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Conditions for EFL Learning and Professional Development

Finland-Swedish
Learner and Teacher Perspectives





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Abstract

This study is about the conditions for active learning and professional teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in a Finland-Swedish context. The study is based upon the assumption that EFL learning and teaching takes place through interaction and that the process is affected by the particular social context of the main actors, that is the learners and the teachers. It is also argued that the conditions for development-centred learning are vital for professional development.

The Finland-Swedish context of EFL is believed to be affected by the general trends of globalisation and the dominance of English as a means of international communication. These trends affect the conditions for learning and teaching EFL, that is the goals for EFL, the expected roles of teachers and learners, the suitability of materials and the experiences of the target language countries and exposure to English the actors bring with them into the EFL classroom.

The general aim of the project is to gain insights of the conditions for EFL learning and professional development in the Swedish-medium EFL-beginner classroom in Finland. What will be described and analysed are the starting-points of: A) learners beginning their studies of English in grade 5 (e.g. attitudes towards, knowledge of and exposure to English), B) teachers who teach these beginners English (e.g. perception of pupils' starting-points, own education and experiences of English, teaching materials, curricula and social context).

The approach to the project at large can be classified as abductive (Polkinghorne, 1983), since the researcher's own theoretical basis has grown simultaneously with the process of carrying out the empirical research and analysing the results. The methodological choices have been influenced by the variety of research questions and difference in roles and maturity between the two main groups of actors in this study. This has made it necessary to employ different methods when gathering information from the pupils (Study A, N=351) and teachers (Study B, N=19) and to make use of concrete operational questions to break down the actual research questions. In the choice of research methods the aim has been to design age-appropriate instruments that identify potential actors and relations in relevant EFL learning settings and thus to regard both types of actors as subjects rather than objects. The method of analysis was informed by hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches to analysis.

For many of the learners (Study A) it is evident that English is becoming a SL rather than a FL in the sense that they are aware of encountering the language frequently in a variety of contexts and through different media and actors, but this was not the case for all students in Swedish-speaking areas in Finland. For a substantial majority of pupils in the Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland the societal context outside school provides good opportunities for active, authentic, need-based EFL learning. Many of these learners are also able to make use of this extensive exposure to English and function as active more or less autonomous learners in these informal contexts. The traditional forms of

activity – reading, talking and listening – still seem to be most effective ways of acquiring both productive vocabulary and listening comprehension skills in English.

Concerning the teacher results (Study B) there is a great divergence in their answers with regard to the research questions. This indicates that different teachers handle the challenges they encounter in fairly different ways. Some of these teachers have managed to apply a reflective and constructive way of dealing with at least some of the challenges they are faced with. Others express frustration with their work situation, with lack of guidance in the available curricula, available teaching materials and among other social actors.

The study indicates that the conditions for EFL learning and teaching in the Finland-Swedish context vary and that there is room for improvement. Suggestions are made on what measures could be taken within this context to best serve the fruitful interaction between learners and teachers and their development as learners and professionals. These suggestions are concerned with the structure and content of pre- and in-service teacher education, content and structure of teaching materials, national policy documents, structure and atmosphere of school communities. To achieve substantial improvement it is suggested that the mutual communication between all actors identified above needs to be developed further.

Keywords: conditions for learning, English as a global language, English as a foreign language/second language, Finland-Swedish context, development-centred learning, second language acquisition, professional development, phenomenology, data-driven

Acknowledgements

This thesis is based upon the assumption that learning and development take place in a social context, in interaction with other people. This project is a splendid example of just that. Even though the title page only features my name, this project is most definitely a result of collective efforts. Numerous people and institutions have contributed in different ways: I will not be able to mention you all, but I want you to know that I appreciate your contributions.

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I dedicate this thesis to my grandfather. Through his own example, he has shown me how important it is to see the good potential in everything and everyone.

Annunciation Day, 9 March 2008

Mikaela Björklund

Table of Contents

Abstract	5
Acknowledgements	7
Table of Contents	9
List of Figures	12
List of Tables.....	14
List of Abbreviations.....	15
1 Introduction	17
1.1 Background and positioning.....	17
1.2 General aim of the study	19
1.3 Outline of the thesis.....	21
2 From global to local context.....	23
2.1 English as a global language	23
2.2 Global changes in society and language education	28
2.3 The Finnish scene.....	33
2.3.1 Development of the Finnish comprehensive school.....	33
2.3.2 Teacher education and official requirements	33
2.3.3 The two latest national curricular reforms	37
2.3.4 The Swedish –medium primary school and the English influence	40
3 A framework for learning.....	45
3.1 Theories of learning and world views	45
3.2 On knowledge and learning.....	47
3.3 Development-centred learning and professional development	52
3.4 Second language acquisition and growth in proficiency	56
3.5 Summary	72
4 Learner perspectives.....	75
4.1 Learner characteristics.....	77
4.2 Availability of exposure-language outside school in the Finnish context.....	79
4.3 Quality of exposure-language	80
4.4 Regional differences.....	83
4.5 Attitudes	84
4.5.1 Attitudes to languages	85
4.5.2. Attitudes to TL culture and people.....	87
4.6 Culture and intercultural education	89
4.7 Availability of culturally related exposure in the Finland-Swedish context	93
5 Teacher perspectives	95
5.1 Teacher characteristics	95
5.1.1 Analytical abilities.....	97
5.2 Perceived constraints, resources and the consequences for planning.....	98

5.2.1 Pupils	100
5.2.2 Material	101
5.2.3. Curriculum.....	103
5.2.4 Educational background/qualification.....	104
5.2.5 Experiences.....	106
5.2.6 Other actors	107
5.2.7 Regional differences	109
6 Methodology.....	111
6.1 Research questions	111
6.2 Methods.....	114
6.2.1 Study A: Learners.....	116
6.2.2 Study B: Teachers.....	124
7 Results	133
7.1 Learner results (Study A)	134
7.1.1 Availability of English exposure through different media	134
7.1.2 Learner performance and its relation to availability of English exposure.....	145
7.1.3 Learners' expressed attitudes and knowledge	158
7.2 Teacher results (Study B)	169
7.2.1 Factors expressed as critical for the outcome of EFL teaching	169
7.2.2 Effects of pupils on planning.....	173
7.2.3 Effects of materials on planning.....	175
7.2.4 Effects of curricula on planning	177
7.2.5 Effects of education and experiences on planning	180
7.2.6 Effects of other actors in the social context.....	182
7.3 Summary of results.....	185
8 Discussion	189
8.1 Learner-related questions	189
8.1.1 The status of English as a FL/SL.....	189
8.1.2 Active and reflective learning.....	192
8.1.3 Need and authenticity	195
8.1.4 Attitudes and realia knowledge	197
8.1.5 Summary	199
8.2 Teacher interview results.....	201
8.2.1 Learners in focus	201
8.2.2 Materials as aid or controlling force.....	203
8.2.3 Goal-oriented curricula as support	204
8.2.4 Education and experiences as basis for development.....	205
8.2.5 Colleagues and other actors as supporters.....	206
8.2.6 Teachers' role in the EFL teaching process.....	207
8.2.7 Summary	208
8.3 Methods discussion	209
8.3.1 Learner instrument and analysis of data.....	209

8.3.2. Teacher interview and analysis of data	211
9 Conclusions and implications for further research.....	217
9.1 Policy and curricula.....	219
9.2 Teacher education and materials	221
9.3 Teaching and learning situation	225
9.4 In conclusion	226
Svensk sammanfattning.....	229
References	239
Appendices	256

List of Figures

Figure 1. The levels in an ecological environmental model (adapted from Imsen, 2000, p. 411).....	19
Figure 2. Conditions for learning in EFL education.....	20
Figure 3. The three circles of English influence, based on Kachru (1985, p. 12).	24
Figure 4. Demands on the language learner	31
Figure 5. Demands on the language teacher (adapted from Björklund, 2004a, p. 169).....	32
Figure 6. The demands on future teachers as active agents on the basis of Luukkainen (2000b)	35
Figure 7. The mono/bilingual status of municipalities in the south-western part of Finland, taken from Sjöholm (2004a, p.640).	41
Figure 8. A continuum of different types of pedagogical interaction.....	52
Figure 9. Gardner’s socio-educational model of the language learning process, including the modifications made by Forsman (2004: 16).....	58
Figure 10. Schematic description of the concept attitude.....	89
Figure 11. Range of possible relations to the textbook, adapted from Wikman (2004, p. 90)	101
Figure 12. Conditions for learning in EFL education.....	112
Figure 13. The explicit relations between RQs and OQs in the study	114
Figure 14. Presentation of the processes of analysis	129
Figure 15. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English music’	136
Figure 16. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English TV programmes’	136
Figure 17. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English used with tourists’	137
Figure 18. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English on the computer’	137
Figure 19. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English books, newspapers, ads’	138
Figure 20. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English used at home and/or with friends’	138
Figure 21. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘Trip to/stay in English-speaking country’	139
Figure 22. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English radio programmes’	140
Figure 23. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English-speaking guests’	141
Figure 24. The variation of mean values (on a 1-5 scale) for exposure to the different sources of English in relation to region	142

Figure 25. The variation of mean values (on a 1-5 scale) for exposure to the different sources of English in relation to urbanisation	143
Figure 26. The variation of mean values (on a 1-5 scale) for exposure to the different sources of English in relation to language/s spoken at home	144
Figure 27. Distribution of scores in listening comprehension test	146
Figure 28. Distribution of scores in the productive vocabulary test.....	149
Figure 29. Number of phrases and sentences produced by the respondents in PV test (n=351)	153
Figure 30. Total number of words, total English exposure, and score in listening comprehension in relation to number of phrases.....	154
Figure 31. Frequencies in the score for number of verifiable facts about differences between Great Britain and the U.S.A. produced by the sample	161
Figure 32. Frequencies in the score for number of verifiable facts about similarities between Great Britain and the U.S.A. produced by the sample.....	158
Figure 33. Schematic presentation of the thematic categories in pupil data on differences between Great Britain and the U.S.A.	164
Figure 34. The major categories that teachers mentioned as critical factors affecting their EFL teaching	170
Figure 35. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding the effect of pupils on the planning of EFL teaching.	174
Figure 36. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding the effect of materials on the planning of EFL teaching.....	176
Figure 37. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding the views on curricular effects on the planning of EFL teaching.....	178
Figure 38. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding the effects of experiences and education on the planning of EFL teaching....	180
Figure 39. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding expressed support and/or feedback by other social actors.....	183
Figure 40. A simple model of the ideal interaction between and mutual influence exerted by different actors involved in language education	218

List of Tables

Table 1. General trends in historical interdependence between world views and educational rationale inspired by Rasmussen (September 2004).	46
Table 2. Course-specific motivational factors, adapted from Dörnyei (1994, p. 280).	66
Table 3. Functional division of lexical phrases, adapted from Nattinger & De Carrico (1992, p. 60-65).	69
Table 4. Brief outline of the main characteristics of study A and study B in this project.....	115
Table 5. Background variables, categories and frequencies in the learner sample	117
Table 6. Background variables in the teacher sample.....	126
Table 7. Mean and mode values for pupils' reported exposure to English through different sources.....	135
Table 8. The mean, standard deviation, highest, lowest, and possible scores for each of the three texts in the listening comprehension (N=351)	146
Table 9. Correlations (rho) between different sources of input and scores in LC (parts 1-3), significance (p) and ranking (rank) included	147
Table 10. Examples of naïve spelling of English	150
Table 11. Correlations (rho) between different sources of input and scores in PV, significance (p) and ranking (rank) included.....	151
Table 12. Ranking for PV, LC and judgement of impact (s=strong impact ranks 1-3, m=medium impact ranks 4-6, w=weak impact ranks 7-10) for the different sources of English exposure	152
Table 13. Correlation values (rho) and judgment of significance on a $p \leq .01$ level for ERK and the individual sources of exposure to English.....	163

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this study. The majority of the abbreviations are in general use within the field of second language research and education, but some of the abbreviations I have introduced myself specifically this study.

BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EFLT	Teaching of English as a Foreign Language
ELP	European Language Portfolio
ERK	English Realia Knowledge (aggregated variable)
FL	Foreign Language
LC	Listening Comprehension test
OQ	Operationalised Question
PV	Productive Vocabulary test
RQ	Research Question
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TEE	Total Exposure to English (aggregated variable)

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and positioning

The foreign language (FL) classroom of the Swedish-medium primary school in Finland can be seen as an important arena for language development and awareness, as well as for the development of favourable attitudes and sound identities among young learners. At the same time the FL classroom is the everyday setting for work and hence also a potentially important arena for the professional development of the teacher. To make use of the full potential of the foreign language classroom, actors such as teachers, parents, authorities, teacher educators and materials producers need to know what the main actors – pupils and teachers – bring with them into the common effort of learning. In relation to the pupils it becomes relevant to study how different actors as well as exposure to English (language, culture, attitudes) influence the processes of learning outside school, in order to discuss what that tells us about the pupils' learning potentials and what impact these factors and processes may have on FL teaching and learning taking place in the FL classroom of the Swedish-medium primary school in Finland. The media influence is of importance also in relation to the teachers, but even more critical are the issues relating to the context of FL teaching and their own professional background.

With this focus it is necessary to choose a relatively broad perspective in order to identify key factors (exposure/actors) influencing the main actors of the language classroom. These form the conditions for foreign language learning. One could say that I have used a broad paintbrush as far as the theoretical background is concerned. A wide range of relevant areas are quickly sketched in order to give the reader an idea of what the theoretical assumptions underlying this study are.

The present study was set within an educational framework and with aims of educational relevance in mind. However, cross-disciplinary background knowledge is used to build up the theoretical background and strengthen the breadth of presented data, thus supporting the discussion of the results and the usefulness of the insights gained¹. Each source/piece of evidence is to be judged on the basis of its appropriateness for a particular line of argument, rather than on the basis of what area or paradigm it happens to represent. Research representing educational sociology, educational psychology, educational philosophy, applied linguistics, and linguistics are made use of in this study.

All these contributing perspectives can be included in a general framework inspired by ecological semiotic and sociocultural² perspectives (see van Lier,

¹ See van Lier (2004a, pp. 37-40; Lindblad 2002, p. 78; Polkinghorne, 1983) on the need to adapt one's approaches and methods according to the research problem at hand.

² The concepts 'intercultural' and 'sociocultural' are used as synonymous in connection

2004a; 2004b). In addition to van Lier's perspectives on language learning, which will be presented in Chapter 3, I have also been influenced by the theory of developmental ecology brought forth by Bronfenbrenner (1979, e.g. pp. 60-65). For the present purpose, the perspectives of interaction (through activities, roles, and social relations) and environment emerge as two key features. The process of development is described as a result of both the characteristics of the individual and of his experiences gathered through constant interaction with the outside world (including both material and interpersonal exchange). Bronfenbrenner's theory was controversial from a positivist point of view, but as will be seen later (see Chapter 3) most current postpositivist theories of learning recognise the importance of interaction (Andersson, 2002, p. 21-22, cf. Giddens, 1984, p. xvi).

The second important perspective relates to environment. In this study it is useful to choose a broad definition of environment. Young children in the Western world grow up in environments rich with opportunities for interaction with numerous actors. The home and family are, of course, among the most important aspects of their environment, but also other institutions (such as school, day-care, clubs) and media (TV, radio, computers) play their part. Andersson (2002, pp. 24-24; Imsen, 2000, pp. 410-414) describes this in terms of a systems theory perspective (Sw. systemteoretiskt perspektiv)³, where individuals are involved in several different micro systems. However, this interaction pattern is so complex and often so subtle that it is difficult to state clear cause and effect relationships, even though it is obvious that one change in a micro system will affect the whole system.

with e.g. education, but I tend to use intercultural more often in connection with awareness and sociocultural in connection with knowledge (cf. Lundgen, 2002, p. 55). The interchangeability in the use of these concepts in the research literature illustrates the rapid development in this field.

³ For an introduction to the development of systems thinking and methodology see Checkland (2000).

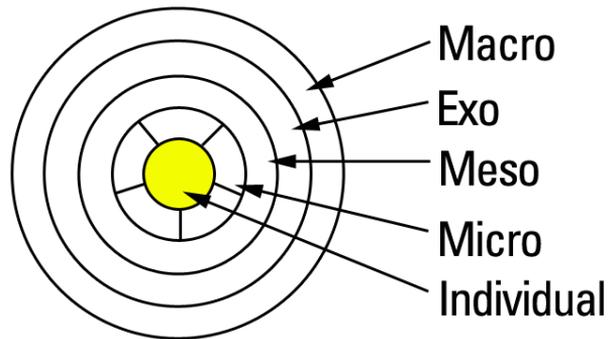


Figure 1. The levels in an ecological environmental model (adapted from Imsen, 2000, p. 411)

Linked micro systems can be referred to as a meso system. According to Andersson (2002, p. 25) these larger entities have received little attention in developmental research. Researchers have often failed to recognise the intricate patterns of mutual interaction in which the individual is involved. But the network of mutual influence and interaction does not end there. It is also important to realise that there are numerous sources of indirect influence. One is called the exo system, which is a system the young person does not have direct access to but in which significant partners in his or her micro systems are included (p. 26). This could for example be the parents' work places. If we enlarge the perspective even further we find the ideologies, values, traditions, economic and political frames of society. This can be referred to as the macro system (p. 26). In this thesis the boundaries between the different systems exemplified will not be spelled out. However, I find this framework useful as a starting-point. If we assume that pupils and teachers are constantly interacting within several different systems⁴ it becomes important to identify these connections and study what kind of an impact they might have on the conditions for learning for the individual pupil and what s/he will bring into the micro systems of the EFL classroom. Risager has developed thoughts along the same lines (2006, pp. 88-89).

1.2 General aim of the study

For the development of EFL education in Swedish-speaking Finland to be effective, the conditions for the learning processes of teachers' and learners' need to be described. Such important conditions are availability of English input, adequate teaching material, curricular constraints, contacts with target language

⁴ In this concept of system I also include direct interaction with artefacts, since all of these have been produced by human beings. The process can thus be described as an indirect interaction with the originators/authors of these sources.

countries, and other possible factors that might influence the EFL learning context. The general framework of where these conditions for EFL in Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland are studied is outlined in Figure 2 below.

By ‘conditions’ I mean all factors except classroom interaction that somehow have an impact on the language learning process (cf. Spolsky, 1989). With such a definition it is self-evident that the inclusion of all of these factors goes beyond the scope of this study, since it is reasonable to assume that all factors have not as yet been identified and they are probably very many and too varied to be covered by a project of limited resources as far as time and economy is concerned. Nevertheless, I find the broad definition mentioned above useful in the sense that it opens up for a) the possibility to notice also what is not explicitly searched for, and b) a view of the complex interplay between different actors activated in the processes of language learning.

Figure 2 below represents a synthesis of the background information covered so far and serves as the starting-point for the dive into some of the theoretical fields (Chapters 2-5) considered to be of importance for this study. Therefore, the model will only be briefly presented here, as it will be possible to follow the more detailed presentation of these issues in the next chapters.

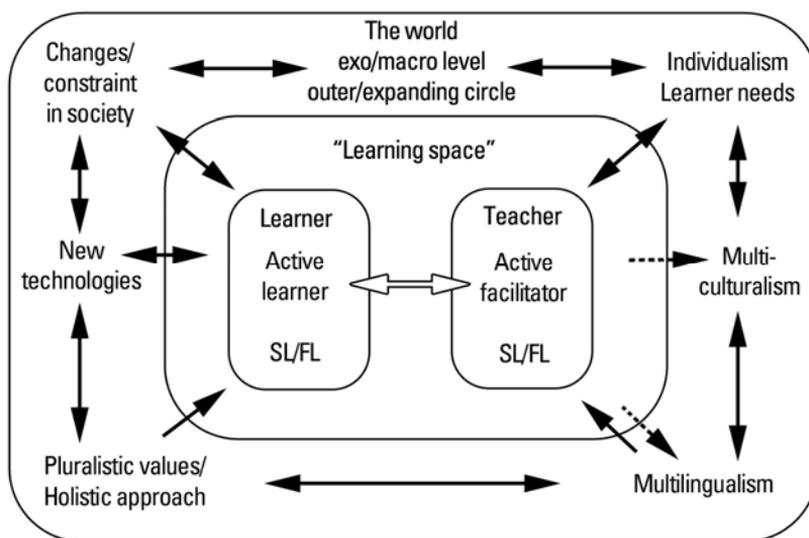


Figure 2. Conditions for learning in EFL education.

As can be seen in Figure 2 learning takes place in the world, i.e. through social interaction with the world. Some of the mentioned characteristics of the world believed to influence learners and teachers or vice versa are visible in the model. What becomes apparent on a closer look is that all of these phenomena could be summarised in terms of “Language, Culture, and Values”. The major factors identified at this point are fairly similar for both teachers and learners. The extent to which these relationships are believed to be reciprocal varies.

Characteristics of the learner and the outside world have an impact on one another, and thus presumably on how and to what extent interaction and learning takes place. For the teacher it is not a question of language learning per se, but of learning as much as possible about the learner and the outside world, to be able to guide and enhance meaningful interaction between the learner and the world and the learner and the teacher, i.e. professional development. This process is either facilitated or hampered by the intrapersonal characteristics of the teacher and the possibilities and limitations offered by her/his daily working environment.

The patterns of direct influence are indicated by arrows in the model. I have also chosen to identify an area called “learning space” between the outside world and the two main actors. This has been done to underline the assumption that learning is a complex process taking place in the interaction between the learner and her/his perception of the artefacts and/or actors of the outside world. Thus the lines between areas indicated in the model are not to be taken as clear-cut boundaries, but as a simplified way of representing complex structures of interplay and interdependence.

The main aim of the project as a whole is to gain insights of the conditions for EFL learning and teaching in the Swedish-medium beginner-EFL-classroom in Finland, and therefore what will be described and analysed are the starting-points of :

- A) learners beginning their studies of English in grade 5
(attitudes towards, knowledge of and previous experiences of English)
- B) teachers who teach these beginners English
(perception of pupils’ starting-points, own education and professional development as teachers of English, teaching materials, and societal context).

Above, I have tried to broadly position the study in the scholarly world and provide the general aims for undertaking it. Both the positioning and the aims are very broad at this point, which illustrates my own starting-point. In Chapters 2-5 the development of the contextual and theoretical understanding will be more explicitly presented and discussed.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

The following structure has been used in order to provide a coherent presentation of the line of thought in the study, starting with the conceptual framework, continuing with methodological considerations, presentation of collected data and finishing with reached conclusions and implications for further research and developmental work in this field.

In Chapter 2 some relevant global and national Finnish developments are presented as a general background to the setting of this study. The global changes mentioned are concerned with the rise of English as a/the language for global communication and general global changes in (Western) society with the emphasis on changes influencing language education. The national Finnish

context is presented through the developments in teacher education, curricular reforms, media influence, and the Swedish-medium primary school.

Even though the actual processes of learning are not being studied directly, the views of learning used are of critical importance for the interpretation of the results. Therefore a framework for learning is presented in Chapter 3. The chapter starts out with a brief historical overview of the developments in this field and then changes focus to describe more current developments, professional development through development-centred learning, and language learning. In other words, the chapter starts out with general perspectives on learning, relevant for both of the two main types of actors focused upon in this study. In the section on development-centred learning the main focus is on the teacher, while the main focus in the section on second language learning is on the language learner.

In Chapter 4 the focus is on some of the characteristics and most relevant perspectives in relation to the learners, such as learner characteristics, availability of exposure, attitudes, and the relevance of sociocultural education. Additional issues relevant for the study on learners (Study A) are also presented.

Chapter 5 presents a perspective on the teacher. Aspects such as teacher characteristics and perceived limits and resources relevant for the teacher study (Study B) are presented here.

The theoretical part can be said to be summarised in the first section of Chapter 6 where the research questions and the concrete operational questions are outlined, followed by the other methodological procedures and considerations this study has given rise to. In this chapter the dual focus of the project – resulting in two different, but clearly linked empirical studies – is explicitly outlined. The different designs used in the learner study (Study A) and the teacher study (Study B) are described. This approach makes it necessary to differentiate between research questions (RQs) and operationalised questions (OQs), where the RQs draw on the results in both studies, whereas the OQs are related only to one of the two empirical studies.

The results of the data gathered are presented in Chapter 7. The presentation follows the order of the OQs specified in Chapter 6, beginning with Study A (learner results) followed by Study B (teacher results).

The conclusions of Studies A and B (learner and teacher results) are discussed in relation to the actual RQs in Chapter 8. Finally, Chapter 9 sums up the implications of the RQ discussion in the previous chapter and also moves beyond the limits of this study.

2 From global to local context

The main contextual background features and motives for this study will be outlined in this chapter. The most obvious reason is related to the rise of English as a global language, which in turn is related to some of the major global changes in (Western) society. After a presentation of these forces of change, relevant features and developments of the Finnish context are discussed as well as the impact of the global forces on this regional context. The expression ‘Finnish context’ used in this presentation also refers to the context of Swedish-speaking Finland, if not stated otherwise. This choice has been made to avoid long passages referring to the context of the linguistic minority under study.

2.1 English as a global language

The spread of English as a global language has been described in terms of three circles; the inner, the outer and the expanding circles, building on Kachru’s acquisitional division of speakers of English. Kachru’s view was presented as early as 1985 (pp. 12-14, see also 1982b), but is still widely used (Coleman, 2006, p. 2). This model is a useful starting-point when trying to conceptualise both the global spread of English and the consequences it has brought and is about to bring about for the teaching of foreign and second languages. Figure 3 below illustrates the division of English into an inner, outer and expanding circle.

The inner circle comprises the native speakers of English, the outer circle the speakers of English as a second language (SL), and the expanding circle speakers of English as a foreign language (FL) (Coleman, 2006, p. 2). A SL is defined as a language learned and widely used in the local/national community (e.g. for administrative purposes, in teaching), it might even have a status as (one of the) official language(s). A FL, on the other hand, is defined as a language with no official status and not widely used in the local community (cf. Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 667). However, this traditional definition of a FL seems to be breaking up at least with regard to English (cf. Risager, 2006, pp. 8-9). Both Svartvik (1999, pp. 9-10) and Baker and Prys Jones (1998, pp. 313, 317) express the view that English as a foreign language (EFL) is a language with no official status, but often widely used in the community for different purposes (e.g. international communication, industry, teaching). In fact, this definition is more or less an exact match of the definition for SL used by Baker and Prys Jones. They also note that the concepts FL and SL are often used interchangeably and sometimes SL is chosen as a superordinate of FL.⁵

⁵ The distinctions become even more blurred if reference is made to the definitions used when referring to the teaching of a majority language in a bilingual country like Finland. Ikonen (1995, p. 8) distinguishes between Finnish taught as a FL, a SL, a domestic SL and as mother tongue (L1). SL is in this case defined as teaching in a Finnish-medium setting, with functional bilingualism as the aim, i.e. immersion. The domestic SL is taught as a separate subject in Swedish-medium (or Sami) institutions.

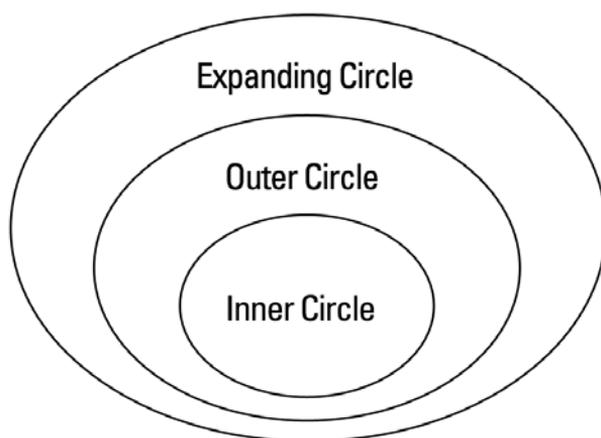


Figure 3. The three circles of English influence, based on Kachru (1985, p. 12).

Also, metaphors like Kachru's can be used for classifying both individuals and whole language communities (e.g. nation states). One of the reasons for the change of definition with regard to English is probably that a nation state perspective rather than the point of view of the individual learner has been chosen (cf. Risager, 2006, p. 7). In my opinion, the changing definition with regard to English makes it even more difficult to distinguish between the roles of a SL and a FL (cf. Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 667-668). If the role of English is changing (cf. Graddol, 2006) it does not necessarily mean that we need to change the definitions of FL and SL, but rather our assessment of what kind of a role English has in different communities and for different learners of English. Such a need is recognised and even encouraged by Kachru in connection with the presentation of his model (1985, p. 14). Svartvik (1999) also recognises the fact that some researchers choose not to make any distinction between the outer and the expanding circles since they are both concerned with non-native speakers. According to Graddol (2006, p. 110) Kachru has recently proposed a shift away from the three consecutive circle-model to one based on the level of proficiency of the English language user, rather than on the status and level of exposure to English as in the previous model. One can claim, that it is a matter of adapting a model of the societal role of language to one of its dynamic role for the individual, as proposed by Risager (2006, p. 7, 90). When properly developed that will probably prove to be an interesting model, but for the purpose of this study I choose to apply the general SL/FL definitions mentioned above.

In terms of a language for international communication English plays in a league of its own today (cf. Coleman, 2006; Graddol, 2006; Svartvik, 1999; Janson, 1997; Hoffmann, 2000). That is not a direct result of the superior number of native speakers of the language. If that was the case Chinese should be the dominant global language. This means that the dominance of English comes as a result of the numbers of speakers of English as a SL and FL (cf. Baker & Prys

Jones, 1998, p. 311; Graddol, 2006). This development has been brought about through a series of more or less related global trends of development during a long period of time. Janson (1997, pp. 215-218; cf. Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 311) identifies three major historical factors leading to the tremendous dominance of English as the language of international communication, namely: British colonialism, the rise of the U.S.A. as a technical, economic and political power, and new innovations and technology. In addition to this, the U.S.A. also came to dominate numerous areas of research after the Second World War, favouring English as the language of research. In the Western world such a position had previously only been held by Latin. However, contrary to Latin, English is not the language of any world religion, even though Baker and Prys Jones (1998, p. 312) note that English-speaking missionaries to some extent have contributed to the spread of English.⁶ Also, Graddol (2006, p. 20) stresses that an 'English factor' is found in virtually every key macro trend: whether it is business process outsourcing (BPO), the rise of urban middle classes around the world, the development of new communications technology such as the Internet, the global redistribution of poverty, the changing nature and control of news media, or the reform of education in universities and schools.

Several language researchers have recognised this trend (cf. Coleman, 2006), expressed concern for it, some even label English 'killer language' and the spread of English 'linguistic imperialism' (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, pp. 319-323; Phillipson, 1992, pp. 46-57). If the aim is to keep the linguistic diversity of the world intact there certainly is cause for concern as has been recognised by several researchers (see Phillipson, 1997; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2004), but it should also be evident that English is not the sole "enemy" in this case. The processes of language loss are complex processes related to social and cultural identity, lack of official funding for the needs of minority language groups (e.g. for alternative school systems, teaching materials, broadcasting etc.). As we have seen above, the strength of English lies in the numerous SL and FL speakers. These speakers of English already possess a first language (L1), related to their culture and identity (cf. Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 317; Chew, 1999). Hence that language is not directly threatened by the dominance of English (cf. Graddol, 2006, pp. 64, 116-117). However, English (or any other language) does become a threat if it becomes the dominant language in a continuously increasing number of social domains in local/regional communities. For some people the need to learn and use any SL/FL in itself is felt as a threat to one's own identity, if one's identity is very strongly connected to one's mother tongue (Krumm, 2004, p. 64). Even for national languages spoken by millions of people (e.g. Swedish in Sweden) concerns have been raised about the increasing influence of English (e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas, 2004; Westman, 1994, p. 47-58; Svartvik, 1999, p. 3). One of the reasons for concern is related to the sometimes excessive borrowing of

⁶ However, it ought to be mentioned that at least protestant missionary organisations often give priority to the translation of central religious texts into local tribal languages, whereas the tremendous project of translating the Bible into these languages is nowadays often left to more specialist organisations (e.g. Whycliffe). Thus, missionaries also strengthen the literacy traditions in these languages. (A. Dahlbacka, personal communication, September 22, 2006)

English terminology and expressions into other languages. It is believed that this trend has been brought about by the high prestige English seems to enjoy (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 313).

From being a language belonging to the nations of Shakespeare and Twain, English is becoming the property of “everyone”. As a means of international communication between speakers of other languages⁷, English is truly becoming a ‘lingua franca’, that is a language for communication with no particular cultural reference (cf. Jenkins, 2007). There is an interesting tension between the increasing popularity and use of English as an international means of communication and the decreasing inclination by SL and FL speakers to embrace British and American culture. Even though English can be seen as an international language, not explicitly connected to any nation state one should keep in mind that the language itself carries with it a particular view of the world and certain elements of culture (Janson, 1997, p. 219; cf. Risager, 2006, pp. 5-6). To some extent users of English will be influenced by this. Partly because of this cultural load that is an inevitable and important part of all living languages, numerous attempts have been made to construct new languages for international communication, but none of these have reached the same success as English (Kachru, 1982a, pp. 1-2; Svartvik, 1999, pp. 10-11).

One could easily assume that the reason for the world-wide spread of English is the extreme suitability of the language. All kinds of arguments relating to the language system itself have been proposed, but none of them are convincing. In fact, the reasons for the spread of English should not be sought in the language itself, but is, as we have seen, a result of a series of unpredictable historical events and related attitudes (cf. Svartvik, 1999, pp. 12-13). If English has become the dominant global language at least partly through freaks of fate it is difficult to predict what the future will bring. However, this is what some influential authors have tried to do. Below I will briefly mention only the predictions believed to be directly related to the teaching of English as a SL/FL in a Finland-Swedish context.

Graddol (2006, pp. 14, 100-101) lists some key trends in this development. The main impression created by these predictions could be summarised in the expression “doom of monolingualism, growth of language variety”. This process can be identified through the following trends:

- a shift away from traditional EFL
- the native speaker is no longer the norm
- an increase of learners of English, believed to peak around 2000 million
- many learners with varying needs
- increase in language variety on the Internet.

Graddol’s predictions seem to point towards a near future where functional communication skills in English are becoming part of more or less every man’s

⁷ In international tourism up to 74 % of the communication takes place between non-English speaking partners, which illustrates the potential for English as a global means of communication (Graddol, 2006, p. 29).

basic competence. There will, however, be an important distinction to the English taught and used today, where the native speaker is still very much the cultural and linguistic reference (cf. Kachru, 1985, pp. 29-30). English will instead be taught as a means of international communication with reference to no particular country, which ought to increase the importance of intercultural awareness and communication skills even further. The rise of 'Global English' will also bring about further variety in the standards of English used, as well as a need to define norms for the global variety, in order to ascertain the usefulness of English as a language for international communication (cf. Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 318; Kachru, 1985). A variety of different ESL-programmes and CLIL⁸ approaches will be used, with the emphasis on young learners (Graddol, 2006, p. 90-91), resulting in an increasing demand of bilingual teachers with subject knowledge skills and/or the capacity to function as facilitators for learning. The rise of other languages on the Internet can also be seen as a first step towards challenging the dominating position of English. After this exciting and perhaps also chaotic time of tension Graddol predicts:

- a decline in the number of learners of English
- English mainly taught from a young age and as an integrated skill
- English is a basic competence and provides no economic advantage
- Global English is challenged by other languages.

The increasing numbers of proficient speakers of English will result in a decrease in the documented economic advantage of knowing English. This will open the gates for other prospective languages (e.g. Mandarin Chinese or Spanish) to challenge English as the main language for global communication. Graddol (2006, pp. 15, 94-95) claims that the fate of English as a dominating global language may well lie in the hands of Asia. Hence, monolingual speakers of English might become marginalised, since bi- or multilingualism will be one of the demands on a qualified workforce.

In a Finland-Swedish context the predictions outlined above would probably result in an increase of primary CLIL-programmes in both the second national language (i.e. Finnish for Swedish speakers) and English. For this purpose numerous teachers need in-service (and pre-service) education. A vast number of teachers at all levels would need education in CLIL-methodology. In addition to this, many teachers at primary school level would need additional education in the language in question. At the secondary school level language experts would need to gain expert subject knowledge or subject specialist would need extensive language education. Also the official European guidelines of a "1 plus 2 plurilingualism" seems to support this trend of development. However, e.g. Krumm (2004, p. 68; cf. Merkelbach, 2003) points out that the adoption of English as the first FL in many contexts seems to be counterproductive, since it decreases learner motivation for acquiring a second less widely used FL. These concerns, raised also within the Council of Europe, may guide the future patterns

⁸ Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a general term for different varieties of immersion-inspired education programmes. See e.g. Baker (1996/2001), Beatens Beardsmore (1993), Nixon (2001), Räsänen (2001), Sjöholm & Björklund (1999), Takala (2000).

of EFL within Europe in a different direction. It ought to be pointed out that both scenarios will require huge public investments in promoting and financing an educational system where foreign languages are included from the start.

The dominance of English as the major foreign language to be studied within a Finnish national context has been brought up for discussion in official documents during the last 20 years or so and projects with ambitious aims have been set up to support a greater linguistic diversity (e.g. KIMMOKE) (McRae, 1997, pp. 300-301). Because of the economic recession, a wide-spread net of small school units, and SL teaching policies those plans have not been implemented. In a large-scale national project researchers have recently been engaged in surveying and evaluating the languages taught and the programmes used within the Finnish school system (Pöyhönen & Luukka, 2007). The initiative is necessary if there is a national interest in guiding the multilingual competence of future generations of Finnish children⁹. However, there will be several challenges in the political decision-making in relation to this issue, if both common European guidelines on plurilingualism (cf. CEFR, 2001, pp. 4-5) and the requirements set by our national legislation are to be met.

In the above, the dominance of English as a world language and possible future trends of development have been outlined. Some of the general changes in society supporting the rise of English as a world language have also been briefly mentioned and will be further dealt with in the following section along with the consequences this development brings for the teacher and learner of ESL/EFL.

2.2 Global changes in society and language education

None of us knows exactly what the future will bring, but still teachers and teacher educators face the challenge of educating people of different ages for the future and language learners face the demands raised by the need to interact within increasingly more complex societal contexts. Hargreaves (1994) talks about the complex demands the post-modern¹⁰ society brings about for the teaching professionals of the future, but it is also important to keep in mind that all these changes in society affect the demands on the future learners to an equal extent (cf. Lindblad, 2002, pp. 82-83). Jonsson (2002, p. 124) summarises this complex of changes learners and teachers are confronted with as follows:

There has been a shift in emphasis from social and economic structures to processes, from status to function, from role to initiative, from processes of socialisation to processes of individualisation, from unifying political projects aiming at collective social progress to individual life projects. (my translation)

In even more general terms the post-modern age has been defined as an era of

⁹ For a historical overview of the language programmes employed in Finnish state schools see McRae, 1997, pp. 296-301.

¹⁰ This transition from modern to post-modern is by no means accepted by all (Lindblad, 2002, p. 80). Some theorists still hold the view that this age of transition leads to the fulfilment of the modern era.

increasing internationalisation, flexibility, relativism and constant change (cf. Hansén & Sjöberg, 2004; Jonsson, 2002, pp. 124-125). Its effect on traditional educational environments can be seen as remarkable, considering the fairly stable culture and unchanging view of core content and “fact-based truths” often prevalent in those environments.

Therefore, it is of great importance to try to predict the direction of future needs of language education. Considering the predictions made above by Graddol regarding English that task is not as impossible as it may sound, since the future always springs out of the roots of today. Many second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have devoted time and effort on trying to deduce some important trends that might have an impact on language teaching and learning in the future. Some of these factors will be briefly discussed below.

Perhaps the most obvious change that has taken place during the last 20 years is the rapid development of information technology. The pace of that development does not seem to slow down, and hence, it would be reasonable to expect great changes in this field also in the future. New technologies make both interaction and intersubjectivity possible in FL teaching, but the very existence of technologies do not guarantee that they are also used favourably (cf. Taalas, 2004; Axelsson et al., 2001; Björklund, 2005, p. 230; Smith, 1986, pp. 204-). Implemented without pedagogical reflection they might, instead, become just a means of reinforcing old and ineffective methodologies. To prevent a negative development in this respect, professional language teachers and educationalists have to maintain, or perhaps even regain, the control of how new technology is used in the language classroom (cf. Björklund, 2004b; Svensson, 2001). Maybe learners need to face up to the responsibility of being the technically more proficient actor as well as the ones responsible for demanding the kind of methods and tools they know support their own learning processes. (cf. Taalas, October, 2006)

Language teaching and learning will always be affected by societal constraints such as: legislation, regulations, trends in society, and labour market demands (Björklund & Smeds, 2000; Graddol, 2006). For instance, the radical changes in language policies in education in Taiwan during the latter half of the 20th century serves as an obvious example of this (Merkelbach, 2006). Another example is the new national framework curriculum in Finland, which was brought about before the effects of the previous one could be properly evaluated, because of the need to conform to common European recommendations.

With increasing migration and globalisation it is not surprising that common European documents concerning education include regulations and visions concerning a plurilingually competent and culturally rich and diverse population (cf. Graddol, 2006). Even today monolingualism is regarded as the starting-point for language education, even though a very large number of the world’s population in fact is/grows up as bi- or multilinguals. Baker and Clyne, among others, argue for a necessary shift from the monolingual as the norm to the multilingual, with obvious consequences for SL and FL classroom practices (Baker, 2003; Clyne, 2003; Krumm, 2004; Kramsch, 1998; Risager, 2006, p. 9-10). This is probably what Riley (2000) has in mind when he argues for a change of second and foreign language education practices with regard to the individual

learner.

Also common European documents such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Teaching, Learning and Assessment* (2001, hereafter referred to as CEFR) stress the importance of the development of the competences of the individual learner and also the fact that different competences are needed in different kinds of situations. CEFR implies that individual learners might choose to develop certain language skills more than others, depending on the situations in which they will need the language (cf. Kramsch, 1998). According to Riley (2000), an increased attention to learner identity and learner environment presupposes the development of effective diagnostic instruments for learning styles, models of communication that go beyond the speech act (i.e., that include intertextuality, implicature, and communicative practices), recognition of the importance of formulaic language and metaphor, the didacticisation of classroom code-switching, and intercomprehension between groups of related languages. These criteria can be referred to in terms of sociocultural communicative skills.

In this connection language resource centres and language advisors emerge as important features of language education. Hence, the distinction between teaching and advising needs to be specified and the profession of the language advisor considered. This kind of change will also bring about a necessary focus on learner autonomy and conscious work towards increased learner autonomy in the language classrooms (Riley, 2000; Little, 2004).

As mentioned, CEFR stresses the importance of culture as an aspect of language teaching and learning. The close connection between language and culture has received increasing attention, particularly in language education research during the last decade (e.g. Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993/2001; Tornberg, 2000; Lundgren, 2002), and there seems to be an agreement among researchers that culture is an inseparable part of communicative competence¹¹. Krumm (2004, p. 63) takes this argument even further, when he claims that the processes of globalisation can be seen as possible threats for democracy, if intercultural awareness and skills are not given priority in education in order to make it possible for learners to participate in public discourse. Nevertheless, there are obstacles in the practical implementation of cultural aspects in language teaching. It has also been suggested that culture cannot be taught as such, since it is a dynamic phenomenon that operates in and through discourse (Evensen, 2000). Hence, culture needs to be immersed in language teaching on a deeper, more existential level (Tornberg, 2000), which means that cultural issues and processes cannot be regarded as the concern of SL/FL education only, but rather as process-related objectives of mainstream education at large. Authors within different educational fields seem to agree that the students of tomorrow are to gain tolerance, knowledge about and understanding and empathy for other ethnic groups, cultures and religions, in order to cope within multicultural societies (e.g. Tornberg, 2004). In Figure 4 below this situation with a variety of trends believed to exert an influence on the role of the language learner is illustrated.

¹¹ The concept ‘culture’ used here is used in a broad sense, primarily concerned with the linguistically formed culture and intercultural patterns of behaviour, rather than the native-speaker bias Risager (2006, p. 10) refers to.

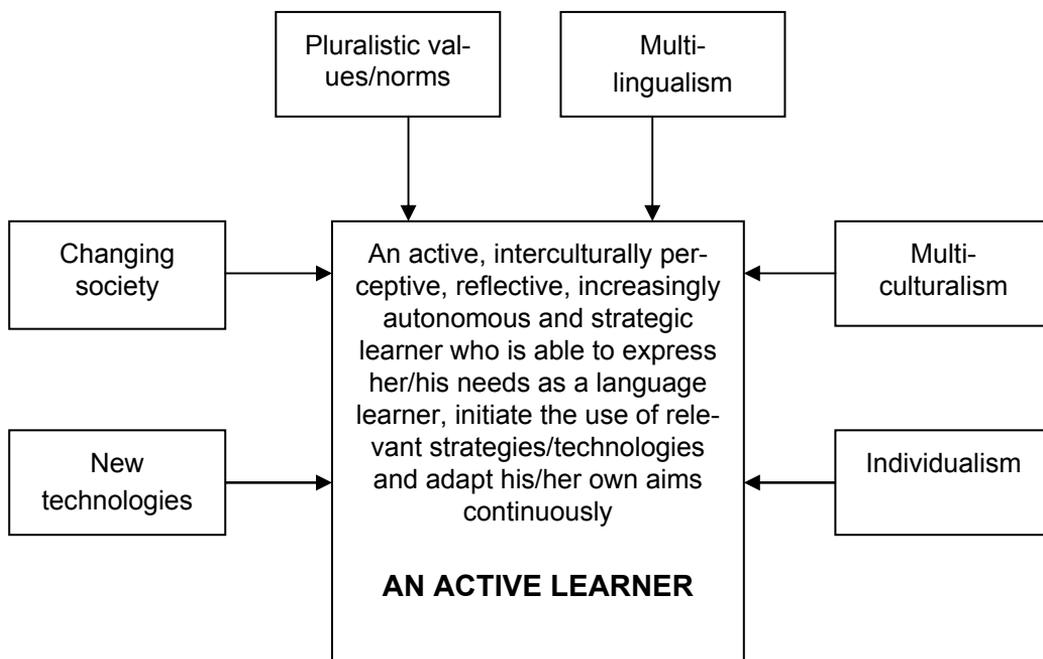


Figure 4. Demands on the language learner

The trends briefly discussed above imply that the language classroom of the future is going to be one of increasing heterogeneity and constant change (cf. Björklund & Smeds, 2000), and that a holistic approach to language teaching, which recognises languages as a part of society, is needed (cf. Kohonen, 2006b, p. 3; Byram, 2006). Riley (2000) argues for the usefulness of a neo-Comenian framework, in other words, a language methodology based on a theory of both knowledge and social interaction.

Figure 5 below is a representation of the different factors that influence language teachers' everyday work. The figure also includes a definition of what kind of a teacher, in my opinion, is needed to handle all of these factors in a successful and creative manner, that is so that pupils' learning is enhanced in the best way possible. To be able to function as a facilitator, the language teacher of the future needs to be open to the changes in society. But openness and adaptability are not enough. The teacher also needs to critically reflect upon these changes, and on what effects they might have on the pupils' learning, to be able to suggest effective learning objectives and strategies (cf. Kramsch 2004, p. 45-47). Imsen (2000, pp. 22-23) lists necessary qualifications of a professional teacher. These are subject knowledge, familiarity with school structure and available materials, formal pedagogical knowledge, practical (methodological) knowledge, artistry (flexibility and creativity), reflection on/in practice and care for the pupils. Through the years several attempts have been made to compile lists of the necessary characteristics and/or competences of a professional teacher. So far none can be said to be conclusive, but they all seem to point in more or less the same direction: towards the need for a multitiered, reflective practitioner.

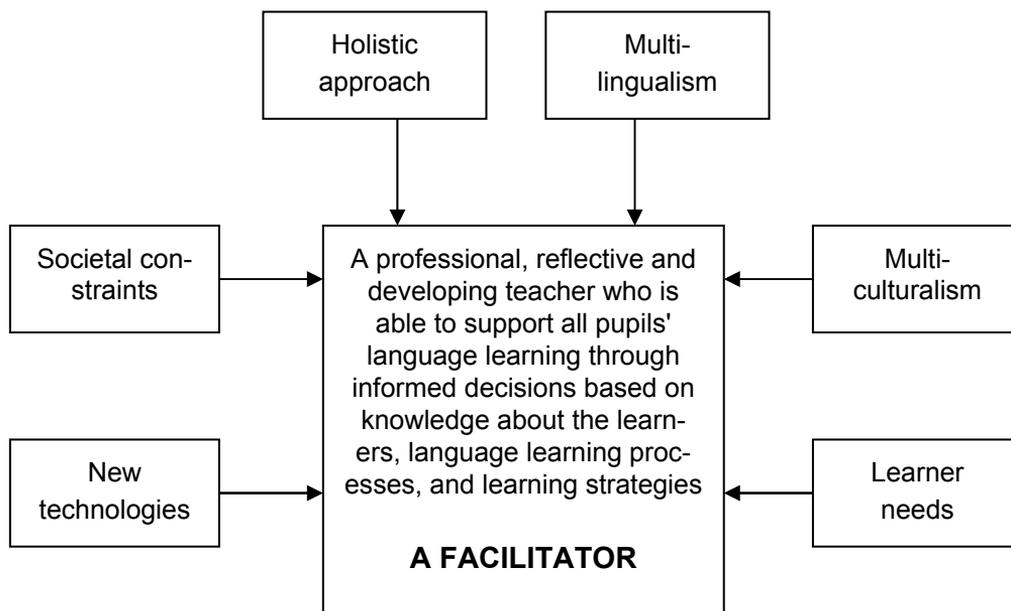


Figure 5. Demands on the language teacher (adapted from Björklund, 2004a, p. 169)

The future scenario briefly sketched above is a complex one. A large number of factors influence the language classroom, the language learner, and particularly the language teacher as the most obvious catalyst. Assuming language education will be influenced by increasing amounts of information and continuous rapid change in society, the actors of the foreign language classroom need to face these phenomena and also prepare to deal with them effectively. A large share of responsibility for preparing teaching professionals lies with teacher education (both pre- and in-service) and with the teaching professionals for preparing their pupils for the future. From this argument follows that research on language acquisition and the conditions for language acquisition that takes place in different settings is an important tool for teacher education in fulfilling the demands of educating successful language teaching professionals of the future. However, even if these actors can be considered the crucial ones concerning the future of language education, one must remember that the complexity of our post-modern society means that also several other actors are involved in this process either explicitly or implicitly. Where the involvement is explicit, the responsibility is easy to identify, but where the involvement is implicit, however powerful it may be, the responsibility is perhaps also more difficult to distinguish for the ones directly involved and also more difficult to explain to the ones affected by it.

In the following I will give a brief presentation of some of the explicit trends of development in the Finnish national context, including a historical overview and some more recent developments.

2.3 The Finnish scene

2.3.1 Development of the Finnish comprehensive school

From a historical point of view the Finnish educational system has been very knowledge centred, with a strong German influence on formal didactic thinking and reasoning (see Andersson, 1998; Andersson, 1997, p. 334). The first attempt at a general educational system was brought about in 1866 with the establishment of the common school (Hansén, 2004, p. 646) and from those roots our present-day system of a nine-year comprehensive school syllabus for everyone stems¹². However, still to this day it is not compulsory for Finnish children to attend school, as long as they fulfil the requirements stipulated in the curriculum.

The system of compulsory education in Finland was from the 1970s until recently divided into two main phases: the primary level and the lower secondary level. Nowadays the whole period of comprehensive education is to be regarded as one phase, even though the practical division into different school units in many places is still based on the two-phase division. Two of the main reasons for that are the facts that the existing buildings were planned and dimensioned for the older system and that Finland is a country with vast rural areas, where you find small rural schools for primary school pupils (aged 7-12) and larger central units for lower secondary students (aged 13-15). This has also brought about a largely used pragmatic division of labour, where it is most common that class teachers (Masters of Education) are responsible for the teaching of most subjects at the primary level, whereas subjects specialists with approximately one year of educational training (Masters of Arts or Science) are responsible for the teaching of their specific subjects at lower and upper secondary level (cf. Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006, pp. 11-12). In some cases subject specialists also teach language classes at the primary level, but that is more common in highly urbanised areas, since the physical distances between different school units makes it a less economical option in rural areas.

The first language other than the mother tongue is to be taught from grade 3 (A-language). In Swedish-medium schools this language is commonly Finnish or English. An additional language is to be taught from grade 7 (B-language), but in most Swedish-medium schools this language is usually begun to be studied in grade 4 (since 2004)/5 (until 2004) as a so-called voluntary A-language. Municipalities can also choose to start SL/FL classes in grades 1-2.

2.3.2 Teacher education and official requirements

As early as 1852 the first professorial chair in education in Finland and the Nordic countries was established at Helsinki University (Uljens, 2002, p. 7).

¹² The Finnish Basic Education Act (1998) states that children are required to attend schooling during ten years starting from the year they turn seven or until they have fulfilled the requirements of the nine-year curriculum of the comprehensive school. For an introduction to the Finnish Education system see e.g. Jakku-Sihvonen and Niemi (2006).

However, it was not directly connected to teacher training which was instituted in 1863. In the 19th century teacher education in Finland was conducted in non-academic teacher training colleges (Hansén, 2004, p. 652). The academic development of education at least in terms of number of staff at university level was very slow up to the Second World War. After the war the demand for an educated labour force grew, and hence also the need to develop more easily applicable educational theories and a more adequate methodological apparatus in education. In 1960 Finland had three faculties of education and nine professorships in education, in 1970 the number had increased to seven faculties and 29 professorships.

As mentioned, teacher education for primary school teachers had until this time been separated from the academic sphere. Gradually this came to be seen as a weakness, since teachers were trained to act according to more or less ready-made models, rather than to base their action on educational theories (Sjöberg & Hansén, 2006, p. 9), i.e. a more independent professional approach. The fusion between the two took place in 1974 (Uljens, 2002, p. 7), when teacher education was included as separate units within the faculties of education. This fusion resulted in an increase of educational specialist staff at the faculties of education. By the late 1970's a new regulation made it possible to fully academise primary school teacher education, which then became a Master of Education programme. Thus, teacher education can nowadays be regarded as research-based and all faculties of education consequently also have doctoral student programmes. (Hansén, 1997, p. 13; Bergem, T., Björkqvist, O., Hansén, S-E., Carlgren, I. & Hauge, T. E., 1997; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2006; Sjöholm & Hansén, 2007)

Educational legislation now establishes that a qualified teacher in Finland needs to have a Masters' degree (either in the subject fields to be taught or in education) and compulsory so-called "educational studies for teachers" (in practice approx. 60-70 ECTS). Due to the changes since the beginning of the 1970's, primary school teachers active in the Finland-Swedish context at the beginning of the 21st century have very different educational backgrounds.

What the future of teacher education in Finland will look like remains yet to be seen, but there seems to be forces working in opposite directions. Many official documents and reports (both national and international) proclaim the need for professional teachers capable of independent and reflective development in a changing world. On the other hand there are also official national directives and commercially produced teaching materials that seem to work in the opposite direction as noted by e.g. Kohonen (2006b, p. 2). Also elsewhere in the world similar trends of taking authority from teachers and reducing them to the role of executing ready-made plans have been noted (Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 117-118). Sjöberg and Hansén (2006, p. 10) recognise the difficulty of foretelling what the future will bring, but still claim that the major trends seem to be pointing towards an ideal of a professional teacher. From her Norwegian perspective Eriksen (2006, p. 33) states that we are currently living in an era of reforms that places the future teachers in our schools in a crucial and very demanding position.

The latest national reports on the need for teacher education and in-service courses for teachers in Finland recognise a number of remarkable changes in the

traditional role of teachers and their working environment also in a Finnish context. The major issues mentioned in the final report of the OPEPRO project (Luukkainen, 2000b, pp. 230-239; Luukkainen, 2000a, pp. 26-36) concerning the changes in the everyday work of teachers bring forward a complex picture of the teacher as an active agent¹³ in relation to a wide range of factors, which I have tried to pick out in Figure 6 below:

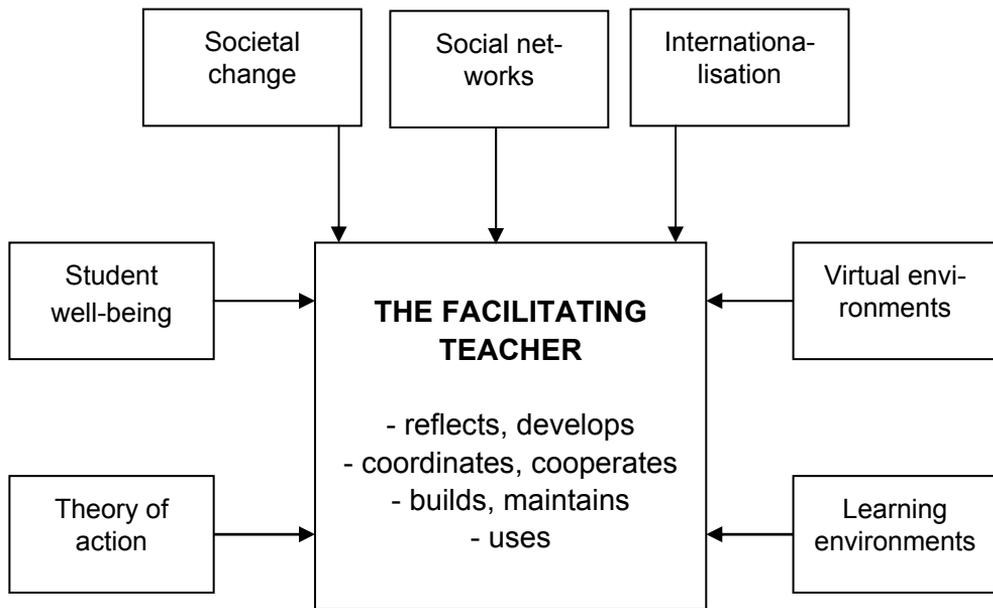


Figure 6. The demands on future teachers as active agents on the basis of Luukkainen (2000b)

In Luukkainen’s summary (2000a) of the national project several new demands on teachers emerge. Several of these issues are also evident in the even more recent national strategy report on teacher education in 2020 (Niemi & Rähkä, 2007). The teacher of the future is described as a reflective practitioner, who constantly develops the practical theory on the basis of which successful educational decisions are made. This action oriented theory needs to be based upon the teacher’s beliefs about the central concepts: human beings, knowledge, and learning.

The teacher is also described as a coordinator of cooperation with other experts and a spokesman for her/his learners, meaning that - contrary to the traditional teaching-centred role of the teacher - it is her/his responsibility to consider the

¹³ Cf. Andersson (2002, p. 73), who argues for a thorough reform of the education system in Sweden. He would like so called educational centres (Sw. bildningscentrum) to be established. In these educational institutions of the future Andersson wants teachers to take on a much wider perspective of roles namely, as stimulators, supervisors, mentors, and teachers. Also Eriksen (2006, p. 40) mentions similar trends in official Norwegian guidelines.

well-being of her/his pupils and support their favourable development. All issues are not to be solved by the teacher her/himself, but the teacher is responsible for pointing out and perhaps even prompting her/his pupils in the right direction, to the right authorities (e.g. medical experts, social-welfare agencies, the police).

Hence, the teacher is seen as an active agent in a constantly changing society, with the ability to develop her/his own profession in accordance with the general directions of societal change, but also as a professional with the will and capacity to take part in societal discussions in order to actively affect the direction of development. Therefore, knowledge about societal mechanisms and democratic methods of influence are important means of developing the whole school community.

To make this possible the teacher also needs to become a creator/initiator and maintainer of personal relationships and social networks of a wide variety. The teacher's work is mainly regarded as a "work with human relations, where relational competence, social- and communication skills are emphasised" (Luukkainen, 2000b, p. 236, my translation) in order to manage complex issues related to the social environment, students' learning difficulties, cultural heterogeneity, and guidance of students.

In this connection it also becomes necessary to see the teacher as an effective utiliser of different learning environments in- and outside school. The teacher is expected to act in such a way that the school atmosphere enhances students' enterprising initiatives. The teacher's role as a facilitator of pupils' learning in virtual learning environments receives special attention. It is the responsibility of the teacher to critically analyse the educational value of the work done in such environments and also to cater for the pupils' process of socialisation.

The teacher is also seen as a facilitator of the pupils' process of internationalisation. This presupposes a sufficient communicative competence in several languages, familiarity with the relevant cultures, and skills in project administration.

All of the factors mentioned above are general guidelines for teachers, and especially teacher educators, at all levels for successful development of the Finnish educational system for future needs. The brief outline given above clearly shows that the major global/international/Western trends in educational change seem to be basically the same in Finland. One can also note a similar risk for contradictory views between some of the demands mentioned both at a global level and a national level. It is not necessarily so, but it is possible to see a contradiction in the emphasis on increased use of new mass and distance technologies and the need for individualisation and differentiation, or in the stressed focus on the individual learner and the need for a more developed intercultural competence. At this point in my presentation I merely want to use these two brief examples to point out that some of these developmental trends, depending on the definitions attached to the different concepts themselves, might be interpreted as contradictory (cf. Kohonen, 2006b, p. 2). The picture of the highly professional teacher with a fairly wide freedom of action that emerges in the description above can also be seen to conflict with the latest curricular

reform¹⁴.

It is also important to note that the outline above seems to draw a picture of the teacher of the future as some kind of a universal genius, or a chameleon, who is able to switch colours according to the present contextual demands. Kohonen (2006b, p. 4) breaks down the necessary areas for professional development (of the language teacher) into the following aspects: “(a) personal awareness and self-direction, (b) awareness of learning processes, and (c) awareness of language and communication”. Taking into consideration the fact that many present-day teachers, who will still be in service in 2010, have completed their pre-service education with a very different image of what the role of a teacher primarily is, there is a great risk that these teachers and perhaps also local school authorities either will suffer from a massive lack of professional confidence, perhaps even burn out, or choose to disregard these proposed demands with the motivation that they seem utopian (cf. Fullan, 1996; Kohonen, 2003; 2006b; Hargreaves, 1994). That is most likely also the reason for the very clear emphasis on stressing the above mentioned competences in both pre-service and in-service teacher education throughout the above mentioned national report (Luukkainen, 2000b). Also Sjöberg and Hansén (2006, p. 7) recognise the importance of providing broader and deeper criteria for what competences a teacher will need. Among other things they mention an understanding of what kind of society their pupils are educated for and a readiness for further professional development. However, at this point in time neither the structure of the administration of the Finnish educational system nor the in-service programmes offered to teachers in Swedish-medium schools in Finland seem to cater for the vast support and professional development probably needed among in-service teachers.

2.3.3 The two latest national curricular reforms

In the national framework curricula for the 1970s and 1980s the instructional objectives as well as the teaching contents were formulated in explicit terms and specified also for the different age groups. In 1994 a new national framework curriculum was taken into use. This curriculum (*Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School*) was a very explicit attempt to decentralise the decision-making regarding content and syllabuses to the local municipalities and individual schools, since the very brief framework document contained mainly general aims regarding the different subjects to be taught. However, in less than ten years a new national curricular reform was brought about, involving mainly numerous teachers representing different fields of expertise.

In 2004 the new framework curriculum (*National Core Curriculum for Basic Education*) was ratified and is now gradually being implemented for the different age groups. This curricular reform was very different from the one that took place in 1994. Perhaps the most important change is that the curriculum is to be regarded as a mandatory norm, rather than as a strong recommendation. Contrary to the curriculum of 1994 this new one contains more detailed

¹⁴ Hargreaves (1994, p. 119) describes similar trends in other contexts.

objectives and lists of content both regarding the individual subjects, and also regarding the so-called cross-curricular themes. The new framework curriculum also describes in detail criteria for assessment of pupils' proficiency at different age levels, as well as plans for developing and ensuring pupil's well-being in school. One could claim that the two latest curricular reforms very clearly illustrate the shift from a trend of decentralisation and increased freedom of action (Sw. *handlingsfrihet*) for the municipalities, schools and individual teachers to one of central control and less freedom of action for the involved actors mentioned above. In both framework curricula the importance of involving pupils and parents in the planning process is stressed.

Above I have claimed that the Finnish school system traditionally was very knowledge centred. With this I mean that also foreign language education was very much concentrated around teaching the pupils rules of language and emphasizing correct reproduction skills, mostly in terms of written translations. During the last few decades the general trends of development in Western society have brought about a more varied definition of what constitutes necessary language skills and competence at least at the level of official rhetoric (see Shepherd, 2000). This can be seen in the two latest national framework curricula (1994 and 2004), which include explicit objectives concerning at least some aspects of the intercultural competence of pupils. These objectives are related to foreign language education, but are also included in the more general cross-curricular themes mentioned above. The general objectives for the teaching of foreign languages in the national framework curriculum of 1994 (*Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School*) include the following culturally related objectives:

[The student:]

- knows ways to communicate that are characteristic of the target language and its culture;
- receives information about the countries, people and cultures of the language area and has an open mind towards different cultures and its representatives; [...]
- becomes interested in foreign languages and cultures. (p. 74)

These objectives open up for a varied and consistent work on cultural issues, but they also leave much of the interpretation up to the individual schools and professional EFL teachers. When comparing these general objectives with the objectives to be reached within primary education, it is interesting to note that only the two first mentioned objectives above are regarded as key objectives to be reached through EFL education in the lower grades. In the national core curriculum for the comprehensive school of 2004 (*National Core Curriculum for Basic Education*) the following objectives for pupils in grades 3-6 (age groups 9-12) labelled cultural skills are mentioned:

The pupils will

- get to know the culture of the target language and will gain a preliminary introduction to the similarities and differences between that culture and Finnish culture
- learn to communicate with representatives of the target language culture in everyday situations, in a manner natural to that culture. (p.

