

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO

# Impoliteness in the EFL Classroom

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Typical features and teachers' strategies

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<p>Tässä tutkielmassa tarkastellaan kieliluokkahuoneissa tapahtuvaa epäkohteliaisuutta ja sen piirteitä. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, millaisia epäkohteliaisuuden muotoja luokkahuonekontekstissa ilmenee ja millaisia strategioita suomalaiset englannin opettajat hyödyntävät reagoidessaan epäkohteliaisuuteen. Samalla tutkimus kartoittaa opettajien asenteita ja havaintoja epäkohteliaisuuteen ja siihen suhtautumiseen liittyen. Tutkimuksen aineistona toimii kaksitoista nauhoitettua englannin oppituntia ja neljä opettajahaastattelua. Aineisto on kerätty Helsingin alueella sijaitsevassa yläkoulussa syksyllä 2018.</p> <p>Oppituntiaineistosta löydettyjä epäkohteliaisuusesimerkkejä ja opettajien hyödyntämiä reagointimenetelmiä on analyysissa vertailtu kvalitatiivisesti haastatteluaineistossa esitettyihin havaintoihin epäkohteliaisuuden ilmenemisestä ja siihen puuttumisesta. Epäkohteliaisuuden tunnistamisessa on hyödynnetty Culpeperin (2010) teoriaa epäkohteliaisuuden vakiintumisesta kieleen ja Mugfordin (2008) kategorisointia epäkohteliaisuuden tyypeistä. Epäkohteliaisuuden esiintymisen syiden pohdinnassa on hyödynnetty tietoa opettajan ja oppilaiden välisistä valtasuhteista ja löydettyjä epäkohteliaisuustekoja on pyritty tarkastelemaan epäkohteliaisuuden käyttäjän ja kohteen välistä suhdetta vasten. Opettajien käyttämiä strategioita on jaoteltu epäkohteliaisuutta salliviin, torjuviin ja sivuuttaviin suhtautumistapoihin.</p> <p>Oppituntiaineiston analyysissa esiin nousevat erityisesti tilanteinen ja kohdistumaton epäkohteliaisuus. Epäkohteliaisuutta hyödynnetään myös oppilaan vallankäytön välineenä suhteessa opettajaan ja sen avulla määritellään asemaa vertaisryhmässä. Oppilaslähtöiseen epäkohteliaisuuteen nähden opettajat ilmaisevat epäkohteliaisuutta harvoin. Haastatteluvastauksissa raportoidut kokemukset vastaavat pitkälti oppituntiaineiston analyysin tuloksia, mutta opettajien kokemuksissa opettajiin kohdistuva epäkohteliaisuus korostuu suhteessa sen ilmenemisen yleisyyteen oppitunneilla.</p> <p>Samoin opettajien oppitunneilla hyödyntämät reagointimenetelmät ja haastatteluvastaukset eroavat toisistaan. Opettajat raportoivat vastauksissaan lähinnä torjuvia suhtautumistapoja, mutta luokkahuoneaineistossa opettajat käyttävät sivuuttavia strategioita lähes yhtä usein kuin torjuvia. Opettajat eivät myöskään haastatteluissa mainitse opettajalähtöistä epäkohteliaisuutta miltei lainkaan. Opettajien käsityksillä sekä epäkohteliaisuudesta että omasta roolistaan opettajana voi olla vaikutusta näiden erojen ilmenemiseen. Raportoidut kokemukset ja käsitykset myös paljastavat luokkahuone-epäkohteliaisuuden olevan ilmiönä haasteellinen ja vaikeasti lähestyttävä. Tutkimuksessa esitetään, että opettajat hyötyisivät jatkossa mahdollisten reagointimenetelmien kartoittamiseen ja arviointiin keskittyvästä tutkimuksesta.</p>		
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## 1 Introduction

Discourse in the context of the classroom, or more specifically the second language (L2) or English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, is defined by unique language patterns and norms of behaviour. Language use in the classroom is generally understood through its connection to learning; language is the tool that enables learning to take place and as such interaction in the classroom is ultimately guided towards this purpose. To aid in the process, the hierarchy of the interactional participants in the classroom, the students and the teachers, is established in a manner that both allows the teacher to control the interaction and in turn restricts the students' freedom of language choice. The repertoire of allowed linguistic behaviour is then ultimately decided by the teacher, whose main motivation is enabling learning. Further considerations are brought to the mix with the addition of the L2 within language classrooms, with one language taking a preferable position over the other.

While the final decision on what counts as acceptable language use in the classroom is bound by other contextual features, such as cultural norms, school rules, and each teacher's personal preference, it can be argued that the occurrence of verbal impoliteness within the classroom is often both unexpected and undesired. Impoliteness in the classroom as well as in other interactional contexts can be defined as the kind of behaviour that aims at breaking the norms of appropriateness. Within interaction, the occurrence of impoliteness forces the interlocutors to reassess the situation and gauge the used impoliteness against their knowledge of the interactional context. This means assessing the motivations behind the impoliteness as well as its effects, i.e. whether it is used humorously or to cause offense. In the classroom, wherein the majority of interactional participants are very young, the noted differences in adolescents' verbal behaviour in comparison to adult speakers add yet another layer into the analysis of impoliteness.

The purpose of the study at hand is to explore the phenomenon of classroom impoliteness in Finnish EFL classrooms. Against what is known about both the "interactional architecture of the classroom" (Seedhouse 2004) and the features and principles of verbal impoliteness, examining the connection between the two offers an interesting and topical research prospect. The rise of behavioural difficulties and student

impoliteness in Finnish schools has been noted widely in the national news, ranging from specific cases of student misconduct to politicians expressing fears over the erosion of discipline in schools (Vähäsarja 2015, Pöntinen 2013). Teachers and experts of educational matters have likewise voiced their concerns, noting that while behavioural problems still remain marginal, teachers today feel more uncertain about the methods they can use to respond to undesired behaviour (Siirilä 2011, Liimatainen 2013).

In light of this, it is somewhat surprising that the study of classroom impoliteness has yet to attract the kind of attention that could benefit both classroom discourse theorists and practitioners in the field of education. In previous studies internationally, classroom impoliteness has been approached from the perspective of the students' identity negotiation and power assertion (Dobs 2014, Candela 2014), while the matter of teacher perspectives has been of little consequence. However, in Finland the rise of media coverage on the topic has led way to new research perspectives concerning unwanted classroom behaviour and teachers' use of disciplinary methods (see for example Koponen 2017, Tainio 2016). The results of these studies mostly mirror the teachers' comments presented in popular publications, emphasizing the need of further studies focused on teacher strategies. In this context, the inclusion of sociolinguistic perspectives on impoliteness may help map out teachers' uncertainties regarding so called undesired behaviour and define the relationship between such behaviour and verbal impoliteness in practice. In this way, the current study will provide information on how teachers make disciplinary decisions and how verbal impoliteness affects the choice of strategy.

Based on the aforementioned aims, this study attempts to identify different types of impolite verbal behaviour occurring in the Finnish EFL classroom and analyse the strategies Finnish EFL teachers use in response to student-initiated impoliteness. More specifically, the study is concerned with how the used strategies correspond to the teachers' perceptions of how impoliteness should be addressed in the classroom context. This is achieved through a comparative analysis of two datasets, one containing 12 transcribed audio recordings of EFL lessons in Finnish middle schools and another containing four interviews with participating teachers. The methods of analysis include a framework for recognizing impoliteness, based on Mugford (2008), as well as a newly

crafted matrix based on the work of Culpeper (2010) (elaborated further in Section 3.3). The research questions considered in the analysis are as follows:

1. What types of impolite language practices occur in Finnish EFL classrooms?
2. How do Finnish EFL teachers' perceptions of impoliteness correspond with the types of impolite language practices found?
3. What sort of strategies do Finnish EFL teachers use to respond to student-initiated impoliteness in the classroom?
4. How do the Finnish EFL teachers' perceptions of the validity of impoliteness strategies correspond with the strategies used?

The first two questions are concerned with the occurrence of impoliteness and the latter two with response strategies towards impoliteness. The comparative aspect of the study is reflected in the division of the questions between the two datasets; questions 1 and 3 make use of the lesson data while questions 2 and 4 are used in the analysis of the interview responses. By considering both data sets side by side in regard to my research topics, I hope to achieve a more thorough basis for the analysis. While the responses reported in the interviews reveal teachers' perceptions and attitudes regarding impoliteness, the comparison of these attitudes with the actuality of found impoliteness types and strategy usage will help understand the practical dimensions of the phenomenon.

In order to delve fully into the phenomenon of classroom impoliteness, it is necessary to review some of the relevant theories regarding classroom discourse and impoliteness research. Thus, in the next section, I will begin by mapping out the theoretical background of the study, considering first the discourse features of the classroom as defined by Steve Walsh (2006; 2011). In introducing the internal power structure of the classroom, I raise Candela's (2014) idea of students' resisting behaviour as a form of increasing authority, which connects to the use of impoliteness as an act of resistance. With impoliteness, I will briefly elaborate on the history of the research field, with a focus on more contemporary takes by Culpeper (2010) and Mugford (2008) in defining the phenomenon. The chapter on theoretical background is then followed by the introduction of the research phases, including data collection, data modification, and establishing of the methods of analysis. The analysis is structured following the order of the research questions, considering first the impoliteness types and then the strategies found in the classroom data and reported in the interviews. Finally, in the discussion I

will bring up some relevant concerns from the results of the analysis, suggesting topics for future research.

## **2 Theoretical background**

The current chapter will map out the theoretical models and previous studies used to approach the phenomenon of classroom impoliteness in the present study. I will begin with defining the discourse context of the EFL classroom, moving from typical interactional features and sequences to the power relations and contextual roles at play within the situation. Key focus is placed on how the specific features of classroom interaction or the division of power between the discourse participants, and the imbalance therein, may affect the occurrence of impoliteness. From defining the discourse context, I will then move onto defining the concept of impoliteness itself, aiming for a working definition for the purposes of this study. The last subsection is dedicated to past research on classroom impoliteness, bringing up relevant topics such as teacher attitudes, the use of impoliteness in student identity creation, and the implications of bullying on learning and student welfare.

### **2.1 The classroom as a discourse context**

To understand how impoliteness affects communication in the classroom it first needs to be established how the classroom in general functions as a discourse environment. Communication in such contexts is governed both by rules mandated by official institutions, such as the national board of education, and more contextual rules as per the instruction of each school and individual teacher. As the main purpose of classroom interaction is to enable and promote learning, these rules are established according to educational objectives, which in the case of Finnish basic education are listed in the national core curriculum. Such objectives include the targeted learning outcomes of transversal competence, for example endorsing cultural interaction and expression as well as the students' management of their own behaviour and possibilities of influencing the well-being of those around them (POPS 2014: 21-22).

In addition to such explicitly stated and reinforced guidelines, there also exist preconceived and culturally instilled norms of appropriateness. These norms come to play when we formulate our ideas on how discourse participants, teachers and students,



should act in communicational situations occurring in educational contexts. Based on our own understanding of the school and the classroom as spaces of learning and social activity, we intuitively construct a model that directs how people should talk and act within them. This process is similar to the notion of genre in rhetorical genre studies, in which genre is understood as the representation of typified rhetorical action (Miller 1984). The genre of classroom communication is thus, in our minds, constructed as the kind of interaction that occurs between teachers and students with established educational aims. However, the specific details this interaction entails can vary tremendously.

Communication in the classroom is, as Steve Walsh (2011: 2) puts it in his introduction to the nature of classroom interaction, both “highly complex” and “central to all classroom activity”. What this centrality means in action is that language, and the communication through language, is in most classrooms the main tool of teaching and learning. The importance of communication is then even further emphasized in the L2 and EFL classrooms, as language is both the instrument and the subject (Walsh 2011:2). The pivotal question when attempting to analyse the discourse in such environments, then, would be how the language used in the classroom affects the learning that occurs as a result. This becomes even more relevant of a concern in connection to the present study, as the occurrence of impoliteness within classroom discourse brings forth several possible considerations that have so far mostly eluded the interest of researchers.

However, before moving onto the phenomenon of classroom impoliteness in full force, it might be pertinent to investigate whether there may be some qualities in typical classroom discourse that could function as triggers for the emergence of impolite speech. To do so, we first need to understand the kind of interactional features that occur in the classroom and the power relations between discourse participants in such environments. Beginning with common features of classroom discourse, these will be considered in the next two sections.

### **2.1.1 Common features of classroom discourse**

In order to understand the pragmatic principles related to impoliteness in the classroom it first needs to be understood how the “interactional architecture” (Seedhouse 2004) of classrooms is built. The events that take place in the classroom determine the extent to

which set learning outcomes are realized, and this realization in turn guides the discourse participants' actions; especially those of the teacher (Kumaravadivelu 1999: 454; Walsh 2011: 67). From this cycle, researchers such as Steve Walsh (2006; 2011) have been able to determine specific features of interaction that are prevalent in classrooms all over the world in otherwise vastly heterogeneous cultural contexts. In his work, Walsh identifies four features of classroom interaction: control of the interaction, speech modification, elicitation, and repair. These features, while not encompassing all of the verbal behaviour that happens in a classroom, typify much of the interaction that goes on in such contexts. Thus, by examining them it is possible to relate their occurrence to the occurrence of impoliteness, revealing possible interactional trends in unwanted classroom behaviour.

A major component in classroom interaction is the discrepancy of power between the contextual roles in the classroom. As mentioned in the introduction, the teacher is at all times ultimately in charge of the interaction, while the students hold fairly little authority in comparison. While this notion holds true across all the features in Walsh's framework, the imbalance of power is further acknowledged as a feature of its own. Control of the interaction applies on all levels of education, as well as in numerous other institutional contexts, wherein one party is in a position of power and authority over the other participating parties, thus controlling the possible communicational patterns within the setting (Walsh 2011: 4). In classroom interaction the teacher is at all times ultimately the one to decide who gets to speak, when, to whom, and for how long, and this control holds true even in decentralized and learner-centred classrooms (Walsh 2011: 4-5). However, although this control is easy to perceive it does not automatically guarantee success of interaction within the classroom, as students may at times feel disinclined to follow the teacher's lead. Further consideration of this power imbalance and its possible effects regarding impoliteness is discussed in Section 2.1.2

The situation is similar in the case of speech modification, or the manner in which the teacher modifies their own and the students' speech, choosing what is appropriate and suitable language, vocabulary, and grammar. Although the majority of decisions connected to this feature deal with the teacher's self-policing, their chosen "classroom idiolect" (Walsh 2006) which is employed to make their own speech purposeful and understandable, there are also aspects of speech modification that affect and limit the

learners' freedom of expression. As such, the possible implications for impoliteness are woven into the politics of classroom language and the teacher's chosen methods of upholding their policies. According to Walsh, "effective speech modification ensures that learners feel safe and included and gives them the confidence to participate in classroom interaction" (Walsh 2011: 10). The described feeling of safety includes the guarantee that students need to be secure in the knowledge that they will be treated appropriately in the classroom, naturally prompting teacher intervention to inappropriate comments and behaviour. Impoliteness can then be seen as stemming from inadequate or inoperative methods for speech modification, such as being too restrictive or failing to address problematic verbal behaviour.

The third of Walsh's recorded features of classroom discourse further clarifies the restrictions of speech patterns in the classroom. Elicitation techniques are in Walsh's (2011: 11) words typically used to ask display questions with the purpose of, for example, checking comprehension, testing knowledge, activating learners' responses, and stimulating practice. Such questions' connection to impoliteness can then be analysed by looking at the manner in which they are expressed and the effects they may have. For example, in her study on the emotional and educational consequences of classroom impoliteness Santamaría-García (2017: 246) notes that elicitation can threaten the students' equity rights, i.e. the right to be treated fairly. The students may, for example, feel like the inquiries are immoderately directed at them instead of the other students, and the imposition is further heightened in cases wherein the student does not know the answer to the teacher's question (Santamaría-García 2017: 246).

Finally, the last of Walsh's features, repair deals with the different strategies the teacher, and to some extent the learners, utilize in correcting errors occurring in the L2 classroom. Out of the four features, repair is possibly the most interesting from the perspective of classroom impoliteness as it elicits quite polarizing views in research. It has been argued that the concept of repair is actually harmful to the creation of a safe and nurturing learning environment. Santamaría-García (2017: 246) notes that the negative criticism that is sometimes unavoidable with repair can in the worst cases lead to the student feeling a loss in their "sense of worth, dignity and identity associated with issues such as respect, honour, status, reputation and competence". If the student's identity becomes damaged by a negative assessment, it can lead to motivational issues

and other negative consequences in terms of learning. Furthermore, unnecessary or obtrusive repair, especially on the teacher's part, may deprive the learners of the opportunity to express themselves, leading to further frustrations and conflict (Walsh 2006). The potentially impolite and face-threatening aspects of repair have caused some researchers to believe that error correction should be altogether eliminated from teaching in order to avoid negative confrontation (for further reading, see van Lier 1988; Walsh 2006).

