home language of the learner, the learners agree on the importance of English and believe to use it in the future. Based on the results of the study, the correlation between attitudes and performance was positive for both groups but higher and more statistically significant for FLB. To attain a similar correlation of the learners with non-Finnish language backgrounds, more pedagogic research is needed.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, language learning attitudes, vocabulary test

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Abbreviations

EFL English as a foreign language

N-FLB Learners with non-Finnish language backgrounds

FLB Learners with Finnish language backgrounds

SD Standard deviation

1 Introduction

In the last 50 years or so, the focus of studies regarding language learning has shifted from the teacher and what is taught at schools to the learner. Nowadays it is generally accepted that a part of learning happens due to some innate and socially modified aspects that vary between one individual and another. These individual differences, such as attitudes, motivation, age, personality, aptitude, cognitive styles, learning strategies, foreign language anxiety, and willingness to communicate affect the outcome of the second language learning and may either facilitate or hinder the learning process (see e.g. Dörnyei 2015). In this thesis, I am going to discuss how one of these individual differences, the attitudes towards the role of English in Finland, affect the performance of two groups of *English as foreign language* (EFL) learners. English was chosen as a focus of this study since it plays a rather large role in Finnish society by being learnt and used in all levels of education, free time and many workplaces. Learning English as the first foreign language is also immensely popular in the age cohort of this study's participants: 99% of learners in the upper grades in the comprehension school choose English as their first foreign language (Education Statistics of Finland 2018).

Even though attitudes in language learning have been quite thoroughly researched in a global context (see, for instance, Thomas 2010), comparative studies with Finnish and non-Finnish speaking learners living in Finland are surprisingly rare. There have been a few attitude- and opinion-related studies in Finland, but they mainly concentrate on one specific age cohort or language group (see e.g. Grasz and Schlabach 2012; and Härmälä, Leontjev, and Kangasvieri 2016). Such approaches, however, have failed to address the differences between groups of people with different language background. More research on the attitudes of learners of varying language background is acutely needed: with the rising number of immigrants and non-Finnish speaking people in Finland (according to Official Statistics of Finland (2018), the number of people of foreign background in Finland has been steadily growing and exceeded 400,000 in 2018), the national school environment is changing.

Even though the amount of people with a non-Finnish language background is

increasing, to date, only a limited number of studies on this minority group have been published. Thus, new information is required in order to enable identical opportunities for learning for all children attending government-owned schools. Furthermore, the main focus on many of the previous Finnish studies, for example in the study by Härmälä, Leontjev and Kangasvieri (2016), has been attitudes towards language learning and the language in question. For this purpose, the element of the role of English in Finnish society was implemented in the thesis. This new and precise focus will provide much-needed information on the current importance of English in Finland and its future on the viewpoint of 9th graders.

It is my experience of working with pupils from a multicultural and multilingual comprehensive school during my pedagogical studies that have driven this research. I have witnessed the nine graders using a great amount of English in their everyday speech when talking with friends of different backgrounds, sometimes complementing their Finnish by using an English equivalent (with Finnish as a second language learners), or just using English via *code-switching* (mixing English and Finnish), even when a conversation in Finnish would have been intelligible. I started to contemplate the reasons behind this: how do they see the role of English in their lives? How do they view the role of English in society? Do they think that everybody should be able to speak English?

In this study, I will compare EFL learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds, what kinds of attitudes these two groups of learners have towards English, and how their attitudes affect their performance in English. The data were collected via a questionnaire that was filled in by participants during their English classes. There were altogether 54 9th grade participants: 27 learners with non-Finnish language backgrounds and 27 with Finnish backgrounds. The data were analysed by using quantitative statistical methods and qualitative content analysis. In this study, I will concentrate especially on the attitudes related to the role of English in Finnish society.

My research questions are:

- 1) How do the attitudes towards the role of English of learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds differ from each other?
- 2) How do the attitudes of English learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds reflect the learners' performance in English?

In section 2, I will introduce the theoretical background to the topic: attitudes in language learning and the role of English in Finland. In section 3, I will discuss the study, methods, and research participants. In section 4, I will present the results of this thesis. In the last two sections, I will discuss the findings in relevance to the theoretical background and present my conclusions.

2 Attitudes towards language learning and English in Finland

It has long been thought that some individual factors can affect the language learning process, rate or outcome by accelerating and facilitating or by hindering and impeding the learning process. Overall, the age of the learner (see e.g. Lenneberg 1967; Johnson and Newport 1989; Bley-Vroman 1989), personality (e.g. Costa & McRae 1992), foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1991), aptitude (see e.g. Carroll 1962), learning strategies (Oxford 1990), willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al. 1998), motivation (see for example Gardner 1985; Dörnyei and Ottó 1998) and attitudes have been widely discussed as possible aspects affecting a learner's learning process in foreign languages. A variety of different theories exist in the literature regarding individual differences. Before the 1980s, the research was heavily orientated towards only individual-related aspects, such as personality and age, but the socio-educational model by Gardner (1985) took the learner's social environment into consideration by proposing that aspects derived from social environments, such as attitudes and motivation, are also reasons for individual's success or failure. In this thesis, I focus on attitude because it can vastly affect the language proficiency of the learner. Other individual factors, such as motivation or willingness to communicate, have already been extensively researched (also in the Finnish context) and new theoretical viewpoints have been introduced in the past two decades (for example Dörnyei and Ottó 1998). Similar newer theories are lacking from attitude-related studies, which validates the need for more research on them. Additionally, a second motivation to choose attitudes as the main scope of this study was to compare learners of two different language background. As mentioned in the introduction, the linguistic situation in Finland has become more heterogenic due to the flow of immigrants.

2.1 Defining and classifying attitudes in language learning

During the last few decades, there have been many definitions of attitudes, but what is emphasized often varies. For instance, Lindzey and Allport (1954, 45) define attitude as "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with

which it is related". This definition emphasises the effect attitudes have on the learner's experiences, such as learning. While this definition seems to include the individual and the individual's behaviour, the social environment's effects are not as directly mentioned. In many other oft-cited attitude definitions, the effect of the social environment is often emphasized. For example, Brown (1987, 126) defines attitudes as items, which "develop early in childhood and are the result of parents' and peers' attitudes, contact with people who are different in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in the human experience" and Gardner as "an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent" (1985, 9). Contrary to Lindzey and Allport's definition, Brown's and Gardner's definitions also emphasise how attitudes are constructed.

In this thesis, I am defining attitudes as the rather unstable, emotion-related reaction of a person towards a situation, which might be language-specific and is usually formed in contact with others. This definition values both the background of the learner and the fact that the attitudes are still capable of changing. In the questionnaire, I have included attitude-related questions that concern the learner's beliefs and personal opinions but omitted the ones related to the close social environment, such as parental or teacher influence. Additionally, the scope of the study does not include questions about the learners' personal feelings towards English per se. These restrictions were chosen due to the limited scope of the study: attitudes towards the role of English in society, even though the social environment of the learner might affect the attitudes. The different definitions of Lindzey and Allport, Brown, and Gardner reflect the cornerstones of attitude research in second language acquisition: why does the learner have certain kinds of attitudes and how do they affect the learning process or outcome. In this thesis, I will concentrate on the latter view. This view was chosen since I aim to find out how the attitudes of the learners with two different language backgrounds reflect their performance in English.

As well as the definitions, the classification of attitudes can also be problematic. In his book, Gardner argues that attitudes can be classified as specific or general (Gardner 1985, 40). For example, positive attitudes towards learning English are a specific attitude and overall interest in foreign languages a general attitude. This classification is insufficient for this thesis since it does not explain the correlation between attitude and

learning. Later, Gardner proposes a classification by relevance to second language achievement (1985, 41). According to this classification, attitudes towards England and the English are much more relevant to classroom language learning than attitudes towards Finnish or general attitudes towards foreign language learning, for example. This classification, unlike the previous one, emphasises language learning and addresses how attitudes affect language learning.

According to Harding et al. (1954, 4) attitudes consist of cognitive, conative and affective components. Firstly, cognitive components are views, beliefs or expectations the learner has for ethnic (or linguistic) groups (ibid). The most common example of cognitive attitudes are stereotypes, which are simplified views of people of a certain origin, of certain features of languages, or of people who speak a certain language. Secondly, the conative component relates to action orientations: how would an individual react or behave in a certain situation (Harding et al. 1954, 4). Thirdly, the affective component includes feelings that affect the attitudes, such as general positivity towards a certain language (ibid). Harding et al., in their psychological review study on ethnic relations and prejudice, do not argue for language learning, but attitudes towards different ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the general idea of their research applies to language learning as well (for example, Gardner utilized their findings in his book on second language learning (1985, 85) and Baker in his book about bilingualism (1988, 113)). In language learning, a cognitive component could, for example, be how an individual believes the Spanish use their fricatives, a conative component how the individual behaves when the individual speaks Spanish and an affective how the individual feels about the Spanish language. The three components are often utilized in studies on language learning related attitudes. Most studies on second language attitudes are related to the latter component, but sometimes elements of the first two are included. I have used a slightly similar approach in this thesis and concentrated on cognitive attitudinal questions in the questionnaire, but also included some affective questions due to their importance in attitude-related studies. This view was chosen to gather data about how the participants believe the future of English will look like in Finland and how they see the importance of English in their personal lives. The latter category includes affective attitudinal questions.

2.1.1 Characterizing language learning attitudes

There are some features which characterize language learning attitudes. The first two features discussed here are characteristics of attitudes, while the rest are factors which form attitudes. The first of these characteristic features for attitudes is that they are not stable. For example, Baker (1988, 114) suggests that attitudes are persistent and relatively stable but adds that they can change and vary between experiences. However, the stable nature of attitudes is debatable, since attitudes by their very nature differ constantly between the circumstances, topics, environment, and teacher. There are many reasons for the swift in attitudes. Some might change when a specific teacher or a teaching method does not agree with the learner, the task is too easy or too difficult, or when the proficiency in the language grows. Overall negative attitudes towards a language group are known to change to more positive ones when an individual has a possibility to interact with the people in the other group (Harding et al. 1954, 48). The same stands for negative attitudes towards a language (ibid). So, when a learner has the opportunity to connect with the people who are native speakers of the language in question, more positive attitudes are likely to arise. As seen from above, context affects attitudes very heavily.

The second characteristic feature of attitudes is that attitudes are not always congruent with actual behaviour (Baker 1988, 114), which means that the use of language can be independent of attitudes and the learner can rely on other aspects, such as his or her personality, abilities and possible rewards for the situation. This means that even though the learner fully enjoys learning English, the individual can act as English is extremely uninteresting if, for example, the learner's peers pressure the learner. Negative attitudes can diminish for a short period if the learner is promised a reward for studying hard and if a person with very positive attitudes is extremely shy, the learner might not take advantage of social learning situations.

The last three features are factors which are related to the background of the learner. The third feature of attitude is that attitudes seem to be more positive with younger learners. Therefore, this feature can be seen as a factor which forms attitudes. This view is supported by Leppänen et al. (2009, 49), who in their large quantitative study ($N=1,495$) on English in Finland, found evidence which suggests that 60% of older participants (45 or older) felt that English is relative or completely irrelevant, whereas, from youngest

participants (15-24 years old), 80% felt that the language is at least fairly relevant in their personal lives. However, the results of their study cannot be unanimously accepted. Leppänen et al.'s (2009) findings on the older Finns and their more negative attitudes towards English might be due to the different education system of their youth and the smaller role of English in Finnish society a few decades ago. More recent studies on the subject seem to verify the results, however. For example, You and Dörnyei (2014) conducted a quantitative study on motivation and language learning attitudes for 10,000 Chinese English learners of different ages. The researchers discussed that the youngest participants', secondary school students', positive attitudes resulted more often in extra effort and energized language learning than the university students (You and Dörnyei 2014, 517). Slightly contrary results were suggested by Kormos, Kiddle, and Csisér (2011), who conducted a quantitative study for over 500 learners of different ages in Chile. The results implicated that attitudes towards English have a stout influence on persistence and effort of the learners, regardless of their age (Kormos, Kiddle, and Csisér 2011, 508). The slightly contradicting results of these studies suggest that even though younger learners have generally more positive attitudes towards English language learning, some aspects of learning derived from or related to attitudes differ on other individual and social factors.

A fourth, and also heavily debatable, feature is that female learners generally seem to possess more positive attitudes towards language learning than males. Similarly to the age of the learner, this feature is also a factor that moulds and forms attitudes. In his ten-year longitudinal mixed-methods study (which included, for example, questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations) on a vast number of English French learners ($N=18,000$), Burstall (1973, 1-2) concluded that girls have more positive attitudes towards French language learning, foreign people and future French learning, as well as general language learning. The girls in the study also revealed to be more willing to study more languages than male participants (Burstall 1973, 2). The difference seems to be there for older learners as well. Based on their quantitative study on around 650 students enrolled in language classes in the United States, Cochran, McCallum, and Bell study argued that female college students have slightly more positive attitudes towards language learning (2010, 578). Although several studies have found out that females have more positive

attitudes towards language learning, some studies have found no such correlation between attitudes and gender. In Thomas' questionnaire-based study on 170 students enrolled in language classes in a university in the United States (2010, 543-544), the gender of the participant, besides with earlier language studies or origin of the participants showed no significant correlation to attitudes possessed by the participants. Additionally, Cortés (2002, 326) conducted a mixed-methods study on circa 200 school-aged children in the United States on instrumental and integrative attitudes towards foreign language learning and found out that female and male learners had equally positive attitudes towards language learning. It could be possible that even though positive attitudes are more common with female learners, other aspects, such as home language, aptitude, or other individual differences have more weight on the nature of language learning attitudes. For instance, in her study, Cortés found convincing results on the importance of the home language of the learners. Those learners, who only spoke one language at home, did not have as positive attitudes towards language learning as those learners who had two or more home languages (Cortés 2002, 328).

The fifth feature is that it seems that social circumstances, such as parental encouragement and parents' attitudes affect attitudes related to language learning. The fifth feature is also a factor that helps to form an attitude, in contrast with being a characteristic feature like the instability and incongruence of attitudes. Burstall (1973, 4) found evidence on parental encouragement having a significant effect on female learners, whereas the boys do not experience as much encouragement or support on language learning. According to Burstall's study, this difference comes from parental attitudes and the beliefs parents hold for their children future employment possibilities (ibid). Considering the changed social roles of men and women, the results of this finding are relatively likely not to be reliable in the 21st century. Overall, parental influence on attitudes cannot be diminished and according to many studies, parents can transfer their attitudes to their children due to their social importance in children's lives. For example, Harding et al. mentioned already in 1954 that parents have a "major responsibility for the transmission of cultural norms for intergroup attitudes" (Harding et al. 1954, 27). Similarly, Baker (1988, 114) mentions the parental effects in his book by stating that attitudes are learnt, even though they cannot be inherited genetically. More recent studies

have validated these findings as well. In a study by Kormos, Kiddle, and Csizér (2011, 509), the researchers found out that parental encouragement has a strong correlation to second language learning attitudes; more precisely, on language learning enjoyment and the pleasure gained from learning. The studies by Burstall, Harding et al. and Baker have highlighted the importance of parents or guardians to a child's language-related attitudes, but as mentioned earlier, many other factors affect attitudes, and they are prone to change and thus the parental influence can diminish.

2.1.2 Previous studies on attitudes towards language learning

It is now well established from a variety of studies that attitudes affect second language proficiency. For instance, in their quantitative study on 60 female Mexican vocational school-aged English learners in the United States, Oller, Baca and Vigil (1977, 182) found out that high attainment is highly correlative with positive attitudes. Similar findings have been found in foreign language contexts as well. In their large quantitative study of attitudes, attributes and aptitudes, Cochran, McCallum, and Bell (2010, 577) discovered that out of the three aspects, attitudes towards foreign language learning leading to aptitude are the most noteworthy measurements of language learning success by predicting circa 20 per cent of language performance. As mentioned previously, attitudes do not always affect behaviour and sometimes even the most positively oriented learner can fail in performance.