These objectives are almost identical, with the difference that efforts obviously have been made to state more explicit – measurable – objectives in the current curriculum as compared to the curriculum from 1994. At the same time the objectives have also become slightly more narrow and even misleading from a Finland-Swedish point of view. Much could also be said about the definition of culture evident in this curricular passage, but suffice it to say that formulations clearly pointing in the direction of culture as a homogeneous national and stable phenomenon do not constitute the best starting-point for intercultural education (cf. Lundgren, 2002, pp. 211-212).

According to Byram (2001), there has been a move towards defining FL competence as something more than linguistic skills in official educational documents of many countries, but generally the practical consequences in the FL classrooms have been insignificant. Therefore, Byram (2001, p. 18) stresses the importance of implementing these official documents thoroughly. For this change to take place he proposes proper assessment of pupils' intercultural communicative competence as an important tool, but also recognises the limitations of traditional quantifiable assessment in evaluating the more subtle aspects of intercultural competence. He puts forward self-assessment through portfolios as a useful tool. In the national framework curriculum of 1994 no explicit assessment criteria are defined. However, such criteria (although not explicitly labelled intercultural competence or involving all the areas included in Byram's definition) for cultural skills are included in the latest national framework curriculum of 2004. As an example of those assessment criteria I want to quote the ones related to pupils in grades 3-6:

The pupils will

- know the main contents of, and key similarities and differences between the culture of their own language and the target language
- be able to interact with speakers of the target language in simple everyday situations. (p. 141)

It is possible to note discrepancies between the relevant objectives quoted above and these assessment criteria. The Finnish culture is no longer explicitly mentioned as the basis of comparison and the native speaker is no longer the self-evident partner for the communication. Obviously some kind of development has taken place during the curricular process, but it did not feed back to the original wording of the objectives.

As has been mentioned, the most striking feature with the framework curriculum of 1994 was a move away from explicit lists of core content, with an emphasis of curricular objectives and aims. For the teaching of English as a foreign language these objectives stressed everyday communication skills, the culturally related knowledge and skills mentioned above, the application of good learning strategies and learner autonomy and affective objectives (pp. 73-75) and left the choice of relevant topics, vocabulary and key structures to be stated in local curricula or to be decided by the teachers her/himself. The core curriculum of 2004 has reintroduced the headline "core contents" (cf. van Ek, 1976, pp. 7-8; Corder, 1973, p. 65). Under this heading the main topics, structures, and communication strategies to be focused on are listed. The list stresses a

functional perspective which can be seen as an advantage. In itself there is nothing wrong with such an approach, but it ought to be noted that the topics listed for grades 3-6 might be perceived of as restricting, since they are limited to cultural knowledge and the immediate environment of the pupils (p. 140). One sentence also mentions leisure-time functions, but nothing is explicitly said about the media and productions of fiction with which these children can be assumed to interact and also encounter English on a daily basis. The topics mentioned presuppose language use in concrete realistic situations, whereas the use of language for taking part of and/or creating fiction is not included. Within the text on foreign language teaching (A-language) both cultural knowledge and -skills are mentioned, but it is difficult to find support for adapting an affective stance in the teaching of culture related topics. Such support can possibly be found implicitly within the cross-curricular themes (pp. 36-41).

2.3.4 The Swedish –medium primary school and the English influence

Finland is one of the three countries in Europe that are constitutionally bi- or multilingual, that is this status is regulated by basic law. This has been made to ensure the Swedish-speaking language minority (approx. 5,5 % of the total population in 2006) the same rights as the Finnish-speaking majority. Mainly because of the historical background to the bilingual status (see Sjöholm, 2004a; McRae, 1997; cf. Statsrådets berättelse om tillämpningen av språklagstiftningen, 2006), Finland has chosen a different way of defining the right to use one's mother tongue. Rather than applying a certain language status to a specific area, every individual is given the right to use her/his mother tongue in all dealings with national and local authorities, including law enforcement, health care, and welfare (Sjöholm, 2004a).

However, the Swedish-speaking population does have its own educational system, which is governed by the same laws and national curricular frameworks as the educational system of the Finnish majority. As could be seen in the section above in the examples given regarding intercultural competence in the framework curriculum of 2004 this can sometimes become a bit problematic, also in EFL education. The starting-points of the pupils (and teachers) can to some extent be considered to differ between the two official language groups. For instance, the Swedish and English languages are fairly closely related, whereas Finnish is unrelated to English. This does seem to have an impact on the learning of certain features of language (especially lexis, e.g. Sjöholm, 1995; Ringbom, 1987; 2007). Regardless of this the objectives and assessment criteria are the same for both language groups. In the example given above, the EFL teachers in the Swedish-medium schools will have to reach a decision on whether they really are going to use the Finnish culture¹⁵ as the major reference or in fact, as is stated in the assessment criteria, the pupil's own culture.

In the Swedish-medium schools the language of instruction is Swedish, unless

¹⁵ It is unlikely that such a unanimous culture exists (cf. e.g. Thavenius, August 2006), but assuming it does, it will most certainly differ to some extent from the one of the Swedish-speaking pupils.

specific language programmes are applied, when part of instruction can be given through a second or foreign language (the most common languages being Finnish and English, for more information see Sjöholm, 1999; Räsänen, 2001). These kinds of extensive SL/FL programmes are not possible to implement in schools on the Åland islands to the same extent since that Swedish region has its own laws, where the sovereignty of the Swedish language is strictly protected. Second and foreign language education in the whole country is, of course, exempted from the general rule of Swedish as the language of instruction. Language teachers are generally encouraged to use the target language as the medium of instruction during SL and FL classes.

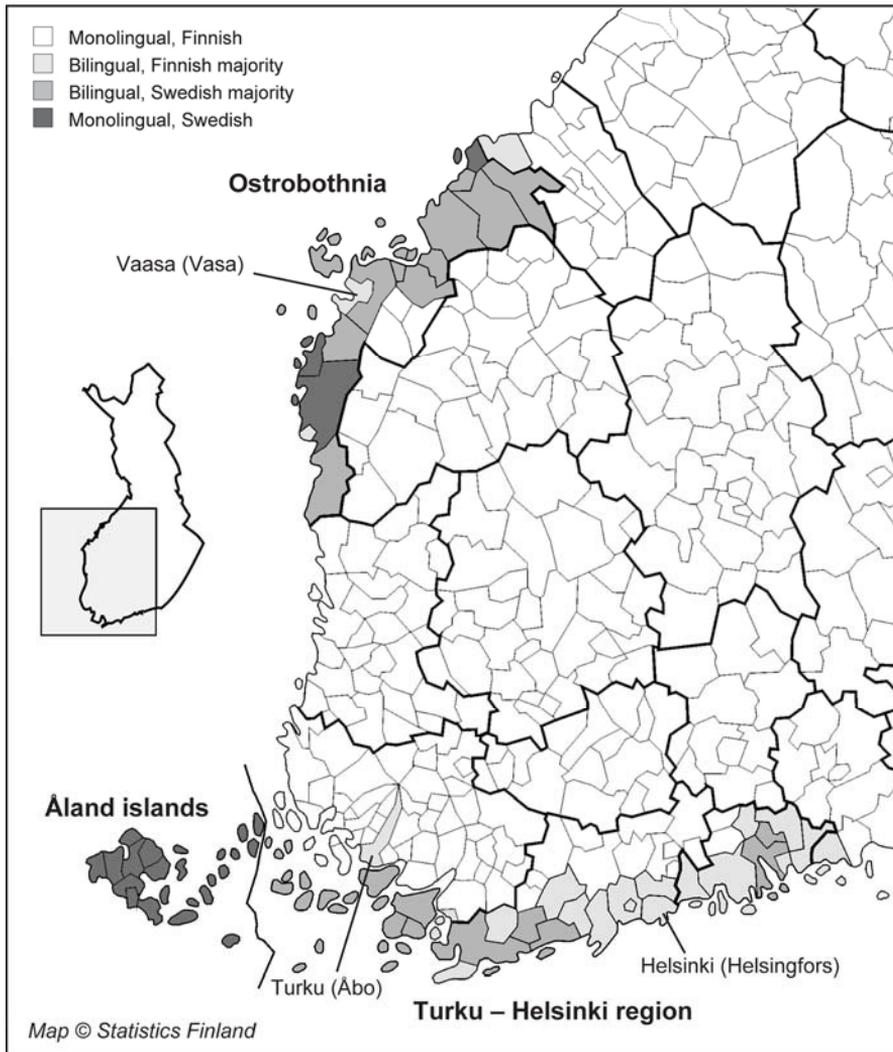


Figure 7. The mono/bilingual status of municipalities in the south-western part of Finland, taken from Sjöholm (2004a, p.640).

As can be seen in Figure 7 above the Swedish-speaking Finns mainly inhabit parts of the southern and western coastlines in Finland. There are also a number of small Swedish ‘language islands’¹⁶ in other areas of the country (Østern, 2004, p. 671). These do not show on this map, since these communities are situated in otherwise monolingually Finnish-speaking municipalities.

The strong position of Swedish on the Åland islands can clearly be seen on the map, as well as the different situations for the majority of the Swedish speakers in the southern parts as compared to the Swedish speakers in the western part of Finland (also called Ostrobothnia). The southern parts are to a large extent urbanised areas where Swedish is a minority language, whereas the western parts are largely rural communities (cf. McRae, 1997), where Swedish is a large minority or even a majority language. These regional differences in what can be referred to as Swedish–Finland (Sw. Svenskfinland), have not decreased during the last decades (Sjöholm, 2004a). Hence, it can be claimed that there are cultural differences also within the small Swedish-speaking population.

In relation to EFL education in Swedish–medium schools, I also want to mention some of the remarkable changes that have taken place in a Finnish context during the last two decades and which seem to be of relevance to EFL education. During the last twenty years the availability of English media in Finland has increased notably and English has emerged as “the dominant language in a large number of domains such as commerce, industry, sport, youth culture, tourism, and especially the language of advertising for consumer goods” (Sjöholm, 2004b, p. 685, cf. Hoffmann, 2000, p. 7). One of the reasons for this increase is the fact that the number of commercial satellite TV channels has increased (McRae, 1997, p. 305) but also the other (national) TV channels contribute to the amount of English input, since foreign programmes are generally subtitled and not dubbed. Even children’s programmes (animated cartoons) are sometimes broadcast in the original English language, even though you also find numerous examples of dubbed children’s cartoons. English pop music and computer games are also common and, of course, travelling abroad has become more frequent, just to mention a few examples. Chapter 4 presents explicit results regarding the amount of English children in Finland are exposed to though different media.

In order to cope with the changing demands of society language teachers are trying to adopt new effective methods in their classrooms, e.g. different content integrated language programmes and immersion programmes (Sjöholm, 1999; Räsänen, 2001; Takala, 2000). Also several projects implementing the use of language portfolios (e.g. Kohonen & Pajukanta, 2000; 2003) have come about, especially at secondary school level. Regardless of these efforts many teachers of English as a foreign language have not been affected by special programmes or projects of this kind. Very little is known about the ways in which these teachers reflect upon and act according to the conditions for teaching English, especially to beginners in primary school settings.

What was said about English influence in Finland as a whole is also relevant for

¹⁶ The concept ‘language island’ is a type of linguistic enclave, defined as a place where there is a Swedish-medium school in a completely Finnish speaking environment (Østern, 2004, p. 671).

the Swedish-speaking Finns (cf. Forsman, 2004; Sjöholm, 2004b), who have their own TV-channel and radio channels upheld by the national broadcasting company (YLE). The same rules apply for the Swedish TV programmes as for the Finnish ones e.g. concerning the subtitles. Swedish-speaking people do, of course, also watch/listen to programmes sent by the national Finnish TV and radio channels and commercial media channels, but especially in Ostrobothnia the influence of media broadcasts from Sweden is considerable (e.g. McRae, 1997, p. 303). However, that does not decrease the influence of English input in this region, since the Swedes seem to apply the same principles regarding subtitling and to be influenced by the same kind of trend of English as “the commercial language of the young”¹⁷. According to Sjöholm (2004b, see also Forsman, 2004, pp.100-101) this internationalisation and globalisation process could more or less be referred to as a process of Americanisation, since a majority of the media products young people are exposed to are of US origin and the predominant variant of English used in these products is American English.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that also teachers in Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland feel their pupils know a considerable amount of English vocabulary, on beginning their English studies in grade 5 (as 10–11-year-olds), which was the most common grade to begin studies in English as a foreign language up till 2004. With the new national policy of distribution of hours per different school subject that was passed in 2002, the teaching in English as a foreign language can start in grade 3 (9–10-year-olds), possibly even earlier. It is also believed that there are regional differences in the amount of English input children receive, not necessarily due to a difference in availability, since that ought to be more or less equal all over the country, but perhaps due to the urban/rural cultural differences between the southern and western parts of Swedish-Finland (cf. Brunell, 2007). These two factors are likely to have an impact on the teaching and learning of English. There are, however, no recent studies made in this field in a Swedish-speaking context in Finland and since this intuition of teachers has not yet been confirmed (or proved wrong) in research studies not much has been done to differentiate and adapt teaching and teaching materials to the present situation.

In some schools teaching materials from the 70s were still used by the end of the 1990s, even though the situation concerning the amount of English input children are exposed to before starting their studies in English has changed dramatically during the last twenty years. One may suppose that many teachers suffer because of the inadequacy of these old materials. As mentioned above, also language teachers in the Finnish parts of the country feel that the materials available are inadequate for the teaching of the voluntary foreign language¹⁸, but contrary to what has been expressed by their colleagues in the Swedish-medium schools they feel that the materials advance at too great a speed (Julkunen, 1998b).

¹⁷ The amount of exposure to English outside school among pupils in Sweden is exemplified in Lundahl (1998, p. 70).

¹⁸ As mentioned, it is nowadays possible for the municipality to include a voluntary foreign language in the curriculum from grade 3 or even earlier. In previous educational documents this option was referred to as an A2-language possible to study from grade 5.

The massive influence of English outside school can also be expected to contribute to the generally very positive attitudes towards English that at least older pupils (cf. Forsman, 2004; Tuokko, 2000, p. 100¹⁹) in Swedish-medium schools seem to have. However, as we will see later in Chapter 4, these positive attitudes are not in themselves unproblematic. In fact, we know rather little of what influence the increased exposure of English has on young, beginning learners' initial knowledge of English, on their attitudes towards the English language, towards English-speaking countries and towards speakers of English, and we know even less about how this extracurricular English exposure affects the teachers and the teaching procedures employed in the classroom. That is why it is the focus of this study.

¹⁹ Also a Swedish study (Andersson, 2002, p. 34) points out English as the only theoretical subject identified as popular by a majority of students in lower and upper secondary school.

3 A framework for learning

As has been pointed out, the general aim of the study is not to investigate the process of learning as such, but rather to gain deeper insights in some of the conditions for learning and teaching English as a foreign language in a Finland-Swedish context. Such results would become very difficult to interpret unless one is aware of what kind of notions of learning the presented process is based on. Therefore, it is relevant to briefly present definitions of the key concepts and views of learning influencing this study. This chapter begins with a general overview of some theories of learning, followed by some concepts of learning regarded as central in relation to second language acquisition (SLA) and development-centred learning.

3.1 Theories of learning and world views

When van Lier (2004b) argues for an ecological framework for learning he also points out that this ecological perspective is at its core a view of the world, thus pointing out the relationship between ontological and philosophical views and the ways in which we perceive and define learning and development. Therefore, I will start with a brief overview of the most general trends in the development of views of the world, how these have affected how we have perceived ourselves in Western European societies, and what kind of main rationale for education that outlook on life has brought about. In this historical description I partly rely on an outline made by Rasmussen (September 2004; cf. 2006, p. 17). As can be seen in Table 1 below Rasmussen outlines a move from the pre-modern to the reflexive, which he claims should be seen as a complex understanding of modernity in contrast to the previous world views.

Table 1. General trends in historical interdependence between world views and educational rationale inspired by Rasmussen (September 2004).

View of the world	Reference	Outlook on man	Educational rationale
<i>Pre-modern</i>	God	Created by God	Educate to spread familiarity with deocentric rules to maintain hierarchical society
<i>Modern</i>	Rationality	Created by humans	Educate good labour force for materialist progression of society
<i>Post-modern-relativist</i>	Anything goes	Communicative beings	Educate to give individual own “voice”, preserve democracy
<i>Post-modern-reflexive</i>	Self-reference	Self created in interplay with outside world/through observation	Provide learners with opportunities to develop selves and maintain relations, inter- and independence

This connection between view of the world and educational rationale is important, since it shows the interdependence between any educational system maintained by society and the predominant values of the surrounding society. That interdependence is, however, not to be seen as a unity. Rasmussen (2006, p. 19) concludes that it is no longer possible to just draw one crucial line between within and without (e.g. school and surrounding society), but reality is much more complex and every individual is a part of several different social contexts, all with their often differing norms and values. This kind of complexity is also made explicit by Table 1, since we will find a variety of the outlined educational rationales and thus also differing world views represented within any national or even local educational context today (cf. Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1998).

3.2 On knowledge and learning

As can be seen in the short overview in Section 3.1, the social-constructivist²⁰ approach to learning is based on other philosophical assumptions than for instance the traditionalist and behaviourist approaches (cf. Kohonen, 2006a, p. 115; Treekrem, 2000, p. 82). This also means that concepts like knowledge and learning need to be redefined in order to make sense within the more recent approaches in education and development. Numerous attempts have been made by theorists and researchers to define these concepts within this framework and they all add value to the concepts themselves, but the concepts have also turned out to be fairly elusive in the sense that their complexity seems to make exhaustive and yet useful definitions almost impossible to produce. In this presentation I have therefore chosen to present simple and broad definitions, that leave out some of the complexity of the phenomena, but which cover processes crucial and sufficient for the scope of this study. The presentation in this section and the following ones in this chapter together reflect the complexity of learning processes taking place in the interplay referred to as ‘learning space’ in Figure 2 (p. X).

Among educational researchers there is a recent interest in transformation of knowledge and learning as a process of transformation (e.g. Engeström, September 2006; Kohonen, 2006b; Perregaux, September, 2006; Säljö, 2000). This current interest in processes of transformation is not new within the conceptual field of knowledge and learning. Piaget (1970, p. 29) defines the art of knowing as a process of assimilating “reality into systems of transformation”. He also stresses that understanding of an object is possible not through perception only but “by acting upon it and transforming it” (Piaget, 1972, p. 48). According to Piaget knowledge can thus be defined as a set of active transformations that the individual tries to make compatible. Knowledge cannot, according to this view be seen as a copy of the world pasted into the passive learner’s mind, but rather as a series of dynamic changes in the mind of the active learner trying to interpret the outside world. Thus, one cannot expect a causal one-to-one relation between teaching as a communicative process and learning as process of conscious change (Rasmussen, 2006, p. 21; cf. Uljens, 2006, p. 30), just as education in a broad sense (Norwegian *danning*) is not limited to educational institutions, but occurs throughout life (Eriksen, 2006, p. 40). Kolb (1984, p. 41) expresses this relation in the following way: “Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it.” Here we can see an even closer connection to the experiences of the individual, and hence also the connection to what is usually referred to as experiential learning. In Kolb’s definition there is no dichotomy between knowledge and experience, since experience grasped in different ways is a necessary prerequisite for generating different elementary forms of knowledge that can be combined into higher levels of knowing.

Within a social-constructivist approach one could ask whether “non-experiential learning” at all is possible, since all learning takes place more or less as a result

²⁰ In practically oriented work the term sociocultural learning is often preferred for this approach.

of interaction between the learning individual and the outside world. If one defines experiences as merely the occurrence of physical action it is possible to claim that other types of learning are possible also within a social-constructivist framework, but if we choose to define experiences as the type of interaction the learner gets involved in we have effectively covered the whole complexity of those varied processes which constitute learning within a social-constructivist framework (cf. Kolb, 1984, pp. 26-28).

As one of the early advocates of experiential learning, Torbert (1972, p. 29) argues that all learning is, in fact, experiential. At the same time he (pp.29-30) warns us for regarding the two concepts 'learning' and 'internalisation' as equivalents. According to Torbert internalisation is a kind of process in which the learner assimilates e.g. "correct behaviour", resulting in an increasingly reduced awareness of the underlying processes. One could even claim that internalisation in this sense is the opposite of learning, which is considered to be an active and conscious process. Curiously enough, Torbert also recognises that much of what we call "everyday learning" is in fact, internalisation and is to be considered a necessary process, since human beings are not able to process all kinds of stimuli surrounding them consciously (cf. Tyler, 1978, pp. 184-186), without becoming unbearably stressed and confused. In SLA research we find a similar discussion concerning the concepts 'learning' and 'acquisition', but with the difference that Torbert (1972) actually argues for the necessity of developing experiential learning, demanding a high level of consciousness, whereas in SLA the subconscious process of acquisition had been promoted.

In Krashen and Terrell (1983; Krashen 1981, pp. 1-2), acquisition is defined as a subconscious communicative process of acquiring implicit knowledge and as a process to which teaching does not contribute. Learning, on the other hand, is defined as a conscious "knowing about" a language, i.e. as a gaining of explicit knowledge, often through teaching. Lately, this absolute dichotomy between learning and acquisition has been challenged and modified by other researchers (see Forsman, 2004, pp. 25-36). Hulstijn et al. (1996), for instance, mention a distinction between incidental vocabulary learning (defined as "the accidental learning of information without the intention of remembering that information", p. 327) and intentional vocabulary learning, but their dichotomy is no longer absolute, but rather complementary. It is also worth noting that Hulstijn et al. actually use the term learning for both types of activities, and also that Krashen and Terrell (1983; cf. Krashen, 1985, p. 8) mostly are concerned with learning/acquisition of grammar, whereas Hulstijn et al. have studied vocabulary learning among intermediate SL learners. There are also other distinctions relating to the context of learning rather than the process per se. Thus 'acquisition' is often related to language learning in informal contexts, whereas 'learning' is associated with language learning in formal contexts²¹ (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 667, Corder, 1973, p. 113). According to van Lier (1996, pp. 49-50; see also Færch, Haastrup & Phillipson, 1984, pp. 201-203), Stephen Krashen created a false dichotomy in his categorical distinction between the two concepts. Both processes could, in fact, be seen as complementary and

²¹ However, e.g. Lindblad (2002, p. 77) stresses the fact that learning activities are not to be related only to particular formal contexts.

contributing to the development of learning outcomes.

Concerning the actual processes of learning Piaget (1972, pp. 48-49) distinguishes between an empirical and a mental dimension of learning or transforming knowledge and in this relation he claims that action is at the heart of the process, whereas perception without action does not result in learning. In Kolb's (1984, pp. 43-46) terminology these dimensions include the processes of apprehension (perception of sensory influences) and comprehension (understanding/analysis of content). In van Liers' framework of second language learning (see Section 3.4) these two terms re-occur, but with slightly different meanings, since they are more connected to the different possible outcomes of the learning process (see also Gass & Selinker, 1994, pp. 298-302). As mentioned, Kolb (1984, p. 42) goes even further in his four-stage model of learning, where the different dialectic processes result in different elementary types of knowledge. However, one could say that the main point in his argument, as for Piaget (e.g.1972), is that perception alone is not enough for learning to take place, but also some kind of active transformational process is needed.

Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985, p. 13) recognise Kolb's model as a useful "learning style inventory", but criticise it for not shedding much light on the actual nature of reflection. More than ten years before Kolb's model was published e.g. Freire (1972, e.g. pp. 62-64) strongly stressed the interrelatedness between reflection and action. When words lose their action dimension the possibility to reflect upon them also suffers, and action for the sake of itself, without connection to reflection reduces dialogue. According to Freire (1972) human existence cannot be silent, dialogue through reflection and action is a necessary prerequisite. Hence, the process of meaning making has to be of a continuous nature, which is also stressed by Kolb (1984, pp. 1-3). At this point, it might be worth pointing out that it is not possible to verbalise all kinds of learning outcomes or knowledge (cf. Lauvås, 1993).

In ecological theories learning is described as the ability to adapt to one's environment in increasingly successful ways. However, I find it necessary to point out that this definition should not be interpreted to exclude the notion of developing one's environment, but to include that notion, which adds ethical and moral dimensions to learning. In the introduction two perspectives of developmental ecology were presented, but van Lier argues for four main ecological principles of learning (or basic organizing concepts, as van Lier puts it; 2004b, p. 86): perception, action, relation, and quality. In my opinion, these concepts defined fairly broadly – through socio-constructivist glasses – include all major aspects of learning processes. Even though van Lier primarily focuses on language learning they can be said to capture the essentials of any real learning process. His principles will therefore be briefly outlined below.

The notion of perception can be said to constitute the crucial basis of any learning process. Van Lier (2004b, p. 86-89) describes it as multi-modal and multi-sensory, and points out four major characteristics. Firstly, perception is not to be regarded as a static process, where the learner is a passive observer of a picture or scene. Instead van Lier proposes the view of the learner as an active participant in a landscape, even though he does recognise the fact that not all

information is picked up as a result of visible activity on the perceiver's part. Secondly, van Lier links perception and activity. I agree with this notion, but one also needs to recognise the possibility of incidental learning. In this connection I believe it is important to realise that activity does not necessarily mean the same as intentionality or even directed action, but can rather be defined as "being engaged in the world around us". If we accept such a broad definition the problematic relation to concepts such as incidental learning and implicit learning cease to be problematic. For example, the broad definition makes it possible to define "watching TV" as an action with the potential of leading to perception and learning rather than defining it as passive reception only. To the extent this type of activity leads to learning it can also be claimed to constitute "mental action".

Thirdly, van Lier claims that perception can be both direct and indirect. I do agree with the assumption that the information available in any given situation might be either directly or indirectly available, but from a more general perspective on learning it is not relevant to argue that perception of linguistic information is more direct than perception through e.g. gestures or cultural scripts. Closely related to this is the fourth characteristic mentioned by van Lier: perception as a multi-sensory phenomenon.

As has already been pointed out the principle of action is directly related to perception. For learning to take place the two need to form a whole (van Lier, 2004b, p. 92). This leads to an activity-centred approach to learning, where it becomes important for learners to interact within the diversity of perceivable information. However, from an ecological (and sociocultural) perspective, it is not only action by itself that constitutes learning, but the principle of relation is equally important.

The concept **relation** can be described as a dialogical and interactional process between the self and the outside world (other selves and/or artefacts). The notion of self is in itself complex and has been defined in a variety of ways²². For this purpose van Lier's (2004b, p. 93) definition is used: "The self can thus be seen as a reciprocal relationship between the individual and his/her world". Both von Wright (2004, p. 70) and Imsen (2000, p. 325) point out that the notion self must be seen as a continuous dynamic act or force rather than something statically existing. The reciprocity is further reinforced, since it more or less coincides with the description of the process of relation itself. We thus arrive at a paradox, where the self is constituted through the process of relating, and the process of relating presupposes a self, conscious of being a "separate actor" in relation to the outside world²³. Much of the difficulties and complexity in defining self and related terms such as soul, spirit, and identity (cf. van Lier, 2004b, p. 93) is probably related to this paradox and the unwillingness to accept it as a necessary

²² See e.g. von Wright, (2004, cf. Imsen, 2000, pp. 326-327) on Mead and his description of the dynamic and intersubjective characteristic of the self. In Mead's pragmatic theory the dichotomy between self and outer world cease to be relevant. Even though this relational perspective fits well with the ecological perspective presented above distinction between self and world will be made in this text when judged useful.

²³ Note the similarities between van Lier's concepts perception and relation and the concept *Bildsamkeit* and the pedagogical paradox (see e.g. Rasmussen, 2006; Uljens, 2006).

point of departure. Van Lier puts it very aptly in the following quotation:

The self is not only what and who we have been (where we have come from), and who we are now as we are aware of ourselves acting, being and having certain experiences and opinions, but it also includes who we are in the process of becoming, or who we want to be as a result of our present actions and dreams of actions. (van Lier, 2004b, p. 96)

From a pragmatic point of view the self can thus be said to be of a universal human origin, though socially constructed (cf. Imsen, 2000, p. 329), whereas the notion identity can be regarded as more contextually and culturally bound. This proposed distinction (van Lier, 2004b, pp. 96-97) of identity as the connecting link between the self and the world is useful, since it makes it possible to understand how it is possible (perhaps even necessary) for a person to develop new identities in new contexts, without necessarily losing the old ones²⁴.

The fourth principle brought forward by van Lier (2004b, p. 97) is the quality of the educational experience. According to him learning cannot be seen as separated from the rest of life, but one major criterion of quality is a holistic view of learning, which has not always been the case in our institutions of education (cf. Andersson, 2002). In fact, it has even been claimed that most of children's learning probably takes place outside school, since that is the environment where they spend a majority of their time (Imsen, 2000, p. 415). The founder of the deep ecology movement Arne Naess (e.g. 1981) has argued that standard of living does not equal quality of life. This is also a relevant argument for learning in both formal and informal contexts (even though set standards are more rarely attached to informal settings). In fact, one could claim that set standards that do not take individual profiles and needs into consideration might just as well contribute to a lower quality of learning. This is particularly the case if we believe that the quality of education can be measured by the use of test scores. Tests can never describe the whole complexity of learning outcomes, they can only represent samples of learning/proficiency (cf. Alderson, 1996, p. 214). Furthermore, van Lier argues that some of the most important indicators of quality in education cannot be measured quantitatively. The effects of numerous educational actions become apparent after such a long period of time that it is impossible to connect them to a particular activity, at least by the use of quantitative measures. These actions are e.g. tasks aiming at the development of intercultural competence (cf. Lahdenperä, 1995; Forsman, 2006)

On the basis of the above presented perspectives I find it reasonable to claim that all learning is experiential to some extent. In this study I will mainly use the concept 'learning' as a superordinate term including different processes of acquiring knowledge and skills when I address learning in general. Acquisition and internalisation will then refer to the more informal/less guided processes. However, in relation to second language learning the concept 'acquisition' will also be used as a general term, since that is how it is traditionally used by

²⁴ Krumm (2004, pp. 64-65) illustrates these processes in relation to multilingualism, where perceived recognition is seen as a necessary prerequisite for agreeing to develop several linguistic identities.

He presents it to illustrate the need for different kinds of action in the language classroom, but in my opinion it can also be used for learning in general. It is important to note that the different types of interaction (teaching) promote different kinds of actions, roles of the participants and thus also learning outcomes. Hence, only one type of interaction is not likely to be “the right one” but a hybrid is more likely to prove successful. For an interesting discussion of this issue see van Lier (1996). For teachers this continuum has a double relevance for their professional development: they need to realise this as continuous learners themselves and in order to be able to develop this mode of thinking and acting as teachers/facilitators of the learning processes of their pupils.

Ellström refers to Lawrence and Miller (1978), who stress the importance of focussing on development-centred learning, in order for the learners to discover their capacity for self-management, i.e. to consciously act on and shape our environment according to our needs, rather than just to react on and adapt to it without reflecting on the ultimate purpose of the action²⁶. Also Alexandersson (1994) stresses the importance of reflection on one’s own practice as the fundament of all development.

How this process is executed in practice may vary. Different researchers argue for different models of reasoning. Somewhat simplified we could say that the main argument seems to be whether action should precede reflection or not, whereas the “right” answer to this is probably ‘both’. The basis for this conflict most likely has its roots in the ever present conflicting interests between theory and practice (at least as far as teacher education and teachers’ work is concerned). Both Ellström (1992) and Lauvås (1993) touch upon this (see also Sjöholm & Hansén, 2007, pp. 50-55). In my opinion they more or less end up with my previous conclusion, even though they seem to get there from very different starting-points.

In order for constructive development-centred learning to take place Ellström (1992, p.83ff) discusses five important principles in the interaction between individual and environment, which affect the individual’s potential for learning, namely:

- 1) the aim of the activity,
- 2) the character of the tasks,
- 3) the climate of the organisation,
- 4) the need for integration between experiential learning and planned education, and
- 5) the need to develop the activity not only for production, but also for learning. (cf. van Lier, 2004b)

Concerning *the aims* (1), it is claimed that explicit objectives as such are not enough, but that commitment from the workers is also of importance, in order for the aims to become a successful means of enhancing learning. For this to

²⁶ Ellström does not use the concepts autonomous/self-directed learning, but it is obvious that these concepts refer to approximately the same kinds of capacities (e.g. Little, 2003, p. 4)

happen factors such as the power and authority of the management, colleagues' attitudes and support, level of participation in the formulation of objectives and perceived opportunity to reach the aims are of importance. If we apply this argument to the situation of the teacher we find that their situation is affected not only by management and colleagues, but also by the pupils. In my opinion, the inclusion of possible clients e.g. pupils would add an important aspect to Ellström's principle. Also Kohonen (2006b, pp. 4-5) identifies the collegial institutional culture as one crucial prerequisite for a teacher's professional growth and points out that collegial collaboration among language teachers has been found to support the following dimensions: Language and linguistics expertise, pedagogical expertise, and partnership in school development (pp. 9-10).

The second point mentioned by Ellström is concerned with *the character of the tasks* (2). In order to develop one's competence a person needs to get the opportunity to act at all three levels mentioned in Rasmussen's (1986) model²⁷, meaning that also an experienced worker needs to get the opportunity to develop new skills. Ellström (1992) also refers to Volpert, who mentions that the work has to offer a high level of autonomy concerning how the tasks are to be carried out and when, provide opportunity to develop a holistic view of the processes involved, provide experiences of great variety, provide opportunity to work with other people. All of these issues seem highly relevant when applied to the daily working environment of a primary school teacher in Finland.

These thoughts are closely connected to the ones expressed by Kronwall, Olsson and Sköldborg (1997), who claim that the reason for learning new things is that you are confronted with a problem you need to solve. In order to do that, you need to have the authority to seek the solution for the problem and you also need to feel personally responsible for your work. The development of an internal dialogue, of participation, common development of aims and a consciousness of both problems and results are mentioned as crucial elements of this process. (cf. Alexandersson, 1994)

In relation to the *climate or culture of the organisation* (3) – the third point mentioned by Ellström - the following issues emerge. The relationship between the individual and objective freedom of action needs to be expressed. The individual also has to feel a high degree of freedom for self-control (Kronwall, Olsson & Sköldborg, 1997). The individual's view of her/his own freedom of action is most probably shaped by previous education, experiences and what the individual knows (or believes s/he knows) about others' experiences in similar situations. A culture, which supports development-centred learning, hence gives priority to action, initiative, risk-taking, tolerance of different views and supports reflection over one's own organisational culture (Ellström, 1992, p. 88). The ultimate aim is to restore authority and seeking of new knowledge to the teachers themselves (Alexandersson, 1994). This can be seen in relation to Lauvås' statement that "institutional knowledge" needs to become one's own in order to become really valuable. He also reminds us of the fact that it is not possible to

²⁷ Rasmussen's (1986, pp. 100-103) three-level SRK-model separates between the skilled-based level, the rule-based level, and the knowledge-based level.

verbalise all of one's own professional knowledge²⁸, even though most of it is possible to put into words.

The fourth point stresses the need for *integration between experiential learning and planned education* (4). Neither formal (in-service) education efforts nor informal learning opportunities alone seem to be enough for bringing about development-centred learning. A carefully balanced learning cycle where these two elements are included is favoured by Ellström (1992, p. 88-89). He argues for educational models where the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) the starting-point is a problem or need for development within the organisation
- b) the programme is based on the individual's experiences of problem solving in practical situations
- c) the programme emphasises dialogue between different groups of staff within the organisation and also between staff and experts within relevant fields
- d) the programme is planned in cooperation with the ones it is intended for.

Ellström (p.90) also points out how important it is that the methods used in in-service courses support the content of the course, since the structure of the course will feed back into the learning of the participants at a meta-level. To give an example, it can be perceived as contradictory and less trustworthy for participants to take part in a pure lecture course dealing with e.g. good practices in communicative language learning.

Finally, there is a need to *develop the activity not only for production, but also for learning* (5). In all complex working processes, so Ellström claims (p. 90-91), it is necessary to focus on both action and reflection. Often organisations tend to be solely focused on goal-oriented production (feed-forward phase) and forget to evaluate, interpret and reflect upon the process (feed-back phase). This way of structuring work soon becomes counterproductive.

In Kohonen's summary of the properties included in transformative learning similar elements appear, but contrary to Ellström's principles, where outer prerequisites are emphasised, Kohonen (2006b, p. 13) lists the inner capacities:

- 1) Realising the significance of professional interaction for growth,
- 2) Developing an open, critical stance to professional work, and seeing oneself as a continuous learner,
- 3) Developing a reflective attitude as a basic habit of mind, involving reflection on educational practices and their philosophical underpinnings,
- 4) Developing new self-understandings in concrete situations,
- 5) Reflecting on critical events or incidents in life and work history, and learning from the personal insights,
- 6) Conscious risk-taking: acting in new ways in classes and in the work community,

²⁸ For an interesting study on the tacit knowledge of professional teachers see Toom (2006).

- 7) Ambiguity tolerance: learning to live with uncertainty concerning the decisions to be made.

This list comes very close to what is brought forward in e.g. Luukkainen's listings of important features for the teacher of the future. Hence, learning for professional development is a matter of getting the necessary opportunity and support to act as increasingly autonomous and self-directed learners and making use of those opportunities or even striving towards creating such opportunities, where they do not exist. Hence, acting as a professional teacher can be described as an active continuous development of one's professional identity.

3.4 Second language acquisition and growth in proficiency

From a social-constructivist perspective factors influencing the individual's learning can also be said to be part of the language learning process. Therefore, I see it as extremely important to present some of the most influential models of SL/FL learning, to discuss their usefulness as a theoretical framework for this study and thus bring forward the perspectives of second language learning on which this work is based.

There are numerous theories of second language learning and even a greater abundance of more general theories of language learning. Some of these are of more static nature, whereas others (the more recent ones) are more dynamic. McLaughlin (1987), Ellis (1985, pp. 248-) and Baker (1996) review and discuss several influential SLA theories. Below some of the most widely spread theories are briefly presented along with the motives for not choosing those theories as the main framework in this study.

In his cyclical **framework** of second language acquisition Ellis (1985, pp.275-) identifies five critical inter-related components governing the processes of language acquisition: situational factors, linguistic input, learner differences, learner processes and linguistic output. In relation to these components eleven hypotheses about language learning are proposed.

Situational factors are commonly believed to be of importance in SLA. These situational factors include the actors, the environment of language interaction and the topic of the conversation. According to Ellis (1985, p. 278-279), situational factors govern the learners use of interlanguage, but not the sequence or order of SLA development. The situational factors are related to the kind of linguistic input occurring. Language researchers of different "schools" have considered linguistic *input* as important for language acquisition, but depending on the view of language learning they represent different aspects of linguistic input are stressed as important. For instance, behaviourists stressed the importance of a precise sequence and strictly controlled amount of linguistic input, whereas the mentalist view put forward by Chomsky limited the importance of linguistic input to simply being the trigger that starts the internal language acquisition device. Ellis (p. 279) hypothesises that input is one of the determinants of sequence, order and rate in SL development. (Baker, 1996, p.

98)

Other important factors in language learning (Ellis, 1985, p. 279) are the numerous and complex individual *learner differences*, of which age is mentioned as one of the most readily accessible for research (p. 104). However, Ellis does not include age in his learner differences hypotheses, but rather stresses the point that affective learner differences are believed to determine the rate of SLA, while the learner's L1 is believed to influence (in a minor way) the order of development. Baker concludes that even though it is possible to create a list of what factors seem to interrelate with effective language learning, it is as yet unclear how and to what extent these factors influence language learning and other factors. An advantage with Ellis' framework is that he recognises the importance of *learner processing* in order for language learning to take place. This 'black box' of mental processes is not easy to research and throughout time it has been filled with different typologies of theories of mental processing, e.g. Chomsky's language acquisition device (LAD). Whatever the processes of the black box be it results in some kind of *second language output*, that according to Ellis consists of both formulaic speech and creatively constructed utterances. Furthermore he recognises learner language as "variable, dynamic, but also systematic" (p. 280).

Ellis' framework offers a fairly broad frame, into which different theories of language acquisition may be fitted without greater difficulty. That obvious advantage of the framework can be regarded as a weakness in terms of guidance in the process of language learning. Since it is non-exclusive it also seems quite static, even though it would certainly be possible to fit also more dynamic theories of language learning into it. (Baker, 1996, pp.99-101) Spolsky starts out his famous work (1989, pp. 1-2, 11-12) by discussing on the one hand the difficulties of creating a general theory of language learning without blurring the details, and on the other the fundamental problem with creating a more specific model, that inevitably will leave out important aspects of the complexity of SLA processes.

Among other influential, but more specific models I want to mention two different strands: Schumann's Pidginization hypothesis/Acculturation model (1978; see also Andersen, 1983) and the accommodation theory ascribed to Giles and associates (e.g. Giles & Byrne, 1982) on the one hand and the linguistic Universal Hypothesis developed from different perspectives by Chomsky, Greenberg and their respective followers (Ellis, 1985; McLaughlin, 1987) on the other. All of these theories contribute to our understanding of SLA but on their own they do not encompass the complexity of a social-constructivist SL/FL classroom perspective. The Monitor Model/Natural Approach put forward by the influential, but controversial theorist Stephen Krashen (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Krashen, 1981; 1982; 1985) on the other hand claims to be a general theory of language acquisition. The model is summarised in five hypotheses and thus appeals to practitioners but it has been severely criticised for not being a comprehensive theory of SLA by other experts in the field (e.g. McLaughlin, 1987; Ellis, 1985; Spolsky, e.g. p. 1-2). The definite dichotomy between the concepts learning and acquisition (see Section 3.2) is one example of a criticised feature.

The perhaps most well known socio-psychological theories of language learning are Lambert’s model from 1974 and Gardner’s socio-educational model from 1985. In the Gardner Model (1985, p. 147) both his own research and research done by others is represented in an integrated fashion in his four-stage model.

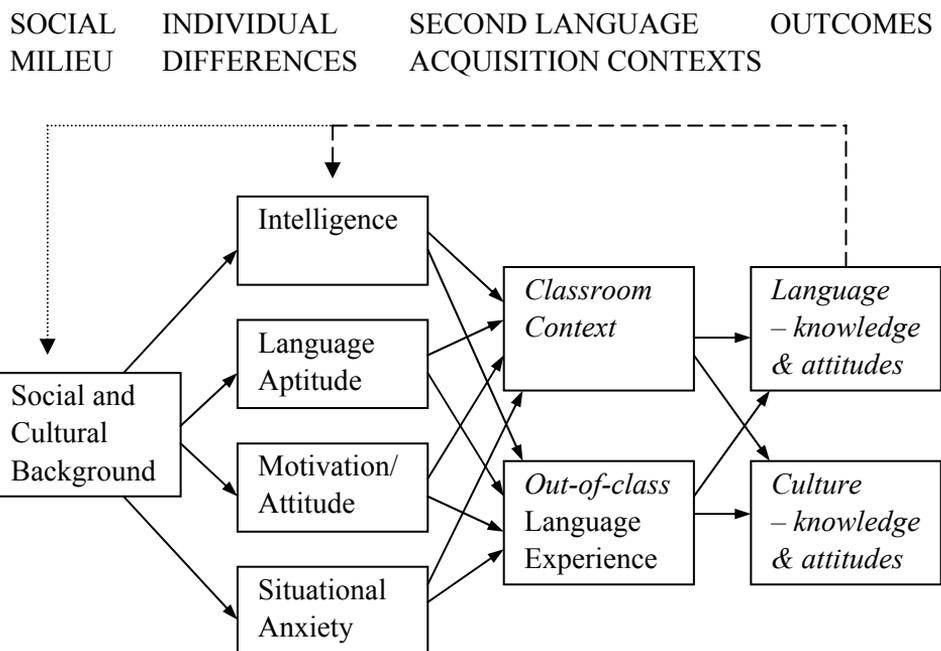


Figure 9. Gardner’s socio-educational model of the language learning process, including the modifications made by Forsman (2004: 16)

The first stage in Gardner’s model deals with the social and cultural milieu of the language learner. The second stage is called individual differences, the third concerns the learning context, where Gardner distinguished between informal and formal learning environments, and the fourth stage deals with the outcome of the process. (Gardner, 1985, pp. 146-150; Baker, 1996, pp. 106-107)

If we start at the left hand side in the model we can see that the social and cultural background of the individual affects her/his language learning process through, e.g. the influence the background has on motivation for and attitudes towards language learning. Gardner claims that cultural beliefs and expectations are related also to the roles played by the other individual differences identified by his model namely: language aptitude, intelligence, and situational anxiety. Gardner’s original model points out that learning/acquisition can take place in both formal and informal learning contexts, but that distinction has been made even more concrete by Forsman (2004), who points out that for SL/FL learners these different environments of learning can be referred to as the ‘Classroom context’ and the ‘Out-of-class context’. The outcomes of the learning process, regardless of the context where it takes place are both linguistic and non-linguistic. Here Forsman has made a slightly different distinction between the

two components of outcome, in that she distinguishes the two in terms of 'Language' and 'Culture'. It is important to note that she includes both knowledge and attitudes in both of these components of outcome that in turn feed back into the language learning process, but also to the social and cultural background of the learner. This dynamic aspect is discussed by Gardner (1985, p. 149-150) but not made explicit in the original model.

Contrary to Ellis's model Gardner's very explicitly points out that there are other outcomes of language learning than strictly linguistic. This is also stressed in the CEFR (2001). CEFR mentions a large number of varied competences, which all can be claimed to constitute important aspects of a comprehensive language competence. Language competence is divided into general competences and linguistic competences. Among other aspects the general competences include sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness. Within the perspective sociocultural knowledge the following areas are mentioned: 'Everyday living', 'Living conditions', 'Interpersonal relations', 'Values, beliefs and attitudes', 'Body language', 'Social conventions' and 'Ritual behaviour'. Also in other documentations on SL/FL research and language education more or less similar divisions are made, even though they might not have been classified under the title 'sociocultural knowledge' (cf. Doyé, 1999: 28-30), but rather under headings such as 'culture-dependent subject areas' (Sw. 'kulturbundna ämnesområden'; Fi. *kulttuurisidonnaisia aihepiirejä*) and 'intercultural themes'. While the definition of sociocultural knowledge used in CEFR is so broad that it includes cognitive, affective and skill-related domains, I will also refer to literature written about intercultural competence when discussing what is here above described in terms of sociocultural knowledge (see footnote 2/page 2X).

According to Baker (1996, p. 107) the value of Gardner's model is that it is a summary of existing research and that it had been directly tested as a model and found to fit the collected data. Baker also mentions that a limitation of Gardner's model is the fact that it does not include the socio-political dimension. A further limitation of models in general is that even though they are most valuable for summarizing and providing clarity they "tend to imply descriptions rather than deep explanations" and the "complexity of contexts and effects of immediate and long-standing situations are not represented in a model" (Baker, 1996, p. 107; see also Spolsky, 1989, p. 4-5). However, I am convinced that a model of SLA can be useful when trying to communicate to an audience what you as a researcher are trying to study at the moment. It is perhaps more to be seen as a clarifying tool of communication than an exhaustive graphic presentation of what the complexity of language acquisition really is.

Gardner's socio-educational model has worked as a starting-point for the researcher's own conceptual thinking about SL/FL learning, since it seems to point out some of the major components affecting the SL learning process. It also clearly shows that SL learning is a social process undertaken in and affected by the social and cultural environment surrounding the learner and also that language learning outcomes are to be seen as more varied than linguistic outcomes.

A similar view of SLA emerges in the theory proposed by Spolsky (1989). Spolsky (1989, pp. 14-29) builds his theory on 74 empirically verified detailed

conditions related to the learner, the language in question, the learning situation and social context. He applies what he calls a “formally valued eclecticism” (p. 12), in that he recognises some of the conditions as necessary and others as graded and/or typical. The conditions deal with what it means to know a language, the importance of language use, aspects of language testing, overall proficiency, individual factors (including ability and personality), linguistic basis, the social context (including attitudes and motivation), and learning opportunities. The descriptions and arguments for each condition are well founded, but one easily gets lost among the sometimes contradictory conditions.

Therefore, I have also found the need for a model that more readily lends itself to a merge between theories of SLA and learning in general. For that I have found several of the issues brought up in van Lier’s (1996, 2004a, 2004b) ecological model of learning useful.

In his work from 1996, van Lier mentions four main processes he considers necessary for language learning to take place. These processes are *exposure*, *engagement*, *intake* and *proficiency*. These crucial processes in turn are enhanced and to some extent also dependent on what he calls the three major principles of a liberating curriculum: awareness, autonomy, and authenticity. These principles will be briefly described before I move on to describe the four major processes of language learning. In his later work he has chosen to focus on the following organizing principles: perception, action, relation, and quality of the educational experience (see Section 3.2). In my opinion these principles cover approximately the same area of learning as the processes previously identified, but with a slightly different emphasis and coverage. In this presentation the older terminology will be used to structure the presentation and the more recent principles will be mentioned where they seem to fit into the framework of language learning he defined in 1996.

Awareness

The concept awareness is by no means an easy one to define, especially since it is easily confused with the notions consciousness and intentionality. Many varied definitions exist, of which some of the most current will be presented here. In earlier work van Lier has been interpreted to define awareness in a broad sense both as a cognitive and a social phenomenon (e.g. Alanen, 2000, p. 107), which does not necessarily have to be conscious, referring to Schmidt’s distinction of the concept. Schmidt (1990) divides awareness into several different processes, demanding different levels of consciousness. According to him, no language learning is possible without conscious noticing, whereas learning without awareness and intention is possible.

Schmidt (1990) presents three different dimensions of consciousness: Awareness, Intention, and Knowledge. He states that in common usage as well as in theoretical work consciousness is often equated with awareness, a concept that in turn may be divided into different levels. Schmidt considers three of these crucial: perception, noticing, and understanding (p. 132). Perception is described as the ability to imply mental organisation and to create internal representations of external events, but it does not necessarily have to be a conscious process. Noticing or focal awareness is the second level. Bowers (1984, pp. 229-230)

points out the difference between perceiving and noticing. Noticing refers to the information we pay attention to, which is only a part of the information we perceive. Noticing is a conscious process, even though what we notice might not necessarily be possible to verbalise. The third level distinguished by Schmidt is understanding, in which he includes analysing, comparing, and reflecting on the information we have noticed. In other words all kinds of mental activity is included here, including meta-cognition.

Van Lier (1996) sees noticing as the crucial kind of awareness for language learning to take place. In order to learn something one must first *notice* it. “This noticing is an awareness of something’s existence, obtained and enhanced by paying attention to it. Paying attention is focusing one’s consciousness, or pointing one’s perceptual powers in the right direction, and making mental ‘energy’ available for processing” (p. 11). As far as language learning is concerned this process of noticing is not as simple as it might sound. We do not know precisely what it is we need to notice in order to acquire language. Van Lier claims that it is likely that there are several different learning processes involved, and he gives the example that learning the meaning of a word and learning its pronunciation are two different processes. Also Levelt’s (1989) work on speaking can serve as an example of the complex processing involved in language production (thus also learning). In his later work van Lier (2004a; 2004b) defines perception as a superordinate concept in relation to the notions discussed above, and stresses the fact that the major efforts of SLA research should be focused on how perceptual learning as such works and this relates to activity and learning (pp. 86-87). Within the concept of perception he also wants to include several different processes. Awareness is referred to as knowledge of the other (i.e. what is outside oneself), consciousness as knowledge of oneself, and both are claimed to be needed in the processes of language learning (p. 90-91).

Second language researchers also state that vocabulary learning and learning underlying grammatical structures are two very different processes. For instance Laufer (2000) criticises Krashen’s acquisition hypothesis as far as vocabulary learning is concerned and Haastrup and Henriksen (2000) recognise the fact that vocabulary learning and grammar learning are often studied in relation to different models and emphasise the importance of a coherent model that would cover the complexity of language learning, in order to make it possible to see how different processes are related to each other, if at all.

Autonomy

We do believe that there is a relationship between teaching and learning, but it has also become necessary to realise that this relationship is by no means a causal one in the sense that there would be a 1-1 relationship between the two (e.g. Uljens, 1997, pp. 34-36). It is obvious that learning can also occur without teaching. At least in the Nordic countries social-constructivist theories of learning have become increasingly influential, which means that it has become generally accepted that learning has to be done by the learner her/himself, and that the role of the teacher is to guide and encourage learning. In the soil of social-constructivism and critical theory the concept of learner autonomy has grown into one of the key concepts of many international and national documents on

learning. It is explicitly promoted by for instance the CEFR and the ELP (European Language Portfolio). Within an educational frame the concept has come to take on the general meaning of promoting the learners' awareness of her/his own learning and conscious knowledge of oneself (Hildén, 2003, p. 239). Hildén also mentions that the concept is used to promote self-directedness, sociocultural competence, motivation, critical reflection and personal independence (pp. 239-240, cf. Little, 2003, p. 4).

Choice and responsibility are, according to van Lier (1996, p. 12), central features of autonomy, which in turn he sees as necessary in promoting the intrinsic motivation and curiosity of the learner. The process of noticing will be weak and unfocused for a passive learner, whereas a learner, who has to make active choices and take active responsibility will be more focused.

Authenticity

In van Lier's terminology the concept of authenticity goes far beyond the authenticity of the materials used in the language classroom. "...an action is authentic when it realises a free choice and is an expression of what a person genuinely feels and believes. An authentic action is *intrinsically motivated*." (p. 13). Put like this authenticity is very much related to all kinds of action that takes place both inside and outside a language classroom. Considering the fact that some second language researchers claim that language input has to be modified if learners are to benefit from it (e.g. Jylhä-Laide & Karreinen, 1993; Nation, 2001), it is interesting to note how strongly van Lier connects authenticity and intrinsic motivation, generally considered to be one of the major driving forces for learning. The difference may have to do with the difference in emphasis: van Lier stresses action whereas other researchers stress input. But there might also be a true difference in their respective claims about the importance of authenticity. I find it important not to limit the discussion of authenticity to aspects of language and teaching materials only, since it is not likely that language and these material are the only factors that motivate action. That does not, however, mean that I support an idealistic view of the supreme usefulness of any authentic material. As we will see later there are different kinds of material (exposure or input) available, which are more or less suited for language learners. On the other hand van Lier's claim that authentic action is intrinsically motivated seems justified, which also means that much of what we 'have to do' is not to be considered authentic action according to van Lier's definition.

Exposure

In order to notice language we have to be exposed to it, but just any kind of language will not be noticed and processed further. In the literature in this field I find that the term input can be used both to indicate available exposure/potential input and to indicate the process whereby the learner notices/takes in language items (cf. Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Corder, 1981; see also Tyler, 1978, p. 176). In his 1996 book van Lier uses the terms exposure and exposure-language rather than potential input. In his later work (e.g. van Lier, 2004a; 2004b, cf. 1996, p. 12) he favours the use of the term affordance coined by Gibson (1979, pp. 127-140) to stress the interdependence between attributes of the perceiver and

attributes in the environment. In a purely ecological study it would be logical to consequently use the term affordance, but since this study has been inspired by different theories, and the theoretical basis has evolved over time I have chosen to use the terms exposure and exposure-language in the former sense of input mentioned above. Exposure is to be understood as the superordinate term including both linguistic and other types of exposure available to the learner, such as cultural and attitudinal input. Exposure-language is defined as the linguistic elements of the target language (TL) available to, and thus with a potential to be noticed by the learner. The characteristics of exposure-language will be discussed in more detail below. To refer to the input process several different terms are used throughout the text for instance intake, acquisition, mental processing.

Exposure to the target language is necessary for language learning to take place and van Lier claims that the main question is how learners gain access to this exposure-language. In the communicative language learning theories dominant during the 80's and beginning of the 90's (see e.g. Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Krashen, 1985) the idea about the importance of the amount of exposure-language (usually called input) was strongly emphasised, whereas quality aspects were given little attention.

Why then does van Lier stress the importance of the quality aspect? For language to be noticed it has to be *useful* and *accessible* to the learner, i.e. s/he has to be able to process it. Hence, a more important feature of exposure-language than amount is the quality of the language learners are exposed to. This is not to be confused with the simplification of exposure on mainly cognitive grounds prevalent many traditional FL classrooms. Factors which influence the quality of exposure-language are above all linguistic, interactional, and sociocultural (Alanen, 2000, p.107). How exposure-language is processed, thus, depends on characteristics of the exposure-language, characteristics of the learner, and characteristics of the setting in which the learner encounters the exposure-language (van Lier, 1996, p. 43). This means, for instance, that if the gap between what happens in the classroom and what takes place in the outside world is too great, the opportunities to learn are seriously reduced. Such a gap might arise in the values and aspirations of the participants, or in a gap between the cultures of second and first language settings (van Lier, 1996, p. 44). Gaps may occur for instance if the teacher in a formal language teaching setting treats the learners as "empty deserts" (Krumm, 2004, p. 72), rather than subjects that bring with them a rich and often diverse language experience. For instance, Claire Kramsch (September, 2007; see also 1997; Kachru, 1985, pp. 29-30) and Mohanty (September 2007) stress the importance of regarding multilingual (language) learners as speakers in their own right. Mohanty also points out that partial language competences might be considered the only appropriate goals in some contexts, rather than the "near nativeness" traditionally favoured in many Western countries (see also Risager, 2006, p. 10).

The two main features of exposure-language, mentioned by Van Lier (1996, p. 45), are comprehension and availability of assistance. Comprehension has been stressed also by communicative language researchers like Krashen and Terrell. For instance Krashen's formula 'i+1' (e.g. Krashen 1982, pp. 20-; Krashen & Terrell, 1983, pp. 32-) for what he calls comprehensible input is well-known.

Lately the availability of assistance, in the form of contextual information and social interaction also has been stressed by lecturers and writers on bilingual education (e.g. Met, 1996; 1998), even though it, to my knowledge, has received little attention in research on bilingual education. As far as comprehension is concerned, it is also important to realise that even though we tend to regard the concept as dichotomous, it is in fact much more like a continuum. The only right answer to how much we should understand of the exposure-language, to be able to benefit from it might, thus, be “just enough” (van Lier, 1996, p. 46), which then again varies from individual to individual. That also means that the quality of exposure is affected not only by the actual linguistic input, but also to the availability of other diverse perceptual clues, contributing to the learner’s process of meaning making.

Within strictly communicative language learning approaches (e.g. immersion) the attention has traditionally been focused on input only. As mentioned, van Lier (p. 46) claims this gives the false impression of a passive learner, which is why he does not use the term input, but rather exposure. In his opinion the processability of exposure-language depends above all on the characteristics of the learner, that is on her/his “prior knowledge, attitudes, interests, analytical abilities, communicative dexterity and so on” (van Lier, 1996, p. 46). Considering the variety of characteristics listed here as well as in Gardner’s model it is reasonable to assume that the learner is a major actor in the process of accessing and utilising exposure-language. It also seems evident that these widely ranging characteristics are not easy, if at all possible, to guide or control. However, that does not give language teachers and researchers the right to ignore these factors, since they evidently are believed to have an impact not only on the processing of exposure-language, but also on the characteristics of the setting, in which exposure-language is encountered.

The setting or set of circumstances surrounding the language learning process is also one of the important factors, which influence the accessibility of exposure-language, according to van Lier (p. 46). For example, van Lier mentions that “massive preoccupation with matters of survival, or other complex demands, can make it difficult to use exposure-language efficiently, or at all” (p.47). Hence, also this factor includes a wide range of different socio-cultural circumstances that might be more or less easy to detect and describe. The previously mentioned gaps in e.g. values between different groups in society are also relevant in this connection. In other words this argument coincides with the previous argument by Gardner that language learning process, or more specifically, the individual’s qualities as a learner are affected by the socio-cultural background, even though Gardner’s model does not include the accessibility of exposure as a factor.

Engagement

Even if all the factors of accessibility to exposure mentioned above are satisfied they provide no guarantee that language learning will take place. For that to happen the learner has to be receptive, in the sense that Allwright and Bailey (1991, p. 157) define it: “...a state of mind, whether permanent or temporary, that is open to the experience of becoming a speaker of another language.” Such curiosity-related behaviours as intrinsic motivation are part of the notion of receptivity and according to van Lier (1996, p. 48) they are powerful tools for

learning. It is often said that school kills the natural motivation and curiosity of children. If one wants one's language learners to be successful one must ensure that receptivity and curiosity are maintained, since receptive learners pay attention to the language. It is, however, important to note that although that process is an active one, it might be either conscious or subconscious. Contrary to the claims by Krashen and Smith (1986), who see spontaneous meaning-focused activity as the only effective path to language proficiency, van Lier claims that both the conscious and subconscious processes are of equal importance, and that conscious attention as a matter of fact might select and direct the learning process more efficiently. It is important not to mix up different strategies of learning with the notions of wanting to or being forced to study²⁹.

Another important element of the engagement process is the activation of cognitive networks of the subject. The mental effort of learning must have something known or familiar to link on to. The essence of this mechanism is the same as for noticing. There must be the link to something known, in order to make it possible to notice, engage in and eventually make sense of what is new. Small children who are ready to act on partly predictable and partly new stimuli are driven by heightened awareness, which Piaget (1976, p. 333) calls 'vigilance'. In L2 learning we cannot take that socio-biological vigilance for granted, according to van Lier (p. 52). Instead we have to encourage attention and focusing by "making things interesting and comprehensible, setting high expectations, promoting intrinsic motivation" (van Lier, p. 52-53).

Dörnyei (1994) claims that a balance between intrinsic and instrumental motivation is the most useful in present-day language education. He divides motivation into three different levels, one being the situational level. At the situational level he specifies three clusters of motives, namely course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific. The components identified as course-specific are briefly presented in an adapted version in Table 2.

²⁹ Krashen and Terrell's (1983) theory and Hulstijn et al.'s (1996) definition of incidental learning have been transferred to the notion of informal language learning/acquisition, which has resulted in arguments, where the ambiguous notion of consciousness is related to the dichotomy informal – formal, which is not a self-evident distinction between a formal and an informal learning situation. Therefore, I define informal learning as learning in an informal environment, without specific instruction. The nature of the process may range from incidental (learning without specific intention to learn the language, i.e. noticing aspects of meaning and form while focusing on the task) to intentional (choosing a certain non-teaching activity with the intention to learn some aspect of a language) (cf. Schmidt, 1990; van Lier, 1996; Bowers, 1984). Also, the learning processes taking place in a formal setting may range from incidental to intentional. The reader ought to note that both the definitions given above include certain aspects of consciousness. The only difference between the two lies in the learning context.

Table 2. Course-specific motivational factors, adapted from Dörnyei (1994, p. 280).

<i>Course specific motivational factors</i>	Interest
	Relevance
	Expectations
	Fulfilment

These factors – relevant in the language classroom – are implicitly mentioned among the general objectives and teaching guidelines for foreign language education in the Finnish national curricula from 1994 (p. 73-77). The 2004 curriculum contains similar implicit references (pp. 16-18, 138-143) to the above mentioned motivational factors, but with an emphasis on functionality and accountability.

An emphasis on the course-related motivational aspects mentioned by Dörnyei should result in an EFL classroom providing the learners with a rich exposure-language, where pupils can choose what they need, rather than implementing methods where all learners are supposed to chew and digest exactly the same amount and kind of “food” within the same space of time. Boud (1995, pp. 24-25) also expresses thought along the same line, when he argues that the focus needs to be on influencing students’ learning rather than on other desirable outcomes of particular teaching or assessment practices.

Intake

This term was taken into use by Pit Corder (1981, pp. 9, 26-27), who found that it was more appropriate for reflecting the learner activity often implied in the input process. In van Lier (1996, p. 53) the term intake is used “to refer to language that is responded to by the learner, in other words, processed in various ways”. van Lier’s definition seems to include different processes leading to some kind of an understanding. Gass and Selinker (1994, pp. 302-303), on the other hand, stress the fact that intake is not to be confused with apprehension and understanding, since intake according to their definition is a process of assimilating input and grammar. van Lier’s broader definition of intake is used in this study. As has already been mentioned above, processing needs an investment of cognitive, emotional, and/or physical effort on the part of the learner.