However, despite these concerns, contemporary research and teacher instruction supports the positive gains of properly executed repair. For example, Budden (2008) notes that students themselves often express the desire to receive feedback. Even so, there are still some apprehensions about repair occurring within peer feedback. For example, Rollinson (2005: 26) has noted that for peer feedback to be effective the students require sufficient skills in debating and expressing criticism. Accordingly, if the skills are lacking, the effect of the repair can be harmful, harming group dynamics and causing conflict (van Erk-Koivisto 2005: 17). Furthermore, the challenges of peer feedback are further increased in the L2 classroom, wherein the students critiquing each other are often expected to use the language they are learning in their assessments. Thus, in the context of the Finnish EFL classroom, a student attempting to critique another's performance should be aware of both enough suitable vocabulary and structures, as well as the appropriateness of language choices, in order for the attempt to be successful.

Besides the four features suggested by Walsh, the interactional context of the classroom has also been examined from other perspectives, for example by focusing on the recurring patterns of interaction. One such pattern is the IRF, initiation-response-feedback, sequence (also called the IRE, initiation-response-evaluation, sequence), established by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The IRF sequence begins with an initiation by the teacher, i.e. a question or request directed at the student(s), continues with a response by the student(s) and finally concludes with the teacher's feedback on the received response. In a sense, this sequential presentation illustrates the vitality of the teacher's role as the facilitator of classroom interaction. Although the IRF sequence necessitates and promotes student involvement, it likewise demonstrates how the teacher's authority and power is emphasized in contrast to the student's. While over

time the definition of the IRF sequence has been expanded to encompass also non-prototypical sequences such as ones initiated by the student(s), the teacher's power remains still unchallenged.

From these observations it becomes evident that the manner in which the IRF sequence depicts the interactional principles of the classroom is not in opposition to Walsh's framework, but rather complementary to it. By comparing Walsh's four features with the different stages of the IRF sequence, it can be noticed that while control of the interaction and speech modification are evident across the whole sequence, elicitation techniques are more connected to initiation and repair links with evaluation. While discourse analysis from the perspective of the IRF sequence offers an overview of the interactional landscape of the classroom, with Walsh's framework, the main advantage lies with its possibilities of closer inspection. By examining the different features that affect the interactive sequences of the classroom, the possible reasons behind the emergence of impolite verbal behaviour are more observable, which suits the purposes of this study. However, as the impoliteness is not always resultant from any specific interactional feature, but can develop as a sum of its parts, it is also beneficial to keep the overall context in mind. Thus, the framework presented here is not directly used in this study, but rather provides background information that can aid in the analysis. Next, I will examine the contextual power relations in the classroom.

### **2.1.2 Power relations in the classroom**

Discourse always exists in a sociocultural context that, to an extent, determines our interpretation of its purpose and meaning. For example, within the Finnish EFL classroom we have preconceived assumptions of the norms and rules that explicitly and implicitly govern the interaction, e.g. that classrooms are primarily places of teaching and learning and the conversations in the classroom will conform to this purpose. The context likewise determines the expected participants of the discourse; in the case of the classroom we associate the domain with teachers and students, perhaps in some cases teaching assistants and other school personnel. As such, the kind of interaction that takes place within the classroom is always understood in relation our knowledge on who is present and how these people should and could act. Furthermore, we intuitively realize that taking the same participants away from the context of the classroom may radically affect their accepted and expected patterns of behaviour; i.e. the students

within a classroom behave differently when responding to the teacher's question than when chatting with each other out of school. This notion of the contextuality and relationality of different roles in social situations is behind many sociolinguistic theories, such as the face-theory (elaborated on in section 2.2.1) and the idea of identity creation within discourse.

The relationality of our roles depending on the context and the participants present also connects with classroom discourse through Vygotsky's (1962, 1971, 1978) idea of sociocultural theory as the basis for learning. In his work, Vygotsky proposed an alternative to behaviourism that views human learning and development as relational or, as Kim and Yoon (2012) interpret his theory, as dependent on the social interaction between the more and less capable members of the community. Implemented into the classroom context, this model posits that the teacher assumes the role of the expert and the learners assume the role of the novice in order for learning to take place. The teacher's position in the classroom is in this sense determined and secured by both this expert status and their institutional role (Erickson 1986).

The expert status places the teacher by default above the student in authority, leading to a position wherein the roles of the discourse participants are in no way equal. The teacher's power in the classroom has been noted for long, especially in studies concentrated on the teacher-directed nature of classroom discourse and the IRF sequence, introduced above (for more information see e.g. Leith & Myerson 1989; Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). While the absoluteness of the teacher's power position has in later studies been questioned (e.g. Candela 1998), it still remains very true that within the classroom the teacher is quite automatically placed in charge of "setting norms for behaviour, teaching relational skills, and orchestrating interaction" (Steele & Cohn-Vargas 2013: 131). The teacher must decide what kind of language and behaviour are suitable for their purpose and what, in contrast, needs to be avoided.

In contrast to the teacher's authority, learners do not enjoy the same level of control over the interaction. By default, the students must follow the teacher's rules and instruction, and failure to comply is generally regarded as undesirable. However, the student's role in the classroom is not completely powerless. In her study on the students' power in classroom discourse, Candela (1994: 139, 146) found that even in discourse sequence heavily controlled by the teacher, such as the IRF, students were

able to establish their role as competent communicators, influence the interaction, and successfully reject assertions made by the teacher. Candela raised the students' acts of refusal as one of the most central signs of the role's power. She found that the students signalled refusal in three ways: through verbal denials to requests, use of volume and tone of speech, and silence (Candela 1994: 150).

Such direct refusals are often regarded as face-threatening, and in light of the present study it is telling that the ways in which students gain power over the teacher come to play in situations linked with conflict. Overall, discontent with the discrepancy of power within the classroom may cause the student to revolt against their contextual role. This can lead to the development of negatively oriented student identities, as it has been noted that the students' power is often closely tied to resistance of learning (Erickson 1986). Hypothetically, a student discontented with their role may resort to using impoliteness as a means of questioning the teacher's authority or disrupting the lesson in order to reject opportunities of learning and raise their own status within the context. Furthermore, students can also aim to raise their level of authority and power in relation to other students; Steele and Cohn-Vargas note that students may, for example, "engage in acts of social cruelty, believing that this may increase their status" (2013: 136). Such behaviour has been widely noted in bullying and social psychology research as the social dominance perspective, i.e. using aggression to gain dominance (see for example Merten 1997; Paul 2014; Pellegrini & Long 2002).

When talking about the role of the student and the power students are able to employ, it needs to be noted that in addition to the individual student identities each student constructs within the classroom context, each learning group as a whole will also form a group identity. Whereas individual students may lack power and authority in comparison to the teacher's position, whole learner groups have an increased chance of reducing this gap. While at its best, a shared learning-oriented group identity can assist all students in their individual learning, a strong group identity may also lend the students the power to reject class norms that go against the norms of their group. As an example, Ige (2010) raises the case of Zulu males in a South-African college, who refused to use English, the official language of the college, and did not partake in groupwork with students outside their own peer group, resulting in unease and conflict in the learning community. Such behaviour makes it more difficult for the teacher to

control the interaction and may lead to arising conflicts between the teacher and the students and between the student group refusing to conform and the other students in the class.

The notion of power struggle in the classroom is essential in understanding the teachers' decisions regarding behavioural guidelines and how these guidelines affect the classroom as a discourse environment. Generally, it seems to be accepted that when a teacher fails to intervene when they notice impolite or inappropriate comments in the classroom, they essentially send out the message that such behaviour is acceptable. A possible factor behind the teacher's actions is, then, the wish to facilitate positive relationships among students, which motivates intervention in cases regarding inappropriate verbal behaviour (Steele & Cohn-Vargas 2013: 131). The teacher may also wish to prevent discontent with the imbalance of power by choosing to alleviate their own authority. For example, employing a learner-centred or decentralized lesson plan lessens the teacher's direct control and allows greater and freer participation for learners (Walsh 2011:5). However, even in using such methods, the final control remains securely with the teacher.

As I have elaborated in both this subsection and the previous one, classroom discourse is at its base guided by the interlocutors' expectations of the hierarchy of discourse participants and the consequent conventions within the situation. Whenever these expectations are somehow disturbed, the interlocutors are left with no existing guidelines on how to speak or act. Such is the case with impoliteness, as the occurrence of impolite utterances in the classroom force both the teacher and the students to adapt to the unexpected. In the next section I will further elaborate on the nature of the phenomenon of impoliteness in the classroom, providing a working definition for the purposes of the current study.

## **2.2 Impoliteness in the classroom**

Impolite behaviour in schools has in recent years been raised up multiple times in news, especially in connection to the reported increase in students' disruptive behaviour and decrease in teachers' well-being (see Helsingin Sanomat 2019). However, it still remains much debated whether this truly is a phenomenon related to a larger sociocultural shift in children's and adolescents' behaviour. For example, with the study



on bullying, few studies are conducted on a large enough scale to provide confirmation, and the erratic focus on different school clusters and the variety in research methods makes it difficult to form conclusive evidence (Paul 2014: 1-2). It has also been suggested that the reported rise of misbehaviour in schools may simply be a result of being sensitized to impoliteness in the classroom (Porter 2007: 15-18). Against this background, it seems crucial to address the topic of impoliteness in the school and classroom contexts in an academic frame. In this section, I will begin by defining the concept of impoliteness, moving from traditional views such as Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-theory onto more contemporary takes, including Culpeper's (2010) and Mugford's (2008) models. From definitions, I will continue with an overview of past research concerning the phenomenon of classroom impoliteness, finishing the chapter with a brief account on the necessity and justification of the present study.

### **2.2.1 Defining impoliteness**

In order to tackle impolite language use in the classroom it first needs to be established what is generally meant by impoliteness. In this section I aim to unravel the history of impoliteness research, leading us to the current understanding of the phenomenon. Despite being widely researched, impoliteness as a concept has been noted to be notoriously difficult to define. Much of this difficulty stems from the traditional manner of understanding impoliteness as merely absence of polite interaction, or otherwise in connection to politeness.

A ground-breaking moment in the history of both politeness and impoliteness research was the implementation of the notion of face into the understanding of appropriateness within interaction. Face as a concept was adapted and developed to be used in sociology by Goffman (1955; 1967). Through his work, Goffman formed a definition of face as the social variables according to which people regulate and structure their verbal and non-verbal behaviour. These variables include for example the relationship between participants within a conversation, the context of the exchange, as well as the topics being discussed. Furthermore, Goffman also ruled that the manner in which these variables come into play can be decided consciously or subconsciously. In this way, people construct a face in relation to the interaction at hand, and the wish and attempt to maintain face can provide an explanation for how people present themselves within social situations (Kidd, 2016). The way a person constructs their face and chooses the

strategies are reliant on the interpretation of social appropriateness and the desire for the construction and preservation of a specific social image.

Whereas Goffman's ideas had a lasting impact on many fields interested in social interaction, a more refined view from the perspective of politeness research was developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Elaborating on Goffman's definition of face as 'the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself' (1967: 61), Brown and Levinson worked to integrate this notion into the accepted view of communication as a rationally conducted and controlled activity. One of the main notions of Brown and Levinson's theory is the division of Goffman's concept of face into two: positive and negative. Brown and Levinson (1987: 61-62) defined positive face as the need participants in a conversation have to be recognized and respected or, alternatively, as the positive self-image each person has of their own personality. This self-image is then coupled with the necessity of it being appreciated and approved of by other people. Negative face, in contrast, is defined as the participants' wish for their actions to be "unimpeded by others", or as "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction — i.e. the freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61). Whereas positive face involves a desire for connecting with other people, negative face involves the need for autonomy and independence in interaction.

Using the concepts of positive and negative face, politeness can be seen occurring when the needs and conditions of each of these are met. Conversely, impoliteness is then defined by the kind of actions that either intentionally or inadvertently threaten a person's face. Such face-threatening action can go against both the negative face, for example when failing to leave a person alone despite implicit and/or explicit wishes to do so, and the positive face, for example by giving a negative or untrue account of a person. However, the perception of what counts as face-threatening is largely dependent on context. Thus, in the classroom if, for example, a teacher reprimands a student for not focusing on the lesson and the student tells the teacher to leave them alone, the teacher's actions would not usually be characterized as impolite and, in contrast, the student's behaviour will more readily receive an impolite interpretation.

While the notion of face-threatening action has been widely recognized and used in sociology and sociolinguistics, many impoliteness theorists have criticized the way it

takes on a western bias that oversimplifies the phenomenon of impoliteness (e.g. Kidd 2016; Schepers 2014). Among its biggest issues, critics have raised the theory's neglect of factors such as the presence of audience, social status, and hierarchical influence (Kidd 2016: 47). Defining impoliteness based on the individual overlooks any possible orientation a person may have to conform to group norms over their own needs, as is sometimes the case in collectivist cultures. To combat this problem some researchers have gone on to suggest the inclusion of the concept of group face, an inclination to align one's face needs with those of one's social group (Archer et al. 2012; Kidd 2016: 49). This idea then can easily be linked with the notion of contextual roles shared by multiple individuals, such as in the case of group student identities within the classroom. However, even with the inclusion of group face, the definition of impoliteness in regard to unfulfilled face needs still fails to take into account many aspects of the phenomenon, such as the effect of intentionality and the fabrication of impoliteness into seemingly polite utterances.

As seen in the criticism of Brown and Levinson's theory, the fact that impolite verbal behaviour is realized as complex and multi-layered interaction presents a challenge in defining the concept. To combat the problematic contradictions in defining impoliteness, theorists such as Culpeper (2010) and Spencer-Oatey (2000) have proposed alternative views on the topic. According to Culpeper's (2010: 22) conceptualization, for impoliteness to be recognized it must first involve the ability for the participants involved in a communicative situation to recognize that a particular behaviour contains negatively evaluated features. The second prerequisite is then the activation of this ability in contexts where such features appear (Culpeper 2010: 22). Continuing on this idea, Culpeper further proposes that one way of looking at how impoliteness can be perceived in communication is by examining whether it is inherent in language, i.e. distinguishable in specific words forms or structures.

Culpeper's suggestion of inherency as a method of recognizing impoliteness is based on Leech's (1983) distinction between absolute politeness and relative politeness. This distinction proposes that politeness exists both on an absolute scale, on which one pole is polite and the other impolite, as well as in relation to the context in which it occurs. In this way an exclamation such as "*Shut up!*" is inherently less polite than the request "*Could you be quiet?*", but there also exist situations in which "*Shut up!*" can be

considered appropriate, and situations in which “*Could you be quiet?*” is not polite enough (Leech 1983: 102). The key to understanding why certain verbal forms are intuitively understood as less polite than others, is the concept of conventionalization, or the idea that “particular expressions are associated in one’s mind with particular contexts” (Culpeper, 2010:129). In essence, certain verbal forms, such as “*Shut up!*”, have been used with impolite intention so often that the inherent impoliteness value they possess is recognized even when the intention is not to cause offense.

Further elaborating on the idea of inherency, Culpeper has created a framework for determining what type of verbal behaviour will more readily be recognized as containing the kind features that make it inherently impolite. Culpeper’s framework consists of nine types of linguistic expression that carry an inherently impolite meaning. These “conventionalized impoliteness formulae” include verbal actions such as insults, pointed complaints, dismissals, and threats (Culpeper 2010: 135-136). The full list of identified formulae is found in Appendix 1.

Although the identification of inherently impolite verbal forms provides a convenient method of recognizing impoliteness within interaction, it needs to be noted that Culpeper’s categories do not encompass the full spectrum of the phenomenon. Few impoliteness theorists support the notion of impoliteness being completely inherent in linguistic forms, because the manner in which people recognize conventionalization ultimately varies from person to person. The perception of impoliteness is largely dependent on whatever social and cultural norms of appropriateness are at play within an interaction as well as the interactants’ assessment of these norms (Locher 2006: 250). People’s experiences and understanding of impoliteness is different, making the inherency of linguistic forms a somewhat flexible concept. For example, when considering impoliteness in the language classroom, the use of L2 may make it more difficult to define the frames of appropriateness in situations where the speaker does not have full control of the language. Therefore, in analysing impoliteness in the classroom it is prudent to keep in mind the relativity of impoliteness. An inappropriate contextual relation can cause a non-conventionalized expression to be understood as impoliteness, i.e. an inherently polite expression could in a suitable context be interpreted as sarcasm. Furthermore, an utterance containing one of Culpeper’s forms could in certain contexts be intended as mock impoliteness, i.e. not seriously intended impoliteness. As Culpeper

says, “a conventionalized impolite expression does not guarantee an interpretation of impoliteness” (2010: 129).

However, despite Culpeper’s admission, it can be argued that in analysing impoliteness and its effects within interaction it is beneficial to also consider the type of cases wherein the inherent impoliteness value is negated by the mock impolite intention and/or interpretation. While the inherency of impoliteness is relatively easy to perceive in verbal forms, intention is realized contextually and can thus be difficult to determine with certainty. In the classroom context, when the teacher attempts to decipher interactions involving inherently impolite verbal forms between students, it may in certain situations be impossible to tell whether they are intended as friendly or unfriendly. Even if the participants involved signal that they have interpreted the exchange as mock impoliteness, due to the normative restrictions of the classroom discourse context, the teacher may still be likely to sanction the behaviour as undesired. Consequently, when examining interaction from an outside perspective in the frames of this study, I have chosen to include all uses of inherently impolite verbal expressions in my analysis and will consider the possible intention behind them case by case.