When the second language is learnt in a school environment, it can create and strengthen negative or positive attitudes. For example, in his study on 150 university students attaining a B.A. in English in Iran, Stevenson (1977, 207) proved that some attitudes are results of poor teaching and therefore teachers should pay attention to diminishing negative attitudes towards language learning and strive for reinforcing positive attitudes. In a much recent study, Cortés (2002, 329) found similar results in her study on attitudes towards language learning. In the qualitative part of her study, the majority of the learners said that the teacher and the teacher's personality and methods are key factors in their language learning (ibid.). Attitudes towards language teachers can naturally have a positive effect on learning, too. Waninge, Dörnyei, and De Bot (2014) conducted a mixed-method study to 28 11- and 12-year-old students in a Dutch school by

classroom observation and a questionnaire and build language learning profiles for some of the students. The researchers found out that a student who had a positive attitude towards their Spanish language teacher also was more positively engaged in classroom activities (Waninge, Dörnyei, and De Bot 2014, 718). The downsides of the study were, however, that the sample size was very limited, and the results may be impossible to generalize to a larger public. Overall, Baker states that attitudes acquired and moulded by education have far-reaching effects and are more likely to last longer than evaluations received at a classroom (1988, 113). This is also related to the dynamic nature of attitudes.

Additionally, there is an unambiguous relationship between attitudes and language choice. In his quantitative study on language choices and attitudes of university students, Thomas (2010, 548) found out that the majority of students had an instrumental orientation towards foreign language learning. The study introduced students with a variety of language choices, but in all languages, instrumental orientation and willingness to study language solely for education or work thrived. In a school environment, such findings are not surprising. Many students think about their future career or education when picking a language to study, especially in a higher education setting (as in Thomas' study) and especially when it is obligatory to study a language.

As seen from the previous paragraph, integrativeness in attitudes and motivation are very closely connected. Furthermore, motivation can create positive attitudes and low motivation emphasise negative attitudes. Gardner (1985, 10) even defines motivation via attitude: "motivation is the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language", and Dörnyei and Ottó list attitudes towards the second language as one of the main factors that influence motivation in their Process Model of Motivation (1998, 53). Throughout the history of motivation-related second language acquisition research, there have been several studies that have found evidence on the relationship between attitudes and motivation. For example, instrumental and integrative motivation towards a certain language can impact language attitudes. Similar to Thomas' study (2010), Oller, Baca and Vigil (1977, 178-179) found out that the Mexicans living in the USA have generally quite instrumental motives towards learning English (for example, learning English to get a job and for job training were very common statements). Due to the participant's strongly instrumental

motives, the attitudes towards Americans were not as positive as attitudes towards Mexicans (1977, 179-180). Even though the attitudes towards Americans were not negative as such, the attitudes became more negative as the participants' proficiency became higher (1977, 181). Thus, attitude can also be a key factor when a second language learning individual tries to assimilate to the surrounding culture. In his quantitative study about the attitudes of Arab minority students learning a second language in Israel and Canada, Abu-Rabia (1996, 543) concludes that the learners with a non-mainstream language background had mainly instrumental orientations towards Hebrew (in Israel) and English (in Canada) and did not clearly show willingness to integrate with the culture. The results of Abu-Rabia's study are in line with Oller, Baca and Vigil (1977) and other researchers as well. It is also possible that sometimes the minority population attains negative attitudes because the learners might have feelings of discrimination and therefore want to reject the language prevailing in the society.

Overall, these studies discussed here highlight the effect attitudes have on language learning: whether they affect grades, proficiency, motivation, behaviour, or the willingness to study languages.

2.2 The role of English in Finland

Globally speaking, English is without a doubt the most commonly used language in trade, education and business, especially in the Western countries. Besides being one of the official languages of the European Union, it is also the official language of several countries (mostly, in former territories of the British Empire). In some areas, the role of English can be seen as a threat to smaller languages. For example, in Finland, there has been an increasing amount of discussion recently about how the growing importance of English might be threatening the prospects of Finnish by becoming more and more common in businesses and customer services (Institute for the Languages of Finland 2018). The statement by the Institute for the Languages of Finland has received a lot of contra-arguments, but the main idea behind the statement stands: English is becoming more prominent in Finland. English is reflected in the speech of Finns via code-switching and by catch-phrases, such as *I don't know* and *so what* (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003, 3). Since the number of English-speaking immigrants is very low (Official Statistics of

Finland 2017b), the increasing use of English is likely due to other matters, such as globalization and media. Many immigrants are also expected to use English as *lingua franca* to enable communication.

Even though English is not a compulsory foreign language in the schools of Finland, it is widely spoken and learnt all around Finland. Education in all levels, business and services around the country are available in English. According to Leppänen et al., a clear majority of Finns believe that the importance of English will grow in the future (Leppänen et al. 2009, 143). Additionally, at least 90% of the participants considered English language skills to be vital in Finland, and that only small children and the old can have lower language skills (Leppänen et al. 2009, 144). However, it is noteworthy to mention that Leppänen et al. did not conduct any language test and the results are only based on the perceptions of the participants. As of 2020, Finnish children start learning a foreign language in the first grade (Ministry of Education and Culture 2018). Previously, the learning of the first foreign language started in the third grade with English being the most popular foreign language chosen in the third grade since in 2018, circa 91% of children decided to learn it as their first foreign language (Education Statistics of Finland 2018). Swedish, even though being the second official language of Finland, is only studied as a first foreign language by 1% of the age cohort in Finnish-speaking schools (ibid.). According to the statistics from Ministry of Education in 2018, on the upper levels of comprehensive schools (grades 7-9), 99% of students have chosen English as their first foreign language (Education Statistics of Finland 2018).

When compared to other countries, Finns study English for a relatively long period. As mentioned, in the spring of 2020, all first graders start learning a foreign language, which means that the great majority of Finnish pupils have learnt English for nine years by the end of their comprehensive school. For many, the learning continues in upper-level education. According to Leppänen et al. (2009,79) around 34% of Finns study English for 6-10 years, 2% for 11-15 years and 16% for 3-5 years. Although Leppänen et al. conducted a vast study, their research is already ten years old and thus the percentages might have changed. Unfortunately, no newer data on the overall duration of English studies were found.

The English proficiency of Finns is extremely high, which relatively likely reflects

the number of years Finns spend studying English in schools. According to Education First's English Proficiency Index (EPI), Finnish people have a very high proficiency in English with Finns ranked 6th in Europe (8th worldwide) in their English language skills in 2018 (EF 2018, 22). The index by EF is not a peer-reviewed study but the sheer quantity of the data makes the results more reliable since the data consisted of over 1.3 million participants. Finns themselves do not have as high opinions of their language skills: in the results of the study by Leppänen et al. (2009, 80-83), 50% of the Finns with an English proficiency stated that they have relatively fluent or mediocre language skills while only around 13% presumed that their language proficiency is fluent. Contradicting Leppänen et al.'s study, Official Statistic of Finland (2017a) has published a study which around 85 per cent of adult learners perceive their language skills at least mediocre. It is noteworthy, however, that the studies by Leppänen et al. and Official Statistic of Finland (2017a) are using different methods and estimation scale, which makes the comparison between studies very hard. Official Statistic of Finland (2017a) uses four-item scale (from knowing only a few words to being a fluent user of English), while Leppänen et al. (2009, 80) utilize a six-item scale (from not knowing English at all to being a fluent user of English). All in all, it can be verified that the English language skills of Finnish learners are high, and the majority of learners perceive it as such as well.

The language proficiency of non-Finnish learners is not as thoroughly studied. Even though the people with a first-generation immigrant background may not have had the opportunity to study English for as long as Finns, 75% of people with immigrant backgrounds living in Finland mention that they have at least a limited proficiency in English (Nieminen & Larja 2015). Even though the percentage for the immigrants is lower than for the population with a Finnish background, the percentage is still high. The English skills of non-Finnish (or non-Swedish) speaking minorities in Finland have not been as methodically studied as the skills of the main population and thus, unfortunately, no more information on the language skills of the minority was found. The lack of studies on learners with non-Finnish language backgrounds was also a motivation for this thesis.

Outside the school environment, English has obtained a relatively strong position in Finnish society. Many businesses working in Finland have chosen to use English in their everyday operations instead of relying completely on either one of the national official

languages. Due to the growing number of immigrants and non-Finnish speaking residents in the country, many companies require their employees to be able to cope with English, especially in leading positions and in customer service (Virkkula 2008, 414). This has been recognized in the city of Espoo, for example, where the city has decided to use English as a third official language in all municipal-owned premises (Jaskari 2017). Overall, the results of the study by Leppänen et al. suggest that circa 46% of Finns use English at their work on a weekly basis (2009, 105). It must be kept in mind, though, that the statistics of Leppänen's study are 10 years old and therefore the number of people using English at work might have grown due to accelerated globalization and the flow of refugees and immigrants. For example, in 2009, there were around 200,000 foreign-language speaking inhabitants in Finland, while in 2018, the number had almost already doubled with altogether 400,000 inhabitants, whose native language was not Finnish (Official Statistics of Finland 2018).

In my questionnaire, I have implemented questions from the personal use of English (e.g. whether the participants perceive English to be important to their free time now or in the future) and from society's use of English in education and work-life, as well as the relation of English to other languages.

3 The present study

In this section of the thesis, I will discuss my methodology. First, I will introduce my data collection methods and research participants and at the end of this section, data analysis methods. The study aims to find out answers to the following questions: 1) How do the attitudes towards the role of English of learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds differ from each other? and 2) How do the attitudes of English learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds reflect the learners' performance in English?

3.1 Data collection method

What we know about attitudes is largely based on quantitative studies that investigate how attitudes towards a language or language learning affect learning and what kinds of features affect attitudes. To name a few, Abu-Rabia (1996), Stevenson (1977) and Burstall (1973) all relied on quantitative methods. Questionnaires with Likert-scale (or similar scales) have been utilized in order to gather information on the personal views on the subjects. Several studies also complement quantitative research by implementing qualitative aspects, such as interviews and open-ended questions. In this section, I will first discuss my methods for attitudinal questions (both Likert-scale statements and open-ended questions) and then the vocabulary test in section 3.1.2.

3.1.1 The attitudinal questions

For this study, I conducted quantitative research by using a questionnaire. Many researchers have utilised questionnaires to measure and analyse the attitudes of the learners (see e.g. Stevenson 1977; Ahmed 2015; Leppänen et al. 2009). A major advantage of a quantitative study is that the results attained by a quantitative study are universally generalizable in an ideal situation (Dörnyei 2007, 34). Additionally, qualitative open-ended questions were implemented to the questionnaire to gain in-depth results from the participants in their own words. Data for this study were collected by using a Webropol-online survey, which the research participants filled in with their tablets or mobile phones. Some participants wanted to fill in the questionnaire by using a paper version. Both the

paper and the online answers were converted into one file. The questionnaire was in Finnish, but an additional English version was given to one group which attends most classes in English and in which there are a couple of students who do not speak Finnish at all. The data were collected in May 2019.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part included questions about the participants' background information, such as gender, birth country, language spoken at home, age of starting to learn English and whether the subjects planned on living in Finland for the next five years (see appendix 1 and 2 for the Finnish and English versions of the questionnaire). The second part of the questionnaire had statements considering the participant's attitudes towards English. The participants answered the statements by using a five-point Likert-scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). A Likert-scale is generally used in quantitative studies (e.g., in Cochran, McCallum and Bell (2010) and Csizér and Dörnyei (2005)) and makes the results controllable and easily analysable. Additionally, a Likert-scale has been utilized in the majority of quantitative attitude studies since it is easy to understand for the participants. However, there are downsides when considering the scale. Due to the limited options, the exact feelings or thoughts of the participants are hard to grasp – if a participant, for example slightly agrees with a statement, he or she has to answer either agree or neither agree nor disagree due to the nature of the scale. Another downside with a Likert-scale is that the participants can avoid extremes and answer agree or disagree, even when they had more extreme opinions on the matter. Luckily, the latter problem did not manifest itself in the collected data, since the participants utilized the total scale in their answers. Questions 6-8 of the questionnaire were related to the attitudes towards English on the learner's personal level and questions 9-16 to the attitudes towards the role of English in Finnish society. The latter questions were divided into two smaller categories: questions 9-13 were about the importance of English in Finnish society and questions 14-16 about the future of English in Finland (with one question about the future of English in the learner's personal life). The questions have been modified from the National survey on the English language in Finland by Leppänen et al. (2009). Questions number 14, 15, and 16 were modified from Ahmed's (2015) attitudinal study. The last two questions in the questionnaire were qualitative open-ended questions. These questions

were chosen to bring a qualitative perspective to the research. I will discuss the third part of the questionnaire in the next sub-chapter.

3.1.2 The vocabulary test

The third part of the questionnaire was a vocabulary test, which was implemented to assess the participants' level of English. Vocabulary knowledge can be simply defined as the lexical knowledge of words and their meanings, and the grammatical function of the words (Nation 2001, 26). Thus, a vocabulary test has been discussed to be a valid measurement for performance and has been used in many studies to assess the learners' language levels (for instance, Henriksen & Danelund 2015). A short, modified version of the Vocabulary Levels Test by Nation (1990) was used to assess the learners' performance in this thesis. Frequency tests, such as the Vocabulary Levels Test by Nation, are based on corpora, and they utilize words which are grouped by the frequency of their occurrence. The idea behind this is that the more frequently a word occurs in a certain corpus, the more likely it is that a learner recognizes the word. Overall, frequency tests are quite often used to test non-native speakers (Nation 2001, 363). As in Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test, the test used in my study has a word recognition tasks for some words in English, where the participants must match a definition and the word from a list. To make random guessing more difficult, the test was made with multiple-choice questions and there were three words in every question that did not fit any definition. This was also chosen to make the vocabulary test easy to understand and to fill. The words used in the test were chosen and modified from the Vocabulary Levels Test by Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham (2001, 82-88) from the following levels: 2000, 3000, 5000 and 10,000. The test by Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham is based on Nation's original Vocabulary Levels Test. As mentioned earlier, there were three tasks per each level in my test. The higher the frequency level, the less likely learners are to know the words.

To explain the marking, I am providing an example of the test given to the participants:

26. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. desolate
2. fragrant
3. gloomy
4. profound
5. radical
6. wholesome

good for your health

sweet-smelling

dark or sad

As the example shows, the marking for the vocabulary test is very candid. Each correct definition will grant the participant a point and therefore a participant can get three points per each question. Since there are three questions per each level (2000, 3000, 5000 and 10,000), and if answered correctly, the participant can get nine points for each level, the participant's maximum score for the whole vocabulary test is 36.

Finnish National Agency for Education has given instructions that to have a good grade by the end of their comprehensive school, English learners in Finland should attain level B1 in English (Finnish National Curriculum 2014, 351-352), which means that none of the students is even expected to know the higher frequency level words. However, higher frequency level words were chosen to be implemented into the vocabulary test to see whether some learners know the words even though they are not expected to. Similarly, words from the frequency level of 1000 were not utilized in this test since the participants are likely to know all of them already due to their several years of studying.

3.2 The research participants

The research participants were 9th graders in a Finnish multinational, multilingual comprehensive school in South-Western Finland. Altogether, 84 participants participated

in the study. From the results, 27 learners with a non-Finnish language background and 27 learners with Finnish language background were chosen. For this study, criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows: those learners, who were either born in Finland or somewhere else, but did not speak Finnish at home with their parents, were counted as learners with a non-Finnish language background, and those learners, whose birth country was Finland and the language spoken at home was Finnish, were considered as learners with a Finnish language background. None of the participants spoke Swedish or any other official minority languages of Finland at home. Some participants' answers had to be eliminated to guarantee the validity of the results: for example, learners, who had not understood the last part of the questionnaire (two had answered the vocabulary test by using two words per each definition) and a learner who had intentionally left all answers blank on a paper version of the questionnaire. Some results with learners with Finnish background were eliminated to guarantee an even amount of results between the two groups of learners. Those learners, whose birth country was not Finland but had been speaking Finnish at home since birth were excluded as well as those learners, who stated that they were not probably going to live in Finland in the next five years. The latter participants were excluded so that they could have more convincingly rated the statements about their attitudes towards the role of English in Finland. Even though the overall number of participants, 54, is not especially high (a minimal requirement for participants in a quantitative study mentioned by Dörnyei (2007, 99) was 60), the questionnaire has two open questions which bring qualitative elements to the study and can, therefore, complement a slightly smaller sample. In this study, I will refer to the non-Finnish speaking group of learners as N-FLB and the group with Finnish speaking learners as FLB.