“Investment of effort leads to two kinds of understanding: *apprehension*, a kind of intuitive, un verbalized (or un verbalizable) knowing, and *comprehension*, which includes the more familiar types of expressible and analyzed knowledge” (van Lier, 1996, p. 54; cf. Kolb, 1984). Hence, there seems to be an important distinction between knowing and saying and the two of them ought not to be confused (cf. Schmidt, 1990). Both of them should be regarded as “true” knowledge. van Lier and Schmidt, hence, refer to the two different kinds of

knowledge without ranking them in order of importance, but rather seeing them as complementary. However, for instance Paradis (2000) states that meta-linguistic knowledge defined as explicitly stored knowledge is of only minor importance in second language learning, whereas linguistic competence defined as incidentally acquired and implicitly stored knowledge is the major force in language learning. It is interesting to note that van Lier (2004b, p. 88) states the opposite, i.e. that incidental learning plays a minor part in language learning compared to intentional language learning.

Practice for Proficiency

For something to be retained in memory it needs to be practised. That is the view held by teachers in so-called traditional language classrooms and it is still prevalent in educational theories and empirical research (cf. Harjanne, 2003). It has been rejected by for instance Prabhu (1987), who argues for meaning-focused activity as opposed to both form-focused practice and so called meaningful practice. Van Lier admits that researchers like Prabhu are essentially right “in their rejection of regimented, timetabled practice sessions” (1996, p. 58-59; cf. Brown, 1994, pp. 137-140, 219). However, he claims that it is important to distinguish between practice and malpractice, which vary in extent and kind of control and focus exhibited. When these characteristics vary, so does the aim of the activity. In Harjanne’s (2003, p. 424) definition of the concept ‘practice’ the goal-orientedness, the pupils’ ownership of the process and their expected activity is stressed. Also van Lier pleads for the importance of taking the individual learner into account: “... guidance for practice should be grounded in local judgments based on the learners’ developing interlanguage, and not on long-distance, remote-controlled preparations of sequenced and graded lesson materials” (p. 62). However, one ought to note that the lesson materials and teacher resource books as such might well be used if skilfully applied to the local context and the individual learner by professional teachers (cf. Takala, 1983). What I find van Lier is arguing against is non-reflective implementation of mass-produced materials for practicing. Just as there is no such thing as a universal perfect method for SLA (cf. Spolsky, 1989, p. 1), there is no universal (or even national) perfect material for practice in SLA.

Another important distinction that according to van Lier (1996, p. 63) has an impact on practice is the distinction between sentences and utterances. Sentences are part of the written language. They are most often carefully constructed creative language, which generally is not suitable for automatization. One might for instance consider the clear tendencies towards using a more infrequent vocabulary in written English than in spoken (cf. Corson, 1995). Utterances on the other hand are part of the spoken language and are therefore more useful to practice for automatization, one reason probably being the often highly frequent vocabulary used in spoken utterances. Hence, one can say that van Lier takes the multi-word unit³⁰ as a starting-point for language practice.

Several SLA researchers (cf. De Carrico, 1998) have recognised the importance

³⁰ The term multi-word (lexical) unit is used as an opposite of single words, which means that they might include most varying forms of literal and more figurative units, also including lexical phrases (cf. Mäntylä, 2004, p. 38).

of lexical units and more specifically lexical phrases³¹ in SLA. Generally speaking, the results gathered so far in this field of research imply that phrases do carry weight in both L1 and L2 acquisition, especially for young learners in informal learning environments. Nattinger and De Carrico (1992), however, suggest that prefabricated patterns might be just as important in SLA of adult learners, who already possess the ability to analyse these 'chunks'. Results by De Cock, Granger, Leech and McEnery (1998) support this standpoint in that adult learners seem to use a lot of lexical phrases, but not in the same way or for the same purpose as native speakers.

Even though the results of many research projects seem to indicate that lexical phrases are of importance in language learning (cf. Hakuta, 1974; Wong-Fillmore, 1976; Björklund, 1996), some researchers have claimed that they are static units of minor, or no importance in language acquisition (Krashen & Scarcella, 1978)³².

Utterances most suitable for automatisisation are lexical phrases, especially what Nattinger and De Carrico (1992), in their functional division, refer to as social interactions and necessary topics.

³¹ The term lexical phrase is used to refer to " 'chunks' of language of varying length, conventionalised structures that occur more frequently and have more idiomatically determined meaning than language that is put together each time" (De Carrico, 1998, p. 129). Other terms for these types of chunks are e.g. idiomatic expressions, fixed expressions, formulas, prefabricated or ready-made language (see Mäntylä, 2004, p. 24; Weinert, 1995, p. 182-184).

³² For a comprehensive review on this issue see Weinert (1995).

Table 3. Functional division of lexical phrases, adapted from Nattinger & De Carrico (1992, p. 60-65).

Type	Examples
<i>Social interactions</i>	hello (NAME), how are you (doing), good morning, excuse/pardon me, of course (not), I don't agree
<i>Necessary topics</i>	my name is..., do you speak...?, at/its __ o'clock, how much is it?, I like/enjoy__ (a lot)
<i>Discourse devices</i>	in spite of X, and then, over there, and so on, in other words, not only X but also Y, at least, my point is that X

Nattinger and De Carrico divide lexical phrases into social interactions, necessary topics and discourse devices. The social interactions describe social relations and consist of phrases aiming at conversational maintenance and phrases with a clear conversational purpose. Lexical phrases often asked of language learners and phrases needed in daily life make up the category called necessary topics. Discourse devices, finally, connect the meaning and the structure of a discourse. The connection between this division of lexical phrases and the different acts of speech identified by e.g. Searle (1969) and van Ek (1976) is evident. One can argue that the learning (through spontaneous acquisition or formal training) and employment of lexical phrases may facilitate interaction in numerous different situations where a verbal response is required. It is therefore worthwhile to study the types of phrases acquired in informal settings and used by EFL learners from a functional point of view.

The CEFR does not use the concept 'lexical phrase', but in the section dealing with lexical competence it lists different types of lexical elements. The first type mentioned is labelled *fixed expressions* and is defined as "consisting of several words, which are used and learnt as wholes" (p.110). Fixed expressions are said to include:

* *sentential formulae*, including:

- direct exponents of language functions [...] such as greetings, e.g. *How do you do?*, *Good morning!* etc.
- proverbs, etc. [...]
- relict archaisms, e.g. *Be off with you!*

* *phrasal idioms*, often:

- semantically opaque, frozen metaphors, e.g.:
He kicked the bucket (i.e. he died). [...]

- intensifiers, [...] e.g. *white as snow* [...]
 - * *fixed frames*, learnt and used as unanalysed wholes, into which words or phrases are inserted to form meaningful sentences, e.g.: ‘*Please may I have...*’.
 - * other fixed phrases, such as:
 - phrasal verbs, e.g. *to put up with, to make do (with)*;
 - compound prepositions, e.g. *in front of*.
 - * fixed collocations, consisting of words regularly used together, e.g. *to make a speech/mistake*
- (CEFR, 2001, pp.110-111)

In addition to these fixed multi-word lexical elements the CEFR mentions single word forms. In other words, all multi-word lexical units are to be regarded as fixed expressions, learned and used as wholes. Such a distinction might be too crude for some linguistic scientific purposes (cf. Mäntylä, 2004, p. 35-38), but it might prove a useful starting-point for a teacher of foreign languages. However, it is important also for language teaching professionals to realise the complexity of the learning processes related to lexis. I find it highly unlikely that all multi-word units are learned as unanalysed chunks or wholes, whereas it is much more probable that a vast majority of them are, in fact, later on used as chunks. This means that the language professional needs to be open for and cater for the possibility that multi-word units can be acquired both as unanalysed chunks and analysed bits of a new whole. To connect to van Lier’s initial argument, multi-word units in the form of both sentences and utterances are reasonable starting-points for practicing a foreign language. This argument is perhaps even more valid for grammar, since such structures rarely can be practiced just by using single word items.

So far we have been concerned with some areas for language practice. Now we shall briefly discuss the notion of language proficiency. It is very easy to limit the notion language proficiency only to observable production by learners. Traditionally this was often limited to proof of written skills. Even today, written proficiency is emphasised in national tests in many countries, at least partly because of the time and resource consuming procedures needed for testing oral proficiency. Language teachers usually take four different areas into account, namely: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Two of these are so-called receptive skills and two productive, but the learners’ language proficiency needs to be activated regardless of which type we refer to. However, productive skills tend to get more attention and perhaps even be higher valued than receptive ones. However, language proficiency includes a wide range of abilities. As was mentioned in passing above, not only what is verbalised is knowledge. The CEFR lists a wide range of areas all related to a holistic language competence. These are (CEFR, 2001, pp. 101-130):

General competences

Declarative knowledge

Knowledge of the world
Sociocultural knowledge
Intercultural awareness

Skills and know-how

Practical skills and know-how
Intercultural skills and know-how

'Existential' competence

Ability to learn

Lang. and comm. awareness
General phonetic aw. and skills
Study skills
Heuristic skills

Communicative competences

Linguistic competences

Lexical competence
Grammatical competence
Semantic competence
Phonological competence
Orthographic competence
Orthoepic competence

Sociolinguistic competence

Linguistic markers of social relation
Politeness conventions
Expressions of folk wisdom
Register differences
Dialect and accent

Pragmatic competences

Discourse competence
Functional competence

The list above is included to illustrate the wide range of abilities/skills/competences involved in the umbrella concept overall language proficiency. It is revealing to see to what a large extent language competence is in fact a result of so called general competences, that is competences that every learner/person needs in order to manage communication. Language competence is hence not something developed only in the foreign language classroom, but the responsibility lies also on other educators/actors. The list above also suggests that pupils do not enter the FL classroom as empty sheets in terms of language competence. One of the intentions with the CEFR is to make it possible for learners to recognise what they already possess and to build on there it is needed in relation to their needs, whether these needs are related to inclusion in a particular society or partial competences in a language needed professionally.

Social interaction

The perceptive reader has, of course, noticed that social interaction named as such or described in other ways figures throughout the process of language learning outlined above. Since it is claimed that social interaction is what drives the process of language learning it is useful to present what van Lier means with the term, which is also the definition used throughout this thesis. He puts it like this:

When I said that social interaction is the 'engine' that 'drives' the learning proc-

ess, I meant that the powers (or conditions) of learning – awareness (and attention), investment, practice, and commitment – are engaged, sustained, and augmented by learners’ work of interacting with others, and this includes interacting (using language) with the world in general through reading, thinking about worldly things, and so on. (van Lier, 1996, p. 147)

Leo van Lier points out that social interaction constitutes not only face-to-face encounters, but also many other “word-world encounters” (p. 147) as he puts it. Hence, social interaction can be said to take place when a human being by the use of language interacts with other beings or basically “everything, real or imagined, that links self and world” (p. 147). As a natural result of this argumentation he also claims that the quality of social interaction lies in the things it “points to” (p. 147). Here the connection to the previously mentioned principle of relation is obvious (see van Lier, 2004b, or Section 3.2).

3.5 Summary

The view of learning to emerge is a fairly complex one, where several different factors and actors interrelate and affect one another. From the above presentation it is obvious that there are no clear borderlines between the world, the learning space and the main actors (learner and teacher), but rather a complex interplay. The major different categories of exposure from the outside world can be summarised in three different categories: Exposure-language, Cultural milieu, and Values (including educational rationale and attitudes).

Since it is argued that social interaction is the driving force of learning, the actual learning space, i.e. the immediate environment where interaction takes place, can be seen as an important layer between the learner and the outside world. Learning is considered to take place within both formal and informal contexts in and outside a classroom. Hence, it is assumed that social interaction is a prerequisite for learning, and that what has been learned is a result of speaking, thinking and/or writing, i.e. methods of interaction at the same time as they are forces of mental processing (cf. Cummins, 2000). The processes studied by researchers within general education and SLA are also essentially the same, even though different labels are sometimes attached to the processes and phenomena within the different domains of research.

For a learner in present day Western society the ultimate aim of learning (whether conscious or not) can be claimed to be development of the self, whereas the corresponding aim for teachers resembles this but is limited to the professional self. Interaction is claimed to be at the core of learning according to the theorists discussed above. Interaction is seen as bi-directed/mutual relationship, which is why the social context of learning is of crucial importance. For the necessary interaction to take place there has to be an authentic need for interaction. For such a need to arise in the first place there has to be someone or something to relate to. For sociocultural/development-centred learning to take place the learner (refers to both teacher and learner in this case) needs to possess the ability to act and relate. Also other individual differences (such as intelligence, language aptitude, attitudes/motivation, situational anxiety) are believed to be of importance, especially as far as language learning is concerned.

Also in this respect it is important to note that attitudes are not a result of individual differences only, but very much a result of interaction with (actors in) the immediate physical or virtual environment. Finally different learning outcomes (in terms of knowledge, attitudes, skills) are expected to become part of the individual learner and have an impact on further learning processes and the ways in which the learner/learning teacher interacts with and affects other actors in the environment.

In the following chapter the spotlight is turned to the learner. Some learner characteristics and relevant features of the societal context are discussed.

4 Learner perspectives

The view of learning outlined above presupposes that it is acknowledged that learning has an intrapersonal side as well as an interpersonal one. I thus subscribe to the claim by Vygotsky (e.g. 1980) and others that social interaction is needed in order for learning and development to take place, which, in turn, means that learning is focused around an active learner interacting with the outside world. Even though this is taken for granted in the model of language learning presented by van Lier, the learner is not really explicitly visible in that model. For the purpose of this study it is useful to place both the learner and the teacher visibly in the social context of learning, which means that some aspects of the processes of learning will fall into the background.

This chapter focuses on the language learner, her/his intrapersonal characteristics and the context surrounding her/him. I wish to use the label intrapersonal characteristics, since they are internalised in the learner, even though they (to the extent they are not inherent) might have been learned in prior interaction with the outside world.

In this chapter on the learner perspective the actual processes of learning discussed in Chapter 3 fall into the background. There are three major reasons for that:

- a) In this study the actual language learning process is not examined, but the focus is rather on the conditions for learning English as a SL/FL.
- b) The processes active in language learning may occur simultaneously, or partly simultaneously and all of them are more or less driven by social interaction, which is why a careful distinction between the different processes or stages is not necessary for my purpose. Such a detailed distinction would make it necessary to more carefully describe the relation in which each stage stands to the outside world, which would be to move far beyond the scope of this research project.
- c) Young learners generally do not possess the necessary meta-cognitive vocabulary needed to describe their own processes of learning. This does not mean that they should not be made aware of how they learn in the sense that they pay attention to the learning process and their preferred strategies of learning.

Concerning the layer called the outside world three types of exposure will be discussed, namely exposure-language, attitudes and sociocultural exposure. I further recognise two kinds of exposure-language. The distinction is based on the fact that classroom-exposure tends to differ from naturalistic input (Forsman, 2004; Sjöholm, 2004c). Corson's (1995) analysis of the English lexicon divides the words in the English language into two different categories. There are words of Anglo-Saxon origin, which native children learn early and there are Graeco-Latin words, which native children encounter through written text and in school settings. The Anglo-Saxon words are often high-frequency words, whereas Graeco-Latin words are usually among the low-frequency

words. Cummins (2000) also relies on this distinction when he proposes a division between the conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency, as a development of the concepts ‘basic interpersonal communicative skills’ (BICS) and ‘cognitive academic language proficiency’ (CALP) he coined in 1979.

According to Corson these two different kinds of vocabulary can easily be related to the spoken and written media respectively: “For example, even children’s books contained 50 % more rare words than either adult prime-time television or conversations of university graduates” (Corson, 1997, p. 677). In several studies (cf. Forsman, 2004; Shepherd, 2000) the lower and upper secondary EFL classroom in Finland has been shown to be very much centred on the written medium. Sometimes the vocabulary stressed by the EFL teacher is perceived as so different from the English language the pupils are exposed to outside the language classroom that the pupils develop a dichotomised view of the English language: The proper, written, not very useful language of the EFL classroom versus the useful, conversational variety of the outside world (Forsman, 2004). Often this dichotomy is referred to as a distinction between British and American English by the pupils. However, one could claim that this difference between the traditional vocabulary of the EFL classroom and the English language encountered in the outside world concerns both linguistic aspects and choices of topics.

Classroom language is not directly studied here, since the aim is to study conditions for ELT, but the teachers’ choices of classroom vocabulary, activities and topics are relevant in relation to pupils’ initial familiarity with English vocabulary. Teachers’ choices are also dependent on the availability of topics and vocabulary in different teaching materials.

Van Lier’s model of growth of proficiency is a model of language learning, but as we have seen above the elements mentioned by him are also valid elements in other processes of learning. This has bearing on the use of the concept ‘exposure’. The kinds of exposure referred to here are all kinds of exposure related to the target language and target language cultures available in the outside world. These might affect pupils’ more informal acquisition of the FL as well as the formal teaching and learning of it. Other kinds of exposure mentioned by van Lier (but not called exposure in his model) are values and aspirations of different groups in society and cultural behaviours.

Among the aspects relating more explicitly to the classroom situation van Lier mentions factors such as making things interesting and comprehensible, expressing high expectations, promoting intrinsic motivation, and different types of practice. He does not include them in the concept exposure, and I do not think it would be useful to do so either, since these factors seem to be directly relevant to the learning environment. However, I would like to stress the fact that they need not and cannot be related to the classroom situation only, since they constitute important elements of any successful learning process. In a classroom environment much of the responsibility for fulfilling these criteria seems to lie with the teacher, whereas the full responsibility lies with the individual learner in a context of informal situations.

As is evident in the description above, exposure is a very wide concept, which

includes linguistic elements, as well as attitudes and factual information about target language communities. Also the learner and the learning environment are extremely complex concepts. To be able to study the conditions for English language education in the Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland, these concepts have to be broken down into more easily observable units. Some of these aspects will be further described in the following sections. I will start with a brief discussion of the intrapersonal learner characteristics mentioned above. These are not explicitly studied in this project, but they are of relevance to the level of prior knowledge, attitudes and communicative ability of the pupils. For the sake of clarity, the section concerning culture and realia knowledge begins with a very brief overview of the concept 'culture'. The main focus in this chapter is on the availability, quality and regional differences in exposure. These are presented through results in previous empirical studies, which means that they at the same time provide evidence of observable learning outcomes.

4.1 Learner characteristics

The relevant characteristics discussed in this section are the learner's analytical abilities, language aptitude, engagement and situational anxiety. These were some of the intrapersonal characteristics mentioned as critical for the SL learning process by language theorists such as Gardner (1985) and van Lier (1996).

Analytical ability is again one of those terms to which it is not very easy to give a narrow definition. However, what I refer to with this term is the intellectual and meta-cognitive ability of the learner. Several language researchers have been able to produce evidence of advantages in learning a SL/FL for the learners who have scored high on different intelligence tests. The language aspects where a high intelligence has proved to be of importance are mainly more abstract features of language (e.g. grammar) and other cognitive functions related to what a student knows "about" language. Concerning purely communicative aspects of the language competence no such clear advantages have been presented. (Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

These findings also coincide with the social-constructivist theories of learning presented above, where reflection is considered an important element of gaining fully integrated knowledge. However, it is important to recognise that e.g. Gardner in his model of SL learning separates what he calls intelligence from language aptitude. One can assume that, just as there are individual differences related to different measurements of intelligence, there are differences in individuals' receptivity or sensitivity to other aspects of the language competence (such as pronunciation, sociocultural sensitivity). These aspects do not have to be directly related to the intellectual capacity of the learner.

In the concept 'engagement' factors such as receptivity (note the connection to language aptitude above), curiosity, intrinsic motivation and mental networking (i.e. linking new information to previously internalised knowledge) are included (see previous chapter on van Lier's model of learning). There seems to be a general agreement among language learning researchers that motivation (often defined in different ways by different researchers, but it is here used in a broad

sense, including both intrinsic and external motives) is one of the main driving forces in SL/FL learning. However, the interdependence between language learning and motivation seems to be fairly complex, since motivation is a condition for learning, as well as an outcome that feeds back into the learning process.

If this very complex phenomenon of motivation (cf. van Lier, 1996, p. 98) is one of the major factors affecting the success in language learning, it is striking to note that many practitioners in the field of primary EFL education in Finland feel that English is a subject which “motivates itself” and that pupils think English is “fun” simply because it is a world language. The questions arise whether this is really the primary motive of the pupils for learning English and if this motive is strong enough for encouraging pupils to continuous learning efforts. Van Lier (1996, p. 115) among others warns for situations where external motives gradually kill the intrinsic ones. This happens if external motives control the learning activities, rather than support or reinforce them.

As mentioned, also Dörnyei (1994) stresses the importance of a balance between intrinsic and instrumental motivation. His course-specific motives are also to be found in the national curricular framework of 1994. The curriculum (pp. 73-77) states that pupils are to learn age-appropriate vocabulary in order to manage in every-day situations (relevance), pupils are to develop an interest for the foreign languages and cultures, that they experience their language studies as meaningful and develop an unprejudiced attitude towards target language representatives (interest). Furthermore, it is mentioned that pupils should learn to evaluate their own work, take responsibility for and define their own objectives of learning (expectations) and finally that pupils’ differences ought to be taken into consideration, that pupils are involved in choices regarding methods and teaching materials, and that they are to get guidance in developing different learner strategies and making use of their knowledge (fulfilment). This kind of an approach should, in my opinion, also include taking pupils’ previous language experiences and competences into account. Krumm (2004, pp. 70-71) points out that no child who has learnt a SL/FL is a true beginner, when starting out to learn a second SL/FL, since they already have developed language awareness. This is a competence that should be recognised in the FL classroom. In the Finland-Swedish context it should be noted that English is not completely unfamiliar for pupils with Swedish as L1, since these two languages are closely related (e.g. Ringbom, 2007). Normally children in the Swedish-medium school have developed some kind of language awareness by the time they commence with EFL, irrespective of ethnic and linguistic background. When they start to learn English they have already begun studying at least one SL (usually Finnish) or have entered school with an L1, which is not the language of the school (e.g. Finnish, English, Somali, Russian, Vietnamese).

In the national framework curriculum from 1994 pupils previous target language knowledge and familiarity with the target language culture is mentioned as a phenomenon to take into account when planning FL teaching only for Sami³³ as a FL (p. 79). The text concerning the starting-points of teaching other FLs

³³ Referred to as the Lappish language in the English translation of the 1994 curriculum.

mention individual learner characteristics and differences, but not explicitly their possible familiarity with the target language and/or culture. In the national core curriculum of 2004 working approaches are dealt with in a separate chapter (pp. 16-18) relating to teaching in general. Within this thoughts regarding the environmental setting of learning and learner participation are expressed. It is mentioned that “the pupils’ various learning styles and backgrounds [...] must receive consideration” (p. 18), but nothing is explicitly mentioned concerning the initial knowledge and skills of the pupils. Hence, one can note a distinct move towards increased focus on individualisation and active participation, but the guidelines do not explicitly encourage a holistic view of the pupil in terms of taking their initial knowledge, skills and attitudes into account.

That also means that traditional education, in terms of a school where everybody is required to study and learn approximately the same thing at the same time, is not effective education of the future (for discussion see Introduction). Also, as we have seen in the theoretical frameworks presented above motivation is not the only prerequisite for learning and in some situations the highest possible motivation does not lead to the optimal learning outcomes (Peltonen & Ruohotie, 1992). This in turn seems to be related to the individual level of situational anxiety (see e.g. Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Gardner (1988) includes attitudes in his motivational aspect in the characteristics of the individual learner. It is mainly the attitudes of the pupils that will represent the motivational aspects in this study. Culturally related attitudes, stereotypes, and sociocultural exposure will be dealt with later on in this chapter, but first we will have a look at the exposure to English pupils in Finland are subjected to.

4.2 Availability of exposure-language outside school in the Finnish context

Julkunen (1998a) reports on to what extent and by which means 5th grade pupils in Finnish-medium schools in Finland (i.e. pupils that have just started their English classes) feel they are exposed to written and spoken English outside school, and by which means they have learned about a target-language community (Great Britain/USA) and its culture. Julkunen himself separates the ones who claim they have received little or no exposure through a certain medium from those who feel they have received a lot or quite a lot of English exposure-language through that particular medium. In my opinion the critical difference ought to lie between the ones who have received no English exposure and the ones who have been exposed – that is are aware of being exposed – to at least a little English through a certain medium. Therefore, the results presented below are based on Julkunen’s study, but do not follow his distinction.

The most commonly reported sources of *spoken English* in Julkunen’s study (1998a) were TV/radio/computer (33,3 %), abroad (29,2 %), from tourists/in town (27,1 %), and at home (16,7 %). Some of the respondents also stated that they had heard English among their friends (8,3 %) and in an English-speaking country (4,2 %). It is interesting to note the great difference between ‘abroad’ and ‘English-speaking country’, which might be a bit surprising considering the possible overlap. It is probably an indication of the fact that Finnish-speaking

people tend to resort to English also when travelling in e.g. the Nordic countries. Also, as will be seen in the results of my own study the definition of an English-speaking country is not always easy to make for a pupil in 4th or 5th grade.

Considering exposure to *written English* outside school studied by Julkunen (1998a) books/newspapers (29,2 %), in town/ads (27,1 %) and TV were the most frequently mentioned by the respondents. Some of them also stated that they had been exposed to written English at home (12,5 %), abroad (10,4 %), among friends (2,1 %), or through some other unspecified medium (6,3 %). Surprisingly, none of the respondents mentioned computers as a source of exposure to written English. On the whole these results are not surprising, in the sense that they more or less confirm the views held by teachers and researchers in this field. There is, however, reason to be cautious concerning the distinction between written and spoken exposure. The fact that the computer was mentioned as a major source of exposure to oral language only and TV as a source of both written and oral exposure could indicate that the respondents have not read the questions carefully enough to fully understand them. But it is, of course, not impossible that the respondents have been exposed to computer programmes with spoken English and TV programmes with English subtitles to a greater extent than anticipated.

4.3 Quality of exposure-language

As mentioned, factors which influence the quality of exposure-language are above all linguistic, interactional, and sociocultural (Alanen, 2000, p.107). How exposure-language is processed, thus, depends on characteristics of the exposure-language, characteristics of the learner, and characteristics of the setting in which the learner encounters the exposure-language (van Lier, 1996, p. 43).

Van Lier considers interaction a necessary condition for learning. One of the major determinants of the quality of exposure-language is hence to what extent the exposure enhances interaction. Conversation can be regarded as an ideal form of exposure (and at the same time interaction), since it is a dynamic situation, in which authentic motives and changing needs lead to exchange of meaning and ultimately to development (see van Lier, 1996; Vygotsky, 1986; Corder, 1981, p. 49; Heritage & Atkinson, 1984, pp. 1, 12-13). According to van Lier (1996, p. 169) “ the essential dynamism of conversation ... depends on various kinds of contingency that operate in the interaction”. He poses the hypothesis that the two key features of this concept are dependency and uncertainty and that learning takes place in the balanced interplay between them.

Conversation, or any language use which plays with contingencies (storytelling for example), can therefore be expected to be the most stimulating environment for learning. (p. 171)

Conversation or face-to-face interaction ideally consists of contextual clues, indefinite possibilities for modification and clarification, and above all of a genuine motive for interacting and a need for trying to understand one another. On the other hand, since conversations are by character unplanned and

unplannable (even though they may consist of some planned elements, e.g. reaching an agreement) they demand a considerable sensitivity concerning all clues, the partner and his/her intensions, in order to make conversation successful. This might, for instance, become a problem when communicating with people from a different culture.

In the theories of naturalistic language learning modified input, modified interaction, contextual information and previous knowledge are considered to be essential for successful language acquisition (Jylhä-Laide & Karreinen, 1993, p. 90). Internationally renowned researchers in this field such as Corson (1995, e.g. pp. 52, 194) and Cummins (2000, pp.79-80) mention extensive reading, interaction around and about the read texts ('talk about text'; cf. van Lier's notion of being 'busy with' below) and writing as important factors for developing L1/L2 language proficiency. It ought to be noted that these researchers stress the development of cognitive academic language proficiency. On the basis of these theories TV and video would not be regarded as effective sources of exposure, since it is claimed that these media (among others) do not make interaction possible, do not contain modified input and leave the listener with too little time to process input. Television has, hence, been seen as useful only as a means of maintaining language skills already acquired.

However, in their case study on a 10-year-old Finnish girl, who had acquired English by watching video-taped cartoons, Jylhä-Laide and Karreinen (1993) came to the conclusion that video can be seen as a powerful source of exposure-language, at least for an independent learner. According to them, video contrary to television contains a certain element of feed-back or interaction, in the sense that it provides the learner with the opportunity to repeat the whole programme, or sequences of it. They also state that the language of cartoons is modified and that it is fairly similar to care-taker talk as far as speech-rate, mean length of utterances, immediate references, number of complete sentences and non-fluent utterances are concerned. Their learner Laura had reached an almost native-like oral/aural proficiency in English just through extensive watching of cartoons on video, which does not support the claim that video would be useful for maintenance only. One can of course question to what extent the girl's language development also prepared her for cognitively demanding tasks.

According to van Lier interaction is equal to "being 'busy with' the language in one's dealings with the world" (p.147), by thinking, talking and/or writing about what has been seen, heard, read. In my opinion that definition makes it possible to include TV in the possible list of sources of exposure. It is possible that many kinds of TV programmes consist of a suitable balance of what is known and what is new for many learners (cf. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development). The topics and frameworks of TV programmes are often familiar to the listener/viewer. Especially TV-series often deal with everyday problems familiar and current to the audience they are intended for. Other advantages with both TV and video, which might contribute to the quality of exposure, are the often used techniques to catch and maintain viewers attention (e.g. vocalisations, rapid character action, visual special effects, child dialogue) (Calvert et. al., 1982, p. 605) and the availability of contextual clues (e.g. the pictures, movement, subtitles). As mentioned, Jylhä-Laide & Karreinen (1993) talk about simple sentence structure, low speech rate and repetition of cartoons as advantages in

language learning. In my opinion some TV-series intended for young people and adults (e.g. *The Bold and the Beautiful*) also contain these elements to a certain degree.

Music and radio do not provide the learner with the opportunity to draw on contextual clues to any greater extent (except for music videos, which can be referred to as TV). Music, however, provides the listener with the opportunity of repetition and sometimes also the possibility to see the text in writing, which radio does not. Radio may be considered of more limited use to beginning SL learners, but both radio and music may, of course, provide the same opportunity for engagement as TV and video.

Books and newspapers are both written media, which demand literacy, which means that they are of limited use to non-literate second language learners. Written texts have often been considered more complicated exposure-language per se, which is a view recently criticised by e.g. Hulstijn (2000). In my opinion it is more a question of what kinds of text that are suitable as exposure-language and to what kinds of learning objectives. Since oral communication skills have been heavily stressed in SL learning during the last twenty years written language has come into perhaps undeserved disrepute. Picture books most often contain contextual clues in the form of clarifying pictures and the large text fonts contribute to readability. Fairy tales and other stories generally have a clear structure and deal with topics familiar to both children and adults and thus understanding is enhanced (Bettelheim, 1982; Edström, 1980). Shanahan (1997, p. 168) points out that “[l]iterature is one of the forms of language that most calculatingly plays upon affect as an inducement to communication”, which would mean that at least some kinds of literature are likely to engage the SL learner to think, talk and write about what has been read, and thus to learn it. However, we need to remember that the debate about the suitability of different kinds of literature for SL learning is by no means resolved among language researchers. Arguments are presented for the use of modified literature (e.g. Nation, 2001) as well as for the use of authentic literature (e.g. Williams, 1998). It is also evident that the kind of vocabulary learners are exposed to through literature is fairly different from the one most frequently used in oral media or face-to-face communication (cf. Corson, 1997). Ads and newspapers sometimes provide contextual clues, but the link between the picture and the text is not always of clarifying character. In newspaper texts as well as in ads more specific vocabulary and complicated or fragmentary structures sometimes make the message more obscure and too difficult for beginning SL learners.

As for computers, the variation of type of exposure is vast, which makes it difficult to judge the quality of the exposure-language encountered through that medium. Multi-medial computer games resemble TV but with an additional directly interactive character, which ought to be beneficial for learners. Programmes that are built up on a text+picture/video-structure (e.g. Encarta) are approximately like picture books. E-mail and virtual chat demand literacy and generally do not contain immediate contextual clues (even though it is possible to attach files containing such information), which makes it a demanding source of information for beginning learners. On the other hand it also encourages authentic interaction (communication) with real counterparts. The infinite number of English text sources available on the Internet are probably of fairly

limited use for young EFL learners, since the language in these texts tends to be fairly complicated and the accompanying pictures do not always support understanding. Hence, it is not possible to define computers as a single kind of medium, but as a tool, providing access to many different sources of exposure-language.

It does not seem credible to decide whether a medium delivers useful language exposure solely on the basis of whether the language is modified or authentic, written or oral/aural, repeated or not. All of these characteristics of the exposure-language need to be related to the personalities and learning strategies of the individual learners, as well as to the attitudes and culture of the learning environment and the outside world.

4.4 Regional differences

A large-scale survey by Huttunen and Kukkonen (1995; cf. Tuokko, 2000, pp. 71-74) measuring the English skills in Finnish-speaking primary schools indicated clear differences in the test results for variables such as 'number of inhabitants in the community' and 'school size'. Urban pupils from large schools generally scored better in the tests. In Forsman's study (2000; 2004) on the relative popularity of American and British vocabulary among lower secondary school students, urban students reported a greater degree of English exposure outside school than the rural students. This difference in the amount of exposure also resulted in differences on Forsman's vocabulary task. The urban students knew the vocabulary better and also showed a greater preference for American words.

In a study made by Pitkänen (1991), testing Finnish-speaking pupils' knowledge of English vocabulary before beginning their studies in the subject, the results were not as clear. In this study rural primary-school pupils achieved better results than urban ones in the more difficult test, whereas the situation was the opposite in the easier test. However, the lowest mean score per school was found in a small rural school and the highest in an urban school. Nor was the influence of media as clear, even though the tendency basically is consistent with the results presented by Forsman. This is probably more due to the time that has passed between the two tests than due to differences in availability of media between Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking areas in Finland. In a recent summary of national results for A-level English for pupils in grade 9 during the 1990s, Tuokko (2007, pp. 49-51) draws the conclusion that the regional differences (where urban pupils from the south-west region outperform rural pupils from the north-east region) have not decreased.

The differences noted by Forsman are, according to her, primarily due to differences in the use of/exposure to different English speaking media. These differences might occur because of either differences in the availability of media or differences in culture and values between different regions. In the study made by Huttunen and Kukkonen (1995) some results indicate that there might be regional cultural differences that have an impact on FL learning. If that is the case the problem becomes more complex and hard to investigate than previously has been thought. This cultural aspect will be further dealt with from the

teacher's perspective in Section 5.2.7. Below the notions 'attitude' and 'stereotype' will be discussed before the concept 'culture' and its relevance from a learner perspective are dealt with.

4.5 Attitudes

Attitudes are believed to play an important part in the thinking and behaviour of human beings (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 174). However, not much was explicitly said about the importance of attitudes in language learning in the previous chapter on second language learning, but the observant reader may have noticed that all the processes presented are dependent to some extent on attitudes. Attitudes provide an intriguing, but complex field of study, which cannot be thoroughly scrutinised here. This brief overview is intended to give an outline of the main issues influencing the choice to include pupils' attitudes as an element in this study. First some relevant continua are presented. Then attitude both to language and to representatives of linguistic and/or cultural communities will be discussed and what consequences linguistic attitudes may have on language education.

The first continuum of importance is related to the individual and the community. All societies are based on value assumptions, resulting in attitudes widely accepted and reinforced in and by society. This means that the way language is used often reflects these attitudes and values (Wellros, 1998, pp. 27-31). Since people are immersed in these attitudes at a very early age they are often not aware of them, but rather accept them as universal norms of behaviour until they are challenged by other culturally specific attitudes (Lundberg, May 2006; cf. Lundberg, 1991, pp. 175-179; Wellros, 1998). However, these socially "anchored" attitudes are also challenged and changed for some individuals through experiences of different kinds. When this happens individual attitudes, not necessarily shared with the surrounding community, are created. A child growing up in a community where dogs are referred to as "man's best friend", will probably not share that attitude if attacked by a dog. It is also important to note that attitudes along the whole continuum are subject to continuous change, even though individual attitudes occasionally might be more rapidly changeable (as in the example above) than societal attitudes.

This argument leads to the conclusion that the classic dichotomy of positive-negative attitudes - which will also be used further down in this presentation - provides us with a useful but oversimplified view of the complex phenomenon. Not all attitudes can be defined as either positive or negative. At a certain point in time, within a specific context several attitudes held by individuals could be classified as more or less neutral. However, we do know that attitudes change over time and from community to community, and so will definitions of what constitutes favourable or less favourable attitudes. The very labels 'positive' and 'negative' reflect societal values and expected attitudes. Hence, also the positive-negative definition should be regarded within a context specific continuum.

It is also widely believed that attitudes are to be regarded as both predispositions and outcomes. Rather than a continuum this should perhaps be described as a cycle where an initial positive attitude furthers positive attitudes towards

language learning. Unfortunately, this also means that negative attitudes left unchallenged often foster increasingly negative attitudes towards language learning and prejudices against target language (TL) representatives. These more or less desired starting-points and outcomes of language learning will be discussed below.

4.5.1 Attitudes to languages

Some people are more successful in learning languages than others. This is probably partly due to the kind of attitudes they are influenced by. Such language attitudes can be discussed in terms of focus. Below some of the possible foci for attitudes of SL/FL learners mentioned by Baker and Prys Jones (1998, p. 174-178) are discussed, namely: instrumental-integrative focus³⁴, specific language focus, focus on the language learning process (strategies and activities).

In SL learning attitudes are often defined in terms of integrative versus instrumental. Gardner and Lambert (1972, p. 15; cf. Baker and Prys Jones, 1998) point towards exploring this distinction as a continuum, since a combination of the two often seems to affect the processes of language learning. The impact of these different attitudes seems to change over time. Learners with a high level of integrative language attitude want to learn about, identify with and perhaps even become a part of the TL community, whereas learners with a low integrative language attitude might reject TL culture and people. Hence, the likelihood of success in language learning increases with a higher level of integrative language attitude, especially over a longer period of time, since this attitude provides stamina to persist in the learning efforts. When a learner wants to learn a SL/FL for purely pragmatic reasons (e.g. to pass exams, get better job) it is called instrumental language attitude. In combination with the “right” societal attitudes the instrumental attitude towards learning languages might be very powerful, whereas the integrative attitude is not as strongly related to the attitudes of the surrounding community.

Baker and Prys Jones (1998) include three different perspectives in what I have chosen to call the ‘specific language focus’. They mention attitude towards learning SL, attitudes towards a particular language and attitude towards language variation, dialects and speech style. According to them attitudes towards learning a SL “tend to be less favourable” in the United States and England than in many other parts of the world where multilingualism is more common and even seen as a valuable resource. This difference in attitudes towards learning other languages than one’s L1 is most certainly related to the notion of need. This notion refers to what kind of skills learners feel are useful. This strong sense of being able to put acquired skills into use is illustrated in a Swedish study (Jonsson, 2002, p. 162) where more than 80 % of the participating students reported being able to read an English newspaper as one of

³⁴ These two types of language learning motivation were identified by Gardner (see Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985). Gardner has gathered data in a Canadian context only. Consequently his views have been criticised for being locally applicable rather than globally relevant (Gass & Selinker, 1994, pp. 252-254). However, the concepts as conceptual tools rather than Gardner’s priorities are of interest in this study.

the necessary skills to possess at the age of 16, while only 25 % thought being able to name two of Shakespeare's plays would be an important skill to possess. Hatch and Brown (1995, pp. 373-374) point out that interest in a particular field and/or felt need to use certain words might be of crucial importance in learning new words in a SL/FL. This attitude towards learning SL words is probably closely related to the instrumental attitudes mentioned above. However, we should not forget the possible connection to a feeling of one's identity being threatened by the introduction of a SL (Krumm, 2004, p. 64). Krumm (p. 65) argues for an educational context where pupils' mother tongues are recognised and learning of other supplementary languages is introduced as an opportunity for e.g. new discoveries and friendships. He also points out the fact that language education tends not to make use of the multilingual identities already possessed by many learners, but rather regard these other languages as a disturbing influence.

The attitude mentioned above is closely related to the language attitude towards a particular minority or majority language. During the last decade for instance Sjöholm (2000) has studied learners' attitudes towards different languages within the Finland-Swedish context. It has been found that speakers of Finnish (majority language) have a less favourable attitude towards learning and using Swedish (national minority language) than English (international language) (Sjöholm, 2000, pp. 130-134). The attitude towards languages that are internationally useful and carriers of global youth culture are often favourable. On the other hand attitudes towards specific majority/international languages might also be negative since they are perceived of as threats to e.g. minority language communities (cf. Section 2.1). Reagan (2002, p. 153, in Kramsch, 2004, p. 39) stresses this function of foreign language education to either reinforce negative attitudes and prejudices or support students' understanding of the social roles of language in society.

Furthermore, language attitudes are not limited only to attitudes towards different languages, but they also include attitudes towards different varieties of a language, such as accents, dialects and speech style. Just as people hold different attitudes towards representatives of different languages, they tend to associate speakers of different language varieties within the same language with certain characteristics (i.e. hold different attitudes towards them). (cf. Hatch & Brown, 1994, pp. 370-371; Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 315; Tannen, 2006, p. 362, Forsman, 2006, e.g. pp. 116-120)

Finally there are also different attitudes associated with the situation of teaching and learning a SL/FL. Depending on the learning strategies preferred by the individual learner, their attitude towards the methods used in the language classroom will differ. Rather than imposing set types of tasks on them it might be worth studying learners' attitudes towards different activities to enhance their chances of success in language learning³⁵.

To improve unfavourable language attitudes Baker and Prys Jones (1998, pp. 178-180) mention the potential importance of rewards, boosting the self-esteem,

³⁵ Cf. the results presented by Howard Gardner on multiple intelligences and the applications suggested for the FL classroom by Berman (1998) and Palmberg (2003).

imitation of others, pleasant contexts and community influence. Especially for young children rewards, such as eye contact and praise when the SL is used are believed to be of importance, whereas the effects of such rewards are not believed to have the same effect on adolescents. It is also believed that “the psychological notion of self-concept, the picture we hold of ourself, may be a powerful governor of attitude change” (p. 178). Especially when young people strive to conform with the peer group it might become an important factor in attitudinal change.

One should not underestimate the role of role models either. Especially young learners often imitate both the general conduct and expressed attitudes of significant others. This means that it becomes important to provide these learners with positive role models and perhaps even to make public icons aware of their responsibility as models for the young generation. Furthermore it is important for learners to encounter the TL in several pleasant contexts outside school. Baker and Prys Jones (1998) write from the perspective of bilingual education and the problems encountered in many minority language contexts, but in my opinion these arguments are just as relevant for any SL context. Often positive attitudes towards the TL may be maintained or even encouraged if the TL is encountered and used in contexts such as popular music, video and the Internet³⁶.

Other kinds of community influence for attitude change are also mentioned, but for this purpose only the most relevant will be touched upon. First of all change has to be felt as voluntary. Imposing change in an authoritarian way is not likely to lead to a positive change in attitudes (cf. Hedin, 1995, pp. 27-28). Regardless of what some researchers may think of the role of English or any other majority language, a “bunker mentality” is not likely to succeed in the “global village” of our 21st century. Positive marketing strategies building on friendship and co-existence are more likely to result in positive attitude change than isolation and protectionism. Furthermore change is likely to occur when ample social, economic, political and cultural means of supporting the language in question are available. In many cases this certainly seems to be the case in relation to the English language, whereas it seems to be a more or less utopian dream with regard to many minority languages around the world.

4.5.2. Attitudes to TL culture and people

The enhancement of pupils’ sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness and respect for others is not quickly achieved or reached with just a small dose every now and then. Martin and Nakayama (2000, p. 128) as well as Kaikkonen (1994, p. 87) point out that stereotypes and attitudes are often unconscious and very difficult to change. The first step in this process is to make pupils aware of how common it really is that human beings think in terms of stereotypes and how crude and sometimes even untrue these generalisations might be. The individual needs to be confronted with information contradicting the stereotype. For a change to take place this new information needs to become assimilated. This process of maturation takes time, especially if the stereotypes and attitudes

³⁶ Cf. Andersson (2002, p. 74).

challenged have been acquired in early childhood.

In connection with the socioculturally related areas mentioned in the CEFR (2001, p. 102) the importance of developing these areas through education is stressed, since they often lie outside the range of experiences the pupils might have or then their knowledge in this field might be distorted by stereotypical ideas. In this study the concept stereotype is simply defined as the positive, neutral or negative generalisations of groups of people often used consciously or unconsciously by people in order to make sense of the world (cf. Kaikkonen, 1994; Kristofferson & Sahlin, 1995, p. 87, Martin & Nakayama, 2000, Wellros, 1998, pp. 46-47; Holliday, Hyde & Kullman, 2004, pp. 22-24). This definition is not uncontroversial. E.g. Martin and Nakayama (2000, p. 128-129) distinguish between stereotype and prejudice, but they do recognise the fact that other researchers do not make the same distinction. Kristofferson and Sahlin (1995, pp. 86-88) propose an even more refined distinction. They connect the two concepts to the common distinction of attitudes into three different components, namely the cognitive, the affective, and the action related components (cf. Baker, 1992, pp.12-13). According to them, *stereotypes* are part of the cognitive component, and they are, as mentioned, highly simplified notions of groups of people, but not necessarily negative. For a *prejudice* to arise, the affective component has to become an unreasonable preliminary outlook, which is realised in discriminating actions (e.g. avoidance, verbal abuse). For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to include the two phenomena in the concept stereotype, since they both a) are based on attitudes and b) reflect crude generalisations of the person or group of people they aspire to describe.

Kaikkonen (1994, p. 86-87) emphasises that stereotypes stem from the user's own culture and from situations where fragmented impressions of the foreign culture are subjectively used. In fact, attitudes are formed throughout the language learning process. Small children hear the words spoken as well as the tone of voice and emphasis (Wellros, 1998, p. 29). They also interpret the body language and manners used by actors in the environment, and thus they learn how to react towards different people and features in society. This reflects the complexity of the phenomenon. If we accept stereotypes to be based on attitudes, we have to deal with all three components. I prefer to describe the relation as a trinity rather than the hierarchy presented by many researchers in this field (see Baker, 1992, p. 13):

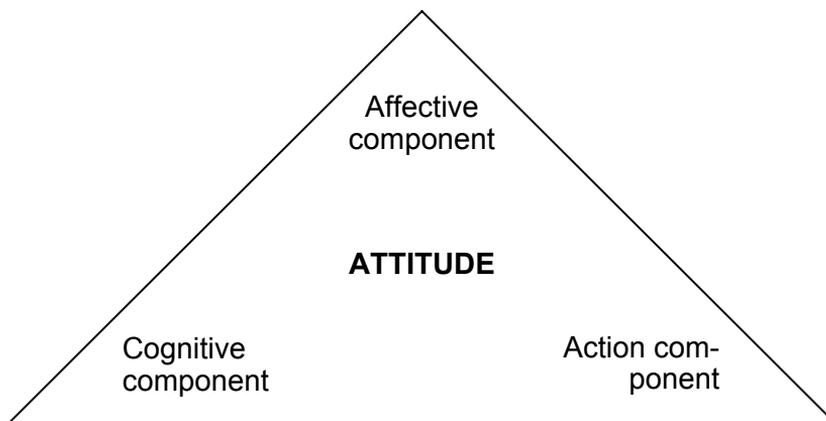


Figure 10. Schematic description of the concept attitude

The affective component is believed to affect the other two (Kristofferson & Sahlin, 1995, p. 86), which means that a person might not be able/willing to internalise new information not compatible with the unreasonable view s/he has of a particular group of people. This means that it is not possible to anticipate a change in attitudes just through providing more and correct information. On the other hand it is also known that attitudes do keep changing through the influence of personal experience and knowledge (Wellros, 1995, p. 29, Kristofferson & Sahlin, 1995, p. 87; Gardner, 1985, pp. 84-107). Wellros (p. 29) stresses the point that attitudes are personal, and thus more easily changeable than social values/value systems.

4.6 Culture and intercultural education

Before moving on to discuss intercultural education it is necessary to define the concept 'culture'. It has a long history and the meaning of the concept has changed largely over time. Koskensalo (2001, p. 64) outlines three major phases in the development of the concept over time, and she also claims that this development to a great extent has contributed to the confusion about the concept that language researchers, and teaching professionals still seem to suffer from. The three phases she mentions are:

- a) The antique ideal with culture as “the refinement of norms and manners through education, religions, arts and science” (p. 64, my translation), the ultimate aim being a perfect civilisation.
- b) In the 18th century ‘culture’ was considered the opposite of ‘nature’, which meant that culture included “everything that belongs to the environment of humans and that has been developed by, thought up by and made by human beings” (my translation, p. 64).
- c) Around the turn of the 18th century and during the 19th century culture came to stand for a particular group of people, who shared some kinds of common traits, “defined in terms of territorial, ethnic, ideological, mental or linguistic criteria” (my translation, p. 64). The emergence of the ‘na-

tion state' brought about the definition of culture as a feature shared by all people of that state (cf. Gullberg, 2004, pp.42-44; Smeds, 2004, p. 55 on the related concept of national identity). This idea of 'national culture' still seems to be persistent in many official national documents.

Also when limited to a 20th century scientific perspective, the concept 'culture' seems to be elusive and definitions at least as varying in scope and focus as outlined in the historical overview above (for an overview of the 20th century literature see Lundberg, 1991, pp. 8-14; Holliday, Hyde & Kullman, 2004, pp. 59-65). From a more present day viewpoint Kaikkonen (1994, p. 65) refers to a perspective of cultural sociology, where the importance of separating culture and institution is stressed, since the concept of national culture actually can be regarded as an illusion. "However, one needs to remember that the national cultures are divided into very many subcultures and that individuals because of this and their upbringing are very different" (p. 89, own translation). As an example of this we can consider the different cultures evident in different age groups within the same community, while at the same time youth culture may be very much the same in several different countries. The notion of a unanimous national culture is thus a too simplified starting-point in teaching with the aim of fostering intercultural awareness and sociocultural competence (cf. Lundgren, 2002, p. 210-212).

Tornberg (2000) describes three different levels in defining the concept culture within curricula and other national documents concerning educational policy. The first level she describes as one of objective superficial facts most often of little personal relevance to the individual teacher. At the second level communicative skills for future use are emphasised. The core content is patterns of communication in different context, where these patterns often are based on the national stereotypes mentioned above. At the third, deepest, level the individual encounter is the focus. A comparison between the aspects of sociocultural knowledge brought forward in the CEFR and the levels in Tornberg's definition highlights the complexity of the concept. In my opinion the areas of sociocultural knowledge mentioned in the CEFR mainly reflect Tornberg's second and third levels. As mentioned in Chapter 1, some of the overall CEFR competence areas are also to be found in the new national framework curriculum in Finland (2004). Concerning the sociocultural area the curricular text is, however, so vague that it becomes important to reflect upon what definition of culture the CEFR actually reflects. Otherwise it will become difficult to know how to transform these curricular objectives into practical action.

Hedin (1995, pp. 26-) points out some of the problems with teaching towards affective objectives. It is often easy enough to catch pupils' initial interest by starting out with one or two "exotic" cultural phenomena. The problem with this kind of approach is that it only serves as a reinforcement of stereotypical views. If the aim is to move beyond stereotypes towards an "attitude of understanding" (p.28) it becomes a more challenging task. If this kind of teaching is done, and the aims explained explicitly, it will most certainly not reach the wished for outcome in the pupil most in need of a change. On the other hand, Hedin is also aware of the moral dilemma with not providing the pupils with information about the affective objectives. He proposes an approach where these decisions

are reached for each topic on the basis of what can be said to be official objectives of a particular national school system. If the affective objectives correspond to the official curricular objectives there is no need to point these objectives out in relation to individual topics.

One way of getting around the problem of alienating some pupils from teaching related to affective objectives is to ask them to “draw the opposite perspective” (Hedin, 1995, p. 28), e.g. what do Kenyans make of our Easter traditions. However, there is also the risk that this kind of an “opposite stereotypical view” only serves to cement some pupils’ prejudices further, e.g. “Well, I’ve always known Africans are stupid”, rather than making them realise the crudeness of their own stereotypical views. Forsman (2006) has been working on a project where she tries to help youngsters in lower secondary move towards this kind of intercultural awareness through “a third place” (cf. Kramsch, 1993/2001, p. 223), i.e. a less sensitive made up, perhaps alien, perspective. In my opinion this is a necessary step towards reaching the kind of reciprocal³⁷ thinking stressed as the ultimate intercultural aim by e.g. Lahdenperä (1995, p. 68). She identifies eight steps as elements of a reciprocal thinking:

- a) to experience a safe candid environment where everyone is allowed to express and discuss different values and problems
 - b) to experience positive contacts with at least one representative of another ethnic group
 - c) to identify shared similarities – then identify and accept differences
 - d) to identify positive characteristics among other individuals and groups
 - e) to experience attention and acceptance from others
 - f) to become aware of oneself, how one categorises and generalises the world
 - g) to get support in taking on the perspectives and roles of other people
 - h) to gain increased knowledge about other countries and ethnic groups.
- (Lahdenperä, 1995, pp. 69-70, my translation)

In my opinion these eight aspects include work on all three affective components, which ought to increase the chances to reach adjustments in pupils’ attitudes.

In his teaching experiments with upper-secondary students Kaikkonen (1994, p. 135) has used a four-stage model. Initially students’ sensitivity to the expressions of foreign culture is enhanced, so that students are able to make conscious observations, learn about standards of behaviour in the foreign culture and finally familiarise themselves with the conceptual world of the foreign culture in order improve their intercultural communicative competence. According to Kaikkonen this model for didactical action also illustrates an individual’s lifelong relation to foreign languages and cultures, which again emphasises the importance of starting this process long before students reach the

³⁷ According to Piaget and Weil (1951, in Lahdenperä, 1995, p. 68-69) reciprocal thinking includes both an objective understanding of other people and an ability to take their perspective both in an affective and a cognitive sense.

upper-secondary level he actually studied. The model clearly represents cognitive aspects and skills. The aspects least visible are the affective aspects of the communicative competence (cf. Byram & Zarate, 1997). Seen from a European educational perspective primary education has most often focused on skills rather than the cognitive and affective aspects of the FL competence. Doyé (1999) claims that this is about to change. One reason for this change of focus is the move towards a more holistic perspective of the pupil and of the learning process. In order to achieve the aim related to intercultural competence put forward both in national and international educational documents methods activating all three aspects (knowledge, attitudes and skills) need to be adopted. Furthermore all three aspects of the attitudinal domain need to be integrated in (FL) education. Especially for younger pupils it is important that the activities used “may be cognitively demanding as long as they are concrete; they may be emotionally complex as long as they are experiential; they may be practically exacting as long as they are systematically arranged, i.e. permit the progression from simple to difficult” (Doyé, 1999, p. 25). Many practical ways of going about this process are presented by Doyé (1999). I also want to point out the close relation between these ideas and the principles of experiential learning (see Section 3.2).

Based on the social constructivist concept of knowledge and the views of SL learning presented in the previous chapter, pupils’ initial understanding of the target language countries is to some extent related not only to their attitudes towards foreign cultures and representatives of these cultures, but also to their learning of more linguistic aspects of a FL (cf. Gardner, 1985; Lyons, 1987, p.303-).

Forsman (2004) has come to the conclusion that lower-secondary students often experience the EFL learnt in school as something different from, distanced to and even irrelevant to the kind of English language they are surrounded with outside school. In her study the students mostly referred to linguistic aspects, but on the basis of her results one could assume that a similar division between “everyday knowledge” and “school knowledge” exists regarding the view pupils have of the target language countries and the socioculturally related content presented in the EFL classroom. Studies where young learners’ attitudes towards, and socioculturally related knowledge of, English-speaking cultures are scarce, at least in a Finland-Swedish perspective. The main reason for that is probably mainly the fact that the maturity level of these pupils has not encouraged researchers to ask pupils of this age to verbalise their attitudes and reflect upon their own process of learning, something that can be felt as a very demanding task even for an adult.

Regardless of these problems it is, as we have seen above, of vital importance for primary EFL education in Swedish-medium schools in Finland that also the knowledge and attitudes these young learners have regarding the target countries are studied. As mentioned (by e.g. Doyé), a favourable development of the sociocultural aspects of EFL education needs to build upon what the pupils already know, what they think they know (in terms of stereotypes and misconceptions) and it should not presuppose knowledge they might not have.

4.7 Availability of culturally related exposure in the Finland-Swedish context

As mentioned in the introduction, the growing influence of international media has resulted in an increasing availability of English exposure, regardless of possible regional differences. This “extra” exposure is, without doubt, a positive phenomenon, in the sense that it gives the pupils the opportunity to practise and improve their receptive and active EFL linguistic skills. It also gives them access to culturally related information about the English-speaking world, while they are confronted with media products produced in and for the media markets in North America, Great Britain and Australia.

This new input will, of course, bring with it new values, which in turn will affect pupils’ notions of and attitudes towards representatives of the target language countries. As we have seen above, positive attitudes are regarded as an important part of pupils’ intrinsic motivation for learning a new target language. In early studies both Gardner and Lambert claim that a greater exposure to/familiarity with the representatives and culture of the target language leads to more positive attitudes towards these, but later studies presented and conclusions drawn by Gardner (1985, pp. 84-107) indicate that the relation seems to be more complex (cf. Section 2.1). In Swedish-Finland there is no guarantee that greater familiarity with English-speaking people automatically leads to more positive attitudes towards the target language cultures. What one could expect to be reached, however, is a less stereotypic, more realistic and varied view. A fact that further complicates the scene is that English is conceived of as an international *lingua franca*³⁸ without reference to any particular culture (Brown, 1994, p. 34; House, 2002, p. 244; cf. Jenkins; 2007, pp. 1-13).

Julkunen (1998a) has studied to what extent Finnish pupils are aware of being exposed to information about English-speaking target language countries and their cultures through media. The results from this study ought to be treated with some caution, since the pupils were asked to decide how important the influence of a predetermined limited list of sources were. As many as 97.7 % of the participating pupils regarded TV/radio as a source for this kind of information, 93.1 % pointed out their own home as a source of information, 77.7 % had learned from their friends, 76.1 % from different magazines, 65.9 % through trips, while only 56.8 % mentioned teaching materials as a source for this kind of information.

Hence, a considerable amount of the culturally related exposure comes from sources outside school, which means that the pupils are often left alone to interpret the impressions they get from the pseudo-reality that media presents to them. Considering what has been said above about stereotypical notions and the difficulty of changing attitudes, it is not unexpected that teachers feel their pupils need more guidance in interpreting the continuous information flow they are

³⁸ The concept *lingua franca* has developed through time, from describing a language for (simple) contact use between speakers of different languages to the wide, complex and flexible communicative functions among speakers of English as a SL/FL (see e.g. House, 2002, p. 243ff).

exposed to. Guidance is needed both regarding linguistic and cultural elements, to help pupils analyse, understand and apply what they have been exposed to in an appropriate manner. Most pupils at the primary level (i.e. grades 1-6) have not yet reached such cognitive or experiential maturity that they are able to critically judge the influence they are confronted with, i.e. understand that what they see/hear/read is not a straightforward representation of reality. The task to help students learn how to reflect critically upon what they are exposed to through media is not a task important in FL teaching only, but FL teaching shares this responsibility with the teachers of other school subjects. For teachers' (and parents') guidance to be effective the media influence on pupils' initial understanding of English-speaking countries needs to be described.

5 Teacher perspectives

By using the concept ‘learning’ in the broad sense described in Chapter 3 it becomes possible to focus on the teacher by using the same framework as for the learner, which in turn, makes it possible to discuss both teachers and learners in the same social framework for learning. The actors of the outside world are also primarily the same as for the learner (but not necessarily the kind of influence they exert), with the exception that the actors in the classroom setting might include actors both in the classroom where the teacher her/himself was learning language and language teaching procedures and the classrooms where she/he is now teaching the foreign language. In this sense the teacher perspective also includes a ‘pure’ learner perspective, which is a further reason for applying a broad framework for social-constructivist learning processes of both learners and teachers.

However, the learning process of the teacher is probably not primarily a question of language learning, but sooner a question of learning as much as possible about oneself, the learner and the outside world (cf. e.g. Imsen, 2000). In my opinion, teachers need to develop such a broad knowledge base to be able to guide and enhance meaningful interaction between the learner and the world and the learner and the teacher, i.e. creating a dynamic learning environment. This process is either facilitated or hampered by the intrapersonal characteristics of the teacher, by the learning environment and opportunities provided and exposure and actors in the outside world. The means of interacting and learning are basically the same as for the learner.

Since both the learner perspective and the teacher perspective are based on the integrated model of the conditions for learning, some of both the obvious and less obvious (f)actors in the different settings and their relation to the learning environment and learning process and the learner/teacher have already been mentioned. However, some of the features which are believed to be of direct relevance to the teacher in the Finland-Swedish language classroom need to be discussed in more detail, which follows below.

5.1 Teacher characteristics

In previous chapters several characteristics or demands placed on the professional (language) teacher of the future have been outlined. These will not be dealt with in any further detail here, but the focus is rather on what has been found to be characteristic for teachers in previous studies.

Hansén (1997, p. 121) distinguishes between four main characteristics related to the individual teacher. He calls them autonomy, insecurity, rhetoric excess vs. rhetoric poverty, and divided (dual) loyalty. The first two are of interest here in relation to teachers’ everyday work and planning, whereas all of them are important for the teacher’s own learning process. The third characteristic is also of methodological interest in this study.

On a number of occasions the teachers in Hansén's study (1997, pp. 121-122) express a strong need for autonomy in exercising their profession. They mention both freedom from interference and space for autonomous actions based on trust as important and also demand space for independent acting in the classroom, in relation to the colleagues, to the head/principal and to the parents (cf. Jonsson, 2002). Even though teachers generally saw freedom as a positive notion, some of them expressed dissatisfaction with what they felt was more a 'laisse faire' attitude on the part of school authorities than a conscious strategy of supporting independent action.

The second characteristic is, surprisingly enough, insecurity. The development from a novice to an experienced teacher generally brings with it a greater sense of security in the micro context, but at the same time it seems to bring about a new kind of insecurity, for example in the teacher's relation to parents and the local school government (Hansén p. 123). Some of the teachers believed that this uncertainty was due to phenomena like the development of society in general, the mass media culture and different groups of actors. Especially teachers in the countryside felt insecure in relation to different atmospheres and opinions in the environment. In other studies (see Imsen, 2000, p. 18) inexperienced teachers were found to focus on control of the classroom situation, lesson content and lesson planning, in addition to what pupils, parents and colleagues thought of them. More experienced teachers gave higher priority to caring for the (individual) learners. However, older teachers in Hansén's study felt that parents seldom gave any positive feedback whereas they were prone to criticise. They also felt insecurity in their work due to their own educational background and a fear of becoming too routinised in their teaching procedures (p.124). This kind of uncertainty was obviously partly related to the economic recession during the beginning of the 1990's, which gave the teachers a feeling of not being able to influence the conditions for their work to any greater extent. Insecurity is also seen as a fundamental characteristic of teachers' work, because of the character of the job (Hansén, 1997, p. 125; cf. Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 141-). Imsen (2000) calls this phenomenon "a constant feeling of insufficiency" (p. 22, my translation) brought about by the huge range of expectations placed on schools by public and private actors outside school. Obviously also what happens in a teacher's private life is related to teacher insecurity at certain times.

The remaining two characteristics of the individual teacher are related to their ways of expressing themselves. Some of the teachers in Hansén's study (1997, pp. 126-129) used an abundance of words and terms, which did not always seem to be fully integrated in their world of thought. Their way of expressing themselves seemed almost ceremonial. The opposite trend was that most teachers tended to lack means of expressing themselves in an explicit and precise manner. The linguistic poverty of expression was manifested in a vagueness and generality of expression. The language usage of the teachers gave the impression that they were not used to discussing their work with other professionals, including researchers/interviewers, probably due to the individualistic manner of managing their work. In my opinion the individual character of the work is probably related to the duality of expression exhibited by the teachers. At a surface level they tended to provide the interviewers with an ideal picture of the school and their work in the school. What was directly

expressed created a view of harmony and consent, whereas what was indirectly expressed drew the opposite picture: one of hidden conflicts. This line of qualitative evidence goes hand in hand with the necessary characteristics of a dynamic environment for development-centred learning identified by Ellström (1992) and presented in Chapter 3 above.

In a Swedish study (Jonsson, 2002, pp. 166-167, 183) teachers reported that they feel at ease with their work at a general level. They stress the fact it is when they get to work with what they have been trained for, i.e. teaching (in this case his/her subject) in the classroom that they enjoy themselves. Tasks not directly related to planning or carrying out teaching cause frustration, since they are felt to “steal time” from the core task of planning and carrying out teaching (note the tension between these views and the complex demands on the teacher previously outlined in Section 2.3.2). However, some frustration is also expressed over shortcomings directly related to teaching when they express dissatisfaction over not having enough time for every individual in the classroom. Jonsson draws the conclusion that these lower- and upper-secondary school teachers do not include responsibility in supporting the socialisation processes of their students or co-operation with the parents as parts of their professionalism. They do not realise that it could be of crucial importance for them to know what their students encounter outside the classroom walls.