In addition to the focus on inherency and intention, impoliteness theorists have also proposed more categorical approaches to the phenomenon. One such framework is proposed by Mugford (2008), who distinguishes between four distinct types of impoliteness: individual impoliteness, social impoliteness, cultural impoliteness, and banter. Out of these, individual impoliteness is described as occurring on a personal level and the offensive value of such impoliteness is targeted at the individual attributes of the person, such as appearance, characteristics, personality etc. This type of impoliteness is then understood as the kind of verbal acts that retain their impoliteness despite the context and are only effective as impoliteness due to obtaining a specific personal target.

In contrast, social impoliteness and cultural impoliteness relate to more general and systematic practices, in which the impoliteness may too have a personal target, but in addition is always directed at either a social or cultural target (Mugford 2008: 377). For instance, when targeting a person with racially insensitive slurs, the impoliteness within the verbal act is realized as targeting both the specific hearer and the whole ethnicity they are likened to. It is notable, that the person targeted with cultural impoliteness does

not need to actually belong in the targeted cultural group. For example, when in the classroom a student calls another student gay with an insulting intention, it does not matter whether the target is actually part of sexual minorities for the insult to be categorized as impolite towards both the target and the cultural group as a whole. Although Mugford's definition of cultural impoliteness is centred on ethnicity, this example illustrates that the category can easily be expanded to encompass other culturally defined groups. With social impoliteness, the target is not realized through ethnicity or other cultural features but rather due to the specific social context in which the impoliteness occurs. For example, within the classroom there are certain actions that are allowed for the teacher and not allowed for the students, such as talking over the class to gain attention, and if a student were to perform them it would be seen as overstepping the bounds of their social role and, consequently, as social impoliteness.

The final category, banter, is differentiated from the rest through intentionality. Banter is defined as a playfully impolite cooperative practice between the speaker and the hearer, thus being mostly synonymous with the previously introduced mock impoliteness (Mugford 2008: 377). The consideration of mock impoliteness is especially significant in connection to the present study, as the high frequency of playful and ritual impoliteness has been noted in earlier research on the interaction of adolescent speakers (see e.g. Stenström 2002). Teenage talk, especially in conversations involving only teenagers and their peers, is characterized by a specific type of language use that is according to Stenström (2002:63) often labelled as "bad language". Teenage talk includes for example slang, dirty words, taboo words, and profanities (Stenström et al. 2002: 63). Whereas merely the use of such language in the classroom is enough to draw attention as contextually inappropriate, the effect is heightened when the verbal acts obtain a clear target, such as in the case of ritual conflict and ritual insults. By definition this type of verbal behaviour is not meant to be interpreted as offensive, but as a type of verbal duelling, or a humorous competition between conversation participants (Stenström et al. 2002: 193).

However, regardless of its original intention, the reason why the inherent impoliteness of teenage talk should not be dismissed is that the shift from rapport between friends into actual bullying can be quite minimal in practice. Bullying research as its own trend in sociology and behavioural studies has been growing in popularity since the 80's and

90's. Nonetheless, Sanders (2004: 3) notes in his overview on the research history of bullying that despite the widespread interest, there is still considerable debate about the term itself. Much like with impoliteness, the question of how to define bullying has been approached numerous times from different viewpoints. Some widely accepted and popular attempts to define the concept include Olweus (1993) and Smith and Sharp's (1994: 2) characterization of bullying as "systematic abuse of power". Olweus' definition especially is held in high regard in the field as it stresses the importance of a victimized student's exposure to repeated negative action as the defining quality of bullying (Olweus 1993: 9). In both Smith and Sharp's and Olweus' definitions, the contextual focus is on bullying occurring in schools, which has been suggested as the most predominant setting for such behaviour (Sanders 2004: 1).

Another generally applicable definition is suggested by Steele and Cohn-Vargas (2013: 137), who combine aspects of the earlier definitions to describe bullying as "a repeated act of verbal, electronic, or physical aggression with an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and victim". The imbalance of power in this definition typically refers to any type of setting in which some type of advantage, such as physical strength, potentially embarrassing information, or popularity, is used to control, harm, and exclude others (Steele & Cohn-Vargas 2013: 137). Furthermore, some researchers differentiate bullying from intolerant behaviour, which for example Steele and Cohn-Vargas (2013: 137) refer to as including "unkind remarks with stereotypical comments on a person's social identity" (i.e. race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). This definition of intolerance matches closely with earlier categorization, making it seem possible to apply a more linguistic perspective on the study of bullying.

Further considering the examples of intolerant language use, it is notable that similar insults are also prevalent in humorously intended teenage talk. Between teenagers who have established this specific type of rapport amongst themselves, ritual impoliteness maybe recognized as a perfectly ordinary mode of communication. However, as noted before, for a person viewing the interaction from the outside the intention may remain unclear. Differentiating between bullying and sarcastic rapport between friends remains a difficult task for the teachers attempting to control interaction in classroom situations. In the Finnish context, Tainio (2014) has studied the relationship between bullying and teasing as well as teachers' reactions to the latter in Finnish secondary schools. While

bullying in the school context is always characterized as a serious issue, Tainio notes that in comparison the act of teasing functions as a way for the students to establish connection and negotiate status amongst peers (2014: 29). However, in analysing teachers' responses Tainio found that teachers' reactions to the occurrence of teasing varied; while teasing was sometimes recognized as part of friendly rapport, it was also occasionally rejected if the teacher interpreted the teasing to be for example potentially embarrassing for the target (2014: 32-33). Based on Tainio's analysis of the responses, I too expect the teachers participating in this study to utilize various different strategies to the occurrence of impoliteness.

In order to establish a functional framework that takes the difficulty of interpretation into consideration, it seems then necessary to keep in consideration both the inherent impoliteness of expressions and the more contextually realized intentions. Furthermore, one-sidedly focusing on the teachers' interpretation needs to be avoided, since this will eliminate possibilities of analysing the kind of forms of impoliteness that are continuously ignored by the teachers. Giving relevance to all interpretations may provide opportunities to detect potential discrepancies between what the students and the teacher regard as impoliteness. The finalized framework used for identifying impoliteness in the present study will be introduced in Chapter 3.1, and possible discrepancies in the interpretation of impoliteness will be addressed in Chapter 5. In the next section, I will provide an overview of previous research on the topic of classroom impoliteness, highlighting relevant concerns.

### **2.2.2 Previous research on classroom impoliteness**

Although politeness strategies in the classroom are a key area of research in the study of classroom discourse, there is relatively little research focusing on impoliteness in learning environments. A large number of the existing studies on classroom impoliteness focus on the pragmatics of teaching impoliteness in EFL classrooms and providing instruction for the teacher (see e.g. Mugford 2008; Schepers 2014). However, with such studies less attention is placed on reporting the actuality of impoliteness usage in the classroom. A less instructional approach can be found in attitudinal studies that cover the ethical considerations of teaching impoliteness. In one study gathering and analysing the attitudes of Iranian EFL teachers, learners, and experts, as well as non-Iranian experts, Ahmadi (2011) found that the teachers' attitudes differed significantly



from the rest. While all participant groups believed impoliteness to be equally as important as politeness as an aspect of language, language teachers were the most reserved in their thoughts on its inclusion into EFL teaching. Ahmadi's (2011) study further revealed that teachers were concerned with matters of class management and the ethical issues of impoliteness instruction. These results coincide with my hypothesis that teachers are apprehensive in general about the use of impoliteness in the classroom and will typically respond negatively to its occurrence.

Moving from the pedagogy of impolite language towards more discourse centred studies, a relevant point of focus in light of the study at hand is the negotiation of power relations and identities in the classroom through impolite language use, which has garnered some interest in the field. For example, Dobs (2014) has explored the way identities within the classroom are co-constructed and how this creation process is to an extent linked with the emergence of impoliteness. In her study, Dobs posits that impoliteness may arise from a misalignment of the perceived roles of the discourse:

When teacher or students ascribed an unwanted discourse identity to another student, s/he often used impoliteness strategies as a way to reject it. [...] [Students] strategically initiate impoliteness acts and assess potential impoliteness acts as impolite or non-impolite in order to support positive self-asserted identity co-construction and reject or negotiate unwelcome other-asserted identity co-construction. (2014: 37).

An example of this kind of development is when a student questions the teacher's position as the expert, effectively rejecting their own context positioned student identity and placing a claim on role of the expert themselves. As this role is within the classroom usually reserved for the teacher such action may lead the teacher to interpret the student's behaviour as a threat to their identity and subsequently as impoliteness. However, challenging the teacher's authority is not the only possible cause for impoliteness Dobs found in relation to identity creation and the rejection of unwanted identities. For example, students sometimes use impoliteness to draw attention to themselves by not abiding to generic conventions, thus rejecting the usual norms of the student role and constructing a class-clown type of identity (Dobs 2014: 55).

Similar observations have been made by White (2011), who studied minority students' resistance to classroom participation, such as whole class discussions, and found that minority students might sometimes elect not to participate in order to preserve their cultural or personal identity. While White's study was not specifically focused on

aspects of impoliteness, his interview responses reveal that obliviousness towards the challenges of intercultural communication could easily result in linguistic conflict and impolite language within the classroom. Much of the responsibility in terms of avoiding such conflict rests with the teacher as the highest authority in making decisions on how interaction in the classroom should play out. In Jones' (2008) study on the benefits of classroom participation, it is likewise noted that the teachers' failure to understand the effective uses of classroom participation, such as abusing their authority to force students into discussion, may disrupt lessons and alienate the reluctant students further.

As can be noticed from White's (2011) and Jones' (2008) observation, cases of impoliteness in connection to identity construction are tightly linked to the presupposed power relations of the classroom. This connection is further elaborated in the study by Wiajimoto et al. (2017) on EFL learners' use of impoliteness in prompted complaints. In their study, Wiajimoto et al. found that the learners' understanding of the social distance and status positioning at play within the discourse could affect their inclination to use impolite verbal behaviour. The learner's choice of impoliteness strategy was affected by whether or not the other interlocutor was familiar or unfamiliar and whether they were of higher, equal, or lower status. For example, learners used swearwords frequently as message enforcers in complaints directed at their peers, but hardly ever in complaints directed at a lecturer or teacher (Wiyajimoto et al. 2017: 10).

Likewise interested in status positioning is Merten's (1997) study analysing the functions of impolite behaviour in the competition for popularity and resultant conflict between female junior high school students. Although Merten approaches his topic from a purely sociological standpoint, using a linguistically relatively unspecific definition of impoliteness as "meanness", the study nonetheless has much relevance in researching the occurrence of impolite verbal behaviour in the classroom. For instance, Merten found that although typically meanness was a naturally occurring by-product of conflict, the observed female students would also use it "instrumentally to gain a competitive advantage" either in the competition for popularity or as protection from unwanted status developments (1997: 175). The students themselves also reported being conscious of their use of impolite behaviour, listing for example sanctioning a person for acting too "stuck-up", i.e. "making unwarranted claims to a higher status", as justification (Merten 1997: 186).

The last major area of interest for the current study is bullying research, which (as stated in Section 2.2.1) has been a highly productive field considering the number of studies produced. Some common current research topics in the field include for example investigating cyberbullying and evaluating the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs, such as the KiVa -project in Finnish schools (see for example Kärna et al. 2011; Williford et al. 2013). Besides these, the effects and implications of bullying on students' wellbeing and learning as well as developing new ways to address the issue have remained relevant focus points over the years. For example, Paul (2014) has explored the phenomenon of traditional and cyberbullying extensively with a focus on the student perspective and the role of social acceptance and peer relations in the occurrence of bullying. Although bullying has typically been approached from the perspective of sociology and behavioural and educational psychology, highlighting its connection to verbal impoliteness can be used to advocate a more linguistic perspective.

As illustrated by this brief overview on the study of classroom impoliteness, in most prior research the central focus has been on negotiating the meaning of the students' impolite language use or expert attitudes towards the learning of impoliteness. However, so far very little attention has been devoted to the study of teacher attitudes towards the use of impoliteness itself. Whereas there exist many instructional books on how teachers should approach problematic or disruptive behaviour in the classroom (e.g. Porter 2007; Steele & Cohn-Vargas 2013), the actuality of teacher practices has so far mostly eluded the spotlight. Although it can be assumed that teachers generally view impoliteness as undesired and disruptive practice in the classroom, there have been accounts of the opposite as well. For example, Dobs (2014) found in her study that certain impoliteness strategies were utilized constructively by students and teachers alike to negotiate identities and enforce an informal but positive learning environment. However, as Dobs notes, especially student impoliteness often creates rifts within and between groups inhibiting genuine student learning, contradicting the possible positive effects (Dobs 2014: 67). For these reasons, the study at hand attempts to elaborate the topic further by setting its focus on what kind of strategies teachers use in reacting to impoliteness within the learning environment and what kind of reasonings they have for choosing these strategies.

### **3 Data and methods**

In this section I will go over the stages of the data collection and transcription process and elaborate on the methods of analysis. The section begins with an overview on how the two data sets used, the lesson recordings and teacher interviews, were procured for the study and transcribed into written form. From there, I will move on to describing the tools of analysis, first establishing a set of frameworks for analysing the impoliteness found in the classroom data, before considering the methods needed for examining the interview responses.

#### **3.1 Data collection**

The data for the present study consists of the audio recordings of twelve middle-school English lessons as well as four interviews with Finnish EFL teachers recruited for the study. The twelve lessons were held by the four interviewed teachers, Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, and Teacher D, prior to the interviews being held. Each lesson's duration was approximately 75 minutes and the interviews varied slightly in length from 15 to 25 minutes. The lessons and interviews were recorded in a Helsinki metropolitan area middle school in September to November 2018. In addition to audio recording the lessons I was able to observe the interactions in the classroom and make notes, which were then used to provide additional information not revealed by the recordings alone. These notes include observations about the students' and the teachers' non-verbal and paraverbal behaviour during interactional episodes containing impoliteness features. Non-verbal factors considered include gaze, facial expressions, and gesticulation, whereas noted paraverbal factors included tone and volume of speech. Additionally, the beginning times of the noted episodes were marked down in the observation notes to ease the transcription process.

The school and the teachers were selected for the study due to my previous connections and consequent ease of access. Permission for the recording process was procured from the appropriate channels, including the school principal and participating teachers. Due to changes in the teachers' schedules, the number of lessons I observed per each teacher was not the same. I first observed four lessons with Teacher A and three lessons with Teacher B in September, followed by two lessons with Teacher C and three lessons with teacher D in October. Each set of lessons was held for the same class, middle-school

seventh graders with Teacher D, ninth graders with Teacher B, and eighth graders with Teachers A and C. Almost all of the recorded lessons resemble prototypical language lessons, containing teacher-lead activities, communicative exercises in pairs and groups, written work, and comprehension exercises. The only exception to this is the second observed lesson in Teacher A's set, which contains a 30 minute listening comprehension test in addition to 45 minutes of regular lesson work. Due to teacher schedules I was not always able to attend consecutive lessons, as I had planned prior to beginning the data collection process, but all sets of observed lessons were concluded within three weeks of the first recorded lesson.

	<b>Observed grade</b>	<b>Number of lessons</b>
<b>Teacher A</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>	4
<b>Teacher B</b>	9 <sup>th</sup>	3
<b>Teacher C</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>	2
<b>Teacher D</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>	3

*Table 1: Observed lesson sets*

The interviews were carried out after finishing lesson observations with each teacher and were held in a similar order as the lessons were observed, with Teacher A being the first interviewee and Teacher D the last. Prior to the interviews, the teachers were not informed of the specific topic of the study, in order to avoid influencing the teachers' reactions and choices during the lessons. The interviews were semi-structured and ordered according to 3 themes: experiences with impoliteness in the classroom, strategies for dealing with impoliteness, and beliefs about the effects of impoliteness on learning and student well-being. The simplified translated interview structure can be found in Appendix 3. Next, I will elaborate on the transcription process of the recorded lessons and, then following, the interview data.

### **3.2 Transcription process**

All of the recordings obtained during the data collection were transcribed for analysis, but the process and specificity of the transcription varied between the two data sets. The

recorded lesson data was transcribed partially. The episodes involving impoliteness noted in the observation notes were transcribed first, after which the recordings were listened to in full and any previously unnoticed episodes were added into the transcript. In order to capture the full impact and meaning of the impoliteness within these episodes, the audio recordings were matched with the observation notes on the interactants non-verbal and paraverbal behaviour whenever relevant. Such information was included as bracketed side notes within the transcription. Another important issue to consider was the translation of Finnish utterances, which was done during the transcription process by using italics to signal the beginning of code-switching between English and Finnish. Any names or details relating to personal information were omitted during the transcription process in order to ensure the students' and teachers' anonymity. The full list of transcription conventions used in transcribing the lesson data is provided in Appendix 2.