The participants in both groups, learners with non-Finnish and Finnish language background, were homogenous when considering their gender. In both groups, there were 13 females and 14 males. The learners with a non-Finnish language background had a great variety of home languages and countries of origin with Albanian being the most spoken language with six speakers.

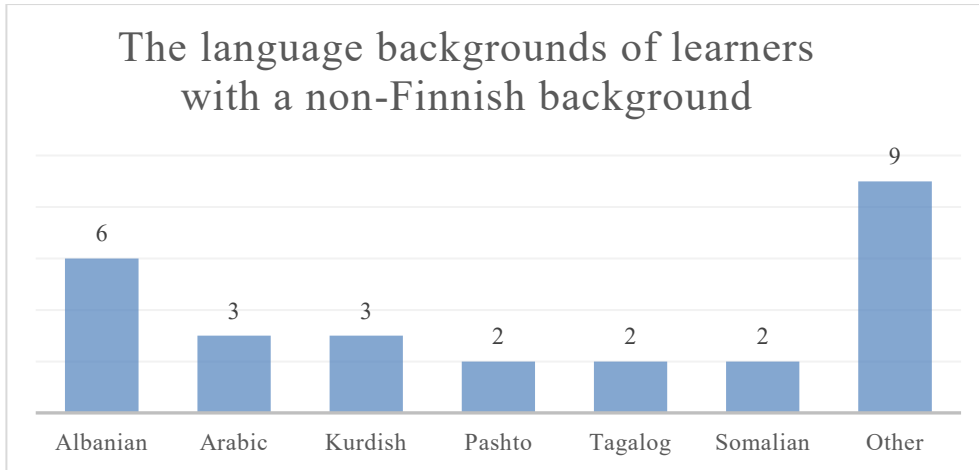


Figure 1 The language background of learners of N-FLB

In figure 1, the language background for the learners who did not speak Finnish at home is illustrated. Nine languages, such as Bulgarian, Mandarin, and Bengali, were only mentioned once and are labelled as 'other' in the figure. 14 of the learners with a non-Finnish language background were born in Finland while the rest 13 were born in other countries. All those who had a Finnish language background were born in Finland. The majority in both groups started to learn English at the age of nine or ten, as can be seen in figure 2.

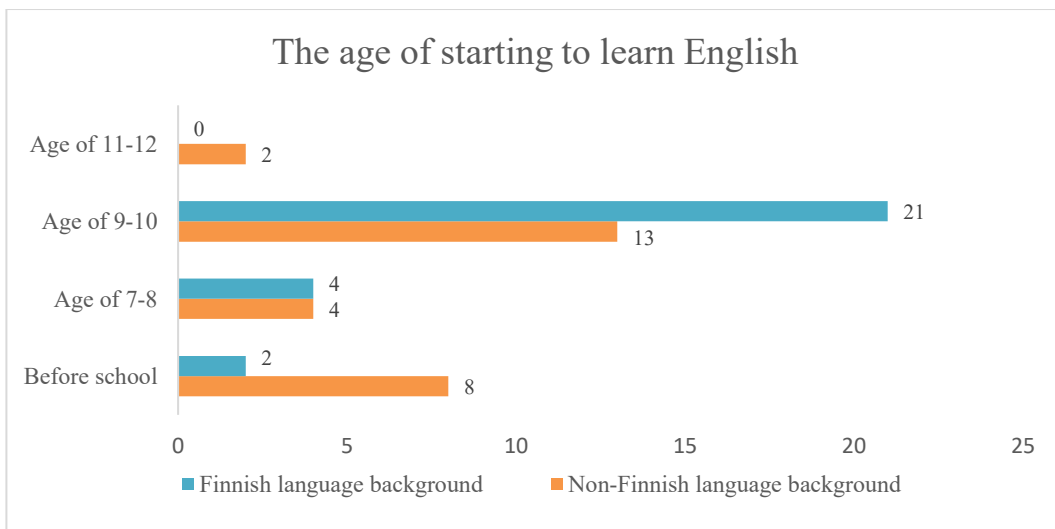


Figure 2 The age of starting to learn English

In Finland, nine or ten is the age when the children are in the third grade and the majority of learners with a Finnish background and most of the learners with a non-Finnish language background started to study their first foreign language. The group with the learners with a Finnish language background did not have a vast variation in the age of starting to learn English: only two participants had started to learn English before school and four at the age of 7-8 (first or second year of school). In the other group, however, the variation was much higher. Six learners had started to learn English before the age of six, six at the age of 6-7 and two at the age of 11-12.

3.3 Data analysis method

To answer the first research question the analysis of the attitudinal questions was needed. The results of the Likert-statements were analysed quantitatively, and the open-ended questions were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. A computer analysing programme *IBM SPSS version 25* (SPSS) was used in order to manage the data as efficiently as possible. Descriptive statistic calculations, such as frequencies, medians, modes and means were calculated to present an overall description of the results for the attitude statements. Standard deviation (SD) and means were also presented, for instance, by Cortés in her comparative study (2002, 323). Even though modes and medians were calculated for the attitude statements, they showed only very minimal differences, if any, and are therefore not presented in the analysis. Moreover, a Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to see whether the results for N-FLB and FLB for each attitude were normally distributed or not (see table 1). A Shapiro-Wilk test has been proven to be a very accurate test for normality when the data are skewed (Yap and Sim 2011) and is thus used often to calculate the normality of smaller sample sizes. The last attitudinal statement, *in 10 years, people will use more English than Finnish in Finland*, was normally distributed for FLB, but did not follow normal distribution for N-FLB.

Table 1 Normality in the data

Statement	Normal distribution assumed for all groups
English is important for me in school	No

English is important for me in my free time	No
I want to learn English	No
Everybody needs to speak English in Finland	No
English is more important in Finland than Finnish	No
English is more important in Finland than Swedish	No
English is the most important foreign language in Finland	No
English should be one of the official languages in Finland	No
In 10 years, people will use more English than now in Finland	No
English will help me with my future career	No
In 10 years, people will use more English than Finnish in Finland	Only to FLB

The standard deviations are presented in the results in the same table with the frequencies and means for each attitudinal statement. Because the great majority of the data were not normally distributed, non-parametric Mann Whitney U-test was needed to analyse the differences between the language groups. Mann Whitney U-test reveals whether there is a significance between the groups in the perceptions towards the attitude statement by providing the probability value. I have used the cut-off point of 0.05 when discussing probability values (p-value), to resolve whether a result is statistically significant or not. The p-value of .05 is frequently used in L2 research to indicate the significance of a result (Dörnyei 2007, 210).

For the open-ended questions, quantitative analysis methods consisted of frequency calculations. Qualitative content analysis was implemented especially to the latter of the two questions (*how do you see the future of English in Finland*) for the analysis of non-numerical data. The division of the answers was derived from the data, as suggested by Dörnyei (2007, 245). He also calls this type of method as a latent level analysis, since it strives to analyse the data on a deeper level Dörnyei (2007, 246). A downside of this chosen method is the subjectivity of it Dörnyei (2007, 38) since the analysis is always interpretive. Therefore, the results of this study show some views held by learners with two different language backgrounds, which, while not generalisable to a larger population,

still provide valuable information on the thoughts of several individuals. Qualitative content analyses were also capitalized by Waninge, Dörnyei, and De Bot (2014) and Cortés (2002), for example.

To answer the second research question comparative calculations were utilized. Correlation coefficients were calculated by Spearman's rho to see how attitudes and performance correlate with each other. Spearman's rho is based on the rank order of the ordinal variables and is commonly used in statistical analyses when the data are not normally distributed (Dörnyei 2001, 230). However, before conducting the Spearman's rho, the vocabulary size needed to be assessed. Analysis of the vocabulary size of the learners was done by calculating the percentages of correct answers. Nation and Beglar (2007, 12) discussed how the results of the Vocabulary Levels Test can be interpreted by multiplying the number of correct answers by hundred, which then shows the correct vocabulary size of the learner. However, a similar analysis cannot be implemented to this study, because the interpreting technique used by Nation and Beglar only works with a 140-item test battery. In the analysis of the results of the vocabulary test, descriptive statistics such as means, modes, medians and standard deviations (SD) were also calculated. Significances of the differences between groups in the vocabulary test were calculated by using a Pearson's Chi-Square test because the results did not follow the normal distribution. Again, the p-value of 0.05 was utilized.

Moreover, the results for the basic information questions were analysed by using crosstabulation to provide comparative data between two or more categories. Even though the gender of the participants or the time they have been learning English is not essential when answering the research questions, the comparative analyses were conducted to see whether these two variables explain the different perceptions.

4 Results

In this chapter, I will discuss the results of the statements 6-16, open-ended questions 17-18, the vocabulary test, and the results of the basic information questions.

4.1 Attitude statements

In this section, I will analyse the data for my first research question: *How do the attitudes towards the role of English of learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds differ from each other?* Questions 6-16 were answered by using a Likert scale (scale from one to five). Since the questions measured the attitudes of the learners and whether the learners disagreed or agreed with the given sentences, I will here call the questions statements. This section 4.1 is divided into three subsections to show the difference between the themes of the statements. The first theme is the importance of English in the participants' personal lives, the second the role of English in Finnish society and the third the future of English in Finland and the participants' future lives. The analysis of the results for the open-ended questions is included in the third category since the open-ended questions are thematically similar.

4.1.1 The importance of English in the participants' personal lives

I will first discuss three statements, which cover personal opinions and the role of English in the learners' personal life. The first statement is number 6: *English is important for me in school.* As can be seen in table 2, the majority of learners in both groups agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, whereas only two learners disagreed. On the group level, the mean was higher for N-FLB, as can be seen in table 2. The mean difference is relatively high, almost half a unit (0.49). SD was 0.751 for N-FLB and 0.829 for FLB. The Mann Whitney U-test signaled that the participants from N-FLB had generally more agreeing attitudes towards the statement than the participants from FLB ($p=0.013$).

Table 2 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *English is important for me in school*

	Dis-agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
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N-FLB: Non-Finnish language background	0	4	4	19	4.56	0.75
FLB: Finnish language background	2	2	15	8	4.07	0.83
Total	2	6	19	27		

The second statement regarding attitudes was: *English is important for me in my free time*. As can be seen in table 3, a clear majority either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, whereas only two learners disagreed. None of the learners strongly disagreed with the statement. On the group level, the mean was slightly higher for N-FLB (the difference was 0.4). The standard deviations were 0.70 for N-FLB and 0.94 for FLB. According to the results of the Mann Whitney U-test, the p-value was relatively high ($p=0.103$), which means that there are no significant differences between the groups.

Table 3 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *English is important for me in my free time*

	Dis-agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
N-FLB: Non-Finnish language background	0	3	9	15	4.44	0.70
FLB: Finnish language background	2	5	10	10	4.04	0.94
Total	2	8	19	25		

The third statement, statement 8, was: *I want to learn English*. As visible in table 4, the vast majority strongly agreed. None of the participants disagreed with this statement. On the group level, N-FLB had a marginally higher mean than FLB, as table 4 illustrates. The difference is extremely minimal (0.15) so no significant results ($p=0.246$) could be found. The standard deviations were also very similar: 0.69 for N-FLB and 0.64 for FLB.

Table 4 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *I want to learn English*

	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
N-FLB: Non-Finnish language background	3	4	20	4.63	0.69
FLB: Finnish language background	2	10	15	4.48	0.64
Total	5	14	35		

Statements 6-8 measured the personal attitudes towards English. Overall, the results show that on a personal level, N-FLB had slightly more positive attitudes towards English. Based on the study by Cortés (2002, 328), learners with more than one home language had more positive attitudes towards language learning, which might partly explain the slightly more positive attitudes of N-FLB. There were some learners with more than one non-Finnish home language and all of them are exposed to a great amount of Finnish at school, too, thus being almost equivalent to a second home language. The attitudes of FLB, though, were also very positive. General positive attitudes of the young learners in both groups are in line with the findings of You and Dörnyei (2014) and Leppänen et al. (2009). The first statement, *English is important for me in school*, was the only statement that provided significant differences between the groups. The reasons for this finding are unclear. The most likely cause for the difference between the groups is that the participants from FLB might use other, more informal, ways of learning than the learners with non-Finnish language backgrounds. These informal ways of learning could, for example, be games, TV-series and social media. Overall, the findings for the first category suggest that all learners, whether they have a Finnish or non-Finnish language background, want to learn English and perceive it to be important in their free time.

4.1.2 The role of English in Finnish society

Statements 9-13 cover the role of English in Finnish society. When considering the first statement of this theme, the statement 9, *everybody needs to speak English in Finland*, the results were relatively positive but there was some deviation, as can be seen in table 5. Participants in FLB (learners with a Finnish language background) had more neutral

answers and participants in N-FLB (learners with a non-Finnish language background) disagreed a little more than the participants in the other group. On a group level, the mean was just slightly higher for N-FLB (0.04 units). Mann Whitney U-test revealed that no significant differences can be attained ($p= 0.862$). The standard deviation was lightly skewed for both (1.16 for N-FLB and 0.97 for FLB).

Table 5 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *everybody needs to speak English in Finland*

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
N-FLB	2	2	4	12	7	3.74	1.16
FLB	1	1	7	12	6	3.78	0.97
Total	3	3	11	24	13		

The next statement, statement number 10 was: *English is more important in Finland than Finnish*. For this statement, the vast majority either strongly disagreed or disagreed. However, the number of neutral answers was significant, and six learners also agreed with the statement, as can be seen in table 6. Even though there have been arguments over the growing role of English in Finland and how English is pushing Finnish aside especially in businesses (Institute for the Languages of Finland 2018), the participants of this study quite unanimously disagreed with the statement of English being more important in Finland than Finnish. On the group level, the mean for N-FLB (learners with a non-Finnish language background) was somewhat higher, as can be seen in table 6 (the difference for mean was 0.34 units). The p-value was 0.232, which means that no significant differences occur between the participants of N-FLB and FLB for this statement. The standard deviations were very similar: 1.05 for N-FLB and 0.997 for FLB.

Table 6 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *English is more important in Finland than Finnish*

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD

N-FLB	5	11	7	3	1	2.41	1.05
FLB	9	10	5	3	0	2.07	0.997
Total	14	21	12	6	1		

Statement number 11, *English is more important in Finland than Swedish*, showed mainly positive attitudes, as can be seen in table 7. In both groups, most of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed. Altogether, three participants from both groups disagreed with the statement. The results of this statement are seemingly in line with the recent publication by Pitkänen and Westinen (2017, 14), who discussed that Finns under 30 have more negative views towards the role of Swedish in Finnish society than older Finns ($N=3153$). According to their quantitative study, only 53 per cent of participants under 30 perceived Swedish as an essential part of the society in Finland, whereas for pensioners, the number was 77 per cent (ibid). In the study, the participants with lesser skills in Swedish also perceived it to be less important in society (Pitkänen and Westinen 2017, 14). Whether the reason for negative attitudes towards Swedish is the same for the participants of my study remains unclear since their skills in Swedish were not tested. On the group level, N-FLB (learners with a non-Finnish language background) had a modestly higher mean (difference of 0.11 units). The negative attitudes towards Swedish were rather unanimous between the groups (p -value 0.791), as were the standard deviations (1.14 for N-FLB and 1.02 for FLB).