5.1.1 Analytical abilities

The analytical abilities of teachers can of course be seen as one of the “suitable personal characteristics” sought for in applicants to teaching programmes. However, to my knowledge the interest in the analytical abilities or intelligence of prospective teachers has (at least in Finland) until recently been mainly a question of whether they will manage to complete the academic Master’s programme, rather than pointing it out as a critical characteristic of a professional teacher. With the rise of constructivism the teacher’s ability to critically reflect upon how her/his own work and the development of the surrounding society affect one another and the individual pupils’ possibilities to learn has increased. One could say that we are talking about a new type of teacher professionalism, where a wide range of characteristics are emphasised as important. This new trend of development is, as we have seen in previous chapters, well documented in educational policy and strategy documents, but to my knowledge little research has been done in this field so far.

For instance in Kiviniemi’s (2000) report on the working environment of Finnish teachers it was clearly stated that teacher education to a larger extent than before needs to focus on developing future teachers’ abilities to identify special problems among their pupils and critically investigate the relation between the school institution and the notion of upbringing (Sw. *fostran*) from a value philosophical point of view. Thoughts along the same lines are expressed in Imsen (2000), where it is described how teachers whole-heartedly approve of the principle of differentiation in teaching, but nevertheless find it very difficult to carry out in practice. Rather than seeing this claim as a demand strictly related to the education programmes for teachers one can also see it as an explicit demand for teachers with highly developed analytical abilities.

When considering the complexity of the language learning process as well as the numerous direct and indirect actors bearing an influence on the foreign language classroom, it seems obvious that teachers need to be able to analyse and act upon the signals sent by these actors. They also need to be able to reflect upon their own experiences and education. However, as mentioned, the societal signals concerning the increasing need of greater professionalism among teachers are blurred by equally evident contradictory signals, where teachers' freedom of action to function as independent, critical and multi-talented professionals seems to become reduced (Kohonen, 2006b, p. 2; cf. Luke, 2003, p. 28).

5.2 Perceived constraints, resources and the consequences for planning

Planning is a necessary part of a teacher's job, but according to van Lier (1996) "successful teaching is a blend of planning and improvisation" (p. 9). Both elements are needed, since classroom interaction also offers unpredictable challenges. Van Lier argues that the teacher has to develop the skill of making principled choices concerning the activities that take place in the classroom, and that s/he should also be held responsible and accountable for those choices (cf. Imsen, 2000, p. 21). In the following some of the major forces affecting teachers' choices and actions will be identified. The concepts 'resource' and 'constraint' used here are inspired by Giddens' constraint/enablement relation (1984, pp. 169-176). It is important to realise that these two features are interdependent, and that both are needed to create a fruitful learning situation.

In the following quotations by van Lier (1996, p. 8) the relationship between how teachers analyse and act upon controlling and facilitating forces and development-centred learning for a growing professionalism becomes apparent:

A key issue for teacher research is to distinguish between constraints intrinsic to the teaching/learning setting, and artificial constraints which a particular system or institution enforces on the teaching/learning setting. The former are true constraints which, in Giddens' sense, direct activities, and are empowering, the latter merely control, and are disempowering. An excess of artificial constraints may make teachers feel that their authority is being eroded.

In Gunilla Svingby's research project concerning Swedish teachers in the comprehensive school in the late 70's a number of different factors affecting teachers' work at different levels were identified. The factors which most strongly affected schoolwork on a general level were school authorities, teaching materials, curricula, headmaster and colleagues (Svingby, 1979, p.72). The authorities did not have the same influence on the actual teaching situation. The most influential factors mentioned in this case were pupils, teaching materials, colleagues, curricula (p. 72). Parents were mentioned as an influential factor both in the more general and the most specific perspective, but they were not considered as influential as the factors mentioned above. Most of the teachers also felt they were able to influence pupils, colleagues, parents and the headmaster, whereas they did not feel they were able to influence authorities, curricula and teaching materials to any greater extent.

In Svingby's research teachers were also asked to rate certain variables in order of importance as obstacles for teaching. Her results show that many teachers felt that the major obstacles for reaching the general aims were to be found rather among central rules, local prerequisites of economic and physical kind in and outside school and among pupils and parents than among central objectives, local rules of the school and socio-psychological prerequisites within the school (Svingby, 1979, pp. 83-85). On a more concrete level, the main factors mentioned by the teachers were class size, the grading system, supply of material, equipment in the school, availability of rooms, teaching materials, the home background of the pupils, pupils' attitudes, parental expectations and norms.

In Hansén's (1997) more recent study, carried out in the Swedish-speaking context in Finland, the conditions mentioned by teachers may be classified into two major categories: physical and organisational conditions. The physical prerequisites include the suitability of the rooms in the school and the equipment available in the school. The main organisational pre-requisite deals with a flexible organisation of the pupils. In this connection age-integrated groups and smaller groups were mentioned. The teachers interviewed in this study also mentioned two major categories of obstacles, which they felt limited or even made impossible their preferred ways of acting. The first category concerns economically related problems, which have an impact on class size, flexible grouping and the opportunity to offer optional or additional courses. The second category has to do with obstacles related to opinions and attitudes. Opinions and attitudes of other teachers, staff, parents and other actors in the community are mentioned as possible obstacles. It is important, however, to note that even though these teachers were aware of several prerequisites and obstacles in teaching, they still seemed to maintain a positive view of their own working situation and school environment. (Hansén, 1997, pp. 76-80)

Lundgren (2002, pp. 207-208) has interviewed teachers in Sweden on issues in relation to intercultural foreign language teaching. These teachers generally identify the obstacles as external features in their own micro context. Only one teacher explicitly mentioned personal features as one of the obstacles. The issues brought up can be divided into three major categories of questions: organisational, methodological, and attitude/identity-related. The organisational questions include the time aspect, schedule managing, and collegial support. The methodological questions are concerned with the (lack of) education in the field, relevant literature and teaching aids, the relation to evaluation, assessment and pupil motivation. The third category of questions express teachers' doubts in relation to the relevance of the field, the reality-relatedness of national curricular aims, their own ability to teach about foreign cultures, and the priority of intercultural understanding in relation to e.g. linguistic components of the syllabus.

From the brief summaries of the three studies above it is possible to claim that the situation does not seem to have changed much concerning the prerequisites and obstacles experienced by teachers during the last twenty years, with the exception that curricula were not mentioned at all in Hansén's study. That might have to do with the different national contexts or the research design. Below, some of the factors identified above will be discussed in more detail, starting

with the pupils.

5.2.1 Pupils

Much has already been said about the pupils as language learners in Chapter 3, but in this section we will briefly identify some of the perspectives identified above and relate those to the results presented in Chapter 3.

As mentioned, pupils are identified among the most influential factors on the actual teaching situation. This influence is expressed as a mutual one, where teachers and pupils have an impact on one another's actions in the classroom. From his viewpoint of social psychology Andersson (2002, p. 35) argues that the traditionally teacher-centred classroom results in pupils who become accustomed to being passive receivers of instructions and information, whereas it reinforces the development of the teachers as active individuals. This relationship is further emphasised when teachers in Svingby's study (1979) listed pupils among the major obstacles for carrying out teaching, more specifically the social background and attitudes of the pupils. This reinforces the view of the "good" pupil as a receptive object rather than active subject, which seems to coincide with Andersson's (ibid, p. 40) conclusion that teachers are not likely to play a major part in pupils' building of social relations even within a school context. Jonsson's (2002, p. 169) more sociological comments on the same research data complete the view that these lower- and upper secondary school teachers only see their pupils in the classroom, but do not share their world outside the classroom. Whether this would also be the case in primary education, where teachers often take a more general responsibility for (a particular group of) younger pupils, is debatable. The ability to take a holistic view of each pupil and to share their world is stressed as an important characteristic of a professional teacher by Imsen (2000). She specifically points out the importance of maintaining a relation to the pupils by regarding them and meeting them as equally valuable human beings. To be able to do this the teacher has to gain insight into the inner and outer worlds of their pupils, or at least try to take that perspective when access to the world itself is denied/not possible (pp. 27, 33).

The Finland-Swedish teachers (Hansén, 1997) mention the necessity of flexible grouping of the pupils as important. In this relation, what Dahllöf (1971, pp. 65-70, 83-86) has termed the steering criterion group (Sw. styrgruppen), becomes interesting. Over thirty years ago he came to the conclusion that teachers (in comprehensive classes traditionally taught) adapt their teaching to pupils between the 10th and 25th weakest percentile, resulting in a certain minority of weak pupils not being able to follow it properly and very likely in some of the faster/brighter ones being thoroughly bored. The teachers in Hansén's (1997, p. 80) study also mention attitudes among possible constraints. However they do not mention the attitudes of pupils, but rather the attitudes of other adult actors, mainly parents.

The factors mentioned by the teachers in the studies above both coincide and differ from the issues brought up in Chapter 3. That is not surprising considering the fact that none of the studies were limited to a foreign language perspective. The major factors discussed within the pupil perspective are individual learner

characteristics (cognitive ability, motivation, situational anxiety), the availability of exposure in the Finland-Swedish context and pupils' attitudes towards the English language and target language representatives.

5.2.2 Material

Materials can include all kinds of equipment used in and for preparing teaching. However, as can be seen above, the textbook seems to emerge as the most influential among these materials. Below, I will present some results illustrating the relation between teachers and textbooks. In my opinion it is also applicable to the relation to other materials, in fact it can be argued that where the use of textbook increases the use of other materials decreases and the other way around. In his pursuit of arguments for using textbooks in the classroom, i.e. text for learning, Wikman (2004) also identifies a wide range of possible relations to the textbook. These variations are illustrated as a continuum in Figure 11 below.

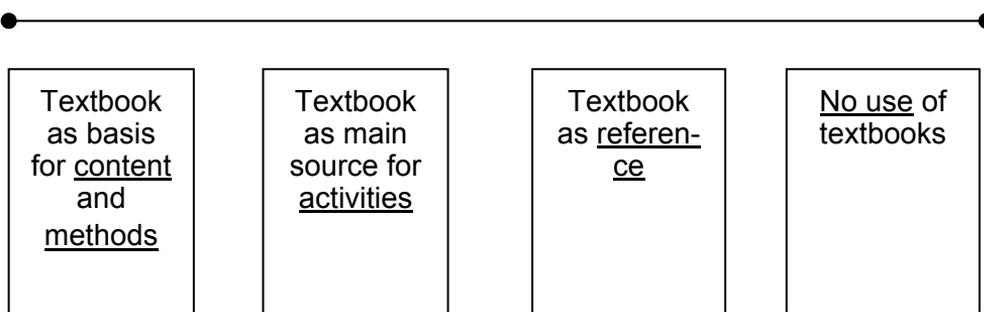


Figure 11. Range of possible relations to the textbook, adapted from Wikman (2004, p. 90)

The teacher attitudes described above are very different. To the left we find an argument, where the textbook is regarded as the main point of departure for teaching both in terms of choice of content and methods. One could say that the teachers' authority only lies in the choice of that textbook, whereas the real authority is attributed to the textbook itself (and its authors). In fact, there has even been tendencies to regard the notions textbook and curriculum as more or less synonymous (Wikman, 2004, p. 87). Wikman (p. 88) argues that the textbook can be seen as the spine of teaching, when it keeps the lessons together and creates a sense of community among the actors in the classroom. He refers to research where teachers have expressed the view that the textbook is important when choosing content, but not in relation to choosing methods. He also points out that the authority of textbooks can be seen as a motivating factor for pupils, but this authority is fragile. If the gap between the pupils' values and experiences and the ones expressed in the textbook becomes too wide the textbook will be rejected and decrease learning (p. 88). If pupils view the textbook as an authority they might also gain their model for learning from the textbook, which further adds to the importance of choice of appropriate materials.

The second argument illustrates the fact that the textbook can facilitate teachers' work e.g. by providing ready-made tasks and activities. They make it possible for students to work more independently and also play a part in terms of discipline, since they keep the pupils occupied (Wikman, 2004, p. 89). The third and fourth arguments illustrate the reservation towards allowing a single textbook to become a great authority in the classroom. It might be regarded as suitable as one of many reference books, in order to provide pupils with a more realistic view of the complexity of the world around them. The fourth argument takes this viewpoint even further. The point of departure seems to be a view that all textbooks add a touch of the unauthentic (see p. 58 on authenticity and Section 4.5.1 on language attitudes), whereas all teaching should depart from real life problems and not be restrained within certain artificial subject areas (cf. Piaget).

Van Lier (1996, p. 7-8) acknowledges the importance of textbooks and resource books, in the sense that they make teachers' work easier³⁹, but he also warns most strongly against allowing these teaching aids to determine what and how things are done in the language classroom. If that happens these aids have become controlling forces rather than helping or facilitating ones (cf. Giddens, 1984).

Furthermore, extensive use of one series of textbooks can be questioned since they often are filled with stories that bear no evidence of the complexities and often contradictions so evident in real life (van Lier, 2004b, pp. 82-83.). Textbooks like these do not support the integration of thematic units described in the last two national framework curricula into EFL education, but will rather be felt like constraints, in this case of an artificial character. It can even be questioned if textbooks and set activities really enhance linguistic growth if they separate linguistic information from other perceptual clues (van Lier, 2004b, p.90).

Again this line of argumentation has consequences for teacher and teacher education. The teacher ought to be able to make principled choices, for which s/he is accountable, concerning the amounts and kinds of materials s/he uses (van Lier, 1996, p. 9). As factors possibly influencing the use of textbooks Wikman (2004, pp. 84-85) lists school level, the character of the subject, methodology, teacher' experience and qualification, attitudes of pupils and parents. Generally speaking qualified, experienced teachers confident in their own command of the subject (that is 'competent' in accordance with Luukkainen's definition, 2000b, p. 50) seem to be less dependent on the textbook. However, reality is more complex than that since also the specific subject and the methodology chosen influences the relation to the textbook.

In a large scale Swedish study (Lindblad, 2002, p. 105) involving lower and upper secondary school students it is stated that teaching materials (textbooks) in general seem to play a more important part in the schoolwork than previously,

³⁹ However, in a Swedish study (Andersson, 2002, pp.30- 31; Lindblad, 2002, p. 105) over 60 % of students in lower and upper secondary education agreed that the textbooks in general were boring. In that case traditional textbooks can hardly be seen as useful means for supporting teaching and motivating pupils.

since independent work has become more common. However, this so-called independent work is usually based on the textbook, which easily results in a marginalisation of the teacher's influence over working procedures and content problematisation.

Julkunen's study (1998b, p. 74) also confirms that language teachers seem to think that authentic materials are best suited for the fastest (presumably also the most talented?) students. Newspapers and computer programmes, even though they motivate learners, are not used in language teaching to any greater extent due to lack of time (cf. similar argument made by EFL teachers in lower and upper secondary in Larzén 2005, p. 135). The time "left over" for the culture of the target language country/ies is also scarce, even though teachers feel that their pupils are positively inclined towards learning to know more about the people representing the target language and their culture. New up-to-date language materials could be useful (cf. Larzén, 2004, p. 136-137), but, as Julkunen's results indicate, also teacher attitudes, values and ideas about language learning might be an obstacle in the necessary process of change. It is, however, not self-evident that teachers of English in Swedish-medium schools have the same order of priorities as their Finnish colleagues. The next section deals with what a curriculum ought to be, how curricula are experienced by teachers and what the consequences of that are.

5.2.3. Curriculum

What is going on in the classroom is, according to Lundgren (1979, pp. 233-234, see also Svingby, p. 50), limited by three types of societal frame factors: the constitutional frame factors, the organisational frame factors and the physical frame factors. Curriculum is according to him a system of value-related goals that guide the educational process. It is important to realise that curriculum (here to be interpreted as curricula at different levels) is only a part of the school governing system. Both the organisational frame factors (school administration at different levels) and the physical frame factors put constraints on the processes of education and the constitutional frame factors (legislation etc.) regulate them. The main aim of the curriculum should, thus, be to guide the educational process through objectives. However, these objectives can be set at different levels and hence result in different kinds of guiding or regulating. (Svingby, p. 49) Depending on how objectives are expressed they are also interpreted differently by different actors (cf. Lundgren, 1979, p. 238). When describing their personal notions of what the aims of education were, the teachers in Hansén's study (1997, pp. 73-75) expressed cognitively related, socially related and individually related objectives. The statements were approximately equally spread between the categories and it was not possible to distinguish between different teacher types in terms of objectives. Concerning what results they expected of their work as teachers, however, more than two thirds of the statements were cognitively related and the socially and individually related played a minor part.

If a curriculum is one of the instruments the surrounding society uses to influence/guide and control learning/the outcomes of teaching, it is then also of crucial importance how the curriculum is built up and formulated. Van Lier (1996, pp. 2-3) claims that what he calls 'curriculumizing', defined as theorizing,

researching and practicing, is an essential character of a professional language educator. What he pleads for is, however, not any kind of curriculum, or any kind of ‘curriculumizing’. In his opinion the three different elements involved in the curriculumizing activity should occur simultaneously and the result of such a process would be a holistic and process-related curriculum. “The setting of goals and objectives, and the construction and assessment of achievement, are themselves integral parts of the curriculum process, rather than pre-established constraints that are imposed on it from the outside” (p.3). The connection to a freedom of action for the individual teacher is again reinforced, this time in relation to the curriculum.

Van Lier also claims that any curriculum ought to be “based on our knowledge of the learning process and the learning context, as well as on our values and purposes (including those of the teacher, student, parent, and any other stakeholder). The key to responsible (and effective) pedagogical interaction is *understanding the learner* (which includes understanding learning), and a theory of learning is therefore needed to underpin the development of strategies for pedagogical interaction.” (van Lier, 1996, p. 4) In this quotation the close connection between the different perspectives presented is explicitly expressed.

“The purpose of a curriculum is to guide the process of teaching and learning.” (van Lier, 1996 p. 6) This can be done by explicit control, or by more subtle flexible means. According to van Lier there is a risk that pedagogical needs and curriculum drift apart, when a more explicitly controlling method is used. A situation might arise where a subject of no practical use is taught for no other reason than that it ‘says so in the curriculum’.

If the curriculum does not fulfil its guiding function it is often taken over by other authorities, such as national tests and existing textbook series. Wikman (2004, pp. 81-82) refers to several studies that point out that the textbook is sometimes perceived of as the concrete incarnation of the curriculum. In a sense, this is hardly surprising, since the textbook did fulfil the function of identifying the core content before any national framework curricula existed (p. 74).

5.2.4 Educational background/qualification

The qualitative results presented in Hansén (1997, p. 60) indicate that teachers in Swedish-medium schools in Finland tend to assign different value to their teacher education as a basis for professional action. All teachers were convinced that teacher education is of importance, but almost one half of the respondents expressed that teacher education alone was not enough to qualify someone for the actual work as a teacher. The teachers were convinced that a good teacher has to possess certain inherent personal characteristics and that the role of education is mainly to choose the right people for the programme and then to develop and modify their inherent ability to teach.

The teachers mentioned both shortcomings and benefits with the content of their own educational programme. The critical comments seemed to focus on the conception that teacher education tends to be too focused on individual lessons and the cognitive content and provide too little training in managing the complex social contexts of the classroom, school and surrounding community (cf. Jonsson, 2002; Kiviniemi, 2000). In a national report on teacher education

(Kiviniemi, 2000, pp. 46-48) teachers were critical about scientific content without practical reference. These comments were made in relation to teacher education in general, but can also be considered in relation to language education and the relation between cognitive content and communicative skills. In several reports teachers also comment on the quality of the educational programme. In Hansén (1997, pp. 61-62) younger teachers pointed out specific parts of education, while older teachers tended to focus on more general characteristics. Among teachers of EFL in lower and upper secondary (Larzén, 2005, p. 133) comments on the lack of culturally relevant topics were common. Also in Larzén's study some teachers expressed the opinion that the academic studies were too theoretical in relation to the future teaching profession.

Hansén (1997, p. 63) also reports on some positive comments concerning the quality of teacher education, but more strongly stresses a benefit of teacher education characterised as 'education as a fundament'. Teacher education was regarded by the teachers as a basis of competence, in that it provided necessary methodological, technical, and subject related knowledge and skills. Some teachers also expressed that education provided an emotional readiness, in the sense that it gave them self-confidence and a certain feeling of mastery. Similar notions are brought forward by Kiviniemi (2000, pp. 30-33, 69), when he lists some challenges for future teacher education. Teacher education can no longer prepare teachers for a profession as "providers of new knowledge", but should strive towards helping student teachers in the process of becoming autonomous life-long learners and reflective professionals prepared to facilitate students' learning and social well-being in changing circumstances (cf. Luukkainen, 2000a; 2000b).

In short, it seems to me that we are talking about a different kind of education for an altogether different profession. Seen in that light it is hardly surprising that some teachers tend to regard the educational basis they have received as inadequate in one sense or another. Also the structure and content of in-service education receives the same kind of criticism. Teachers in Kiviniemi (2000, pp. 66-67) express the view that the present structure is not adequate for development to take place. The topics are at times also regarded as irrelevant. Instead they propose that in-service education should progress according to a systematic plan, including relevant topics introduced and discussed during longer stretches of in-service education ranging from one week to one month every fifth year.

As far as language studies are concerned studies abroad or language practice is nowadays generally included in the pre-service educational programmes of language teachers in Finland, but similar experiences can also be gained through trips or stays arranged privately or arranged as in-service courses. The importance of experience gathered during visits or stays abroad will be discussed below.

5.2.5 Experiences

As expressed in the beginning of this chapter, teachers' beliefs and actions are also believed to be affected by their experiences. Within an EFL perspective teachers' experiences as learners and users of English are surely of importance for their reflections on the processes of language learning and teaching.

These experiences cover both linguistic and sociocultural fields and are gathered throughout the teachers' own formal EFL education, as well as through their informal encounters with the English language, English-speaking people and cultures. Especially language practice abroad and/or other visits to English-speaking countries are believed to be of importance. However, studies where the outcomes of students' and/or teachers' studies or stays abroad have been systematically studied are hard to come by, but there seems to be an abundance of beliefs and myths regarding these stays abroad (Eriksen, 2006, p. 43). On the basis of my own experience in this field and reports returned by some of our students at Åbo Akademi University over the years, these stays abroad seem to have the potential of enhancing future teachers' oral proficiency, socio-linguistic knowledge and awareness. Secondary EFL teachers also seem to value the obligatory stays in an English-speaking country included in their pre-service education, especially in terms of the cultural insights they gained through those experiences (Larzén, 2005, p. 133). Thus, the visits provide the language teachers with opportunities to build up their views of themselves as users of English, broaden their cultural repertoires, and enhance their confidence as professionals in the EFL classroom.

In a recent volume where studies on living and studying abroad (Byram & Feng, 2006, pp. 1-6) have been collected the perspective to emerge is more complex. The editors point out that studying abroad "may not involve living abroad in an enriching sense" (p. 2), but that more research in this field is needed to gain a better understanding of the complex mechanisms involved and appropriate actions of preparation and support for students going abroad. Depending on cultural and linguistic distance, initial expectations, previous experience of otherness etc. students (including student teachers) experience and value their stay abroad in very different ways (Ayano, 2006, p. 21; Ehrenreich, 2006, p. 190, 209). In Ehrenreich's study German language teachers went abroad to work as assisting teachers with the aim of developing linguistically and professionally. On returning the achieved goals were generally referred to in terms of "personal development and growth" (pp. 189-190). On the basis of the study by Alred and Byram (2006, p. 230-231) it is possible to conclude that students who enjoyed their year abroad also came to work within environments where their intercultural competence is needed whereas students who did not appreciate experiences of otherness and so on tended to avoid careers demanding such skills.

The studies above are concerned with stays abroad lasting a minimum of one year, but shorter periods may have a positive impact on the participating students' development when the visits are properly planned, involve the students in the decision-making and support them in the process of investigating and reflecting on their experiences (Jackson, 2006; Tarp, 2006). The studies above are mostly concerned with intercultural competence and to what extent staying

and living abroad contributes to a positive development of that competence. The results point in the direction that it is not the stay as such that contributes to a positive development in terms of intercultural competence. Other factors, such as the cultural distance, personality factors, preparation and support throughout the stay are of great importance. It is possible that these factors are influential also in relation to linguistic outcomes.

5.2.6 Other actors

Numerous other actors are mentioned in the studies referred to above in this chapter. Among these we find four major categories: Authorities, teacher education institutions, colleagues and parents. Authorities are mainly referred to by teachers when legislation, regulations and economy is concerned, teacher education is mentioned in relation to pre- and in-service education, whereas colleagues and parents are referred to in terms of more or less implicit support. Since teachers often refer to all four categories in affectively loaded terms, it appears that they experience positive and negative affective tensions in relation to them, as has already been exemplified above in connection with teacher education. Therefore teacher education will not be dealt with in further detail here.

According to Hansén (1997, pp. 112-113), teachers refer to authorities - even local school authorities - in peripheral terms. The local director of education often comes to represent the whole school administration, which means that the role of the director of education is associated with strong positive and negative affective epithets. Teachers tend to express positive feedback and negative criticism towards the actors that are not present in the school on a daily basis more bluntly than towards e.g. colleagues.

Hansén (1997, pp. 104-106) summarises his findings on collegial relations in the following way: "The patterns of interaction between the teachers can be described as traditional. The basic characteristics of this tradition were freedom from interference, freedom of action, and collegial solidarity rather than systematic cooperation" (p. 105). The solidarity referred to encompasses two different phenomena, one being the good spirit/fellowship among colleagues, the other being a non-threatening and therapeutic form of social intercourse. Regardless of this solidarity teachers seem to avoid asking for assistance in problematic situations, in order not to reveal personal weaknesses or failures. This fear could be one reason for avoiding genuine cooperation. Younger teachers in Hansén's study reported the need for and also exemplified instances of cooperation more frequently than older teachers. This variation might be an indication of a change in the traditional solitary teaching culture.

One of the differences between colleagues and parents lies in location. Colleagues are present in the school on a daily basis whereas parents traditionally are not present in the school environment very often, but have their main domain outside school, or perhaps at the fringe of school. Another difference between the two is how the relation is described by teachers. However, none of the above mentioned groups of actors traditionally seem to have the same direct influence on the EFL teaching situation as the teachers and pupils themselves, even though the indirect influence through frame factors,

attitudes, and expressed or felt expectations might at times be considerable.

In a Swedish study (Jonsson, 2002, pp. 166-168) teachers mention supportive relations to one's colleagues as important for feeling satisfaction with one's work, and a lack of support is described as most dissatisfactory. In teachers' spontaneous comments on co-operation a clear pattern emerges. All actors mentioned are present in the school context and the kind of co-operation mentioned is focused on the teaching process. There is an obvious connection to the thoughts on professional development brought forward by e.g. Kohonen (see Chapter 2). Parents are scarcely mentioned in these open comments.

According to Jonsson (2002, p. 145), conflicts between school and homes were common in Sweden during the time when the system of elementary school was created. That was perhaps understandable, but she claims that teachers still tend to regard parents as opponents rather than partners with the common interest of supporting the development of "their" children. In a Finland-Swedish context Hansén (1997, pp. 110-111) does not put it as bluntly, but his results show that teachers experience the relation to parents as a balancing act filled with tension. They welcome and expect parental support in relation to homework and in fostering a positive attitude towards school, but at the same time they feel insecure in relation to what kind of a view of the teacher's work parents might be spreading. Based on these facts one has to conclude that this state of affairs does not coincide very well with the objectives of the last two national curricula (1994 and 2004), which state that parents should be given the opportunity to interact with the school regarding the planning of education. On the basis of a large-scale study in the Swedish compulsory school, Jonsson (2002) reports that it is not possible to see any clear patterns of co-operation or confrontation. However, pupils and teachers did not seem to share the same world of experiences, even though they do share the same physical school environment. Parents expressed views that they felt they had no insight in and too little information about this institution, where their children spend so much of their time. Teachers on the other hand mention contacting the homes of pupils living in difficult social conditions as most difficult, in fact as lying outside their area of influence and competence.

For a constructive co-operation between teachers and parents some conditions are necessary. Jonsson (2002, p. 148-149) identifies two:

- There must be an agreement regarding what is high priority in terms of objectives and problems.
- Both parts need to trust the motivation and ability of the other to contribute to solutions and share responsibility in a constructive manner.

Both of these criteria are important, e.g. in relation to the perceived professionalism of the teacher or the privacy of one's own home. Jonsson suggests (*ibid*, p. 179) that a shared area between the teacher and the home of the pupils seems to entail value-related knowledge and skills.

5.2.7 Regional differences

Several regional differences have been exemplified in Section 4.4. Just as they affect the individual pupils, they affect the teacher through the pupils but also directly. The national curriculum passed in 1994 opened up a possibility for increasing differentiation between schools and regions. Obviously authorities judged this trend to be less positive, since a new more explicit curriculum for the comprehensive school was passed already in 2004, or in other words before the effects of the previous one could be properly evaluated. This new framework curriculum does not allow for cultural or regional differentiation like the curriculum of 1994 did, hence there should not be an immediate risk for an increase in the historical knowledge gap between rural and urban communities. According to the analysis presented by Brunell (2007; cf. Tuokko, 2007) these regional differences are still evident in the achievement patterns in the 2003 PISA-test among pupils representing different regions in Swedish-Finland. Brunell draws the conclusion that the variation in scores is due to differences in socio-economic status between the regions. As proposed earlier, these differences might not be only of socio-economic character, but also of cultural character.

One needs to question whether this strive towards uniformity is the best way to guarantee the much stressed equality as far as language education is concerned. A perhaps more important means of reaching the same goal would be to study these possible cultural differences and their effects in order to raise teaching professionals' and administrators' awareness in this field.

Diverging from the traditional pattern, the summary of these theoretical chapters is presented in the next chapter as an introduction to the research questions.

6 Methodology

In this chapter the research questions and operational questions are presented as well as the methodological considerations and procedures used in the two empirical parts of this study.

6.1 Research questions

The research questions guiding this study are developed by drawing on the theoretical discussion presented in Chapters 2 to 5. The key questions are complex and require operationalisation. The relationship between the concrete operational questions (OQs) and the actual research questions (RQs) is illustrated and discussed. This use of research questions at two different levels is possible from a phenomenological point of view.

To make the explanations of the choices made in this section more transparent Figure 12 presents a modified version of the model presented in Section 1.2. In Figure 12 the main areas chosen for study are presented. The notions ‘culture’ and ‘language exposure’ have been replaced by ‘social context-other actors’ and ‘exposure-language outside school’, as these concepts represent the specific purpose of the investigation more adequately. Values and educational rationale (discussed in Section 3.1) are studied only to the extent they are reflected in curricula, teaching materials, media, and by other actors.

As mentioned earlier, the main aim of the project is to gain knowledge of some of the conditions for EFL learning and professional development in the beginner-ELT classroom. For this purpose it was decided that the study would have two foci, one on the starting-points of young novice EFL learners (A) and the other on the starting-points for EFL planning and teaching of their teachers (B). As can be seen in the model below, language learning is regarded as part of a whole (cf. e.g. van Lier, 2004a) where teachers and pupils alike are important contributors, both of them shaping the process with their personal characteristics and experiences. External factors exhibit influence on teachers and pupils and thus influence the learning process indirectly, but also exhibit continuous direct influence. On the basis of the theory reviewed some of the factors believed to exhibit influence on the second language learning process were chosen for this study.

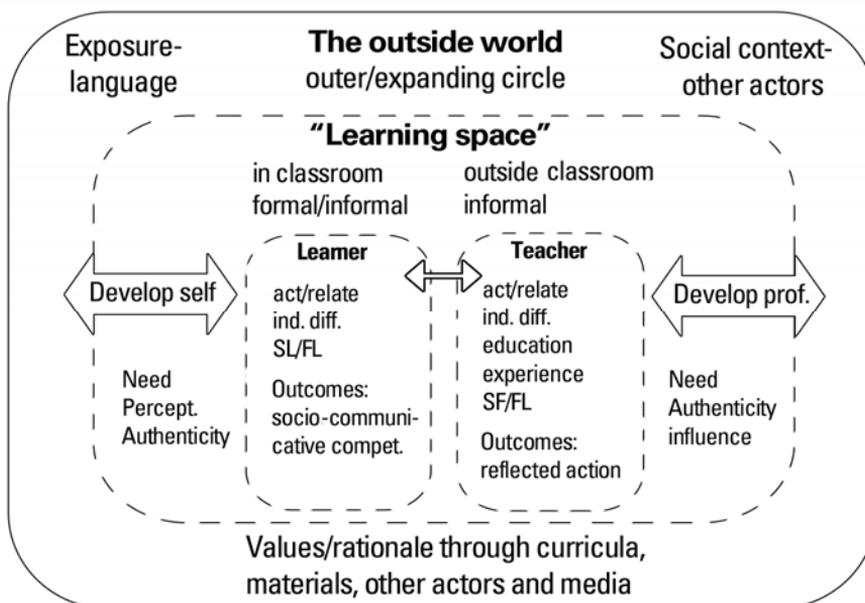


Figure 12. Conditions for learning in EFL education

In the introductory theoretical chapters it is made explicit that the EFL learner of the future is expected to take an active role both in relation to forming the aims and the set-up of the learning situation and in relation to the actual learning activity. Important questions (learner RQs) to be discussed in this context are:

- the status of English (SL/FL) among young learners in Swedish Finland
- the possibilities for pupils to function as active and reflective learners
- the conditions for making EFL learning need-based and authentic for these learners
- the conditions for working towards realistic and favourable attitudes towards representatives of other cultures.

The second focus is on the conditions for the primary EFL teacher. The main question emerging here is to what extent the perceived conditions make it possible for the teacher to act as the crucial facilitator in the EFL classroom of the future. In this context it becomes relevant to study (teacher RQs) how primary school EFL teachers:

- adapt their teaching to their learners (initial knowledge, attitudes, cognitive level),
- use teaching materials as an aid rather than a controlling force,
- find support for their own continuous development in goal-oriented curricula,
- experience that education and experiences have given them the basis they need in order to develop professionally,

- find support for continuous development among colleagues and other actors, and
- express their role/confidence in the English as a foreign language teaching process.

In order to be able to discuss these research questions the concrete starting-points of learners and teachers need to be studied. The following more concrete and researchable questions are directly related to the conditions of the learners (OQs for Study A):

- To what extent are pupils aware of being exposed to English outside school?
- Through what media are they aware of being exposed to English?
- What kind of language skills have they gained (receptive-productive) through exposure outside school?
- What kind of knowledge and attitudes do these pupils express about the English language, English-speaking countries and culture?

Since the aim is to find out about the starting-points it is reasonable to study pupils who have not yet engaged in formal EFL teaching. Therefore relations connected to the formal EFL classroom are not directly studied. E.g. the relation teacher-pupil is not valid as an object of study, even though it (as shown in Figure 12) is at the core of the learning process. Such learner related aspects are addressed in the teacher interviews.

The following concrete research questions (OQs for Study B) were used to gain an initial understanding about the starting-points of teachers. They were asked to express their views on the following questions:

- How do pupils affect how they plan EFL teaching?
- How do materials affect how they plan EFL teaching?
- How do curricula affect how they plan EFL teaching?
- How do education and experiences affect how they plan EFL teaching?
- How do actors in the social context affect how they work in the EFL classroom?
- What factors do they describe as critical for the outcome of EFL teaching?

In Figure 13 below the relation between the OQs and the RQs is made visible. Only explicit relations are illustrated, even though also implicit relations might be brought to discussion in Chapters 8 and 9.

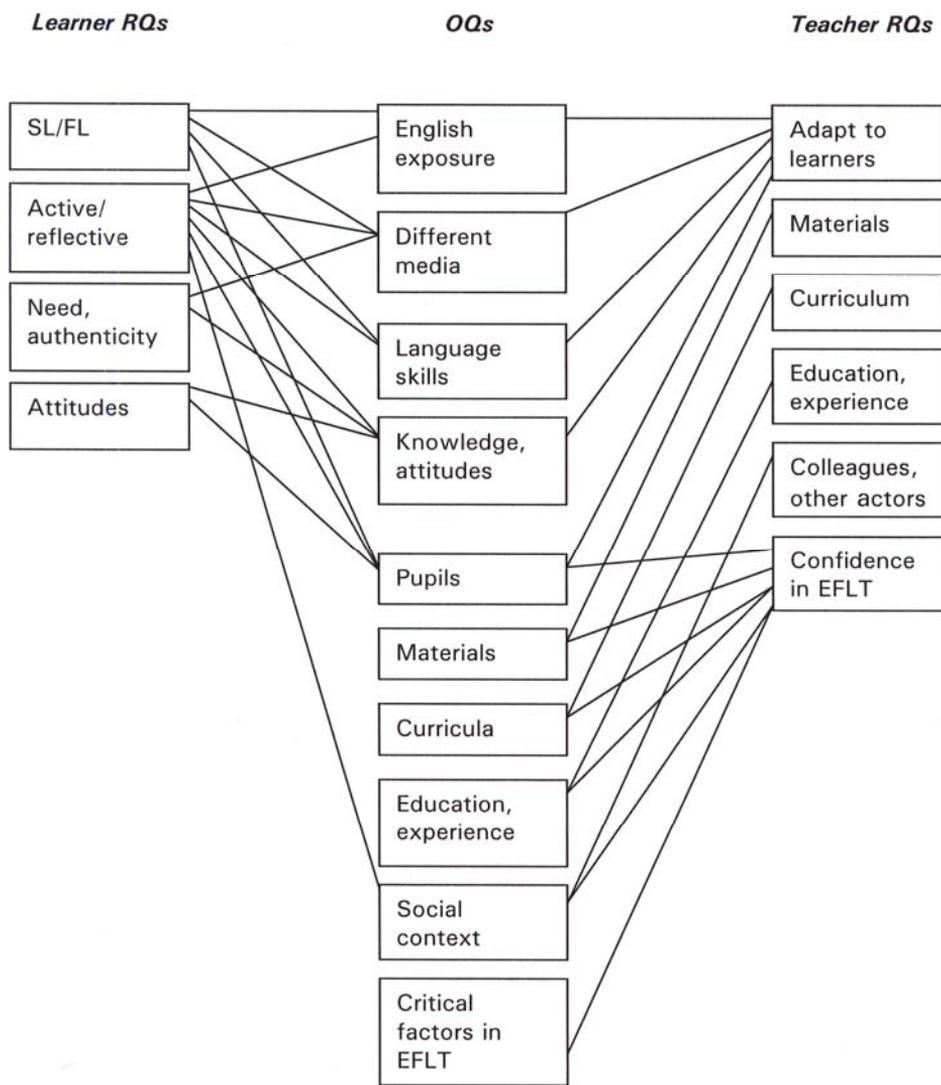


Figure 13. The explicit relations between RQs and OQs in the study

Figure 13 illustrates the complexity of the issues brought forward in the research questions and how they relate to the concrete operational questions. This variety of questions requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. These considerations will be dealt with in the next chapter.

6.2 Methods

The specific research questions above cover both pupil and teacher perspectives. Jonsson (2002, p. 127, 155, cf. Imsen, 2000, p. 409-410) points out that pupils have often been studied just as objects, which she claims is no longer a valid

approach in this era of growing individualisation, where pupils share the responsibility for their own learning with other adult actors. Hence it becomes just as important to listen to pupils’ “voices”, i.e. experiences and values as to the teachers’ descriptions and classifications of them. It is interesting to note that during the last century numerous authors within the field of human sciences have argued for the need to apply methods that take into account the complexities of human interaction (Polkinghorne, 1983). In 1979 Bronfenbrenner (e.g. pp. 56-82) argued not only for the importance of regarding both actors in a dyad as active subjects but also for a focus on the complex patterns of interpersonal relations for a better account of the nature of human development and learning. These perspectives have to some extent influenced the empirical approach, but the variety of specific research questions and difference in roles and maturity between the two main groups of actors in this study has made it necessary to employ different methods when gathering information from pupils and teachers (see descriptions of Study A and Study B below). In the choice of research methods the aim has been to design age-appropriate instruments that identify potential actors and relations in relevant EFL learning settings and thus to regard both types of actors as subjects rather than objects (learners both of them).

Table 4. Brief outline of the main characteristics of study A and study B in this project

	Study A	Study B
<i>Sample</i>	Pupils in grade 4	Teachers of English in grade 5
<i>Time</i>	Spring 1999	Spring 2000
<i>Instrument</i>	Test and Questionnaire	Interview
<i>Analysis</i>	Quantitative (SPSS), Qualitative	Qualitative (N’Vivo)

The methods used and considerations made within each study are discussed in more detail in the following sections, starting with the learner-centred study (study A), however, the approach to the project at large can be classified as abductive⁴⁰, since the researcher’s own theoretical basis has grown

⁴⁰ Polkinghorne (1983, pp. 121-123) names three types of inference: Abduction, induction and deduction. Abduction can be described as the dialectic movement between discovery and justification in the research process, recognizing the importance of creative and intuitive stages as well as theoretical stages. The concept can be applied in the process of hypothesis formation, but can also be used to describe the procedures applied in a

simultaneously with the process of carrying out the empirical research and analysing the results.

6.2.1 Study A: Learners

Planning

Considering the research questions connected to study A, a survey of mainly quantitative character was considered the most appropriate means of collecting data. The survey would have to consist of both a questionnaire and a small language test. Both instruments ought to be easy to administer to a large number of pupils and should not demand the presence of the researcher.

Sample

Study A was conducted in spring 1999 with 351 fourth-grade pupils (10-year-olds) in rural and urban Swedish-speaking areas of Finland. To ensure a probability sample with the limited personal and economic resources available, stratified cluster sampling was used to select the sample (cf. Cohen & Manion, 1994, pp. 86-88). Hence, the test was distributed to all fourth-grade pupils in schools chosen through the following procedure: All Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland were divided into different groups based upon which one of four geographical districts they represented: the west coast (Österbotten), south-west coast (Åboland), Helsinki region (Nyland), and south-east coast (Östra Nyland). Within these areas the schools were further divided into urban and rural ones, on the basis of information available from the Statistics Finland (Tilastokeskus, 1999, pp. 62-70). Within these groups the schools/classes were randomly chosen, until there was an approximate equal proportion of pupils representing the two main regions that I have chosen to call South (south-west coast, Helsinki region, south-east coast) and West (west coast), and urban-rural municipalities (see Figure 7 p. 41). The aim was, thus, to get approximately equal proportions of pupils, not of schools, even though the tests, for pragmatic reasons, were administered to the pupils in the schools, during lesson time. These equal proportions were seen as important, in order not to limit the statistical treatment of the material too much. The distribution of the respondents were as described below:

Table 5. Background variables, categories and frequencies in the learner sample

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Categories (coding)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>% of whole sample</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Female (2)	188	53.6
	Male (1)	163	46.4
<i>Region</i>	West (1)	159	45.3
	South (2)	192	54.7
<i>Degree of urbanisation</i>	Rural (1)	162	46.2
	Urban (2)	189	53.8
<i>Domestic language/s</i>	Swedish (1)	207	59.0
	Finnish (2)	12	3.4
	Swedish and Finnish (3)	108	30.8
	Swedish and other (4)	8	2.3
	Finnish and other (5)	1	0.3
	Swedish, Finnish and other (6)	5	1.4
	Other (7)	10	2.8

The so-called Swedish “enclaves” (Swedish-medium schools in otherwise Finnish-speaking areas) and the Åland Islands were excluded from this study, since most of those schools offered English from grade 3 or 4, which would make relevant comparisons difficult. The sample chosen represented approx. 9 % of the total population of fourth-graders in Swedish-medium schools in Finland at the time when the study was conducted.

Instrument and instructions

The primary aim of the study was to estimate the initial skills in English, attitudes towards and familiarity with life and institutions in the English-speaking world among fourth-graders before they begin their studies of English in grade 5 (11-year-olds). For this purpose an instrument was created (Appendix 1). The test contained a vocabulary production task (PV), a listening comprehension test (LC), some background information about the respondents, a list of potential sources of exposure to the English language, questions related to attitude towards and knowledge of English-speaking countries. The aim was to design an instrument that would be simple in design and distribution, manageable for young learners, while at the same time providing the researcher with a wide spectrum of relevant data.

In the PV test respondents were asked to write down as many English words and phrases they could think of during ten minutes. It was pointed out that the spelling was not of any crucial importance. The respondents were also asked to indicate, to what extent they felt they knew the word or phrase and to try to explain the meaning of the word/phrase in Swedish (the school language and also mother tongue of a majority of the pupils). The LC test was included to make comparisons between vocabulary production skills and listening comprehension skills possible.

The LC test contained three short text extracts designed for this purpose (see Appendix 2.). The first one was designed to be the easiest of the three. It is short (32 words tokens), contains short clauses, very frequent vocabulary and describes a character familiar to most children in Swedish-medium schools in Finland (Pippi Longstocking). The second one is longer (90 word items), deals with a made-up character, but the vocabulary is concrete and should be easy to visualise. The third extract is not any longer (88 word items), but it features more characters and stretches over a longer period of time. It also contains some more complex sentences and more demanding vocabulary for young beginning learners. All extracts were read on tape by a native speaker of English. The fairly neutral General American accent of this person was believed to be perceived as slightly more familiar (and thus possibly causing less anxiety) to the respondents (cf. Forsman, 2004) than e.g. Received Pronunciation. In order to measure the listening comprehension skills of the respondents, questions demanding an increasing amount of production and complex understanding were formulated. The kind of answers expected varied from closed (circle) to open (full sentence) answers.

The choice of potential sources of exposure to English in the questionnaire was guided by discussions with first and second language acquisition research colleagues and findings in national studies (Julkunen, 1998a; Pitkänen, 1991). The potential sources of exposure to English listed were English popular music, English TV programmes, English-speaking tourists, computers, written material (such as books, magazines, leaflets, advertisements), friends/at home, trip abroad, radio programmes, guests (as distinguished from the previously mentioned use with friends and/or in the family circle). The respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they experienced being exposed to English thorough each of these sources, by choosing one of 3-5 set alternatives (see Appendix 1). The question concerning trips abroad to English-speaking countries did not follow this pattern, but only included the alternatives 'yes' and 'no' and clarifying questions regarding country visited and length of stay. The questionnaire also included an item where teachers were asked to indicate if the pupil had taken part in any kind of extra-curricular English club.

The last section in the questionnaire included questions relating to the respondents' knowledge about English-speaking countries, attitudes towards speakers of English and the English language. The wording of the instructions given in the test was discussed with the pilot groups after they had completed the test, as well as during research student seminars. Also other aspects of test construction mentioned by the pilot groups were taken into account in the final version. Thus, adequate wording and simplicity of design was achieved.

To ensure as equal conditions for the respondents to the test as possible, written guidelines were sent to the teachers (Appendix 3) along with the test-questionnaires and the listening comprehension tape. The teachers were required to give some initial instructions, to keep track of the time available for each task and to start the listening comprehension tape. Necessary written instructions were also given to the pupils in the questionnaire.

The pilot tests and the first real test I administered myself, in order to check that the guidelines sent to the teachers were sufficient and correct. On the basis of this procedure it is not possible to guarantee that all respondents taking part in study A were given an equal treatment, but, provided the instructions were followed, the test conditions ought to have been more or less the same. No teacher informed me that the respondents had had any problems related to the instrument design when taking in the test.

Validity and reliability of the instrument

In the construction of the test the following main guidelines were followed:

- a) The test ought to be easy to administer and the testing event should not last more than one lesson (approx. 45 minutes).
- b) “Beginners” with no experience of formal English instruction ought to be able to cope with the test.
- c) The test should not contain complex or long instructions.
- d) The test should not be biased for gender or locality.

Thus, the instrument created was fairly simple and short, but nevertheless, the pilot study indicated that it seemed to be sufficiently valid and reliable for this purpose, especially considering the fact that these results will be regarded together with the teachers’ perceptions of these issues. Hence, these aspects will be viewed from two perspectives, in order to increase reliability.

During Study B (see Section 6.2.2) some missing background information about the respondents was completed.

Coding

The closed questions⁴¹ in the questionnaire were pre-coded, whereas the open-ended ones and the test questions related to language skills were post-coded. For this latter category the results were first qualitatively analysed and then placed into categories. The production task was simply coded according to number of different words (types), recognizable as English, produced by the respondent. This means that scores were awarded for items, even though they were spelt in the most creative ways and/or the meaning of them vague, erroneous or even missing, e.g. *strong enagt*, with the translation *svårt* (Eng. difficult) supplied. The words given with correct meaning were also coded as a separate variable and the count includes all words given with at least one (of possibly several) correct meanings.

⁴¹ Moore (1997, p. 56) uses the terms open and closed questions. Cohen and Manion (1994, pp. 276-277) uses the terms ‘fixed-alternative’ items and open-ended items for the same kinds of questions.

The system for awarding scores in the listening comprehension can be found in Appendix 4. For the open questions the maximum score was based on the most exhaustive answer possible (rather than the most exhaustive actually created by the respondents). The maximum possible score of points for the first text extract was 4 and 12 points each for the second and third text extracts, resulting in a possible maximum score of 28 points.

Concerning the relative amount and kind of input received by the respondents – ranging from 1 (depending on question: never, hardly ever) –5 (depending on question: every day, almost every night, every month, at least every second month)⁴² for each potential source of input - a “sum-variable” named Total English Exposure (TEE) ranging from 1-5 was created out of the mean value of eight of these questions (the variable ‘club’ was not included). In calculating this mean it was taken into account that not all respondents had answered all questions and the value of the new variable was calculated according to how many questions the respondents had answered.

Concerning the questions related to factual knowledge about Great Britain and the United States one point was awarded for each statement that could be verified as a factual statement by means of available encyclopaedia (e.g. Encyclopaedia Britannica, wikipedia), statistics and so forth. In other words, this concerned only statements belonging to the most superficial category (cf. Tornberg, 2000) of sociocultural knowledge. The main reasons for this choice were that these types of facts were most suited for quantifying and that it was in accordance with the aims of the study to investigate how different sources of English exposure contribute to pupils’ knowledge of English-speaking countries.

In the question related to attitudes towards English-speaking countries the statements were coded as positive (3), neutral (2), or negative (1). The mean value was then calculated and means between 1 and 1,5 were coded as negative, means between 1,6 and 2,4 as neutral and mean from 2,5 to 3 were coded as positive. The single item related to attitudes to the English language was coded as mentioned for the previous attitude question, of which it was actually a part.

The domestic languages mentioned by the pupils in an open-ended question were coded into the seven different categories shown in Table 5 (p. 117). Table 5 also gives the code for each of the categories. The languages referred to as ‘other’ in the coding were e.g. English, Somali, Vietnamese and Russian. The reason why English was not coded as a separate category in its own right, was a) that the group would have been too small for statistical computing and b) that the children with a domestic language other than Swedish and/or Finnish in a Finland-Swedish context often are used to English as a lingua franca. The categories and codes of the other background variables (gender, degree of

⁴² Questions (section C in instrument) 7-10 included only 2-3 alternative answers, but they were coded according to the same principle: 1 indicating a minimum of exposure and 5 the maximum (or indeed any experienced exposure in the case of question 10). The variable concerning experienced exposure to English through computers was reached by computing the answers to questions 6 and 7, resulting in a seven-graded scale. The data gathered on questions 11-12 proved to be too inconsistent to make reliable coding possible, therefore the coding regarding trips/visits abroad is only based upon the nominal scale yes/no answer on question 10.

urbanisation, region) are also shown in Table 5.

Analysis

The analysis was carried out to explore possible degrees of relationships in the collected data, rather than to test hypotheses in a traditional sense. According to Cohen and Manion (1994, p.135-136) correlation techniques are particularly useful in the above mentioned type of educational research. The statistical computer software SPSS was used for assistance in the process. Since the data was mainly at nominal and ordinal scale levels (Moore, 1997, p. 175-179) the main statistical measures chosen were the contingency correlation coefficient (C) and the Spearman rank correlation (ρ ⁴³) (Siegel, 1956, pp. 196-213; Kinnear & Gray, 1998, pp. 107, 118-119). These measures are appropriate for my data since they “make no assumption about the shape of the population from which the scores were drawn” (Siegel, 1956, p. 196).

The contingency coefficient is applied to data of mainly nominal character. Siegel regards it as the most suited measure of correlation for data where at least one of the variables represents nominal scale data. C does not assume an underlying continuity of the variable values. For data at ordinal scale level it is not the most appropriate, since there are several limitations to the measure. Some limitations pointed out by Siegel (1956, p. 201) and judged relevant in the study are:

- Even though C can attain a level of zero association it is incapable of attaining values expressing total unity.
- Two C-values are not directly comparable unless they have been gained from contingency tables of exactly the same size.
- C is not directly comparable to other correlation measures, such as the Spearman ρ or the Pearson r .

Because of these limitations the Spearman rank correlation coefficient is more suited for correlations for data where both variables represent ordinal scale level data, to make ranking possible. As indicated in the discussion above, the main rule followed in applying particular correlation measures to the data has been to use measures appropriate for the scale level of the data. There are some instances where deviations from this rule have been accepted to make comparisons within larger sets of data possible. In such cases C has been applied also to ordinal scale correlations and ρ has been applied to data where one of the variables is represented as dichotomised, but in fact represents an underlying continuity.

According to Siegel (1956, p. 213) the efficiency of ρ is about 91 percent of the Pearson r . This means that r may reveal correlations with a smaller sample than ρ . Pearson r can be regarded as the most powerful means of correlation, but it requires interval scale level and assumes normal distribution of the population.

There is always reason to be cautious when interpreting correlation results.

⁴³ I have chosen to use this traditional abbreviation of the Spearman rank correlation coefficient, rather than the more recent abbreviation r_s .

Cohen and Manion stress three reasons for caution. First of all, one cannot make “cause and effect”-judgements on the basis of (nominal and) ordinal data correlation values, since the number itself does not tell us which variable influences which, but only if there is a statistical association (Moore, 1997, pp. 322-324; Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 132). Secondly, one ought to take care not to confuse the p-value with percentage, but keep in mind that the strength of association may be reached by calculating the square of the correlation value (Cohen & Manion, 1994, pp. 138-139). Thirdly, it is pointed out that a correlation value “is not be interpreted in any absolute sense” (Cohen and Manion 1994, p. 139). Since many factors might influence the correlation value, correlation values might differ between different samples in the same population.

When interpreting the correlation results in an exploratory study, two aspects have to be taken into consideration: the strength of the correlation value and the statistical significance. Correlation values have a theoretically possible range of variation between -1 and +1, indicating total negative and positive association respectively. In the presentation of results the judgments of significance have been based upon the following guidelines provided by Cohen and Manion (1994, pp. 139-140):

Correlation values from .20 to .35	Indicate weak association of relevance for exploration, not for prediction
Correlation values from .35 to .65	Indicate moderate statistically significant association crude group predictions possible

In prediction studies correlation values even higher than .65 are often wished for, but in exploratory studies also values of the lower size are of interest, as described above.

The measure of statistical significance is of importance if one wants to discuss the results gathered from a sample in relation to the parent population (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 137). With a larger sample the likelihood is greater to reach statistically significant results. In the case of correlations, the statistical significance measure is an indication of “whether or not the correlation is different from zero at a given level of confidence” (ibid, p. 138), i.e. “not likely to happen just by chance” (Moore, 1997, p. 490), which is not necessarily the same as important. In this study significance level has been set to .01 or lower and the p-value is usually given in relation to the correlation values. In some cases statistical significance at the appropriate level is indicated with ‘***’. Non-significant correlations are indicated with the abbreviation ‘n.s’.

Qualitative analysis of the types of phrases was carried out manually with a sample of 64 respondents, representing both genders, both regions and urban/rural backgrounds. The phrases used by these respondents were transcribed and paper matrixes (each containing one multi-word unit and a numeric code conveying information about the respondent, such as number, domestic language, gender, region, urban/rural status) made. These slips of paper were manually elaborated. The categories to evolve are mainly data

driven, but show traces of the researcher's familiarity with some linguistic (functional and philosophical) divisions (Nattinger & De Carrico, 1992; Searle, 1969; van Ek, 1976; CEFR, 2001) of multi-word units. All of these were fairly straightforward and should be useful for educational purposes. A first analysis resulted in some interesting, but not necessary compatible categories. Therefore, a reassessment of some of these categories was made at a later point in time, resulting in some adjustments of the material and relabelling of categories. At this point a conscious choice was also made to achieve an analysis of educational relevance rather than linguistic.

Qualitative analysis of the respondents' answers to the questions on differences and similarities between Great Britain and the United States of America has also been carried out. However, the choice was later made only to include the result on differences in this presentation, since the result on similarities did not contribute to the richness of the results. In this qualitative analysis all layers of culturally related knowledge (even misconceptions, stereotypes) have been included, since they are expected to contribute to the understanding of pupils' starting-point regarding sociocultural knowledge and attitudes.

The process of analysis is clearly inspired by the sociocultural domains specified in CEFR (pp. 102-103), but the nature of the data has been the most influential criterion for classification. The categories to emerge do not exclude one another totally, but they all reflect qualitatively different perspectives. Hence, it was possible to include pupils' answers in several categories, if these statements contained several distinct perspectives. The quotations chosen to exemplify the categories have been carefully translated to convey as much of the original content as possible. The choice has been made to produce the most authentic translation possible, rather than the most fluent or linguistically appealing one. This means that I have also chosen to include linguistic oddities that I believe contribute to the readers' understanding of the data and the age group it represents. The software N'Vivo has been used as an aid in this qualitative analysis.

Ethical aspects

In this section some relevant questions posed by Kvale (1997, pp.105, 113) will be discussed. The group of pupils studied cannot be expected to directly benefit from the outcomes of this study. However, other populations of learners of English as a foreign language in the Swedish-medium school in Finland, their teachers and possibly also other adult target groups can be expected to benefit from these results. It is also highly unlikely that any respondent in this study would physically or mentally suffer from the experience of taking part in the test and/or from the results generated through it. In fact, it is even possible that some informal positive effects might be experienced by the pupils as a result of the heightened awareness of the complexities of the EFL learning situation raised through the administration of this test and the teacher interview (Study B). However, it has not been an aim to try to verify any such side-effect of these studies. On the basis of the expected positive effects of the results for a large population of people and the absence of negative effects on the sample of respondents Study A can be considered to be constructed and administered in accordance with existing rules on ethics in educational research.

In my opinion, there is always some kind of a “researcher effect” on every study, regardless of whether the data gathered and the processes of analysis are more quantitative or qualitative in nature. The crucial aspect here is to explicitly point out what the researcher has done, with what in mind, and from what perspective (i.e. theoretical and experiential background). The effect of the researcher on the results in this study is evident in the choice of focus in the instrument itself and also in the interpretations of both quantitative and qualitative results. However, methodological procedures, the theoretical basis of and background information possessed by the researcher has been fairly well outlined. Therefore there should not be any great risk of an implicit researcher effect in Study A.

The learner respondents in this study did not sign any written document of agreement, but every school headmaster was fully informed about the aims, procedures and expected outcomes of the project. All the administering teachers were given written information about the project. In some schools a written agreement between the school and the researcher was signed when that was deemed necessary by the school/local authorities. In other schools these agreements were oral. The researcher also offered the schools the possibility to send a letter of information to the parents, but this was generally not used. Taking part in the study was voluntary for the pupils, but exactly how they were informed about this was up to the individual administering teacher. To my knowledge all pupils present in the class (some were ill) took part in the test.

There was no way of providing any absolute guarantee of anonymity of respondents, however, the confidential treatment of the results has been fairly well guarded. The only weak link here is the phase when the instruments were collected by the administering teachers and sent by post to the researcher. Out of concern for the confidential treatment of the results promised to the respondents only the number attached to each respondent will appear in the presentation of the qualitative results. No other information concerning the individuals will be offered. In the quantitative presentations however, comparisons with background variables can safely be made, since they involve the whole sample or at least such a large group that individuals cannot be singled out.

During analysis a co-examiner was used under two circumstances:

- a) when the interpretation of written data was very ambiguous a second experienced evaluator of text was called upon. If the ambiguity remained the item was discarded (very few cases).
- b) when the researcher wanted a second opinion on the choice of quotations to include in the presentation of results.

6.2.2 Study B: Teachers

Planning

For the teacher-centred Study B, a semi-structured interview mode was chosen as a data collection instrument for two main reasons. The first reason was the wish to ensure a high response rate to the many open-ended questions triggered by the research questions. The second reason was that the direct interaction during the interview was considered highly valuable, because of the possibilities it provided to follow up interesting leads and to specify questions, which might

be necessary due to the many areas of focus covered by the research questions. The interview was regarded a most appropriate means of gathering knowledge about teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes in relation to the conditions of EFL teaching. (cf. Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 272)

The above mentioned reasons were judged as more prominent than the considerations related to the major disadvantage of subjectivity traditionally mentioned in relation to research interviews. When the aim of the interview is to obtain a deeper insight into the views of teachers, subjectivity is not a major obstacle in the interview situation, but more so in the phase of analysis. To limit possible interviewer-bias a semi-structured interview was chosen. The reasons for choosing a rather strict semi-structured interview mode were also related to the number of topics covered, the interviewer's limited familiarity with qualitative interview techniques, and the wish for some flexibility in the procedure. The researcher carried out all the interviews personally.

Sample

The nineteen teachers finally chosen to be interviewed were all from the schools involved in the test with the pupils. That was done in order to make possible comparisons between the points of views of the teachers and the results and opinions of the pupils and as a means of validating some results by provision of several perspectives. That also meant that the proportions of teachers representing different geographic areas (West-South) and types of schools (urban-rural) are not exactly equal. The teachers do, however, represent the whole range of West-South, urban-rural, varying class/school size, and differences in teaching experience. Hence, the different kinds of working environments of teachers of English from grade 5 in Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland can be said to be acceptably represented by the participating teachers.

Considering the fact that the selection of teachers is based on the sampling procedure in study A, I would characterise the sampling procedure in this case as non-probability quota sampling (cf. Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 89). It should also be noted that the teachers selected are fewer than the initial number of schools that participated in study A, since some of the schools where the test was conducted only teach grades 1–4, and after that pupils move to a central school. It was not regarded as necessary or even ethically correct, to interview these teachers concerning just a few of their pupils.

Table 6. Background variables in the teacher sample

Variable	Quality	N
<i>Gender</i>	Male	5
	Female	14
<i>Region</i>	West	10
	South	9
<i>Degree of urbanisation</i>	Urban	7
	Rural	12
<i>Years of teaching</i>	0-10 years	5
	11-20 years	8
	21 or more	6

All teachers were contacted beforehand by phone, in order to ensure their participation in the interview and to set up a suitable time for the interview. All teachers asked to participate agreed (n=20). However, one was later screened out, because she had had a leave of absence during the pupils' first term of English instruction. A week before the interview letters were sent to the participants, confirming the time and place of the interview and also, in some cases, including a list of required background information about the pupils, i.e. information that was missing in their questionnaires, e.g. gender, participation in club, etc.

Interview guide

An interview guide (Appendix 5) was constructed on the basis of the aims mentioned earlier. In the construction of the interview guide the guidelines mentioned in Kvale (1997, pp. 220) were followed. The guide contained several open-ended questions, ranging from general to specific, and direct to indirect (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 277), on each area of focus, and was to be followed chronologically, but did also allow for further enquiries, such as questions of more specific interest, check-ups and provocations, when necessary (Kvale, 1997). The questions were arranged in such an order that they began with the ones considered the least threatening and the most expected by the teachers. This was done to make the interviewees feel more confident and relaxed.

The interview guide was elaborated during a general research student seminar, in which also primary school teachers took part, and gave feedback to the preliminary plan. It was then further elaborated and feedback provided during subsequent subject specific seminars. Different parts of it were also tried out on

teacher colleagues (both primary and secondary school teachers), but it was not, however, tried out as a whole on any occasion. The guide was designed for an interview planned to last approximately 45 minutes.

Interview situation

The exact physical location of the interview was chosen by the teacher and researcher together, so that it satisfied the following criteria:

- a) The teacher had to feel secure, unrestrained.
- b) A good quality on the recorded interview ought to be possible.
- c) A table (or other suitable surface) and at least two chairs had to be available.

An optional criterion was that relevant teaching material preferably could be available. This criterion was not always satisfied, mainly because teachers tend to store different kinds of material in different places. The other criteria were fulfilled satisfactorily in all cases, except one, where the noise-level occasionally became disturbing and other people entered the room, demanding the interviewee's undivided attention. Also in some of the other situations other people entered the room, but in these situations it did not seem to have a disturbing effect on either the concentration or the openness of the participants.

Before the interview, the interviewees were informed that the focus was going to be on the conditions of initial English teaching/studies in grade 5 in Swedish-medium schools in Finland. The areas of focus were briefly presented. It was emphasised that the teachers' own ideas and perceptions were of the utmost interest, not what teachers generally express, or colleagues are interested in. After that the teacher's consent to having the interview tape-recorded was confirmed. They had also been informed about this procedure in advance, and hence only two of the teachers commented on it, but all gave their consent.