By contrast, when transcribing the teacher interviews, the focus of the transcription process was on the content of the teacher's message, rather than on the manner of delivery. Thus, less importance was placed on relaying possible paraverbal or nonverbal signals, and the interview data was transcribed according to the conventions of written standard language. In certain parts, repetitious words or sentence structures with no clear contribution to the meaning were omitted from the transcript in order to maintain clarity. Likewise, when choosing the excerpts to be shown as examples in the analysis chapter, additions to the utterances were provided in brackets in cases where the context of the utterance was not clear enough. As the interviews were in all four cases held in Finnish, they were initially transcribed in Finnish and the excerpts chosen as examples into this study were then translated into English by the author.

### **3.3 Methods of analysis**

In this subsection I will first describe the methods used in the analysis of the classroom data, followed by the analysis methods of the teacher interviews. The initial analysis of the classroom data was conducted during the collection and transcription process by including only interactional episodes containing identifiable cases of impoliteness in the transcript. After the completion of the first version of the lesson transcript, each episode was analysed again, and any previously uncertain cases were properly determined or discarded from the final transcript.

The identification of impoliteness during these stages of analysis was done using a matrix based on Culpeper (2010). This matrix includes two values, inherency and intentionality, that factor into the recognition, interpretation, and categorization of all impolite utterances. The inherency value decides if an utterance is inherently impolite or not impolite based on whether it contains inherently impolite features, as defined by Culpeper's (2010) formulae (see Section 2.2.1 for details). The intentionality value decides if an utterance is intentionally impolite or not impolite and is determined based on contextual factors, such as the relationship between the speaker and hearer, purpose of the interaction, and nonverbal and paraverbal cues, such as facial expressions and tone of voice. In the matrix, instances of playful impoliteness usage are categorically defined as containing impolite intention due to the aforementioned difficulties in determining the true intention of mock impoliteness with certainty (see Section 2.2.1 p. 18-19). The resulting four possible combinations of the intentionality and inherency values are shown in Figure 1.

Inherent impoliteness	Inherent impoliteness
Intentional impoliteness	Not intentional impoliteness
Not inherent impoliteness	Not inherent impoliteness
Intentional impoliteness	Not intentional impoliteness

*Figure 1: Inherency and intentionality values of impoliteness*

Based on the created matrix, verbal acts containing neither impolite intention nor inherent impoliteness are categorized as politeness, whereas verbal acts containing at least one of the values is categorized as impoliteness. Out of the three value combinations determined as impoliteness, the one in which both inherency and impolite intention are realized contain the most prototypical instance of impoliteness, such as direct insults and threats. In contrast, the category without inherency, in which impoliteness is recognized through intention, consists of the sarcastic use of language, or the use of otherwise politely understood utterances in a contextually offensive

manner. Finally, the last category of inherently but not intentionally impolite utterances allows for the inclusion of accidental use of inappropriate and inherently impolite language. This type of impoliteness can be expected to occur during cases wherein the speaker may not fully grasp the meaning and appropriateness of the used utterances, as may be the case with L2 speakers.

As an example of how the matrix functions in practice, the verbal act *You are so smart* can obtain multiple value combinations depending on the context and be categorized either as politeness or as intentional but not inherent impoliteness, which can then further be understood as mock impoliteness. In the two latter interpretations, the determining factors include whether or not sarcasm is used and detected, and whether or not the speaker and hearer consider each other to be friends or not. However, as the reliability of determining such factors varies considerably within each interactional context, the analysis will allow for the ambiguity of intentionality. This will provide a way to disregard intentionality in cases where a verbal act cannot be unquestionably categorized as intentionally impolite but is nevertheless contextually understood as impoliteness.

In the next stage of analysis, due to the importance of situational power relations in determining the type of impoliteness, a set of guidelines was established to determine how the interlocutors' power relations came into play within each interactional episode. The framework was crafted for the purposes of this study based on the observations made in Section 2.1.2 concerning the contextual roles in the classroom. The resulting five categories, detailed in Table 2, differ from each other based on whether the impoliteness is initiated by the teacher or the students and whether it is directed towards an interlocutor with the same contextual status as the initiator or different. In addition to possible direction between the roles of the student and the teacher, two additional categories were included to allow for the possibility of impoliteness without a specific target.



<b>Direction of impoliteness</b>	<b>Description</b>
Student(s) → Student(s)	Impoliteness towards interlocutor with an equal status
Student(s) → Teacher	Impoliteness towards interlocutor with higher status
Teacher → Student(s)	Impoliteness towards interlocutor with lower status
Student(s) → Unclear	Student-initiated impoliteness without a clear target
Teacher → Unclear	Teacher-initiated impoliteness without a clear target

*Table 2: Directions of impoliteness in the classroom*

After the interlocutors present in each episode were determined, the analysis continued with the categorization of the impoliteness acts further, using a framework based on Mugford's (2008) categories of individual, social and cultural impoliteness. Adapted from Mugford's original definition, individual impoliteness is in the frames of this study taken to encompass the sort of impolite verbal behaviour that is targeted towards a specific hearer, attacking their individual and personal qualities. Calling someone stupid or ugly are examples of behaviours that will always be considered direct attacks, but simply the act of ignoring someone can also be taken as individual impoliteness. The category of social impoliteness, by contrast, was renamed for the sake of clarity as situational impoliteness, as it is used to refer to the type of impoliteness that is determined by situational roles within an interactional context. In this sense, while situational impoliteness may too have an identifiable individual target, unlike individual impoliteness it is defined by the situational roles of the target and the speaker and the power relations between them. The basis of situational impoliteness are then situational norms of interaction; the idea that certain behaviour is more acceptable for certain people and unacceptable for others. For example, in the classroom the teacher is allowed to tell the student to stop talking, whereas if the student were to command the teacher similarly, it would be considered rude.

Lastly, with Mugford's category of cultural impoliteness, I have chosen to expand the original definition to include not only impoliteness targeted at specific ethnicities, but also at any group defined by its cultural norms, such as religion, gender, sexuality, or

subcultural and recreational preferences. Furthermore, cultural impoliteness also contains the sort of behaviour that, while not necessarily directly targeting a specific subculture, is understood as culturally insensitive or taboo according to the cultural norms of the participants present in the interaction. Like situational impoliteness, this type of impoliteness may have a specific target, who is likened to the targeted cultural group in a negative sense. In the school environment, this includes impolite behaviour with for example racist, homophobic, or misogynistic tones, but also impoliteness that is intended to shun certain subcultural or recreational interests, such as identifying others as “nerds” or “goths” with negative intention. The resulting identification framework containing the three categories of impoliteness is presented in Table 2.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
Individual impoliteness	Impoliteness towards clear target(s) that attacks the individual qualities of the hearer
Situational Impoliteness	Impoliteness that may have clear target(s) that is realized based on the norms of appropriateness applied to the situational roles of the speaker and hearer
Cultural impoliteness	Impoliteness that may have clear target(s) that is either directed at a whole cultural group or classified as taboo according to the cultural norms of the majority of interactional participants

*Table 3: Categories of impoliteness*

Each impoliteness act must be closely inspected in their context of occurrence and considered in relation to both the inherency and intentionality values and the directionality at play in order to determine the type of impoliteness used. However, even with these three categories defined as such, it needs to be noted that distinguishing between them still remains somewhat ambiguous in certain situations. Thus, some guidelines need to be established for cases in which the impoliteness can be categorized according to more than one type.

One such case occurs in differentiating between the individual and situational type, wherein the defining factor should be the nature of the interactional episode. In order to

decide whether the impoliteness act is situational in nature, it needs to be determined if the episode in which it occurs can be considered as defined by situational norms or as one that can occur freely in any type of interactional context. For example, in the classroom context when a student ignores the teacher or talks over them when they are attempting to address someone, the action is categorized as situational impoliteness due to the interactional context. While the action of ignoring another person or talking over them can obtain an individually impolite interpretation in most situations, in the case of the teacher and the student, these roles prompt certain behaviour that needs to be adhered to. In this sense, when the student is ignoring a teacher, whether it is intentional or not, they are breaking the norms of their situational role, according to which students should pay attention when the teacher is talking. Furthermore, as the roles are situational, if the teacher were to demand the same type of behaviour from a student outside of the classroom or school context, the act itself could be seen as impolite and the response of ignoring the teacher's demands would be categorized as individual impoliteness.

Moving onto the interview data, the transcript was analysed in order to identify teacher attitudes and practices of intervening to impolite speech in the classroom. This was done first by developing the interview questions themselves in accordance with the goal and then selecting appropriate examples from amongst the responses. One of the key points of interest within the analysis of the teachers' attitudes was the identification of specific strategies they reported having towards impoliteness. The usage of these strategies was also analysed in the classroom data, in order to compare the teachers' perceptions of their own behaviour with the actuality of their classroom practices.

In order to establish a functioning categorization, I chose three types of strategies the teachers could choose to adopt: rejecting, ignoring, or enabling impoliteness. Rejecting impoliteness is used here to refer to the type of practices and behaviour that actively attempt to prevent, restrict, and discourage impoliteness in the classroom. Conversely, ignoring strategies are then defined by the lack of reaction towards impoliteness, which based on the assertions raised in Section 2.1.2 can even be taken to indicate the enablement of such behaviour. However, enabling impoliteness through lack of reaction differs from the final strategy of actively enabling impoliteness, either through implicit or explicit positive feedback or via the teacher's own use of impoliteness, thus setting a

behavioural example for the students. The three possible orientations in the teachers' strategies are presented in Table 5, after which I will move on to the analysis.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Description</b>
Rejecting	Restricting impoliteness with verbal and/or non-verbal means, explicitly discouraging impolite behaviour
Ignoring	Ignoring/disregarding impoliteness, enabling impoliteness by not indicating a stance
Enabling	Enabling impoliteness explicitly through verbal and/or non-verbal means, encouraging impolite behaviour

*Table 4: Teachers' strategies towards classroom impoliteness*

## **4 Analysis**

The analysis of the two data sets is ordered according to the two observed themes: impoliteness in the classroom and teachers' strategies towards it. In Section 4.1, I begin by presenting the impoliteness found within the data, comparing its distribution among the observed lesson sets with background information concerning the participating teachers and student groups. From the total frequency of impoliteness, the analysis moves on to the categorization of the found impoliteness according to the type of impoliteness used, the inherency and intention values at play, and the directedness of the impoliteness acts. Section 4.1.3 then introduces the teachers' perceptions of the three previously analysed aspects of classroom impoliteness. In Section 4.2 the focus is on analysing teachers' strategies towards impoliteness, beginning with the usage of strategies found in the lesson data before moving onto the strategies reported in the interviews.

### **4.1 Impoliteness in the classroom**

After the initial analysis of all 12 recorded lessons the final transcript of classroom data consists of 71 interactional episodes with impoliteness. These episodes contain either one or more identifiable verbal impoliteness acts that can be categorized according to

the frameworks presented in Section 3.3. One verbal impoliteness act is typically performed by one speaker, with the exception of cases where the content of the verbal utterances themselves are meaningless and the impoliteness is born of situational factors, such as a group of students ignoring the teacher. A single verbal impoliteness act may also contain multiple interlinked utterances of the exact same impoliteness type. For example, multiple similar insults by the same speaker towards the same target constitute one verbal impoliteness act. However, if the same speaker were to use another type of impoliteness towards the same or a different target, it is counted as a new impoliteness act. The beginning and the end of each impoliteness episode is determined in relation to the verbal impoliteness acts within; the transcript for each episode thus includes possible triggers and reactions to the impoliteness acts. For example, with episodes containing multiple impoliteness acts, the first impoliteness act can act as a trigger for another impoliteness act.

Within the data, both impoliteness episodes and impoliteness acts occur most frequently during the lesson set with Teacher A. On average, in one 75 minute lesson with Teacher A, interactional episodes containing impoliteness occur almost 8 times, approximately once every ten minutes, and these episodes altogether contain 12 individually identifiable impoliteness acts. With the lesson sets for the other three teachers, the frequency of both impoliteness episodes and individual impoliteness acts is noticeably lower. Impoliteness episodes occur least frequently during the lesson set with Teacher C and impoliteness acts with Teacher B. The full distribution of the episodes and impoliteness acts among the observed lesson sets and lessons can be seen in Table 4. As the data for the current study is limited, these frequencies cannot be used to point towards any general trends concerning the frequency of impoliteness in the classroom. Instead, they will act as reference points for the interviewed teachers' perceptions on impoliteness and its perceived frequency.

	<b>Number of lessons</b>	<b>Total episodes</b>	<b>Episodes per lesson</b>	<b>Total impoliteness acts</b>	<b>Impoliteness acts per lesson</b>
<b>Teacher A</b>	4	31	7.75	48	12
<b>Teacher B</b>	3	14	4.67	19	6.33
<b>Teacher C</b>	2	9	4.5	14	7
<b>Teacher D</b>	3	17	5.67	24	8
<b>All</b>	12	71	5.92	105	8.75

*Table 5: Distribution of impoliteness episodes and impoliteness acts in the classroom data*

Analysing the differences in the distribution of the impoliteness episodes and impoliteness acts, it becomes relevant to address some differences between the observed lesson sets, including the individual characteristics of the student groups and the participating teachers. Such background information is discerned mainly from the interview responses and the observations made during the collection of the lesson data. In some cases, the information was provided by the teacher prior to or after the lessons, and then included into the observation notes.

When looking at the higher frequency of impoliteness during Teacher A's lesson set, there are a few important details regarding Teacher A that may for their part contribute to the difference. For example, in comparison to the other three participating teachers, Teacher A was younger and had less teaching experience. She reported in the interview that at the time she had not yet fully graduated and had only taken on her position as a part-time teacher during the previous spring. She had begun teaching the group of eight graders I observed only a month before the time of the data collection, and her relationship with the class was thus relatively new. She also reported having taught only high school students prior to that fall semester and had, according to her interview responses, initially struggled with adapting to the middle school teaching environment.

In comparison to Teacher A, the other three teachers, whose lesson sets contained less impoliteness, had more teaching experience. At the time, Teacher B and Teacher D had both worked eight years as a teacher, while Teacher C had indisputably the most experience, having taught English for over 30 years. In addition, in the cases of Teacher B and his class of ninth graders and Teacher C and her class of eighth graders, the teachers had more familiarity with the observed groups. Teacher B had been teaching his group English for the past two school years, while Teacher C, despite not having worked as her group's English teacher prior to the observed lessons, had acted as the group's homeroom teacher during the previous school year. The low frequency of impoliteness during the lesson sets with Teacher B and Teacher C could then be the result of the combination of experience with teaching and familiarity with the groups. Contrastingly, Teacher D was not previously familiar with her group of seventh graders and had in fact started working at the school only in the beginning of that school year, two months prior to the time of the data collection. While she had a similar amount of experience as Teacher B, her lack of familiarity with the group could be one of the reasons why impoliteness was slightly more frequent during her lessons.

In addition to the teachers' characteristics and experience, there were also potentially significant differences in the consistency and characteristics of the observed groups. One such factor is the group's familiarity with each other, which was considerably more apparent with Teacher B's ninth graders, who had two years of common history with each other, than with Teacher D's seventh graders, who had only had a few months of time together prior to the data collection. In regard to possible group student identities within the observed classes, Teacher B's group was altogether the most motivated towards learning and Teacher B's assessment of the English proficiency among the ninth graders was high. In contrast, Teacher A's group was noticeably more diverse in composition, with both highly skilled students and students with noted difficulties in learning, as observable from the presence of a teaching assistant during the group's lessons. There was one group of students in particular who had a tendency of disrupting the lesson with unrelated remarks, and most of the impoliteness recorded in the data originates from interaction involving them. In the case of Teacher C's eighth-grade group and Teacher D's seventh-grade group, there were certain similarities in the groups' compositions and the atmosphere during the lessons. Both groups had, according to the teachers' assessments, mostly skilled students, whose motivation

towards learning varied. The lessons observed with these groups can be characterized as lively, with lots of disruptions to the lesson plan and many interactions unrelated to the lesson topic.

#### 4.1.1 Frequency of classroom impoliteness

In my analysis of the directions of impoliteness in the classroom data, I found the most common categories to be the ones where impoliteness is initiated by a student. There are 34 cases of student-initiated impoliteness with the target being another student and 46 cases where the target is unclear. The third most frequent category of directionality is also student-initiated with the target being the teacher, although such impoliteness acts appear noticeably less frequently with only 14 identified cases in the data. However, the drop in frequency is even more clear when comparing student-initiated impoliteness with teacher-initiated impoliteness, as teacher-initiated student-targeted impoliteness occurs only 6 times and teacher-initiated impoliteness without a clear target only 2 times. Besides these five initially determined categories, thorough analysis of the data revealed a sixth category of impoliteness instances where either the initiator or the target of impoliteness is not present within the classroom. Such cases occur 2 times in the data. The distribution of the different possible directions can be seen in Figure 2.

