"The English you use at school is not the English that you use during your free time"

A study on upper secondary school students' informal use of English

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Tutkimus käsittelee suomalaisten nuorten englannin käyttöä kouluajan ulkopuolella. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää, miten lukioikäiset nuoret käyttävät englantia vapaa-ajallaan, mikä motivoi heitä näihin aktiviteetteihin, ja kokevatko he oppineensa englantia näiden aktiviteettien avulla. Tutkimuskysymyksiin sisältyi myös se, mitä mieltä opiskelijat olivat koulussa opitun englannin ja vapaa-ajalla käytettävän englannin välisestä suhteesta.

Tutkimukseen osallistui kahdeksan oppilasta kaikilta vuosikursseilta yhdestä lukiosta Helsingissä. Kyseessä on kvalitatiivinen tutkimus, jonka aineistonkeruumenetelmänä käytettiin puolistrukturoituja teemahaastatteluja. Haastateltaville esitettiin ennalta laadittuja kysymyksiä sekä lisäkysymyksiä, jotka nousivat esiin haastattelutilanteessa. Haastattelut nauhoitettiin oppilaiden koululla. Jälkeenpäin ne litteroitiin ja käännettiin englanniksi tutkielmaa varten.

Tulokset osoittavat, että suostuin englanninkielinen aktiviteetti on TV-sarjojen tai elokuvien katselu. Englantia myös puhutaan sukulaisten, ystävien, ja kumppanien kanssa, ja oppilaita motivoi heidän oma kiinnostuksensa näihin aktiviteetteihin. Koulussa opittu englanti arvioidaan yleisesti negatiivisesti, kun taas vapaa-ajalla käytetty englanti koetaan vapaaksi ja mukavaksi. Oppimisen koetaan olevan mahdollista molemmissa ympäristöissä, joskin kouluajan ulkopuolisesta oppimisesta pidetään enemmän. Englannin käytön koetaan olevan hyvin erilaista näissä ympäristöissä.

Lukion opetussuunnitelmassa korostetaan englannin roolia kansainvälisen kommunikaation kielenä. Tutkimukseen osallistuneet opiskelijat eivät kuitenkaan koe saaneensa opetusta, jossa kommunikaatio olisi pääosassa, vaan painottavat koulussa käytetyn englannin olevan arvosanakeskeistä ja täydellisyyteen tähtäävää. Loppupäätelmänä voidaan sanoa, että lukiolaiset kokevat vapaa-ajalla opitun ja käytetyn englannin olevan mukavampaa, monipuolisempaa ja hyödyllisempää kuin koulussa opitun ja käytetyn englannin.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Avainsanat (suomeksi) – informaali oppiminen, englanti, kielen oppiminen, lukio, lukion englanti, kouluajan ulkopuolella tapahtuva oppiminen, yo-kokeet

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Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information
"Englanti, jota käytät koulussa, ei ole samaa englantia, kuin mitä käytät vapaa-ajalla" – tutkielma lukiolaisten englannin käytöstä vapaa-ajalla

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1.   Introduction

Watching your favourite show on Netflix or writing a caption under your latest Instagram photo do not seem like the obvious activities that help you learn English. Accidental or intentional, using social media and watching TV shows in another language are activities of informal learning. Most young people in upper secondary school use media such as Netflix or Instagram on a daily basis, which is why I found it intriguing to see how much they think it affects their language learning, especially compared to the education they get at school. In this study, I am looking at how upper secondary school students use English in an informal environment outside of school, and what differences they perceive there are between school English and free time English.

Previous studies on informal learning have identified playing video games, especially massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), and watching TV shows with subtitles as the most efficient for learning English vocabulary and communication skills: (see Koolstra and Beentjes 1999; Uuskoski 2011; Peterson 2012; Sylvén and Sundqvist 2012; Vidgren 2014; Birulés-Muntané and Soto-Faraco 2016). The initial focus of my study was going to be how gaming and watching TV shows with subtitles affect informal learning of English, but after conducting the interviews, it became evident that my informants were no longer gamers, although some had played video games as children. Therefore, I decided to focus on other activities that foster informal learning, such as speaking with friends or relatives in English, and watching English language TV shows. I will also pay attention to the students' opinions on how important they feel informal learning is when learning a second language, and their attitude towards English teaching in their upper secondary school.

Noora Vidgren's (2014) study inspired me to use upper secondary school students as my informants. At this level of education, all of the students are preparing for the Finnish matriculation exams and therefore presumably use English more than those who are younger than them. Also, in upper secondary school, the students' level of English should be so high that they could effortlessly use it during their free time as well. Since my sample consists of only eight people, my results are not generalisable,

but they do provide valuable information about the students' habits of using English in their free time. I am especially interested in whether the students feel that they have learnt English by watching subtitled TV shows, because previous studies have shown a connection between these two activities. My research questions are:

1. How do upper secondary school students use English in their free time?
2. What motivates upper secondary school students to do these activities and use English in their free time?
3. What do the students think about the English at school compared to the English they use in their free time?

In this paper, I will give an overview about previous studies done on informal learning, describe the methods of my study, discuss the results of my study, and give suggestions for further studies. The interview questions in this study were drafted in collaboration with professor Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen as a part of her study on gaming and its effects on the informal learning of English, and the interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed by me (see chapter 3: Methods, and 4: Results and Discussion).

2.   Theoretical background

Previous studies have shown that informal learning can help with second language acquisition (see Koolstra and Beentjes 1999; DeHaan, Reed and Kuwada 2010; Olsson 2011; Chen and

Yang 2013; Ebrahimzadeh 2017; Enayat and Haghighatpasand 2017). Motivation to learn, attitudes and interest in learning are also key factors in successful informal learning (Fagerlund 2012). Playing video games and watching TV shows with subtitles are activities that have been identified as the most efficient for learning English vocabulary and communication skills (Uuskoski 2011; Sylvén and Sundqvist 2012; Vidgren 2014; Birulés-Muntané and Soto-Faraco 2016). Since none of my informants are gamers, informal learning through video games is not the main focus of my study. Instead, I focus on students who watch TV shows or who are otherwise active in using English in their free time.

In this section of my thesis, I will define informal learning and look at studies which show that watching TV shows is beneficial for second language acquisition. I will also talk about other activities that are considered informal learning, and briefly cover how video games are related to informal English learning. Finally, I will summarise how English is taught in Finland.

2.1   Definitions for informal learning

Informal learning can be defined by comparing it to formal learning. Formal learning often happens at school, whereas informal learning usually happens in a natural environment, outside of formally instructed classes (Krashen 1981:40; Carliner 2013: 5). Some activities could be defined as both formal and informal learning, if they have formal instruction, but are voluntary or happen outside of the usual learning environment (Carliner 2013:6). It can be very difficult to recognise when learning occurs, because we learn while we do things in our everyday lives (Livingstone 2001:19). Therefore, in my study, I focus on the informal *use* of English, assuming that learning takes place when English is used in an out-of-school context.

In his study, Krashen (1981) found that both formal and informal environments can contribute to competence in a second language, neither environment being better than the other. Second language acquisition is mainly about the amount of intake the learner gets. An informal environment can have a lot of opportunities for intake and be good for second language acquisition, just as well as a formal environment, for example a classroom (Krashen 1981: 115-116). It can also be argued that because both formal and informal learning aim for similar outcomes, it is beneficial to use formal learning techniques in an informal environment (Sackey et al. 2015:122).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2017) defines informal learning as a part of lifelong learning. Informal learning "is never organised, has no set objectives in terms of learning outcomes and is never intentional from the learner's standpoint" (OECD 2017). This definition sees informal learning as something that happens without any planning or structuring or learning goals. Like the OECD, Hager and Halliday (2009: 236-237) also define informal learning as an ongoing process which is indeterminate and opportunistic, meaning that it is not defined or predicted and happens when there are unanticipated opportunities for it. Although some of informal learning is unintentional, these definitions do not take into account planned informal learning, where the person chooses to learn outside of school or work.

Marcia Conner (1997-2013) distinguishes between formal, informal, intentional, accidental, and non-formal learning. She writes that *formal learning* is organised and happens in a school environment, from primary school through to university, as well as in technical and professional training. *Informal learning*, on the other hand, happens throughout life, as an individual gains knowledge, skills, attitudes and values from their family, neighbours, friends, and media. Conner also includes in her list *intentional learning,* which happens when an individual purposefully wants to learn something and tries to achieve that objective, *accidental learning*, which is not planned and happens in everyday life when an individual does not intend it or expect it, and *non-formal learning*, which can be an organised educational activity with set learning outcomes occurring in an informal environment (Conner 1997-2013).