Table 7 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *English is more important in Finland than Swedish*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
N-FLB	1	2	6	7	11	3.93	1.14
FLB	0	3	4	9	11	4.04	1.02
Total	1	5	10	16	22		

In the next statement, *English is the most important foreign language in Finland*, attitudes were once again mainly positive, but relatively many, ten learners, had a neutral

view (table 8). More participants from FLB (learners with a Finnish language background) strongly agreed with this statement, whereas a larger number of participants from N-FLB (learners with a non-Finnish language background) agreed. It is possible that some learners identified Swedish as a foreign language. To address this misconception, Swedish was specifically mentioned in the previous question. Whether the learners still thought Swedish as a foreign language for this statement, remained possible. On a group level, there were no significant differences ($p=0.597$), but the mean for N-FLB was slightly higher with a difference of 0.11 units (see table 8). The standard deviations for both groups were identical (0.93). Overall, the learners from both groups were rather unanimous with this statement.

Table 8 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *English is the most important foreign language in Finland*

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
N-FLB	1	0	4	12	10	4.11	0.93
FLB	0	1	6	6	14	4.22	0.93
Total	1	1	10	18	24		

Statement number 13, *English should be one of the official languages in Finland*, showed a rather large deviation, as can be seen in table 9. The majority of learners disagreed, but there were several neutral answers. Altogether, more students from N-FLB (learners with non-Finnish language backgrounds) agreed with the statement, whereas more learners from FLB (learners with Finnish language backgrounds) strongly disagreed with the statement. On a group level, the results were again rather similar, as can be seen in table 9. Once again, the mean was higher for N-FLB with a difference of 0.19 units, but since the difference is marginal, it cannot be considered as a truly significant finding (p -value 0.556). The standard deviation was skewed for both groups (1.22 for N-FLB and 1.35 for FLB).

Table 9 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *English should be one of the official languages in Finland*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
N-FLB	2	9	6	6	4	3.04	1.22
FLB	4	9	6	3	5	2.85	1.35
Total	6	18	12	9	9		

Statements 9-13 covered the role of English in Finnish society. As with personal statements, N-FLB had more positive attitudes altogether. However, the attitudes of N-FLB were marginally more negative when considering the relationship with Swedish and other foreign languages in Finland than in FLB when looking at the mean. However, since the p-value was so high (0.791), the difference is not significant. Overall the data suggest that the learners from both groups have very similar attitudes and perceptions towards the role of English in Finnish society. This is an interesting finding since it advocates the idea that 9th graders in Finland, regardless their home language, see English as a very important language (more important than the second official language and other foreign languages), but not as a threat to Finnish in the society.

4.1.3 The future of English in Finland

The last three statements revolve around the future of English in Finland and the learners' personal lives. When considering the future of English language in Finland in statement 14 (*in 10 years, people will use more English than now in Finland*), the majority of learners had positive views, as can be seen in table 10. There were three participants (two from N-FLB and one from FLB), though, that strongly disagreed with the statement. On a group level, mean was slightly higher in FLB with the difference of 0.04 units, as can be seen in table 10. The Mann Whitney U-test disclosed that no significant difference could be found from the data (p-value 0.970). The standard deviation for N-FLB was 1.07 and 0.94 for FLB.

Table 10 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *in 10 years, people will use more English than now in Finland*

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
N-FLB	2	0	3	13	9	4.00	1.07
FLB	1	1	2	15	8	4.04	0.94
Total	3	1	5	28	17		

In the next statement, *English will help me with my future career*, a vast majority strongly agreed, as can be seen in table 11. Only one subject strongly disagreed and five had neutral views. More learners from FLB had neutral views than from N-FLB. On a group level, mean was higher for N-FLB, but the difference is extremely marginal (0.04 units) and therefore not significant (p-value 0.690). The standard deviations for both groups were minorly negatively skewed (0.89 for N-FLB and 0.75 for FLB).

Table 11 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *English will help me with my future career*

	Strongly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
N-FLB: Non-Finnish language background	1	1	7	18	4.52	0.89
FLB: Finnish language background	0	4	6	17	4.48	0.75
Total	1	5	13	35		

In the last statement, statement number 16 (*in 10 years, people will use more English than Finnish in Finland*), a large majority of learners disagreed or strongly disagreed, as visible in table 12. Clearly more learners with Finnish language backgrounds leaned towards disagreed, while learners with non-Finnish language backgrounds tended to agree or even strongly agree more than participants from FLB. On a group level, the mean was higher for N-FLB with a difference of 0.63 units. The learners from N-FLB had

more positive attitudes toward this statement. Even though the p-value is 0.075 which means that the participants from N-FLB and FLB had rather similar views on the statement since the p-value is closing on the cut-off point of 0.05. Thus, the p-value shows how there is a difference with a slight significance. The standard deviation for N-FLB was 1.305, which means that it is skewed but for FLB, the distribution is normal (SD=1).

Table 12 Frequency of answers, mean and SD for *in 10 years, people will use more English than Finnish in Finland*

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
N-FLB	7	6	6	6	2	2.63	1.31
FLB	10	10	4	3	0	2	1
Total	17	16	10	9	2		

Statements 14-16 consider the future of English, both in personal life and in Finnish society. Overall, the attitudes towards the future of English were very positive. The results to the first two statements from this category showed no significant differences between the two groups, which ninth-graders of Finnish and non-Finnish language background perceive that English will grow to be more important in Finland and that it will help them with their career. The results for the first statement, *English will help me with my future career*, were in line with the previous publications of Leppänen et al. (2009) and Virkkula (2008), who acknowledge the growing impact of English in the work-life and how workers in all areas need to speak English. The results for the last statement, *in 10 years, people will use more English than Finnish in Finland*, suggest that learners from N-FLB are slightly more likely to believe that in the future, English will be spoken more than Finnish in Finland.

Next, I will discuss the results for the open-ended questions because the open-ended questions are thematically compatible with the category *the future of English in Finland*. Those excerpts of the participants' answers which were written in Finnish have been translated into English, but the Finnish version is also provided. Some answers were written in English by the participants and are presented here in their original form. In the excerpts, the group code (N-FLB for the participants with a non-Finnish language

background and FLB for the participants with a Finnish language background) is featured to show the difference between groups and additionally, the *P* stands for the participant and the number is included to show the identification number of the participants. I will first analyse the results of the first open-ended question (number 17): *how do you see the role of English in your life in 10 years?*

There were no blank answers to the first open-ended question. In N-FLB, two participants stated that they did not know, but the rest confirmed that they will probably use English. Similar results were found in FLB, where three participants stated that they do not know what kind of role English will have on their lives, but the rest stated that they will likely be using English. No participant stated that they will not be using any English in their future lives. The results provided relatively clear categories into which the answers can be divided into. There are six categories: work, studying, friendships, free time and hobbies, personal development, and travelling. I have counted the mentions for each category from both groups. In many answers, several categories were named. For this analysis, I have excluded the “do not know”-answers from the categories. Some answers that do not fall into any of the previously mentioned categories. These answers include answers such as “important”, “a lot”, “useful”. Altogether, these one-word answers occurred only two times in both groups. Many answers included several mentions of the different categories: those answers have been counted into each mentioned category. Figure 3 for mentions by category and group can be found later.

The first category, work or career, was mentioned six times in N-FLB. In FLB, future career was mentioned sixteen times. The second category, studying, was mentioned eight times in N-FLB and four times in FLB. One subject stated, that he would like to use English to study more languages with it, but mostly the learners referred to their future studies at higher levels. One subject also mentioned how she would study her law degree in English. The third category, friendships, was mentioned five times in N-FLB and six times in FLB. The fourth category, free time and hobbies, includes subjects such as games, series, movies, media and Internet. Free time and hobbies were mentioned twice in N-FLB and twelve times in FLB. Some subjects stated that they will use English in their free time, which might also include

friendships. For this reason, these two categories are hard to separate. Those answers that visibly mentioned relationships or friends, were counted under category three, and those answers that clearly mentioned free time, under category four. The fifth category, personal development, includes answers that refer to how the participants see their own skills or use in the future changing. There were five mentions of personal development in N-FLB, but no specific mentions in FLB. In N-FLB, participants stated, for example, that they will use English more than now, be better at speaking English, and improve their language skills. The sixth and the last category, travelling was relatively popular with five mentions in N-FLB and seven in FLB. It has to be considered, though, that some participants may have meant travelling when talking about using English in their free time.

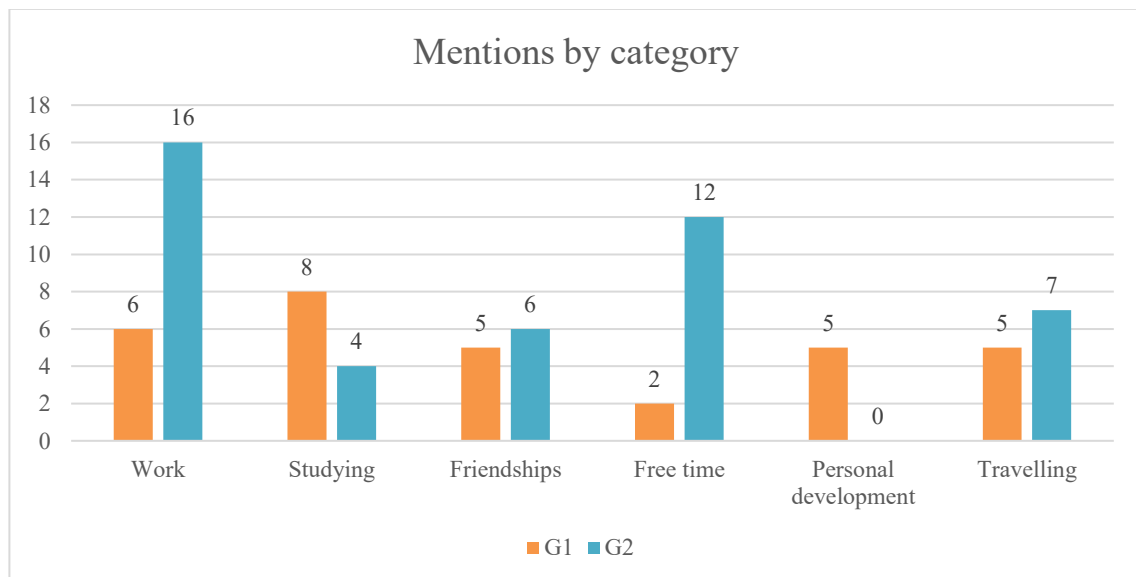


Figure 3 Mentions by category per group

As can be seen in figure 3, work and career seem to be places where most learners think they will need English, especially in the Finnish language background group. In N-FLB, future schooling and studying in English at least at some level seemed to be important, whereas learners from FLB thought that would use English in their free time and travelling.

The excerpts chosen from the participants' answers demonstrate the positive attitudes towards the language as well as the orientation of language learning. For these excerpts, the Finnish version is available after the English translation. As can be seen

from excerpts one and two, many participants from both language background groups combined several categories to one answer, such as work, education, and free time.

- (1) N-FLB: P3: English will be important for me because I have big plans for my career and for studying English. Also, when travelling, English is a must-know.
**Englanti aikoo olla minulle tärkeää koska minulla on isoja suunnitelmia työelämään ja muuten englannin opiskelu. Myös matkoilla englanti on must know.*
- (2) FLB: P9: English is definitely a part of my life through studying and/or working. It is also needed in free time, for example when travelling.
Englanti on mukana varmasti elämässäni opiskelun ja/tai työn kautta. Sen lisäksi tarvitaan sitä myös vapaa-ajalla esim. matkustettaessa.

In N-FLB and FLB, participants 23 and one expressed the willingness to communicate in English with non-Finnish speaking people in Finland. The same willingness to communicate with non-Finnish speaking people arose from the answers of participants from FLB but in a lesser quantity. Some examples of the answers that expressed the willingness to communicate in English are available in excerpts three and four. In excerpt three, the participant also included the preference of Finnish youth to use English. This is very likely connected to code-switching: as showed in Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003, 3), Finns sometimes include English words and phrases into their speech.

- (3) N-FLB: P23: Then there will be more tourists, immigrants and also the Finnish youth like to use English.
Silloin on enemmän turisteja, maahanmuuttajia ja myös suomalaiset nuoret tykkäävät puhua englanniksi.
- (4) FLB: P1: I would speak English with my friends and probably use it in work.
**Puhuisin englantia ystäväieni kanssa ja luultavasti käytän sitä työ asioissa.*

More often the learners wanted to communicate with non-Finnish speaking friends online. The answers for these participants are available in the excerpts four and five.

- (4) N-FLB: P1: I like to study and to speak English. I will need it for many things, such as for games, for friends, for example friends online who do not speak Finnish.
**Tykkään englannin opiskelusta ja sen puhumisesta. Tarviin sitä myöskin monessa jutussa niinkuin peleissä, kavereita varten esim nettikaverit jotka ei puhu suomee.*

- (5) FLB: P5: I will probably conversate with people in English online.
Keskustelen luultavasti ihmisten kanssa englanniksi internetissä.

When considering the 18th question, *how do the learners see the future of English in Finland*, the views were almost unanimously positive in both groups. The question was obviously more difficult than the previous one: seven participants from N-FLB and four from FLB stated that they do not know how the future of English looks like in Finland. The majority in both groups felt that the importance of English will grow in Finnish society. The excerpts chosen from the participants' answers for the 18th question demonstrate the perceptions of the growing nature of English' importance in Finland. Excerpts six (a participant from N-FLB), seven and eight (two participants from FLB) highlight the growing importance of English in Finnish society. These types of answers were the most common in both groups.

- (6) N-FLB: P23: I believe that English will become more important.
**Uskon, että englannin kielestä tulee tärkeämpi*
- (7) FLB: P20: The importance of English is continuously growing, so it will be more and more important to know it in the future.
Englannin kielen merkitys kasvaa koko ajan, eli sen osaaminen tulee olemaan tulevaisuudessa yhä tärkeämpää.
- (8) FLB: P9: The future of the language is definitely good. People will probably speak it a little more.
Kielen tulevaisuus on varmasti hyvä. Puhuminen lisääntyy varmaan jonkin verran.

A participant from N-FLB in excerpt 9 mentions the doubt she is having towards the willingness to speak English in Finland. As Leppänen et al. pointed out (2009, 144), the majority of Finns believe that not all age cohorts (mainly olders and young children) should be able to speak English. The participant likely had similar views.

- (9) N-FLB: P24: Not everybody wants to speak English in Finland, but the majority will want to.
**Kaikki eivät tykkää puhua englantia suomessa, mutta suurin osa haluaa.*

The participant (from N-FLB) in excerpt number 10 even emphasises how in the future the universal role of English in Finland might even unite different groups of people. Such universally uniting perceptions did not occur in FLB.

- (10) N-FLB: P6: I think that it will become the universal language of Finland with the growing immigrant numbers, a language both the Finns and the foreigners know could unite them.

Even though the majority of the participants felt like the role of English will grow in the future, a few participants from FLB did not share the perception, as can be seen from the following two excerpts. In N-FLB, no such perceptions of the future of the role of English occurred.

- (11) FLB: P1: Well, I don't really know. I don't think English will become that popular.

**No, en nyt tiää. Ei mun mielestä englannin kielestä tule kauhean suosittua.*

- (12) *FLB: P6: Not gonna change.

4.2 The relationship between attitudes and performance

In this section, I will first analyse and compare the results of the vocabulary test in section 4.2.1, and then in section 4.2.2, correlate the results with the results of the attitude tests. In the latter section, I will try to answer my second research question: *How do the attitudes of English learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds reflect the learners' performance in English?*

4.2.1 The level of proficiency

The vocabulary test was designed so that the frequency of the words used in the task lowered after every three tasks. The number of correct answers by level was transformed into percentages to give more clear results. As one may expect, the correct identification of the words lowered after each level, when the words became less frequent. First, I will present some basic descriptive statistics for each level.

In the questions regarding words from the frequency level 2000, the results for both groups were rather similar. Median was higher for N-FLB (89 to 78) but mean and mode were higher for FLB (see table 13). Pearson's chi-square test showed that even though there were some differences between the groups, the difference is not statistically significant (p -value= 0.149). The standard deviations were relatively similar for both groups (30.55 for N-FLB and 31.07 for FLB).