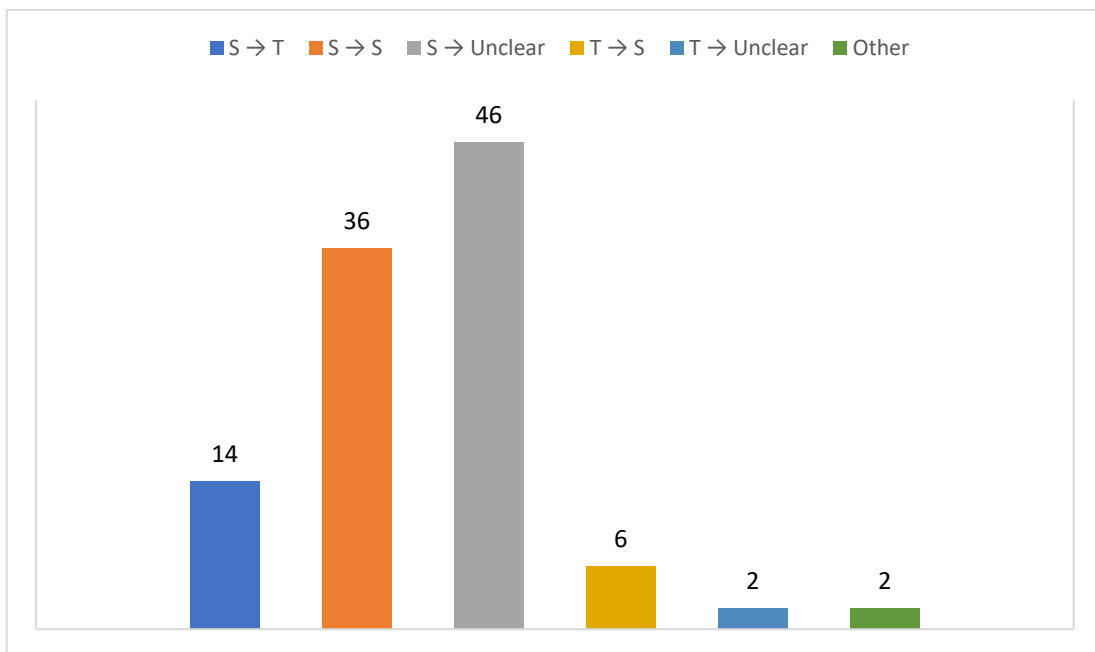


Figure 2: Directionality of impoliteness in the classroom



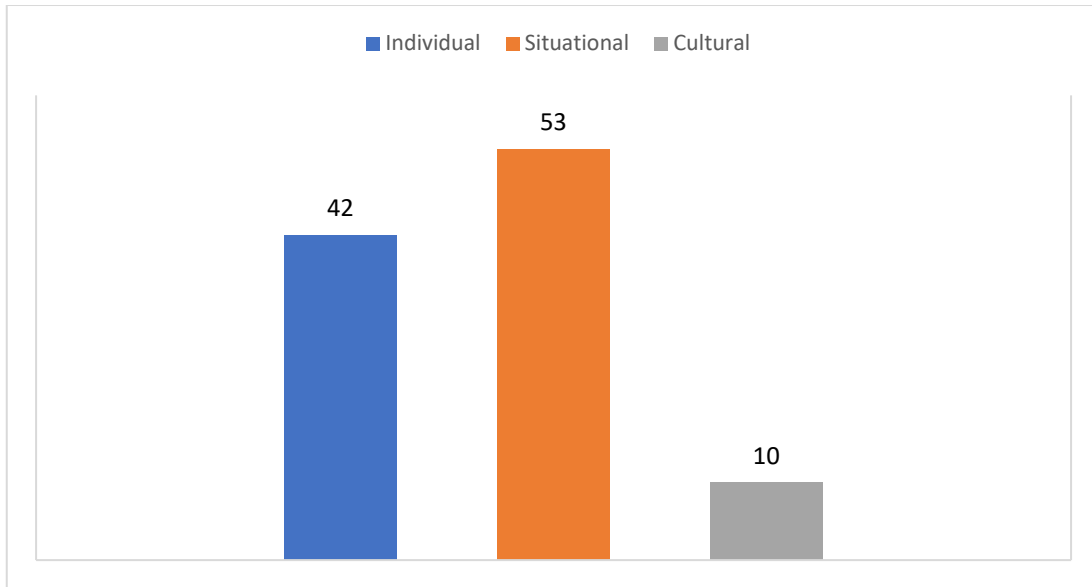
Comparing the overall frequency of directionality with the distribution of the impoliteness acts amongst the four lesson sets reveals some interesting differences. Whereas within the lesson sets with Teacher B student-initiated impoliteness without a clear target is noticeably more common than student-initiated student-targeted impoliteness, in the sets with Teacher A and D the difference between the two is quite minimal, as illustrated in Table 6. The frequency of teacher-initiated impoliteness types is comparatively more common in the lesson set with Teacher B, while within the other lesson sets their occurrence almost non-existent. Furthermore, teacher-targeted impoliteness occurs with a similar frequency during all lesson sets except Teacher D's, during which it is completely absent. These differences can be speculated to result from behavioural differences between the observed groups, the teachers' relationships with their students, and other individual factors. For example, the emergence of student-initiated student-targeted impoliteness can be attributed to the students' familiarity with each other. As such, the differences between the four data sets serve as a reminder that the emergence of specific impolite behaviour in the classroom is ultimately dependent on circumstances.

	$S \rightarrow T$	$T \rightarrow S$	$S \rightarrow S$	$S \rightarrow U$	$T \rightarrow U$	Other
Teacher A	6	2	20	18	0	2
Teacher B	5	3	0	9	2	0
Teacher C	3	0	4	7	0	0
Teacher D	0	1	11	12	0	0

*Table 6: Distribution of directionality in the classroom data*

Moving forward from the directionality of impoliteness, the next part of analysis covers the impoliteness types in the data. Analysing the individual impoliteness acts, I was able to determine that examples of all three categories of impoliteness, individual, situational and cultural impoliteness, are found in the data. Out of the three categories, the most frequently used form of impoliteness is situational impoliteness with 53 identified cases, meaning that more than half of the total impoliteness acts in the classroom data belong

under situational impoliteness. The second most frequent category is individual impoliteness with 42 identified cases. The least frequent category in the data is cultural impoliteness, which is identified in only 10 of the total verbal impoliteness acts found. The total frequency of the impoliteness types found in the data is illustrated in Figure 3.



*Figure 3: Frequency of impoliteness types in the classroom*

Concerning the distribution of these impoliteness types amongst the four observed lesson sets, there are again some differences. For example, while situational impoliteness is overall the most frequently identified type, its occurrences are distributed rather evenly with cases of individual impoliteness within Teacher A's and Teacher D's lesson sets, with individual impoliteness actually being slightly more common in the latter set. In contrast, in the lesson sets with Teacher B and Teacher C, situational impoliteness is noticeably more frequent than the other types, with the contrast appearing most salient in the case of Teacher B. Cultural impoliteness occurs most frequently in the lesson set with Teacher A, as can be expected based on the overall frequency of impoliteness, but interestingly enough does not occur at all during the lesson set with teacher C. The full distribution of the types of impoliteness can be seen in Table 7.

	Individual	Situational	Cultural
Teacher A	20	22	6
Teacher B	5	12	2
Teacher C	5	9	0
Teacher D	12	10	2

*Table 7: Distribution of impoliteness episodes and impoliteness acts in the classroom data*

#### **4.1.2 Features of classroom impoliteness**

Next, I will move on to a more in-depth analysis of specific example episodes chosen from the data, attempting to illustrate how the directionality influences the type of impoliteness found, and how the inherency and intentionality values come into play within the impoliteness acts. The section is ordered according to the directions of impoliteness, providing insight to which categories of impoliteness are typical in connection to each possible direction. As the focus of the study is on student-initiated impoliteness, such impoliteness acts will be covered first and more thoroughly, before briefly covering teacher-initiated impoliteness. Furthermore, the effect of the multilingual environment of the language classroom and the English-Finnish code-switching on the impoliteness within the episodes is considered in connection to certain relevant examples. The original Finnish transcripts of the translated episodes can be found in Appendix 4.

Beginning with student-initiated impoliteness with no clear target, this type of impoliteness was overall most frequent during all four lesson sets. The occurrence of such impolite verbal behaviour is in the identified examples most commonly linked with situational impoliteness, such as disruptive behaviour, disobedience towards the teacher, and complaints regarding the lesson. In addition to having an unclear target, these situational impoliteness acts are also typically defined by the ambiguity of their intentionality, whereas inherency varies from case to case. The range of uses is illustrated in Examples 1-3. As noted in Section 3.2, the use of italics in the episodes

signals code-switching between Finnish and English, with all originally Finnish utterances translated and italicized in the transcripts.

- (1) The teacher is collecting all unnecessary items from desks before a listening comprehension test after asking the students to put away their belongings multiple times. (Teacher A, Lesson 2).

1 T: can you like put all the extra stuff here?  
 2 S: {whining tone} *nooooooooooooooooooooo*  
 3 T: yes (.) you don't need it right now (.) let's put everything extra in here

- (2) The teacher instructs the students to read words out loud. (Teacher D, Lesson 1).

1 T: say them in Finnish as well  
 2 S: *I don't wanna do this exercise*  
 3 T: you can just— just say it out loud  
 4 S: *it's so dumb*  
 5 T: {moves away}

- (3) The teacher tries to regain silence and focus after a speaking exercise. (Teacher C, Lesson 2).

1 T: {talking over students' chatter} okay! {claps hands} thank you let's have a  
 2 pause now and—  
 3 {chatter continues}  
 4 T: thank you!  
 5 {chatter continues}  
 6 T: {frustrated tone} thanks  
 7 {chatter continues}  
 8 T: shh!  
 9 {chatter gradually subsides}

Example 1 portrays an interactional episode in which the student initially refuses the teacher's request. While the student's verbal act is not inherently impolite, it is recognized as such due to situational factors; the student does not provide a satisfactory reason for not wanting to do as the teacher requests, but rather expresses the refusal through whining, a behaviour that is generally regarded as unsuitable in the classroom context. Example 2 likewise features a student's refusal, which is then followed by an inherently and intentionally impolite complaint on line 4. However, the student's complaint is not directed at the teacher, but rather the exercise, making it situationally inappropriate and undirected. Finally, in Example 3 we can see how the impoliteness is initiated by a group of students failing to pay attention to the teacher, thus appearing situationally impolite, with no clear indication whether it is intentional or not.

In addition to situational impoliteness, there are also some examples of undirected student-initiated cultural impoliteness in the data. Such impoliteness acts typically have

an impolite intention that is contextually realized as an attempt to use impoliteness in a playful manner, as seen in the following examples.

- (4) Teacher opens the classroom door and greets the arriving students. (Teacher A, Lesson 2).

1 T: *good morning* [S]!  
2 S: waddup niggers

- (5) The students invent questions they want to ask from an upcoming guest speaker on anonymous online message board Flinga. (Teacher D, Lesson 1).

1 S: {laughing} *I wrote* you mom gayyy!  
2 T: shh (.) please put appropriate questions

Example 4 illustrates how the student uses ethnically and culturally insensitive language in what they, most likely, consider a humorous greeting. This type of language use corresponds with the way the phenomenon of teenage talk typically transpires; while the greeting is presented in response to the teacher's prompt, the impoliteness within is not directed at the teacher, but possibly used to elicit a response. However, neither the teacher nor any of the students present in the classroom acknowledge or comment on the greeting or its inappropriateness in any way. One possible reason behind the teacher's choice to ignore the impoliteness act is connected to the code-switching that occurs during the interaction; the teacher greets the student in Finnish while the student responds in English. The teacher may, then, interpret the student's use of the inappropriate greeting as an attempt to imitate a type of informal speech style they have heard in the media without full understanding of its cultural aspects and offensive value.

In Example 5, on the other hand, by failing to comply appropriately to the instructions of the given task, the student is both disrupting the lesson and disobeying the teacher, similarly to the earlier examples of undirected situational impoliteness. However, the impoliteness type in this case is defined by the intentional choice to use "gayness" as an insult, making the remark culturally loaded. While there is a defined addressee to the questions posted on the message board, the purpose of the impoliteness act is not to reach the person, as the students are aware that the teacher will censor out inappropriate messages. Instead, the purpose of the impoliteness usage appears to be to make others laugh at the insult itself, signalled by the speaker's own laughter, making it an example of undirected mock impoliteness. However, Example 5 also illustrates how the teacher

treats the impoliteness act as inappropriate despite the playful manner of presentation, explicitly rejecting it in her response.

Moving forward from undirected impoliteness, with student-initiated student-targeted impoliteness it should be remembered that while the overall frequency is high, the occurrence of such impoliteness acts varies noticeably between the lesson sets. Despite the difference in frequency, the characteristics of these impoliteness acts are similar across all lesson sets. Whereas within undirected impoliteness acts individual impoliteness could not by definition occur, as it requires a target, most of the impoliteness acts between student initiator and target are individually and inherently impolite. Such impoliteness acts also typically have an impolite intention, although based on contextual factors they can in most cases be argued to be understood as mock impoliteness, as in Example 6. However, the occurrence of individual impoliteness is not limited to cases of playful impoliteness usage, as Example 7 showcases. There are also some episodes where it is difficult or impossible to interpret the students' intention even based on contextual clues or the background information provided in the observation notes, as in Example 8.

- (6) After a presentation by S1 and another student, which the other students have to grade, S1 asks S2 about what they had written on the review sheet.  
(Teacher D, Lesson 3).

1 S1: *well what did you write there?*  
2 S2: {laughing} *that you talk like you're retarded*  
3 T: *shh! hey! {speaking quietly to S2} we don't say things like that*

- (7) S1 is complaining about the lesson plan to S3 while the teacher is setting up a video. (Teacher A, Lesson 1).

1 S1: *I don't wanna watch fucking Winnie the Pooh*  
2 S2: {turns from their seat towards S1} *language*  
3 S1: *shut the fuck up*  
4 S2: *language*  
5 S1: *seriously shut your fucking mouth {raises middle finger}*  
6 S2: *finger language*  
7 S3: [S2] *that's really not funny*

- (8) A group of students is having a disagreement about their joint presentation.  
(Teacher C, Lesson 2).

1 S1: *yeah but isn't it—*  
2 S2: *shut up!*  
3 T: *hey! no*

Example 6 is a typical interaction involving impoliteness between two students, who appear to be friendly with each other both before and after the interaction, thus hinting at an interpretation of mock impoliteness for the used impoliteness act. However, it is notable that while most similar cases in the data rarely prompt teacher involvement, in this example the teacher interjects and explicitly rejects the student's use of impoliteness. As the impoliteness act in question occurs directly in response to a spoken presentation as a part of peer feedback, it is possible that the teacher is alerted by the negative effects of harmful repair practices (other reasons for the teachers' choice of strategy will be elaborated more closely in Section 4.2).

In contrast, the students involved in the interaction occurring in Example 7 do not have the same kind of familiarity with each other as the students in the previous example. This episode is initiated by S1's undirected complaint about the lesson program, which is interpreted by S2 as inappropriate and then rejected with the reminders that profanities are not allowed in the classroom, on lines 2, 4 and 6. In turn, S1 rejects the reminders through an inherent and intentional impoliteness act in the form of two silencers, on lines 3 and 5. This response, as well as S3's assessment of S2's behaviour as "not funny" on line 7, suggest that they have interpreted S2's lines as impoliteness. However, the type of impoliteness in the reminders is not individual, but situational; by attempting to reject S1's language choice, S2 is essentially making a claim to the role of the teacher and placing themselves higher than S1 in the chain of authority. The reminders are not inherently impolite, but they have an ambiguously impolite intention, that is picked up and rejected by S1 and S3. An interesting factor in considering why the intention is interpreted as such is the choice of language in the example. While S1 initiates the interaction by speaking Finnish, S2 chooses to use English. This choice is reminiscent of the way EFL teachers may use English despite students' use of Finnish, further emphasizing S2's claim on the position.

Moving on to Example 8, the impoliteness act in the episode is once again an inherently impolite silencer directed at the previous speaker. In this case, however, the intentionality of the impoliteness act is somewhat ambiguous; the students in question do appear to be friendly with each other, but the context itself suggests that the impoliteness may be born out of actual frustration. This is further supported by the teacher's interjection, where she verbally rejects the use of impoliteness. However, the

group is able to continue functioning after the interaction and overall S1 shows no signs of having taken offense.

As with undirected student-initiated impoliteness, student-targeted impoliteness acts also occasionally attain culturally loaded dimensions. Such is the case in Example 9, in which there are multiple student-initiated and student-targeted impoliteness acts. The episode begins with three consecutive insults, two of which are targeted at S4 and one at S1. However, S1's first impoliteness act does not end in line 1. The original impoliteness act continues in line 9, where midway through the impoliteness type changes, beginning a new impoliteness act. S1's other impoliteness act contrasts being a woman or being gay with negative qualities, much like Example 5 earlier. Similarly, S1 and S4, as well as the other students present in the interaction, appear to be on friendly terms all throughout the observed lesson set, suggesting that the interactional episode is an example of ritual insulting, thus obtaining a contextually mock impolite interpretation.

(9) Conversation between students during exercise. (Teacher A, Lesson 1).