In this thesis, I am using Conner's (1997-2013) definition of informal learning. The accidental aspect of learning is also included, as emphasised by the OECD (2017), Hager and Halliday (2009). Thus, informal learning can happen by accident, without planning, and throughout an individual's life, as they gain knowledge, skills, attitudes and values from their family, neighbours, friends, and media.
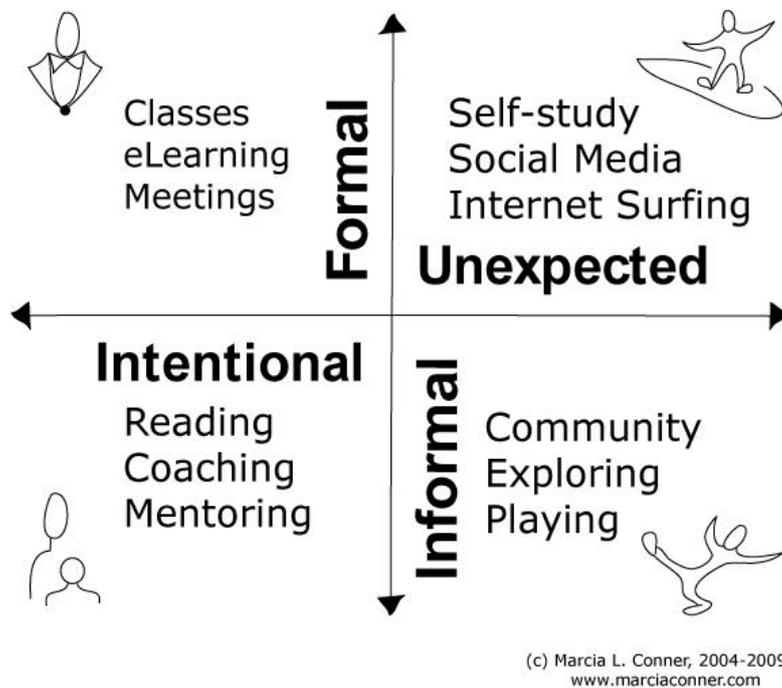
Picture 1: Types of learning (Marcia Conner 1997-2013)

2.2   Informal English learning activities

Chun Lai, Weimin Zhu and Gang Gong (2014) studied the out-of-class English learning activities of middle school students. Their sample consisted of 82 Chinese students, average age 14. The students had studied English as a foreign language for approximately five years. Lai et al. used a questionnaire to find out how much time in the past six months the students had spent studying English outside of class, what kind of technological resources (such as the internet, online games, TV, etc.) they had used to support their English learning, and what English language activities they had engaged in outside of class. Afterwards Lai et al. conducted follow-up interviews with 19 participants, who reported either a lot or very little out-of-class learning in the questionnaire.

The results show that the students engage in various out-of-class English learning activities, for example watching English language films, and listening to songs in English. The students do more vocabulary memorisation and other practices and quizzes, than actual language production activities, like chatting online with a foreign person. The more the students use technology in order to meet their learning goals, the greater their confidence and enjoyment is in learning English. This significantly improves the quality of these students' out-of-class English learning (Lai et al. 2014: 278-308).

Another finding is that parents have a significant influence on how the informants perceived out-of-class English learning activities. Some parents encourage their children to learn English outside of class and do activities together with them, others forbid certain activities, such as the use of online English dictionaries, and therefore affect the way the students think about using English during their free time. Lai et al. suggest that future studies could focus directly on parents' perceptions of out-of-class learning (Lai et al. 2014: 278-308).

Noora Vidgren (2014) studied Finnish upper secondary school students and how they learnt informally. She wanted to find out how much and in what type of situations upper secondary school students say they use English outside school, and whether informal learning correlates with the students' grades and the time they do homework or study for tests. Vidgren's sample consisted of 244 upper secondary school students aged 16 to 19, who were from three upper secondary schools in Helsinki. Her data collection method was a quantitative questionnaire.

Vidgren found that those students who learn English informally spend less time doing their homework, achieve higher grades, and perceive English courses to be easier than those students who are universal or institutional learners (i.e. those who learn only or mainly at school). She also found that there is a correlation between playing video games and how difficult the students think their English courses are, since those who play video games find the courses easier than those who do not play (Vidgren 2014:18-60).

These studies by Lai et al. (2014) and Vidgren (2014) show that informal learning is one of the most efficient ways to learn a second language, and it can also improve students' grades. Using technology to meet learning goals correlates with greater confidence and enjoyment in learning English, and parents have a significant influence on how students perceive out-of-class English learning activities. It should be noted that Lai et al.'s (2014) study might have different results in other countries than China, where parents' might have less influence on students' informal learning, as individualism and independent choices are valued over family members' opinions. Also, without internet censorship, students in other countries have access to various websites through which they can practice communicating in English.

2.3   Vocabulary acquisition through informal learning

Elke Peters and Stuart Webb (2018) studied how viewing a full-length TV show affects the incidental vocabulary acquisition of Dutch EFL learners. Their sample consisted of 63 participants who were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The control group only took the pretest and the immediate posttest, but the experimental group also watched an unsubtitled English language TV show and took a delayed posttest one week later.

Peters and Webb wanted to measure different aspects of vocabulary acquisition: form recognition, meaning recall, and meaning recognition, and used the same test for the pretest, the posttest and the delayed posttest. They looked at the possible correlation between vocabulary acquisition through watching TV, and the learners' prior vocabulary knowledge, how frequently the target items occurred, whether there were cognate items (meaning similar words in Dutch and English, such as *an alliance – een alliantieness*), and how relevant the items were for understanding the content of the TV show. In the test the participants indicated their familiarity with a word (both written on paper and spoken twice by a native speaker) and provided translations or synonyms for the word if they could. The participants could also answer open questions about whether they had understood the content of the TV show they had watched, and whether they had learnt anything else that was not otherwise measured in the test (Peters and Webb 2018: 7-24).

The results show that the experimental group incidentally learns vocabulary items through watching a full-length TV show. The participants can recognise and recall the meaning of approximately four words, and their prior vocabulary knowledge affects their learning as well. The more frequently a word occurs, the more likely it is that the word is learnt, and cognate words also help with learning. Peters and Webb conclude that watching TV can enrich a learner's vocabulary and there is potential for language learning, since watching TV is an enjoyable activity for people (Peters and Webb 2018: 7-24).

Joan Birulés-Muntané and Salvador Soto-Faraco (2016) studied the potential learning opportunities of watching foreign language tv- shows with subtitles. Their sample consisted of 60 Spanish students, who study English as a foreign language on the intermediate level. The students were asked to watch a one-hour long episode of a TV- show in English (the original version), or with English subtitles, with Spanish subtitles, or with no subtitles at all. The participants did a vocabulary test before and after watching the episode, as well as a plot comprehension test after watching the episode.

The results show that the English-subtitled version of the show improves the students' listening skills significantly more than the Spanish subtitled and non-subtitled versions do. No new vocabulary is learnt after watching the episode, but this finding may be because the material is difficult to understand, and there are low frequency words which are repeated approximately five times in the episode. The plot comprehension is the most successful with Spanish subtitles. Birulés-Muntané and Soto-Faraco also argue that based on this study, the best way to improve one's understanding of L2 speech is to watch TV shows or films in their original language, with original language subtitles. Birulés-Muntané and Soto-Faraco say this is possible for a learner who has reached either the intermediate or advanced level of language (Birulés-Muntané and Soto-Faraco 2016).

These studies by Peters and Webb (2018), and Birulés-Muntané and Soto-Faraco (2016) show that watching English language TV-shows with subtitles improves listening skills and vocabulary acquisition, which are both important aspects of learning English. How frequently a word occurs correlates with how likely it is that

the word is learnt, and the best way to improve one's listening skills and understanding of L2 speech is to watch content in the original language, with original language subtitles. These studies have sufficient sample sizes and valid research methods. The findings suggest that since watching English language TV shows is enjoyable, it might be the best way to acquire English vocabulary, especially with subtitles in the original language.