Table 13 Percentages of correct answers for level 2000 by groups

	Non-Finnish language background	Finnish language background	Difference
Median	89	78	11
Mean	70.48	71.67	-1.19
Mode	89	100	-11
Standard deviation	30.55	31.07	

Words of the frequency level of 3000 were slightly better known by FLB, as can be seen in table 14. Learners from FLB seemed to know the words almost three percentage points more correctly. Standard deviations for both groups were similarly skewed (35.68 for N-FLB and 35.44 for FLB). However, the difference is nominal and not significant (p -value=0.191). The results suggest that the difference is random variation due to the size of the samples.

Table 14 Percentages of correct answers for level 3000 by groups

	Non-Finnish language background	Finnish language background	Difference
Median	78	78	0
Mean	63.85	66.74	-2.94
Mode	89	100	-11
Standard deviation	35.68	35.44	

When analysing the knowledge of words from frequency level 5000, the median was higher for FLB and mode slightly better for N-FLB (see table 15). However, the differences are not statistically significant (p -value=0.490). Again, the standard deviations were relatively similar (35.29 for N-FLB and 34.58 for FLB).

Table 15 Percentages of correct answers and SD for level 5000 by groups

	Non-Finnish language background	Finnish language background	Difference
Median	44	56	-12
Mean	53.04	51.44	1,6
Mode	89	89	0
Standard deviation	35.29	34.58	

The words from frequency level 10,000 were very difficult for both groups, as table 16 shows. For both groups, the mode was zero per cent and median 22 per cent, indicates that the median was two correct answers out of nine. As expected from the median, mean and mode results, the difference is not statistically significant at all (p-value 0.236). The standard deviation for both groups was a little lower for N-FLB (23.95) than for FLB (27.77).

Table 16 Percentages of correct answers and SD for level 10,000 by groups

	Non-Finnish language background	Finnish language background	Difference
Median	22	22	0
Mean	24.56	26.22	-1.66
Mode	0	0	0
Standard deviation	23.95	27.77	

Since the level 10,000 was so difficult for the learners, I chose to omit the level when considering the overall performance of the learners and only count the levels 2000, 3000 and 5000 into the overall score. Altogether, based on mean and mode, FLB seemed to do slightly better, as can be seen in table 17. Median was higher for N-FLB with 70% correct answers (which signalizes 19 correct answers out of the maximum 27) while the median for FLB was 63 (17 correct answers out of 27). Pearson's chi-square test revealed that the differences between the groups are closing on being statistically significant (p-value 0.068). The standard deviation was almost identical for both groups (31.78 for N-FLB and 31.84 for FLB).

Table 17 Percentages of correct answers and SD for all levels by groups

	Non-Finnish language background	Non-Finnish language background	Difference
Median	70	63	7
Mean	62.48	63.19	-0,71
Mode	93	96	-3
Standard deviation	31.78	31.84	

The vocabulary test's results did not show any significant differences between the learners with a Finnish and non-Finnish language background. However, there were some differences in the means, modes and medians. When looking at the total score of the test, learners with a Finnish language background performed slightly better. The slightly lower performance of the learners with a non-Finnish language background might at least be partly explained by the language of teaching since English is taught by using either Finnish or English at schools. Those learners who do not speak Finnish as their first language, some aspects of the foreign language might be harder to grasp.

4.2.2 Attitudes and the level of proficiency

In this section, I will compare the results of the vocabulary test and the attitudinal statements. I first calculated the means for each attitudinal category and all attitudinal items for every participant. Secondly, I assessed the learners' performance in the vocabulary test. Since the level 10,000 was extremely difficult for the learners and thus does not provide a lot of valid data, I chose to ignore the last level from the analysis. The overall performance for every participant (for levels 2000, 3000 and 5000) was measured. After this, I calculated the correlation with the attitudes and the performance by using Spearman's rho (presented here as r).

The analysis showed that there was a slight positive correlation between positive attitudes and vocabulary test results for N-FLB in the first category the importance of English in personal life ($r=0.165$). However, the correlation was not statistically significant (p -value 0.410). Nevertheless, the results for FLB showed a very significant and quite strong correlation between the two variables (p -value= 0.01, $r=0.618$). The results are also presented in the figure 4 below. The results suggest that the attitudes towards the importance of English in the learners' personal life reflect the performance of learners with Finnish language background, but do not apparently reflect the performance of learners with a non-Finnish language background.

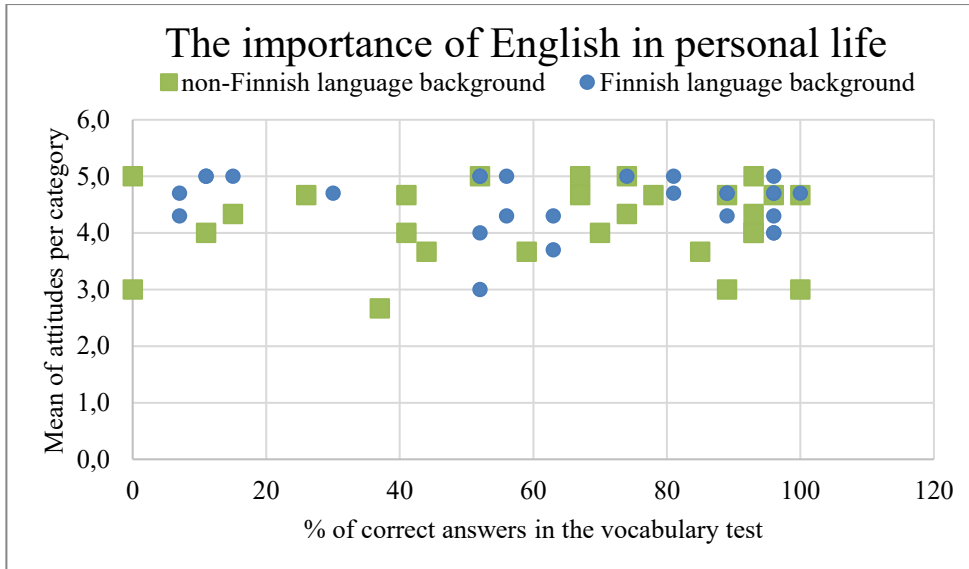


Figure 4 The correlation between category one and performance

When analysing the second category, *the role of English in Finnish society*, it came apparent that no such strong correlation existed for either of the groups. There was a minor positive correlation with no statistical significance for learners with a non-Finnish language background ($r=0.131$, $p=0.515$). For learners with a Finnish language background, there was once again a little higher positive correlation, which was still not statistically significant ($r=0.216$, $p=0.279$). Figure 5 below illustrates the answers of the learners.

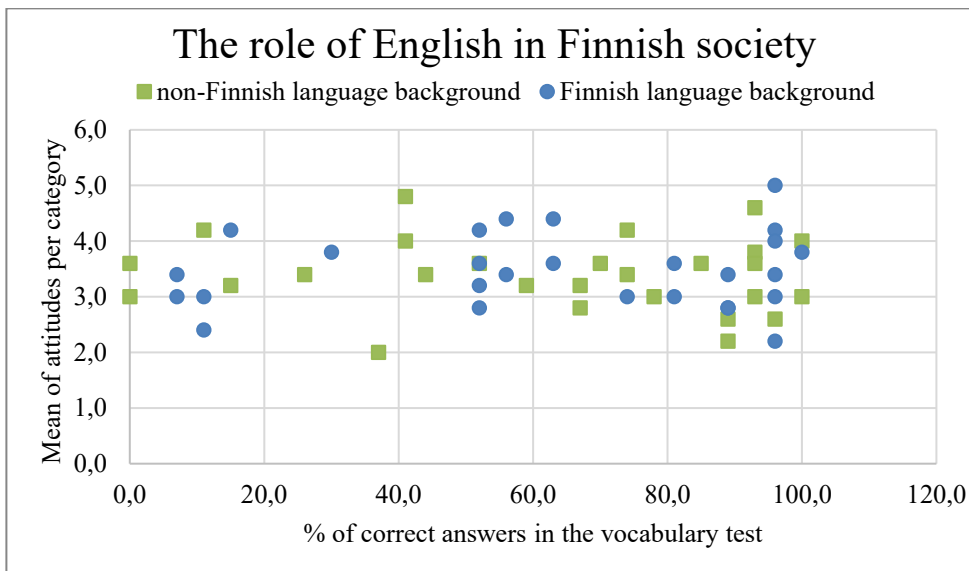


Figure 5 The correlation between category two and performance

The third category, *the future of English in Finland*, provided similar results with the second category. There was again a minor positive correlation between the variables for learners with a non-Finnish language background ($r=0.176$, $p=0.380$) and a slightly higher positive correlation for the learners with a Finnish language background ($r=0.210$, $p=0.294$). See figure 6 for an illustration.

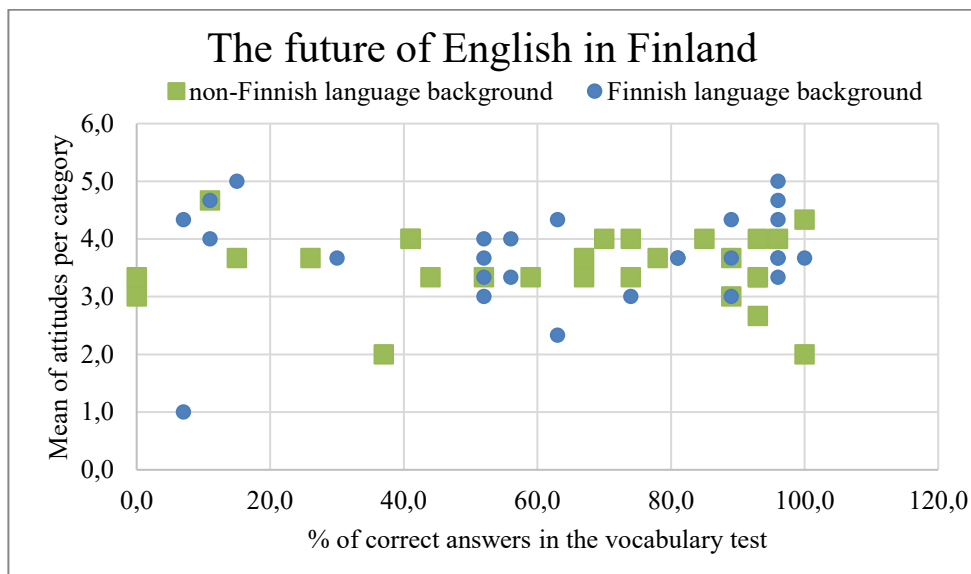


Figure 6 The correlation between category three and performance

To see the relationship of attitudes in general and performance in the vocabulary test, I calculated the rho for all attitudes and vocabulary test results. For the learners with a non-Finnish language background, a minimal positive correlation was found (0.187 , $p=0.349$). For the learners with a Finnish language background, there was a relatively strong positive correlation between the variables ($r=0.365$). Since the p-value was 0.061 , the statistical significance of the results was potential. The results suggest that the attitudes of the learners with a Finnish language background have a higher tendency to reflect the performance. The results are also presented in figure 7 below.

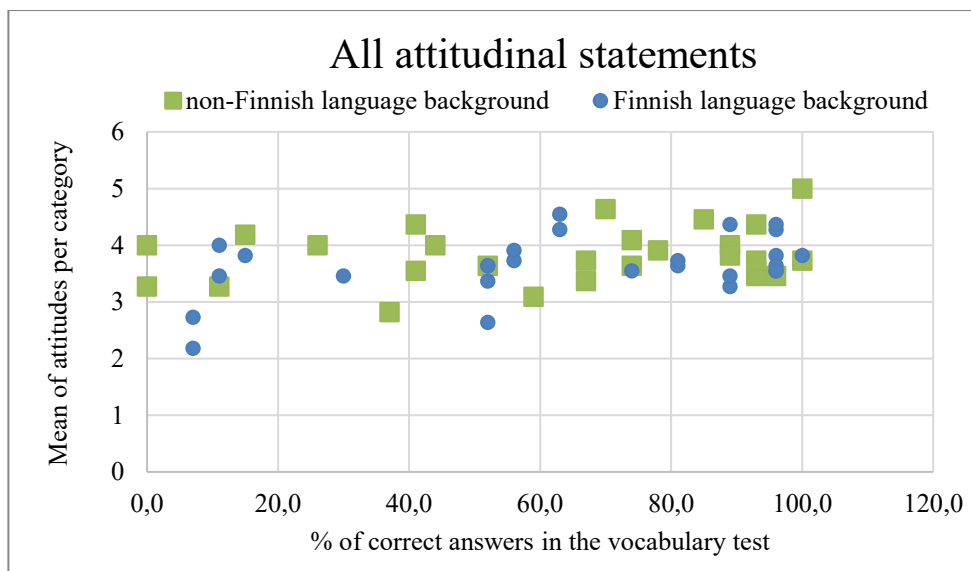


Figure 7 The correlation between all attitudinal statements and performance

4.3 The effect of age of starting to learn English and gender on attitudes and performance

Even though the basic questions were the first questions to start the questionnaire, they are introduced last in this section. This was chosen due to their limited effect on the scope of the study since based on the research questions the study does not concentrate on gender or the age of starting to learn English and their effects on attitudes or performance. Additionally, the characteristics of both groups, N-FLB (learners with a non-Finnish language background) and FLB (learners with a Finnish language background), have already been introduced in section 3.2. In this section, I will, therefore, concentrate more on details about the differences between the gender of the participants and the age of starting to learn English when compared with the vocabulary test and the attitudes. The data were analysed by using crosstabulation in SPSS. The comparative analysis for N-FLB and FLB were presented in sections 4.1 and 4.2.

Age of starting to learn English influenced vocabulary test results. The data were analysed by using crosstabulation, but to make the data easier to analyse, I grouped the participants into age of onset-groups: those who started learning English before school age (before age of six), those who started during first years of school (ages of seven or eight), those who started at the age of nine or ten, and to those who started at eleven or later. There were no participants in FLB (learners with a Finnish language background),

who had started learning English later than the age of 10. Since the age group for ages nine and ten was much higher than for the others, I converted the numbers into percentages. Those learners, who had started their English studies before school age or in the first years of school, had more correct answers in all word frequency levels. The differences between these two groups were rather small and they performed relatively similar in all levels, both by correct answers and by incorrect answers. The largest group by participants, the learners who had started learning English at the age of nine or ten, performed well in the first two frequency levels, as did the participants who had started learning English at an earlier age. The latter two levels showed variation, however: especially in the level 5000, the learners' performance was outdistanced by the learners who started earlier, as can be seen in table 18 below.

Table 18 Percentages of learners and correct answers by age group for the word frequency level 5000

Number of correct answers	Before school age (%)	Age of 7-8 (%)	Age of 9-10 (%)	Age of 11 or later (%)
0	10	0	17.6	0
1	0	12.5	11.7	0
2	0	0	2.9	50
3	0	0	20.5	0
4	10	0	14.7	0
5	0	12.5	11.7	0
6	10	0	2.9	0
7	0	0	9	0
8	50	50	6	0
9	20	25	2.9	50

At the level 5000, circa 30 per cent of the learners who started learning English at the age of nine or ten had zero or one correct answers, while in the first two groups the respective amount was 10 (for those who started learning English before school) and around 13 (for those who started learning English at the age of seven or eight).

Table 19 Percentages of learners and correct answers by age group for the word frequency level 10,000

Number of correct answers	Before school age (%)	Age of 7-8 (%)	Age of 9-10 (%)	Age of 11 or later (%)
0	20	25	32.3	0
1	0	0	20.6	50
2	10	25	23.5	0
3	20	12.5	8.8	50
4	20	25	5.8	0
5	10	0	2.9	0
7	10	0	2.9	0
8	0	12.5	2.9	0
9	10	0	0	0

Table 19 shows the same data for the word frequency level 10,000. In the frequency level of 10,000 words, the percentage for learners who got zero or one correct answers was 20 for those learners who had started learning English before school, 25 for those who started at the first years of school, and 53 for those who started at the age of nine or ten. These results show rather consistently how the learners logically benefit from beginning to learn a language earlier. The small number of the last group, the learners who had started learning English at or after the age of eleven, does not provide comparable data. The number of participants in the last group is two. The small group sizes for the first two groups (eight and ten learners) are similarly problematic and therefore, I will not concentrate on the differences between age groups in this thesis.