The social and emotional atmosphere varied from interview to interview, and also during the interviews, but they all seemed to follow the same pattern in the sense that the atmosphere moved from more formal to less formal, as the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee moved from purely professional to more personal. During some interviews the relationship between the participants was a mixture of professional and personal from the very start, but at no point in any interview did the relationship become private. All teachers showed a willingness to share their knowledge, and several of them seemed to become more personally engaged and interested in the questions discussed as the interview progressed.

The researcher tried to remain as neutral as possible (in terms of both verbal and non-verbal expressions) during the interviews, in order not to influence the interviewee in any direction. However, this was not always possible, since positive encouragement, specific follow-up questions and even gentle provocation sometimes were needed to get spontaneous and non-ambiguous answers. It was sometimes experienced as difficult not to get so engaged in the issue being addressed that the interview would become an "equal sharing of ideas", which was not the idea. Therefore, I tried to save my own views or hints until after the interview, often finding that I had forgotten what I wanted to

share, which at the time felt a bit frustrating.

Another challenge was to keep the interviewee from rambling away from the essence of a question. It was sometimes difficult to decide when to try to guide the interviewee back to the question at hand. Teachers apparently enjoy telling “stories”, which at a surface level do not always seem to be very relevant to the topic under discussion. On a deeper level, however, these stories might say a lot about e.g. a teacher’s attitudes. The stories were also found to be important, because they always seemed to make the teacher more relaxed and open.

Transcription and translation

Preliminary transcriptions of some of the interviews were made by a research assistant. They were later checked and completed (when necessary) by the researcher, since it was considered a valuable opportunity to re-familiarise with the content of the interviews. The rest of the interviews the researcher transcribed from the start herself. The content – usually the exact wording – of the interviews were transcribed. Sometimes unnecessary repetitions were left out, e.g. ...like...like..., like when the pupils... Laughter and sighs were also marked in the transcripts, but otherwise no paralinguistic features. The “engagement sounds” or single (encouraging) words by the interviewer have been indicated in the transcriptions in the following manner: *you know /m/ one feels*. Longer stretches of speech by the interviewer are indicated with an initial ‘I.’.

In the translation of quotations square brackets are used to indicate clarifying comments or additions, e.g. *to set [the pupils] to work*. [...] is used to indicate that the original statement has been shortened in the presented form, whereas ... is to be interpreted as a marked pause. Standard brackets are used when the Swedish original is included for reference in the text. The first principle followed in translating the included quotations has been to convey the message of the original statement as closely as possible. The second principle followed was one of readability and accessibility of the included quotations, i.e. the translations ought to be written in a fairly easily accessible form. In cases where these two principles stood in conflict, the first principle was given higher priority.

Analysis

The process of analysis can be said to be mainly data-driven, with the exception that it has used the themes/main questions indicated in the interview guide as a point of departure. The method of analysis could to some extent be said to be hermeneutic-phenomenological since through an interpretative approach it focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of some of the areas relevant to the variation of conditions for teaching EFL in a Swedish-medium context in Finland, rather than focussing on the profiles of individual teachers. The analysis has been inspired by the hermeneutic theory of Ricoeur, as it has been applied by Geanellos (2000) and Rasmussen (September 2000). The two main processes of analysis are graphically described below.

Explaining what the text says

Interpreting the meaning

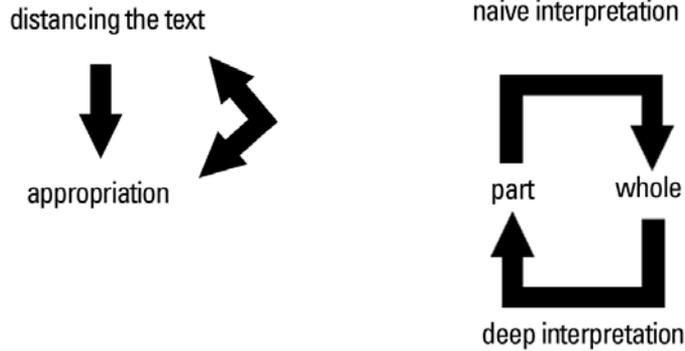


Figure 14. Presentation of the processes of analysis

A distance to the recorded data is reached through transcription into written text, and thus freeing the text from the authors' intentions and from the local context where it was created. The next step in the process is appropriation, i.e. making the text one's own. These two opposite processes encourage a dialectic process of interpretation, following the steps of focussing on what the text says (explaining), naïve understanding, and deep understanding (interpretation). The level of explanation is concerned with what the text says, whereas the other two are concerned with what the text really is about. A naïve interpretation or understanding is reached when elements of the text are related to one another and to the whole. The deep level of interpretation is reached through repeated switches of perspective between part and whole, to ensure that the phenomenon under study is interpreted from as many angles as possible and it is possible to relate the interpretation to phenomena outside the text. At this point the analysis moves beyond the text of the original data. (Geanellos, 2000, pp. 113-115; cf. Polkinghorne, 1983)

Interpretation according to these principles was tried out manually with four of the teacher interviews. This process turned out to be too laborious and time-consuming for being appropriate to use on the whole data. Therefore it was decided to use computer software as an aid and to categorise the data in order to manage the process of analysis.

The transcribed interviews were inserted in the N'Vivo software, where organisation and categorisation of the interview data was carried out. The first rough organisation in themes was based on the interview questions and achieved with the help of the so-called tree nodes available in the system. Categorisation was carried out on the data within each of those rough themes. The qualitatively different categories to emerge within these "ready-made" themes were purely data-driven. Once the first categorisation of the data had been made the analysis

of the pattern to emerge was carried further with the help of the memo-function. Moving from the overall view of the data, through a stage of surface level detailed understanding, interpretation through categorisation, finally ending up with a slightly more distanced analysis of the results. One could say that the process described above constitutes the levels of describing and interpreting the data. However, the analysis could perhaps be said to be at a more naïve level at this point in the process.

The process of finding the actual presentation mode can be said to constitute a further cycle of analysis, i.e. taking a potential reader into account made it necessary to view both parts and whole from a different perspective, hopefully resulting in a more distanced/balanced mode of presentation. In the discussion of the results, this more objective presentation of data gives way also to personal interpretations based on the researcher's background knowledge (see theoretical background), i.e. the deep kind of interpretation mentioned above. One could say that an active engagement in examining the possible consequences of the presented results has been deemed a higher priority than applying a purely objective, distanced perspective. Throughout the whole laborious process of analysis there has been a constant dialectic movement between moving into the text and interpreting it at a distance, but as can readily be seen in the above description one or the other has tended to dominate during each separate phase. These different changes of perspective are used to make it possible to enter a dialogical relationship with the text/data, since knowledge is no longer believed to reflect reality, but is viewed as a social construction of reality. Thus, "truth" is created through dialogue. (Kvale, 1997, pp. 204, 216)

Validity and reliability

According to Geanellos (2000, pp. 117-118), Ricoeur maintains that validation should not be regarded as the same as verification, whereas verification is an inappropriate measure for hermeneutic knowledge. However, all interpretations are not to be regarded as equally trustworthy (cf. Polkinghorne, 1983). Some interpretations are more likely than others. I agree with these thoughts, but I also find this ambiguity problematic, since it is in no way helpful for the practical validation of interpretative research results.

As mentioned, interview data runs the risk of being subjective and biased (e.g. Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 282). By describing the instrument, method used, interview context and the selected subjects, the researchers' own background knowledge and the steps of analysis as clearly as possible I have strived to provide informed readers with enough information to make it possible for them to draw their own conclusions regarding the reliability and validity of the results in this study. The reliability and validity of results should be considered in relation to how consistent and understandable the arguments are in relation to the context it is expected to study (Carlsson, 1991, p. 91; c.f Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 282). While the phenomenon under study can be said to be at a societal and cultural level, the context needs to be considered and therefore one also has to accept that the "truth" sought for is not a static end process ("the final solution"), but reveals itself in many layers and dependent on the context, thus lending itself to a variety of interpretations. (Carlsson, 1991, p. 92-93).

The processes of constructing the interview guide, carrying out the interviews, transcribing the data and analysing it have been described above. The aim has been to control each of these by careful procedure and whenever possible procedures have been tried out beforehand to ensure that they are reliable for the purpose. However, it also ought to be mentioned that there has been a constant need to balance between maximal reliability and other important, often pragmatic considerations (i.e. length of interview etc.). The approach of analysis used also ought to ensure a fairly good reliability, since it builds upon several different movements between different perspectives, making it necessary to adjust interpretations in accordance with what is revealed through different viewings of the text. At the same time this process is also believed to ensure that the risks of one-sided or selective interpretations of the results will be minimised.

At a general level I would like to argue that the validity of results of this kind should be judged upon the extent to which they are able to produce new ideas and alternative courses of action, which might change the culture (cf. Gergen & Semin, 1990; Kvale, 1997, p. 226). Hence, the primary aim is not to predict action but to present the reader with new relations, making it possible to ask new and relevant questions (House, 1980 in Kvale, 1997, p. 221).

When validation is seen as a question of choosing between competing and falsifiable interpretations, of investigating and giving arguments for the relative credibility of alternative claims of truth (cf. Polkinghorne, 1983, pp. 2, 224, 242) it no longer becomes necessary to rely heavily on inter-subject validation in the sense that it should be included in the study. In fact, inter-subject validation will take place during every reading of this study and therefore it should not be used as a means of providing the researcher with an excuse not to take full responsibility for validating the results (Kvale, 1997, p. 223).

Ethical aspects

Study B has been planned and conducted in order to generate insights on some of the conditions for primary school EFL teachers in Swedish-medium schools in Finland without causing the group of respondents any disadvantage. These teachers have offered an hour or two of their time to take part in the study, but in return they have had the, sometimes rare, opportunity to discuss their EFL teaching procedures, joys and concerns with a “colleague”. It is also my firm belief that all teachers working with this type of tasks could benefit from the results in the form of future in-service education programmes, adapted teaching materials and new framework curricula where issues addressed in the study are taken into consideration. Also teacher educators and pre-service teachers might benefit from the results.

Concerning the effect of the researcher on the results it is evident that the researcher in this case has affected the results to some extent, by designing the interview guide, affecting the atmosphere during the interview, setting the follow-up questions and analysing the results on the basis on her own background knowledge and in accordance with her skills. However, I do not regard this a major problem. The researcher should, in fact, be regarded as the primary research instrument. As long as the procedures and the role of that

instrument has been logically and transparently described the effect on the results can be clearly followed and estimated. The procedures used in study B has been defined in as much detail as found necessary, which should make the role of the researcher explicit to the reader. (cf. Kvale, 1997, pp.113, 105)

Before the interview all teachers were contacted by phone. The focus of the interview was briefly explained and an agreement reached on when and where to meet for the interview. No written contract was set up with the respondents concerning how the results may be used. Instead, I have orally described for what purposes the data might be used and how possible quotations will be presented, i.e. translated to English and with all possible personal information about the individual teacher, the school or municipality excluded. I also asked permission to use quotations in the original Swedish version, provided the other above mentioned principles were followed.

Measures have been taken to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. The interviews have a number code. However, reference to other teachers, the school or municipality by name has not been erased from the interview data. To the extent these data are required by a larger audience they will be erased from the text. All handling of research data has been and will be done in accordance with existing national legislation (cf. Lag om offentlighet i myndigheternas verksamhet, 1999). In the next chapter the results will be presented in accordance with the guidelines expressed in this chapter.

7 Results

This presentation of results is divided into two sections, according to the two parts of the study as was described in Chapter 6. The presentation follows the listing of OQs with a few exceptions that are pointed out. The learner results are presented first. This part of the presentation has been structured in accordance with the operational questions, in the following sections:

- 7.1.1 Availability of English exposure through different media
- 7.1.2 Learner performance and the relation to availability of English exposure
- 7.1.3 Learners' expressed attitudes and knowledge

The two first OQs are presented in the first section, since the perceived availability of exposure to English is closely interrelated with the different sources/media mentioned. Each section will begin with an overview of the relevant quantitative data followed by presentations of possible qualitative data.

The second part consists of the result of the teacher interviews and here the last OQ is presented first, to serve as an introduction to the other, more specific, ones. The presentation is divided into the following five sections:

- 7.2.1 Factors expressed as critical for the outcome of EFL teaching
- 7.2.2 Effect of pupils on planning
- 7.2.3 Effect of materials on planning
- 7.2.4 Effect of curricula on planning
- 7.2.5 Effect of education and experiences on planning
- 7.2.6 Effect of other actors in the social context

As has been pointed out in the sections concerning the aims and methods of this study, these choices of foci have been made on the basis of the theory presented in the initial chapters, but also on the basis of the kinds of results gathered throughout the research process. Hence, this presentation should be read as a result of an abductive (see Chapter 6) approach to empirical study.

Throughout this presentation examples of respondents' Swedish answers have been translated into English by the researcher, with the aim of providing the most authentic translation possible, which means that the quotations sometime consist of unidiomatic written English, since the data consist of written learner language and transcriptions of spoken discourse. Also the transcription of learners' written English production will seem strange if compared with normal standards of written English. The choice of using more authentic, and at times perhaps less easily understood, transcriptions and translations has been made in order to present the whole range of interesting evidence supporting a deepened understanding of the respondents' starting-points in relation to teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Swedish-medium schools in Finland.

The number related to each quotation indicates which respondent the statement can be attributed to. Out of concern for the confidential treatment of the results promised to the respondents, no other information concerning the individuals will generally be offered in the qualitative sections of the presentation. In the

presentation of the types of phrases used by pupil respondents even the identification numbers are usually left out, but this choice has been made for more practical reasons, since long strings of numbers would not contribute to the readability of the presentation.

7.1 Learner results (Study A)

In this chapter the results of the test and questionnaire carried out with the pupils (n=351) are presented. The results refer to a Finland-Swedish outside EFL classroom context, since the pupils taking part in the study had not yet begun their formal EFL studies.

7.1.1 Availability of English exposure through different media

I will begin by presenting some descriptive statistics for each of the different sources of input mentioned in the learner questionnaire. The estimated relative frequencies reported by these young respondents reflect their own perception of the state of affairs. A data collection instrument relying on 'objective' observation might, of course, have yielded slightly different results. The frequency-rates for the variable 'English club' were not reported by the pupils themselves, but by their teacher in grade 4. Finally, the rates of the aggregated variable 'Total English exposure' will be presented.

Only for 9.5 % (n=29) of the pupils, participation in an English club is reported. The total number of missing values to this question is as high as 47, which constitutes 13.4 % of the total sample, most of them from one school. Because of the great number of missing values I have chosen not to include the variable 'English club' in Table 7 below. It offers a brief overview of the mean values for each of the nine remaining background variables related to availability of English exposure. The variables in the table are listed from the highest mean value (on a scale from 1-5) to the lowest, a rough indicator of the availability.

Table 7. Mean and mode values for pupils' reported exposure to English through different sources

Source of English exposure	Mean	Mode	N	Missing values (N)
<i>Music</i>	4.48	5	347	4
<i>TV programmes</i>	4.07	5	344	7
<i>Tourists</i>	3.07	3	347	4
<i>Computers</i>	2.96	1	343	8
<i>Written material</i>	2.82	1	342	9
<i>Friends/at home</i>	2.51	1	349	2
<i>Trip abroad</i>	2.37	1	344	7
<i>Radio programmes</i>	2.30	1	345	6
<i>Guests</i>	1.83	1	348	3

As can be seen in the table above, English music and English TV programmes are by far the most common sources of English exposure outside school. They are followed by tourists, computers and written material (books, newspapers, magazines, and ads). A contributing factor to the relatively high mean value for the variable 'tourists' is that the set alternatives included in the questionnaire were slightly different from the alternatives given for the other sources of English (cf. Appendix 1). More interesting however, is the fact that exposure to written language reaches a relatively high mean value. Also computer influence can be expected to consist of written exposure to some extent, even though this was not specified in the study.

Friends and family, radio programmes, trips abroad, and guests are among the less frequent sources of English exposure. It is interesting to note that English is spoken among friends and/or at home more frequently than the family entertains English-speaking guests. Mean values provide limited insight when used to present material like this. For instance, the mean given for the variable 'trip abroad' might seem relatively high, but since this variable only consisted of 'yes' or 'no' answers, the mean value might easily be misleading. Therefore, the range of frequency for every source of English is presented below. If not specified differently, the percentages mentioned are "valid percentages", in the sense that the missing values are not part of the count.

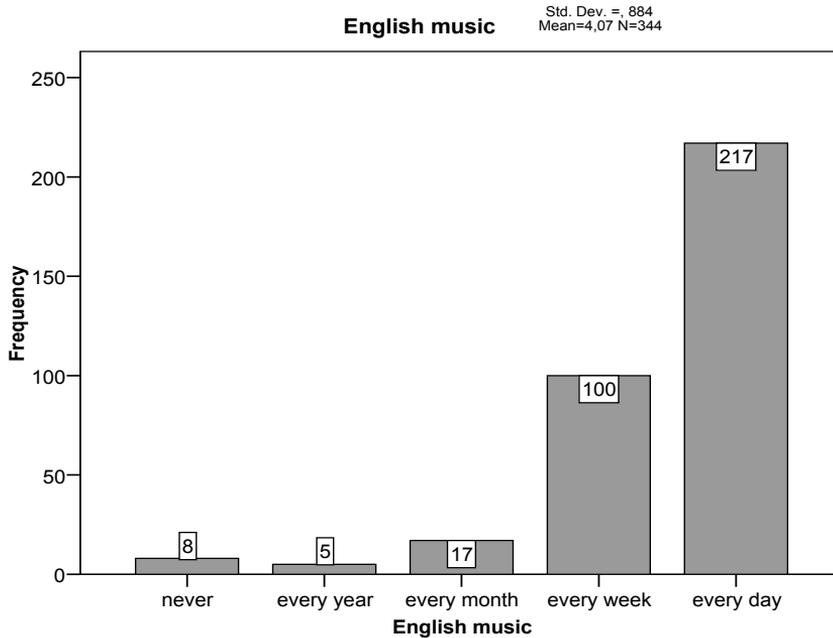


Figure 15. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English music’

Concerning English music, 91.3 % (n=317) listen to English music at least once a week and a majority of respondents (62.5 %, n= 217) claim that they listen to English music every day. A small group of 6.3 % (n=22) listen to English music once a month or at least once a year, whereas only 2.3 % (n=8) of the respondents claim that they never listen to English music.

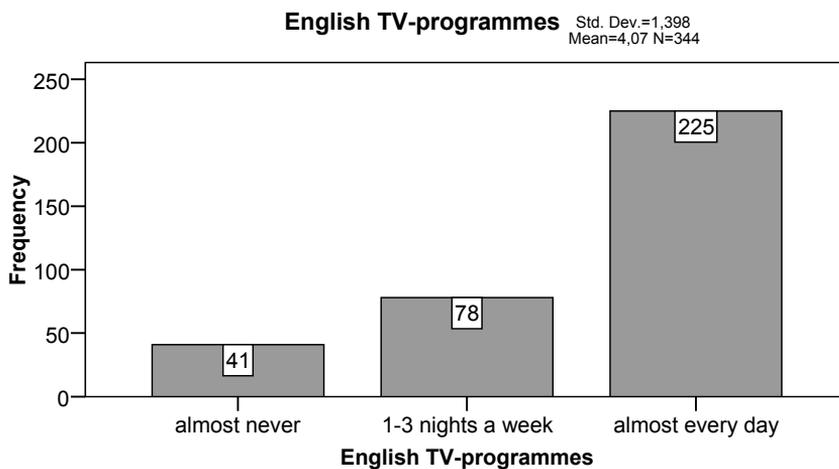


Figure 16. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English TV programmes’

For English TV programmes, 65.4 % (n=225) watch English TV programmes almost every night and 22.7 % (n=78) watch them 1-3 times a week. Hence, an overwhelming majority of 88.1 % (n=303) watch English TV programmes at least once a week. The remaining 11.9 % (n=41) of the respondents report that they almost never watch English TV programmes.

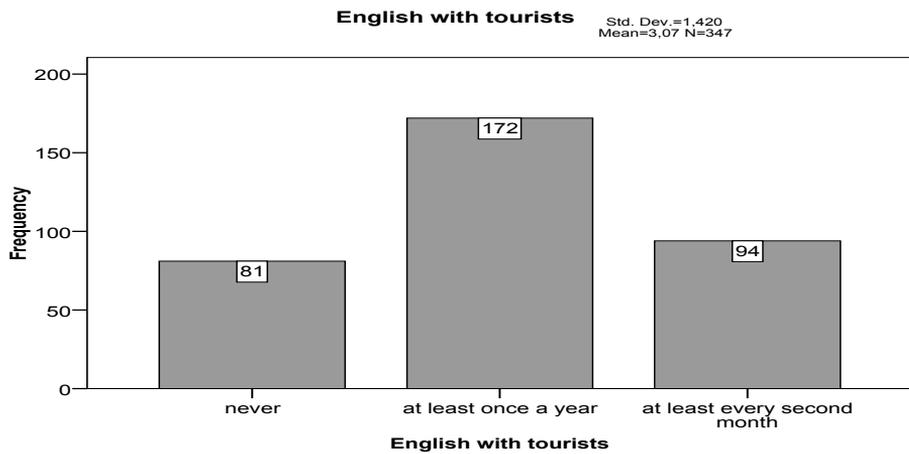


Figure 17. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English used with tourists’

Almost 50 % (n=172) of the respondents have chosen to indicate that they meet English-speaking tourists at least once a year, 27.1 % (n=94) have chosen the alternative ‘at least every second month’. The remaining fourth state that they never meet English-speaking tourists.

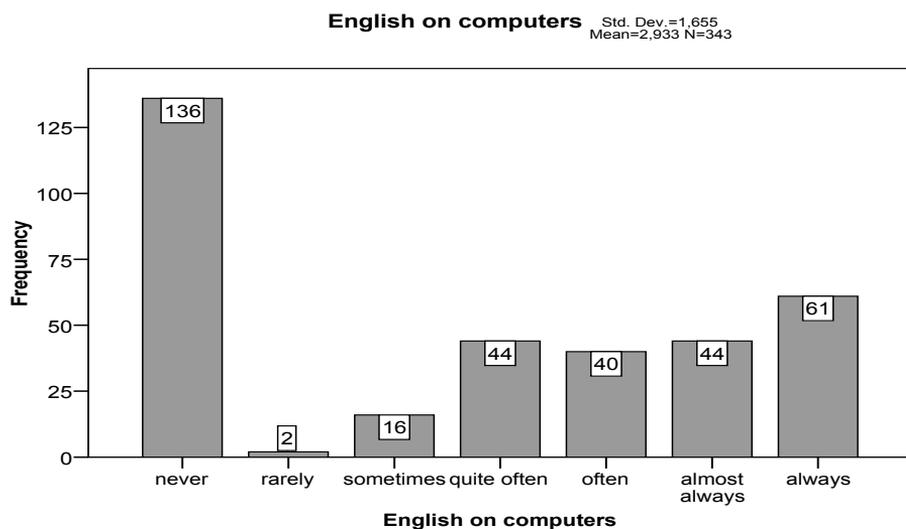


Figure 18. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English on the computer’

As many as 39.7 % (n=136) of the respondents report that they are not exposed

to English through computers outside school. The ones who use English on the computer ranging from rarely to always represent 59.8 % (n=205) of the respondents, of these 17.8 % (n=61) report that they always use English when they work on the computer outside school.

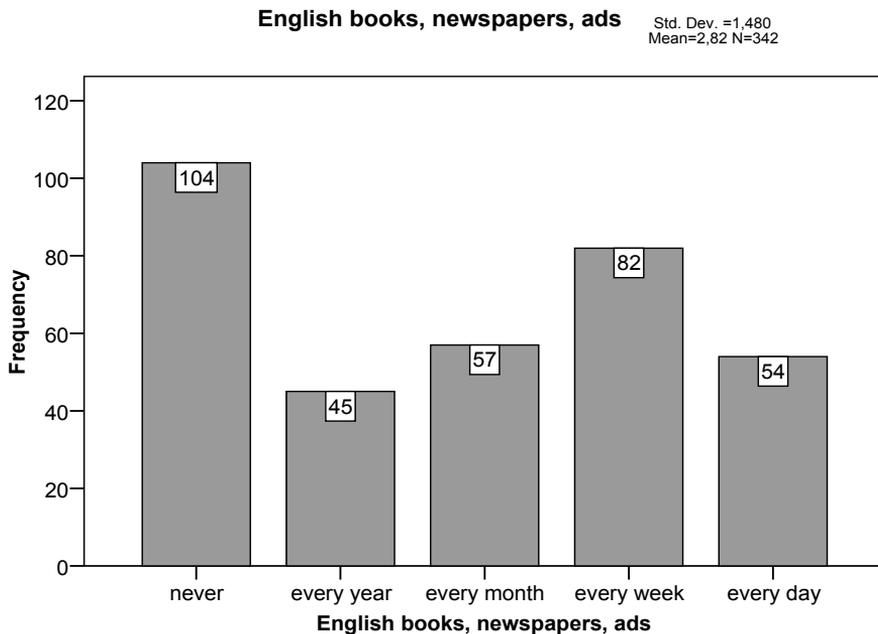


Figure 19. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English books, newspapers, ads’

A group of 30.4 % (n=104) of the respondents claim that they never read English books, newspapers or ads. That leaves a group of almost 70 % (n=238) who has had some kind of contact with written English input, and of these 24 % (n=82) read English every week and 15.8 % (n=54) every day.

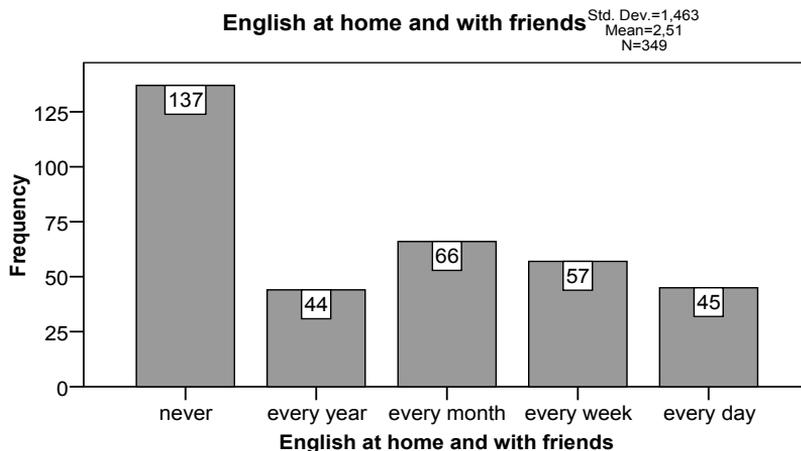


Figure 20. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English used at home and/or with friends’

A total number of 137 (39.3 %) reported that they never speaking English at home or with friends. The remaining 60 % are spread approximately equally over the other categories. A relatively small group speak English at home or with friends every day (n=45, 12.9 %).

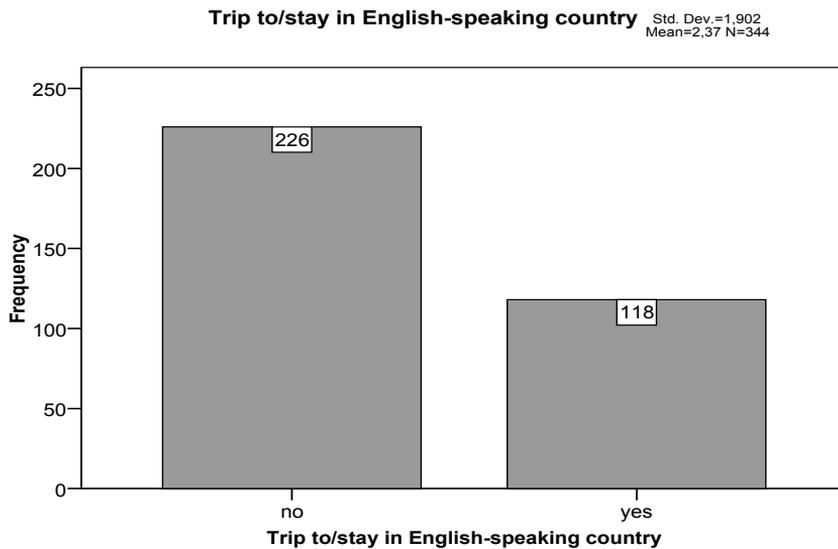


Figure 21. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘Trip to/stay in English-speaking country’

Roughly two thirds of the respondents (n=226) state that they have neither made any trip to nor stayed in any English-speaking country. Since this question only included the alternatives ‘yes’ and ‘no’, the information provided does not give us any more detailed information about the frequency of encounters of English during trips abroad.

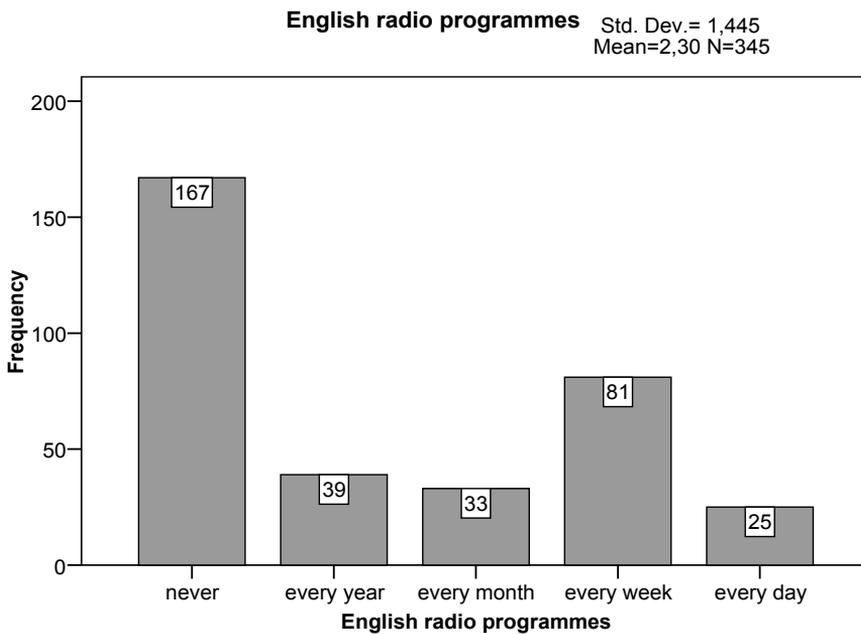


Figure 22. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English radio programmes’

Almost every second respondent or 48.4 % (n=167) reported that they never listen to radio programmes in English. However, 30.7 % (n=106) listen to English radio programmes at least once a week. Of this group 7.2 % (n=25) listen to such programmes every day.

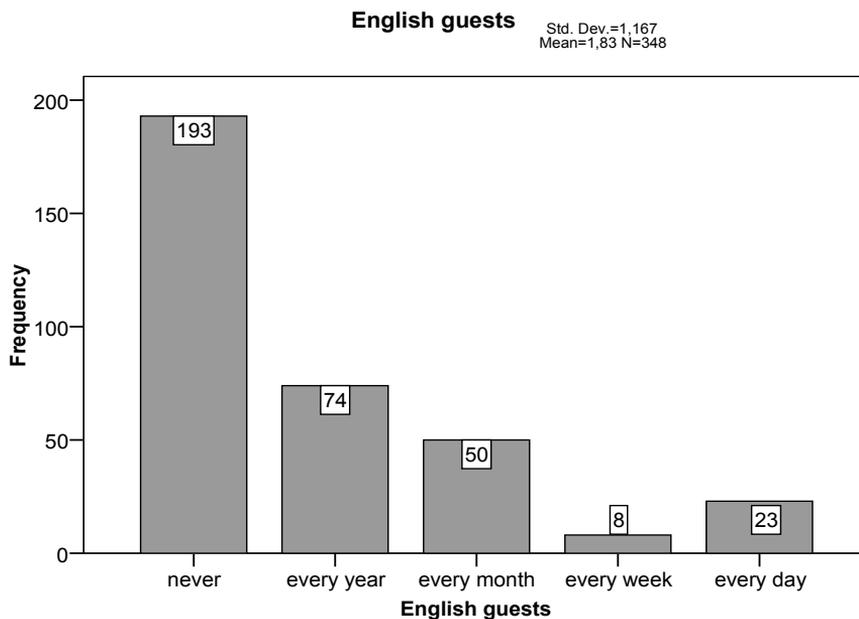


Figure 23. Presentation of pupil count for values for ‘English-speaking guests’

Even fewer pupils than on the previous question claim that English guests visit their home. Of the respondents in this study 193 (55.5 %) have never had English guests whereas 31 (8.9 %) mention that English-speaking guests visit their home once a week or even every day.

In conclusion, one can say that there is great variation among the respondents’ answers both regarding the kind of sources of English they are conscious of being exposed to outside school and how frequent they report this exposure to be. The most frequent sources of English outside school are music and TV. A vast majority of the respondents are aware of English exposure through these media; however, it is worth noting that not even for these highly frequent sources does the exposure apply to all respondents.

A majority of these young respondents are also aware of exposure to English through tourists, computers, written media, family and/or friends. The frequency of English being used among family and friends is higher than the frequency of entertaining English-speaking guests, something that was reported by a minority of the respondents. Among these pupils, trips to English-speaking countries and listening to English radio programmes were among the less common sources of English. However, the ones who report exposure to English through radio seem to be exposed to this form of English input on a quite frequent basis.

Correlations of exposure to English with background variables

For the background variable ‘gender’ and the nine sources of English exposure outside school used in this study there is a statistically significant correlation

only for ‘computers’(see Appendix 6). However, the correlation value is low, which is interesting since it indicates that gender related behavioural patterns are diminishing also concerning this source of exposure. Boys scored a little higher on the variable ‘computers’ ($C=0.292$, $p=.000$). For the other eight listed sources of English exposure there are no statistically significant correlations with the variable ‘gender’ for the chosen significance level.

For some of the other background variables there were statistically significant but weak positive correlations for a majority of the sources of English exposure. Some of these are presented below, for a comprehensive list of correlation values see Appendix 6.

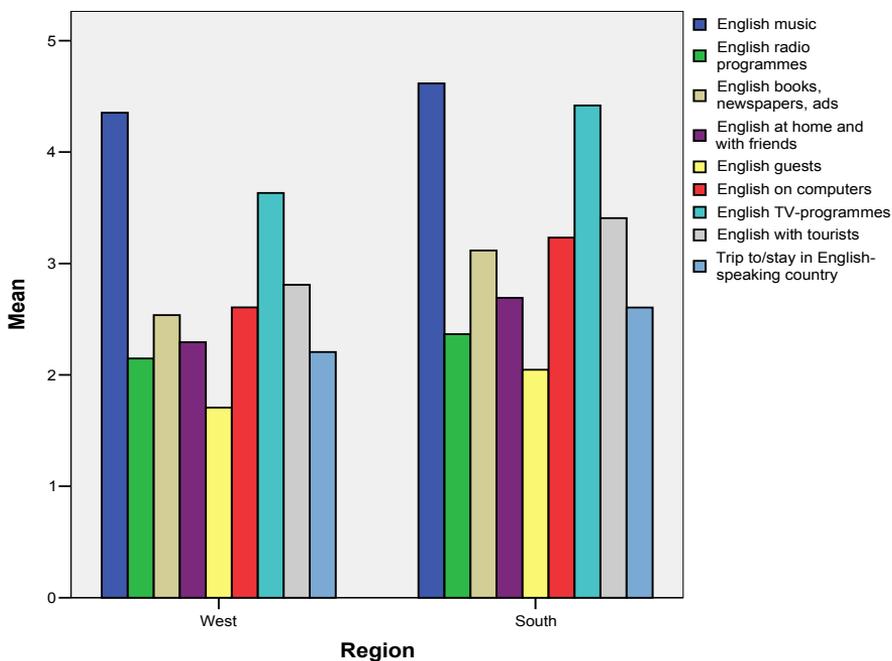


Figure 24. The variation of mean values (on a 1-5 scale) for exposure to the different sources of English in relation to region

There are weak positive statistically significant correlations for six of the included sources of English exposure and the background variable ‘region’, namely music, TV, tourists, computers, written material, and friends/at home. The mean values graphically presented in Figure 24 illustrate that the respondents from the southern region on the whole report somewhat higher frequency values for most of the potential sources of English outside school.

However, the low correlation values indicate that these differences – even though they are statistically significant – are very small. For the variables ‘radio programmes’, ‘trip abroad’ and ‘guests’ there are no statistically significant correlations, which means that there is no statistically verifiable relationship for

the variable 'region'. The variables 'language/s spoken at home' and 'region' do not correlate ($C=.193$, n.s.), which seems to support the conclusion that 'region' is not biased by variation in the domestic languages of the pupils in this study. However, there is a very weak positive correlation for 'region' and 'urbanisation' ($C=.132$, $p=.012$), which indicates that there were some more urban respondents in the southern part of the country than in the western one. But this correlation did not quite reach the set level of statistical significance and the correlation value is so low that it is of minor relevance, indicating a shared variance of less than two percent.

There is also a slightly stronger statistically significant positive correlation for 'language/s spoken at home' and 'urbanisation' ($C=.275$, $p=.000$), which means that there are relatively more children in urban areas with a language background where additional or other languages than Swedish are used at home.

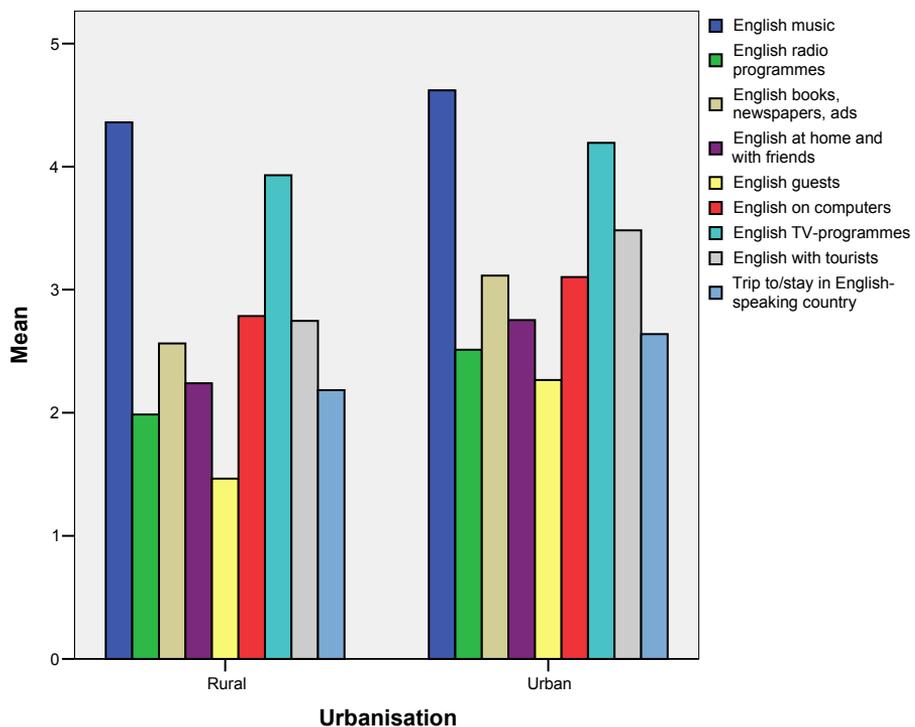


Figure 25. The variation of mean values (on a 1-5 scale) for exposure to the different sources of English in relation to urbanisation

Figure 25 illustrates trends of weak positive significant correlations for 'urbanisation' and the sources of English exposure, indicating that urban children report slightly higher frequency values on the questionnaire. However, statistical significance is reached only for four of the less frequent sources, namely 'tourists', 'written material', 'radio programmes', and 'guest'. For these

the result can be expected to imply differences also in the population. The correlations are not statistically significant for ‘urbanisation’ and the variables ‘music’, ‘TV’, ‘computers’, ‘friends/at home’ and ‘trip abroad’. The result indicates that pupils in the countryside and in town tend to listen to English music, watch English TV programmes and use English on the computer to approximately the same extent. Note that there were significant (although weak) correlations for these variables in relation to ‘region’. The highest correlation value for ‘urbanisation’ was reached for ‘guests’ ($C=.313, p=.000$).

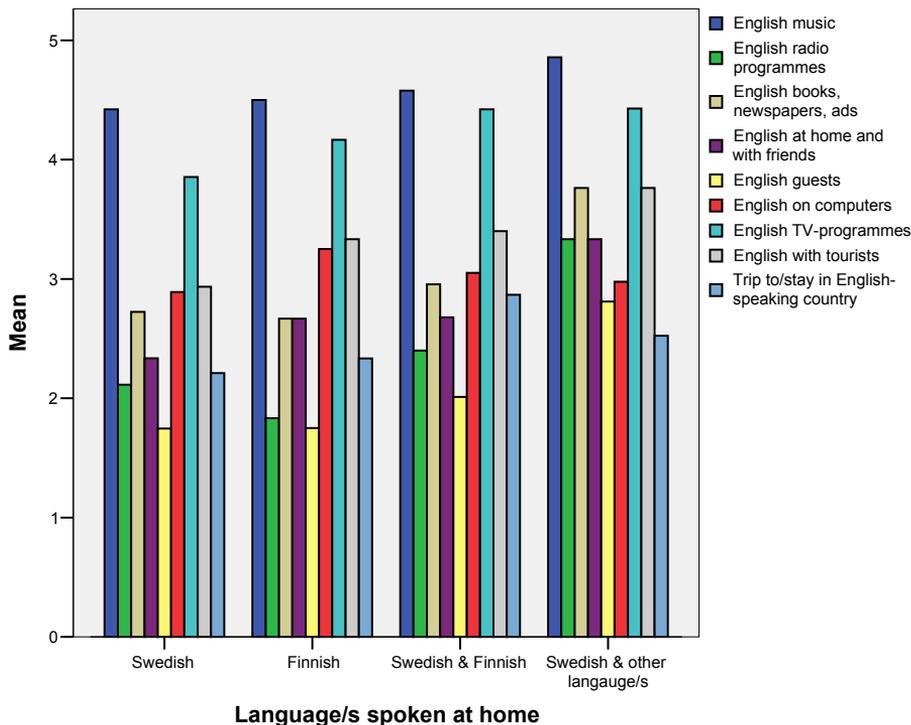


Figure 26. The variation of mean values (on a 1-5 scale) for exposure to the different sources of English in relation to language/s spoken at home

As was mentioned above, the results of correlations with ‘urbanisation’ and correlations with ‘language/s spoken at home’ might to some extent reflect a bias for urbanisation, but there are also differences in the patterns. Generally speaking, similar trends of weak positive association can be noticed, as we can see in Figure 26 above. This indicates that familiarity with more than one language/and or other languages than Swedish is associated with a slightly higher mean score on the frequencies for the different sources of English exposure. The correlation values range from weak to moderate, the scores being lower for the more common sources of English and higher for the less frequently encountered sources of English exposure. Statistical significance is reached for the variables ‘tourists’, ‘friends/at home’, and ‘guests’.

Summary

In conclusion, there are only relatively small differences in the levels of exposure due to regional, urban/rural and linguistic background. However, it is possible to note a slight tendency that pupils from the southern part of Finland are aware of or in fact get more English exposure. There were only three “regionally neutral” sources of English exposure (guests, radio programmes and trip abroad), all of these among the less common sources of English.

Degree of urbanisation also seems to play only a minor part in the amount of English these children are exposed to outside school. For this variable, three of the more commonly used sources of English exposure – music, TV and computers - are “neutral” in terms of the urban/rural distinction in addition to some less frequent variables. However, e.g. English-speaking guests and tourists seem to be more common sources of English in urban areas.

It is interesting to note that with regard to the language or languages spoken at home, all three statistically significant correlations are related to direct human sources of English, implying that personal verbal interaction in English is more common among pupils with a multilingual language background.

7.1.2 Learner performance and its relation to availability of English exposure

The questionnaire and test used in this study make it possible to correlate the amount of reported English exposure with the results in the two different language tests (listening comprehension and productive vocabulary). These results will make it possible to draw some conclusions regarding the effectiveness of different sources of English exposure.

Listening comprehension test (LC)

The listening comprehension test resulted in a fairly great dispersion of scores, but not in maximal distribution. The scores vary from 0 to 24, whereas the maximal possible score for this test was 28. The mean value was 10.26. The distribution of scores can be seen in Figure 27 below.

To gain a deeper insight in the outcome of the listening comprehension test the results concerning the different text extracts used will be presented by some overall measures in Table 8 below. As described in the methods chapter (Chapter 6), the text extracts were designed to be at different levels of difficulty. This assumption was supported by the performance of the respondents.

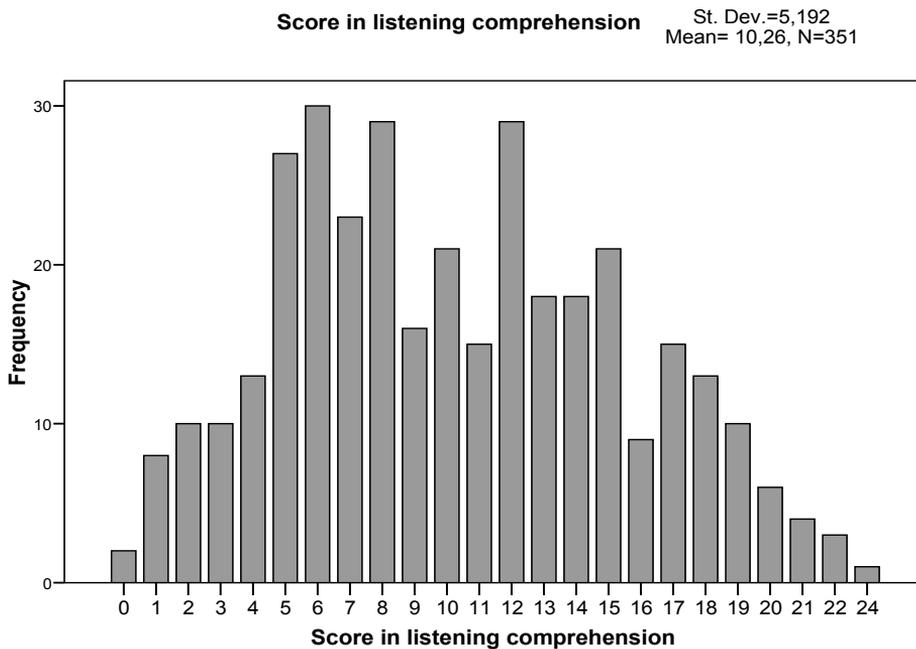


Figure 27. Distribution of scores in listening comprehension test

As is indicated by the measures in the table below, the variation is great in the result of the three parts of the test. When looking at the mean value it is evident that the first part is the easiest. In fact, almost 75 % (n=263) of the respondents had reached the maximum result, whereas only 1.1 % (n=4) did not score any points at all. This indicates that a majority of the pupils in this study have some kind of receptive basis in English, even though the result might also to a great extent reflect their strategic competence, since the instructions given, the questions and the text itself contained several clues that might have helped the respondents.

Table 8. The mean, standard deviation, highest, lowest, and possible scores for each of the three texts in the listening comprehension (N=351)

Listening comprehension	Mean	Highest (maximum)	Lowest (minimum)	Standard Deviation
<i>Part 1</i>	3.56	4 (4)	0 (0)	.879
<i>Part 2</i>	4.49	12 (12)	0 (0)	3.123
<i>Part 3</i>	2.20	9 (12)	0 (0)	2.174

The second text extract resulted in a wide distribution of the result. Also for this text extract the whole range from minimum to maximum is in evidence. However, it is evident that his text, describing an unfamiliar made-up character was more difficult to understand for many of the respondents. As many as 8.3 % (n=29) did not score any points at all on this part of the listening comprehension test. More than fifty percent of the respondents (55.6 %, n=195) were given no or low (1–4) points, and only one person reached the maximum of 12 points.

Finally, the third text extract seemed to be the most difficult one, which is indicated by the low mean value 2.20. On this part of the listening comprehension no one reached the maximum score. As many as one third (31.9 %, n=112) of the respondents did not get any points at all for their answers on this text, the following rough third (29.3 %, n=103) reached one or two points, and the final third got 3-9 points. Two pupils reached nine points. The questions related to this text were all open-ended, but the questions were written and answers expected in Swedish. Some pupils also indicated on the test paper that they could not hear this part properly, something which was also mentioned by one of the teachers. Hence, it is not possible to say whether it was only a matter of the text itself being experienced as more difficult or a combination of the two.

Availability of exposure in relation to listening comprehension test results

Now I will move on to look at the correspondence between the results of the listening comprehension test and the reported frequency of exposure to English through the different media presented earlier in this chapter. There are statistically significant positive correlations for all but one of the different kinds of input mentioned in the pupil-related results above and the variable ‘score in listening comprehension’. For ‘radio’ the correlation value is extremely low and the p value does not quite reach the set level (p=.012). The Spearman rank-correlation values vary between .136 and .413, as can be seen in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Correlations (rho) between different sources of input and scores in LC (parts 1-3), significance (p) and ranking (rank) included

	Music	TV	Tourist	Computers	Books etc.	Friends/at home	Trip abroad	Radio	Guests	Club
rho	.298	.389	.237	.258	.396	.413	.228	.136	.270	.233
p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	n.s.	.000	.000
rank	4	3	7	6	2	1	9	10	5	8

The three highest correlation values in Table 9 can be said to be moderate in strength, possibly making crude group predictions possible (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 139), the other correlation values vary from weak to insignificant. The strongest correlation values are found for speaking English at home or with

friends and reading English books, newspapers, ads. These two variables are not among the most frequently used by the respondents. More than 30 % of the respondents have not used them at all, but more than 10 % claim they exhibit these behaviours every day. The variables ranked third and fourth are the two most frequently reported by the respondents. Hence, about 90 % of the respondents watch English TV programmes and listen to English music. 'Guests' are followed by 'computers', 'tourists', 'club', 'trip abroad', and finally 'radio'.

To make statistical comparisons with the above mentioned sources of exposure to English more easily accessible, the aggregated variable Total English Exposure (TEE) was created. The correlation value for 'score in listening comprehension' and 'total English exposure' is .470, and the level of significance .000. In this correlation there were no missing values. The covariance between the overall amount of exposure and level of performance in the listening comprehension seems to be moderate.

Productive vocabulary test (PV)

The total number of words produced by the respondents in this study range from 0 (n=1) to 56 (n=1), the mean being 21.85. This is also shown in Figure 28, where it is apparent that the vast majority of the respondents, in fact approximately 80 %, have produced between 11 and 34 different English words (types).

As mentioned in Chapter 6, each different item possible to recognise as an English word was taken into the count regardless of possible spelling errors. The count of words includes such items, even though the respondent might have held a vague or even erroneous idea about their meaning. As a matter of fact, the correspondence between the variables 'total number of words' and 'number of words with correct meaning' is very high. Spearman's rank correlation value is .977 (p=.000). For 'number of words with correct meaning' the distribution varies from 0 points to 55 and the mean value is 20.74, which seems to go fairly well with the same values for 'total number of words' (cf. Figure 28).

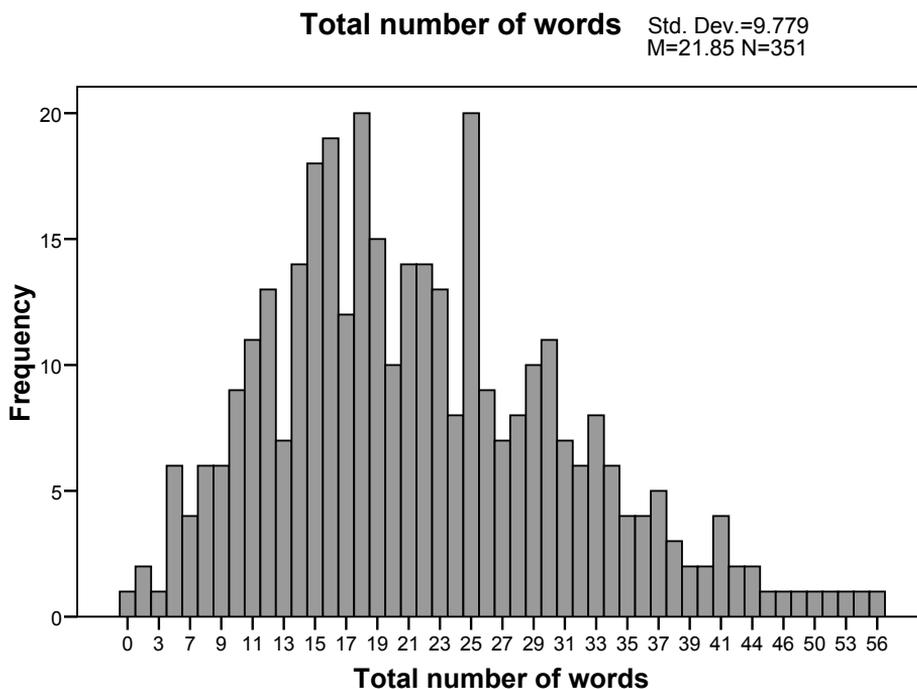


Figure 28. Distribution of scores in the productive vocabulary test

It is also interesting to note that only one single item out of all the words produced by all the respondents had to be excluded as a result of it representing the wrong language. This was the item moy (resp. 124), which is probably an adaptation of the Finnish word ‘moi’, meaning ‘hi’. A handful of words also had to be excluded since they were not possible to read/interpret. All other words were possible to recognise as English even though some of the respondents rely heavily on the spelling of Swedish/their mother tongue. In Table 10 some examples of this type of “naïve” spelling of English words and phrases are listed.

The examples in Table 10 are chosen to represent the typical patterns used by the respondents in this study. Most of these “naïve spellings” clearly show a reliance on the L1 spelling system, which for a majority of these pupils is Swedish. It is obvious that these pupils have not yet become familiar with the standard form of spelling these words in English. The phrase provided by respondent 336 has been included to illustrate a phenomenon used by some of the respondents. The written form used for this everyday expression seems to indicate that it has been processed as one chunk.

Table 10. Examples of naïve spelling of English

Respondent	Item	Standard English
21	Hors	Horse
120	van	One
151	Ängri	Angry
242	voter	water
302	maskitos	mosquitoes
3	I:m kand not	I cannot
21	Hier ve gou	Here we go
137	Ai em a pigg	I am a pig
239	Gud måning	Good morning
336	haudujudu	How do you do?

Respondent number 3 provides us with an example of a slightly different kind. There seems to be a move from using the L1 spelling system towards awareness of some of the features of the spelling system of the target language, but this knowledge is obviously not fully developed. At this point I also want to point out that a large number of words and phrases were, in fact, spelt correctly by the respondents. Some examples of these will be shown in the presentation of the types of phrases used by the respondents later on in this chapter (See section on types of multi-word units, p. 152).

Availability of exposure in relation to productive vocabulary test

Before moving on to the results concerning the variable ‘number of words produced by the respondents’ and the different kinds and amounts of input the respondents estimate they have received, it is worth noting that the rho-value for ‘score in listening comprehension’ and ‘number of words produced by the respondents’ is .421 ($p < .000$). Hence, these measures do covary to some extent, but they also partly measure different types of skills.

Also the total number of English-like words produced by the respondents correlates significantly ($p < .001$) with all the different variables of input, but the correlation values are lower than for ‘score in listening comprehension’, as can be seen in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Correlations (rho) between different sources of input and scores in PV, significance (p) and ranking (rank) included

	Music	TV	Tourist	Computers	Books etc.	Friends/at home	Trip abroad	Radio	Guests	Club
rho	.249	.196	.208	.237	.296	.341	.240	.184	.209	.305
p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
rank	4	9	8	6	3	1	5	10	7	2

All of these values are fairly weak, but from the exploratory point of view of this study they may still contribute to the understanding of this field (cf. Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 139). The strongest correlation values are found for speaking English at home or with friends, attending English clubs, and reading English books, newspapers, ads. Hence, there seems to exist at least a weak correlation between an estimated frequent exposure to these sources of English exposure and a higher score on the productive vocabulary test. Also for the variables ‘music’, ‘trip abroad’, ‘computers’, ‘guests’ and ‘tourists’, the correlation values are positive and significant, but fairly low. The correlation values for the potential exposure sources TV and radio are also positive, but so low that they indicate extremely low covariation. The relation between exposure to English through these two sources does not seem to have any large positive (or negative, for that matter) influence on the respondents’ performance on the vocabulary test.

If we leave the correlation values for a moment and take a closer look at the ranking, it is worth noting that only some of the listed potential sources of English exposure have reached more or less the same ranking in relation to both the listening comprehension test and the productive vocabulary test. Several of the sources of exposure to English show a stronger correlation with either receptive skills or productive skills whereas only two seem to have a strong impact on both kinds of skills. Below the judgment of the rankings of these two tests are presented.

Table 12. Ranking for PV, LC and judgement of impact (s=strong impact ranks 1-3, m=medium impact ranks 4-6, w=weak impact ranks 7-10) for the different sources of English exposure

	Music	TV	Tourist	Computers	Books etc.	Friends/at home	Trip abroad	Radio	Guests	Club
PV	4	9	8	6	3	1	5	10	7	2
LC	4	3	7	6	2	1	9	10	5	8
Impact	m/m	w/s	w/w	m/m	s/s	s/s	m/w	w/w	w/m	s/w

Speaking English at home or with friends tops the ranking in both cases. Also written materials are to be found among the most highly ranked in relation to both LC and PV. Among the weaker correlations the variables ‘music’, ‘tourists’, ‘computers’, and ‘radio’, get approximately the same ranking in both tests. However, ‘TV’, ranked as third in relation to listening comprehension, has dropped down almost to the bottom of the ranking list for productive vocabulary, whereas both ‘trip abroad’ and ‘club’ reach a higher ranking in relation to the productive vocabulary correlation test. Previous participation in English club or such seems to have had a greater impact on the production of words than on the performance in the listening comprehension, whereas TV-influence seems to be less useful for the production of English words, than for the understanding of English. Below we will study the occurrence and types of phrases used in this data.

The correlation between the overall measure of the above mentioned sources of English exposure (TEE) and the total number of words produced by the respondents was considerable, but not as strong as for TEE and listening comprehension. The positive moderately strong and statistically significant Spearman’s rank correlation value for PV and TEE was $\rho = .399$, $p < .000$.

Types of multi-word units

An earlier version of these results was presented in Björklund (2000). The quantitative results presented in this section involve the whole sample. The qualitative results, however, represent only a sample of the ones who have produced phrases. The phrases that have been analysed come from 64 respondents, who have not taken part in any kind of formal instruction in EFL, since it was regarded as relevant to study what kind of phrases young learners acquire in informal settings. Hence, respondents who had taken part in part any kind of English club were excluded from this sample. In this small sample 37 (58 %) are girls and 27 (42 %) boys. 37 (58 %) come from rural areas and 27 (42 %) from urban ones, 23 (36 %) from the south of Finland and 41 (64 %) from the western parts. The total number of phrases to be analysed here is 239.

Before presenting the analysis of the types of phrases produced by the sample, we will take a look at some quantitative data on the use of phrases for the whole group of respondents in this study.

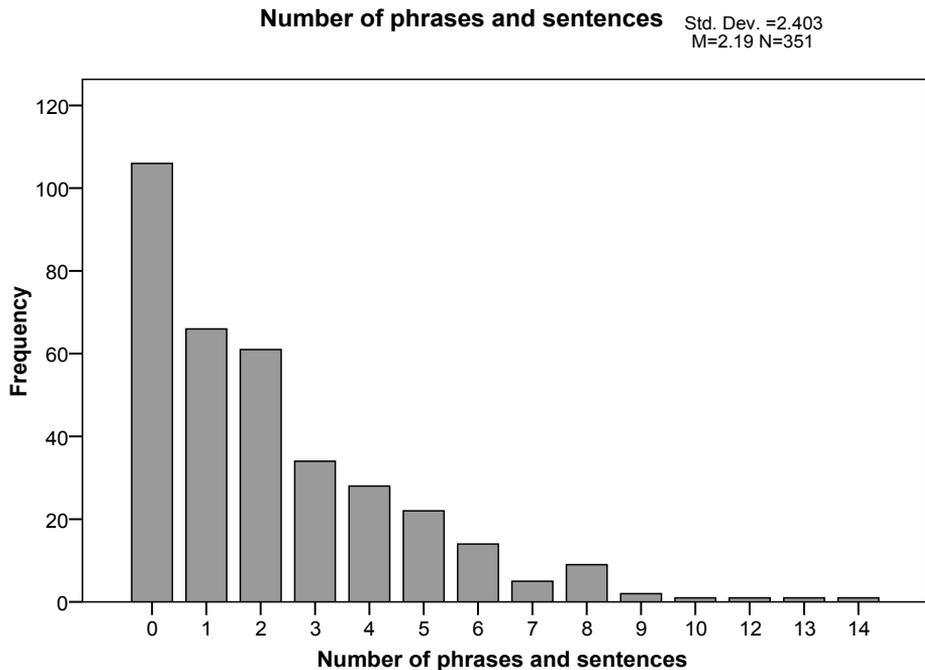


Figure 29. Number of phrases and sentences produced by the respondents in PV test (n=351)

As illustrated in Figure 29, 106 (30.2 %) of the respondents have not produced any phrases at all. The remaining 245 have produced 1-14 phrases each. The majority of these (n=211, 60.2 %) have produced 1-5 phrases. The remaining 34 (9.8 %) respondents produced between 6-14 phrases each, only one respondent as many as 14.

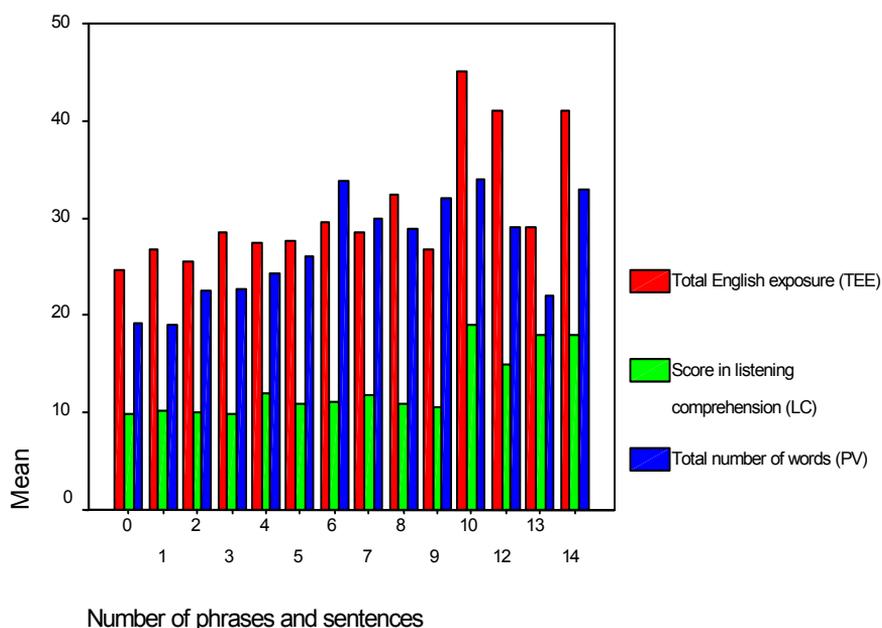


Figure 30. Total number of words, total English exposure, and score in listening comprehension in relation to number of phrases.

Two weak statistically significant positive correlations (Spearman's rho) between the variable 'number of phrases produced' and some of the other variables are of interest here, namely: PV ($\rho=.341$, $p=.000$) and TEE ($\rho=.197$, $p=.000$). For the score in LC, there was no statistically verifiable linear association, as illustrated in Figure 30 (the columns for LC are quite similar in height). It is hardly surprising that there is a correlation for the number of phrases used by each respondent and total number of words in the production task, but it ought to be noted that the correlation value is weak. The correlation value for total exposure to English is even lower, indicating a minimal relationship between the individual's tendency to produce phrases and sentences and the total amount of exposure to English. This is graphically illustrated by the representation of mean values in Figure 30 above.

In the following, the types of phrases produced by the respondents will be presented. Elements of the division presented for lexical phrases by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) is used (see Chapter 2). This should not be taken as an indication that all phrases presented here are lexical phrases in the sense defined by them. Such conclusions can be drawn only for a small number of the phrases in this sample. These, and other linguistic features in the production of the respondents, will be discussed briefly later on. However, it is relevant to present the range of phrases used by the respondents for a deeper insight into with what kind of lexical range pupils might enter the Swedish-medium EFL classroom.

It ought to be pointed out that all phrases used as examples in this section are

careful transcriptions of the phrases produced by the respondents. For authenticity, all possible deviations from standard spellings have been kept in this presentation. In the qualitative analysis of these phrases produced by the 64 respondents, six main types emerged:

Type	n
Social interactions	59
Expressives	60
Questions	29
Requests	21
Statements	56
Other	27

Social interactions include greetings and other highly formulaic language used for maintaining social relations. Expressives include multi-word units communicating feelings rather than stating facts. Many of the phrases included in categories 3–5 are what Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) call necessary topics. Necessary topics generally include representatives, declaratives, directives and interrogatives. For this purpose, such a division into categories based on communicative function (questions, requests, statements) seemed most relevant.