- 1 S1: *I don't know but they're ugly if nothing else*
- 2 S2: I mean look at your shoes
- 3 S3: [S4's] *shoes are fucking //ugly*
- 4 S4: *//my shoes cost more than //[[indistinct speech]*
- 5 S1: *//it's not about the price*
- 6 man
- 7 S2: *but it is*
- 8 S3: *it's about the swag*
- 9 S1: *those are ugly (.) those are ugly as fuck (.) those are women shoes (.)*
- 10 *you're a woman (.) those are fucking (.) gay shoes*

Example 9 is also interesting when considering the prevalent code-switching that occurs in the episode. While both S1's and S3's original insults, on lines 1 and 3 respectively, are in Finnish, after S4's defence of his shoes the two change into English. S3 does not insult S4 further, but rather chooses to elaborate on lines 5-6 and 8 on the reasoning behind his views in a manner that is distinctly more playful than the initial insult. In contrast, S1 continues on his line of insulting, but the code-switching into English and consequent tone shift begun by S3's previous turn makes the insults seem less hurtful than his original insult. The use of English in softening the blow of impoliteness is also apparent in S2's insult directed at S1 on line 2, which resembles a humorous interjection.



With student-initiated and student-targeted impoliteness acts, only one example of situational impoliteness is found in the data (see Example 7). Contrastingly, within student-initiated impoliteness acts targeted at the teacher, situational impoliteness is distinctly the most common category. Episodes containing this type of impoliteness in the data typically entail a student explicitly questioning the teacher's choices and authority, setting unauthorized demands, or threatening the teacher. However, there are notable differences in the usage of teacher-targeted impoliteness between the observed data sets; while such impoliteness is comparatively more frequent during Teacher B's lessons, it has an impolite intention less often than during the other lesson sets and is more commonly understood as individual mock-impoliteness. The following examples illustrate how teacher-targeted impoliteness acts vary from situational impoliteness to individual impoliteness and in terms of intention and inherency.

- (10) The teacher tries to get the class to quiet down before a listening comprehension exercise. (Teacher C, Lesson 1).

1 T: okay here we go (.)  
 2 {students continue chattering}  
 3 S1: shh! shh!  
 4 T: {disappointed tone} *some teacher said in the first period that they will start*  
 5 *writing a list where they'll mark down whenever somebody's making too*  
 6 *much noise* {sighing} *I'll probably have to start doing the same (.) that's*  
 7 *something I don't want to do and I've never had to do it before (.) but I will be*  
 8 *forced to if I always have //to wait—*  
 9 S2: // {indignant tone} *just do it then!*  
 10 T: [S2]! {snaps fingers and points} *quiet now!*  
 11 S2: {mocking tone} *shut up!*  
 12 {a few students laugh}  
 13 T: *you won't talk any more*

- (11) The teacher pauses the tape during a listening comprehension test. (Teacher A, Lesson 2).

1 S: {accusing tone} *why the heck did you pause there, now?*  
 2 T: because these are like— because after this we are going to hear the answer  
 3 to the next question

- (12) The teacher ups the difficulty in a memory game. (Teacher B, Lesson 2).

1 T: next (.) I'm gonna take out two words!  
 2 S1: *ooh*  
 3 S2: *ooh*  
 4 S3: *woah*  
 5 S1: {sarcastic tone} *you're getting wild*  
 6 {students laugh}  
 7 T: {sarcastic tone} *thanks*

Example 10 and Example 11 are suitably representative instances of situational impoliteness targeted at the teacher that is intended to undermine the teacher's authority. In Example 10, the student's intention appears to be to ridicule the teacher through a set of demands. The episode features two separate impoliteness acts by the same initiator, S2, as the impoliteness acts in lines 9 and 11 differ in terms of inherency; the first one is not inherently impolite, but recognized as impoliteness through intention, while the second impoliteness act is an inherently impolite silencer. Similarly, Example 11 features a question, which forces the teacher to defend their choice of action. Yet, it should be noted that the act of questioning in itself is not what makes the behaviour impolite, but the manner of presentation, which is inherently impolite and goes against the situational norms of the classroom.

Conversely, in Example 12 S1's comment is not inherently impolite, but rather revealed as impoliteness paraverbally through the use of sarcastic tone of voice as well as by the teacher's similarly sarcastic response in line 7. The impoliteness act is targeted at the teacher, but the intention is not necessarily to insult but to poke fun and make other students laugh at the teacher's expense. The interaction is in this way reminiscent of the impoliteness episodes found between students who retain friendly relations with each other despite the used impoliteness acts, suggesting a close relationship between the teacher and the students in question. This observation is in line with known information about Teacher B and his class having worked together for two school years prior to the study. Thus, the familiarity of the teacher and the group may in part explain the low frequency of actually impolitely intended teacher-targeted impoliteness as well as the higher frequency of teacher-initiated impoliteness during the lesson set.

Before moving on to further considerations concerning teacher-initiated impoliteness, it is necessary to view the sixth category of directionality found in the data after the initial five categories had been established. This category contains two impoliteness acts within two interactional episodes. These episodes, presented in Examples 13 and 14, occur in connection with each other during the same conversation concerning mean messages one of the students had received on the social media application Snapchat. The first episode contains a student-initiated impoliteness act targeted at a specific person outside of the classroom, whereas the episode in Example 14 features an

inherent impoliteness act initiated by the previously targeted person and re-expressed by S1 within the situation.

- (13) S1 and S2 are discussing mean messages S2 has received on Snapchat.  
(Teacher A, Lesson 1).

1 S1: *I sent them a pic and then they sent back the same thing as before*  
 2 S2: *well send back (.) like* {holds up both his middle fingers}  
 3 S1: *should I //send—*  
 4 T: //no! no I'm not letting you do that! that's naughty  
 5 S2: *okay okay okay (.) just this finger* {holds up one of his middle fingers}  
 6 S1: [laughs]  
 7 T: no! [laughs]

- (14) The debate about the snapchat discussion continues with S3 joining in.  
(Teacher A, Lesson 1).

1 S3: *what are they doing to you?*  
 2 S1: *well*  
 3 S2: *tell him what they said to you*  
 4 S1: *whore*  
 5 T: *hey—*  
 6 S1: {pointing at S4} *and she's apparently [NAME's] woman*  
 7 T: *hey! The question is can you— if for example there are people in social*  
 8 *media who're bothering you can you block those people? (.) I recommend*  
 9 *just blocking them*

In Example 13, S1 relays the content of the messages she has sent and received on Snapchat, which triggers S2 to suggest responding with the use of inherently recognizable impoliteness, which he demonstrates in line 2. However, before S1 can ask for further advice, the teacher intervenes in the interaction, explicitly condemning the use of such inappropriate behaviour. Although in line 2, S2's impoliteness act appears intentionally impolite, the teacher's intervention causes S2 to use a more humorous approach as he continues to suggest the use of impoliteness in line 5, ultimately succeeding in making both S1 and the teacher laugh. Interestingly, while the laughter in response to S2's impoliteness act sends out a positive, or even enabling signal, the teacher still explicitly denies the use of impoliteness in line 7. In Example 14, as S1 further elaborates the content of the message targeted towards herself, the teacher once again recognizes the impoliteness and further advises the students on how to respond to instances of inappropriate electronic messages or cyber-bullying.

With student-initiated directions of impoliteness accounted for, it is necessary to also consider teacher-initiated impoliteness, as these categories may potentially influence each other. The teacher-initiated impoliteness acts found in the data are divided amongst

three of the observed lesson sets with no instances found in Teacher C's lesson set. As mentioned, most examples of this type of impoliteness are found within the lesson set with Teacher B, while only three instances in total are found during Teacher A's and D's lesson sets.

One characteristic common to all teacher-initiated cases in the data is that none of them included inherent impoliteness, possibly due to the teacher's awareness of their position as a role model within the classroom context and ensuing attempts to avoid easily recognisable forms of impoliteness. However, as the overall frequency of teacher-initiated impoliteness is so low, it is impossible to determine any recurring tendencies between the cases with certainty. Nevertheless, as with teacher-targeted impoliteness, comparing the impoliteness-acts in Teacher B's lesson set with all other instances found does point towards some kind of a difference in usage. Firstly, similarly to teacher-targeted impoliteness, most teacher-initiated acts during Teacher B's set are contextually realized as mock impoliteness, while the examples from other sets feature either non-playfully impolite or ambiguously impolite intention. Secondly, there are examples found in all three lesson sets of teacher-initiated impoliteness being triggered by the occurrence of student-initiated impoliteness. Thirdly, although all three impoliteness categories are found in connection to the teacher-initiated impoliteness acts in the data, cultural impoliteness is found only during Teacher B's lesson set and only within undirected impoliteness acts. These observations are reflected in the following examples.

- (15) After a pair discussion exercise concerning group work the teacher asks the students to share the results of their discussion. (Teacher B, Lesson 2).

1 S: I think I'm not maybe the best team player  
 2 T: oh really?  
 3 S: yeah to be honest  
 4 T: (.) {mocking tone} yeah  
 5 {a few students laugh}  
 5 S: {sarcastic tone} thanks

- (16) The students are arriving into the classroom before the lesson.  
 (Teacher A, Lesson 3).

1 S: *we need to watch a movie or I'm leaving*  
 2 T: you can't say that  
 3 S: *well I just did*  
 4 T: {mocking tone} ooooh!

- (17) The teacher comments on the events of a story created by the students.  
(Teacher B, Lesson 1).

1 T: it's like getting to a teenager's mind (.) {playful tone} going to the shop  
 2 buying some food getting depressed killing yourself  
 3 {a few students laugh}  
 4 S: {disapproving tone} oh (.) that's (.) that's //not— that's not //funny  
 5 T: //no //no it's not (.)  
 6 let's not go there  
 6 S: let's not yeah

In Example 15, impoliteness during the teacher's utterance in line 4 is realized through the used tone of voice and the contextual mismatch between the teacher's expected role and actual behaviour. In essence, the teacher is by default not expected to agree with the students' negative perceptions of themselves, but rather encourage and facilitate development. However, in the case of Example 15, the teacher's use of impoliteness is not understood as meanspirited, but rather interpreted as mock-impoliteness, similarly to the episode of student-initiated impoliteness in Example 12, which occurs earlier during the same lesson. As such, the used impoliteness act in Example 15 functions more as a means of building camaraderie between the teacher and the student than as actual discouragement.

In contrast, the teacher-initiated impoliteness in Example 16 is realized as intentional impoliteness. The episode is initiated with student-initiated situational impoliteness, as the student arriving into the class begins the interaction by setting a demand for the teacher, challenging her authority. The teacher initially responds to the student's impoliteness with an explicit restrictive strategy by stating that such behaviour is not acceptable. However, as the student continues to challenge the teacher in line 3, the used impoliteness act triggers the teacher to change her strategy and respond with the use of a mocking exclamation, possibly meant to insinuate that the teacher is not threatened by the student's behaviour. Another possible trigger for the teacher's choice to use impoliteness besides the student's impoliteness act in the situation is the relationship between the teacher and the student in question. As mentioned before, Teacher A's class of eight-graders included a group of students who were particularly negatively oriented towards classroom norms, and the student in Example 16 is one of the students from this group. Against this context, the teacher may have had multiple similar interactions with the student prior to the one shown, and therefore developed a sense of what kind of response will produce a desired result.

Finally, the last episode containing teacher-initiated impoliteness in Example 17 illustrates how the teacher attempts to joke with the students using a cultural taboo, mental illness. The used impoliteness act is undirected and has a mock impolite intention, but it is explicitly rejected by one of the students. While the impoliteness used by the teacher initially sends out the message that such jokes are allowed, the teacher retracts this message upon hearing the student's negative response. This reaction illustrates the use of both enabling and restricting strategies towards impoliteness, which will be further considered in Section 4.2.

#### **4.1.3 Teachers' perceptions of impoliteness in the classroom**

In this section, I will elaborate on the perceptions and opinions voiced by the four participating teachers during the interviews. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the teachers were not informed of the topic of the study prior to the interviews and as such had no time to prepare for the interview questions or the addressed topics beforehand. At the beginning of each interview, the concept of classroom impoliteness was introduced to the four teachers as encompassing not only aggressive and profane behaviour, but also the kind of behaviour that goes against classroom norms and is viewed negatively in the learning environment. A few examples were provided to the teachers, including disruptive behaviour, disobedience, and inappropriate commenting or joking. However, overall the definition of impoliteness was left deliberately ambiguous, as the teachers were assured that they could choose to bring up any sort of behaviour they themselves wanted to. As the original interviews were held in Finnish, all excerpts shown are translated. The original Finnish extracts can be found in Appendix 5.

In the interview, when asked to describe typical forms of impolite behaviour they had come across in the classroom, Teacher A brought up that student-initiated impoliteness in the classroom can be directed at either the teacher or other students. In connection to impoliteness targeted at other students, the response in Example 18 specifically mentions examples that can be considered forms of individual and inherently recognizable impoliteness, whereas with teacher-targeted impoliteness the response raises examples of situational impoliteness. In addition to these, Teacher A's response in Example 19 also mentions teacher-initiated impoliteness, noting that she had sometimes felt like her own behaviour could begin to lean towards impoliteness, surmising that it may be connected to her own young age.

- (18) [Typically, impolite behaviour includes] students being impolite towards each other, for example leaving others out or some form of jeering or even full out obscenities and insults. [It can also be] some kind of otherwise hindering behaviour, like having a negative attitude towards me. (Teacher A).
- (19) I also recognize and confess that sometimes it is difficult for myself to act cool and polite, when somebody is for example constantly testing me. Maybe it has to do with me being so young, that sometimes I really want to say back in kind, even though I know I'm in such a position [that I can't]. (Teacher A).

Teacher B, on the other hand, is in his responses more focused on student-initiated teacher-targeted or undirected impoliteness. His response in Example 20 brings up student disobedience and the act of tantalizing the teacher as examples of typical impolite behaviour in the classroom. As an elaboration, Example 21 depicts instances of students denying the teacher's request, which corresponds with the typical examples of situational impoliteness found in the classroom data (see Examples 1 and 2).

- (20) At its most typical, [classroom impoliteness] takes the form of a certain kind of disobedience, meaning that students won't do as I say or that sometimes they'll also tantalize me on purpose. It's sort of like snapping back at me. (Teacher B).
- (21) The most typical [type of impoliteness] is probably when I ask a student to do something and their response is "no, I won't". Of course, they can say it in other words besides those-- (Teacher B).

Like Teacher A and Teacher B, also Teacher C references situationally impolite behaviour in her interview answers. As with Teacher B, Teacher C's perceptions of typical classroom impoliteness are focused on teacher-targeted and undirected forms of student-initiated impoliteness, such as denying the teacher's requests to calm down. Her response in Example 22 also brings up the use of swearwords, noting that as a personal preference she does not tolerate swearing in the classroom, even when it is undirected. When considering impoliteness between students in Example 23, Teacher C's response brings up physical aggression, as well as students shouting at each other, especially during presentations. Such instances may, depending on the situation, be interpreted as either situational or individual impoliteness.

- (22) A common type [of impoliteness] is that students make noise and won't calm down when I ask. Then there's swearing; if students swear [during the lesson] it's something I personally don't like, even if it isn't directed at me. (Teacher C).
- (23) Then there are fights, where students get physical [with each other]. [...] The worst kind [of impoliteness] in my opinion, is when students shout out at another student, who is for example holding a presentation. [...] That can have really long-lasting consequences for a more sensitive person. (Teacher C).

Amongst the teachers, Teacher D's response brings up the most specific types of impoliteness. Her initial response in Example 24 references inherently impolite insults, especially culturally impolite name calling. Furthermore, in reference to a specific type of individually impolite name calling between female students the response speculates the insults to be part of rapport between friends, thus alluding to the possibility of mock impoliteness. In her latter response in Example 25, Teacher D also references teacher-targeted situational impoliteness, more specifically the challenging of teacher authority, in her answer.

- (24) Some examples that I come across in middle-school include racist name calling and using gayness as an insult. [...] Girls call each other "whore", but I have heard that it's something they treat as a joke. [...] Disability as a theme is also prevalent, as are all the groups that have been disadvantaged in society. You can really notice that the [used] insults will strike the people that are already down. (Teacher D).
- (25) Another type of impoliteness that is common besides name calling is a sort of impatient selfishness, which has increased over the years. The sort of "I want everything now" -attitude. [Students] may try to boss around the teacher, saying things like "you come here right now". (Teacher D).

In addition to compiling experiences and perceptions of specific forms of impoliteness, the teachers were also asked to describe how common or uncommon they feel impoliteness is in the classroom. Interestingly enough, there is significant variation in the teachers' estimates. Whereas both Teacher A's and Teacher B's responses characterize impoliteness as something that can, depending on the circumstances, be fairly frequent, Teacher D's and Teacher C's views on the matter appear to be completely opposite of each other. In her response in Example 29, Teacher D reports impoliteness to be a daily occurrence, while in Example 28 Teacher C contrastingly estimates impoliteness to be fairly uncommon, particularly when intentional.