Within the group of learners with a non-Finnish background, crosstabulation showed that learners who had started learning English before school age were consistently performing better in all levels than the learners who had started learning English later. On level 5000, for example, 88% of the learners of the age group one in N-FLB answered 89-100% of the items correctly, whereas the other groups performed with more varied results. Within the group of learners with a Finnish language background, crosstabulation showed that age group two (learners who started learning English in the first years of school) did significantly better in all levels than the learners who started at the age of nine or ten. For instance, on level 5000, the age group two managed to get either 89 or 100 per cent of the answers correctly, whereas the correctness of answers for the age group three varied between zero and hundred per cent. The age group one (learners who started learning English before school age) for FLB was only two participants, and thus does not provide

reliably analysable data, the age group one is eliminated from these results.

As with the effect the age of starting to learn English had on vocabulary test results, the age of starting to learn English affected attitudes, too. The attitude questions six, seven and eight addressed the importance of English in the learners' personal lives, statements from nine to thirteen the role of English in Finnish society, and the statements from fourteen to sixteen the future of English. In the first category, the results for age groups one (started learning English before school), two (started learning English at the age of seven or eight), and four (started learning English at eleven or later) had similarly positive results. The largest group by participants, the learners who started learning English at the age of nine or ten, tended to disagree more and did not as strongly agree to the personal questions as the other groups. Especially in the second question of the category, *English is important for me in my free time*, where 50-63% of the learners in the other groups agreed strongly, only 38% of the learners in the third group strongly agreed. Table 20 shows the percentages for this statement. These findings are in line with the study of Larson-Hall (2008, 54-56), who studied quantitatively the attitudes towards English of university-aged Japanese learners of English ($N=200$) and suggests that the younger the participants had started studying English, the slightly more positive attitudes they have for it in general.

Table 20 Percentages of learners' attitudes towards *English is important for me in my free time* by age group

	Before school age (%)	Age of 7-8 (%)	Age of 9-10 (%)	Age of 11 or later (%)
Disagree	0	0	5.9	0
Neither disagree nor agree	20	12.5	14.7	0
Agree	20	25	41.2	50
Strongly agree	60	62.5	38	50

In the third attitude statement, *I want to learn English*, the first group agreed less strongly in percentage terms, as can be confirmed from the table 21 below. One explanation for this result is that most of these learners have been attending school in English and therefore might already feel like they know English well enough.

Table 21 Percentages of learners' attitudes towards *I want to learn English* by age group

	Before school age (%)	Age of 7-8 (%)	Age of 9-10 (%)	Age of 11 or later (%)
Neither disagree nor agree	20	12.5	5.9	0
Agree	40	0	29	0
Strongly agree	40	87.5	64.7	100

In the second category, statements *everybody should be able to speak English in Finland* and *English should be one of the official languages in Finland* revealed similar results for every group. However, when considering the relation of English with the current official languages of Finland, the learners who had started learning English before school age tended to disagree more. Learners from group two (who had started learning English at the age of seven or eight) also disagreed more than the two other groups on the statement on *English being more important in Finland than Finnish*. The differences for the statements of *English being more important in Finland than Swedish* or *Finnish* are still rather minimal and even though the two groups had higher percentages who strongly agreed, most of the learners in the other two groups also agreed. The strongest difference can be found in the last statement of the category: *English is the most important foreign language in Finland*. The participants' answers are available in table 22 below.

Table 22 Percentages of learners' attitudes towards *English is the most important foreign language in Finland* by age group

	Before school age (%)	Age of 7-8 (%)	Age of 9-10 (%)	Age of 11 or later (%)
Strongly disagree	10	0	0	0
Disagree	10	0	0	0
Neither disagree nor agree	20	12,5	20,6	0
Agree	50	37,5	26,5	50
Strongly agree	10	50	52,9	50

For this statement, the only disagreeing participants were found from group one. When analysing the third category, the future of English in Finland, the first statements showed very little differences. The last question, in ten years, people will use more English than Finnish in Finland, revealed that some of the learners who had started learning English before school age were the only ones to agree with the statement. These results could be once again explained by the different school language of the majority of

participants in group one.

When analysing the results inside the groups, N-FLB showed differences in the last statement of the first category, the importance of English in personal life. Half of the learners who had started learning English before school age agreed with the statement *I want to learn English*, while the majorities in the other groups strongly agreed. In the second category, the role of English in Finland, there was a greater variety in the answers of the age group one in the statement *everybody should be able to speak English in Finland*, while in the other groups, the learners either agreed or had a neutral stand. 38% of the learners in the age group one in N-FLB disagreed with the statement. In the rest of the questions for this category, the results were rather unanimous. The last category, the future of English, there were no significant differences between the age groups of N-FLB.

FLB, furthermore, showed differences in the first category, the importance of English in personal life. Learners who had started learning English at the age of seven or eight agreed more on the statements *English is important for me in my free time* and *I want to learn English*. In the latter statement, 100% of the participants in the age group two strongly agreed while the same percentages for the age group were around 46. In the second category, the role of English in Finnish society, the statement *English is more important in Finland than Finnish*, provided the largest differences. Here, all the participants from the age group two disagreed with the statement, while 38% of the learners from the age group three agreed or had a neutral stand. In the last category, the future of English, the biggest differences were found in the statement *English will help me with my future career*. All of the participants from the age group two strongly agreed with the statement while the attitudes of the participants in the age group three divided between attitudes of neutral (19%), agree (29%) and strongly agree (52%).

When considering the differences between gender, the results showed no significant differences in performance or attitudes of English on a personal level. When comparing performance between genders, a small number of males did better in the two first levels (frequencies of words from levels 2000 and 3000), but the difference is rather minimal. There were no significant differences in the higher frequency levels. However, contrary to Gömleksiz's findings in a research conducted in Turkey (2010, 917), where females had more positive attitudes towards learning English than males, the findings of this study

showed that males had more positive attitudes towards the role of English in the Finnish society. In my research, males tended to strongly agree more with statements *English is more important in Finland than Swedish* (four females strongly agreed while 18 males strongly agreed) and *English is the most important foreign language in Finland* (eight females strongly agreed while 16 males strongly agreed).

Within group levels, gender also had some, but rather small, effects on both the attitudes and the results of the vocabulary test. According to the results, the vocabulary test's results showed basically no differences between the genders in N-FLB or FLB on every word frequency level. However, the results indicated that when considering the level 10,000, males of N-FLB performed slightly better. All the learners who got four or more answers correctly in this level were males in N-FLB. However, the number of males is rather low: four answered four or more items correctly. When considering attitudes, the differences were the greatest in the second category, the role of English in Finnish society. 57% of the male learners in N-FLB strongly agreed with the statement, whereas 23% of the females in the same group felt as strongly. When analysing the attitudes within the FLB, the second category also provided the most differences. Male learners from FLB both agreed (21% of males in FLB) and strongly disagreed (50% of males in FLB) more with the statement *English is more important in Finland than Finnish*, while females tended to disagree with the statement more (62% of the females in FLB). Similar to N-FLB, the largest difference was in the next statement: *English is more important in Finland than Swedish*, while 71% of the males in FLB strongly agreed with the statement and only 7% of the females in FLB. Previous studies are in line with this finding. For example, Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture has published a study which stated that girls have generally more positive attitudes towards Swedish (2012, 40). When considering the statement *English should be one of the official languages in Finland*, 31% of the females in FLB strongly disagreed with the statement, while the males had more positive views. These findings, both in general and in group level, are rather interesting since they contradict many previous studies (as discussed in 2.1.1), which emphasizes the females generally having more positive attitudes towards language learning. It must be acknowledged, though, that the study by Gömleksiz, for example, did not concentrate on questions related to the role of English in the society. Since the differences found in my

study are still rather minimal and my study has a different orientation than the previously mentioned studies, I will not concentrate on gender-orientated research here.

5 Discussion

In this section, I aim to answer my two research questions:

- 1) How do the attitudes towards the role of English of learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds differ from each other? and
- 2) How do the attitudes of English learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds reflect the learners' performance in English?

To answer the first research question, the attitude statements and the open-ended questions will be discussed. Some thoughts and possible causalities have been discussed in sections 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.1.3. The first category of the attitude statements, the importance of English in personal life, revealed some differences between the groups. The biggest difference was that the learners with non-Finnish language background seem to perceive English to be more important for them at school than the learners with Finnish language backgrounds. As discussed in 4.1.1, the cause for this difference could be that the participants from FLB rely more on the informal ways of learning, while participants from N-FLB rely more on formal learning at the school environment. There are some pieces of evidence for this hypothesis. Firstly, tv-series and movies are not dubbed in Finnish, which allows informal, often even subconscious learning for those who watch series from Finnish television channels. This is not the case for some of the languages which the participants from N-FLB mentioned as their home languages because, in those countries, the shows are very often dubbed. Additionally, the subtitles in their home language are not as readily available in Finnish TV or streaming services in Finland as Finnish.

Secondly, different cultures may play a part. According to a quantitative study by Järvinen (2018, 1), a vast amount of 9th graders in Finland spend around two to four hours online daily. The percentages for youth who spend four to eight hours online daily was very large, too (ibid.). On the contrary, the young with a different cultural background spend much less time online (Wikström, Haikkola and Laatikainen 2014, 50). The data available on the social media websites usually used by youths, such as YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook (ebrand Suomi Oy 2016), is commonly in English, which means that the learners have a possibility to learn informally by using these websites. Other two statements of the category, *English is important for me in my free*

time and *I want to learn English*, provided much smaller differences. The similar answers of the groups suggest that the learners, whether they have a Finnish or non-Finnish language background, are interested in learning English and use it in their free time. However, learners with a non-Finnish language background tended to more strongly agree with the statement *I want to learn English*. The results of this statement are likely to be related to the first statement since the learners might perceive learning at school as the only way to learn, even though they use informal means of learning on their free time. These cultural differences will be discussed more in detail later.

The results for the second category uncovered that the learners from both groups agreed on the important role of English in Finland. The differences between the groups were rather nominal in the first statement and the learners in both groups rather unanimously perceived that English language skills should be required from everybody in Finland. There were, however, several neutral answers from both groups, which might suggest that not all age cohorts, for example, need to have the skills in English. Leppänen et al. (2009, 144) found evidence that according to their participants, children and the old do not have to be able to speak English. This might be one of the reasons for many neutral answers for this statement. The second statement, *English is more important in Finland than Finnish*, revealed interesting findings. Even though there were no significant differences between the groups and most learners disagreed with the statement, the participants from N-FLB agreed a little more with the statement. Since some of the learners with a non-Finnish language background perhaps do not have as a strong connection to Finnish as the learners with Finnish background, the finding is not surprising.

The next two statements of the category, *English is more important in Finland than Swedish* and *English is the most important foreign language in Finland*, which assessed the learners' perceptions to English and its relation to other languages, uncovered very similar perceptions from both groups. For both statements, learners from FLB had a slightly higher mean, but the difference is very minimal. The disagreeing views of the latter statement might need some explaining. Since the only obligatory language at school besides Finnish is Swedish, it is possible that the learners perceived Swedish as a foreign language and answered accordingly to the latter statement. The statement *English should*

be an official language in Finland had some differences in the mean between the groups. Learners with a non-Finnish background tended to agree more with the statement. One cause for this result might be that since the learners do not speak Finnish at home, they would like to benefit from talking in another and possibly stronger language in official settings.

The third category, the future of English in Finland, uncovered that the learners from both groups had rather similar perceptions towards the future of English in Finnish society. Especially in the first two statements, *in 10 years, people will use more English than now in Finland* and *English will help me with my future career*, provided no differences between the groups. The results show that whether the language spoken at home is Finnish or something else, 9th graders perceive that people will speak more English in the future and that they will need English for their future career. Attitudes like this are connected to instrumental motivation because they show how the learners see themselves using the language, which then might lead to the willingness to learn (Gardner 1985, 11). The next statement, *in 10 years, people will use more English than Finnish in Finland*, uncovered some differences between the groups. Learners from N-FLB agreed more with the statement. One reason for this difference might be related to the last statement of the previous category (*English should be an official language in Finland*). It is again possible the learners with a non-Finnish language background hope that they would be able to use English in all official settings in the future, instead of relying on Finnish, which might not be the strongest language for them.

Open-ended questions revealed some similarities and differences between the language groups. Overall, if omitting the answers were the participants stated that they do not know, all learners felt that they will use English in their future lives. In the first open-ended question, *how do you see the role of English in your life in 10 years*, the most striking differences were that participants in FLB mentioned using English in work and in free time dramatically more than participants in N-FLB. In both categories, there were ten more mentions. Participants in N-FLB, however, mentioned using English for studying (N-FLB had eight mentions and FLB four) and for personal development (five mentions for N-FLB and zero for FLB) more. Travelling and conversating with friends in English were common dreams for the future for both

groups and no significant differences were found in these categories. According to the results, participants from N-FLB perceive to use English more in their near future, whereas participants from FLB perceive using English after studying, in work. Since in ten years, most of the participants are likely to be already graduated or in the end stages of their higher education, it seems likely that the participants from N-FLB had a hard time grasping how far away 10 years is. The over-representation of using English in free time by the participants in FLB is hard to explain. A possible explanation could be informal learning occurring in free time, which was also discussed at the beginning of this section. For learners with a Finnish language background, games, movies and series are basically never dubbed, but for learners with another language background, the situation might be different. For languages with more speakers, such as Arabic and Kurdish, it is cost-effective to dub foreign shows, and in some countries, such as in Albania, dubbing has been part of the entertainment scene for a very long time. Albanian, Arabian, and Kurdish all occurred more than once as the language background of learners in N-FLB. However, in modernized electronic devices and software, there are several language options, which would give all the equal opportunity to watch a show or to play a game in English. Additionally, as discussed earlier, it is noteworthy to mention that the habits of using the Internet vary between children of Finnish and immigrant origin. According to a mixed-methods study on the wellbeing of children of immigrant background by Wikström, Haikkola, and Laatikainen (2014, 50), most of the 13- to 16-year-old children with Somalian or Kurdish origins spent on average maximum two hours per day online or watching television. Overall, 44% of nine-graders in Finland spent 2-4 hours and 29% 4-8 hours online daily (Järvinen 2018, 1). Järvinen's report on the Internet usage and gaming of youths had around 750 participants from Finnish comprehensive schools. The results of these two studies might in some extent explain the differences in the use of English by the participants and their perceptions.

In the second open-ended question, *how do you see the future of English in Finland*, the views were again very positive. Generally, learners perceived that the importance and the use of English will grow in Finland, which is in line with previous studies (Leppänen et al. 2009, 143). Learners from both groups expressed that people

will speak, use and understand it more. One learner from FLB perceived that the amount of teaching English will also grow. The learner was likely to think that since more people must be able to speak English or that the language skills must be better, extra teaching is necessary. As in the previous open-ended question, there were differences in the answers of the two groups. Three learners in FLB thought that the importance of English will not grow, while no such answers were present for N-FLB. Thus, it could be argued that the wider language base of learners from N-FLB affects the views the learners have on the society's need and use for languages. An interesting view was also given by a participant with a non-Finnish language background, who thought that English could function as a tool for uniting different groups of people.

The results to my second research question (*how do the attitudes of English learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language backgrounds reflect the learners' performance in English?*) showed some differences between the groups. The results suggested that the learners with a Finnish language background had a relatively strong connection between their attitudes and their performance for the first attitudinal category (the importance of English in the learners' personal life). There was also a positive correlation between the variables for the learners with a non-Finnish language background, but the correlation was less significant and more modest. For the next two categories, the role of English in Finland and the future of English in Finland, the correlations were smaller for both groups and less significant. Nevertheless, the attitudes for these categories reflected in the performance more for the learners with a Finnish language background. When comparing the overall attitudes and performance, the results for learners with a Finnish language background provided a stronger correlation between the variables. The results presented here suggest that overall, language background does affect the connection between attitudes and performance. The learners with a Finnish language background tend to perform better when they have more positive attitudes towards English than the learners with a non-Finnish language background. To understand the reasons behind this phenomenon, more research is needed.