In the last category, labelled "Other", all multiword units (mainly noun phrases) with no clear communicative function have been included. The numbers shown within brackets below represent the number of phrases belonging to each group. I have chosen to present the numbers belonging to each of these otherwise qualitatively derived categories in order to provide a picture of the relative frequency of the different phrases.

Social interactions

The social interactions are divided into two categories: 'greetings' (33) and 'other expressions' (24). The most common greetings are *Hello* (15), *Haj* (Eng. hi) (6), *God bye (baj baj)* (4) and *Hau ar you?* (3). 71 % (n=24) of these were produced by urban children. Among the other expressions *tenkju/NOUTANKS* (8), *ai nov/ ai sii* (5), *Happy Birtey* (4) and *(Yes,) please* (3) were among the most frequent.

Expressives

The following type of functional multi-word units is not part of Nattinger and De Carrico's functional division, but emerges strongly as a type in its own right in the material, and is, hence, included. These expressives range from very positive expressions to rude insults. The more frequently occurring in this material are listed here, starting with the more positive categories.

Type of expressive	n
<i>I love you/horse, Ai laik ju</i>	20
<i>Very good/veri match/too moch</i>	4
<i>Come on</i>	4
<i>Sou wat/big diör</i> (Eng. deal)	5
<i>Sorry</i>	4
<i>Are you creysy/stupid/shor</i> (Eng. sure)	4

<i>I eit you</i> (Eng. I hate you)	2
<i>Fuck you/Kiss your as/slick maj dick</i>	9

The same range from positive to pejorative can be noted among the expressives occurring only once in this sample, e.g. *Im Best*, *Take it easy*, *i niid juo* (Eng. I need you), *sörtenli nat* (Eng. certainly not). There is also a creative or perhaps incorrectly decoded item *battfeis*. Regardless of the background it does, in my opinion, belong to the expressives. Some of these expressions (e.g. *come on*, *fuck you*) could be regarded as requests. In the analysis they were regarded as belonging to this category on the basis of the Swedish translation given for them or the general use of the unit.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that 89 % (n=16) of the phrases in the "I love you"-category were produced by girls, who produced 64 % (n=39) of the total amount of expressives. In the last pejorative category boys produced 67 % (n=6) of the phrases.

Questions

The following category represents questions. The majority of these units can be included in one of five topic related categories, namely: *You spik englisch?*(5), *Ho are joy* (3), *vats jor neim* (5), *Vat You dujing* (3), and *Can I/you+VP+pers. pron* (7). The last of these includes requests to use the telephone, to know if one is heard or seen and also requests for help. This means that there is a fine line between some of these questions and the requests classified as a separate category. In my opinion there is, however, a distinct pragmatic difference in the use of questions formulated with the auxiliary verb *can* as above and direct commands.

Among the questions occurring just once in this material the following are found: *hovmats* (Eng. How much), *You understend*, *edi badi houm*, *Hao old ar joy*, *Do ju koming?*, *Do you have see this before?*. Again the Swedish translation was needed to confirm that the phrases *You understend* and *edi badi houm* belong among the questions. The units shown in this category show that some of the respondents in this study are able to produce basic questions by use of different strategies. A variety of auxiliaries are used (i.e. how, do, can), as well as both normal (e.g. *You spik englisch?*) and inverted (e.g. *spik ju elis*) word order.

Requests

A majority of the phrases included in the category labelled requests more or less follow the pattern (possible negation) + verb+pronoun. The most frequently occurring type of phrase is *Help mi!* (6). A special case within this group is the variant *I niid yor help!*. Other examples of this pattern are: *luket diss* (3), *kiss/Finis mi/Hm* (Eng. him) (4), *dount do it/tats mey* (Eng. don't touch me) (2). Other units in this category, not following the above mentioned typical pattern, are: *lets go* (2), *Run and go*, *Tjadapp* (Eng. Shut up), *stay home*, *open de door*.

Statements

The multi-word units coded as statements are fairly many and they include a variety of what seems to be creative sentences as well as fixed expressions.

Below the more frequently occurring types are shown.

Types of statements	n
<i>My name Is</i>	6
<i>ai am/you ar (+ noun)</i>	7
<i>ai (dont) spik svidis/inglis</i>	3
<i>ai dont no</i>	8
<i>ai dont tinkso</i>	2
<i>ai promes</i>	2
<i>I play game</i>	2
<i>you are mine best Frend!</i>	4

There are many phrases in this category occurring only once. The range of these phrases is shown in the following examples: *Its gud fud* (Eng. It's good food), *Hier vi gou, Smel greit, I:m kand not, You kant du et, coming soon, gado* (Eng. got to). One of the more unique phrases in this material, which can lead to interesting speculations as to the source of influence is the following statement: *And spit like a man.*

Others

In the final category labelled 'other' all remaining phrases have been included. However, the category is not as miscellaneous as might be assumed. As mentioned previously, the communicative function of these phrases is not as clear as for the other categories. To a large extent it consists of noun phrases. It is also possible to find some patterns among the items included in this category. A group of five phrases represent geographical or movie names, e.g. *United states of America, govstbusters, Age of Empire*. Other types are: *to my* (Eng. me)/*to ju* (6), *My bony* (Eng. bonnie) (2). There are also two phrases related to time: *one more time, Evry day*. The large remaining group of eleven units is represented by these examples: *Bad Girl, hot dog, very important person, vei out, game over*.

Evidence of 'chunk'-processing

What becomes obvious, when analysing the data, is that the input the respondents have received in writing, is more correctly spelled, e.g. the 'I love you'-phrases, compared to the input they have received through auditory media. Of the 'I love you'-phrases 14 out of 18 were correctly spelled. This argument is, however, based on the assumption that TV-related vocabulary is received only auditorily, whereas, for instance, song lyrics and computer related vocabulary to some extent are received in writing.

The evidence of phrases which the respondents have processed only as chunks is not very comprehensive, since one can only draw such a conclusion when the respondents have written a multi-word unit as one chunk or given a functional, rather than literal Swedish translation. Some examples of phrases written as one chunk, or as two words wrongly divided, are: *Komän, Tjadapp, luket diss, haudjudu, Wannabe, gado, eks jusmi, maimemis* (Eng. my name is). *Aim* and *am* are also regarded as equivalents to 'I' by some of the respondents.

There are also examples of phrases with non-literal functional translations in

Swedish, for instance *iksjusmi* - ett ögonblick (Eng. Just a minute), Häppybirtej/ Happ porsdig - Hade näran (Eng. lit. “have the honour”, i.e. congratulations. Hence, a fixed expression, but not the exact equivalent, is also used in Swedish by this respondent), *Tänkju* – tack (Eng. thanks).

On the whole, the phrases produced by the respondents ranged from phrases which they were not able to translate or explain (e.g. *Age of Empire*) and phrases with a non-standard translation/explanation (e.g. *My kam fron finich*, [Eng. lit. My come from Finnish/finish] translated: Jag kom från finland [Eng. I came from Finland]), to the kind of ‘chunked’-phrases mentioned above and thoroughly processed phrases, which were even correctly spelled (*And spit like a man*, translated: och spotta som en karl). The phrase *My kam fron finich* is also a good example of a creative language construction, where the respondent has used elements encountered in English with the aim of producing the meaning conveyed in the Swedish translation. The linguistic skills of this pupil are not yet developed to a level that would enable her to form a “correct” sentence in terms of general grammatical and lexical rules.

7.1.3 Learners’ expressed attitudes and knowledge

Two attitude-related measures are used in this study, one measuring respondents’ attitudes towards the English language and the other measuring respondents’ attitudes towards (representatives of) United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) (see Appendix 1). There is a small, but statistically significant correlation between the two above mentioned measures of attitude ($\rho=.179$, $p=.002$, $n=298$). Hence, there is a weak interrelation between attitudes related to the English language and attitudes related to English-speaking countries, but there is also considerable variation, which means that positive answers on one of the measures do not automatically lead to a positive answer on the other.

Attitudes towards the English language

According to the single item in the questionnaire related to English language attitudes, the overwhelming majority of the respondents were positive towards the English language. 241 (78,8 %) of them gave answers that were interpreted as positive, only 12 answers were neutral (3,9 %), and 53 (17,3 %) were negative. For this variable there were also a great number of missing values ($n=45$). Below some examples of the range of positive answers.

(102): I think English is *fun*.

(94): I think English is *pretty easy*.

(213): I think English is *a good and easy language*.

(214): I think English is *useful for me*.

Most of the positive answers simply state that English is fun, good or easy. Some of the respondents also point out that it is useful to know and/or that it is a widely spread language. The answers coded as neutral were mainly statements consisting of both negative and positive components, e.g. I think English is *difficult but fun to learn*.

The negative group is worth some more attention. The typical negative answer was: I think English is (*pretty*) *difficult*. Some of these respondents seem to express a realistic view of the English language, or their own ability in relation to learning English, as exemplified below.

(106): I think English is *difficult to read*.

(8): I think English is *hard to understand sometimes*.

(43): I think English is *difficult to write*.

(348): I think English is *difficult to write and sometimes to understand*.

(316): I think English is *a strange language*.

(21): I think English is *a strange (Swe. konstigt) language*.

The four first examples – for this purpose coded as negative – reflect a greater language awareness rather than negative attitudes. It is possible that these respondents have a fairly positive attitude towards the language, but acknowledge (parts of) it as difficult, since it is yet fairly unknown. The two last comments seem to be more purely affective, expressing fear or rejection of the unknown.

This item correlates significantly ($p < .000$) with both measures of pupil performance (LC and PV), but the correlation values indicate only a weak association. For the variable ‘score in listening comprehension’ the Spearman rank correlation value was .307 and for the variable ‘total number of words’ it was .236. Hence there seems to be a slightly stronger covariance between ‘score in listening comprehension’ and ‘language attitude’ (as measured by this item).

Attitudes towards English-speaking people and countries

Respondents’ answers concerning attitudes to English-speaking countries and representatives of these were not as positive as for language attitudes. The majority of answers were coded as neutral (72,3 %, $n=238$), 21,9 % ($n=72$) as positive and 5,8 % ($n=19$) as negative. It ought to be noted that the policy of the coder was to code only explicitly positive/negative answers as such and all the rest as neutral. Since the same policy was followed for the answers on the language related attitude question it is possible to compare these results with one another and also to relate them to the performance related variables.

There is no statistically significant correlation for ‘attitudes to English speaking countries’ and the two measures of linguistic skills i.e. ‘score in listening comprehension’ and ‘total number of words’. Nonsignificant weak positive correlations were observed ($\rho < .150$), which indicates that the direct impact of these attitudes on pupil performance is minimal in this sample and non-existent in the population.

Pupils’ expressed knowledge of English-speaking countries

Quantitative measures can only describe pupils’ attitudes to a limited extent. Qualitative data and analysis often provide a deeper understanding of – in this case - the knowledge basis and attitudinal starting-points of the pupils participating in this study. For this purpose, two questions related to differences and similarities between the two traditionally considered major English-speaking countries Great Britain and the United States of America (cf. Chapter 1 on

English as a global language) were included in this study. The preliminary analysis of these two questions has previously been discussed in Björklund (2004c). As in previous sections, examples of respondents' answers have been translated into English by the researcher, with the aim of providing the most authentic translation possible, which means that it may at times reflect awkward English from a strictly linguistic point of view. These choices have been made in order to provide the whole range of interesting evidence regarding the respondents' familiarity with the language and country in question.

I want to begin this presentation by providing a brief quantitative overview of the amount of factual knowledge expressed by the respondents in this study. For this quantitative measure the concept factual knowledge has been narrowed down to bits of factual information possible to verify by means of available sources of information (e.g. Encyclopedia Britannica, Wikipedia). Out of these facts an aggregated variable was created to make correlations with other relevant variables possible. Correlation values for both language tests, TEE, the individual sources of exposure and other background variables will be presented.

This superficial overview will, as mentioned, be deepened in the qualitative analysis of the respondents' answers. As shown in the methods chapter, there were two separate open questions, one focussing on differences between the above mentioned countries, the other on similarities. This presentation will focus on a) which sociocultural fields the respondents' answers cover, b) what they express regarding each of these fields and c) what kind of attitudes these statements reflect. Figure 31 presents the variation in the number of correct pieces of factual information produced by the pupils' on the question regarding differences between Great Britain and the U.S.A.

Almost 48 % (n=167) of the respondents in this study have not produced any information classified as verifiable factual information. This group of respondents most likely represents two different categories: the ones who have not managed (or bothered) to identify any differences between the two countries and the ones who have provided answers not possible to categorise as factual information (e.g. *In the U.S.A they only speak English*). Answers in this latter category are included in the qualitative analysis. Statements like in the example above provide interesting information about pupils (mis)conceptions and might also contribute to a deeper insight into their attitudes.

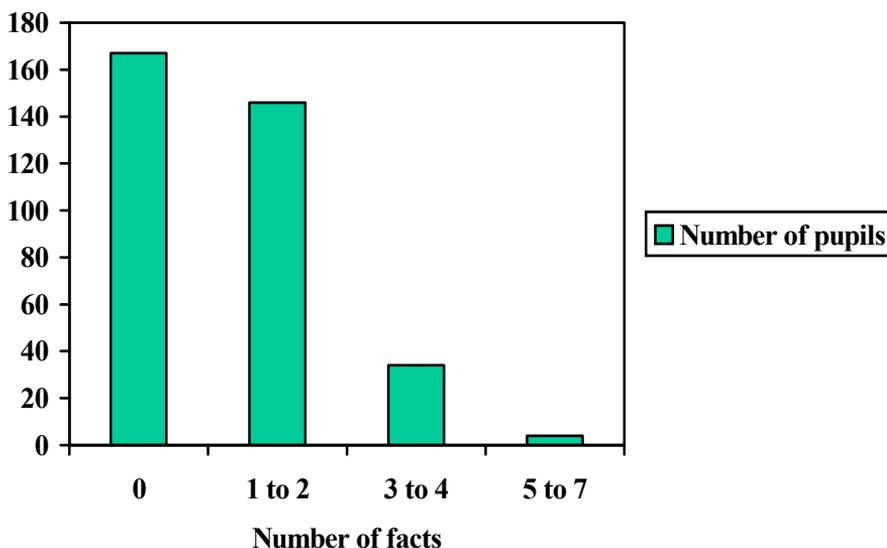


Figure 31. Frequencies in the score for number of verifiable facts about differences between Great Britain and the U.S.A. produced by the sample

In addition to the group mentioned above, we find a large group of the pupils ($n=146$, 41.6 %), who are able to point out at least one or two differences between the countries in question. The kind of knowledge expressed by these respondents is most often concerned with the language varieties, government, geography or flags. These different categories of answers will be presented in more detail in the qualitative analysis. The small remaining group of 10.9 % of the pupils ($n=38$) provide evidence of a somewhat greater realia knowledge. Even if 3–7 pieces of verifiable factual information cannot be regarded as deep or varied, the kind of information provided still reflects a greater familiarity with the countries in question than the previous two groups.

Figure 31 above provides a clear hint that there is great variation in the amount of knowledge of the two major English-speaking countries expressed by 10-year-olds who have not yet begun their formal EFL studies. In Figure 32 below the spread of answers regarding similarities between the countries is presented.

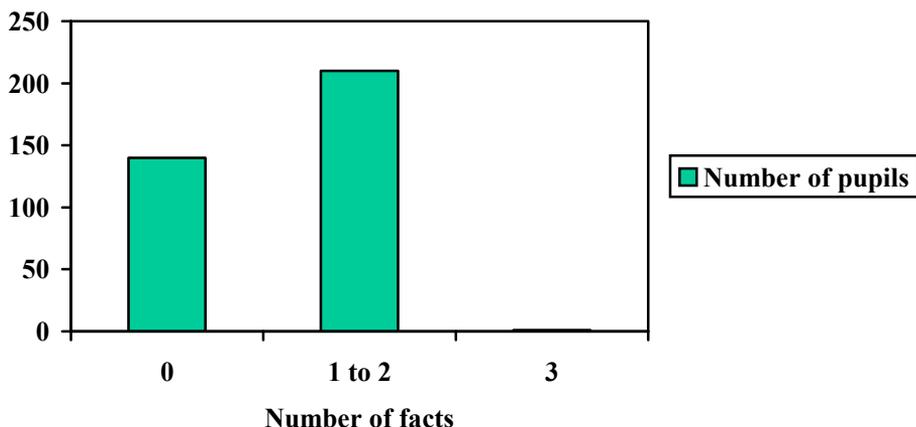


Figure 32. Frequencies in the score for number of verifiable facts about similarities between Great Britain and the U.S.A. produced by the sample

Almost 60 % (n=210) of the pupils have managed to identify one or two similarities between Great Britain and the United States of America. The most frequent piece of information given by the respondents is that the same language (i.e. English) is spoken in both countries. This information was, in fact, available in the instructions to the task. After some consideration, it was included in the results, since the large group of almost 40 % (n=140) shows that many pupils did not make use of that piece of available information. Only one pupil has produced more than two verifiable facts, which might indicate that it is more difficult to identify similarities than differences. However, this result might also to some extent reflect lack of time or even fatigue of the pupils, since it occurred towards the end of the test and demanded more writing than the other tasks.

As mentioned above, the answers to these two questions were merged into one variable labelled Explicit Realia Knowledge (ERK). This aggregated variable correlates with the following variables in the study:

PV ($\rho = .305, p < .000$)

LC ($\rho = .376, p < .000$)

TEE ($\rho = .292, p < .000$)

The correlation values are positive and range from moderate to weak. Even though there is always reason to be cautious regarding “cause and effect”-judgements on the basis of correlation values, it is evident that there is a relation between these pupils’ success in the two language tests and their explicit knowledge of the two English-speaking countries Great Britain and the U.S.A. Also the general amount of exposure to English through different sources can be claimed to have a positive effect on the respondents’ realia knowledge. However, it ought to be pointed out that none of these correlation values are strong enough to explain most of the variation.

To gain some more detailed information about the nature of the statistical

relationship between ERK and TEE, ERK was also correlated with the individual sources of English exposure. The correlation values are shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Correlation values (rho) and judgment of significance on a $p \leq .01$ level for ERK and the individual sources of exposure to English

	Books etc.	Friends/at home	Tourists	Computers	Trip abroad	Club	TV	Music	Guests	Radio
rho	.230	.222	.210	.182	.178	.163	.150	.129	.108	.053
sign.	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

The potential English sources music, radio programmes, and guests do not show significant correlation values for ERK. Club, written material, home and friends, computers, TV, tourists, and trips, seem to be somewhat more influential sources of realia knowledge of English-speaking countries. However, the correlation values range from very weak to insignificant, which means that the statistical association is low. It is noteworthy that the two most frequently used media for English input (TV and music) show extremely weak correlation values, whereas two of the less frequent, but most influential sources in relation to the productive language tests (books etc. and friends/home) also reach the highest values here.

When considering this result, it is not surprising that such a large proportion of the respondents in this study does not state any differences or similarities between Great Britain and the U.S.A. The kind of knowledge these young pupils are able to acquire through English TV programmes and English music is to a minor extent explicit knowledge regarding English-speaking countries. Since the TEE resulted in a slightly higher correlation value it is reasonable to assume that the process of acquiring ERK-type knowledge is based upon complex influence from sources that might not be easily available (outside school) to the majority of this young population. On the other hand, some of the stereotypes and attitudes that we will discuss later on in this section might well originate from TV programmes or music.

Before moving on to the presentation of the qualitative results, it is worth pointing out that there were no statistically significant correlations for ERK and the variables 'language/s spoken at home' or 'attitude towards speakers of English and English-speaking countries'. For ERK and the variable 'attitude towards the English language' there was a statistically significant but extremely weak positive correlation.

What kind of knowledge is explicitly expressed?

For this presentation I have chosen to concentrate on the answers to the question regarding differences between Great Britain and the U.S.A. As shown in the

quantitative presentation the variety of answers was greater on the question on differences. Hence, the answers to the question on similarities does not contribute to a deeper understanding of pupils' knowledge of English-speaking countries or the attitudes expressed towards these countries and representatives of them. As mentioned previously, the vast majority of answers to the question on similarities stated that *the same* or *almost similar* language/s is/are spoken in both countries. I also want to stress the fact that the qualitative analysis presented here is based on all types of answers produced by the respondents on the question concerning differences between the two above mentioned countries. Hence, the categories and examples presented will not consist of strict factual statements only, but they also include stereotypes, misconceptions and different attitudes. In the analysis of these statements six main categories emerged, as presented in Figure 33.

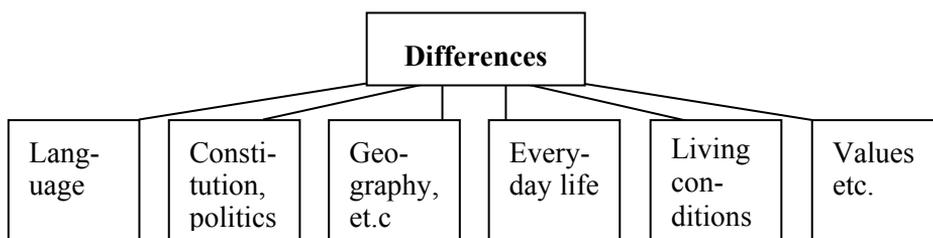


Figure 33. Schematic presentation of the thematic categories in pupil data on differences between Great Britain and the U.S.A.

Some of the aspects of sociocultural knowledge listed in the CEFR (pp. 102-103) are found in the material, but not all pupil comments fell into these categories, which is why also other categories are used. As mentioned in the methods chapter, there is some overlap between the categories, even though they do represent qualitatively different perspectives. Thus, a few pupil comments have been included in two categories.

The first category includes all pupil comments related to linguistic differences between Great Britain and the United States of America, and the second category deals with constitution and politics. The third category is labelled 'geography' and includes geographical differences, but also national symbols, such as flags and iconised buildings. The fourth and the fifth categories are closely related, the first one representing all comments on everyday life, the other representing statements concerning living conditions in Great Britain and the U.S.A. The final category is a broad one, including all the comments on values and attitudes that the pupils ascribe to representatives of the two target language communities. Often these statements reflect the respondent's own attitudes rather than the values of the described community. I have chosen to keep these as separate categories, even though it is sometimes difficult to find a clear border-line between the four last ones. In my opinion, they still essentially represent different kinds of knowledge. In the geographical category the knowledge expressed is of an objective and general character, whereas the

respondent's statements about living conditions is clearly of a more sociocultural character. Everyday living includes aspects dealing with food and drink, holidays and leisure activities, whereas living conditions include comments on how people are housed. The category on values touch upon all these cultural fields, but the perspective is very different, in that it deals with values and attitudes rather than factual knowledge.

□Language differences

Many pupils express an awareness of differences in pronunciation between British and American English. Many of these statements are purely neutral, which is exemplified in the two first quotations below.

...and there they speak American English and in Great Britain they speak British English (313)

They speak different English dialects (34)

There is also evidence of positive and negative comments regarding both of these spoken varieties of English.

In Great Britain they speak nicer (Sw. mera fin) English but in U.S.A. English is easier! (26)

In Great Britain they speak pure English (77)

The U.S.A. is all English (Sw. hel engelskt) while Great Britain speaks perfect English (152)

In Great Britain they speak strange (Sw. konstig) English In U.S.A. they speak more clearly. (242)

The English of Great Britain is very beautiful (Sw. jätte fint) but in U.S.A. it is different in TEXAS THEY SPEAK STRANGE ALSO (Sw. *OCH SO) in Cicago and Los Angeles. BLACKS also SPEAK DIFFERENT English (195)

As mentioned, the number after each quotation is simply an indication of which person in the study the statement can be attributed to. As the comments above illustrate, both the British and American varieties (as defined by these young learners) receive both negative and positive comments. Among the positive comments there seems to be a trend to attach epithets like nice, pure and perfect to British English, whereas American English is described as easier, clear and better. However, there is also occasional evidence of the opposite e.g. *in great britonia they speak very clear English but in the U.S.A. and Mexico they speak more American which is not so clear* (213). In the more negative comments the same kind of adjectives are attributed to both language varieties, the most typical being strange.

There are also several comments concerning differences in the vocabulary between these two varieties of English. As the examples show, this vocabulary mainly represents the sphere of interest of these young respondents.

Candy and svit is godis (Sw. for sweets) but one of the countries uses only Candy and [the] other swit. (277).

...there are many other words in American English E.g. Soccer is football in england

and football in in usa is American footbaal in england (156)

In England they mostly say TEATIME and in the U.S.A. they mostly say DINNER.
[original examples] (28)

The interesting variation in the spelling of 'sweets' and 'football' in the statements above are interpreted as traces of vocabulary only aurally encountered by the pupils, which is why the written form has not yet been established. Finally there are also a few comments on differences in spelling conventions between these two recognised varieties of English. The majority of these comments are very general, or tend to mix up spelling and pronunciation which is illustrated in the following quotation.

The words are spelt differently (Sw. *ulikadant) U.S.A.'s are spelt as long for example dog=doog [original example]

On the basis of this material it is possible to claim that at least some of the pupils in this study seem to conceptualise British and American English as different varieties of the same language. They show awareness of differences primarily concerning pronunciation, but also to some extent regarding vocabulary. In the next section pupils' expressed knowledge of differences in constitution and politics between Great Britain and the United States of America will be presented.

□Constitution and politics

Under this heading comments on the constitution and political importance of the two countries have been gathered. These statements were not nearly as frequent as the language-related and the geographical ones (below). This result is hardly surprising considering the age of the respondents. The most common comments in this category mentioned the constitution in both countries, as is shown below.

U.S.A. has a president but Great Britain has a Queen (77)

President Bill Clinton lives in the U.S.A. (1)

England has Qeen Elzabit, Queen or king, and in u.s.a. they have president (233)

To avoid unnecessary speculation it is worth pointing out that at the time when this survey was carried out Bill Clinton was still the president of the United States of America. I also want to point out the interesting spelling of 'Queen Elizabeth'. In my opinion, it serves as an example of how this pupil has stored what had been heard. Except for such neutral statements, this category also includes comments carrying an attitudinal element, mainly regarding the political importance and international involvement of the U.S.A.

U.S.A. is a superpower (123)

Usa pretends (Sw. *lå̄s, i.e. lå̄tsas) to be big and decide (128)

U.S.A. is bigger and more powerful than Britain (324)

The constitution of these countries is obviously familiar to several of these 10-11-year-olds and some of them have even gained an awareness of the differences in global political influence between the two, which obviously has raised either positive or negative attitudes.

□Geography and national symbols

The most frequent comments in this category express views on the difference in size between the two countries and the fact that they have different flags. This knowledge is relatively superficial and not explicitly of sociocultural character. The examples included contain this type of superficial factual knowledge, but I have chosen examples that point towards a more detailed knowledge than the most general comments coded within this category.

The capitol (Sw. *huvestad) of Great Britain is London. (22)

U.S.A. has a big statue god of liberty (Sw. frihetsgud)... (102)

Great Britain is divided into four different parts (78)

it rains a lot in Great Britain (36)

Within this category there are also some comments indicating that some pupils are not sure which geographic entities the notions 'Great Britain' and 'the United States of America' entail, as can be seen in the examples below.

The countries are equally big (217)

Great Britain is greater (Sw. *store, i.e. större) (140)

Great Britain is a continent (12)

Some of the examples in the three categories presented so far also give reason to claim that England and Great Britain are considered synonymous by at least some of the respondents. It is also evident that the spelling conventions of the Swedish equivalents of Great Britain and the U.S.A. are not yet fully established, e.g. *Usa*, *usa*, *u.s.a.* for the U.S.A. The Swedish term 'Storbritannien' for Great Britain was also spelt *Storbritanien*, *Storbrittanien*, which has not been transferred to the translation.

On the basis of this material one can claim that these young pupils as a group possess enough geographically related factual knowledge to be able to form a basic factual view of Great Britain and the U.S.A. if allowed to work together. In the following section pupils' perspective on everyday life in these countries is presented.

□Everyday life

This category includes numerous comments of the most varying kind. Everyday life seems to be one of the areas where pupils' stereotypical views are clearly represented, as in these examples:

Enland (prob. 'England') has nicer sweets (105)

People are better looking in U.S.A. (139)

U.S.A. is better at ice hockey. Great Britain is better at football. (193)

U.S.A. is dangerous they are violent (Sw. *voldsamma) in U.S.A. (61)

[In] Great Britain people are more polite than in Usa. (309)

In U.S.A. the people are a bit with leisure wear in Great Britain the people have a lit-

the nicer clothes. (343)

The Americans are fat. (312)

These opinions clearly express sociocultural stereotypes. They are expressions of a deeper character than e.g. the geographical facts presented earlier. This does not mean that the comments within this category constitutes deeper knowledge in the sense of a more sophisticated or refined information, but rather that this type of knowledge is often more deeply rooted in the pupils and that it will serve as the basis for their communication with representatives of these target language countries. This is one of the fields of sociocultural knowledge listed by the CEFR, and so is the following category concerning living conditions.

Living conditions

Living conditions is one of the fields listed as one of the relevant areas for a thorough sociocultural knowledge. However, the comments in the pupil data categorised under this heading are few, very general or even vague.

There are skyscrapers in Usa but not in Great Britain. (151)

...and there are bigger streets [in the U.S.A.]... (200)

Both of these quotations exemplify the interesting conviction that the United States of America is the more urban society of the two. These data indicate that young learners at this stage have not been able to gain very much knowledge within this area of interest.

Values and attitudes

Within this category the neutral comments are naturally enough very few and they are of general, more superficial character. More interesting are the strong positive and negative attitudes expressed in several comments within this category. The examples indicate that at least some pupils already at the age of 10–11 years old have formed opinions in value related matters about the two target language societies and are able to express these in writing.

In usa they are greedier (Sw. snål) and there are more crimes. One cannot trust anyone who is there. Still England is pretty boring because nothing happens (Sw. *hander) there. (234)

U.S.A. is a modern and rich country (+ large) [parenthesis in original text]. Great Britain is a fairly old-fashioned (Sw. omodernt) country. (3)

England has a greater (Sw. större) history and there is older environment. Usa has more cosmopolitan/big-city life (Sw. storstadsliv) and some more fashion. (181)

The Americans are have big heads (Sw. storhetsgalna) (312)

Usa is a country where there are many blacks and they can make (Sw. laga) good music. (165)

These quotations express stereotypical ideas that are often connected to strong positive or negative attitudes. Like for the two previous categories, we do know that a sound knowledge of the values predominant in target language societies and realistic attitudes are of importance in the intercultural competence of EFL

learners. The expressed stereotypical ideas are also of interest outside the EFL classroom, since they have implications for the general aims of the comprehensive school.

7.2 Teacher results (Study B)

This presentation has the OQs as its main focus and organizing principle, whereas the RQs are addressed in the next chapter labelled Discussion. The presentation of the teacher interview results begins with an outline of what the teachers participating in this study spontaneously mention as major factors affecting their actual teaching, i.e. what they have answered on the last OQ. The reason for that choice is to provide an initial idea about the teachers' perspective of the major factors affecting their teaching before moving on to present the results concerning the five major areas specified in the OQs. As mentioned, these OQs are believed to shed some light on the RQs considered to be of the utmost importance both for the future language learning opportunities for beginning EFL pupils in the Swedish-medium schools in Finland, as well as for the professional development of the teachers of these pupils. Those five areas also cover aspects not explicitly mentioned spontaneously by the teachers themselves, whereas some of the factors mentioned by the teachers are more implicitly included in the major aspects of focus chosen for more detailed presentation. These choices have been made since the researcher has chosen to concentrate on contributing to an overall view of the conditions for the primary school EFL teacher's work and professional development.

The results concerning the areas of focus are presented below under the following headlines:

- 7.2.1 Factors expressed as critical for the outcome of EFL teaching
- 7.2.2 Effects of pupils on planning
- 7.2.3 Effects of materials on planning
- 7.2.4 Effects of curricula on planning
- 7.2.5 Effects of education and experiences on planning
- 7.2.6 Effects of other actors in the social context

The teachers were asked to explain how the above mentioned factors are related to the planning of their EFL teaching. All the data are based on the teacher interviews, and therefore represent the views and beliefs expressed by the participating teachers, rather than their actual classroom practices. As mentioned, quotations have all been translated from their original Swedish version into English by the researcher. An earlier version of these results was presented in Björklund (2004a).

7.2.1 Factors expressed as critical for the outcome of EFL teaching

Let us first take a brief look at what the teachers in my study claim that influences their teaching and to what extent they express being in charge of the situation, taking the responsibility for identifying and solving problems that may arise. The teachers' strategies for handling these influential factors are dealt with

in further detail under each individual section devoted to that specific aspect. The following six main categories emerged.

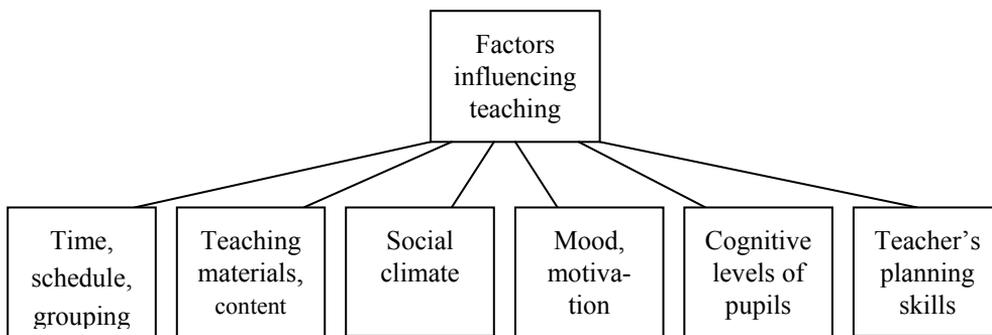


Figure 34. The major categories that teachers mentioned as critical factors affecting their EFL teaching.

The factors listed in Figure 34 above seem to represent the whole range from external structural factors to the inherent or learnt characteristics of the main actors in the EFL classroom. It is interesting to note that none of the teachers in this study mention the curriculum among the critical factors for the outcome of their teaching. Other adult actors are not explicitly mentioned either, but the traces of such influence is implicitly visible, especially in the first three categories briefly presented below.

Time/schedule/grouping

Some teachers mention ‘time’ and other time-related frame factors as important in relation to the outcome of their EFL-teaching.

...so most likely time is that first factor that does, if we keep to those 15 minutes or switch something, so that we have a little longer, or if a day drops altogether and then the following step is to what has happened so to speak with the timetable (Sw. i de-thär schematekniska) during the last few days, if English has not been held some day previous I try to make it longer and then there is often some part that connects to later [i.e. previous content], so that it will hold together as one unit, so these are the first factors (T 11)

However, it was also mentioned that sometimes tasks are carried out much faster than expected, which is experienced as problematic. Also the practical arrangements in the school affect the effectiveness (or speed of progress) of teaching. The necessity to teach two or even three different levels at the same time seems to promote a slower progression.

... and then it turns out that that took a lot more time. Or that went extremely fast, now we are finished ... but usually one ends up putting a break on (Sw. man hamnar och bromsa), since it does take a lot longer always. That is so frustrating you know /m/ one feels one does not get anywhere (T 4B)

... precisely that one has to set [the pupils] to work on quiet tasks, but often I have them take the tape recorder with them to a[nother] room and listen to (Sw. lyssna

igenom) the text and repeat, because they can do that on their own you know and in the meantime take some kind of that I teach something else to that [i.e. remaining] group, so that is what I find takes the most time and most energy and is most annoying, because it goes faster or slower depending on what one has had in mind, so it is that putting it together (Sw. pusslande) which makes it /I: Precisely that running of two groups at the same time?/ Yes. (T 6)

The teachers' comments seem to reflect the view that there is no way of avoiding these kinds of problems, due to lack of funding, the size of the school or other reasons beyond their own zone of influence. In other words, they solve the problem by adjusting to the situation at the best of their ability, even though they are convinced it is not an optimal situation neither for the pupils nor for themselves as professionals.

Teaching materials, content

Some teachers also mention the textbook as an important factor, since it structures what is to be dealt with, how and in what order.

Well, one starts out from what is in the book to a fairly great extent (Sw. ganska långt). (T 2)

Well, it is the group of pupils and of course also the material, concerning (Sw. i frågan om) books and such I have handy. (T 4A)

In this section I have also included the only teacher comment relating to the curriculum. The textbook is not explicitly mentioned in this statement, but it is evident that this comment refers to core content defined by unspecified source.

I think surely that must be what one knows will be brought up. What they will learn, that is included (Sw. kommer med) in our curriculum so that one sees to it is included you know at least one starts out from that then (T 19)

Social climate

Another factor mentioned as important for the outcome of teaching is the social climate of the classroom.

Things that might have happened influence [the English lesson]. To be sure it is pointless (Sw. onödigt) to start with personal pronouns if one realises that something has happened during the break or something that they can't get out of their minds (Sw. att di tänker bara på det). Then one has to change the situation and be flexible then. (T 2)

It is not regarded as useful to carry out teaching in a class where the pupils are pre-occupied with what has taken place during the break or what has occurred in the local community lately. Within this category there are also comments concerning so called "problem pupils", i.e. pupils with social problems or otherwise less well-behaved in classroom situations, as exemplified in the quotation below.

And I have no problem pupils, that you would normally find in a group, ... so I find I can choose the kind of teaching I regard as good. If I sit there with four to five troublemakers (Sw. busar) who cannot shut up, who constantly go on talking, who are generally disturbing, then I have to do it [i.e. teach] in a different way, then there are

more silent activities. (T 3)

This teacher expresses the view that activities have to be chosen not only with methodological considerations in mind. Also possible disciplinary problems have to be considered. It is interesting to note how the chatting of some pupils might result in an emphasis on silent, presumably individual, activities.

Mood and motivation

This category could easily be confused with the previously mentioned one related to the social climate of the classroom, but the statements have been interpreted as qualitatively different. In this category the focus is on personal traits and motivational factors and the interplay between the individuals in the classroom. In the previously described category the focus lies on experiences and incidents outside the classroom affecting the concentration of the actors in the classroom. In that sense this category adds a further perspective to the complexity of the learning experience in the EFL classroom.

Well, quite a lot my own mood and the moods and motivation of the pupils and it is no doubt an interplay between the two (T 9)

All aspects of this category are reflected in the quote above. Many teachers in this study seem to feel that one major factor which determines teaching is their own motivation and mood, the motivation and mood of their pupils and the interaction between the two.

Cognitive level of the pupils

Many of the teachers mention the group of pupils as one of the major influencing factors. Some teachers in this study simply mentioned the “pupil material” as important.

Elevmaterialet (Eng. literal transl. pupil material) (T 14)

This pragmatic way of referring to the groups of pupils they are teaching is interesting. It might be seen as an indication that some teachers tend to regard the group of pupils as the primary recipient of teaching rather than the individuals in the EFL classroom. The teachers who have shared more information regarding this aspect have generally referred to the cognitive capabilities of the pupils.

Certainly it is the kids who determine that, pragmatically /I: Are you thinking mostly of their cognitive levels or if they happen to be out of form (Sw. deras dagsform)/ Well, you know generally speaking it is a general educational principle that one as a teacher, if one wishes to gain some kind of a success, ought to lower oneself to the level of the crowd. [Laughter] (T 18)

However, some of the comments classified in this category also show an awareness of and care for the needs of the individual pupil in the group. As we can see in the example below this is often perceived of as one of the time consuming elements in planning EFL teaching. One reason for this heterogeneity in the group of pupils mentioned by these teachers is the fact that the groups are age integrated, that is two grades are often taught together in small schools.

Well, since they are at somewhat different levels, I try to [plan] get so that everybody will be able to participate in something, so that it won't be too difficult for the weakest, but that there will also be something to challenge the ones who are a little stronger. That is what amounts to a lot, ye-es [emphasis], that is what I think of often when I sit down in the evenings to look it through. (T 13)

This teacher clearly expresses an awareness of the different cognitive capabilities of the pupils and invests time and engagement in planning lessons according to the principle "something for everybody". The following category deals explicitly with the teacher's own planning skills.

Teacher's planning and skills

No, one's plans may be really great and then one can't carry out anything, but of course the planning is important, certainly, it is extremely important (Sw. jätteviktig), but it isn't always guaranteed that one's plans are successful. (T 9)

Several teachers also realise the importance of planning, and they express as a general rule 'the better the plan, the better the outcome', but they also recognise the fact that sometimes the plan is not carried out at all due to other factors, most commonly problems with the social climate of the classroom or the temporary moods of the actors involved. Within this category I have also put comments related to the teacher's skills, for instance the ability to inspire the pupils and know in advance what will be difficult or take a lot of time to finish. As we have seen in the categories above, lack of the latter abilities often leads to frustration and disappointment on the part of the teacher and boredom on the part of the pupils.

This brief overview does not provide in-depth knowledge into the mentioned aspects, but it does add to the understanding of what frames for action some class teachers' in the Swedish-medium primary school in Finland are conscious of as important factors in EFL teaching. Below the teacher interview results focusing on factors believed to be of importance on the basis of previous research will be discussed, starting with teachers' opinions about how pupils affect their EFL planning.

7.2.2 Effects of pupils on planning

From the teachers' responses to questions related to the effect of pupils on the planning of EFL teaching, four qualitatively different categories emerge. The categories illustrate a great variation in teacher views on how pupils affect their planning.

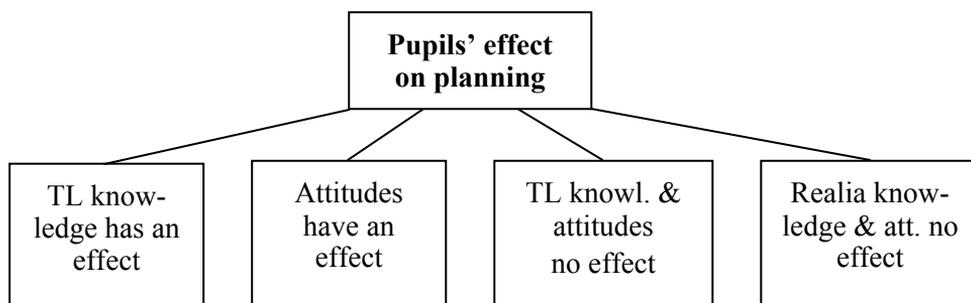


Figure 35. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding the effect of pupils on the planning of EFL teaching.

TL knowledge affects classroom procedures

The teachers mention that the pupils' greater knowledge of the target language makes it possible to use more English in the classroom and to progress faster through the textbook. It is also possible to demand more of the pupils, e.g. a higher degree of correctness in written language. One teacher also mentions a wish to build upon what the pupils already know in order to reach their common goals.

I do not ... actively try to teach them anything totally new, but it starts all the time from building up and strengthening what they have ... and so far that strategy has reached the goals we have had ... (T 11)

In this connection, the heterogeneity of the group of pupils is also mentioned, since it becomes necessary to prepare extra or different tasks for the advanced ones. An additional problem is to find one textbook suitable for all pupils in the group, regardless of their level.

There is a huge gap between the strongest ones and the weakest ones, so it is a bit difficult with the planning sometimes, to consider all of them. One has to find some kind of mean, to work for those in the middle. (T 4)

The same problem is also reflected in other aspects of planning. Teachers find it difficult to choose for whom to prepare the lesson, the weakest, the strongest, or somewhere in between. They also mention pupils with specific learning difficulties/disorders, which adds to the complexity. In the following section the attitudes rather than the TL knowledge of the pupils will be the focus.

Attitudes affect both content and procedures

The pupils are generally perceived to have positive attitudes towards the TL, which is regarded as an asset in the sense that it does not become necessary for the teacher to devote a lot of time to making the lessons in English enjoyable.

Yes, in the way that I do not have to put down so much time on making it interesting [...] I don't need to come up with lots of funny games, since they are pretty pleased with it as it is. (T 6)

There are, however, also a few comments in the interviews referring to instances where pupils' attitudes positively affect both the content and the classroom

procedures. These instances are concerned with providing the pupils with culturally related knowledge either in order to help them cope abroad or in order to give the pupils a more realistic view of the TL community. One teacher also mentioned that pupils' positive attitudes give her the possibility to discuss certain culturally related topics.

As mentioned, there is a great variation in the responding teachers' views on how the pupils affect their planning. As has been illustrated above, some teachers consciously think about the pupils as individuals with different needs, but even among these comments you find a tendency to regard the group of pupils as a single unit, which should undergo the same kind of "treatment". Below we will focus on the comments that bring forward the view that the pupils' initial TL knowledge and attitudes are not of any particular relevance to the teacher's planning.

TL knowledge and attitudes do not affect planning

I still think I need to take everything from the very beginning, because there are still the ones who need that. (T 20)

Some teachers mention that the initial TL knowledge and skills of their pupils do not affect planning, since they feel it is their duty to start from the very beginning anyway, or simply because they follow the textbook. For some pupils the content is new, for others it is revision.

As was previously mentioned, attitudes towards the TL are generally fairly positive, and hence it is stated that they do not affect planning, since they are more of a resource than an obstacle. From the above, the conclusion can be drawn that at least some teachers' planning seems to focus more on eliminating obstacles than on fully using the pupils as resources.

Attitudes towards and knowledge of TL countries do not affect planning

These teachers feel that the initial position of their pupils concerning attitudes towards and knowledge of TL countries does not affect the planning of EFL education. It is apparent that some teachers have not thought about these aspects as possible factors to consider in their planning. Among the teachers who have, the aspects are generally seen as issues they do not find it possible to devote much time to. To the extent that they express they do, Great Britain is the most obvious target of focus, since it is not regarded as familiar to the pupils, which means that here, again, the teachers start from "the beginning".

It is more about Great Britain during the English lessons. I think all of them know fairly little anyway, so it is probably right to start from the beginning. (T 20)

7.2.3 Effects of materials on planning

There is a wide range of views expressed also in the responding teachers' opinions about teaching materials and their relevance to planning, as can be seen in the outline of categories below. Each category with pertinent quotations will be presented separately.

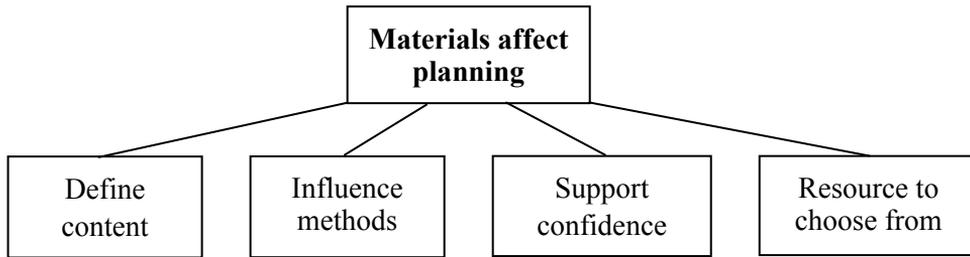


Figure 36. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding the effect of materials on the planning of EFL teaching

Define content

Most teachers in the study seem to use one series of textbooks almost exclusively. It is also apparent that many of them tend to follow the structure of the book, and that some of them become frustrated when they have to make choices concerning the content.

... they mainly follow Bricks [a textbook], and it isn't bad, but it's very extensive and difficult to get through [...] and there I almost wish they could point out which activities it is possible to leave out [...] it is difficult to know what one has to go through. (T 21)

Hence, the textbook seems to be one major force in deciding the content to be taught. One teacher also explicitly expressed the opinion that since the content of the textbooks is based on the curriculum, the teacher does not have to make that choice. In my opinion, this view is problematic because some of the textbook series still in use at the time when this interview was made were produced in the 1970s and 1980s. These materials were obviously not produced on the basis of more recent national curricula. In some schools, material produced for the comprehensive school in Sweden are used and one cannot take for granted that the content and structure of these materials are in all respects equivalent to the aims in Finnish curricula, even though they probably coincide to a large extent.

We still have On the Move [old textbook], in fact. ... because in co-operation with lower secondary they have wished for On the Move for a long time. (T 20)

Another complicating factor is the fact that many lower secondary schools seem to want to decide what content is to be taught in the primary schools that supply them with pupils. Some of the teachers in this study express the belief that it is not regarded as acceptable that the pupils begin their English studies in lower secondary with very different vocabularies.

Influence methods

Since the textbook is used almost exclusively in some EFL classes, it also has a great influence over the classroom procedures and methods.

...but if one follows the book, it [the lesson] becomes very varied. One listens to the cassette, it's a lot of listening comprehension, songs and such. (T 4B)

Some teachers seem to implement the activities recommended in the textbook without much reflection, except when it comes to extensive training of certain grammatical skills. Then many of the teachers seem to agree that more tasks are needed than the ones available in the textbook series they use.

Support confidence

...and that anxiety has made us mostly follow the textbook. (T 11)

Some teachers feel that the textbook gives them something to rely on, both regarding content and methods, when they do not feel very confident themselves. That is also why the reactions to a material containing faults and with a less rigid structure are very negative among these teachers.

And to know yourself that you can't trust the textbook and what it deals with. The old books you can follow like that ... it is easier for the teacher to use them. (T 4B)

Resource to choose from

Many teachers also mention that they regard available materials as a resource possible to choose from, but only one teacher expresses this freedom as bluntly as the one quoted below.

But no teacher is tied up to one bloody textbook, or what? [...] No, I'm not that insecure. There are such huge loads to choose from. (T 18)

Most of the statements coded here make it obvious that this freedom of choosing is related to the choice of textbook series, of using extra exercises, of deciding what topics/tasks to work with when there is an abundance of texts and exercises. There are, however, also some comments on the use of other texts and other materials, such as computer games and videocassettes. These other materials used are often quite old materials that the school happens to have. The possibility to buy new materials seems limited in the schools these teachers represent.

Generally, the teachers feel that there are enough materials available to choose from, but one teacher mentions a lack of culturally related materials, such as videocassettes suitable for beginners at the age of 11-12. That is a relevant concern when put in relation to the slightly changing aims of the more recent national framework curricula.

7.2.4 Effects of curricula on planning

In this section the teachers' views on curricula at different levels are presented. It was left to the teachers themselves to decide what curricular levels they wanted to specify. The most frequently mentioned curriculum was the schools' own. Regarding the effect of curricula on planning, the interview data fell into five qualitatively different categories.

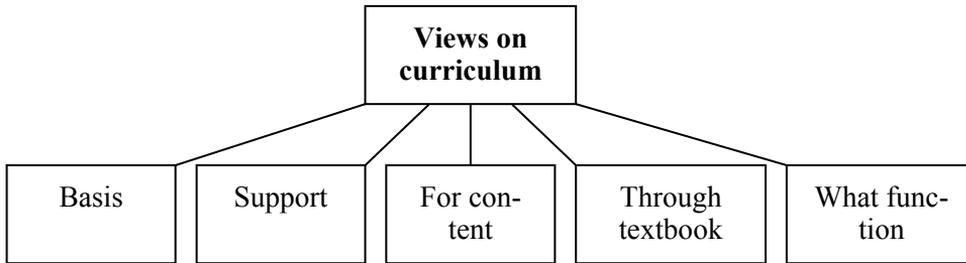


Figure 37. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding the views on curricular effects on the planning of EFL teaching

Basis

Seven of the teachers in my study mention the curriculum as some kind of a basis for their EFL planning. For one of the teachers, this basis functions as an adjusting factor when there is a risk of straying away too far from what is central (e.g. in the joint planning with the pupils), as in the quotation below.

Because of many different reasons, there has to be something to lean on still and check back to, so that we do not flip out altogether and there, there the curriculum serves as that kind of a basis. (T 11)

The others state that they see the curriculum as a kind of aid for the first crude planning of the school year, or as a more latent framework for their work. They mention that they might have a look at it once or twice a year.

It is like a key foundation (Sw. *basgrund). [I: How, in what sense is it a basis, do you always base what you do on it or?] No, I do not always think about it, but it is, you know one knows that it is based on it anyway, it is like always in the background that this belongs to it (Sw. hör till). (T 19)

...but on the whole that I sort of have those frames and that this is to be included and that they should, this is how far we should get, or this we should achieve before spring. So indirectly it does affect. (T 8)

Yes, one does look a little in autumn, like that yes, (T 4B)

For many of these teachers the curriculum apparently affects their planning indirectly rather than directly, just as pointed out in one of the included quotations.

Support

None of the teachers explicitly mentioned the curriculum as a restriction for their teaching (cf. Basis, above). It was evident that for many teachers the curriculum is not felt as either a restriction or a support, but rather as something of no real significance. The curriculum is described as a useful aid for new teachers whereas it is not seen as useful for teachers with several years of teaching experience, who feel confident in their subject knowledge and who “know that stuff already”.

I have been teaching for ten years now, so I know that stuff already. No, I don’t need

it [the curriculum]. But for a new teacher during the first year, of course, and perhaps still during the second... (T 14)

However, some experienced teachers do tend to feel a lack of support in the national framework curriculum of 1994 and local curricula based on this framework, since they are too vague and not really state what should be taught; i.e. what content should be regarded as the most central. This lack of curricular support is felt in relation to the teaching materials and the pupils' parents, since the curricula do not state exactly what ought to be covered. These statements are closely interconnected with the ones classified as related to content, below.

For content

It is obvious that the teachers in my study link curriculum and content. They mention that they check the curriculum to see if they have covered the central content, and what the pupils are expected to learn.

In so far that I check that everything we have written that they should know, that it is there and that is then principally (Sw. främst) concerning grammar, but otherwise I have to confess that I do not have a look in it very much when it comes to planning the teaching. (T 23)

The purpose of the curriculum is described as an aid in the process of choosing content, and here it becomes evident that many teachers tend to define content as grammatical structures. Among these statements one also finds frustration with the national framework curriculum of 1994, which only contains aims instead of explicitly listed central grammatical structures.

Yes, it's really bad, because we would like [...] concrete; that grammar. Everything else comes for free. And you talk, you learn to write letters, you talk about nationalities, yes, that comes in, but that is like the cream on the cake. (T 4B)

It would be interesting to study if this kind of frustration has decreased among teachers with the arrival of the new national framework curriculum of 2004, since it has a more regulating character.

Through textbook

...and all textbooks follow that [the national framework curriculum] of course [...] so if you follow a textbook, you follow the curriculum. (T 3)

...but in the daily planning it [the curriculum] hardly comes in at all other than indirectly through the textbook (T 11)

Some teachers express the idea that as long as they follow a particular textbook they follow the curriculum, since they believe the available textbooks to be based on the framework curriculum (cf. Define content under Section 7.2.3)

What function

For some of the teachers in this study there seems to be uncertainty about what function the curriculum should fulfil. As was previously shown, some teachers mentioned that they expect the curriculum to list relevant content, especially grammatical structures, so that teachers do not start doing whatever they feel

like. On the other hand, this is exactly what other teachers seem to do, since they mention that they do not feel obliged to follow the curriculum if the content in it is not suitable for a particular group of pupils.

In my opinion common sense tells you what you shall teach them [...] so I don't go through the curriculum, no. I must say I mostly play by ear. [laughter] (T 8)

Some teachers simply claim that they do as they please regardless of the curriculum. This may have to do with the view expressed above that common sense will tell any teacher what is useful to teach. A more likely explanation is the fact that some teachers feel they already know the curriculum very well, either because they have been revising the school's own version of the curriculum recently or simply because they initially wrote it on the basis of their own procedures in the classroom.

Well, I have written the curriculum [...] I have written down what I think is essential. (T 15)

Other reasons expressed are the views that the curricula do not contain very much information or simply are not useful. Another interesting view is expressed in the following quotation:

During this course I took it became evident that many [teachers] had only skimmed through the curriculum, so I believe the curriculum is something unknown, or at least a less well known concept. (T 8)

According to this view, the curriculum and presumably its intended function is a less known or perhaps even unknown concept to many teachers, who, as a result, are not able to make use of it properly. That would explain why some teachers tend not to value revision of the curriculum.

7.2.5 Effects of education and experiences on planning

As many as nine of the teachers mention that they do not think that their own experiences and education affect their planning, or that they are not aware of the fact that they do. Regardless of this fact, both in the statements of these teachers and in those of the others there are several ways in which their experiences and education seem to influence their planning and actual work in the classroom.

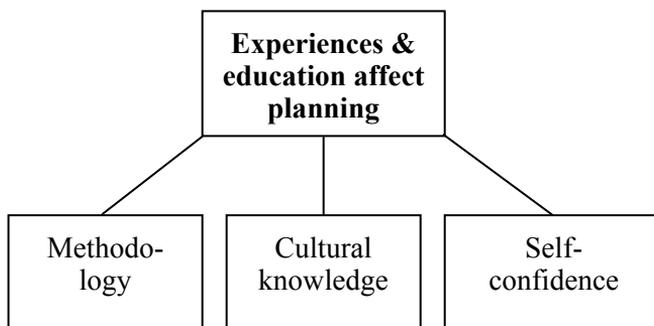


Figure 38. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding the effects of experiences and education on the planning of EFL teaching

Methodology

I suppose, if one would feel very good at it oneself, then perhaps one would be even more open, talk more English and so on. (T 17)

The most frequent comments are concerned with the didactic effects of education or, more commonly, lack of education. Many teachers mention their own lack of confidence in their own English skills as a constraining factor concerning the use of oral language in the classroom. Teachers who are not confident in their own subject skills/knowledge feel a need for more planning, and a need to master the situation, which in turn limits the amount of flexibility built into the lessons. Only one teacher explicitly states that the recent teacher education programme she has taken part in has affected her planning positively in the sense that she has become more able to express concrete, attainable goals. One teacher also mentions that an in-service methodological course has had a positive effect on the planning of EFL teaching.

Some teachers seem to draw upon their own experiences as comprehensive school learners when planning, especially when they have not had any formal training in EFL methodology. It is, of course, also to be expected that teachers draw upon their own teaching experiences when planning tasks and procedures. However, only two of the teachers mention this explicitly. One teacher also recognises the possibility of pupils and teacher learning together as a good option.

Cultural/ realia knowledge

An interesting notion is brought forward in the following statement:

When one comes to England, or Great Britain, it would be good to know how to say that, how to find the toilet and ... that you never learn in school or how one, British customs how they do, how we do ... That is something I've come to think about since my brother studied in London and he had a really good English pronunciation so people thought he was an Englishman, but he was so awfully, in their eyes, he was so incredibly rude because he didn't know that code. (T 21)

Hence, it is also possible to benefit from the experiences of others. For this teacher the experiences of her brother have brought with them an understanding of the relevance of certain cultural skills, i.e. a cultural awareness, which goes beyond realia knowledge. One other teacher also mentioned that he had realised the importance of teaching pupils how to act when travelling to and in a foreign country.

There are also methodological aspects to this, in the sense that the teachers claim they are able to make the textbook texts more personal and interesting for the pupils if they are able to share their own experiences, or mention "curiosities" about a particular country or its inhabitants. Some teachers also mention that they tell their pupils about the British way of life and how British people interact. One teacher states that one's own experiences are of importance in teaching situations that go beyond the scope of the textbook. It is worth noting that none of the teachers mention education as a source of cultural experiences and awareness. Only two of them mention that they have benefited from the experiences of other people.

Self-confidence

As can already be seen implicitly in the previous categories, education and other experiences seem to be of importance for security and self-confidence as an EFL teacher. There are some explicit remarks about this in the material.

It [education] has simply made me safe in the teaching situation. I find that I am not insecure in entering the English lesson, but it feels comfortable. (T 14)

Some of the teachers with studies in English as a university level subject (e.g. teacher 14 above) are more at ease with their situation as teachers of English, whereas some of the teachers with no studies in English at this level mention that they feel the need to plan even what they want to say in class thoroughly beforehand.

7.2.6 Effects of other actors in the social context

In the interview guide there were no questions explicitly aimed at finding out the influence of specific actors on teachers' planning, but the aim of the questions was rather to find out which actors teachers identify as important and in what respect they perceive being influenced by them. For this a more general question concerning the social context of the learning/teaching situation was included in the interview. Some actors were identified by the teachers, namely: parents, colleagues, visiting pupils (from abroad), and media. Authorities were referred to in very general terms such as "the municipality" and "the state". In my opinion, the ways of referring to these actors indicate that there is a very clearly perceived distance between the individual teacher and these authorities, as illustrated in the quotation below.

They, I mean the state do what they do and the municipality hardly cares at all (Sw. bryr sig nog knappast så mycke) what we are doing, as long as we keep within the limits of the budget. (laughter) (T 15)

The same teacher also admits that he/she thinks that "the state" should care more about what is done with the money they allocate to the municipalities, so that the school really would get the resources they need. During the interview it was not checked whether this statement refers to a belief that the state provides resources that are not used for educational purposes by municipalities, or that a greater interest would generate greater resources for education in the national budget. These statements were made when the 1994 national framework curriculum was used. The influence and interest of the state might be perceived differently today, when a more detailed, and more prescriptive curriculum is being used.

As could be seen in the quotation above the question aimed at identifying different social actors generated more interesting results in terms of how the relationship to the mentioned actors are described. In terms of experienced support or feedback from other social actors, the teachers' answers can be categorised into two qualitatively different categories as illustrated in the Figure 39 below.

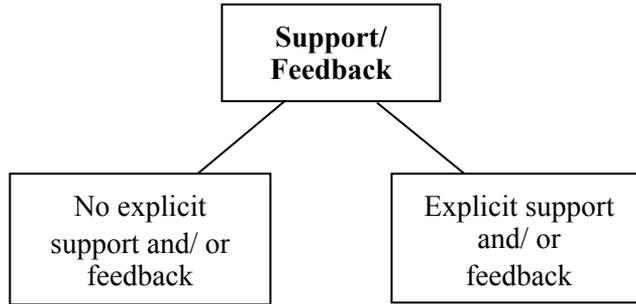


Figure 39. The main categories found in the teacher interviews regarding expressed support and/or feedback by other social actors

Within these categories different actors and perspectives are distinguished. These will be briefly presented below.

No explicit support and/or feedback

Ye-es, I would need it, but there is none, who in that sense could give support, because after all we are a small staff and we, here in this village there are no English-speaking people of anything else, so there is no explicit (Sw. direkt) support that I can get in that way and if one takes an even broader perspective we have the actual points of fact (Sw. realiteterna) again that limit [ed. note: the possibilities to take part in] in-service courses and other and also partly one's own interest I do choose, I have to admit that I choose some other in-service course rather than English to the extent that there is money and time for in-service courses at all, which is extremely limited (Sw. jättegrensats) today. (T 11)

This quotation reflects the expressed need for different kinds of collegial support and professional development, but also clearly illustrates the perceived lack of it both in school, because of the often small school units for grades 1-6 in the Finland-Swedish context. Also the strained economic resources seem to play an important part in limiting this teacher's possibilities to take part in formal in-service education. For class teachers who teach numerous subjects there is also the further consideration that one needs to choose carefully within which subjects professional development is most urgently needed/wanted.

One teacher expresses frustration over a lack of parental support, especially in relation to weak pupils: *...but if they helped him at least a little at home and were persistent it would, he could do better* (T 5). However, the picture is more varied than this. There are also teachers who express views that support is not really necessary. One teacher mentions that English is easy to teach anyway and another one finds this idea of support rather neutral, it would not affect her/his teaching one way or another anyway.

Explicit support and/or feedback

Concerning explicit feedback and support parents are mentioned as important actors. One teacher describes it like this:

...so I came to the conclusion that [name of school omitted] is a very good school. Also in terms of these parents, that is the importance of the parents for the school. The parents have a rather great influence there in that school and are eager to participate. [They] support, and that. Help out, also give praise and sometimes also blame which one then takes with composure if it is well-founded. I'm sure there are very many teachers who have it very much more rotten (Sw. jävligare) than I these days. (T 18)

The same teacher also describes how he/she decided to change schools, because it became impossible to work in accordance to his/her ambitions in the old one. After careful consideration, the school with the parents mentioned above was seen as a much more preferable professional environment. In the quotation above one can clearly see that parents in this particular school have become an integral part of the school context. They are engaged and that also gives them the right to enter in a sometimes also critical dialog with the teacher/s. The quote gives an impression of a dynamic open environment.

Parental support, engagement and feedback is also described in other, somewhat less profound ways by some other teachers in this study. Some of these comments are concerned with how parents support their children at home and in that sense support education. The comments here range from the traditional help with homework to the kind of stimulating bilingual home environments that parents might (or might not) create for their children, as in the quotation below.

Yes, because I have some pupils who come from bilingual environments (Sw. förhållanden) and that, pupils who come from stimulating bilingual environments are enormously strong, [in comparison] with the pupils who then come from , let's say conditions where one does not have any awareness of the importance of language... (T 18)

One could, of course, claim that this is a matter of indirect support rather than explicit such. However, I have chosen to include it here, since it is evident that this is something teachers very much feel as explicit support or an even problematic lack thereof, resulting in a profound inequality among pupils with very different starting-points. In terms of explicit support parents provide useful feedback on the amount of homework and they might also be called upon to share their expert knowledge in some field.

Also visiting pupils from abroad are mentioned as actors supporting the EFL teacher's work. In the quotation this aspect as well as the support perceived to be provided by media or in society at large are visible. The media influence and distinct presence of English in the local community and society at large was mentioned as a supporting (f)actor by several teachers, which is interesting especially in relation to the previously mentioned thoughts that EFL teaching is to start from the very beginning, as expressed by some of the teachers in this study.