2.4   Attitudes towards English learning in different environments

Marlena Plavšić and Marina Dicović (2015) studied university students' attitudes toward different types of learning. They collected their data from 553 participants in a Croatian university, and used a questionnaire with options to answer on five-point Likert type scales, from strongly disagree (1) to totally agree (5). Plavšić and Dicović wanted to know whether the students' year of study, knowledge about the different learning types, household income, and parents' formal education affect the students' attitudes towards formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Plavšić and Dicović's study reveals that most of the students are not particularly interested in pursuing non-formal and informal learning, but those students who show the most interest towards these types of learning are in their final years of study. Plavšić and Dicović suggest that these senior year students may have realised that non-formal and informal learning benefit them, as these types of learning can be cheaper and more accessible than learning through formal instruction. Students who are familiar with formal, non-formal, and informal learning have more favourable attitudes towards all types of learning. The students' level of income has a slight effect on their attitudes, as those with higher income level tend to favour formal education more than other students, but there are no differences in the attitudes towards non-formal and informal learning (Plavšić and Dicović 2015: 79-86).

Anna Linnakylä (2010) studied 8th graders' interests and attitudes towards using English outside of school. She wanted to find out what kind of activities the students did outside of school that were beneficial to their English learning, what was the students' motivation to do these activities, what kind of English they learnt through these activities, and what similarities and differences there were between the students (for example, girls and boys, high-achieving and low-achieving, and so on). Her

study utilised mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative, and her sample consisted of all of the 8th graders in one school in Finland. Linnakylä used a survey to gather an overall picture of how the 8th graders were using English and whether they thought they had learnt English informally, and sent it to all of the 8th grade students. She also conducted interviews that focused on the students' motivation to learn and use English in their free time (Linnakylä 2010:18-86).

Linnakylä's study shows that the students view watching English language films and TV shows, and listening to music as the most beneficial activities to their language learning. In regards to real-life practices, travelling abroad and talking to foreign people are also found useful, and the students say they have learnt English the most by listening to spoken or sang English. The survey shows girls learning more English through their out-of-school activities than boys, and boys learning more English by playing online games than girls. One significant finding between high-achievers and low-achievers is that those students who achieve high marks in English read more in their free time than those students who get low marks. In conclusion, the students favour spoken language over written text, and rate the most enjoyable activities as the same ones that they feel contribute the most to their English learning (Linnakylä 2010:18-86).

Plavšić and Dicović's (2015) study shows that familiarity with formal, non-formal and informal learning means more positive attitudes towards the learning types. In regards to my study, this finding suggests that those students who do not feel there is a connection between learning English and, for example, watching TV shows, do not have enough information about informal learning. However, there can be other factors behind the reasons why students think that they do not learn English informally, awareness of the benefits of informal learning not being the only reason. Linnakylä's (2010) study reveals that enjoyable free time activities are perceived as the ones that are the most beneficial for learning English. Personal interest correlates with the motivation to pursue a specific activity, and therefore it can be argued that watching TV shows is a good way to learn English.

2.5   English teaching in Finland

Previously, the teaching of foreign languages started when students were in the third grade. This is still the practice in other parts of Finland, but from autumn 2018 onwards, all of the first graders in the Helsinki region will start studying their first foreign language, *A1-kieli* (Helsingin Kaupunki 2018). In autumn 2017, 79.5% of the third graders in the Helsinki region chose English as their first foreign language (Ibid). This makes English by far the most popular choice for the first foreign language.

The students in my study have all begun their English studies in the third grade. Therefore, during the time of the interviews, they have studied English from nine to twelve years. The Finnish National Agency for Education's "National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools" (2015:108) states that students' level of English (if chosen as the first foreign language, *A1-kieli*) should be on the level B2.1 in CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference). Thus, they should be able to interact, interpret texts, and produce their own texts in English independently and clearly.

3.   Material and methods

In this section I will talk about the methods I use in my study. I will describe the planning stage of collecting data, discuss my sample and the structure of the interviews, and finish with how the interviews were executed and transcribed. The main aim of my study is to answer these research questions:

1. How do upper secondary school students learn English in their free time?
2. What motivates upper secondary school students to do these activities and learn English in their free time?
3. What do the students think about the English at school compared to the English they use in their free time?

3.1   Planning

In order to understand how upper secondary school students learn English informally, I needed to know about the English related activities they engage in during their free time. I also wanted to know their opinions on English teaching in school, the reasons why they felt motivated to learn English outside of school, and whether there were similarities or differences between the type of English they use at school and in their free time.

At first, the method for the study needed to be determined. There are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches to conducting research (Dörnyei 2007: 24). A quantitative approach provides numerical data that can be analysed in statistical methods, whereas a qualitative approach provides open-ended and non-numerical data that can be analysed in non-statistical methods (Ibid). A mixed methods approach includes elements from both of these approaches (Ibid). I chose the qualitative method, because I wanted to interview the students, and my main focus was their opinions on using English in different environments. I considered using a mixed methods approach, but came to the conclusion that a qualitative method would be sufficient, since the scope of my study is not vast.

There are different methods of conducting an interview as well. I chose a qualitative semi-structured interview, in which there are some set questions, but they can be asked in any order and answered freely (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2014: 47). I felt this

was the best way to collect data, because I am mainly interested in the students'
opinions on English, and could not predict what they would answer nor where the
conversation might go during the interviews.

The benefit of a group interview is the vast amount of information that can be
collected from various informants at the same time (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2014:63).
The disadvantage of a group interview is that some participants may not show up,
and there can be a one or two people dominating the conversation (Ibid). Taking
these into consideration, I still chose the group interview due to having limited
amount of time, and because I did not need to have a specific amount of participants.
If some of them failed to show up, it would not affect my data collection. Also, if
there would be domination in the conversation, I could try to pose questions to
specific members of the group, therefore gathering equal amount of information
from each informant.

3.2   Sample

Typical sampling was used when selecting the participants for this study, so common
features of their experiences could be identified (Dörnyei 2007:128). The informants
are all students and enthusiastic users of English, so it was presumed their
experiences in using English would have some similar characteristics. I chose to
interview upper secondary school students instead of younger students, because
upper secondary school students are more proficient in English than lower secondary
school students. Additionally, upper secondary school students are either studying
for or have completer the English matriculation exam, which requires a certain
degree of immersion in the language. Therefore it can be presumed that upper
secondary school students use English in their free time, either for studying or in
other activities.

The school that my informants are studying in is one of the most prestigious schools
in Finland, with the required average grade for admission (in spring 2017) above 9.
This school was selected due to ease of access and already existing contacts.
Originally I had selected nine participants for the interviews, but one student from
the third group did not show up, so my total sample size narrowed down to eight
students. Age is not a variable in my study, so the students are aged 16-19 and have

completed a varying amount of English courses, from one course to having completed all of them. Social class is not a variable either, because the scope of my study is limited and other factors are focused on.

In previous studies, there has been a gender division that has shown boys as more active users of English in their free time, with higher English grades and better English skills than girls, and men studying more English in their free time and using more English at work than women (Linnakylä 2010; Uuskoski 2011; Leppänen et al. 2011). There are also differences in what type of video games girls and boys like to play, and what activities in general they prefer (Kinzie and Joseph 2008: 657; Linnakylä 2010:64). However, in my study, gender is not a variable, since I could not predict nor affect how many informants of each gender would want to take part, and the scope of my study did not allow me to measure multiple variables.

3.3.   Pre-interview stage

At first my supervisor contacted the upper secondary school teacher, and the teacher gave her students information about the study. Roughly 150 students were emailed the invitation to take part in the study, but it is unclear how many of those students read the email. The students were told to email me if they were interested in taking part in the study, and I got replies from about 20 of them. I then emailed the students short questionnaires in Finnish about their English use outside of school (see appendix 1) in order to find out who was suitable for the study. For example, two of the students did not qualify for the study because they used English at home with their parents and therefore it was not their second language.

After the students had filled in the questionnaire and sent it back to me, I divided the students into three groups, each group consisting of three students who had reported they engage in similar freetime activities, for example watching TV shows in English, or listening to podcasts in English. This was done according to the thematized interview style, meaning that the interview is focused on specific themes that are discussed (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2014:47-48). There were five set questions, but the students could also freely talk about relevant topics or similar experiences they might have had when using English in their free time.

I set up the interviews with the students by email, and arrived to the school on the set dates. The interviews were conducted in empty classrooms or the school library in order to get good sound quality and have privacy for the conversations. Before the interviews, the students signed an informed consent form, in which they declared they had understood what the interview data is used for and gave their permission to use it (see appendix 2).