Vocabulary test as a sole measurement of the learners' performance can be seen as problematic. Since the Vocabulary Levels Test, which was utilized in this study, only requires the participants to match a word and the best-fitted definition while offering no

linguistic context, the test cannot be said to assess productive or pragmatic language skills. Similar problems in vocabulary tests used in many other studies were noted by Read and Chapelle (2001, 22) and Kremmel and Schmitt (2017, 4). Thus, learners who do not perform well in the Vocabulary Levels Test might still have a high level of proficiency in English. However, a vocabulary test was the best-suited option for assessing the performance in this thesis. Marks for courses, while on one hand might consider more aspects of language skills, are on the other hand subjective and include non-language related aspects such as classroom behaviour, absence, and activity.

Naturally, there are some limitations to this study. The scope of this study was limited in terms of the sample size, which was 54 participants. More research with larger sample size is needed in order to assess the full scope of attitudes of students with a Finnish and non-Finnish language background and their effect on foreign language performance. Notwithstanding the relatively limited sample, this work offers valuable insights into the attitudes of the students of these two categories while suggesting implications on future language teaching.

The findings of this research provide insights for future pedagogic implications. Since the performance differences between the two groups were minimal, the Finnish education system has succeeded in making the proficiency of language learners with different language background rather equal. However, since there were slight differences between the groups, continuing to provide equal opportunities to learn languages both formally and informally would ensure that the language skills of learners with different language backgrounds do not start to differ. Additionally, a better understanding of the attitudes of learners with a non-mainstream language background provided in this thesis will help to identify the needs of teaching. As mentioned before, the number of Finnish inhabitants who are not native speakers of Finnish is rapidly growing so it is crucial to keep their needs in mind when planning education to maximise learning for learners with Finnish and non-Finnish language background. This approach will also prove useful in expanding our understanding of how youths will see the future of English in Finland and how their home language can affect the views.

6 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to find out what kinds of attitudes two groups of learners, those with a Finnish language background and those with a non-Finnish language background, have for the role of English in their personal life and the Finnish society, now and in the future. Another main objective of this thesis was to examine how these attitudes reflect on their performance in English. In this section, I will draw my conclusions.

The results to the first research question showed that the attitudes of the groups do not vastly differ from each other. The attitudes of both groups towards all the categories were positive and not many differences were found between the groups. Learners with a non-Finnish language background tended to have more positive views towards the role of English in their personal lives, especially when considering the importance of English in school. In category two, English was compared to other languages in Finland and its role in Finland considered. Again, both groups thought that English is important in Finland, even more important than the second official language Swedish and other foreign languages. However, English was not seen as an adversary to the role of Finnish. The differences between the groups were rather minimal and no significant differences were found. In the third category, the future of English in Finland was assessed. Once again, learners from both groups thought that the importance of English will grow in Finnish society. The last question showed somewhat significant differences between the groups: learners with a non-Finnish language background tended to neither disagree nor agree with the statement *English will be more spoken in Finland in ten years than Finnish* while the learners with a Finnish language background disagreed. The open-ended questions confirmed the positive attitudes of the learners and how they think that the importance of English will grow. Additionally, learners from both groups listed similar occasions where they will use English in the future. There were some differences, however. For example, free time and work were mentioned much more by the learners with a Finnish language background, while the other group mentioned personal development and studying.

The results for the second research question did not show great differences, either. When considering the first attitudinal category, the results showed that the attitudes reflect the proficiency of learners with Finnish language background, but do not seemingly reflect

the proficiency of learners with a non-Finnish language background. Other two categories only found a slight, statistically nonsignificant positive correlation for both groups. However, in all categories and overall comparison, the performance in the vocabulary test correlated more positively with the learners with a Finnish language background.

More information on the different attitudes of learners with varying language backgrounds would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter. Overall testing of performance in English, not just vocabulary skills, for both language groups is needed to gain comprehensive representation of the language skills. Additionally, more detailed background information might reveal some reasons behind the differences in correlation between the groups.

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Appendix 1. The questionnaire in Finnish

Kyselytutkimus

Pro Gradu-kysely 9.-luokkalaisille.

Kyselytutkimukseen vastaaminen kestää arviolta 20 minuuttia. Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista, mutta kaikki vastaukset ovat todella hyödyllisiä tutkimukselleni. Tutkimukseen vastaaminen ei vaikuta arvosanaasi. Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään anonyymisti, joten vastaajia ei pystytä tunnistamaan. Kysely koostuu kolmesta osiosta. Ensimmäisessä osiossa kysytään perustietoja, toisessa englantiin liittyviä asenteita ja kolmas osio on sanastotesti, jonka oikeat vastaukset näet lopuksi.

OSIO 1: Perustiedot

1. Sukupuoli

Nainen

Mies

Muu / en halua vastata

2. Maa, jossa olet syntynyt

3. Vanhempien kanssa puhuttava kieli/kielet

4. Kuinka vanha olit kun aloitit englannin opiskelun?

5. Aiotko todennäköisesti olla Suomessa viiden vuoden päästä?

Kyllä

Ei

6. Englanti on minulle tärkeää koulussa

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. Englanti on minulle tärkeää vapaa-ajalla

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. Haluan oppia englantia

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. Kaikkien on osattava englantia Suomessa

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. Englanti on Suomessa tärkeämpää kuin suomen kieli

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. Englanti on Suomessa tärkeämpää kuin ruotsin kieli

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

12. Englanti on Suomessa tärkein vieras kieli

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

13. Englannin pitäisi olla virallinen kieli Suomessa

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

14. 10 vuoden päästä Suomessa käytetään enemmän englantia kuin nyt

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

15. Englannin kieli auttaa minua tulevaisuuden työelämässä

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

16. 10 vuoden päästä Suomessa käytetään enemmän englantia kuin suomea

1: täysin eri mieltä, 2: eri mieltä, 3: ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 4: samaa mieltä 5: täysin samaa mieltä

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

17. Miten luulet, että englantia on mukana elämässäsi 10 vuoden kuluttua?

18. Miltä mielestäsi englannin kielen tulevaisuus Suomessa näyttää?

Osio 3: Sanastotesti

Tässä osiossa sinun täytyy yhdistää englanninkielinen sana ja sen selitys. Sanastotesti ei vaikuta arvosanaasi, joten ethän käytä sanakirjaa apuna. Jokaisessa kohdassa näet kuusi sanaa, joista kolmeen on selitys. Yhdistä sanan numero ja selitys. Kolme sanaa jää ilman selitystä jokaisessa kohdassa.

19. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. original
2. private
3. royal
4. slow
5. sorry
6. total

first

complete

not public

20. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. apply
2. elect
3. jump
4. manufacture
5. melt
6. threaten

choose by voting

become like water

make

21. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. basket
2. crop
3. flesh
4. salary
5. temperature
6. thread

money paid regularly for doing a job

heat

meat

22. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. bench
2. charity
3. fort
4. jar
5. mirror
6. province

part of a country

help to the poor

long seat

23. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. opera
2. coach
3. darling
4. interior
5. echo
6. slice

a thin, flat piece cut from something

person who is loved very much

sound reflected back to you

24. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. discharge
2. encounter
3. illustrate
4. knit
5. prevail
6. toss

use pictures or examples to show the meaning

meet

throw up into the air

25. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. circus
2. trumpet
3. nomination
4. sermon
5. stool
6. jungle

speech given by a priest in a church

seat without a back or arms

musical instrument

26. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. desolate
2. fragrant
3. gloomy
4. profound
5. radical
6. wholesome

good for your health

sweet-smelling

dark or sad

27. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. alcohol
2. apron
3. lure
4. mess
5. phase
6. plank

cloth worn in front to protect your clothes

stage of development

state of untidiness or dirtiness

28. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. auxiliary
2. candid
3. dubious
4. morose
5. pompous
6. temporal

full of self-importance

helping, adding support

bad-tempered

29. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. auspices
2. dabble
3. froth
4. haunch
5. revelry
6. seclusion

being away from other people

work at something without serious intentions

noisy and happy celebration

30. Yhdistä sana ja oikea selitys. Laita selityksen alla olevalle riville sanan numero.

1. saliva
2. endorse
3. nurture
4. overhaul
5. skid
6. straggle

give care and food to

natural liquid present in the mouth

slip or slide

Kiitos vastauksistasi!

Appendix 2. The questionnaire in English

Questionnaire

MA Thesis Questionnaire for 9th graders.

It will take approximately 20 minutes to answer this questionnaire. Your participation in this study is voluntary, but all results are highly needed and will benefit my research. Your grade will not be affected by your answers. This questionnaire is completely anonymous, so no participants can be recognized based on their answers.

The questionnaire consists of three parts. In the first part, you will answer questions regarding your basic information and in the second part, attitudes towards English. The third part is a vocabulary test. The right answers for the vocabulary test will be shown at the end of the questionnaire.

PART 1: Basic information

1. Gender

Female

Male

Other/ I do not want to answer

2. Birth country

3. Language spoken at home with parents/guardians

4. How old were you when you started studying English?

5. Do you see yourself in Finland in 5 years?

Probably yes

Probably no

PART 2: Attitudes

For this part, please answer the statements by using a scale of 1-5. 1 means that you strongly disagree and 5 that you strongly agree. There are also two open-ended questions. There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer as honestly as possible!

6. English is important for me in school

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. English is important for me in my free time

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. I want to learn English

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. Everybody needs to speak English in Finland

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. English is more important in Finland than Finnish

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. English is more important in Finland than Swedish

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

12. English is the most important foreign language in Finland

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

13. English should be one of the official languages in Finland

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

14. In 10 years, people will use more English than now in Finland

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

15. English will help me with my future career

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

16. In 10 years, people will use more English than Finnish in Finland

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

17. How do you see the role of English in your life in 10 years?

18. How do you see the future of English in Finland?

PART 3: Vocabulary test

In this part, you need to combine the English word and its definition. The test will not affect your grade, so please do not use a dictionary. You can see the right answers to the test after submitting your answers.

There are six words with three definitions in every part. Please combine the word's number and the definition. There are no definitions for three words in each part.

19. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. original
2. private
3. royal
4. slow
5. sorry
6. total

first

complete

not public

20. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. apply
2. elect
3. jump
4. manufacture
5. melt
6. threaten

choose by voting

become like water

make

21. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. basket
2. crop
3. flesh
4. salary
5. temperature
6. thread

money paid regularly for doing a job

heat

meat

22. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. bench
2. charity
3. fort
4. jar
5. mirror
6. province

part of a country

help to the poor

long seat

23. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. opera
2. coach
3. darling
4. interior
5. echo
6. slice

a thin, flat piece cut from something

person who is loved very much

sound reflected back to you

24. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. discharge
2. encounter
3. illustrate
4. knit
5. prevail
6. toss

use pictures or examples to show the meaning

meet

throw up into the air

25. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. circus
2. trumpet
3. nomination
4. sermon
5. stool
6. jungle

speech given by a priest in a church

seat without a back or arms

musical instrument

26. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. desolate
2. fragrant
3. gloomy
4. profound
5. radical
6. wholesome

good for your health

sweet-smelling

dark or sad

27. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. alcohol
2. apron
3. lure
4. mess
5. phase
6. plank

cloth worn in front to protect your clothes

stage of development

state of untidiness or dirtiness

28. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. auxiliary
2. candid
3. dubious
4. morose
5. pompous
6. temporal

full of self-importance

helping, adding support

bad-tempered

29. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. auspices
2. dabble
3. froth
4. haunch
5. revelry
6. seclusion

being away from other people

work at something without serious intentions

noisy and happy celebration

30. Please combine the word and the number. Put the word's number in the box under the definition.

1. saliva
2. endorse
3. nurture
4. overhaul
5. skid
6. straggle

give care and food to

natural liquid present in the mouth

slip or slide

Thank you for your answers!

Appendix 3. The Finnish summary

Suomenkielinen tiivistelmä

Johdanto

Yksilöllisten erojen, kuten asenteiden ja motivaation tiedetään voivan vaikuttaa vieraan kielen oppimiseen joko edistävästi tai niitä hidastaen (ks. Dörnyei 2015). Tässä pro gradu -tutkimuksessa keskityn siihen, miten yksi näistä yksilöllisistä eroista, asenteet vierasta kieltä kohtaan, eroaa kahden eri kieliryhmän välillä ja miten asenteet heijastuvat koehenkilöiden osaamisessa. Lähtökohdaksi valitsin asenteet englannin kieltä kohtaan suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa nyt ja tulevaisuudessa, koska aihetta ei olla entuudestaan tutkittu Suomessa, englanninkielen asema on vahva. Tutkimus keskittyy kahteen oppilasryhmään: niihin, joiden kotikieli on suomi ja niihin, joiden kotikieli on jokin muu kieli kuin suomi tai ruotsi. Kummassakin tutkimassani ryhmässä oli 27 oppilasta suomenkielisen peruskoulun 9. luokalta. Tutkimuskysymykseni ovat: miten asenteet englannin yhteiskunnallista asemaa kohtaan eroavat niiden oppilaiden välillä, joiden kotikieli on suomi ja niiden, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi ja miten näiden kahden ryhmän oppilaiden asenteet englantia kohtaan heijastuvat oppilaiden osaamiseen englannin kielessä? Aineisto kerättiin kyselylomakkeella, joka sisälsi asennekysymyksiä sekä sanastotestin, jolla arvioitiin oppilaiden osaamista englannin kielessä. Aineisto analysoitiin kvantitatiivisesti, jonka lisäksi kvalitatiivista sisällönanalyysia käytettiin avoimien kysymysten analysoimiseen.

Asenteet kielenoppimisessa ja englannin kieli Suomessa

Kieltä opittaessa asenteet kieltä kohtaan voivat vaikuttaa suuresti oppimisprosessiin tai -tuloksiin. Asenne voidaan määritellä eri asioita painottaen, mutta yleisesti on käytetty Brownin määritelmää (1987), jossa hän määrittää asenteen aikaisin lapsuudessa kehittyväksi tekijäksi, joka on seurausta sosiaalisen ympäristön vaikutteista. Asenteet voidaan nähdä koostuvan kolmesta eri osa-alueesta, jotka ovat kognitiiviset eli uskomuksiin ja ajatuksiin perustuvat tekijät, konatiiviset eli käyttäytymiseen liittyvät

tekijät sekä tunteisiin liittyvät affektiiviset tekijät (Harding et al. 1954, 4). Tässä tutkimuksessa keskitytään pääasiassa kognitiivisiin asenteisiin eli siihen, millaiseksi koehenkilöt näkevät englannin roolin Suomessa ja henkilökohtaisessa elämässään nyt ja tulevaisuudessa.

Asenteisiin liittyy yleisesti ottaen joitakin luonteenomaisia piirteitä. Ne eivät välttämättä ole vakiintuneita, vaan voivat muuttua ja kehittyä yksilön kokemusten, ajatusten ja tilanteiden mukaan, eivätkä ne myöskään aina ole yhdenmukaisia käyttäytymisen kanssa (Baker 1988). Tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että vaikka yksilö ajattelisi negatiivisesti esimerkiksi jostain kielestä, hän voi oppia puhumaan sitä palkkion toivossa. Nämä kaksi piirrettä kuvaavat asenteiden sisäisiä ominaisuuksia, ja muut tässä esiteltävät piirteet muokkaavat asenteita ja auttavat niitä syntymään. Kolmas piirre on se, että asenteet ovat usein positiivisempia mitä nuorempi kielenoppija on kyseessä. Useat tutkimukset todistavat tämän väitteen (esimerkiksi Leppänen et al. 2009; You ja Dörnyei 2014), mutta eriäviäkin tuloksia on löytynyt. Neljäs piirre on se, että naispuolisilla oppijoilla on usein positiivisemmat asenteet kielenoppimista kohtaan kuin miespuolisilla. Vaikka suurin osa tutkimuksista puoltaakin tätä väitettä (esimerkiksi Burstall 1973; Cochran, McCallum ja Bell 2010), on olemassa myös eriäviä tutkimustuloksia (esimerkiksi Thomas 2010). Vaikka on todennäköistä, että nuoremmilla ja naispuolisilla oppijoilla onkin useimmiten positiivisempi asenne kielenoppimista kohtaan, asenteet muodostuvat monialaisesti ja yksilölliset erot sekä sosiaalinen ympäristö vaikuttavat niihin vahvasti. Viidenneksi piirteeksi mainitaan sosiaalisen ympäristön vaikutte, sillä esimerkiksi vanhempien uskomuksilla on vaikutus lapsen asenteisiin (ks. Harding et al. 1954; Kormos, Kiddle ja Csizér 2011). Kaiken kaikkiaan useat tutkimukset puoltavat asenteiden tärkeyttä kielenoppimisessa. Asenteet voivat vaikuttaa niin arvosanoihin (Oller, Baca and Vigil 1977), osaamiseen (Cochran, McCallum, and Bell 2010) kuin motivaatioon kielenoppimista kohtaan (Gardner 1985; Dörnyei ja Ottó 1998).