...English is heard and seen in very many ways there are guests. Last year I had a little American girl in my class for six months and then I came to use English a lot with her... So I hope that has rubbed off on the class' attitude towards English and maybe they have a little, little in their backpack (Sw. i ryggsäcken). At least a positive attitude towards small American girls (Sw. små amerikanskor), because she was awfully nice. (T 4)

This statement clearly shows that there is an awareness of the importance of authentic language use and linguistic and cultural encounters for the development of language attitudes and perhaps also linguistic skills.

Finally, colleagues are mentioned in terms of explicit support and feedback. The statements coded in this category provide some kind of a complementary view to the ones presented concerning collegial feedback in the previous category.

In the actual teaching one is pretty much alone after all, but this kind of common [stuff] that we have discussed, [text]books a lot, and can sigh over what is tiresome and difficult and sigh over what we shall do with these pupils who do not manage. [...] ...should we call lower secondary and say that now we are going to do like this. That kind of stuff. (T 4B)

In this quote the affective collegial support mentioned by some of the teachers is evident, but at the same time the things under discussion are directly relevant to the teaching situation and further planning of teaching. Also the connection to language colleagues in lower secondary is mentioned. In another statement collegial support in terms of making use of one another's strong points is also mentioned, e.g. that the music teacher might ask the English teacher to introduce an English song or the other way around.

7.3 Summary of results

In this chapter the results of the OQs in studies A (learners) and B (teachers) have been presented in as much detail as judged necessary to illustrate the emerging patterns.

The learner results (Study A) confirm the beliefs that the availability of the English language was fairly great in the Swedish-medium parts of Finland already in 1999. However, a wide spectrum of exposure to English, ranging from fairly little exposure to English to a vast amount, is reported among the participants. There are also considerable differences concerning to what extent pupils report being exposed to English through different media. Hardly surprising, for instance (popular) music and TV top the frequency lists, whereas English-speaking guests and radio programmes are among the less frequent sources of English exposure.

The learner results also show that there are great differences in the linguistic starting-points of beginning learners on entering formal EFL classes. This sample provides evidence of a vast range of different levels of performance in relation to listening comprehension and productive vocabulary. A small minority has developed almost no skills in either area. An equally small minority has reached a level where they are able to grasp the general content of simple, fairly concrete unfamiliar spoken text. Some of them are also able to construct almost flawless sentences, as shown in the productive vocabulary task. A substantial majority show evidence of some listening comprehension skills and at least a limited productive vocabulary. Variation in initial English skills correlates to some extent with the amount of exposure the respondents have reported, but the correlation values are at best moderate, often very weak, which means that the perceived amounts and types of exposure to the English language are just some

factors in a much more complex interplay of conditions in the process of learning in an out-of-school context.

It is interesting to note that the frequent use of written material in English and the use of English at home and/or with friends rank highest in terms of strength of association, i.e. statistical covariance for both listening comprehension and productive vocabulary. Computers and music also show the same kind of overall effect, but the impact is weaker. The generally frequent source, TV was associated with the score in LC, but the relationship with the PV was minor. The types of phrases produced by the respondents show that at least some pupils are able to produce phrases that express feelings, state facts and uphold social relations before they begin their formal studies in the English language.

The attitudes reported by the respondents are generally positive. The language related attitudes are overwhelmingly positive, especially when one takes into account that some of the statements classified as negative rather express realistic doubts in relation to one's own capacity to acquire different linguistic features. The attitudes towards representatives of English-speaking countries are less positive and the knowledge expressed by these young informal learners is often hampered by stereotypical views and faulty assumptions. There seems to be only a minimal correspondence between the performance (LC and PV) of the respondents and the attitude measures used in this study.

The teacher results (Study B) show that teachers are able to identify different factors affecting their work as teachers of English. Some factors are within their own reach to influence, whereas others seem to be out of their reach. When teachers are asked to identify how pupils affect their planning, issues such as pupils' initial target language knowledge and attitudes emerge. However, several statements also suggest that these factors do not affect the planning. The justification is often that EFL teaching in mainstream education has to start out from the assumption that pupils are not familiar with English, regardless of the actual starting-points of individual pupils. Another justification for the choices made in progression is that the teacher/class has to follow the textbook.

The degree to which the teachers express being influenced by teaching materials (most often the textbook) in their planning varies. Teachers' statements include perspectives where the textbook defines the content and influences the methods in EFL. Another category includes statements where the textbook supports the teacher's confidence in teaching English, whereas the last category includes statements where it is evident that different materials are viewed as possible resources by independent teachers.

The same kind of range of qualitatively different answers emerges in relation to the curriculum, ranging from an implicit basis for education, support for inexperienced teachers for defining the core content, to the view that the curriculum is expressed through the textbook and the view that the curriculum really does not fulfil a clear purpose. The teachers' own (lack of) education and/or English language experiences seem to be potential sources that affect methodology, cultural familiarity (i.e. culturally related content) and general self-confidence as a teacher of EFL. Finally, some of the teachers in this study express a lack of support in the social environment. Actors mentioned as important by the teachers are parents, colleagues, and visiting English-speaking

pupils. Also municipal and national authorities are mentioned, mainly in relation to economic resources.

In the following chapter the results will be discussed from the perspective of the RQs. Links to theory are also made explicit, when judged appropriate.

8 Discussion

In this chapter the implications of the results presented in Chapter 7 will be discussed. The results in this study are discussed in the light of the actual research questions (RQs) stated in Chapter 6. The explicitly learner-centred RQs are presented first, followed by the teacher-centred RQs. Methodological issues are discussed as a subsection under each of the two previously mentioned parts. The future perspective and actual implications for EFL policy, materials production, teacher education and suggestions for further research in this field are discussed in Chapter 9.

8.1 Learner-related questions

The learner-related research questions are discussed below in the following order:

- the status of English (SL/FL) among young learners in Swedish Finland
- the possibilities for pupils to function as active and reflective learners
- the conditions for making EFL learning need-based and authentic for these learners
- the conditions for working towards realistic and favourable attitudes towards representatives of other cultures.

At the time when the data was collected the majority of Swedish-medium schools began teaching English as a foreign language in grade 5, a minority began their studies of EFL as early as in grade 3 (such subjects were not included in the study). After these data had been collected the EFL context has changed in many Swedish-medium schools in Finland, so that English is now taught from grade 4 rather than grade 5. However, I am convinced that the implications of these results are still relevant, since the development of digital technology and media influence on a general level has increased even further during the last ten years. It is, therefore, suggested that the data gathered among these 10–11-year-olds generate results relevant for discussion in relation to the starting-points of 9–10-year-olds in Swedish-medium schools in Finland today.

8.1.1 The status of English as a FL/SL

It ought to be noted that the results do not necessarily reflect the actual amount of exposure the respondents have been subjected to, but rather the relative amount and kind they are aware of being exposed to. However, this is not seen as a problem, since it is claimed by e.g. Schmidt (1990) that a learner needs to notice linguistic material to a certain degree in order to be able to acquire it. Hence it is plausible to expect that the pupils who have reported greater amounts of exposure probably also have acquired more English (measured as listening comprehension skills and productive vocabulary). This in turn implies that pupils in this study are not likely to have exaggerated the amounts of English

they have been exposed to, since the relative scales used are based upon their own experiences.

As the results of this study show, all pupils report being exposed to English outside school. It is also apparent that there is great variation in the amount and types of influence they report. In accordance with the views of many language researchers and theorists (see Section 2.1), these results support the view that English can no longer be said to be a foreign language in the sense this term has traditionally been used for all pupils in this study. The results clearly show that a majority of the pupils are familiarised with English outside school at a fairly young age. The pupils show an awareness of being exposed to English in many networks outside school even before they have begun their formal studies of the language. The mean values reached for English exposure through TV and music are very high (reaching over 4 out of 5 possible). Most pupils are frequently exposed to English through these media. However, some of the sources are less frequent among the majority of the pupils in this study. These sources are e.g. guests, radio programmes and friends/at home.

For some of the pupils English could be regarded as a second language, that is, a language widely used in the surrounding community (see Section 2.1). Almost 13 % of the respondents claim they speak English with friends or family on a daily basis (but not as the domestic language) and almost 16 % claim they read written material (ads, magazines, books) in English on a daily basis. On the other hand, there is also a group of pupils who hardly ever have been in contact with English outside school. Thus almost 12 % of the respondents reported that they hardly ever have been exposed to English through TV programmes and more than 8 % reported that they hardly ever were listening to English music. These two sources of English exposure were, in fact, the most commonly relied on by the pupils in this study.

It is not possible, however, to know whether the results indicated by this small group of pupils reflected the actual state of affairs or whether they rather reflected a lack of awareness. On the basis of supplementary information provided by their teachers, it is plausible to claim that at least parts of these results are indeed related to a lack of exposure to the sources mentioned rather than due to lack of awareness. The result of the productive vocabulary task supports that conclusion, since only one single item produced was a “non-English“ item. This is taken as an indication that all participating pupils at this age have at least some kind of an awareness of English.

Many of the pupils have also acquired basic listening comprehension skills and even a small productive vocabulary in English, even though their production often contains spelling errors and some misinterpretations, but so does the interlanguage of first language learners in informal learning contexts. Some of the respondents seem to have processed some more common every day expressions as chunks, which indicates that the respondents have heard these rather than read them and also that they have been able to reach approximate conclusions regarding their semantic field of use. Hence, one can say that the amount and type of exposure reported by these pupils indicates that English cannot be regarded as a traditional foreign language for the vast majority of young pupils in the Finland-Swedish context, but they also show that there is

great variation in the total amount of exposure to English and hence also in the English language skills of these pupils. The data provide confirmation of the claim that EFL in Swedish-medium schools cannot be taught solely as a competence for the future. It is very much a competence these pupils will use almost on an everyday basis and therefore the aims and the content (themes, vocabulary, grammar etc.), ought to be chosen with a “here and now”-relevance in mind. In my opinion, pupils less confronted with English will not suffer from such a methodological approach, since it will also give them access to the necessary linguistic tools for engaging in this English interplay when the need or possibility arises.

The teachers interviewed for this study generally confirm the view of extensive exposure to English in the Finland-Swedish communities and great variation between individual pupils, but the strategies they describe that they use to meet the situation differ (see Section 7.2.2). Some mention that they try to build upon what the pupils know already, that is adopt a SL-approach, whereas other teachers claim that English is to be taught as a traditional foreign language.

Differences in relation to background variables

Generally speaking, there are small differences in the levels of exposure due to regional, urban/rural and linguistic backgrounds. However, it is possible to see an overall tendency that pupils from the southern parts of Finland are aware of or in fact receive more English exposure, which coincides with the results presented by Forsman (2004) concerning 14-year-old learners of English in a Finland-Swedish context. There were three “regionally neutral” sources of English exposure: ‘radio programmes’, ‘trip abroad’ and ‘guests’. All of these are among the less common sources of English exposure. However, it is not likely that the explanation for this pattern lies in availability only. For instance concerning visibility of TV channels, the western parts still⁴⁴ have access to several channels from both Finland and Sweden, which is not possible in the southern parts of Finland. Therefore, I believe that the explanations for these patterns are more complex. They are probably to be found in differences in the sociocultural values and behavioural patterns in these regions (cf. Brunell, 2007). However, scrutinizing these reasons is not a primary aim of this study; the aim is rather to point out that there are differences in exposure and that this probably affects the linguistic and cultural starting-points of these prospective pupils in EFL education. This is something the teacher needs to be aware of.

The degree of urbanisation also seems to play a part in the amount of English these children are exposed to outside school. For this variable the more commonly used sources of English exposure – music, TV and computers - are “neutral” in terms of the urban/rural distinction. Hence, there does not seem to be any difference in the access to English through these two media depending on whether one lives in the countryside or in a more densely populated area. On the other hand, there does seem to be a greater likelihood to encounter English-

⁴⁴ At the point in time when the data was collected the analogue distribution of (state funded and commercial) TV channels from Sweden were still functioning, whereas agreements about more general visibility through digital technology had not been reached. Analogue broadcast of these channels was shut down in autumn 2007.

speaking tourists and guests for pupils in urban areas. For these two sources it is perhaps possible to claim that it is more likely that the result is due to real differences in the amount of available “exposure”.

In conclusion, region appears to be a slightly stronger predictive factor of differences in the status of English as a common language in the surrounding community than degree of urbanisation. This is important for teachers to realise, but it is equally important for teachers to respect the fact that these differences are not within teachers’ domain of direct influence. To the extent that such issues are discussed among teachers and parents, parents intent on supporting the EFL success of their children can be encouraged to bring in access to some of the less frequent – potentially more effective - sources of English (see discussion in Section 8.1.2).

There is also a very weak positive relationship between the domestic language/s and the amount of English exposure. The perhaps most interesting point to note is that this trend is weaker than for both region and urban/rural differences. Hence, domestic language does not seem to be of very great importance for the amount of English these children are exposed to, and to the extent that it does make a difference it seems that pupils with a more varied linguistic background (e.g. two L1s or L1 other than Swedish) are aware of being more frequently confronted with English through different sources.

8.1.2 Active and reflective learning

In this discussion one needs to keep in mind that the results under discussion concern pupils who have had no formal teaching in English, with the exception of the small group who has attended English club (the data does not provide information about the degree of formality during those sessions).

Listening comprehension

In this study music and TV stand out as effective sources for acquiring initial listening comprehension skills. This may seem logical enough, but it is interesting since these media have not been considered that effective by some SLA researchers (see discussion in Section 4.3). However, one ought to be a bit cautious regarding this conclusion, since the questionnaire did not distinguish between video taped and broadcast programmes. Interestingly enough, there are several clearly aural sources that do not reach very high rankings, whereas written material is ranked among the most effective ones. These less influential sources also include the variable English club. Hence, it is possible that these clubs have not focused on listening comprehension skills to any greater extent. On the basis of the results one can also question the potential effectiveness of radio, trip abroad, tourists and guests as sources for developing initial listening comprehension skills among young informal EFL learners.

However, it ought to be noted that this correlation can either be seen as an indication that written sources of English are in fact more effective as potential sources of acquisition among these young learners or as an indication that pupils who read English are simply more proficient also regarding listening comprehension skills. Regardless of which interpretation one prefers, the results indicate that written material of different kinds and using English among friends

or at home are less commonly used but potentially powerful sources of English exposure. One could say that a frequent use of these sources of English can be seen as a trademark of the active informal learner of English as a FL/SL. This is worth noting for teachers and parents who want to support children's learning of English outside school.

Some interesting conclusions can also be drawn on the basis of the result on the three different texts in the listening comprehension test. The very high mean score on the first text indicates that the vast majority of pupils in this study have some comprehension basis in English, even though the result might also to a great extent reflect their strategic competence, since the instructions given, the questions and the text itself contained several clues that might have helped the respondents. However, many real life communicative situations also consist of context-embedded communication, containing all kinds of clues to the meaning of a written or spoken text. It should thus be regarded as a necessary element of language competence (cf. CEFR, 2001), which most pupils are able to acquire actively through informal interaction. If the teacher wishes to build up pupils' confidence as active learners of English these results provide a basis for the choice of methodological tools in the EFL classroom.

The results for the other two texts in the listening comprehension test also shows that there is a very wide range of listening comprehension skills represented among these pupils. On the one hand some of them have managed to understand parts of the content of unknown stories containing also abstract notions and where fewer contextual clues were available to them. On the other hand throughout the three parts of the LC there is also evidence of pupils who have not succeeded in decoding any of the asked for information from the text. On the basis of the result it is not possible to know if the lack of success in these tests is purely due to lack of listening comprehension skills. It is possible that some of the result also reflects a lack of motivation for the task, even though nothing in the written comments serves to support such an interpretation. This indicates that there might be a wider spread of entering skills than previously expected in what has been traditionally regarded as a very "homogeneous" EFL classroom of the Swedish-medium school in Finland.

Vocabulary task

Also the results on the productive vocabulary task confirm the trend of a great variation in English skills seen in the listening comprehension test. The respondents have produced between 0 and 56 different word types, with a mean of 21.85 for the whole sample. For the vast majority of these words they were also able to supply an acceptable translation, which means that they had a fairly good idea about the meaning of the word.

The same kind of continuum from less to more proficient can be traced in the spelling used by these young learners. Many rely heavily on the L1 spelling system, others show a beginning awareness of the spelling conventions of English and a few are even able to spell whole phrases correctly. It ought to be noted that the instructions to the test informed the respondents that they did not have to spell the words correctly, and this might have influenced the result to some extent, but nevertheless the whole range of ability is visible in the material.

Some of the respondents were also obviously struggling with learning the spelling conventions of Swedish. The questionnaires as a whole show ample evidence of that. In my opinion, this reliance on L1 spelling conventions as well as the traces of chunk-processing can be taken as an indication of a strong aural influence. This indicates that these young learners are more exposed to aural influence than written or that this kind of exposure is easier for them to process.

However, when the sources of English exposure are correlated with the outcome in the productive vocabulary task, the result does not seem to fully support either of the assumptions proposed above. The strongest correlation values were reached for the variables friends/at home, English club, written material and music. These represent a mixture of aural and written exposure, whereas the least influential sources of exposure related to the productive vocabulary test were mainly aural sources (radio, TV, tourists, guests). It is also interesting to note that the computer only reached a ranking as sixth. One could perhaps have expected a stronger correlation between computer and productive vocabulary. It seems that attending English club is strongly related to productive language performance rather than listening comprehension skills, whereas the opposite is the case regarding TV as a source of English.

Some of the sources of exposure to English show a stronger relationship with either receptive skills or productive skills whereas only two seem to have a strong impact on both kinds of skills (cf. Table 12). Regardless of the fact that one cannot with certainty ascribe “cause and effect”-directions to correlation values, it appears to be the case that the frequent use of English with friends and/or at home and written material in English does seem to have an impact on both production and comprehension skills. On the other hand, tourists do not seem to have any greater impact in terms of linguistic skills. Both music and computers are stable at a medium level for both types of skills whereas the other variables show varying degrees of influence. The most interesting of these are TV and English club, which show opposite trends of influence.

The variation in the tendency to produce phrases was great in this material. As we have seen, almost 70 % of the respondents in this study used at least one phrase in the productive vocabulary task. This fact does, of course, not prove much about the importance of phrases for SLA, but evidently most children do not retrieve language as single lexical units only. However, it is difficult to know to what extent these items have also been processed as unanalysed chunks. For most of the multi-word items in this study this cannot be determined, but for some of the units the orthography or the Swedish translation provides support for the assumption that these phrases have been processed as chunks. The present study does not tell us whether all the processed chunks have gone through the same process and whether the unprocessed ‘chunks’ will be processed. That can only be shown through a longitudinal study which is beyond the main aims of this study.

What the results of the study do show, however, is that many children seem to be able to acquire lexical items in English in informal settings, both as unanalysed chunks and as processed multi-word units. Many pupils also seem to be able to process these themselves. Some pupils, however, might need help with the processing, since they seem to build up their own “grammar”, which is not in

accordance with the existing rules of the English language, for instance *aim/am* has been taken as the equivalent of *I* (cf. Björklund, 1996, pp. 56-58). Perhaps teachers ought to get access to more research-based information about what kind of rules of their own (interlanguage, cf. Koskensalo, 2006) pupils may have when beginning their English studies in order to be able to help their pupils in the best possible way.

In the lexical items produced in this study we can see the connection to the notion of consciousness. You need to notice something in order to learn it. In my opinion, there are clear examples in this study of the importance of consciousness in language learning. The fact that not a single phrase produced by the sample was "non-English" (in the sense that they were all possible to recognise as English phrases after some analysis), can be seen as further proof of consciousness. In the analysis of individual words, only one word in the whole material was judged as "non-English".

Realia knowledge and attitudes

Regarding the differences and similarities between Great Britain and the U.S.A. pupils' views give rise to some relevant issues for discussion. Firstly, it is interesting to see that almost one half of the respondents did not identify any differences or similarities at all, even though some information was available in the very instructions to the task. It is difficult to know whether that should be interpreted as a lack of sensitivity/awareness to information or less well developed strategic competence. However, this result does make it apparent that these young pupils do not seem to be able to benefit from all possible available information, even though it happens to be in their mother tongue.

Another interesting observation is the fact that these respondents as a group identified more differences than similarities. There is a slight risk that this result to some extent might be due to pupils getting tired of writing or possibly not having enough time, but the result might also be seen as an indication of the prevalent ways of presenting foreign countries and cultures as different and exotic (cf. Hedin, 1995). This latter interpretation is not that far-fetched considering the general human strategy of making sense of the world through processes of generalisation and differentiation. These processes are necessary in order to sort out the endless amount of stimuli encountered, but at the same time it is exactly these strategies that support stereotyped views of people and cultures perceived as foreign.

8.1.3 Need and authenticity

In this section I will discuss the conditions for making EFL learning need-based and authentic for young learners in Swedish-medium schools in Finland.

I have already discussed the fact that all of the pupils are more or less acquainted with English, but that there are great differences in the language skills with which they enter the formal EFL classroom. Some of the interviewed teachers argue much along the same lines. They mention that they try to build upon what the pupils already know, refer to the teaching of English as a joint venture and/or express the challenges with trying to cater for heterogeneous groups of pupils. However, there are also teachers who firmly express the view that English is to

be taught “from the very beginning” regardless of the variation of skills between individual members of the class.

Both pupil and teacher results confirm that the great majority of pupils initially have a positive attitude towards the English language, i.e they acknowledge the importance and/or usefulness of the language. From a motivational perspective the conditions for initial formal EFL teaching are very good, but it is, in my opinion, evident that it will be difficult to plan e.g. the same kind of EFL listening comprehension tasks for the whole range of abilities represented by the pupils in my study. If these tasks are geared more for the advanced ones it may result in anxiety and loss of motivation and self-confidence among the initially less skilled ones and if the teacher takes the least skilled ones as the standard it may result in boredom and loss of motivation among the more skilled ones.

The results in this study seem to confirm the view of SLA researchers who claim that in order to learn a language one needs to use it. Real life speaking, listening and reading emerge as powerful means of acquiring English. In my opinion, the results also show that it is not a question of just any kind of reading or speaking/listening, but of these tasks being undertaken because one enjoys doing it or feels the need to do it. Music and computers do not reach top ranking, but do seem to promote the acquisition of both productive vocabulary and listening comprehension skills.

For parents, teachers, and school authorities it is also important to consider what kind of skills young pupils will feel the need to develop. Different media are differently suited for the acquisition of receptive and productive language skills. E.g. TV and English club seem to promote the acquisition of different linguistic skills. These conclusions should, however, not be taken to indicate that productive skills in English cannot be acquired through other media. These results and conclusions are based upon statistical means and correlation values, which means that there can always be exceptions to the general “rule”. In this connection it is also important to remember the regional differences discussed in Section 8.1.1. If there is a difference in the status of English between the regions in Swedish Finland there is also likely to be differences in the need for learning English and the opinions about relevant choices of topics for initial formal EFL teaching.

Furthermore, these children seem inclined to learn functional multi-word units, since a great majority of the phrases produced by the sample of 64 children were clearly functional. A majority of the examples presented in the previous chapter clearly shows the communicative focus of these respondents. Even though the data in this study does not reveal the processing of the majority of the phrases produced, it is obvious that many of them are fixed expressions (cf. CEFR, pp. 110-111). It is interesting to note that among these fixed expressions the sentential formulae, or even more specifically direct exponents of language functions are the most frequent, whereas other kinds of fixed frames are less frequent (e.g. phrasal idioms) or do not occur in the material at all (e.g. proverbs).

Another observation is that discourse devices are totally lacking, whereas there is an abundance of expressives. Considering the age group studied (10–11-year-olds) and the fact that they have not received any formal teaching of English this

is not surprising. A contributing factor might also be that the input the children receive does not contain discourse devices to any greater extent, or that these phrases simply are too abstract, and hence "invisible" to these informal learners. Whatever the reason for the lack of discourse devices is, it is of importance for teachers to recognise this, since it proves that this is an area with which the pupils are not familiar at all, whereas they, as a group, know quite a lot about how to interact socially and how to express feelings. One can assume that the need to understand and express relations, feelings, and even identity is felt as important for this age-group. On the other hand, teachers can also enhance their awareness by pointing out the need for various pragmatic discourse devices (e.g. Aijmer, 2001; CEFR, 2001), as indispensable tools in contributing to mutual understanding.

There seems to be some differences in the tendency to use phrases related to gender, level of urbanisation, scores in listening comprehension, number of words produced, and opportunities of input. These relations are, however, so weak that they ought not to affect teaching to any great extent. What is more interesting, is the fact that the tendency to use phrases did not significantly covary with participation in English clubs. That could be interpreted as a sign that this kind of beginning FLT does not encourage pupils to produce sentences or phrases. However, this interpretation ought to be taken cautiously, since only a small number of respondents (n=29) had attended English clubs.

On the basis of the different areas of realia-related information given by the respondents it is interesting to realise that the pupils as a group are most readily able to identify differences related to language, but also differences related to geography, every day living, and living conditions. Several comments were also value-related. However, no comments were offered in relation to beliefs and traditions. This result serves as a support for the notion that young pupils tend to internalise information related to national icons and (often more concrete) information supplied by visual media. The comments related to the different areas support this assumption.

The geographical information given suggests that common problematisation may be important in the EFL classroom, while there seems to be pupils who have a very vague knowledge of which geographical entities these notions stand for. The same can be claimed about constitutional and political knowledge. This knowledge exists on a more or less "iconised" level and a more differentiated view might be beneficial, not to say necessary, to support a development away from less constructive stereotypical views.

8.1.4 Attitudes and realia knowledge

In this section I will take a closer look at the conditions for working towards realistic and favourable attitudes towards and knowledge of representatives of other cultures. As mentioned in the methods chapter, the variable values related to language attitude is based on one single item, which is intended to measure the spontaneous views of the respondents. As could be expected on the basis of previous research (cf. Forsman, 2004) attitudes towards the English language are generally very positive among these young learners. However, I find it important to point out that there is a small but not insignificant group of pupils who

express negative attitudes or at least doubts related to their own ability to learn the language. The latter view is to some extent supported by the fact that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the language attitude variable and the language tests used. Pupils with a more positive attitude did better on both language tests in this study. This correlation is stronger for the listening comprehension test, which could be seen as an indication that positive attitudes are even more important for enhancing performance (reduce situational anxiety) in listening comprehension situations. However, it must be pointed out that one can only speculate as regarding causal relationships on the basis of correlation values, since these do not give us any information about the direction of influence.

The outcome of the attitude variable related to English-speaking countries and representatives of these is very different from the purely language related measure. The majority of respondents' answers were regarded as neutral, with small positive and negative groups. This result should be taken as an indication that positive attitudes towards peoples and countries are not necessarily directly dependent on, or related to the language they speak, at least not, if this language is a well spread means of international communication (cf. Janson, 1997). Because of the spread of English all over the world the language might be associated with so many varying nations, cultures and peoples that it may end up not "belonging" to any of them specifically. As is shown in some of the answers given on this variable, some of the respondents in this study expressed positive attitudes towards one English-speaking country and/or culture and negative towards another.

This may be a partial explanation for the low correlations between this attitude measure and the performance on the language tests in this study. In my opinion, this result should, however, not be taken as a proof that this kind of attitude is of less or no consequence to EFL, but as an indication of the fact that English today is seen as a world language not strictly connected to one single nation. This makes it important to dig further into the views that young learners hold of English-speaking countries, representatives of these, cultural artefacts and so forth, so that it is possible to motivate also future generations of learners in learning English, if society still considers that as an important part of primary education (cf. Coleman, 2006).

The kind of sociocultural knowledge explicitly mentioned by the respondents is mostly of a superficial factual character, but there are also more deeply value-related comments. The views expressed in the comments on everyday living are generally of a more deeply rooted character than the other categories. The sociocultural stereotypes expressed here are more thoroughly integrated in the mental networks of the pupils and will serve as the basis of communication with (native speaker) representatives of the target language if left unchallenged. This type of knowledge is not as easy to modify and develop as the more superficial factual knowledge. Therefore, conscious and long-term work is needed in this respect. The comments concerning living conditions and values provide further support for this claim. It is probable that some of the misconceptions evident in the pupils' comments stem from mixing views given of both countries through TV-series and films, even though this study does not provide proof of that connection.

The purely value-related comments provide important evidence of the starting-points of these pupils. It is worth stressing the fact that positive attitudes towards English do not necessarily imply positive attitudes towards native speaker representatives (in this case limited to the U.S.A. and Great Britain), as shown in the results.

The results also show evidence of unrealistic positive stereotypes. Also these might turn out to be problematic as a basis of communication. As discussed in the theory chapters, positive attitudes do not support avoidance strategies in communication situations in the same way as negative stereotypes/prejudices do. They might, nevertheless, result in problematic situations, when these unreasonable attitudes get in the way of really listening to the partner in communication and when proven not relevant they may change into prejudices.

Let me take an example from this material. One of the respondents states that black people in America are good at "making music". If that is taken as proof of a positive stereotypical view of the whole group of people this respondent stands a good chance of getting disappointed in encountering black people who are not interested in music. This might easily result in a negative stereotype: "They are not good at music at all" or "They are liars/unfriendly". If then again the starting-point would be "Many black people are good at making music" the above described encounter would not result in a more negative view of the group of people, but rather in a more varied and realistic view. The last example could still be considered a stereotype, but it is not unreasonable and hence of the more constructive kind necessary for making sense of the world. As the example shows, it does not result in another unreasonable view, but instead it is developed by the encounter.

It ought to be mentioned that the kind of values expressed by the respondents in this study is not of relevance to EFL education only, but the information gathered is just as relevant in planning the integrated topics on internationalism and active citizenship specified in the national core curriculum for the comprehensive school in Finland. Thus, this information is important for teachers, teacher educators and staff involved in educational politics on regional and national levels.

8.1.5 Summary

For many of the learners in this study it is evident that English is becoming a SL rather than a FL (see discussion in Section 2.1) in the sense that they are aware of encountering the language frequently in a variety of contexts and through different media and actors. However, it ought to be pointed out that at the point in time when this study was made this was not yet the case for all students in Swedish-speaking areas in Finland. In this context it becomes interesting to consider the role of English as a global language and the consequences this might have on which TL communities should be discussed in class. One could even ask if English should be taught and learnt as a lingua franca, as detached from the cultural values it conveys as possible. That is of course a political decision, but it is important to bear in mind that it will bring about difficulties in terms of ownership of the language and the consequences that might have on grammar, pronunciation standards and so forth.

For a vast majority of pupils in the Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland the societal context outside school provides good opportunities for active, authentic, need-based EFL learning. Many of these learners are also able to make use of this extensive exposure to English and function as active more or less autonomous learners in these informal contexts. The traditional forms of activity – reading, talking and listening – still seem to be most effective ways of acquiring both productive vocabulary and listening comprehension skills in English.

A majority of pupils enter EFL education with a varying repertoire of unprocessed language chunks. This can be made use of for enhancing an active learning process, but attention should also be given to supporting the pupils in the process of moving beyond this stage of foreign language competence. As a substantial group of pupils will probably have a noteworthy receptive and productive vocabulary when they enter formal English classes, why not use it and build on it to continue developing the kind of vocabulary they will relate to and need on a “here and now” basis.

The learner results do not provide explicit evidence of to what extent the role as active and reflective learners of EFL will become possible also in more formal (school-based) EFL contexts, but the teacher data is not uniformly encouraging in this respect. This will be reflected upon in more detail in the discussion of the teacher-related research questions.

In relation to a need-based EFL teaching, it might be worth pointing out that there were small, but still statistically significant regional differences. Pupils in the west do not watch/listen to/read English as much as the others (cf. Brunell, 2007). One needs to take this into consideration when setting realistic aims for EFL education. However, concerns about the effects of regional conditions have been voiced explicitly only with regard to the second national language Finnish in the latest national curriculum (NCC, p. 130).

Concerning the affective domain, the results show that these young pupils generally have a positive attitude to the language. The instances of negative attitudes were mostly concerned with what might be a realistic fear of failure, which in turn serves as a proof of growing language awareness. A large group of pupils express knowledge about target language countries, but this is mostly icons, superficial knowledge and, above all, sociocultural stereotypes. Other areas are even less familiar, in the sense that they are not verbalised. If attitudes are believed to be of importance for language learning and communicational success, these issues need to be dealt with right from the start in a conscious and long-term work to break down and elaborate further these stereotypical views. The importance of this kind of work also goes beyond the explicit field of EFL education, and one of the general educational aims of the Finnish comprehensive school is, in fact, to educate towards tolerance and acceptance of differences.

If we embrace the challenges brought about by a global world, we also need to recognise and accept the fact that there is increasing plurality also in our local classrooms. Teachers need to be prepared to provide adequate challenges for active able learners as well as relevant activating methods for the less skilled ones. Regardless of what approach we employ, it does not seem realistic to strive towards equality in the sense of “everybody alike”, if we aim at respecting and

recognizing the needs of the individual. In the next chapter we will discuss the teacher-related research questions, thus also how they have taken the wide range of abilities of these pupils into consideration.

8.2 Teacher interview results

In order to find out more about some of the conditions of EFL work of teachers and pupils in Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland, interview material from 19 primary school EFL teachers was analysed with six research questions (RQs) in mind. The RQs address how teachers:

- adapt their teaching to their learners (initial knowledge, attitudes, cognitive level),
- use teaching materials as an aid rather than a controlling force,
- find support for their own continuous development in goal-oriented curricula,
- experience that education and experiences have given them the basis they need in order to develop professionally,
- find support for continuous development among colleagues and other actors, and
- express their role/confidence in the English as a foreign language teaching process.

The factors mentioned spontaneously by teachers as factors that determine their EFL teaching cover a wide range of different factors. Some are frame factors such as schedule, grouping, teaching material, whereas others are related to the skills and abilities of the main actors in the classroom (planning skills, cognitive level). However, the types of factors overriding all of these factors seem to be of a more social or even internal psychological character. The teachers mention e.g. that even the best-laid plan does not work out if the class is not “in the mood” for it for some reason.

It is positive that these teachers show an awareness of the classroom as a social and psychological arena, where the actors have needs even more crucial to tend to than purely cognitive ones. On the other hand, the results also show a clear trend that frame factors and social factors have a stronger impact on EFL teaching than actual content. Content is usually referred to as the contents of the teaching material. Only one teacher explicitly mentions the curriculum as an important factor.

8.2.1 Learners in focus

In this section I will discuss what the teacher data reveals about how teachers adapt their teaching to the initial knowledge, attitudes, and cognitive levels of their learners. As was discussed under the learner-related RQs, most learners are exposed to English through numerous different media. A majority of them are able to acquire language actively through this informal exposure and they are also very positive towards the English language. However, there is also great variation in the extent to which learners acquire English outside school and there

are regional differences in the amount of exposure they receive.

With all this information about the learners in mind, it becomes interesting to discuss the analysis of the results regarding teachers' opinions about to what extent learners affect their planning. The data showed that this is something taken into account only by some teachers and to some extent. Pupils' initial English language knowledge and generally positive attitudes are regarded as positive resources by some of the teachers. Some of them mention that it is possible to use more English in the classroom and to demand better writing skills, since pupils are more proficient nowadays, whereas others claim that this development does not change things. In their opinion, one still needs to start from scratch, which means that the content will be new for some and revision for others. Teachers who choose the latter strategy motivate their choice with the fact that this is how they come to terms with the heterogeneity of the classroom and it also makes it possible for them to follow the textbook. These two issues are also mentioned by the teachers who try to take pupils' TL competence into consideration, but for them they are perceived of as problems. It is difficult to plan teaching so that all pupils will get some of the tasks at their level. Extensive use of one textbook also becomes problematic, since it is difficult to find one that caters for the whole range of abilities present in the language classrooms.

It is apparent that teachers in both categories are mostly concerned with teacher-centred teaching intended for a whole class of pupils, where the challenge becomes finding material and activities suitable for an increasingly more heterogeneous EFL classroom. However, one teacher also expresses that his aim is not to teach, but rather to build on what the pupils already know. This can be seen as a more individual-centred approach to teaching and learning, but it is, in fact, difficult to know if this teacher is talking about the pupils as a group or as individuals.

Even though the teacher data provide evidence of teachers' awareness of the classroom as a social arena, the tendency to talk about the pupils as a group is evident throughout the data. On the basis of this study, one cannot draw the straightforward conclusion that teachers actually think of the group of pupils as a unit, but it is apparent that many of the teachers expressed as self-evident that beginning EFL pupils ought to receive the same kind of input, through the same textbook in the same space of time (whole class teaching). Adaptation to individual learner needs is to be set within this kind of frame for most of them, with the obvious limitations that brings about.

Many of the teachers are also aware of the generally very positive attitudes towards English among their young pupils and claim that this is of importance when they plan their teaching. These teachers mention two aspects where pupil attitudes are of importance:

- 1) On a more general level, the positive attitudes imply that teachers do not have to spend time on making English fun, since the pupils seem motivated for it anyway. This is mentioned in contrast to other subjects, where these kinds of motivating activities are expressed to be of great importance. In other words, pupils' positive attitudes save planning time and make it possible for the teacher to use more of her/his creativity on the planning of other subjects. For the small group of learners with negative attitudes towards English/doubts about their own

ability to learn the language this kind of approach to EFL teaching might prove problematic. Therefore, it is encouraging to note that some teachers do express an awareness of individual variation and the challenges brought about by that.

2) The other aspect, mentioned by only a few and of a more specific character, deals with culturally related knowledge. Some teachers mention how pupils' positive attitudes and great interest in the subject makes the teachers share culturally related experiences and knowledge, presumably to a greater extent than previously. Hence, it seems that positive attitudes and an expressed interest and curiosity might result in a teaching where cultural elements are more readily included.

This is very interesting in relation to what these teachers say about pupils' attitudes towards and knowledge of target language communities. Very little is said about that in the interviews. Many teachers do not seem to find these issues to be of importance for their beginning EFL classes. Some teachers express the view that knowledge is of importance, but that young pupils generally do not possess it, which means that also regarding this aspect of language teaching they start "from the beginning". Hence, the general view that socioculturally related attitudes and knowledge is not a major concern in the beginning EFL is created, with the exception of classes where pupils express an explicit interest in these matters. Such an approach can be seen as a positive step towards taking learner needs into account, but we also need to be aware of the fact that it very easily results in even greater gaps between EFL classes with different initial levels of knowledge/in different regions. In that sense it becomes a curricular-equality problem.

8.2.2 Materials as aid or controlling force

The degree to which materials are allowed to have an effect on teachers' EFL planning varies greatly on the basis of the results of this study. For many teachers one can say that the textbook more or less defines the content of beginning EFL. For some of these teachers the textbook also influences the methods used. The only exception explicitly mentioned has to do with grammar exercises, where many teachers express that there are too few in their textbook. This can be seen as some kind of independence in relation to the textbook, but it can also be interpreted as a reinforcement of one's own experiences as a pupil. In all other respects these teachers express a very great respect for the textbook as an authority. The textbook is perceived of as an authority to rely on and, therefore, it is important that it does not contain any errors. One teacher also explicitly expresses the belief that the textbook is based on the curriculum, hence one only needs to follow the book. However, as has been mentioned before, this is a problematic statement in a context where several older or foreign textbook series are used. Also some teachers in lower secondary seem to perceive the textbook as a means of defining content to some extent, since some primary school EFL teachers' experience that they are obliged to use a particular kind of textbook series.

Many of the teachers mention materials as a resource to choose from, but the majority of these teachers are talking about the choice of material to use in addition to the main textbook. Only a few state that they are not relying on one

main textbook but rather choosing the most appropriate tasks depending of the situation. It is worth noting that these teachers mainly focus on written material; only a few mention other audio/visual materials. When they do mention other types of material these are mainly what they happen to have available in the school, usually out-dated material. The possibility to buy material was experienced as limited by these teachers. As they see it, even the opportunities of buying new textbooks are small, especially when put in relation to buying new books in maths or Finnish.

Regardless of this potentially problematic situation, the teachers in this study generally express that there is no shortage of available material. Only one teacher feels there is a lack of culturally related material suitable for 11-12 year-old EFL learners. This should be seen in relation to the previously discussed lack of awareness in relation to culturally related knowledge and attitudes.

It is obvious that only a small minority of the responding teachers express a high degree of freedom in relation to the teaching materials (cf. Sections 3.3 and 5.2.2). Most of them seem to be very dependent on the textbook. For these teachers, the textbook can be seen as a controlling force rather than an aid for the professional teacher. Some teachers in this study also express that they feel limited by the obligation to use the textbook series of the lower secondary. However, the textbook can also boost confidence for insecure or inexperienced teachers, but then it becomes extremely important to either a) produce materials that have gone through thorough control or b) give these teachers opportunities to develop the professional competence they feel they need.

8.2.3 Goal-oriented curricula as support

In this section teachers' ability to find support for continuous professional development in goal-oriented curricula is discussed on the basis of the teacher interview data. There is an interesting spread in their views on what functions curricula are supposed to have and what functions they actually do fulfil. The curricula referred to by the respondents are the national curriculum framework of 1994 and the local curricula based on this document. Many teachers express an uncertainty or even frustration in relation to the function of the curriculum. It is obvious that they do not feel that the curriculum serves the purpose they expect it to do. Depending on their views on what function a curriculum is supposed to fulfil, they react to this perceived shortcoming of the official documents in different ways. The more insecure teachers expect concrete support and advice for choosing relevant content and tasks in extensive textbooks. These teachers were frustrated by the almost purely goal-oriented curriculum from 1994, since it in their opinion, was too vague and did not list core content (defined by many of these teachers as grammatical structures).

Other teachers have a less frustrating relation to the national curriculum, which also means that they are not so dependent on it. In fact, many of these teachers claim that they mainly use it as an indirect basis or ignore it. One teacher in the study also expresses the opinion that the curriculum is a less well-known or perhaps even unknown document for many teachers. The more "curricularly independent" teachers seem more confident in their own ability to choose relevant content and activities for EFL.

It is also suggested that the curriculum could serve as a support for inexperienced teachers, but that it is no longer a relevant tool for more experienced ones. This could be interpreted as an expression of the fact that more experienced teachers have already internalised the curriculum, but as we have seen, several of the comments point in the direction of professionals moving beyond or even ignoring the curricular text. Hence, a high degree of freedom is expressed in relation to the curriculum. This is very interesting considering the nature of the most recent core curriculum (2004) for the comprehensive school in Finland, which is no longer to be taken as a recommendation, but rather as a mandatory rule. This recent curricular reform might well be felt as a restraint for the teachers who obviously have been independent actors, whereas more insecure, inexperienced ones might find some of the support they did not find in the previous framework curriculum.

Another possible scenario is that some teachers will continue teaching what they find most relevant, regardless of curricular demands. If this is the case, the major aim of the 2004 curricular reform, to bring about a more uniform comprehensive school in Finland, will most certainly fail. Actually, I would like to go so far as to claim that this aim will not be reached by the means of a curricular reform only. As well the variation in teachers' answers about the conditions for the planning of beginning EFL as the great spread in learner-related results serves to show that there is no such thing as equality in terms of exactly the same conditions, not even among a geographically limited language minority in a country like Finland, with few readily visible boundaries between social classes.

8.2.4 Education and experiences as basis for development

The main topic of this section is how teachers feel that education and experiences have given them the basis they need in order to carry out and develop in their profession. In my opinion, it is remarkable that so many of the teachers in this study seem to be largely unconscious of any effects of experiences and education on their planning. Nevertheless, the analysis of the interview results shows that education and experiences do seem to have the potential of increasing the teachers' knowledge and confidence in the classroom.

Lack of education seems to make teachers less confident in their own oral skills in the target language and also makes them draw upon their own experiences as learner in the comprehensive school. This supports the previous speculation regarding the origin of some teachers' strong focus on grammatical structures as the core content. It also explains why they express a need for extensive planning, for a minimal number of oral or otherwise unpredictable activities during EFL classes.

At least for some teachers education seems to result in more confidence in their TL skills and an ability to set attainable goals. One teacher mentions in-service education as an important "vitamin injection" in terms of methodology. These more confident teachers mention that they use English in the classroom, as well as oral activities and other flexible elements.

Another interesting finding is the fact that none of the teachers in this study mention education as a source for developing cultural awareness and/or sociocultural knowledge. Only a few of the teachers explicitly mention such

skills and they have been gained through their own experiences or through the experiences of others. The insights gained through such experiences are related to the future competence of the pupils, how they should act in a TL country. This kind of culturally related knowledge is also used by some of the teachers to “spice up” the texts in the textbooks, and to share interesting and inspiring facts with the pupils. In relation to the stereotypical views expressed by many of the learners, teachers really need to gain knowledge in this area in order to be able to deal with these issues consequently and with confidence.

Only one teacher mentions “learning together” as a option. For this teacher that seems to imply building one’s confidence on the professionalism as an educator rather than as a linguistic model. This makes it possible for this teacher to act confidently in the EFL classroom even though the TL skills might not be up-to-date. Looking for ways to express oneself becomes the common aim of both the pupils and the teacher. In my opinion, this teacher has applied a possible survival strategy for the future. It will not be possible as a teacher in the future EFL classroom to be familiar with all ways of expression or customs related to different English communities, but that does not mean that they would no longer be professional educators. Rather the opposite, their role as professional educational actors becomes even more apparent and even crucial for the success of their learners.

8.2.5 Colleagues and other actors as supporters

It is also important to discuss to what extent teachers find support for continuous development among their colleagues and other actors in the social context. Concerning the influence of other actors on the planning and work of the EFL teacher, authorities are referred to in very detached terms and only in relation to being the ones who provide (inadequate) economic resources for the school. Authorities are not mentioned at all in terms of explicit support. Colleagues, on the other hand, are referred to as important partners that are not always there in small school environments, especially in terms of affective support, e.g. a partner to discuss problems with and for moral support. For many of the teachers in this study, parents are seen as the ones who should help out with their child’s homework. When that support is not there this may result in frustration on the part of the teacher. However, there is also interesting evidence of more extensive parental involvement in the school environment. When parents enter this role and to some extent become active partners of discussion it seems to enhance the teacher’s feeling of being able to carry out her/his work (and develop) professionally. None of the interviewed teachers explicitly referred to actors in the social context as resources for development, but that kind of development was described in other terms by some teachers as in the example above and in relation to pre- and in-service courses (with no actors mentioned).

Finally, parents and/or visiting pupils from abroad are mentioned as a possible source for support, especially in terms of attitude enhancement, but also as a linguistic/communication model.

8.2.6 Teachers' role in the EFL teaching process

On the basis of the comments given in relation to the previously discussed areas, the teachers in this study express their roles in the EFL teaching process in different ways. Even though there is considerable variation in the comments, one can identify a typical profile in the sense that it is supported by numerous statements by different teachers.

The teachers generally agree that planning is expected of them and that it is important. On the other hand they also mention numerous other even more influential factors that they do not have direct power to control. A picture emerges of a professional with limited possibilities to execute one's plans in the daily working situation. Teachers need to adapt instantaneously to the unexpected situations in the classroom and/or less optimal structural arrangements, which demands a great amount of flexibility.

The great majority of the teachers express that it is their task to implement the textbook, that is teach the "right" vocabulary and grammar as decided by others e.g. textbook authors or lower secondary teachers of English. Some teachers, on the other hand, say that they have the responsibility to choose a textbook, some also seem to use several materials more freely as a resource. The relation to curricula is generally vague, but some teachers express a need for more explicit support from curricular documents. This support is asked for in relation to key content rather than other types of aims.

In relation to the pupils, the teachers' role is generally described as the planner of a set of activities suitable for most of the pupils, and possibly with the aim of targeting the activities so that there is something for everyone during a lesson. This is experienced as a great challenge. One could perhaps say that these teachers describe their role as presenters of information and leaders of activities for a group of pupils. When one expects to give the same "treatment" to everyone, teaching easily becomes an elimination of obstacles rather than using the full potential of the pupils as resources. There are also some exceptions to this general trend in the material. For some of the teachers the role could be described as a facilitator or guide on a common journey. Here the explicit aim is not to provide the pupils with new information, but to discover together more about the language and its range of use (for future need).

Much of the lack of confidence evident in some of these comments seems to be due to the common expectation of being a language expert. Only one teacher brings forward the notion of being an educational professional as a source of professional confidence rather than being a linguistic expert. Perhaps some of the stress is also due to the teachers' awareness of media influence and the importance of authentic language use, the latter often mixed up with the notion of communicating like native-speakers.

The teachers also express that they have no partner to discuss their EFL work with, and when in-service education is offered they feel the need to give other courses higher priority. One way of coming to terms with this situation could be a further emphasis on stimulating interaction with parents involved in the school environment, as described by one of the teachers.

8.2.7 Summary

There is a great divergence in the results with regard to the specific research questions. This indicates that different teachers handle the challenges they encounter in fairly different ways. One could perhaps say that some of these teachers have managed to apply a reflective and constructive way of dealing with at least some of the challenges they are faced with. Others again express frustration with their work situation, with lack of guidance in the available curricula, available teaching materials and among other social actors.

It is evident that most teachers in this study are aware of the English exposure surrounding their pupils' outside school, and some of them try to make use of it to some extent. However, many of them express that they do not find it necessary to adapt their teaching in accordance with the initial language knowledge the pupils might possess. It seems as if these teachers experience the same division between "school English" (based mainly upon written grammar norms) and "spare time English" (oral slang inspired English). The latter is not to be given that much attention in school, since pupils receive that influence from elsewhere. Cultural knowledge and the development of pupils' attitudes towards target language communities are issues addressed to some extent by these teachers, but mostly in terms of something "extra curricular" that one rarely finds the time for. To the extent that they express including cultural issues, these are at a factual level or relate to personal experiences in the form of anecdotes (sharing interesting information on exotic characteristics in the target language community).

Also regarding the teachers' relation to the textbook there is variation. Some teachers are able to use it as an aid among others for reaching the aims of teaching, whereas other teachers clearly express that they follow the textbook and feel they need to get through it in order to reach the curricular aims, which the textbook is believed to fill, regardless of when it has been published. For the latter category the textbook has clearly become a controlling force rather than a resource. These teachers would need to regain their professionalism in order to be able to cope with the constantly changing aims and demands of our post-modern society.

Also in relation to curricula and other actors we find great variation in the teachers' responses. None of the teachers explicitly mentions the national framework curriculum of 1994 as a support for their professional development or for their work, but some teachers express that the framework curriculum provides them with freedom to do what they appreciate. Colleagues are mentioned as important explicit support, but mainly with a strong affective overtone. However, it cannot be excluded that these informal discussions among colleagues might fulfil the necessary criteria for the supportive environment needed for developing the transformative professionalism outlined by Kohonen (e.g. 2006b). Interestingly enough, parental involvement in the school was mentioned as an important feature for generating the feeling of being able to carry out one's work professionally and possibly also developing.

There seems to be a connection between the amount of EFL education and foreign language experiences these teachers have and their professional confidence, especially in relation to the amount of planning they feel they need

and their readiness to use oral English in the classroom. However, this relationship is by no means clear-cut. Especially experiences of visiting, or living in, a foreign country seem to have an impact on their awareness of cultural issues and different layers of culture. It was also noted that it is possible to gain insight from the experiences of others.

In all of the above mentioned areas, there seems to be crucial differences in how the teachers handle the challenges they are faced with on the basis of how they define their role in the classroom. The ones who expect teaching to be the mastering of a synchronised sequence of activities carried out in accordance with one textbook and where the teacher is the linguistic expert, easily face a situation of anxiety and loss of professional confidence. The situation might become less stressful if the teaching process is regarded as a common journey, where all participants share responsibilities, but the teacher serves as the guide/promoter with the right brought about by her/his educational professionalism (cf. Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1998, e.g. pp. 78-79). Furthermore, teachers would probably benefit from supporting networks in the form of other adult actors in the social context.

8.3 Methods discussion

8.3.1 Learner instrument and analysis of data

The learner instrument was designed with the following three main foci in mind:

- the questionnaire/test should be easily accessible to the young respondents it was intended for (simple instructions, not too long, should be possible to complete easily during one lesson of 45 minutes, including instructions give by the teacher etc.) cf. methods chapter
- the instrument should provide data on some of the relevant issues related to the starting-points of pupils beginning their EFL studies in Swedish-medium schools in Finland
- the instrument should be possible to distribute to a large number of subjects and the data should be relatively straightforward to transform to quantitative data for statistical analyses.

In relation to these main guidelines the instrument has been successful. The instrument was also tested on a pilot group of pupils of the same age as the respondents and some minor adjustments were made on the basis of their results and comments. However, during the actual analysis several minor issues emerged as points worth considering and perhaps also worth developing for further use of the test. These issues are mainly related to the conscious choice of developing an instrument covering several issues and for easy access to numerous young learners, that is gathering broad information rather than deep. This was considered the best way of accessing the research questions at the time. These issues will be discussed briefly, with the exception of some more technical issues dealt with already in the methods section.

The choice to use relative scales is based on the age of the respondents. It was

not considered meaningful to ask 10-year-olds to estimate the exact time spent on different activities. It was believed that the estimation would be easier to do on a relative scale. The wording of these was determined on the basis of previous studies with similar foci (e.g. Julkunen, 1998a; Pitkänen, 1991). This meant that different frequencies were used for different sources of English depending on the expected frequency of the sources. On the basis of the result, one can claim that these choices were relevant (the answers given are spread all over the possible categories). However, this also meant that the mean values of the different media studied are not always directly comparable. For instance, the alternatives provided for tourists were by no means as frequent as the ones provided for music and TV. If not discussed properly, comparisons between such means might easily become misleading. On the other hand, it would have become more than confusing for the pupils to use exactly the same frequencies for all different sources, e.g. trip to English-speaking country every day/every week and so forth.

To further increase reliability one could have considered another way of scoring the relative frequencies. At the time when the coding was done it was considered most transparent to award the value 1 to the least frequent indication and a 5 to the most frequent. For two variables this meant awarding 1 or 5 to every respondent, since these two (trip and club) only consisted of the options “yes” and “no”.

The variable ‘exposure to English through the computer’ was divided into two steps, since it was regarded as relevant to see to what extent these pupils used the computer and to what extent that time was spent on English activities. The choice was relevant at the time when the study was carried out, but would probably not be the most appropriate now when most children have ready access to computers at home. Already the result in my study showed that so many of the respondents had access to computers outside school that it was relevant to create one aggregated variable reflecting both frequency and degree of English out of the two questions related to the computer.

Regarding the listening comprehension, the choice was made to include a very simple text about a well-known fairy tale character, Pippi Longstocking. This choice was made in order to decrease the anxiety level of the respondents and to provide different levels of difficulty within the listening comprehension test. After analysing the results it was considered whether to leave out the answers to the first text altogether, since it could be possible to figure out which character the text was about on the basis of the text. However, the choice was made to include also this first extract in the analysis, since the results reflect a range of difference. It is believed that these results contribute to the intriguing puzzle of pupils’ conditions for EFL.

The choice to include a fairly open vocabulary production task can also be questioned. From a strictly linguistic point of view it would probably have been better to use a more clearly defined instrument measuring productive vocabulary on the basis of well-developed existing tests. However, such tests are usually not suitable for purely novice learners. An additional concern was also the accessibility of the test. The test type used proved to be easily accessible, it gave the respondents the freedom to produce the vocabulary they were familiar with

without having to conform to any particular standards of written English. The results provide an interesting source of the variety of language actually familiar to young pupils and it also reflects the remarkably wide spread in productive EFL skills shown by these learners. Hence, an easily accessible open task like the one used turned out to provide data easy to quantify, but also qualitatively rich and relevant for the educational aim of the study.

Another point to discuss is the fact that the variable scores related to language attitude is based on one single item. No control variable or other means within the instrument was used to verify the result. That is an obvious validity weakness and an addition of some more items ought to be considered if the test is reused. However, that is not unproblematic. The item was expected to measure a spontaneous, and hence less well “monitored” reaction by the respondents. The variable can well be said to fill that purpose, probably better so since there were no more items explicitly pointing out this language aspect. Had the purpose been to gain a very rich and varied view of pupils’ attitudes to the English language a qualitative interview instrument should have been used, with considerable fewer respondents. Then statistical measures could not have been applied as in this study. Regardless of what kind of measure one would have chosen to use it ought to be noted that attitudes do not lend themselves easily to observation, nor are they possible to measure like objectively observable variables (cf. Baker & Prys Jones, 1998, p. 174).

The questions related to differences and similarities between Great Britain and the United States of America appeared at the end of the test. The choice to place them there was conscious and based on the conviction that the questions related to exposure language and more linguistic aspects were less “threatening” and therefore better to appear at the beginning of the test. The realia and attitude related items had also been developed from the piloted version, since these had proved too open to be easily analysed. There is a slight risk that these items to some extent might reflect a tiredness of writing or possibly lack of time. Regardless of this possible bias, these items do, in my opinion, measure what they set out to.

As we have seen, there are some reasons to handle some of the results with a degree of caution. However, these concerns are related to details, and when properly spelled out they should not lead to misinterpretations of the results. Generally, the learner data gathered with this instrument reflect what they were intended to measure and they do so with an acceptable accuracy for the aims set. That does not, however, mean that this test could be used successfully for more specific linguistic aims or for gaining more in-depth knowledge into the complexity of pupils attitudes or interaction in social contexts.

8.3.2. Teacher interview and analysis of data

The choice of the interview as the main source of teacher data was successful in terms of gaining the optimal number of respondents as well as rich and varied data. The rich data gathered provide support for the view that the sampling procedure, a non-probability sample, was adequate. The representation of teachers with various backgrounds suggested that the choice was likely to be fairly safe. The most important benefit through that procedure was that this

choice made it possible to assume that these teachers and pupils can be expected to share “the same world” in the sense that they represent the same schools and local communities. That emerged as an important feature when considering the conditions for learning as a context-bound phenomenon.

Other options were considered regarding the choice of instrument for study B, but the reasons for the decision to use an interview were considered to be relevant. Even though this method turned out to be time-consuming and at times challenging for the novice researcher, the whole sample of subjects were willing to participate and also to share information fairly openly. The interview opens for immediate interaction and exchange of thoughts, which turned out to be useful for the types of questions posed in this study.

During the phases of analysis it seemed that this potential of the interview could have been made use of even more. However, there are several reasons why that did not happen. A purely practical one is related to the amount of time allocated for each interview. It was not considered wise to plan the interviews for much more than an hour (in fact the interviews took between approximately 30 minutes and 90 minutes). Neither the interviewer nor the respondents would have been able to concentrate on the topics at hand for much longer without a break.

Even when leaving the time aspect aside, more in-depth questions were perhaps not possible to pose at the point in time when the interviews were made, since the theoretical background of the researcher was more limited at that point in time. One could perhaps claim that the strengths and weaknesses of the abductive approach reveal themselves in a nutshell here: Since the theoretical basis for the study was not fully developed the interview became more open, more “question generating” and thus more suitable for a data driven analysis. A solid theoretical basis would perhaps have generated even deeper more specific questions and answers during the interview phase. However, that would not have been the best point of departure for a data-driven analysis, since the nature of both the research questions and the interview questions with all likelihood would have changed and covered a more limited field, something which would not have been in accordance with the principal aim of the study.

Then again one could ask why not a purely inductive approach was applied. In my opinion it would not have been possible, since the researcher already possessed an initial understanding of and interest in this field. Therefore it seemed more relevant, and indeed more ethically defensible in relation to the participants, to acquire the initial theoretical basis needed to make relevant choices concerning the research questions and interview guide possible. At this point it should also be mentioned that the exact formulation of the specific research questions for study B have to some extent evolved over time, as the theoretical background and the results have emerged.

Some of the teachers expressed relief to get the opportunity to share their thoughts verbally as compared to long questionnaires (that some claimed they would not have answered at all). It also turned out to be a good choice to interview the teachers individually and in a local and familiar environment of their own choice. For a few of these teachers this choice of a non-threatening environment was probably crucial for their participation. The lack of availability

of teaching materials (in some cases) did not turn out to be a serious problem during the interviews. The teachers were generally well able to describe the textbooks and other aids they use. However, for future teacher interviews of the same character, it ought to be noted that a neutral meeting place is preferable to a private. As has been expressed earlier, the teachers were fairly open, but there were individual variations, ranging from a more distanced professional openness to an almost private openness. The main reason for this variation is based upon the match of personalities and interpersonal character of the respondents. However, it cannot be ruled out that there also might be a slight age-related bias in the sense that the researcher to some extent shared the educational experiences of the younger teachers and they thus found it easier to regard the researcher as a potential colleague (less of a threat).

No explicit gender factor could be detected during the interviews. Among the male teachers the same variation in personalities could be observed as for the female. To some extent the male teachers might have used a slightly more frank (straight-forward), at times even vulgar and/or self-ironic vocabulary. Since it was to be expected as part of the normal Western variation in the communication patterns of males and females (Tannen, 2006) and did not affect the actual views brought forward in the interviews, that has not resulted in any gender-related bias in the results or analysis.

During the transcription phase some of the interviews were first transcribed by a transcriber not very familiar with the field of education. Even through the sound quality of the recorded interviews generally was good and even in the worst cases tolerable, it occasionally turned out to be difficult for her to decipher some of the terminology used by both the interviewer and the respondents. Therefore, it was necessary for the researcher to listen through also these parts of the raw data carefully. It was time consuming, but turned out to be rewarding, since it resulted in an equally thorough familiarity with the whole set of data, regardless of who had made the initial transcriptions.

Length of pauses and other oral, but non-verbal, features could have been even more carefully transcribed, but that was not considered necessary and hence not given as instructions to the other transcriber. During the phase of analysis the indications of marked pauses, sighs and laughter made in the transcription have been sufficient for the analysis. If the researcher and the interviewer had been different people an even more careful transcription of these elements might have become necessary. In this study “the problem” was sometimes rather the opposite: During the phases of analysis the researcher could sometimes “hear” the exact intonation and other prosodic features of the respondent, which at time made it necessary to deliberately strive towards the more distanced position described in the methods section e.g. in order to make relevant choices in terms of quotations to present.

The procedure of analysis of the interview data was inspired by the Ricoeur (in Geanellos, 2000), but the main focus has been to produce a data-driven analysis. In that strive towards openness, the abductive approach applied has proved to be useful as discussed above. The first stage of categorisation was based on the interview questions and the rough categories to emerge based on the actual availability of data and the (inevitable) background knowledge of the researcher.

These categories have triggered the need to familiarise oneself with research in a certain field, which has supported the next phase of analysis. Thus several parts of this thesis both in terms of theory, results and discussion, have emerged more or less simultaneously during a long period of time. One could perhaps use the analogy of building a log cabin: Building one wall at a time would have been a more easily definable task and would have made it possible to reach higher in a short period of time. However, that single wall would not have been able to stand on its own. Therefore, I have chosen to work on all four walls, one layer of logs at a time. At times I have also seen the need to go back and change a log here and there, when it has been proved to be too short to reach the others at the corners. Fortunately, that process has been made a lot easier with modern technology and appropriate software.

This approach of working during analysis turned out to be useful already at the piloting stage, but that phase also indicated that a presentation of the stages of the process did not lend itself to a reader friendly presentation. Therefore, the choice was made to use these mental principles during the process of analysis, but to organise the presentation of theory, results and analysis more or less according to traditional formats for presenting research within the fields of education and other social sciences. To some extent the processing can still be traced in the presentation in the different stages of presentation of results and discussion.

However, what ought to be criticised at this stage is the short sightedness of the researcher for failing to save the digital evidence of the different stages of processing. In accordance with existing rules for empirical research, the recorded interview data and the transcriptions have been saved for possible inspection, but the same measures were not taken to save consistent evidence of individual phases of analysis, but rather these phases have emerged one “on top of” each other, thus leaving only fragmented evidence of each stage. Consistently saved versions of the digital material would have been possible to produce. On the other hand, such versions would probably not have resulted in an easily penetrable succession of stages of analysis either, since much of the processing has taken place on scraps of reused paper and sometimes even without any other written account than the text in the different manuscript versions. That way of working has been helpful for the creatively demanding work of analysis and interpretation of results, but unfortunately it is by no means an ideal documentation for someone interested in tracing the explicit lines of thought during that process.

If we assume that knowledge is created through interaction and that the search for truth is to be regarded as a context dependent journey through many layers, this means that the “truth” sought for in a study of this kind is the possibility to ask new relevant questions that are created in a dialogue (in this case mainly through the existing text) between the reader and the researcher. Within the frames of an academic thesis, every effort has been made to present and describe the background, research, and methodological approaches having an influence on this study to make it possible for the reader to decide for him/herself if the many layers of theory presented, methods used, results presented and conclusions drawn are consistent and generate new questions to be studied in greater detail. To use the previously presented metaphor: the reader is to decide

if the log cabin is inhabitable or not.

Ethical concerns have to some extent been addressed in the method section. At this point, I want to mention the one ethical concern of major importance to emerge during analysis. Some of results gathered and highlighted in the analysis could – if applied in an unethical manner – be exploited to reduce the professional confidence of teachers and even to criticise the work being done in our schools. That is not the aim of this study, and it would also be a highly improper use of the results since the participating teachers were aware of discussing conditions for their work as EFL teachers in Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland rather than of defending their general approach to their work. However, several issues to emerge in the results point in the direction of a great variety in terms of professionalism and, therefore, these issues need to be highlighted as an important outcome of the study.