3.4   Interviews

The interviews were conducted within a week's time in January 2018. The interviews varied in length, the shortest one being approximately twenty minutes, and the longest one being nearly forty-five minutes. I modelled the interview questions after Pilvi Kirppu's (2014) study on how upper secondary school students learn English from video games. I did this because our informants were the same age, and her study produced valid and reliable answers, so the questions were suitable for my informants as well. The interview questions used in this study are in appendix 3.

The interview language was Finnish. The interviews were semi-structured, so there were five set questions, and in each interview, some additional questions were posed as well. Letting the conversation flow is a key feature of a qualitative interview (Dörnyei 2007:140), which is why this interview structure was chosen. I also wanted to ensure natural speech, so the students could tell stories about particular events in their life which might have raised thoughts, feelings, or opinions about English or language use in general. The benefits of doing an interview are that people are usually comfortable with sharing information in the interview situation, and the interviewer can instantly direct the conversation and ask more in-depth questions if necessary (Ibid, 143). I used probes (defined by Dörnyei 2007: 138), asking for clarifications and more details about specific things the students mentioned. For example, when the students talked about how important it was to get points in English at school, I asked them whether they felt that they use English at school just to get the points, or whether they benefit from it in real life as well.

The first question I asked in the interview was the same as in the questionnaires the students had completed. I did this to prime the students for the topic we would

discuss and to get more comprehensive answers about their English use in their free time.

The second question was meant to get the students talk about whether they have noticed that their freetime activities, like watching TV shows, have helped them learn English, and if so, in what ways. Because all of my informants are active users of English, I expected them to have noticed a connection between using English in their free time and improving their skills.

The third question was posed so the students could compare the kind of English they use at school and the kind of English they use during their free time. I asked them to think about the similarities and differences between the Englishes, so I would get an idea of how they perceive the impact of the environment, whether formal or informal, on their learning.

With the fourth question, I wanted to know whether school English is beneficial for the students in their free time, or vice versa. The students could talk about which aspects of English they only learn in a specific environment and, like in question three, focus on the possible differences between school English and freetime English.

The fifth question was asked in order to get an overview of how well the students are doing at school. I would have wanted to compare how the students' English skills reflect on their grades, but no valid or reliable conclusions can be made from the students' perceptions of how they use English.

3.5   Post-interview stage

I transcribed the interviews using my computer's Windows Media Player. Due to time limitations in free trials, I did not download a proper transcription software. All of the interviews were of good quality, so there were almost no problems in hearing what was said, besides a few instances of coincidental speech. In my transcriptions I left out the pauses, hesitations, and other markers typically used in conversation analysis, since my main focus was on the topic and not the way things were said. After completing the transcriptions in Finnish, I picked out the parts I wanted to use

in this thesis and translated them into English. These were categorised based on which interview question they answered or what kind of information they provided regarding English use in general. Finally, I wrote down the results, which I will discuss in detail in the following chapter.

3.6   Limitations of the study

Dörnyei (2007) lists quality criteria for qualitative research, in terms of its validity and reliability. A qualitative study is subjective, because the interpretation of the data depends solely on the researcher. Furthermore, the quality of the analysis depends on the quality of the data, and whether the data can be considered interesting is another question entirely, one that cannot be answered since there are no guidelines for analysing sets of complex meanings. Since the researcher is the instrument of data collection, the researcher's skills determine the quality of the study as well (Dörnyei 2007: 54-55). Being aware of the limitations, I recorded the interviews so my data would be transparent, and therefore subject to other people's interpretations as well. This increases the validity of the study, because the reasoning behind my findings is visible to all.

The qualitative method used is based on the thematized semi-structured interview model, as defined by Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2014:47-48). The weaknesses of these interviews are that they take time, require social skills from the interviewer, and because there is no anonymity, the informants may present themselves in a better light than they normally are (Dörnyei 2007: 144). The informants can also talk too much or not enough, being overly sharing or too shy (Ibid). The amount of speech the students produced varied tremendously, and there could have been group pressure to answer in a certain way, especially during interview sessions one and three, when all of the participants seemed to know each other. In interview two, one student openly said they disagree with the others as they presented their opinion, which suggests there was less group pressure during this interview.

No generalisations can be made based on my study alone. My sample consists of eight enthusiastic English speakers from one school only, so these results can be applied to this school during this time, but they do not cover the opinions or experiences of a larger population. Some of my findings, however, agree with the

findings of previous studies (these will be discussed in sections 4.1 to 4.6). The emergence of similar themes in different environments and at different times indicates that the issues present in my study are also present in other contexts.

4.   Results and discussion

In the following section, I will discuss the answers I got for each planned question, as well as the additional questions. I have only included the answers which provide information about the students' English use in their free time, or their thoughts about it, leaving out the parts which do not directly relate to the topic. All of the examples can be found in appendix 4.

4.1   Situations outside of school

The first question *In what situations do you use English outside of school?* received answers similar to those that the students had emailed me.

Example 1:   (S1): "at work, in customer service, listening to music, watching TV shows and films in English, talking with foreign friends" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Seven out of the eight students, including student one, say they watch TV shows or films on Netflix, which makes it the most popular English-related free time activity. The students might favour this activity due to ease of access, since Netflix has a large variety of TV shows and films. Because watching TV shows or films is enjoyable, the students' personal interest can affect how much they engage with this activity, as stated by Linnakylä (2010:100) and Peters and Webb (2018: 7-24).

Example 2:   (S3): "watching TV shows in English, reading in English, talking with friends and relatives in English" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Six out of the eight students, student three included, speak English in their day-to-day life with non-Finnish speakers, either with friends, family, or at work. Four out of the eight people listen to music in English. Only two people listen to podcasts in English or read in English, which means listening to podcasts and reading are the least popular English-related free time activities. Linnakylä (2010:66) and MacLeod and Larsen (2011:24) found that students are aurally exposed to English the most, meaning that they listen to spoken or sung English. It seems that the students in this study favour spoken English more than sung English. Linnakylä (2010:66) and Uuskoski (2011:46) also suggest that print reading during one's free time positively

correlates with getting high grades, but most of the students in my study do not favour this activity.

Example 3: (S4): "browsing social media, watching Netflix without subtitles, messaging with my (Finnish-speaking) mum in English" (Interview, 19.1.2018)

Student four says they speak with their Finnish-speaking mother in English. If student four's mother tongue is Finnish and this applies to their mother as well, English is not necessary for communication, but chosen for other reasons. For example, both student four and their mother might want to practice English, or use it just for fun. Overall, English outside of the school environment is present in the students' lives when they watch TV or films and interact with friends, family, or their partners.

4.2 Connection between free time activities and learning

For the second question *Do you feel that these activities and English learning have a connection? What kind of a connection?* the answers are mostly unanimous. All of the students agree that by using English in their free time they improve their language skills. The activities they list as the most useful for improving their skills are listening to English in their day-to-day life, talking with other people, or watching TV shows. As established in section 4.1, these are also the activities that the students do the most, which agrees with Linnakylä's (2010:77) findings. It could also be that most of the students are aware of the benefits of using English in an informal situation, and therefore engage in these activities outside of school (see Plavšić and Dicović 2015: 79-86). The link between watching TV shows and learning English vocabulary is further discussed in section 4.6.1.

Example 4: (S2): "you get more self-confidence to use the language, and you don't wonder if you can say something or not say something, it doesn't matter if you say something totally cuckoo sometimes" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student two emphasises the self-confidence they get when using English in their free time, as they feel that they do not have to say everything correctly all the time. This contrasts with how they speak of school English, saying that in class they have to try

to get everything right to get points. Student two indicates that they are more relaxed when using English outside of school than inside of school. As Krashen (1981: 115-116) discusses, when there are more opportunities for intake in the informal environment, it is better for acquiring the language than a formal environment.

Example 5:   (S5): "well I'd say that when my second cousin stayed at our place for one summer, and we only spoke English, I'd say you learn a lot more by speaking than what you learn in social media or just by reading or listening [to music or podcasts]..." (Interview, 19.1.2018)

Student five does not see a connection between watching TV shows and learning English, but agrees that speaking with a native English speaker during their free time has helped improve their English skills. They might not be aware of how social media, and reading and listening to English can help with improving their language skills (see Plavšić and Dicović 2015: 79-86), or they have noticed that communicating with someone in real life has a larger impact on their English skills than other activities, such as asynchronous interaction online, or activities including no interaction at all.