Englannin kielellä on Suomessa suuri rooli. Vaikka kieli ei ole virallisen kielen asemassa, sitä puhutaan laajasti eri instansseissa kuten yritysmaailmassa, ja opiskellaan useita vuosia kouluissa. Vaikka Suomeen tulevista maahanmuuttajista vain pieni osa on englanninkielisiä (Tilastokeskus 2017), englantia käytetään Suomessa jatkuvasti yhä

enemmän. Syynä lisääntyneeseen käyttöön ja englannin *lingua franca* -statukseen Suomessa on todennäköisesti globalisaatio ja sosiaalinen media. Englannin suuresta roolista kertoo myös se, että vaikka sitä ei ole pakko opiskella koulussa, noin 99% opiskelijoista valitsee silti sen ensimmäiseksi vieraaksi kielekseen (Opetushallinnon tilastopalvelu 2018). Koska suomalaiset yleisesti ottaen opiskelevat englantia niin pitkään, on suomalaisten kielitaito englannissa todella hyvä muihin maihin verrattuna. EF:n (2018) selvityksen mukaan suomalaisten kielitaito englannissa on Euroopan kuudenneksi paras. Toistaiseksi ei-suomenkielisten oppijoiden englannintaitoa ei olla mitattu, mutta erään tutkimuksen mukaan 75% maahanmuuttajataustaisista oppijoista omaavat vähintään suppean kielitaidon englannissa (Nieminen & Larja 2015).

Tutkimuksen toteutus

Tutkimus toteutettiin kyselylomakkeella, jonka koehenkilöt täyttivät oppitunnilla joko sähköisesti tai paperilla. Kysely koostui kolmesta osasta. Ensimmäiseksi oppilaat vastasivat kysymyksiin, joilla selvitettiin perustietoa oppilaista. Toiseksi oppilaat vastasivat viisiportaisiin Likert-asteikollisiin kysymyksiin asenteistaan. Kaksi viimeistä asennekysymystä olivat avoimia kysymyksiä. Avoimilla kysymyksillä haettiin tutkimukseen laadullista lähestymistapaa. Asennekysymykset oli jaoteltu kahteen suurempaan kategoriaan, eli henkilökohtaisiin uskomuksiin englantia kohtaan ja yhteiskunnallisiin väittämiin. Asennekysymykset jaoteltiin vielä pienempiin kategorioihin: englannin tärkeys oppijan omassa elämässä, englannin tärkeys suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa ja englannin tulevaisuus Suomessa. Avoimet kysymykset kuuluivat teemaltaan kolmanteen kategoriaan. Kolmannessa osassa kyselyä oppilaat tekivät sanastotestin, joka pohjautui Nationin Vocabulary Levels-testiin (1990).

Tutkimustulokset analysoitiin käyttäen SPSS-ohjelmaa. Ryhmien erojen p-arvot laskettiin asenteille Mann-Whitneyn U-testillä ja sanastotestille Pearsonin khiin neliöllä. Vertailtaessa asenteita ja oppimistuloksia käytettiin Spearmanin rhotaa, jolla mitattiin niiden korrelaationsuhde. Avoimia asennekysymyksiä analysoitaessa lähestymistapa oli kvalitatiivinen, jolloin hyödynnettiin kvalitatiivista sisältöanalyysia.

Tutkimustulokset

Tutkimustuloksista kävi ilmi, että molempien ryhmien jäsenten asenteet englantia kohtaan ovat hyvin positiivisia. Ryhmien asenteita verrattaessa ilmeni, että asenteet ryhmien välillä eivät eronneet suuresti toisistaan. Ensimmäisessä asennekategoriassa, englannin rooli oppijan omassa elämässä, molempien ryhmien asenteet olivat hyvin positiivisia ja englantia koettiin tärkeäksi koulussa ja vapaa-ajalla. Oppijat myös kokivat englannin oppimisen olevan tärkeää. Suurin ero tässä kategoriassa löytyi väittämästä “*englanti on minulle tärkeää koulussa*”, sillä ne oppijat, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, olivat keskimäärin puolisen yksikköä vahvemmin samaa mieltä väittämän kanssa (p-arvo= 013). Myös muissa kategorian väittämissä asenteet olivat positiivisemmat niillä oppijoilla, joiden kotikieli ei ollut suomi.

Toisessa asennekategoriassa, englannin tärkeys yhteiskunnassa, erot ryhmien välillä olivat hyvin minimaalisia. Suurin ero löytyi väittämästä “*englanti on Suomessa tärkeämpää kuin suomi*”, jossa keskiarvo ei-suomenkielistaustaisilla oppijoilla oli 2,41 ja suomenkielistaustaisilla oppijoilla 2,07. Vertailtaessa englantia muihin kieliin, eli ruotsiin ja vieraisiin kieliin, löydettiin pieniä mutta kiinnostavia eroja oppilaiden välillä. Oppijat, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, suhtautuivat toista ryhmää negatiivisemmin näihin väittämiin. Pohdittaessa sitä, pitäisikö englannin olla yksi Suomen virallisista kielistä, oppijat, joiden kotikieli on suomi, suhtautuivat tähän toista ryhmää negatiivisemmin.

Kolmannessa asennekategoriassa, “englannin rooli tulevaisuudessa Suomessa ja oppijan henkilökohtaisessa elämässä”, molemmat ryhmät olivat sitä mieltä, että englannin rooli suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa kasvaa ja että englantia auttaa heitä tulevaisuuden työelämässä. Näissä väittämissä ryhmien välillä ei ollut eroja. Kolmannen väittämän erot olivat sen sijaan lähes tilastollisesti merkittäviä (p-arvo= 0.075). Ne oppijat, joiden kotikieli on suomi, eivät olleet samaa mieltä väittämän “*10 vuoden kuluttua Suomessa puhutaan enemmän englantia kuin suomea*” kanssa, kun taas toinen ryhmä ei ollut väittämän kanssa samaa tai eri mieltä.

Avoimien kysymysten vastauksia analysoitaessa oppijoiden positiiviset asenteet englannin roolia kohtaan vahvistuivat. Ensimmäisessä avoimessa kysymyksessä (*miten luulet, että englantia on mukana elämässäsi 10 vuoden kuluttua?*) kaikki oppijat kokivat, että englantia on mukana heidän tulevaisuudessaan ja listasivat tilanteita, joissa he tulevat

käyttämään kieltä. Vastauksista löytyi ryhmien välillä eroja: ne oppijat, joiden kotikieli on suomi, mainitsivat työn ja vapaa-ajan huomattavasti useammin kuin toinen ryhmä. Vastaavasti ne oppijat, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, mainitsivat itsensä kehittämisen ja opiskelun useammin. Toisessa avoimessa kysymyksessä (*miltä mielestäsi englannin kielen tulevaisuus Suomessa näyttää?*) muutamaa epävarmaa vastausta lukuun ottamatta vastaukset olivat lähes yksinomaan asenteeltaan positiivisia. Vastauksissa toistui molemmilla ryhmillä ajatus siitä, että englantia käytetään tulevaisuudessa enemmän. Ryhmässä, jonka oppijat koostuivat niistä, joiden kotikieli on suomi, oli myös kaksi koehenkilöä, jotka eivät uskoneet, että englannin rooli Suomessa kasvaa. Toisessa ryhmässä ei ollut koehenkilöitä, jotka kokivat näin.

Sanastotestin perusteella erot ryhmien välillä olivat kohtalaisen pieniä, eivätkä olleet tilastollisesti merkittäviä. Ensimmäisellä 2000 yleisimmän sanan tasolla, oppijat, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, taso oli hieman korkeampi ja muilla tasoilla (3000 ja 5000), suomenkielistäustaisten oppijoiden tulos oli hieman parempi. Koska oppijat eivät pärjänneet tasolla 10000, se päätettiin eliminoida yhteispisteitä laskettaessa. Kun katsottiin oppijoiden kokonaistulosta, ne oppijat, joiden kotikieli on suomi, pärjäsivät hieman paremmin. Tämä tutkimustulos voidaan ainakin osittain selittää sillä, että koulussa englantia opetetaan suomen ja englannin avulla, jotka eivät välttämättä ole kaikkien oppijoiden vahvin kieli.

Toisen tutkimuskysymyksen vastaukset eivät myöskään näyttäneet suuria eroja ryhmien välillä. Vertailtaessa asenteiden ja sanastotestin kokonaistuloksien vastauksia, ensimmäisessä asennekategoriassa ilmeni, että niillä oppijoilla, joiden kotikieli on suomi, on suurempi positiivinen korrelaatio asenteiden (englannin rooli omassa elämässä) ja oppimistulosten välillä kuin oppijoilla, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi. Toisessa (englannin rooli suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa) ja kolmannessa (englannin tulevaisuus Suomessa) asennekategorioissa molemmilla ryhmillä oli pienehköt positiiviset korrelaatiot muuttujien välillä, mutta korrelaatiot eivät olleet tilastollisesti merkittäviä. Vertailtaessa kokonaistuloksia kaikkien asenteiden keskiarvoon kävi ilmi, että yleisesti ottaen asenteiden ja oppimistuloksien välillä oli vahvempi positiivinen korrelaatio niillä oppijoilla, joiden kotikieli on suomi.

Pohdinta

Osa eroista oppijaryhmien välillä voidaan selittää eriävillä kulttuurisilla piirteillä. On mahdollista, että suomenkielistaustaiset oppijat käyttävät enemmän informaalisia oppimistapoja, kuten sosiaalista mediaa. Tätä väitettä puoltavat myös esimerkiksi Järvinen (2018) sekä Wikström, Haikkola and Laatikainen (2014), jotka ovat tutkineet suomenkielistaustaisten ja maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppijoiden internetin käyttöä ja esittäneet, että suomenkielistaustaiset oppijat käyttävät internetiä huomattavasti enemmän päivän aikana. Myös television katselutottumukset voivat vaikuttaa asenteisiin: Suomessa ei dubata ohjelmia, mutta tilanne on erilainen esimerkiksi albanian ja arabiankielisissä maissa, jotka oli mainittu yleisesti oppijoiden kotikieliksi. Nämä kulttuuriset piirteet selittävät todennäköisesti sitä, miksi suomenkielistaustaiset oppijat yleisemmin ilmoittivat, että englanti on heille tärkeää vapaa-ajalla ja miksi ne oppijat, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, kokevat englannin tärkeämmäksi koulussa.

Englanninkielen rooli suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa herätti eriäviä mielipiteitä ryhmien välillä. Ne oppijat, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, olivat vahvemmin sitä mieltä, että englannin roolia pitäisi Suomessa kasvattaa ja että englanti on Suomessa tärkeämpää kuin suomi. Todennäköisesti kaikilla niillä oppijoilla, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, ei suomi ole myöskään vahvin kieli, vaan he joutuvat turvautumaan välillä englantiin tai muihin keinoihin, joka luonnollisesti vaikuttaa heidän asenteisiinsa näissä väittämässä. Tässä ryhmässä oli myös muutama oppilas, jotka eivät lähtökohtaisesti puhu ollenkaan suomea. Kolmannen kategorian viimeinen kysymys (10 vuoden päästä Suomessa käytetään enemmän englantia kuin suomea), jossa ei-suomenkielistaustaisilla oppijoilla oli korkeampi keskiarvo, liittyy myös tähän selitykseen. Oppijat toivonevat, että heillä olisi mahdollisuus käyttää vahvempaa kieltään tulevaisuudessa virallisemmissa instansseissa. Kolmannen kategorian kahden ensimmäisen väittämän (*10 vuoden päästä Suomessa käytetään enemmän englantia kuin nyt ja englanti auttaa minua tulevaisuuden urallani*) välillä ei löytynyt eroja ryhmien välillä. Tämä viittaa siihen, että kielitaustasta huolimatta oppijat kokevat englannin merkityksen kasvavan ja sen tärkeyden työelämässä.

Verrattaessa ryhmien asenteita ja oppimistuloksia ilmeni, että oppijoiden kotikieli vaikuttaa asenteiden ja oppimistuloksien suhteeseen, sillä suomenkielistaustailta

oppijoilta löydettiin vahvempi positiivinen korrelaatio kaikissa asennekategorioissa. Jotta näitä tuloksia voitaisiin analysoida tarkemmin, tarvitaan lisätutkimusta aiheesta. Esimerkiksi taustatietojen, kuten lähimmäisten vaikutusta oppijan omiin asenteisiin, voitaisiin tutkia laajemman kuvan saamiseksi.

Tutkimuksen rajoituksena voidaan nähdä pieni otosjoukko. Otosjoukon kokoa on kompensoitu ottamalla tutkimukseen myös laadullinen lähtökohta. Jotta tutkimuksen tulokset voitaisiin yleistää isompaan kontekstiin, kaivataan lisätutkimusta suuremmalla otosjoukolla.

Yhteenveto

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää kahden erilaisen oppijaryhmän asenteita englantia kohtaan, ja sitä miten nämä asenteet eroavat toisistaan. Asenteiden kohdalla keskityttiin erityisesti englannin rooliin suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa nyt ja tulevaisuudessa. Toinen tutkimuksen tavoite oli selvittää, miten kyseiset asenteet heijastuvat oppijoiden osaamiseen englannissa.

Pienet erot asenteissa ryhmien välillä viittaavat siihen, että suomalaisessa koulutusjärjestelmässä oppijan kotikielellä ei ole suurta merkitystä oppimistuloksiin. Yleisesti ottaen oppijoilla oli positiivisia asenteita englannin kieltä kohtaan, ja kielen merkitys Suomessa nähtiin vahvana, ja jopa kasvavan tulevaisuudessa. Kokonaiskuvaa tarkasteltaessa niillä oppijoilla, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, oli hieman positiivisemmat asenteet kuin niillä oppijoilla, joiden kotikieli on suomi. Tutkimuksen perusteella asenteet ja oppimistulokset korreloivat vahvemmin oppijoilla, joiden kotikieli on suomi. Kielenoppimista voidaan yrittää maksimoida, jotta niiden oppijoiden, joiden kotikieli ei ole suomi, positiiviset asenteet saataisiin korreloimaan oppimistulosten kanssa. Tutkimus tarjosi myös mielenkiintoista informaatiota siitä, millaisena Suomessa asuvat yhdeksäsluokkalaiset eri kielitaustoista näkevät englannin roolin yhteiskunnassa.

Lisätieto eri kielitaustaisen oppijoiden asenteista voi olla tärkeä tutkimuskohde, jotta opettamista voitaisiin kehittää entisestään. Oppijoiden kielitausta voitaisiin ottaa tarkemmin huomioon ja verrata esimerkiksi sitä, miten arabian- ja somaliankielitaustaisen oppijoiden asenteet eroavat suomenkielitaustaisten oppijoiden

asenteista. Myös kattavampi testi kielenosaamisesta olisi tarpeen: tässä tutkimuksessa keskityttiin reseptiiviseen kielenosaamiseen, mutta produktiivinen kielitaito voisi tarjota mielenkiintoisia vivahteita tutkimukseen.