None of this is made to criticise the work of the participating teachers or of work generally done in our Swedish-medium schools, but rather to ascertain the readiness of teachers to face the potential challenges of the EFL classroom and to suggest possible paths towards meeting them. This piece of research should thus be seen as future-oriented and one small step along the path of professional development suggested by the inevitable changes in our global society. Regardless of starting-point, some kind of professional development is necessary for every teacher interested in supporting the EFL learning of her/his pupils. For professional development to take place the conditions for development-centred learning need to be studied and remedies planned when necessary. None of that should be construed as criticism of the individual teacher, since the conditions merely illustrate their perceived professional situation at the point in time when the study was made. Teachers should, rather, receive praise for sharing their views on their situation so openly that measures can be taken by authorities, in pre- and in-service teacher education and among producers of teaching materials and curricula to accommodate to the needs of many present-day and future teachers in the Swedish-medium schools in Finland.

9 Conclusions and implications for further research

In the introduction and theoretical background, a continuously changing global society is outlined, along with the (often conflicting) demands on teachers and learners of the future. EFL and professional learning is to take place in these constantly changing contexts, where numerous explicit and implicit f/actors provide varying conditions for and exert continuous influence on the processes of learning. It cannot be regarded as an underestimation to use the label ‘challenging’ for the expected role of the present-day and future language learners in Swedish-medium comprehensive schools in Finland or to call the expected role of the professional teacher ‘extremely demanding’. In order to prepare for this era of continuous, probably even increasing, rate of change, the conditions for these actors in the regional Swedish-medium context need to be made explicit. This study has sought to be a first step in that direction. The aim has been to highlight some of the most relevant issues in relation to the conditions for a) novice pupils’ readiness to act as active learners of English as a foreign or second language and b) teachers’ readiness to act as the independent professionals outlined in both national and international strategy and policy documents.

If critical influential actors can be identified, relevant suggestions can be made on what measures need to be taken within this context to best serve the fruitful interaction between pupils and teachers. These suggestions are concerned with the structure and content of pre- and in-service teacher education, content and structure of teaching materials, national policy documents, structure and atmosphere of school communities.

Most of these identified target areas have a direct focus on the teacher rather than the learner, but this single focus exists only at a surface level. As has been maintained throughout this study, the teacher and learner is to be seen as a primary dyad in the EFL teaching situation. These two actors are immediately affected by changes in the social networks of the partner in the dyad. The results discussed in Chapter 8 clearly show that changes in the world of the teacher affect the learner and the other way around. One could perhaps claim that, as far as action is concerned, the way to positive developments in EFL learning and the role of the pupils in classroom context goes through the teacher, whereas the role and potential for learning for the teacher can be more directly influenced by actors outside the classroom, as mentioned above. This is not to say that pupils’ learning would be any less affected by the surrounding environment, but that the efficiency of formal EFL learning is greatly influenced by the choices made by the individual teacher (cf. Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1998).

The key features and patterns of interaction identified for further discussion in this chapter are illustrated in Figure 40 below.

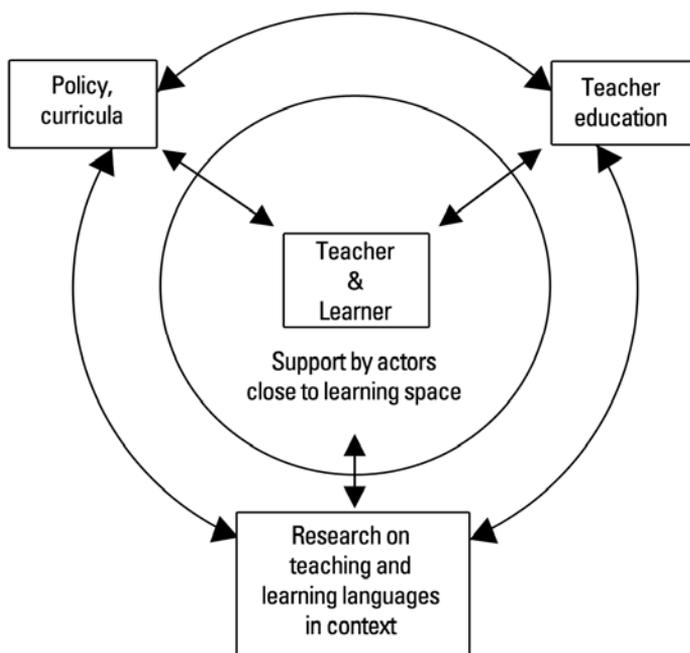


Figure 40. A simple model of the ideal interaction between and mutual influence exerted by different actors involved in language education

Already at this point, I want to stress the fact that there is, and probably ought to be, an even more complex interplay between the actors at the macro level and other actors at the same level and further down. Areas that should be directly affected by policy and curricula are the production of materials and (both in- and pre-service) teacher education.

The view indirectly deduced from the results in this study is that there is not sufficient mutual interaction between all of the actors at the outside school level (macro level in Bronfenbrenner’s terminology), and between them and the actors in and in immediate connection to the FL/SL classroom. The patterns of interaction indicated by the arrows in Figure 40 do to some extent exist, but not to a sufficient extent for constructive development to take place. Explicit channels for mutual interaction between the actors at the outside school level need to be established. Also the channels for interaction between actors at the outside school level and actors in and in immediate contact with the language classroom need to become more systematic, frequent and above all mutual.

Some explicit channels of contact already exist, but these are often perceived as fairly one-sided. Below, some issues are addressed in relation to the above mentioned need for more explicit and mutual interaction brought forward in the results of this study. Above, I argue for mutual efforts between several actors in order to come to terms with the challenges brought forward by the results in this

study, therefore the reader will find that the issues discussed under each of these headings are by no means concerned with actors in those domains only, but they are discussed under the heading where the primary responsibility to take initiative in these processes is believed to lie. To some extent, similar issues are also discussed under several headings, but from the relevant perspective of the actors in question. We will start with the issues mainly relating to EFL policy and national curricula.

9.1 Policy and curricula

The pupils participating in this study provide evidence of a highly varied initial competence in English. For some of them the results can be taken as an indication of English as a SL rather than a FL, but at the point in time when the empirical study was carried out this was not the case for all pupils in Swedish-medium schools in Finland. The pupil results also show that British English and culture cannot be considered to be the most dominant varieties outside school. The results give reason to consider national language policies for the future. Questions such as the two below become important targets of focus for both SLA researchers and educational policy makers.

- At what point should English be considered a SL rather than a FL?
- What variants of English are to be emphasised in our schools (British English, American English or Global English/English as an International Language)?
- What linguistic flows of English are the learners involved in and for what purpose/s (cf. Risager, 2006, p.101, 106)?

In addition to these three questions, national policy makers are also to consider what role English is to have in our educational system. Should a development towards ESL be supported also in terms of more time allocated for the study of/in English or should rather other languages be given emphasis within the school community? This question is related to what the kind of individual plurilingualism (CEFR, 2001, pp. 4-5) one wishes to promote in the Finnish context. Issues like the ones above have been eagerly discussed among language experts in a national language policy project (see Pöyhönen & Luukka, 2007), but the complex issue of providing a sound educational programme for the future is by no means finished there. It is also important to consider to what extent a SL/FL language policy programme of the future in bilingual Finland should try to stem or promote a particular kind of development, to what extent it should predict learner needs in the future, and to what extent it ought to adapt to the perceived immediate learner needs.

Another issue brought forward by the learner results in this study is the fact that there seems to be regional differences in the initial language competence of pupils in different regions in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland. These differences are not believed to be a result of difference in the overall opportunities to English exposure, but should rather be seen as a sociocultural difference. This might have implications for future national and local curricular processes. If we assume that there are cultural differences between different regions, it might be questioned to what extent a national core curriculum should

prescribe core content and goals. However, it ought to be remembered that these regional differences might have changed over time, since they were much smaller than the individual variation. Hence, there is reason to consider the same question with regard to the very different individual starting-points of the pupils in this study. A detailed, prescriptive national core curriculum might, in fact, reinforce inequality in the educational system, since children do not have the same starting-points and do not live in similar contexts. Providing the same contents and applying the same measures for all is convenient and perhaps even necessary to provide means of comparison (discrimination) between different learners for the needs of national and international institutions of higher education and employers. However, it should not be confused with the notion of equality in terms of equal opportunities. This must be a conscious choice, closely related to what kind of rationale, philosophy of education and outlook on man we “confess” ourselves to.

Another issue related to goal-oriented curricula is the frustration it seems to cause among some of the teachers in the study, since they are not confident in their roles as professionals and/or in the use of such documents. The framework curriculum of 1994 was not regarded as a potentially powerful tool for planning and development, but it did not restrain the more confident teachers either. Those teachers, who were not engaged in the process of developing the local curriculum, felt no commitment to adapt their teaching according to it. The picture to emerge is not encouraging: Some teachers felt bereft of an important support structure, whereas others felt no need for this explicit support, and no commitment to the framework curriculum either. Neither group mentioned the relatively wide freedom of action brought about by the curriculum as an advantage and opportunity to develop EFL teaching.

Much of the frustration of teachers not confident in using a goal-oriented curriculum could have been eased through well-timed in-service courses and the preparation of suitable support materials. To my knowledge no such courses were launched for teachers in Swedish-medium schools in Finland when the framework curriculum of 1994 was taken into use. Appropriate pre- and in-service efforts could have been planned and brought about on time if explicit mutual interaction between the authorities in charge of the curricular process and the institutions in charge of in-service education and materials development had taken place throughout the process. The kind of confident professionals showing independence in relation to the curriculum will, no doubt, be needed in the future, but they will need incitements to become involved in and thus aware of and committed to the curriculum as a support in their continuous professional development.

Goal-oriented curricula could serve an important function, if these teachers were shown how to make use of them instead of regarding them as more or less insignificant to their teaching reality. Apparently a serious attempt to remedy this was made during the national curricular reform finished in 2004, since numerous teachers were involved in the process. That can be seen as a positive step towards mutual interaction. However, the possibility for mutual interaction with researchers in the field and with teacher educators was not consistently stressed, at least not in the development of the Swedish version of the curriculum. This can be seen as a weakness, since immediate readiness for in-

pre-service action and materials development would be greater with frequent and mutual interaction.

The importance of mutual interaction is further accentuated since we are dealing with the development of competences and support for a linguistic minority. To put it bluntly: Not all courses or materials developed for the Finnish-medium school system lend themselves for adoption in the Swedish-medium school system. Hence we are left with a situation where a few SLA researchers, educational experts and developers of material are to develop strategies, actions and materials for the new situation. The challenge is great for these few, since they will have to cater for the same variety of needs as the far more numerous actors involved in the Finnish- medium schools. Personal resources for developmental work and research are not infinite, and hence, mutual interaction is needed among the different actors indicated above to ensure that studies and projects are carried out in the areas of current interest.

In this connection, I want to point out that not even the outcomes of research results available seem to reach the other actors involved through explicit and frequent channels. At universities in Finland, measures have been taken to include a duty to inform a wider audience in society about the results of current research at a general level. Within the field of education, and more specifically EFL education, I find that insufficient. For this process to become fruitful regular opportunities to meet to discuss mutual interests, to reflect upon and adapt research results to practice need to be created (cf. Takala, 2006, p. 225; 1982, pp. 118-119). Interestingly enough this should be a lot easier to bring about within the Swedish-medium context in Finland, since there are fewer partners involved. Such a development of sharing thoughts and ideas on an equal footing will be difficult to achieve in this era of production centeredness and individual competition, unless this kind of interaction is explicitly promoted. However, mutual interaction and favourable development takes place only when the participating actors are committed to working towards a common goal and are able to trust the professionalism of their partners.

9.2 Teacher education and materials

The learner results indicate that English can no longer be taught as a pure foreign language in the Swedish-medium schools in Finland. Especially regarding the linguistic starting-points of the pupils, it seems to be time to reassess the view about the traditionally homogeneous EFL classroom. Some pupils have gained a remarkable level of productive and receptive skills before they commence their formal studies of English whereas other pupils enter the classroom with much less explicit knowledge of English. This situation constitutes a new challenge both in terms of applying adequate methodology in and developing suitable teaching materials for the increasingly diverse EFL classroom. One of the most critical questions in teacher education and materials development, therefore, needs to be what kind of teaching and material is needed when pupil groups become more heterogeneous and the more proficient pupils become increasingly proficient (cf. Risager, 2006, p. 107).

It still seems to be important to stress that there is no such thing as one perfect

textbook and to provide student teachers and in-service teachers with the reflective tools they need to make professional choices with regard to what material to use. Every group of pupils is different, and hence materials need to be adapted to the needs of these groups of individuals. The traditional “one textbook, one exercise book”-approach is favoured by many teachers, but the results in this study show that this approach might reassure teachers but also provide them with less freedom of action. Therefore the development of more flexible materials, e.g. theme-based resource books, with additional photocopiable material, activity-CD-roms and/or websites would provide teachers more professional freedom of choice and possibilities to adapt EFL teaching to the local context. The application of such materials ought to be supported by goal-oriented national curricula. In this connection it might be worth pointing out that the most flexible and authentic “resources” in the EFL classroom are, in fact, the pupils themselves (see section on teaching below).

Some of the policy trends, such as the more prescriptive curriculum from 2004 (with numerous practicing teachers involved in the process), point in another direction. A curriculum that would be both a concrete support and which would encourage/challenge independent professionals to follow it (assuming we still want a nationally governed comprehensive school) is probably not possible to achieve. Therefore, teacher education needs to remain an education of academic (independent and reflective) professionals and the on-going transformation processes of educational action need to be stressed even further (cf. Section 3.3). The option to professional teachers in the sense outlined above is subordinate to the use of ready-made materials. In this case teacher education also needs a reform, and would certainly not belong at the university level any more. In my opinion, the latter is in fact an impossible option, if we assume that learning is interactive and contextually situated. Even though extensive material series were produced by professional educators for the adoption of this approach they could not take local contexts into account in the same way. If international textbook series were used not even national curricula could be considered. For application of flexible materials reflecting and competent professionals are needed, since decisions need to be made about what to use in a particular situation. The present national core curriculum states that the kind of vocabulary and content to be taught needs to be relevant to the pupils.

Learners in this study generally possessed fairly shallow and sometimes stereotypical views of target language representatives and communities. Only a few of the teachers mentioned culturally related experiences, but when they did, it was apparent that these had been of importance to expand their awareness of and inclusion of such elements in the EFL classroom. It is important that the teacher’s own awareness and application of this knowledge does not become only a presentation of “the exotic” (cf Hedin, 1995) in order to raise motivation, but also part of a more deliberate framework for the development of intercultural awareness and competence among the pupils. Pre-service teacher education for Swedish-medium schools in Finland includes this aspect in the course programme for future EFL class teachers, but more remains to be done. Therefore, methods and materials should also be produced with the overall aim of supporting pupils’ intercultural awareness in mind. This field of research is fairly recent and the task to challenge stereotypical views, develop a willingness

to decenter (c.f Forsman, 2006) and support genuine acceptance of what at first is perceived of as foreign is a major challenge. E.g. Kaikkonen (1994; 2006), Doye (1999) and Forsman (2006) suggest methodological approaches in this field but many questions remain to be solved and application to be done to different contexts and work with different age groups. In the Finland-Swedish context, especially techniques and materials for younger pupils need to be developed, preferably as joint action between actors in the classroom and at the outside school level.

It is evident that a degree of confidence in one's English oral skills as a teacher of EFL is needed. Therefore, teacher education should and also does include (at the point in time when this was written) a certain focus on the development of oral skills in English as well as the more traditional grammatical elements. Also in-service support ought to be arranged. However, one must ask whether traditional courses really are the most effective options for the development of oral skills or if it would be more useful to encourage and support international teacher networks and/or global conversation networks (e.g with the assistance of Skype). The previously mentioned options would not be impossible to implement even with minimal economic resources. The main problem would be to find partners. The ones most interested in these types of networks would probably not be native speakers of English (if that should be considered important). Teachers could also be encouraged to attend "brush up your English" -excursions to an English-speaking country.

However, I believe that the most important issue in this respect is to help insecure teachers towards a different attitude regarding their own role in the EFL classroom. They should not experience that they need to be native speaker models (impossible aim). The primary language teacher should rather strive towards being a model in the sense of being an unprejudiced, communicatively confident and (preferably) proficient EFL speaker or what Phillip Riley would define as a competent stranger (in Björklund & Smeds, 2000). In my opinion, providing pupils' with models for pragmatic communicative strategies is even more important than modelling native-like pronunciation. This is an issue that has been addressed to some extent in theoretical SLA discussions, but to my knowledge little has been done to study the application and the outcomes of such an approach in formal EFL settings empirically.

Considering the challenges outlined for EFL in Swedish-medium schools in Finland, it is hardly surprising that education and experiences are likely to increase the teacher's professional confidence. Even though actual teaching situations or outcomes were not studied here, it is to be recommended that mainly teachers with some tertiary education in English and/or extensive experience of using English in every-day life are designated to teach English at the primary school level. However, previous education and experiences do not seem to be enough to successfully meet the challenges of EFL in Swedish-medium schools in Finland.

On the basis of this study and in accordance with the discussion above, in-service education of various kinds is needed in order to raise the levels of awareness and the confidence among many teachers. Considering the increasing variety of demands and the nature of the teaching profession it is to be expected

that some kind of “collegial action” is one critical component in handling the demands of the future language classroom. From the view point of the results in this study, relevant themes for in-service education could be:

- How to cater for the individual learner needs and support learner activity in the classroom?
- How to use different materials from different sources within FL teaching?
- How to make use of goal-oriented curricula in planning and evaluation processes?
- How to define the components of communicative language competence and develop means to support pupils’ development of all necessary areas of linguistically and culturally related competences?
- How to develop one’s own linguistic and sociocultural competences and reflect upon the nature of the teacher-model in EFL?

However, it is of the utmost importance that the themes of in-service courses and so forth would be based upon the actual needs of, and thus in dialogue with, practicing teachers and educational experts. Otherwise we will be back at the starting-point: Providing teachers with in-service courses where themes have been chosen by other actors, to some extent on the basis of what might be trendy rather than on the actual needs of the target group. The most long-lasting results would probably be achieved if relevant themes were considered within long-term networks (teacher-teacher, teachers-researcher/mentor, teacher-other adult actors), where teachers could feel confident in expressing and discussing different kinds of needs, problems and experiences (cf. Lundgren, 2002, pp. 226-228, 243). The suggested themes above have been integrated in the Swedish-medium pre-service teacher education programme in Finland. These new teachers already have a broad basis of knowledge, but they also need to be encouraged to continuous learning in the field, e.g. through collegial networks.

The results have shown that one can learn also from the experiences of others. That is why I express a strong preference for collegial networks (a field where more empirical research and developmental work is needed). Such networks do not need to be restricted to teachers in the same school, but can include teachers/educators/researchers from other schools, at other levels or in other countries, but preferably with a common interest in the issues under discussion. Internet based chat rooms that could be used both for these kinds of professional discussions, but also for the development of linguistic and sociocultural competences if set up with people staying abroad in an English speaking country or even native speakers (more demanding, could perhaps be gradually included). One problem with this approach is that the class-teachers usually engaged in EFL teaching at the primary level in Swedish-medium schools in Finland cannot be expected to devote their spare-time to developing their professional competence in all the fields they teach. For this large group of language teachers, in-service efforts need to be carefully planned, so that they support several fields of teaching at the same time. Several methodological considerations are similar across different fields of teaching and linguistic development can also be achieved in networks with international partners.

Another problem in connection with in-service efforts for teachers is that they do

not seem to reach all types of teachers. Teachers tend to attend and apply new knowledge in fields they are already interested in, resulting in the same (few) teachers developing whereas the less confident in a particular field are not reached by these in-service courses. To remedy this, nothing short of a reform of in-service education is needed. Regular participation in courses and/or networks would need to be included as a necessary part of the yearly workload. In continuous dialogue with the individual teachers, the educational leader at the schools or in the municipality would need to make sure that each teacher participates in the kind of in-service education s/he needs most and that there is a progression and variation in fields (relevant to the subjects taught by that teacher) over the years. If a period of induction were integrated as a bridge between pre-and in-service education a development in this direction would perhaps not be so dramatic. However, it will be difficult to achieve as long as municipalities are struggling with minimal resources for education (cf. Lundgren, 1979, p. 239).

9.3 Teaching and learning situation

Interestingly enough, the learner results seem to support the view that traditional methods of interaction like reading, talking, and listening (writing was not included explicitly) seem to be most effective sources for acquiring English outside school, that is, when used for authentic exchange of meaning. This coincides well with the methodological suggestions made by SLA theorists such as Leo van Lier (e.g. 1996, 2004b) and is thus worth considering in relation to the methodologies and topics used in the EFL classroom.

The second issue the learner results give reason to discuss in relation to the context of teaching and learning is the view of the learner as an active agent in the learning process, a view clearly promoted in various policy documents. The learner results indicate that a vast majority of the respondents can be considered active agents in terms of acquiring listening comprehension skills and productive vocabulary in English in informal settings. This should also be recognised in the formal teaching of English in Swedish-medium primary schools.

To promote learner activity and add authenticity to the English learnt in school, there is reason to make use of the productive (and receptive) vocabulary children at the age of 9-10 years⁴⁵ bring with them. By giving attention to the language learners bring with them into the classroom, the focus on topics relevant for them on a here and now-basis will be inevitable, in accordance with the national core curriculum from 2004. Some of the vocabulary learners bring with them into the EFL classroom will consist of unprocessed chunks of language. If these

⁴⁵ The learners in this study were approximately 10 years old (in grade 4) and had not yet begun their studies of English in school (with the exception of voluntary English club). In accordance with the new curriculum English is taught from grade 4. Since the amount of English available in the Finland-Swedish environment has not decreased during the last decade, the assumption is made that the results can be regarded as fairly valid for beginners of English, even though they will be approximately one year younger than the respondents in this study.

elements are ignored they will be left unprocessed for a long time (possibly even become fossilised). If brought to attention learners will be supported in processing these chunks and thus they may contribute to the learning process (cf. e.g. Nattinger & De Carrico, 1992).

Such focus on the language acquired outside school will also work towards two other important goals. It will bridge the perceived dichotomy between “school English” and “spare-time English” expressed by older learners in the Finland-Swedish context (Forsman, 2004) and it will sensitise learners to the English exposure they are surrounded by, resulting in even better learning outcomes at least in terms of vocabulary size.

Considerable individual variation is to be expected, which means that teachers need to take individual learner needs into account, which will require a considerable restructuring of teaching some teachers. Many teachers in this study expressed planning EFL teaching mostly with “class-view”, starting from what is to be taught rather than from what the individual learners know. If the individual-centred approach is to be realistic, teachers will need support in terms of flexible, easy-to-adapt teaching aids and curricula need to be written in accordance with this approach.

If pupils’ language learning can be supported by making them process their language chunks, the same is definitely the case in relation to the sociocultural knowledge they have acquired. Culturally related knowledge does not seem to be very familiar and the knowledge pupils in this study shared was to a large extent stereotypical and even hampered by misconceptions. The area of stereotypes and the attitudes related to them emerge as an important area of focus in EFL (as indeed in any) teaching for the development of intercultural competence. As mentioned, this research area is fairly recent. Some studies have been published recently with the intercultural dimension in focus (Forsman, 2006; Häggblom, 2006; Aaltonen, 2006), but a lot of the developmental work needed to support EFL teachers in Swedish-medium schools in Finland remains to be done, especially with the focus on young learners.

There are two groups of pupils who risk marginalisation in the generally “self motivated” EFL classroom. One is the small group of insecure and/or negative pupils, the other the group of initially highly motivated “slow learners” realizing after a few “reality shocks” (e.g. poor results on exams, failure to make oneself understood) that all aspects of English are not that easy to master. If the teacher relies on the popularity of English to pull them through they might in the worst case lose heart entirely. Put in a longer future perspective there is no guarantee that English will continue to be the only, or even dominating, language of global youth culture, which means that it cannot be taken for granted that a majority of pupils will be highly motivated for studying it.

9.4 In conclusion

There are several actors at macro/exo levels who influence the teaching and learning processes of teachers and learners in Swedish-medium primary schools in Finland. However, to ensure that primary school EFL teachers and learners

are ready to meet the challenges of the future, changes need to take place also within the teachers and learners themselves, in the micro context of learning, and in the roles of teachers and learners in what I have chosen to call the learning space. For such a transformational process to take place the best possible environment for development-centred learning needs to be created. To achieve this, it is evident that the mutual communication between all actors identified in Figure above needs to be developed further. With mutual communication I imply a dialogue built upon mutual trust and respect for the professionalism of the other actor/s. I propose a regular meeting-place on an equal footing, with the common goal of supporting our children's active and diverse language learning processes in mind. To achieve the best possible EFL education in Swedish-medium schools in Finland, the expertise of national policy makers, SLA and educational researchers, experienced and inexperienced teachers, supporting actors in close proximity to the school, and materials developers is needed.

Scientia ipsa potestas est

F. Bacon

Svensk sammanfattning

Inledning

Avhandlingens titel lyder på svenska Förutsättningar för lärande i engelska som främmande språk och professionell utveckling – finlandssvenska elev- och lärarperspektiv. Studien handlar alltså om förutsättningarna för lärande och undervisning i engelska som främmande språk (EFS) i en finlandssvensk miljö. Undersökningen utgår från antagandet att lärande och undervisning sker genom interaktion och att lärandeprocessen påverkas av de specifika sociala kontexter huvudaktörerna – det vill säga elever och lärare – rör sig i. Vidare hävdas att gynnsamma förutsättningar för ett utvecklingsinriktat lärande är av vital betydelse för professionell utveckling.

Eftersom problemfältet är brett har jag valt att använda mig av ett tvärvetenskapligt grepp när jag byggt upp den teoretiska referensramen. Den teoretiska ram som skisseras upp är influerad av ekologiska och sociokulturella perspektiv (t.ex. Bronfenbrenner, 1979; van Lier, 2004a) på lärande och utveckling. Båda perspektiven betonar individens samspel med omgivningen. Vill man anlägga ett systemteoretiskt perspektiv på denna interaktion framträder ett komplext samspel där faktorer och aktörer på olika nivå påverkar och påverkas av individen.

Utgående från de ovan nämnda perspektiven kan man förutsätta att undervisningen och lärandet i EFS i finlandssvensk miljö påverkas av de generella globaliseringstrenderna och engelskans dominans som ett språk för internationell kommunikation. Det är av intresse att öka förståelsen för hur bland annat dessa trender påverkar förutsättningarna för lärande och undervisning i EFS, det vill säga undervisningsmålen, de förväntade lärar- och elevrollerna, materialens ändamålsenlighet, de erfarenheter av målspråksländer samt exponering för engelska som aktörerna bär med sig in i EFS-klassrummet.

Med förutsättningar avses i detta sammanhang sådana villkor och förhållanden (graderade, eller definitiva) som på något sätt påverkar engelskundervisningen genom den effekt de har på de två huvudaktörerna i processen. Begreppet är hämtat ut Spolskys (1989) välkända teori om andraspråksinlärning, men används i min undersökning främst som ett samlingsbegrepp för ett flertal komplexa fenomen.

Problemområde och avhandlingens syfte

Avhandlingens övergripande syfte är att fördjupa insikten om de förhållanden som påverkar lärande i engelska som främmande språk och lärares professionella utveckling i det svenskspråkiga EFS-nybörjarklassrummet i Finland. Det som beskrivs och analyseras är utgångspunkterna hos: A) elever i årskurs 4 som ännu inte inlett sina studier i engelska som främmande språk och B) de lärare som undervisar dessa nybörjare i engelska. För elevernas del är fokus rent konkret inriktat på deras attityder till, kontakt med samt kunskap om engelska och engelskspråkiga länder. För lärarnas del ligger fokus, förutom på elevernas utgångsläge, också på lärarens egen utbildning och egna erfarenheter av engelska språket, undervisningsmaterial, läroplaner och den sociala miljön.

Teori

Från global till lokal kontext

Den teoretiska bakgrunden inleds med ett snabbt svep över de olika kontexter som berörs. Startpunkten tas i den roll som det närmast självklara språket för internationell kommunikation som engelskan kommit att fylla. Engelskans olika roller diskuteras kort utgående från Kachrus (1985) modell över engelskans användning som förstaspråk (den s.k. inre sfären), som andraspråk (den s.k. yttre sfären) och som främmande språk (den s.k. expanderande sfären). Diskussionen utmynnar i slutsatsen att generella beskrivningar på en övergripande nivå inte längre fångar den roll engelskan spelar i individens liv, utan att dessa beskrivningar därför lämpligen bör göras på individnivå.

Engelskans dominans inom de mest varierande samhällsområden kan också upplevas som ett hot mot en global språklig mångfald och mot den egna språkliga identiteten. Graddol (2006) förespar dock att denna ensidiga dominans på lång sikt kommer att mattas av och att andra språk troligen kommer att göra anspråk på att vara viktiga globala språk.

Andra viktiga trender som nämns inom ramen för ett mer globalt perspektiv är ett postmodernt förhållningssätt till kunskap, lärande och utbildning, med de allt mer komplexa krav på aktivitet och självständig reflektion som detta för med sig för såväl lärare som elev. Internationalisering, ökande migration och modern informationsteknik har fört med sig ett allt ökande behov av flerspråkighet, förmåga att hantera kulturell mångfald och ett samhälle karaktäriserat av ständig förändring. Detta kommer tydligt till uttryck i nationella och internationella strategidokument om undervisning och lärande.

Dessa internationella trender märks också på den nationella finländska scenen. De komplexa kraven på framtidens lärare illustreras med exempel från Luukkainens (2000a, 2000b) s.k. OPEPRO-rapport. Läraren beskrivs i dessa som en ”reflekterande, utvecklande, samarbetande, koordinerande, byggare, användare och upprätthållare” av kontakter och nätverk i relation till ett komplext nätverk av andra aktörer. Detta skall ske i akt och mening att försäkra optimala utvecklingsmöjligheter för eleven. Denna vision är till sin karaktär avsevärt mer mångfacetterad och till sitt innehåll avvikande från den traditionella rollen som ämnesexpert, vars ansvar det är att hantera konkreta undervisningssituationer. Att omsätta dessa strategidokument i praktiken kräver med stor sannolikhet massiva fortbildningsinsatser och nationella djupgående diskussioner kring vad lärarens (och utbildningens) roll huvudsakligen är. Utan denna typ av stödåtgärder kommer de allt mer komplexa kraven sannolikt att leda till total utmattning eller ett utbrett förakt för nationella styrdokument hos lärarkåren.

Ett annat centralt drag i den finländska utbildningskontexten är läroplanen som styrdokument. Några aspekter på de två senaste läroplansreformerna presenteras kort. Läroplanen från år 1994 innebar en stor omvälvning, där man i de nationella grunderna gick in för ett så gott som helt målstyrt dokument till skillnad från det tidigare, som varit klart stoffcentrerat. Ramdokumentet gav varje skola relativt stor frihet att själv specificera stoff, konkreta kunskaps- och färdighetsmål samt arbetsmetoder. Läroplanen från 2004 är på dessa punkter

betydligt mer explicit och markerar på så vis en återgång till en större stoffcentrering. Dessa illustreras i en kritisk granskning av de kulturella målen för undervisningen i främmande språk i de två senaste läroplansgrunderna.

Slutligen ägnas den regionala finlandssvenska miljön en del uppmärksamhet. Finlands konstitutionella tvåspråkighet ger den finlandssvenska skolan en närmast unik prägel. Den finlandssvenska verkligheten påverkas emellertid också av det anmärkningsvärda inflytande engelskan har, framförallt inom ungdomskulturen och via olika digitala och analoga medier. Detta inflytande har också uppmärksammats av språklärare, men det är ingalunda så att man kan förutsätta att engelskans inflytande är lika stort och rikt över hela det geografiskt spridda område man ofta hänvisar till som Svenskfinland. Regionala skillnader förekommer bland annat i medieutbudet. Även andra faktorer, till exempel familjens socioekonomiska status, anses kunna påverka beteendemönster och preferenser bland de unga.

En referensram för lärande

Kapitel 3 inleds med en snabb skiss över hur världsbilden påverkar sättet att se på människan och utbildningens betydelse. Att öka medvetenheten kring detta samband blir allt viktigare när samhället och därmed också skolmiljön blir allt mer pluralistisk i fråga om normer och värderingar.

Sedan övergår diskussionen till en problematisering av begreppen kunskap och lärande. Också dessa begrepp definieras man förstår något olika om man representerar olika perspektiv på utbildning och livssyn. Vissa utbildningsteoretiker särskiljer till exempel mellan lärande och erfarenhetsbaserat lärande, medan man kan fråga sig om en sådan distinktion överhuvudtaget är möjlig inom ett ekologiskt perspektiv, eftersom lärande per definition anses äga rum i interaktionen mellan den lärande och den omgivande världen. Lärande har också särskiljts från internalisering, i betydelsen 'assimilering av korrekt beteende'. Inom språkutvecklingsforskningen framträder en liknande distinktion där man särskiljer mellan lärande och tillägnande. Förhållandet mellan processerna och deras relativa betydelse för utvecklingen av språklig kompetens har debatterats livligt under de senaste 30–40 åren.

Trots något olika begreppsapparater inom olika discipliner och olika stark betoning på olika processer tycks en gemensam nämnare för begreppet lärande vara en aktivitets- eller transformationsdimension. För att lärande skall äga rum räcker det alltså inte med att den lärande individen varseblir nya fenomen, utan en aktiv inre process förutsätts (se t.ex. Kolb, 1984; Piaget, 1972). Sett från van Liers (2004b) ekologiska perspektiv förutsätter denna aktivitet en ömsesidig relation med den omgivande världen.

Utgående från en uppfattning av lärande som en aktiv relation med omgivningen blir det viktigt att sätta fokus på lärarens dagliga arbetsmiljö och vilka förutsättningar den miljön ger för ett utvecklingsinriktat lärande. Ellström (1992; 2004) betonar den kvalitativa skillnaden mellan ett reproducerande lärande och ett utvecklingsinriktat lärande. Det senare är en förutsättning för lärarens professionella utveckling. För att professionell utveckling skall äga rum måste arbetsmiljön öppna för och stöda utvecklingsinriktat lärande genom

gemensamma och tydliga mål, variation i arbetsuppgifterna, ett tillåtande arbetsklimat, möjligheter till erfarenhetsbaserat lärande och en processinriktning i arbetsuppgifterna.

För elevens del är det språket som står i fokus för lärandeprocessen. Här är de teoretiska modellerna många och synnerligen varierande i relation till vilka faktorer de betonar som viktiga för lärandet. Ett flertal teorier om språklärande tenderar att vara av mer specifik karaktär och kan svårligen appliceras inom andra miljöer. Mer övergripande teorier däremot blir lätt så allmänna att de varken stöder förståelsen av processerna eller lämpar sig för empirisk testning. Denna framställning bygger främst på de teorier som presenterats av Gardner (1985), van Lier (1996; 2004a; 2004b) och Spolsky (1989). Dessa modeller placerar in andraspråklärande i en social kontext och bygger på uppfattningen att lärandet består av flera sinsemellan olika och kompletterande processer som utmynnar i språkliga, kulturella och attitydmässiga resultat. Den sociala miljöns betydelse och lärandeprocessernas beskaffenhet diskuteras främst utgående från van Liers centrala begrepp: medvetenhet (awareness), autonomi (autonomy), autenticitet (authenticity), exponering (exposure), engagemang (engagement), intag (intake), övning (practice) och social interaktion (social interaction). Även lexikala frasers betydelse i andraspråklärandet diskuteras.

Elevperspektiv

Eftersom det tidigare kapitlet lade fokus vid själva lärandeprocesserna finns det skäl att också explicit rikta fokus på den språklärande individen och hans eller hennes omgivning. Förutom intrapersonella egenskaper, är den engelska, de attityder och den sociokulturella kunskap eleven exponeras för utanför skolan av betydelse för lärandeprocessen. I detta kapitel diskuteras därför bland annat exponeringspråkets beskaffenhet och tillgången på engelskt inflytande i finländska och finlandssvenska miljöer. Nationell forskning visar att unga finlandssvenska elevers exponering för engelska utanför skolan varierar i de olika regionerna och även beroende på urbaniseringsgrad.

Eleverna kommer också i kontakt med och bär på olika attityder. Dessa attityder gäller dels målspråket som sådant, dels de länder och människor språket associeras med. Att förändra någons attityder är en mödosam process, eftersom attityder inte bara består av en kognitiv komponent utan också av en affektiv komponent och en handlingsberedskapskomponent. Icke desto mindre är ett sådant arbete viktigt eftersom negativa attityder och stereotypa uppfattningar kan påverka lärandeprocessen och elevens möjligheter att kommunicera med och förstå representanter för målspråksländerna på ett negativt sätt.

Därför har begreppet kultur blivit allt mer framträdande i främmandespråksundervisningen. Då avses inte enbart realia och traditionella artefakter, utan i begreppet kultur innefattas också kommunikativa färdigheter samt förmågan att kunna möta och vilja förstå andra människor, oavsett vilka kulturella uppfattningar och handlingsmönster de bär på.

Lärarperspektiv

Också för lärarens lärande och professionella utveckling är de intrapersonella egenskaperna av betydelse. Hansén (1997) har emellertid kommit fram till att

lärare ofta upplever samma typer av inre konflikter, där de pendlar mellan självständighet och osäkerhet, språkligt överflöd och fattigdom, samt kluven lojalitet.

Lärare identifierar också speciellt viktiga begränsningar eller resurser i förhållande till sin egen planering och undervisning. Bland de faktorer som identifierats i tidigare forskning nämns eleverna, undervisningsmaterialen (främst textboken), läroplaner på olika nivå, den egna utbildningsbakgrunden, egna erfarenheter av målspråk och målspråkskulturer, samt andra aktörer i den sociala kontexten. Också beträffande dessa måste man räkna med att det kan förekomma regional variation.

Metodologi

Kapitel 6 inleds med presentation av forskningsfrågor på två nivåer: de egentliga forskningsfrågorna och ett antal operationaliserade konkreta frågeställningar. Projektet omfattar dels forskningsfrågor om förutsättningarna för lärares professionella utveckling, dels forskningsfrågor om elevers förutsättningar för EFS-lärande. Detta innebär att projektet i praktiken är tudelat: Studie A fokuserar på elever, Studie B på deras lärare (se tabellen nedan):

Tabell 1. Översikt av huvudsakliga karakteristika för studie A och B inom forskningsprojektet.

	Studie A	Studie B
Sampel	Elever i årskurs 4 (N=351)	Engelsklärare i årskurs 5 (N=19)
Tidpunkt	Våren 1999	Våren 2000
Instrument	Test och frågeformulär	Intervju
Analys	Kvantitativ (SPSS), kvalitativ	Kvalitativ (N'Vivo)

I metodavsnittet redogörs för samplingsförfarande, instrumentkonstruktion och instruktioner, kodning och transkription samt analys, för både Studie A och Studie B. Slutligen diskuteras också etiska aspekter och relevanta synpunkter i relation till validitet och reliabilitet.

Resultat

Resultatpresentationen är tudelat, så att elevresultaten (Studie A) presenteras först följda av lärarresultaten (Studie B). Presentationen följer de operationaliserade frågor som identifierats i metodkapitlet.

Elevresultaten visar att eleverna kommer i kontakt med engelska utanför skolan i relativt stor utsträckning. Det förekommer dock stora skillnader mellan mer frekvent förekommande källor för engelskt inflytande (t.ex. musik och tv-program) och mindre frekvent förekommande (t.ex. radioprogram och engelskspråkiga gäster). De individuella variationerna är också stora. Variationen på basis av kön var mycket liten, medan variationer på basis av region, urbaniseringsgrad och hemspråk var mer märkbar. Tendensen var sådan att urbana elever från södra Finland med en flerspråkig bakgrund tenderade att nå högre ”exponeringsvärden” för engelska. De korrelationsvärden som uppmättes för de respektive källorna till engelskt inflytande var dock förhållandevis låga.

Såväl hörförståelsetestet som det produktiva vokabulärtestet visade på en stor individuell variation i den initiala språkkunskapen. Elevernas resultat i båda testen visade en viss korrelation med den mängd engelskt inflytande de rapporterat, men värdena var rätt låga och det förekom väsentliga skillnader beträffande vilka källor som tycktes påverka resultatet i de olika testen.

I materialet finns exempel på elever som redan innan de inlett sina studier i engelska behärskar elementär stavning och kan formulera korta satser, men det stora flertalet av eleverna ger prov på en modersmålsinfluerad stavning. I materialet finns också inslag av vad som ser ut att vara exempel på holofraser, d.v.s. lexikala fraser som inlärts som oanalyserade helheter. De fraser som förekommer i materialet representerar fraser för social interaktion, känslouttryck, frågor, önskemål, påståenden och en mindre grupp varierande fraser klassificerade som övrigt.

Eleverna uttrycker överlag mycket positiva attityder till det engelska språket. Hos den mycket lilla gruppen som uttrycker sig negativt om språket, syns bland ett flertal en ängslan över att språket är svårt att behärska. Elevernas attityder till engelskspråkiga länder och personer var inte fullt lika positiva. En majoritet av uttalandena klassificerades som neutrala, men endast en mycket liten grupp var negativ. Den sociokulturella kunskap om målspråksländerna Storbritannien och USA eleverna ger uttryck för förefaller inte vara speciellt djup, men elevernas uttalanden omspänner dock skillnader beträffande språk, konstitution och politik, geografi, vardagsliv, levnadsförhållanden och värderingar. Många av elevernas kommentarer ger uttryck för en stereotyp (men inte nödvändigtvis negativ) uppfattning av landet ifråga. Det förekommer också exempel på klara missuppfattningar.

Läroresultaten visar på stora variationer i lärares sätt att förhålla sig till de faktorer och aktörer som påverkar deras planering och undervisning. Det lärarna själva nämner som avgörande för hur deras undervisning utfaller sträcker sig från strukturella faktorer, som tidsaspekter, schemaläggning, gruppindelning, och undervisningsmaterial till mer sociala och intrapersonella faktorer som elevernas kognitiva förmåga och den egna förmågan att planera undervisningen.

Det förekommer stor variation beträffande i hur stor utsträckning lärarna anser att elevernas initiala målspråkskunskap, förtrogenhet med målspråkslandet och attityder påverkar deras planering. Samma bredd uttrycks också i lärarnas relation till undervisningsmaterialen. För någon lärare är det textboken som definierar undervisningens innehåll, andra berättar att materialet påverkar de

arbetsätt de använder, för någon stärker materialet det professionella självförtroendet, medan någon lärare ger uttryck för att materialet endast är en resurs som man fritt väljer bland.

Läroplanernas funktion beskrivs som en bas för undervisningen, ett stöd t.ex. för val av stoff, och som ett dokument utan verklig funktion. Det finns till och med lärare som hävdar att läroplanen uppfylls bara man följer undervisningsmaterialet. Den egna utbildningen och de egna erfarenheterna av målspråket och målspråksländer påverkar lärarnas val av metoder, deras sociokulturella kunskap och deras professionella självförtroende i klassen.

De andra aktörer som nämns av lärarna är – förutom eleverna – föräldrar, kolleger, elever på besök utifrån och medier. Myndigheter benämns i mycket vaga ordalag. I lärarnas svar framträder en klar tudelning beträffande huruvida de upplever stöd från de omgivande aktörerna. Här förekommer klart en frustration där lärare som önskar stöd inte upplever sig få det, medan andra beskriver ett gott samspel med främst kolleger och föräldrar.

Diskussion

I diskussionskapitlet diskuteras resultaten utgående från de egentliga forskningsfrågorna. På basis av resultaten kan man konstatera att engelska verkar vara på väg att bli ett andraspråk snarare än ett traditionellt främmande språk för många elever i Svenskfinland. Detta medför konsekvenser för nationella språkprogram och läroplansgrunder. Man kan till exempel fråga sig om engelska skulle behöva undervisas som ett lingua franca, snarare än ett språk knutet till specifika nationer och kulturer.

Resultaten visar också att de flesta elever i Svenskfinland har goda förutsättningar för ett aktivt, autentiskt, och behovsrelaterat lärande av engelska i ett tidigt skede utanför den egentliga skolmiljön. De flesta elever inleder alltså sina studier i engelska med en klar uppfattning om hur engelska låter och med ett visst förråd av holofraser och/eller andra ord i bagaget. Här bör det dock påpekas att detta inte gäller alla elever, eftersom en liten grupp elever inte kommer i kontakt med engelskan via olika medier i någon större utsträckning.

Elevernas attityder är överlag positiva, men deras kunskap och uppfattningar om målspråksländer lämnar en hel del övrigt att önska. Därför bör undervisningen byggas upp så att den möter och utmanar elevernas stereotypa uppfattningar. Det står alltså klart att det finlandssvenska språkklassrummet inte är en homogen språklig miljö, utan att eleverna inleder sina studier i engelska med olika förhandskunskaper. Detta medför en utmaning för läraren, som förväntas möta och stöda elever med olika utgångslägen i deras fortsatta lärande.

De flesta lärare uttrycker en medvetenhet om att deras elever kommer i kontakt med engelska i relativt stor utsträckning utanför skolan. Trots detta är det flera lärare som inte anser att detta är av någon större betydelse i EFS-klassrummet, eftersom man där betonar andra aspekter av språket än dem de lär sig utanför. Lärarna ger alltså uttryck för att skolengelskan ses som något annat än fritidsengelskan. Det är också uppenbart att lärarna i hög grad beskriver sin undervisning som ett program som genomförs med alla studerande i ungefär

samma takt. Diskussion kring kulturella frågor och attityder förekommer i någon mån som ett ”extra” inslag när tiden tillåter, inte som ett regelbundet och systematiskt återkommande element i undervisningen.

Lärarens förhållande till textboken varierar. För några lärare är undervisningsmaterialen faktiskt en resurs att välja bland, medan resultaten tydligt visar att andra lärare är mycket bundna till textboken. Textboken har då blivit en kontrollerande faktor snarare än en resurs. Det är också uppenbart att den målorienterade läroplanen från 1994 inte fyller en funktion som stöd för dessa lärare. Några av lärarna upplever att läroplanen ger dem den frihet de gärna har i val av stoff och metoder, medan andra uttrycker en frustration över den brist på stöd den ger främst i val av stoff och strukturer. Läroplanen förmår alltså inte ge sådana konkreta mål som skulle engagera till ett utvecklingsinriktat lärande.

Inte heller samverkan med kolleger och andra aktörer ser ut att vara så systematisk att den fyller en klart utvecklande funktion, även om potentialen uppenbarligen finns där, vilket kommer till synes i enstaka lärarkommentarer. Det professionella självförtroendet kan stärkas av lärarens egen språkliga och didaktiska utbildning och erfarenheter av engelskspråkiga länder, men förhållandet är inte ett simpelt 1–1-förhållande.

Slutligen ses lärarens sätt att hantera och uppleva förutsättningarna för EFS-undervisningen olika främst beroende på hur de uppfattar sin egen roll i språkklassrummet. De som ser sig som verkställande ämnesexperter upplever lätt otillräcklighet och mister sitt professionella självförtroende. I de fall där undervisningsprocessen beskrivs som en gemensam resa och läraren har en mer fostrande eller frigörande roll upplevs situationen som mindre stressande, eftersom lärarens professionalitet vilar på en pedagogisk-didaktisk kompetens snarare än på rollen som ämnesexpert.

De metoder som valts för studien fyllde överlag sin funktion på ett tillfredsställande sätt. Olika angreppssätt övervägdes, men relativt enkla metoder valdes för att möjliggöra ett större elevsampel och även med tanke på de unga elevernas koncentrationsspann och förståelse för uppgifterna. I någon mån kunde konsekvenserna av kodningen ha ägnats större uppmärksamhet i samband med testkonstruktionen.

Beträffande lärarstudien visade sig en halvstrukturerad intervju och en uppsökande strategi i val av plats för intervjun vara goda val. Samplet valdes så att direkta kopplingar till elevsamplet skulle vara möjliga. Detta minskade bortfallet i fråga om enstaka bakgrundsvariabler i elevmaterialet, men kunde kanske ha utnyttjats mer explicit i diskussionen av resultaten. Lärarresultaten medförde också etiska avgöranden över hur materialet kunde presenteras på ett sådant sätt att det inte blir stigmatiserande utan verkligen tjänar målgruppen.

Sammanfattning

Det står helt klart att interaktionen mellan lärare och elever i Svenskfinland kan och behöver utvecklas. I hög grad förefaller det handla om lärarens sätt att definiera sin egen roll och elevens roll i klassrummet. För att en sådan förändringsprocess skall ta form behöver samspelet förbättras mellan aktörerna i

skolmiljön. Utöver detta är det tre områden för ömsesidig samverkan som framträder som de viktigaste för utveckling av förutsättningarna för EFS-undervisningen i Svenskfinland:

Skolsamfundet – Språkpolicy och läroplan

Skolsamfundet – Lärarutbildning och materialproduktion

Skolsamfundet – Forskning kring undervisning och lärande i olika kontexter

Även om vissa kanaler för kommunikation redan finns är de otillräckliga och bygger sällan på den ömsesidighet och respekt för den andres professionalitet som jag anser är fullständigt avgörande för att en positiv utveckling skall äga rum. Lärarfortbildningen kunde fungera som en arena för denna samverkan, om man förmår utveckla fortbildningen enligt lärarnas faktiska behov och till ett systematiskt element i varje lärares vardag.

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Har eleven deltagit i engelsk klubbverksamhet eller dyl. ? Ja Nej
 I så fall, ungefär hur länge (ange i år): _____

A)

Namn: _____

Skola: _____

Vilket/vilka språk talar du hemma? _____

Var/i vilka situationer har du HÖRT engelska?
 _____Var/ i vilka situationer har du SETT/LÄST engelska?

Skriv ner alla engelska ord och meningar du minns. Om du inte vet hur de stavas, så skriv som de låter! Svara också på frågan om du vet vad ordet/meningen betyder, genom att ringa in rätt alternativ. Om du vet vad ordet/meningen betyder på svenska, så försök förklara det så kort som möjligt!

Exempel:

**Vet du vad ordet/ Försök förklara vad
 meningen betyder? ordet/meningen betyder!**

_____ Ja Osäker Nej _____

_____ Ja Osäker Nej _____

Du har tio minuter på dig. Läraren tar tid och talar om då halva tiden gått och då tiden är ute. Om denna sida inte räcker till kan du fortsätta på nästa sida.

Engelskt ord/mening

Vet du vad ordet/ Försök förklara vad
 meningen betyder? ordet/meningen betyder!

_____ Ja Osäker Nej _____

B) Din lärare kommer att sätta på en kassett. Du kommer att få höra om tre påhittade personer. Det gäller att lyssna noga, för du får höra bandet endast en gång. Texten är indelad i fem delar. Efter första delen svarar du på frågorna med nummer 1., efter andra delen svarar du på frågorna med nummer 2 osv.

1) **Ringa in** rätt alternativ:

Personen är en	flicka	pojke
Personen är alltid	ledsen	glad
Personen har en	motorcykel	häst
Personen är starkast i	världen	staden

2) **Ringa in** rätt alternativ:

Personen är	barn	vuxen
Personen är en	flicka	pojke
Personen är	med andra	ensam

3) **Svara** på frågorna på svenska:

Vad gör personen då folk talar med honom/henne?

Var gömmer personen sig?

Vad lyssnar personen på?

Vilka är personens vänner?

4) **Berätta** om Toms pappa.

5) **Berätta** så mycket du minns om Tom.

C) Svara på följande frågor genom att **ringa in** det alternativ som passar bäst.

1) Hur ofta lyssnar du på engelsk musik?

Varje dag Varje vecka Varje månad Varje år Aldrig

2) Hur ofta lyssnar du på radioprogram på engelska?

Varje dag Varje vecka Varje månad Varje år Aldrig

3) Hur ofta läser du tidningar, böcker och/eller reklam på engelska?

Varje dag Varje vecka Varje månad Varje år Aldrig

4) Hur ofta talar du engelska med dina syskon, föräldrar eller vänner?

Varje dag Varje vecka Varje månad Varje år Aldrig

5) Hur ofta har ni gäster som talar engelska hemma hos er?

Varje Varannan 2-5 gånger 1 gång Aldrig
månad månad per år per år

6) Hur ofta använder du dator hemma?

Varje dag Varje vecka Varje månad Varje år Aldrig

Om du svarade 'ja' på fråga 6, svara då också på fråga 7. Svarade du 'nej' kan du gå till fråga 8

7) Behöver du engelska då du använder datorn?

Varje gång Varannan gång Aldrig

8) Hur ofta tittar du på engelska program på TV/video?

Nästan varje kväll 1-3 kvällar i veckan Nästan inte alls

9) Hur ofta träffar du turister eller andra som talar engelska?

Minst varannan månad Minst 1 gång/år Aldrig

10) Har du varit (på resa eller bott) i något engelskspråkigt land?

Ja Nej

Om du svarade 'ja' på fråga 10, svara då också på fråga 11 och 12. Svarade du 'nej' får du fortsätta med frågorna på nästa sida!

11) Vilket/vilka engelskspråkigt/a land/länder har du besökt eller bott i?

12) Ungefär hur länge var du där? (t.ex. ett år, en månad eller en vecka)

D) Svara på frågorna så noggrant som möjligt.

- 1) USA och Storbritannien är två länder där man talar engelska. Vilka **olikheter** tycker du att det finns mellan länderna? Skriv ner så många olikheter som möjligt! (Om raderna inte räcker till kan du fortsätta på baksidan av pappret.)

- 2) Vilka **likheter** finns det mellan Storbritannien och USA?

- 3) Här nedaför ser du åtta påbörjade meningar. Du skall **fylla i** hur just du tycker att meningarna skall sluta. Det är din egen åsikt som är viktig!

Exempel: Jag tycker att glass är _____.

Jag tycker att USA är _____.

I Storbritannien finns det _____.

Engelskspråkiga länder är _____.

I Storbritannien är människor _____.

Jag tycker att folk i USA är _____.

Jag tycker engelskspråkiga människor har _____.

Jag tror att engelskspråkiga människor ofta _____.

Jag tycker engelska är _____.

Tack för din hjälp!

Appendix 2.

Hörförståelse texter till test med elever i åk. 4 VT-99

Text 1

This person is a girl. She has got red hair and she is always happy. She has got a monkey and a horse and she is the strongest girl in the world!

Paus 1

Text 2

Have you ever seen the tiny little child who sometimes dances around in the park? All alone she dances among the autumn leaves.

Paus 2

She's very shy. When people try to talk to her she just shakes her head and runs away. She often hides in one of the big old trees down by the river. There she sits for hours, just listening to the sounds of the wind and the river. I think she is happy there and that she feels that the trees and the wind are her friends.

Paus 3

Text 3

Once upon a time there was a young man called Tom Jones. He was the son of a carpenter named Oscar Jones. Oscar was a very clever man and he was very good at his profession.

Paus 4

Tom, who was much like his father, was also a handy man, but in quite a different way. Tom was a pick-pocket. In the streets of London he stole money out of people's pockets and purses. He was, however, very successful in his own area and was never caught by the police.

Slut

Hejsan!

Appendix 3.

Vasa 29.4. 1999

Tack för att ni gått med på att medverka i min undersökning! Förhoppningsvis kommer undersökningen att ge resultat som ni direkt eller indirekt kommer att ha nytta av när det gäller engelskundervisningen i er skola. Här följer några instruktioner angående ifyllandet av formuläret. Hela formuläret torde ta ungefär 40 minuter i anspråk.

De frågor som finns ovanför det dubbla strecket på första sidan, hoppas jag att du som delar ut formuläret, eller klassläraren kan fylla i. Det visade sig nämligen i pilotundersökningen att eleverna själva har mycket vag uppfattning om dylikt.

Elevens namn vill jag gärna ha ifall det skulle bli aktuellt med en uppföljning av intressanta resultat. I fall där namnet inte klargör elevens kön vore det bra om du kunde fylla i om det är fråga om en pojke eller flicka.

Till instruktionerna:

Del A: Be eleverna fylla i och läsa instruktionerna fram till ”orduppgiften”. Alla elever bör börja med den uppgiften samtidigt, för att underlätta tidtagningen, som faller på dig. Eleverna har alltså tio minuter på sig. Du kan gärna meddela eleverna då halva tiden gått och naturligtvis då tiden är ute. Påpeka innan ni inleder uppgiften att det är de själva som skall skriva ner de ord/meningar de sett/hört/minns. Påminn dem om att det är helt OK att skriva ord och meningar **som de låter**.

Del B: För del B har jag bifogat en kassett. Hörförståelsen, inklusive pauser, är 7 minuter och 20 sekunder lång. Tyvärr är kvaliteten inte den bästa, så det kommer att höras ett visst bakgrundsbrus, då du vrider upp volymen. Bruset torde dock inte inverka störande på förståelsen. Det är viktigt att alla elever har läst instruktionerna innan bandet sätter igång!

De pauser som finns insatta på band borde räcka till för att eleverna skall hinna svara på frågorna i det avsnittet. Om eleverna av någon orsak inte alls hinner med, kan du stanna bandet en stund. Det är dock viktigt att eleverna inte får höra texten mer än **en** enda gång.

Bandet slutar med meningen ”Svara på frågorna med num-

mer fem”. Därefter går det bra att stanna bandet. Eleverna får alltså ta den tid de behöver på sig för att svara på sista frågan. De som blir färdiga får fortsätta med frågorna i del C och D.

OBS! I instruktionerna på bandet sägs det att eleverna skall svara på **frågorna** med nummer fyra och fem. Det finns trots allt bara en fråga för avsnitt fyra och en för avsnitt fem. Detta behöver inte tas upp med eleverna, om de inte ”fastnar” på det, vilket ingen i pilotgruppen gjorde.

Del C: Frågorna i denna del torde inte föra med sig några större problem. Om någon av eleverna inte hittar något lämpligt alternativ, be dem välja det som är närmaste alternativ ”nedåt”. D.v.s. om de t.ex. lyssnar på engelska radioprogram endast några gånger i året, så skall de ringa in ”Varje år” och inte ”Varje månad”. Ifall eleverna funderar på vad ett engelskspråkigt land är kan du ge dem den något ”luddiga” definitionen ”ett land där folk talar engelska”, eftersom jag gärna vill se i deras svar vilka länder de uppfattar som ”engelska”.

Del D: Ifall eleverna anser att de inte vet något om dessa länder och de människor som bor där kan du be dem skriva utgående från hur de **tror** det är, utgående från vad de sett på TV o.s.v.

Ifall det är något du undrar över, så är det bara att ringa mig på 06-3247358 eller 050-3584684. Du kan också få tag på mig via e-mail på adressen: Mikaela.Bjorklund@abo.fi

Var snäll och fyll i lappen nedan, klipp ut den och skicka den tillsammans med de ifyllda formulären och kassetten.

Hjärtligt tack för hjälpen!

Mikaela Björklund
Assistent i främmande språkens didaktik

Kontaktperson: _____ Telefonnummer: _____
E-mail: _____
Adress: _____

Kriterier för bedömning av svar i hörförståelsetest

1) Ringa in rätt alternativ:

Personen är en	flicka 1	pojke
Personen är alltid	ledsen	glad 1
Personen har en	motorcykel	häst 1
Personen är starkast i	världen 1	staden

2) Ringa in rätt alternativ:

Personen är	barn 1	vuxen
Personen är en	flicka 1	pojke
Personen är	med andra	ensam 1

3) Svara på frågorna på svenska:

Vad gör personen då folk talar med honom/henne?

skakar på huvudet/springer sin väg

1 1

Var gömmer personen sig?

ett /stort och/eller gammalt träd/ vid floden

1 1 1

Vad lyssnar personen på?

vinden/floden

1 1

Vilka är personens vänner?

träden/ vinden

1 1

4) Berätta om Toms pappa.

snickare/namn Oscar Jones/klipsk man/duktig (i sitt yrke)

1 1 1 1

5) Berätta så mycket du minns om Tom.

lik sin far/händig man/på ett annat sätt/på Londons gator

1 1 1 1

stal pengar/ur fickor och väskor/framgångsrik

1 1 1

blev aldrig fast av polisen

1

Intervju-guide med lärarna

(intervjun skall helst ta plats på neutral mark)

Inledning (innan bandet sätts igång)

Forskaren presenterar sig och förklarar att ändamålet med intervjun är att klarlägga utgångsläget (vissa faktorer) för engelskundervisningen i Svenskfinland.

Intervjufrågor

- Material

Vilka typer av material finns det för engelskundervisningen idag?

Hur värderar du det?

Vilka/vilken typ av material skulle behövas, om det alls behövs mer material?

Använder du andra material än direkta undervisnings material i din undervisning?

Motivera och exemplifiera!

Hur användbart tycker du att

- a) Internet

- b) TV och video

- c) böcker och tidningar

- d) annat autentiskt material

är i undervisningen?

- Elevernas utgångsläge

Vad kan eleverna då de börjar engelskundervisningen?

Var har de lärt sig det?

Bör man ta hänsyn till det i undervisningen? Motivera!

Motsvarar undervisningsmaterialen elevernas nivå?

- Tekniker

Vilken typ av övningar passar bäst i undervisningen med nybörjarna?

Vilka övningstyper är

- a) effektivast?

- b) mest omtyckta av eleverna?

- Kultur i undervisningen

På vilket sätt kommer målspråskulturen fram i undervisningen?

Hur stor del av tiden sätts på socio-kulturella fenomen?

Hur tycker du att eleverna förhåller sig till engelskspråkiga människor/kulturer/länder?

Hur märks detta i undervisningen?

- *Undervisningens förutsättningar*

Vad är det som bestämmer hur din undervisning blir?

Hur är det med din utbildning? (Känner du att du behärskar ämnet?)

Vad skulle du betona/prioritera om du hade helt fria händer?

Trivs du med att undervisa engelska? Motivera ditt svar!

- *Nämiljöns attityder till ämnet*

Känner du stöd av omgivningen för det du gör?

Vem, hur?

Tycker du engelskan prioriteras? Behövs det?

Avslutning

Forskaren klargör åter hur intervjumaterialet kommer att användas och avtalar med respondenten hur han/hon tillåter att materialet används. Forskaren tackar för informationen (ger gärna konkreta exempel) och frågar om läraren har något att tillägga, t.ex. tips och ideér åt andra lärare/läromedelsförfattare.

Table A.1. Contingency coefficient values (C) and significance values (p) for nine sources of English exposure and the background variables 'region' (North=1, South= 2), 'urbanisation' (rural=1, urban=2), and 'language/s spoken at home' (Swedish=1, et.c.), and 'gender' (male=1, female=2) .

	Region C, (p)	Urbanisa- tion C, (p)	Home lang. C, (p)	Gender C, (p)
Music	.242, (.000)	.191, (n.s.)	.230, (n.s.)	.125, (n.s.)
TV	.267, (.000)	.110, (n.s.)	.216, (n.s.)	.089, (n.s.)
Tourists	.237, (.002)	.242, (.000)	.272, (.006)	.049, (n.s.)
Computers	.171, (.001)	.076, (n.s.)	.014, (n.s.)	.292, (.000)
Written material	.219, (.002)	.226, (.001)	.295, (n.s.)	.109, (n.s.)
Friends/at home	.205, (.004)	.176, (n.s.)	.423, (.000)	.043, (n.s.)
Trip abroad	.128, (n.s.)	.125, (n.s.)	.208, (n.s.)	.031, (n.s.)
Radio programmes	.142, (n.s.)	.236, (.000)	.331, (n.s.)	.079, (n.s.)
Guests	.158, (n.s.)	.313, (.000)	.342, (.004)	.164, (n.s.)
Club	.164, (.004)	.080, (n.s.)	.211, (n.s.)	.079, (n.s.)

The Finland-Swedish context is affected by the general trends of globalisation and the dominance of English as an international language. These trends affect the conditions for learning and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL): the goals, the roles of teachers and learners, the suitability of materials, and the initial experiences of speakers of English.

This study explores the conditions for EFL learning and professional development in the Swedish-medium EFL-beginner classroom in Finland. The starting points of 351 novice EFL-learners and 19 of their teachers are described and analysed.

The results indicate that English is becoming a second language rather than a traditional foreign language for many learners. These learners also have good opportunities for informal EFL learning outside school. However, this was not the case for all learners, which suggests that there is a considerable heterogeneity and regional variation in the Swedish-medium EFL classroom. The teacher results indicate that some teachers have managed to apply a reflective and constructive way of dealing with at least some of the conditions they face. Other teachers express frustration with their work situation, the curriculum, teaching materials, and other social actors.

The study suggests that the conditions for EFL learning and teaching in the Finland-Swedish context vary. Suggestions are made on what measures could be taken to support constructive interaction between learners and teachers and their development as learners and professionals. To achieve substantial improvement it is suggested that mutual communication between actors at different levels needs to be developed further.

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