- (26) [The frequency of impoliteness] probably depends on the group quite a bit, but [...] there's definitely always some of it. (Teacher A).
- (27) [Impoliteness] can be even daily, but usually it's maybe not that [common]. Probably every other day, however. (Teacher B).
- (28) If I think about all of my teaching groups, [impoliteness] is not very common. [...] Students being intentionally impolite is in my view very rare, actually. (Teacher C).
- (29) I'd say [impoliteness] is basically daily. (Teacher D).

After the initial frequency estimates, the teachers were further asked to elaborate on whether they felt like the regularity of impoliteness in the classroom had either



increased or decreased during their time as a teacher. Teacher A, having worked as a teacher for only a short period of time, was unable to answer, while the other three teachers all provided answers that differ greatly from each other. Teacher B's response states that he felt like there had been no increase in impoliteness, whereas Teacher C's and D's answers are once again opposite. Teacher C estimates that impoliteness had decreased throughout her career, which she attributes to the increase in her own authority and expertise as a teacher. By contrast, Teacher D's response previously in Example 25 shows that she felt as though certain type of situationally impolite behaviour had noticeably increased.

(30) I haven't experienced any sort of trend that impoliteness would have increased. (Teacher B).

(31) My own authority has very clearly increased. Impoliteness is decreasing in the sense that there's always a way of making the students behave. (Teacher C)

For most parts, the teachers' perceptions of classroom impoliteness and its frequency align with the analysis of the classroom data. Situational and individual impoliteness are emphasized in the responses with only Teacher D mentioning examples that can be considered forms of cultural impoliteness, matching the overall frequency of the impoliteness types illustrated in Figure 3. With situational impoliteness, the teachers' responses factor in specific types of behaviour such as disruptiveness, demands for the teacher, negative attitudes towards learning, and inability to concentrate, adequately matching the impoliteness acts found during the lesson sets.

However, with frequency, teacher-targeted impoliteness is somewhat highlighted in the responses in comparison to the other student-initiated forms of impoliteness, which are found more commonly in the data. Likewise, the possibility of teacher-initiated impoliteness is only mentioned by Teacher A even though it is also found during Teacher B's and D's lesson sets. Such discrepancies may result from the teachers' own definition of impoliteness in the classroom involving only student-initiated impoliteness, as no examples of teacher-initiated impoliteness were provided prior to starting the interview. Further comparison and discussion of the reasons behind possible differences are provided in Chapter 5.

## **4.2 Teachers' strategies**

In this section, I will move to the analysis of teacher strategies towards impoliteness in the classroom. In the framework crafted for this study, the strategies available to the teachers are categorized as either restricting, ignoring or enabling. Due to the known norms of discourse within the classroom, as addressed in Section 2.1, it is likely that teachers will ideally prefer the use of restrictive strategies. However, in order to encompass all choices made, it is necessary to further analyse the impoliteness episodes found in the data. The section will therefore begin with an overview of the frequency of identified instances of the strategies being used during the observed lesson sets, with example cases illustrating found tendencies in their usage. From the analysis of the classroom data, I will move on to the interview responses, identifying self-reported strategies and teachers' preferences and perceptions concerning them.

### **4.2.1 Strategies in the classroom data**

In analysing the strategies teachers use in regard to student-initiated impoliteness acts, the episodes chosen for the analysis were selected based on the probability of them having been heard by the teacher. Thus, episodes during which the teacher was not present in the classroom or in close physical proximity to the interaction's participants were excluded from the analysis. Likewise excluded were episodes where the teacher was present and suitably nearby, but it could not be ascertained based on the audio recordings or the accompanying observation notes that the teacher had noticed or heard the interaction take place. Concerning the other possible directions of classroom impoliteness, the use of teacher-initiated impoliteness is by default analysed as the use of enabling strategies, based on the teacher's status as the authority figure in charge of setting a behavioural example in the classroom.

After the exclusion of ineligible episodes from amongst the previously determined 71 impoliteness episodes, the final classroom data transcript for the analysis of teacher strategies contains 58 impoliteness episodes. As stated above, these episodes could contain multiple impoliteness acts and consequently multiple examples of strategy usages by the teacher. However, in many cases the teacher would react to multiple impoliteness acts with a single strategy. In addition, the teacher could in certain cases use multiple strategies in reaction to a single impoliteness act. Due to the difficulties this caused in determining which strategy was used in reaction to which specific impoliteness act, the frequency of the used strategies is measured in relation to the

found impoliteness episodes, rather than individual impoliteness acts. The results of the analysis are shown in Figure 4.

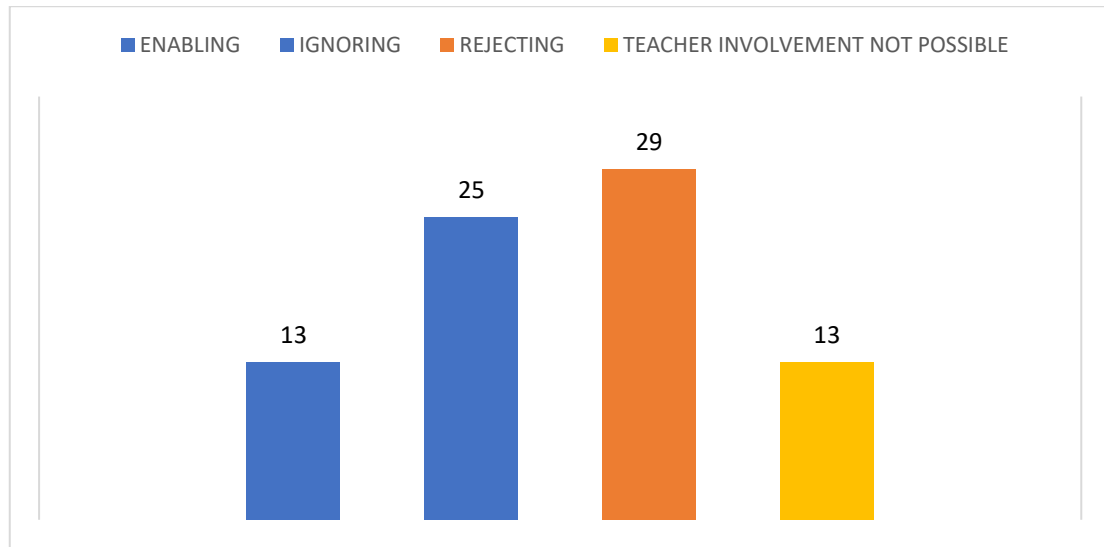


Figure 4: Teachers strategies towards impoliteness in the classroom data

Different strategies are used 67 times within the possible 58 episodes to react to student-initiated impoliteness. The most frequent type of strategy found is rejecting, with 29 identified instances. Almost as frequent is the use of ignoring strategies, which are found 25 times in the data. Enabling strategies are the least commonly found type of reaction used by the teachers, with a total of thirteen instances in the data. In addition to these, it is important to note that there are 13 impoliteness episodes in the data during which teacher involvement was not applicable.

When comparing the overall frequency of used strategies with the distribution of the usage instances amongst the four lesson sets (illustrated in Table 8) some significant observations can be made. For instance, the majority of instances where enabling strategies are used occur during Teacher B's lesson set, while none occur during Teacher C's. As teacher-initiated impoliteness usage is in the framework included into enabling strategies, these findings are in line with the distribution of teacher-initiated impoliteness within the classroom data. It is also notable that while during the lesson sets with Teacher C and D, the frequency of strategy usage aligns with the results of the overall frequency, within the episodes observed during Teacher A's lesson set, the use of ignoring strategies is slightly more common than rejecting ones. A possible factor contributing to this difference is the overall frequency of impoliteness episodes, which was considerably higher during Teacher A's lessons. Such a high frequency of

impoliteness episodes could potentially lead the teacher to prioritize her usage of restrictive strategies according to contextual knowledge, i.e. only reject impoliteness in cases where she knows the message will be received and ignore it in others. Further motivations behind strategy usage will be considered in the next subsection as well as in Chapter 5.

	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Enabling	4	8	0	1
Ignoring	12	2	5	6
Rejecting	10	3	9	7
Total	26	13	14	14

*Table 8: Distribution of teachers' strategy usage in the classroom data*

In order to uncover possible tendencies in the usage of reaction strategies towards impoliteness, it is necessary to inspect example episodes from the data. Beginning with the most common type of strategy found, instances of rejecting strategies being used were found commonly during all lesson sets. This type of strategy is contextually the most expected of the three possible strategies and used especially in connection to situational undirected and teacher-targeted impoliteness. The rejection of impoliteness is indicated explicitly through verbal and nonverbal means. Such indications include, for example, the use of short exclamations and the calling of the students name to interrupt unwanted behaviour, as well as gesticulation signalling that the verbal behaviour the teacher is responding to is not allowed in the classroom. Sometimes the use of restricting strategies is expanded into verbally endorsing the rules of communication in the classroom and justifying why certain behaviour is not allowed, as well as issuing sanctions for undesired behaviour. Instances of the use of rejecting strategies are included in some of previously analysed episodes (see Examples 3, 5, 8, 11, 13 & 15), and can be further seen in the following examples.

- (32) The students negotiate who should be standing next to whom in an exercise, where they have to form a line based on how much they walk daily. (Teacher D, Lesson 3).

1 S1: {talking to S2} you can go over to the other side!  
 2 S2: I walk like // [indistinct]—  
 3 S3: // {talking about S2} he's a bit stupid if you haven't noticed  
 4 S2: what?! you are stupid!  
 5 S1: //ooooh!  
 6 S4: //ooh! got you!  
 7 T: hey!  
 8 S4: *A little roasting like this*  
 9 T: *hey let's listen now everybody (.) one at a time*

- (33) The teacher has given S1 and another student some extra assignments and S1 questions the teacher's decision. (Teacher A, Lesson 1).

1 S1: *why it is it always for us? why isn't it for those guys?*  
 2 T: *well—*  
 3 S2: because they are better at English than you  
 4 T: no!  
 5 S2: you need some extra teaching  
 6 T: [S2]!  
 7 S2: what?  
 8 T: you can't say things like that  
 9 S2: I did  
 10 T: well it's really annoying (.) you can't say things like that—  
 11 S1: *but we can also say that he's an outsider and a loner*  
 12 S2: yes  
 13 T: but (.) why don't we just— just don't say anything (.) we can all be friends

- (34) The teacher is asking the students about the weather. (Teacher C, Lesson 1).

1 T: could somebody raise their hand and answer the question? and the others  
 2 remain silent (.) [S1]  
 3 S1: it's very cold  
 4 T: yes it's very cold I agree  
 5 {students chattering}  
 6 shh! {Addressing S2} yes?  
 7 S2: [unintelligible due to chatter]  
 8 T: hey! {claps hands} now one talks at a time! Only one! [S2]?  
 9 S2: it's a bit windy

Example 32 demonstrates how the teacher's use of restrictive strategies can be realized very minimally as a single word interjection, in line 7. In the particular episode no more is needed due to the mock impolite nature of the students' impoliteness acts, and upon being chastised by the teacher the students themselves attempt to explain that the interaction is merely an instance of "roasting", i.e. ritual insulting between friends. In contrast, in Example 33 the teacher initially attempts to reject S2's use of impoliteness with a single negative and the use of the student's name. When S2 responds with a question in line 7, seemingly not understanding what is wrong, the teacher chooses

another type of restrictive strategy, explaining that the use of such verbal behaviour is unacceptable. However, the teacher's choice of strategy prompts S1's use of impoliteness in line 11, to which the teacher responds by suggesting what sort of behaviour should be used instead of impoliteness.

Whereas the strategies used in Examples 32 and 33 occur in connection to student-targeted impoliteness, the episode in Example 34 depicts a typical instance of using rejecting in reaction to situational undirected impoliteness. The teacher initially attempts to silence the students causing a disruption with a single hushing exclamation in line 6. When this fails to bring about the desired outcome, the teacher suspends the interaction with a physical action, clapping her hands together in order to focus the students' attention to herself, before elucidating that the rules of classroom interaction forbid students from talking over each other in situation such as this. The strategy usage is in this case successful, as S2 manages to finish their line without being interrupted by disruptive chatter.

Moving onto ignoring strategies, the use of these is characterized by the lack of reaction on the teacher's part. Ignoring strategies are used in connection to all types of impoliteness, but they are more commonly found in connection to student-targeted impoliteness rather than undirected or teacher-targeted impoliteness types. This tendency could be attributed to two factors. Firstly, as observed in Section 4.1, student-initiated student-targeted impoliteness acts are commonly interpreted as mock impoliteness, which may make the teacher less likely to intervene. Secondly, it may be easier overall for the teacher to recognize and consequently react to impoliteness that is targeted at themselves. However, ignoring strategies were also occasionally used in connection to teacher-targeted impoliteness as well as distinctly recognisable forms of student-targeted impoliteness, such as in episodes containing physical aggression. Different uses of ignoring strategies are illustrated in Examples 35-37.

- (35) A student has finished the assigned exercises and is asking what to do next.  
(Teacher A, Lesson 1).

1 T: would you like me to give you a game to play?  
2 S1: no I can just look at my //phone  
3 T: //no!  
4 S1: okay I can just leave  
5 T: {laughs} no!  
6 S1: I can help [S2] he's retarded {laughs}  
7 T: [S1] did you already do this one?

(36) The teacher greets a student arriving into the class. (Teacher B, Lesson 2).

- 1 T: hey [S] how's it going?
- 2 S: {ignores the teacher}
- 3 T: (.) okay {goes to talk to another student}

(37) S1 is working on a written assignment, when S2 suddenly grabs their notebook. (Teacher D, Lesson 2).

- 1 {S2 snatches notebook out of S1's hands}
- 2 S1: *what the hell—!*
- 3 {S2 tries to draw in the notebook}
- 4 {S1 struggles with S2 to retrieve the notebook}
- 5 S3: *hey (.) what are you doing?*
- 6 {S1 gets the notebook back}
- 7 S1: *well I just said that I already have thirty words and that fucking gay took my notebook and started to mess it up*
- 8 {S2 laughs and returns to their seat}
- 9 S4: *that kind of guy should be beaten up honestly*
- 10 S3: *violence isn't the answer*

In Example 35, the teacher completely disregards S1's inherently impolite insult towards S2 in line 6, interpreting the impoliteness act as a joke due to contextual knowledge about S1's and S2's relationship as friends. The teacher may also be motivated to ignore the insult based on her own relationship with S1, who is amongst the previously mentioned group of students with frequent impoliteness usage, choosing to direct S1's focus onto the exercises instead of reprimanding them. Conversely, in Example 36, it is unclear what exactly is the student's intention in completely ignoring the teacher. What is interesting about this particular episode, is that due to it occurring before the lesson has properly started, it may be categorized as individual impoliteness, in which case the student is attacking the teacher's individual face, rather than his role as an authority figure. As such, the teacher's use of ignoring strategies may result from the personal feeling of hurt and wish to in turn ignore the student. However, as it is impossible to determine the reasons behind the student's behaviour, it is likewise difficult to speculate on the motivations for the teacher's choice to ignore the impoliteness act.

The episode in Example 37 takes place during a part of the lesson where the students had to work independently on their written assignments. As a result, the atmosphere in the class was very calm and there was fairly little noise when S2 decided to take S1's notebook. Because of these circumstances, it would have been nearly impossible for the teacher not to notice the scuffle, and it can be safely argued that the decision to ignore it

was intentional. The teacher does not even comment on the inherently impolite negative expressive by S4 in line 10, but rather a rejecting strategy is used by another student in line 11. However, while the intention of the impoliteness acts by both S1 and S4 is clearly impolite, it is not evident based on contextual cues whether they are intending for it to be understood as mock-impoliteness. The scuffle is over very quickly and S2 appears happy despite the insults, which may have caused the teacher to interpret the impoliteness use as not serious, leading her to ignore it. Besides the interactional episode depicted in Example 37, there is a limited amount of interactions between S1 and S2 during the lesson set, making it impossible to gauge the full nature of their relationship.

Finally, examples of enabling strategies being used are found mainly in the form of teacher-initiated impoliteness, illustrated earlier in Examples 15-17. Besides such instances, there are a few examples of enabling strategies being used in response to student-initiated impoliteness. These uses of enabling strategies include both verbal and nonverbal means of expressing an accepting or otherwise positive attitude towards the used impoliteness, as shown in the following examples.

(38) The teacher comments on a student's suggested continuation to a story the whole group is creating together. (Teacher B, Lesson 1).

- 1 T: oh good point! so, he's becoming a little bit less (.) um
- 2 L1: fat
- 3 T: not fat but what's the word? (.) overweight!
- 4 L2: no we //said that he becomes fat
- 5 T: //slightly chubby (.) oh well okay that's not really a school word
- 6 but okay fine (.) FAT!

(39) A student is crying in outrage after having answered incorrectly. (Teacher A, Lesson 4).

- 1 L1: *I couldn't see anything cause [L3's] //big—*
- 2 L2: *//yeah (.) ass was in the way*
- 3 T: [laughs]

In Example 38 the teacher initially objects to the use of insulting language in the classroom, but ultimately relents, enabling the impoliteness, while Example 39 depicts the teacher's enabling reaction in response to an inherently insulting complaint directed at a student. The teachers' use of enabling strategies in these examples is likely motivated by personal sense of humour or personal level of acceptance towards impolite language use. For example, Teacher B reported in the interview having a lenient attitude



towards swearing, suggesting that he may be willing to make certain exceptions concerning the use of impoliteness in the classroom. Further analysis of the use of strategies will be conducted in the next section, as I move on to consider the strategies reported by the teachers themselves within the interview responses.