Example 6:   (S7): "yeah, I can say right now that my English skills do not come from what I learnt at school. In primary school I was really bad at English, and then at sixth grade I remember there was this book, they didn't translate the sequels in Finnish and I still wanted to read it, so I started to read it in English, and it was only after that that my English skills started to develop" (Interview, 23.1.2018)

Student seven explicitly states that they have learnt more English during their free time than at school, and that when used outside of school, their English becomes more fluent and their vocabulary grows with different words than what they have learnt at school. This suggests that student seven does not feel they learn adequate amount of English or the right kind of English at school. However, no conclusions can be made about whether this is due to the student's own attitude or the teacher's teaching methods, or another factor entirely.

There are multiple activities in which the students use English in their free time. Most of the students have noticed that they learn vocabulary or sayings from these activities, which indicates that they are aware of the benefits of informal learning, or accidentally learn in the informal situations (see Marcia Conner 1997-2013). The motivation behind the students' engagement in the activities seems to be personal interest.

4.3   English at school vs outside of school

The third question *How would you compare the English you use at school, and the English you use during your free time?* was asked to reveal similarities or differences between the environments in which the students use the language.

Example 7:   (S1): "[the English] you use during your free time is, well, free, and you don't fixate on grammar and punctuation that much, and you might use words that you shouldn't use at school… and if you write, you write abbreviations and use spoken language that at school you would not get points for, so it's really free and if you don't remember something, you can explain it in other words, whereas in school you have to remember [it], otherwise you get no points, so it's much easier to use [English] in your free time" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Almost all of the students, as exemplified by student one, say that school English focuses on points and grades and matriculation exams. Two students even say that they have not learnt enough English or the right kind of English at school.

Example 8:   (S2): "... at school you get more sophisticated words and words that enrich your English vocabulary in a different way" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student two views some aspects of school English positively, saying that they have learnt vocabulary items that differ from those they learn during their free time.

Example 9:   (S3): "and maybe the English you use at school is not the English that you use during your free time, but like for example when you go to work, you need to use more academic English… in speech, I can use prepositions

however I like and it's not that big of a deal, but if you write incorrectly, then you lose points" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student three mentions that there is a difference between school English and free time English, but that both of these Englishes are useful. However, they also point out that school English is all about points, not about whether the communication is successful. According to both student one and student three, free time English can include grammar mistakes, but no one minds.

The most striking finding is how the students feel that the English they use during their free time is very different from the English they use at school. They say that no one corrects their mistakes in their free time, their English is "not as restricted as in school", and they do not focus on grammar and punctuation as much as in school. The students also say that they learn a different kind of vocabulary during their free time than at school. The environment therefore plays a big part in how the students perceive English, and what they use the language for.

4.3.1   Preferred environment for using English

In relation to the question about comparing school English and free time English, I asked the students which environment they like to use English in, and what it is like.

Example 10:   (S1): "I'd like to use more English at school, because I use it in my free time so much, and I've noticed that during English classes the teacher doesn't speak just English to the students… but then the students still answer in Finnish…" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student one says they would like to speak more English at school. They continue by describing the situation in class, how the teacher does not always speak English to the students, and the students reply in Finnish, even if the teacher has asked a question in English. The language used in the English classroom will be further discussed in section 4.6.3.

Example 11:   (S2): "I also like to speak more English during my free time, because it's

free and relaxing, whereas during class there's an exercise with specific sentences and you have to translate them exactly, so I'd rather do exercises where I could freely talk about my holiday… that would be more fun" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student two prefers using English in their free time, because they feel that in class the exercises are strictly instructed to produce specific answers. They say they would prefer exercises that allow for free talk, implying that they have not had a chance to do these kinds of exercises frequently.

Example 12:   (S3): "... during my free-time I don't come across situations where I'd have to translate a lot, I just talk to people who don't understand Finnish… I think it's more pleasant" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student three mentions that they do not need to translate much from Finnish to English or vice versa, which implies that they feel these kind of tasks in the school environment are not pleasant. This might also indicate that they do not see translation skills as necessary in real life as some other aspects of using English.

The answers in general show that the students prefer to use English during their free time and feel more positive about using English outside of school. They describe it as free, relaxing, fun, pleasant, real, not completely correct, fast, and easy. In comparison, English use at school is described as boring, restricting, high-level (proficiency expected), fancy, and complicated. These results agree with Tarja Fagerlund's (2012: 124) findings on students' informal learning of English, as her informants also felt mostly positively about learning English outside of school, and felt the learning process had been easy and natural. The concerning aspect of these findings is how students indicate they are more open to learning and using English outside of school than inside of school. If students lose all motivation to learn inside the school, something needs to change and teaching methods should be revised.

4.4   Things learnt only at school vs only outside of school

The fourth question posed was *Are there some things you only learn at school or only outside of school?* and the aim was to get the students compare the English they

use at school to the English they use in their free time. This question overlaps with question three, but provides more detailed discussion on specific things taught at school or learnt during their free time.

Example 13:   (S4): "if you use English outside of school, you learn a different kind of language, like contemporary English, sayings and… young people's English, you learn that from social media" (Interview, 19.1.2018)

Student four describes free time English as different from school English, which agrees with the answers to the previous interview questions. Student four says free time English is modern and young people's English is learnt through social media, not at school. This indicates that school English is not up to date with the kind of language that student four would like to use, and therefore they use their free time to learn different expressions than those they are being taught at school.

Example 14:   (S1): "I think the only way to learn pronunciation is to speak… your teacher can of course give you examples, but the fluency when you trust yourself to use the language without it sounding like 'rally English' comes from speaking with native speakers or people who can give you those examples…" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student one feels that English can only be learnt by speaking. They argue that the only way to become fluent and confident in using the language comes from speaking with native English speakers, indicating that this speaking happens outside of the school environment. As for school English, most of the students agree that grammar is something they learn at school and that should be taught at school, because of its complexity.

Example 15:   (S2): "I also think that at school you... don't learn that it's okay to speak incorrectly sometimes, and the kind of relaxed speech is missing, I mean 'cause Finns don't speak Finnish correctly, so similarly at school there's the pressure that everything has to go right or the teacher will say 'you can't say it like that, the preposition is wrong!'..." (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student two agrees with student one, saying that at school there is pressure to use the language absolutely correctly. One student feels that conversational skills are not learnt at school. All of the students echo this, saying that it is during their free time that they learn to communicate and to not take it so seriously if they make mistakes. In the Finnish National Agency for Education's "National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools" (2015:109) it is stated that the students should "understand the significance of English and its role as the language of international communication"[1]. Evidently, this emphasis on international communication has not shown in the English teaching for these students, because they describe school English as focusing only on correct speech, not on getting the message across.

4.5   English grades

The fifth planned question was *What kind of grades have you got from your English courses?* and the informants' answers were simple, as they had got either nines or tens from their English courses in upper secondary school.

Example 16:   (S5): "I think I've gotten a ten from each course" (Interview, 19.1.2018)

Student five is a final year student, who says they have got a ten from every course in upper secondary school. Their answer represents most of the other answers as well, as three students had got all tens. Another three students had got both nines and tens, and two students had got all nines.

Example 17:   (S8): "I've had nines because I always turn in everything late, I think I've had one ten" (Interview, 23.1.2018)

Student eight explains their nines by saying they have submitted assignments late. Overall, all of the students had received high marks from their English courses.

As shown by Noora Vidgren (2014) and Anna Linnakylä (2010), getting good grades can correlate with actively using English outside of school. However, there can be other correlating factors as well. The nines, which are not the highest possible grades, can be explained by how the students describe school English very different

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[1] translation of the researcher

from the English they use during their free time. Their proficiency in the language does not necessarily reflect on their grades, as they feel that English classes are heavily focused on performance and not on using the language for communicating in the real world. However, it should be kept in mind that these conclusions are based on the students' perceptions of their English use, and therefore are not completely reliable or valid as results.

4.6 Additional questions

In this section I will cover the additional questions asked. Some of the questions slightly overlap with the set interview questions, which is why I have not done an in-depth analysis for each answer, only for the ones that provide new information related to my main topic, informal learning.

4.6.1 TV shows and English learning

Being a Netflix enthusiast myself, I was genuinely interested in hearing what the students' favourite TV shows were. The answers reveal that the students have mixed feelings about learning English by watching TV shows: some find watching TV shows useful, others do not think they learn anything by watching TV or watch just for fun.

Example 18:   (S2): "Orange is the New Black… you get expressions and ways to say
things [from OITNB], more fun ways to say things, not just expressions
from school books" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Here, student one contrasts the expressions they learn from TV shows with the expressions they learn at school, saying that expressions from *Orange is the New Black* are more fun than those in school books.

Example 19:   (S5): "I've never believed that watching TV shows helps with learning
English, maybe with understanding really fast native-like [speech]... but
maybe not otherwise" (Interview 19.1.2018)

Student five says they do not believe they have learnt much English by watching TV shows. Explicitly stating that TV shows are not useful for learning English indicates

that the student is not aware of how useful this activity can be for language acquisition (see Plavšić and Dicović 2015).

Example 20:   (S4): "I watch [How I Met Your Mother] more for fun than for learning English" (Interview, 19.1.2018)

Student four says they watch TV for fun, rather than for actively trying to better their English skills. This does not necessarily indicate unawareness of the benefits of informal learning, because it can be assumed that most people watch TV for fun (see Peters and Webb 2018; Linnakylä 2010). In fact, the learning type that student four might practice, being unaware of it, is accidental informal learning (see Marcia Conner 1997-2013).

4.6.2   Grading and points

I also wanted to clarify how the students feel about school English, and the emphasis on grading and points, by asking the following:

You talk a lot about points, so do you feel that whenever you use English at school you do it to get points, and you only study to pass a test, or do you feel that you benefit from it in your free time as well? Does the English you use at school prepare you for life, or only for the matriculation exams?

Example 21:   (S1): "I feel like it is for life, but in order for you to use it in your life, it feels like you need to get good points in exams so you can get good grades in your courses so you can excel in your matriculation exams so you can use it in life, so actually the effect it has in your life comes much later for us, after a few years… and I don't think you get enough credit for using English and being able to communicate in English, it is not taken into account in your course grade like whether or not you get those ten words in the word test correct" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student one heavily criticises the English teaching at school. They mention how at school only the points and grades matter, and the ability to communicate in English does not play a big part in the course grade.

Another student further emphasises student one's point, and argues that good grades and good English skills do not necessarily correlate. They give an example of their friend who excels in English at school, but finds it difficult to use the language in practice, whereas they themselves have no problem speaking English in a real-life situation, even if they have not got as high grades as their friend has.

Example 22:   (S5): "the school hasn't really figured out yet what kind of teaching we need, the level of our English skills is so high, but we just go more and more into detail about insignificant things and that's what they think learning is, and not practical use" (Interview, 19.1.2018)

Student five notes that overall the students' level of English skills is high, but the teaching they receive does not reach that level. Student five also says that school English focuses on trivial things, rather than on how to use English outside of school.

Example 24:   (S7): "it doesn't make sense that the matriculation exams get harder and harder each year, but the English teaching before the review course stays the same… if you just learnt English at school, and your language skills, your English skills wouldn't otherwise develop, then you wouldn't pass your matriculation exam, you just wouldn't, the exam so difficult nowadays" (Interview, 23.1.2018)

Student eight points out the inconsistency in making the matriculation exam more difficult each year, but not increasing the level of English teaching as well. They say that just by learning English at school it would not be possible to pass the matriculation exam, indicating that self-study outside of school is necessary. Overall, all of the students feel that there is a gap between what they are taught at school and the skills they need, either in the matriculation exams or in real life. Because many of the students feel that school English emphasises grades too heavily, it can be argued that school English does not prepare the students appropriately to use English outside of the classroom. That might also explain why students have gravitated towards using English in their free time, as they feel it is less restricted and focuses more on communication.

4.6.3 Language used in the English classroom

Comparing the English used at school and the English used outside of school sparked a conversation about how much English a teacher should speak. I asked whether the students would like it if during their English classes the teacher spoke only in English.

Example 24:   (S1): "yeah, I mean if you have a question about grammar, then I think it's okay to ask in Finnish, because I get it that some of the grammar stuff can be hard, but then again it would also help you to learn that vocabulary in English, because your brain doesn't switch the language, and it's psychologically tested that… if you can ask questions in the target language and otherwise explain words… then it reinforces learning and you can get better results faster" (Interview, 16.1.2018)

Student one says that it is okay to ask questions in Finnish in the English classroom, if the topic is difficult. However, they believe it would be beneficial to learn the challenging vocabulary in English as well, and explains this by referring to psychology and researched tactics for better learning.

Example 25:   (S5): "I'm not quite sure if it would be smart, because then those who are not so proficient in English would feel excluded when they don't understand, and I'm not sure if that's the goal in teaching, I feel that those who are fluent speakers [of English] have already met the goal that teaching has" (Interview, 19.1.2018)

In a previous study by Fraser MacLeod and Pia Larsson (2011:35), the students felt that they did not have enough opportunities to speak in class, and that the English spoken in the classroom was not relevant. These results are similar to the ones in my study, as two of the students feel that more English should be used in the classroom, with one saying that nearly everything should be said in English. There is one other student who completely disagrees, saying that using only English would not be fair to those less proficient in the language, and it would also be pointless, because advanced students have already met the teaching goals. The topic clearly divides the students' opinions, and it might also relate to how much they know about teaching and learning in a language classroom (see Plavšić and Dicović 2015).

4.6.4 Subtitles

I wanted to know if the students thought it was easy to start watching TV shows in English, or if it was difficult, and whether they think a certain amount of knowledge in English is needed before starting to watch content in English (without Finnish subtitles). I also asked whether they think a child would understand the language at any point if they started watching content in English.

Example 26:   (S1): "... I remember when I was seven... I just started watching things like makeup tutorials in English, and some Americans there said things like 'now I'm putting on mascara' and I googled 'mascara' to find out what it is in Finnish... even now when I'm watching other things, if there's a word I don't know and it's repeated many times in the show, it starts to bother me so I google it. I guess you need to know some English before being able to watch shows, especially without subtitles, but on the other hand there's the picture, and people put together the tone of voice with the picture, so..." (Interview, 16.1.2018)

It can be assumed that student one is interested in how to do makeup, which has led them to watch makeup videos. Interest in the content helps with learning second language vocabulary items, as well as authentic language and dramatic performance in the videos (Wang 2012). Student one also says that some knowledge of English is needed before being able to watch English language TV shows, but mentions the importance of other elements present during viewing, such as the picture and the tone of voice. These elements, as well as subtitles, help the viewer to acquire vocabulary items, as proven by Wang (2012).

One of the students says that some knowledge of English is needed before being able to watch shows without subtitles. Another student says that they learnt English through watching English TV shows with Finnish subtitles. One student says that reading the subtitles in Finnish and listening to the voices in English at the same time might be beneficial for children trying to acquire a second language. They all agree that it might be difficult at first, and that either subtitles or some knowledge of English is needed before starting to watch English-only content.

Outside of these rather neutral statements, the students had strong opinions on subtitles. Three of the students find subtitles annoying, two students think that words are translated in a weird way, and one student finds subtitles confusing, since they are bilingual in Finnish and Swedish. Another three students do not use subtitles at all, and one of these three does not pay attention to the subtitles even if they are on.

Example 27:   (S4): "... if you're put into that situation in real life, like for example if you spend a year abroad, or something like that, and your only choice is to speak English, then [your English] is on a whole different level than just by learning it at school, or putting Finnish subtitles on a TV show." (Interview, 19.1.2018)

Student four thinks that English is learnt better by having a conversation with people in real life, than at school. They also indicate that Finnish subtitles do not help with improving English skills as much as speaking with people does.

As for positive mentions, one student says their parents like subtitles because they like having time to read them in Finnish, and another student thinks that having subtitles on helps if people start watching a show in English and the speech goes too fast or is otherwise hard to understand. A general consensus seems to be that once a certain level on English has been achieved, subtitles are unnecessary or distracting. It is intriguing how subtitles divide opinions, because previous research has proven that using subtitles can help with vocabulary acquisition and language learning. The reason for why some students find subtitles annoying might be due to their high level of English and the need to challenge themselves further, but evidently they have not considered that subtitles can be helpful, even when fluency in English is achieved.

5.   Conclusion

In this thesis, I have looked at the ways in which upper secondary school students use English informally, and their views on using and learning English in different environments. The aim of the study was to answer these research questions:

1. How do upper secondary school students use English in their free time?
2. What motivates upper secondary school students to do these activities and use English in their free time?
3. What do the students think about the English at school compared to the English they use in their free time?

The results are not generalisable, because they only represent the views of eight students, all from one upper secondary school in the Helsinki area. The answers to my research questions show that English is mostly used and learnt while watching TV, or speaking with friends, partners, or relatives. The motivation to engage in these activities seems to be personal interest. Using English outside of school is described as fun, free, and relaxing (among other things), whereas the English used at school is described as boring, restricting and complicated (among other things). There is a divide between the attitudes to English in different environments, with the informal environment getting positive descriptions, and the formal school environment getting mostly negative comments.

English teaching is criticised by nearly all of the students. The students think the level of teaching does not correspond with the requirements for the English matriculation exam, and they feel they have not learnt as much English as they should have. Overall the students think English classes are too easy, and there is not enough emphasis on using English outside of school by speaking with other people. The Finnish National Agency for Education's "National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools" (2015) emphasises the role of English "as the language of international communication"[2], but evidently this emphasis on communication has not shown in the English teaching for these students. In the future, English teaching

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[2] translation of the researcher

in upper secondary schools should better match the level of proficiency that the matriculation exam requires, and it could also better provide tools for communicative situations in real life.

Future studies on informal learning could investigate how the students' grades correlate with their free time English use. Lessons could be video recorded, and the teacher's teaching methods as well as the students' participation could be analysed, which would help with establishing the reasons for why the students feel they are not being taught the right things. A mixed methods study with a larger sample could be conducted, so some generalisations could be made based on the results. If more time consuming studies can be conducted, it would also be interesting to do a longitudinal study on how watching TV shows and having conversations in English correlates with informal learning throughout a person's life.

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Appendix 1

All of the English translations are done by the researcher. The informants received the material in Finnish.

<u>Questionnaire about English use (original Finnish version)</u>

- Minkä ikäinen olet?
- Millä vuosikurssilla olet?
- Kuinka monta englannin kurssia olet lukiossa suorittanut (kpl)?
- Kerro lyhyesti tilanteista, joissa käytät englantia koulun ulkopuolella (esim. "pelaan englanninkielisiä tietokonepelejä 10 tuntia viikossa", "katson englanninkielisiä tv-sarjoja ilman tekstejä/englanninkielisillä teksteillä 5 tuntia viikossa", jne)

<u>Translated English version</u>

- How old are you?
- What year of study are you in?
- How many English courses have you completed in upper secondary school?
- Briefly tell about situations in which you use English outside of school (e.g. "I play computer games in English 10 hours per week", "I watch English language TV shows without subtitles/with English subtitles 5 hours per week", etc)

Appendix 2

Informed consent form (Original Finnish version)

LUPA HAASTATTELUAINEISTON KÄYTTÖÖN TUTKIMUS- JA
KOULUTUSTARKOITUKSIIN

Tutkimme englannin kielen oppimista luokan ulkopuolisissa tilanteissa. Haastattelu
tallennetaan digitaalisesti. Projektin tutkijat ja opinnäytetöiden tekijät analysoivat
haastattelut ja esittelevät tuloksia seminaari-istunnoissa ja tieteellisissä
konferensseissa Suomessa ja ulkomailla sekä julkaisuissa. Materiaalia voidaan myös
käyttää opetus- ja koulutustilaisuuksissa. Suorituksia käytetään nimettöminä siten,
että haastateltavat eivät ole tunnistettavissa.

Pyydämme lupaa käyttää haastatteluasi edellä kuvailtuihin tarkoituksiin.

Kiitos!

_____

_____

Annan suostumukseni siihen, että haastatteluani voidaan käyttää aineistona
englannin kielen oppimista luokan ulkopuolella käsitteleviin tutkimusjulkaisuihin,
tiedeyhteisön sisäisissä tilaisuuksissa sekä opetus- ja koulutustilaisuuksissa.

Paikka ja aika

_____   ___/___20___

Allekirjoitus ja nimenselvennys

_____

Translated English version

PERMISSION TO USE INTERVIEW MATERIAL FOR RESEARCH AND
EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

We are investigating English learning in out-of-school environments. The interview
will be digitally recorded. The researchers and Master's students will analyse the
interviews and present the results in seminars and scientific conferences in Finland
and abroad as well as in publications. The material can also be used in educational
and training events. The material will be anonymous, so none of the informants can
be recognised.

We ask for permission to use your interview for the above mentioned purposes.

Thank you!

_____
_____

I give permission to use my interview as material for scientific publications
discussing English learning in out-of-school environments, for community internal
events, and for educational and training purposes.

Place and date

_____   ___/___20___

Signature and print name

_____

Appendix 3

<u>Interview questions (original Finnish version)</u>

1. Missä tilanteissa käytätte Englantia koulun ulkopuolella?
2. Koetteko, että näillä aktiviteeteilla ja englannin oppimisella on yhteys? Millainen?
3. Miten vertailisitte koulussa käyttämäänne englantia, ja vapaa-ajalla käyttämäänne englantia?
4. Auttaako koulussa opittu englanti teitä käyttämään englantia vapaa-ajalla, tai päinvastoin? Onko jotain mitä oppii vain koulussa tai vain vapaa-ajalla?
5. MIllaisia arvosanoja olette saaneet englannin kursseilta?

<u>Translated English version</u>

1. In what situations do you use English outside of school?
2. Do you feel that these activities and English learning have a connection? What kind of a connection?
3. How would you compare the English you use at school, and the English you use during your free time?
4. Does the English you learn at school help you with using English in your free time, or the other way around? Are there some things you only learn at school or only outside of school?
5. What kind of grades have you got from your English courses?

Appendix 4

Examples (original Finnish versions)

4.1

1. (S1): "Töissä, asiakaspalvelutyössä… ja sitten kuuntelee musiikkia periaattees vaan englanniks, ja kattoo just sarjoja englanniks ja leffoja ja mitäs muuta… ja puhuu ulkomaisten kavereitten kaa"

2. (S3): "joo ja mul on pääosin sillai et jos mä katon ja luen ja kuuntelen englantia niinku sarjojen ja kirjojen kautta, ja sit mul on öö paljon niinku englanninkielisiä kavereita nii mä puhun niitten kaa, ja sit mul on myös sukulaisia jotka niinku, ainoo yhteinen kieli on niinku englanti"

3. (S4): "joo, no tota, mä käytän esimerkiks, jos niinku selaa sosiaalista mediaa nii sielt aina joka päivä tulee puhelimella selattuu sitä, nii sitte siellä esimerkiks just instagramis… nii siel tulee englantii vastaan, ja sit netflixissä, nii siel mä en käytä tekstityksii ollenkaan, et mä niinku kuuntelen sen vaa englanniks, tai sit jos se on jotenki hankalampi nii sit mä pistän siihen englanninkieliset tekstitykset, ja sitte kans, mä joskus, tai yleensä siis aina melkee laitan äidin kaa niinku englanniks tektiviestit"

4.2

4. (S2): "... nimenomaan siihen kielenkäyttöön nii saa sellast itsevarmuutta ja sellasta et ei mieti koko ajan et voiks mä nyt sanoo näin vaa sanoo, ja sit se ei niinku haittaa et jos sanoo välillä jotai ihan kukkua"

5. (S5): "öö mä sanoisin et tota ku mun pikkuserkku asu meillä armeijan ja sen jälkeen sit muutaman vuoden viel ja sit ku se puhu vaa - ku me puhuttiin vaan enkkuu, nii kyl mä sanoisin et siit oppii paljon enemmän ku sit mitä se oikeestaa se sosiaalinen media ja muutenki tollanen kuunteleminen ja lukeminen"

6. (S7): "mun kielitaito ei ainakaa tuu koulust tunneilt, niinku ihan voin sillee rehellisesti sanoo et ei tuu sielt, tai et mä olin ala-asteel, ku englanti alko mä olin tosi huono, siis todella huono, sit mä kutosel, mä muistan et yhest kirjast minkä mä luin, nii sen kak - tai niinku jatko-osii ei enää suomennettu, ku se ei ollu tarpeeks suosittu, nii sit mä halusin kuitenki lukee sitä nii sit mä aloin lukee englanniks, kutosel, et vast sen jälkeen mun kielitaito alko kehittyy"

4.3

7. (S1): "kylhän se mitä vapaa-ajalla käyttää se on tosi… vapaata tavallaan, et siinä ei niinku just viilaa sitä pilkkua samal tavalla ja ehkä käyttää sanoja mitä ei pitäisi koulussa käyttää, ja... just niinku vaik jos kirjottaa nii kirjottaa lyhenteitä ja kirjottaa tiekkö niinku puhekieltä mikä ei koulus todellakaa et siitä ei sais pisteitä… koulussa sun on pakko muistaa tai sit se on piste tai ei pistettä, nii se on eri asia, et kyl niinku vapaa-ajalla se on paljo helpompi käyttää mun mielestä"

8. (S2): "kouluenkus tulee sit sellasii sivistyssanoi ehk enemmän ja sellasii niinku.. niinku sellasii jotka monipuolistaa sitä englannin kieltä sit eri tavalla"

9. (S3): "ja ehk koulus opittava enkku on ehk sitä enkkuu mitä käytetää sit niinku, esim, tai niinku ei sillai niinku vapaa-ajalla, et jos menee vaik johonki työhön jos tarvitaan englantia, niin sit tavallaa pitää vähä käyttää niinku akateemisempaa"

4.3.1

10. (S1): "et ku vapaa-ajalla käyttää niin paljon nii ois kiva et kouluski sais käyttää, ja sit ku nyt mitä huomaa nii esim mun englannintunneilla ei me pu - ei niinku opettaja ei puhu oppilaille pelkästään enkuks, tottakai no, yrittää mahollisimman paljon, mut et oppilaatki, ne vastaa aina suomeks"

11. (S2): "siis mäki puhun viel enemmän - tai siis 'enemmän mielellään'… niin englantii vapaa-ajalla, koska se on just sellast vapaamuotosta, ja sellast et, se on just sellast rentoo, et, et jos on tunnilla joku puhe-pariharjotus niin siin on että mä saan nyt tällaset lauseet et sun pitää nyt kääntää nämä kyseiset lauseet niinku just sillee tarkkaan englanniksi, niin mä mieluummin tekisin sellasii tehtävii et mä kerron sillee et mitä mä oon tehny mun lomalla… nii sellanen olis mun mielestä paljon hyödyllisempää"

12. (S3): "vapaa-ajalla niinku, tai mä en - mulle ei ainakaan tuu sellasia tilanteita et pitäs kääntää kauheesti, et mä vaa puhun semmosten kaa jotka niinku ei ymmärrä suomee… nii se on miellyttävämpää mun mielestä"

4.4

13. (S4): "pelkästään se et käyttää koulun ulkopuolella niin oppii sellasta niinku erilaist, esimerkiks vähä niinku sellast nykykieltä englannista, ja semmosii - sellasii sanontoja… sit sellast niinku nykykieltä, esimerkiks nuorten kieltä oppii just sosiaalisest mediasta"

14. (S1): "S1: no ääntämisen mun mielestä oppii vaan ku puhuu… opettaja voi antaa esimerkkejä, mut kuitenki semmonen sujuvuus, ja semmonen niinku just et sä luotat siihen mitä sä teet ja se ei kuulosta semmoselta rallienglannilta mitä suomalaisilla välillä kuulostaa, nii se on ehkä se et sun pitää olla joko niitten natiivien kaa tai sit ihmisten jotka pystyy niinku oikeesti antaa sulle esimerkkejä"

15. (S2): "S2: joo et kyl mä oon kans sitä mieltä et, et koulussa ei välttämättä opi sitä… sellasta et se on niinku ihan fine puhuu välil väärin, et siis puuttuu se tavallaan se rentous, et eihän suomalaisetkaan puhu suomee oikein, nii saman tyyppisesti, et koulus ehkä enemmän se paine sit niinku et sen pitää mennä just oikein, ja sit opettaja on sillee "joo et sä voi sanoo noin, että se prepositio meni väärin!""

4.5

16. (S5): "S5: kymppi taitaa olla jokasesta [englannin kurssista]"
17. (S7): "mul on ysii ku mä palautin aina kaikki jutut myöhässä, on mul kai yks kymppi…"

4.6.1

18. (S2): "sit Orange is the New Black, ihan parhait, varsinki sielt saa just sellasii erilaisii ilmauksii ja tapoi sanoo jotai juttuja, sellasii vähä hauskempii tapoi et ei oo just aina niitä oppikirjan mukasii"
19. (S5): "en mä oo ainakaa ikin kokenu et niinku sarjojen kattominen tai leffojen kattominen sillee auttais, muuta ku sitä ymmärrystä ehkä vähä, jos on, puhutaan vaik tosi natiivin kaltasesta ja nopeesta [puheesta]… mut ei nyt ehkä muuten"
20. (S4): "enemmän mä katon sitä [How I Met Your Motheria] huvin vuoks ku sen takii et mä oppisin englantii siitä"

4.6.2

21. (S1): "must tuntuu et se on kyl elämää varten, mutta, jotta sä pääset elämää varten käyttämään englantia, nii jotenki ehkä se tuntuu siltä et sun täytyy kokeissa saada hyvii numeroita, että sä saat kursseista hyvii numeroita, et sä voit pärjätä yo-kokeissa, että sä voit käyttää sitä elämässä, eli se elämäs se vaikutus tulee oikeesti tosi myöhään, se tulee meille vasta jonkun muutaman vuoden päästä… ja siitä ei saa niinku tarpeeks mun mielestä ainakaan credittii koulussa, et siit et jos sä pärjäät just

hyvin, sä pystyt puhumaan sujuvasti, sä pystyt kommunikoimaan englanniks, sitä ei oteta samalla tavalla huomioon sun numerossa ku sitä et sä saat ne kaikki sanakokeen kymmenen sanaa täysin oikein"

22. (S5): "koulu ei oo pystyny viel sopeutuu siihen et millaseks se opetus pitäis tehä, et se on enemmän sitä et sit mennää sinne niinku viel pikkutarkemmaks ja pikkutarkemmaks ne - niitten pisteitten osalta ja sit se on niinku sitä osaamista, eikä sit sellanen käytännön"

23. (S7): "must ei oo kyl mitään järkee et ylppärit vaikenee koko ajan vuosi vuodelt, ja enkunopetus on niinku ennen tätä abikurssii nii ihan samaa tasoo… et jos miettis et oppii kieltä sillee oikeesti vaan tunneil, et kielitaito - et enkuntaito ei kehittyis muuten, nii ei ylppäreis pärjäis sillä et mitä tunneil oppis, nii todellakaa, koska se koe on kuitenki sen verran vaikee nykyään"

4.6.3

24. (S1): "joo, tai siis et jos tulee joku kysymys kieliopissa nii saa mun mielestä kysyy suomeks, jos ei osaa vaik kielioppii - mä ymmärrän et osa termeistä voi olla hankalia, mut muuten mun mielestä seki et sä opit ne kielioppitermit englanniks ku sä opettelet sen asian, nii se syventää, tai sun aivot ei tiekkö vaiha sitä kieltä, koska sehän on psykologisesti testattu että… jos se pysyy samana kielenä nii jos sä et ymmärrä sä voit kysyä englanniks… ja sillon se niinku oppiminen vahvistuu, ja sillon voi saada nopeemmin parempii tuloksii"

25. (S5): "mä en oo ehkä ihan varma siitä et oisko se järkevää sit et suljetaan tavallaan osa porukasta pois jos ne ei ymmärrä, et onks se kuitenkaa se tavote siinä opettamisessa… ne jotka sit osaa puhuu paremmin niin ne on todennäkösesti saavuttanu jo sen tavotteen mikä sil opetuksella on"

4.6.4

26. (S1): "S1: mä muistan ku mä olin 7-vuotias… mä aloin siis kattoo ihan niinku jotai meikkitutoriaalei englanniks, jotku britti - jotku amerikkalaiset siellä nonii "now I'm putting on mascara", sit mä olin sillee okei nonii "mascara" sit mä googlasin "aa, ripsari"… välil jos ei tiedä et jos katotaa jotai Game of Thronesii mis on jotai iha hulabaloo- sanoja, nii tottakai mä niinku googlaan ne… mut kai siin nyt jotai pitää osata ku alkaa kattoo sarjaa, varsinki jos kattoo ilman mitään tekstityksiä, mut

toisaalt siinä on kuva, ihminen yhdistää kuvan helposti siihen niinku äänensävyyn ja tälleen..."

27. (S4): "jos sut tuupataan niinku oikeessa elämässä, just vaik, jos sä lähet vaihtoon tai jotain vastaavaa, ja sul on niinku ainoo mahollisuus vaan puhuu englantii, niin sillon se on niinku ihan eri tasolla ku se et sä opettelet sitä koulussa, tai sulla on mahollisuus laittaa vaikka ohjelmaan suomenkieliset tekstit..."