#### **4.2.2 Strategies reported in the interview responses**

In contrast to the classroom data, where all three kinds of strategies are found, in the interview responses the teachers report only using rejecting and ignoring strategies, with rejecting strategies being promoted as the ones predominantly used. During the interview, the teachers were first asked how they would recommend reacting or responding to clearly identifiable instances of impoliteness, such as physical aggression, insults or swearing. In their responses, all teachers reference the contextual nature of choosing a suitable operational strategy, which made it difficult to provide precise answers on how to act when encountering impoliteness. Nevertheless, all interviewees were able to form some ideas on the matter.

- (40) In my opinion, the teacher should always consider case-by-case what measure of action is actually necessary. I have, for example, adopted the policy that I will more readily interfere in the sort of impoliteness that is directed at another student. I, as an adult, can endure it if the students are being difficult towards me. (Teacher A).
- (41) It depends hugely on the situation, but overall you need to react to [impoliteness] somehow, or else the message will be kind of bad. At least it needs to be shown that you have seen and heard it happen. What, then, the remedial measure should be is in my view very situational. (Teacher B).
- (42) Well, I think swearing needs to be stopped. [...] I, at least, will ask, or order, the student to apologize [...] If the swearing is directed at the teacher and it includes even jeering or something, that is in my opinion a very serious situation and it needs to be discussed with the student. Likewise, if it continues [...] then it needs to be taken forward to the principal and to the parents. (Teacher C).
- (43) You definitely need to blow a whistle in that situation. If there are other adults present, one of you can leave with the [aggressive/impolite] student. Schools actually have clear steps for situations, so that if it goes way over what's appropriate you can even phone home and tell the parents to come get their child, because this is not okay. The teacher needs to send out a clear message, that all learning is based on a feeling of safety and security, that you don't have to feel afraid in any classroom. (Teacher D).

Both Teacher A and Teacher B, in their responses, focus on the contextuality of choosing the correct course of action. Whereas Teacher B emphasizes that the teacher should always signal that they have noticed the use of impoliteness, Teacher A

expresses that student-targeted impoliteness should be considered more seriously than impoliteness targeted at the teacher. Like Teacher B, Teacher C and Teacher D both agree that teacher intervention is necessary. Teacher C approaches the issue from the perspective of swearing as an individual issue, considering the addition of other impolite behaviour as a reason to take such behaviour even more seriously. In contrast, Teacher D considers it important that the teacher follows available guidance in order to secure the classroom as a safe environment for learning.

After these initial responses, the teachers were next asked to describe how their perception on the suitable response would change if the type of impoliteness used were less prominent, such as students making mean-spirited jokes at each other or students being deliberately difficult towards the teacher. The offered responses once again bring up different aspects affecting the choice of reaction. Teacher A, Teacher B, and Teacher C all agree that vaguely impolite behaviour between students should be regarded as a serious issue and preferably addressed in some restrictive manner. While Teacher B considers the occurrence of mean-spirited joking or jeering in the classroom as a problem affecting the whole group, Teacher C brings up the limitations of the teacher's ability to know for certain what sort of relationships and attitudes the students have with and towards each other. In contrast to the three other responses, Teacher D is the only one to suggest the possibility of ignoring strategies being used in response to impoliteness, raising the point that negative behaviour could also be eliminated by instead enforcing positive behaviour.

- (44) It's easier to intervene when it's more easily recognizable, because you notice that. However, I personally do try to intervene more in those mean-spirited cases where you notice that the conversation between students is really getting [heated]. I do try to say that: "hey, we have our rules and we want, and I want, this to be a safe space for all of us, so none of that". (Teacher A).
- (45) Those are the kinds of situations that I think need to be considered and taken into discussion case by case. If there is a lot of mean-spirited jeering or joking in the group, which isn't necessarily directed at me but others, then that really is a time for a common discussion with the group. Or if the group's atmosphere feels very stuffy, these are all things that I, as a teacher, need to be able to put into words [for the students] --. (Teacher B).
- (46) If I hear someone saying mean-spirited things to their friend I definitely will, if not there during the lesson then at least after it, ask the person whom it was directed at if it was actually [bullying or impoliteness]. Two students can look like friends, but it's not like I actually know what is behind it, if anything. So, I do try to find out if it's a matter of bullying, after all. That's something I feel like I'm sensitive in reacting to --. (Teacher C).

- (47) I would believe that minor impoliteness can be removed with so called vicarious reinforcement, meaning that we focus our attention to what is being done well, instead. Not everything needs to be addressed all the time, otherwise the teacher's speech can become really negative if we only look at the things that are bad and are constantly saying "don't do this" and "don't do that" --. (Teacher D).

The perceptions presented in the teachers' responses correspond with the norms of the classroom and predominant ideals on how the teacher should respond to impolite or inappropriate behaviour. The teachers acknowledge that impoliteness as a feature of interaction is not generally desirable or acceptable in the classroom context and are well aware of their own position as gatekeepers of behaviour in recognizing and rejecting its occurrence. However, the responses also reveal a sense of uncertainty or lack of awareness regarding concrete practices in responding to impoliteness; while the questions were posed as applicable on a general level, most responses reference the teachers' personal policies and methods, and out of the four teachers only one takes into account the existence of pre-established operational guidelines. Furthermore, when comparing the self-reported strategies with the instances of strategy usage found in the classroom data, there are noticeable differences. For instance, ignoring strategies are used significantly more frequently than they are reported in the responses. These differences and possible reasons behind them will be elaborated further in the next sections, as I move to discuss the results of the analysis.

## **5 Discussion**

In this section, I will discuss the results of the analysis and their implications, bringing forth the possible limitations of the study. In this study, I set out to find answers to four research questions:

1. What types of impolite language practices occur in Finnish EFL classrooms?
2. How do Finnish EFL teachers' perceptions of impoliteness correspond with the types of impolite language practices found?
3. What sort of strategies do Finnish EFL teachers use to respond to student-initiated impoliteness in the classroom?
4. How do the Finnish EFL teachers' perceptions of the validity of impoliteness strategies correspond with the strategies used?

In order to provide satisfactory answers to these questions, the discussion will focus first on the impoliteness types found in the classroom (questions 1 and 2) and secondly

on response strategies (questions 3 and 4). Section 5.1 begins with the comparison of teachers' perceptions of impoliteness with the results of the classroom data analysis, highlighting interesting differences and similarities. The effects of language choice in the multilingual context of the L2 classroom will also be briefly considered in this section. In Section 5.2, the aim is again to compare the teachers' practices of intervening with the strategies reported in the interviews. In this context, I will discuss the possible influence of Finnish teacher training on the Finnish EFL teachers' beliefs about impoliteness.

At this point, as I am attempting to answer the research questions, I find it necessary to further clarify the purpose and aims of the study. Although I have provided multiple examples of actual classroom interactions, many of which contain contextually inappropriate and profane linguistic choices, the aim of this study is not to shock the reader into thinking that impoliteness is rampant in Finnish EFL classrooms. It needs to be clarified that despite the examples shown, most interaction during the observed lessons was conducted in accordance to contextual norms. Neither is the aim to criticize the way Finnish teachers are approaching the occurrence of classroom impoliteness. Instead, I hope that through my analysis of both the occurrence of impoliteness and the practices surrounding it, this study can shed light onto a topic that is often avoided or approached with a certain, perhaps unnecessary, discretion. While classroom impoliteness is a phenomenon that hugely affects the overall interactional atmosphere of the classroom, including teacher and student well-being, it remains little noticed in the research of classroom discourse. What this study hopes to do is take a step in the direction of providing much needed data for helping teachers and educational practitioners understand the phenomenon and develop suitable guidelines for addressing it.

### **5.1 Impoliteness in the classroom**

Concerning the occurrence and frequency of different types of impoliteness, the results of the classroom data analysis mostly matched the teachers' perceptions. When considering possible impoliteness types in the classroom, forms of situational and individual impoliteness were reported in the interviews by all teachers, closely matching the frequency of such types in the data. Interestingly, the intentionality of impoliteness is also mentioned by Teacher C, who noted that intentional impoliteness might actually

be rare within the classroom. While it was noted in Section 4.1.3 that this view is opposite to Teacher D's assessment of impoliteness being a daily occurrence, both accounts could hold true considering the data. A large portion of the identified cases of situational impoliteness are ambiguous in intention. As such, Teacher C may have interpreted cases with ambiguous intention as inadvertent and unintended use of impoliteness. Likewise, a large portion of the found individual impoliteness acts can be contextually understood as mock impoliteness. Due to its playful nature, such impoliteness may be categorized as not belonging under impoliteness in the teachers' definition of the phenomenon, leading the teachers to evaluate the frequency of impoliteness as lower than it appears in the results of the classroom data analysis.

However, even with such alignments, there are still some differences between the teachers' perceptions and the impoliteness observed in the classroom. These include the emphasis of teacher-targeted impoliteness and the lack of examples of teacher-initiated impoliteness within the interview responses. In attempting to speculate how such differences come about, there are two questions that need to be asked. Firstly, how does the teachers' understanding of the classroom context and the social roles within affect their perceptions? And secondly, how great is the influence of individual differences, such as teaching experience or individual tolerance of impoliteness?

Beginning with the influence of context, the omission of teacher-initiated impoliteness within the responses can possibly be attributed to the teachers' understanding of their own role in the classroom. As indicated by the negatively oriented assessments of impolite behaviour in the interview responses, the teachers understand the occurrence of impoliteness within the classroom as something to be avoided and discouraged and are well aware of the centrality of their own behaviour in this process. In understanding that the teacher needs to set restrictions and actively reject the students' usage of inappropriate language, it is possible that the teachers may then overlook possible slips in their own behaviour. Essentially, if the teachers have established an ideal image of how a teacher should act, they may subconsciously attribute such behaviour to their own self-image as a teacher, disregarding the sort of actions that go against this vision. This speculation is partially supported by the interview data, wherein the youngest of the teachers, Teacher A, is the only one to acknowledge the possibility of teacher-initiated impoliteness. It is possible that as Teacher A has comparatively limited

experience as a teacher, she is yet to construct a precise image of the ideal teacher or to adapt her own self-image to it.

Similar processes may likewise contribute to the teachers' perceptions of student-initiated impoliteness. In addition to constructing an image of the teacher, the teachers will also create idealizations of classroom interaction and lesson procession based on their understanding of the norms of the classroom context. In regard to impoliteness, this ideal image is especially affected by the teachers' wish to facilitate positive relationships between the students and maintain a sense of safety within the classroom. As the occurrence of impoliteness within student interactions goes by definition against this wish, it is possible that the teachers may choose to overlook the impoliteness in cases they determine as non-threatening towards the overall atmosphere of the classroom. That is to say, certain impoliteness acts between students, such as the previously mentioned mock impoliteness, may not be understood as impoliteness, which skews the overall frequency in favour of undirected and teacher-targeted impoliteness.

The teachers' contextual understanding of the students' role and their knowledge of adolescents' behaviour may further heighten the teachers' recognition of especially teacher-targeted forms of impoliteness. As the classroom context is understood through its educational aims, such as teaching the students how to behave in academic settings, teachers may come to expect actions such as the challenging of authority and questioning of educational practices from the students. In contrast to this expectation, the occurrence of other impoliteness types may appear less noticeable. As Teacher A noted in her responses, it is easier to respond to more easily recognizable forms of impoliteness, including teacher-targeted impoliteness, and consequently more difficult to recognize and respond to others. Of course, what each teacher then recognizes as impoliteness targeted at themselves is highly subjective, leading us to the consideration of individual differences.

Assessing the effect of individual traits in the recognition of impoliteness is challenging in the frames of this study due to the limited amount of background information and the used discourse analytic framework, but certain speculations can be made. For example, the comparatively high frequency of teacher-initiated impoliteness during Teacher B's lessons could possibly be argued to be motivated by Teacher B's perceptions of

impoliteness. In the interview, Teacher B noted for example having a lenient attitude towards swearing during lessons, not considering it as such a bad thing. This tolerance of impolite behaviour can perhaps be further reflected in Teacher B's use of enabling strategies, such as in Example 38. Furthermore, as mentioned above in Section 4.1.1 and Section 4.1.2, the relationship between Teacher B and his class was fairly close, with some of the observed impoliteness episodes resembling interactions between friends, rather than teacher and students (see Example 15). The occurrence of impoliteness, especially teacher-initiated impoliteness, during Teacher B's lesson set might then stem from both a more tolerant attitude towards impoliteness and a wish to maintain a less formal atmosphere during the lessons.

Considering teaching experience, it is notable that the teacher with the most teaching experience, Teacher C, reported the least amount of impoliteness encountered in the classroom. While the results of the classroom data analysis are partially in line with this assessment, there remains a distinct difference between Teacher C's evaluation of the frequency of impoliteness as extremely rare and its observed frequency in the data. As one possible reason for this, Teacher C reported in the interview responses that she felt as though impoliteness during lessons had decreased, accounting the change to the increase in her own authority. This assessment aligns with the earlier considerations concerning the way the teachers' self-image and image of the ideal teacher may affect their perceptions of impoliteness. It is possible that as Teacher C feels herself more equipped to handle impoliteness in the classroom than she did before, she has consequently stopped associating certain behaviours by the students as impolite. Of course, it may also be that Teacher C's own perception of impoliteness differs and has always differed from the definition used in this study. It is unfortunate that due to Teacher C's schedule, I was only able to observe and record two lessons, leaving the data analysis rather limited.

Lastly, before moving to teachers' strategies, I want to briefly consider the effect of language choice in the recognition and interpretation of impoliteness. While code-switching in the classroom is not the key focus of this study, in analysing the occurrence of impoliteness in a highly multilingual environment it is impossible to ignore. The examples I have chosen for this study illustrate that both English and Finnish are used in the Finnish EFL classroom and both languages are used to bring about impoliteness. In

Examples 4, 7 and 9, I have attempted to showcase the possible ways in which the use of English may affect both the impoliteness by students and the teachers' interpretation of it. While in the interviews, the teachers noted that the students' choice of language does not alter their choice of intervention strategy, Example 4 indicates that certain behaviour may still be ignored based on it. However, as the limitations of my analysis make it difficult to draw any conclusions, the use of L2 impoliteness is a perspective that would benefit from closer inspection in future research. For example, comparing the emergence of impoliteness in the language classroom with a non-language classroom could reveal interesting differences.

## **5.2 Teachers' strategies**

Just as with the perceptions of impoliteness, contextual awareness and individual characteristics also affect the teacher's choice of responding to impoliteness. This is evident in the use of all three types of strategies, enabling, ignoring and rejecting. With enabling strategies, none of the teachers reported them as a possibility in responding to impoliteness, which is very much in line with the norms of classroom interaction and the teacher's role in upholding them. In the classroom data, impoliteness episodes involving the use of enabling strategies occur mainly in the data of Teacher B, and the reasons behind their use can be speculated to be similar as the ones behind Teacher B's use of teacher-initiated impoliteness, especially due to the overlap in these two categories. However, it needs to be noted that the overall number of found examples is small and as such it is difficult to gauge the level of influence contextual and individual factors may have on the occurrence of enabling strategies.

In contrast, ignoring strategies were used quite frequently in the classroom data, while in the interview responses only Teacher A and Teacher D referenced the use of ignoring strategies. This result is expected based on how much the role of teacher intervention is stressed for example in connection to bullying and matches the earlier speculation on how the teachers may adapt their own self-image according to outside norms and expectations. These norms are even reflected in the examples of strategy usage brought up in the interviews. Teacher A felt as though ignoring strategies could be applied in cases involving teacher-targeted impoliteness, as the teacher should be able to endure certain misbehaviour by students, whereas Teacher D stressed that ignoring strategies should be combined with the enforcement of positive behaviour.



Teacher A's response is interestingly somewhat opposite to the response given by the much more experienced Teacher C, who felt as though the occurrence of teacher-targeted impoliteness was a serious issue and should always be rejected and discussed with the students. It can be speculated, then, that Teacher A's perception may be influenced by her experiences as a teacher and the comparative lack thereof. As the classroom data analysis demonstrates, impoliteness during Teacher A's lessons was more common than with the other observed groups. Due to no prior experiences of teaching secondary school students, Teacher A may have grown to expect and adapt to such behaviour by ignoring its occurrence. This speculation receives support from the author's own experiences of Finnish teacher training, where notions similar to Teacher A's are sometimes repeated in preparing student teachers to the ways students may attempt to test the new teacher. In order to bring this speculation to a more academic level, it would be beneficial to inspect the way Finnish teacher training addresses the topic of impolite or undesired classroom behaviour and what sort of related tools are introduced to student teachers.

In contrast, Teacher D's perceptions concerning the use of ignoring strategies and the suggested action of focusing on the positive instead of the negative are in line with the idea of positive pedagogy, currently popular in the Finnish educational field (see Leskisenoja 2017; Leskisenoja 2019). However, while examples of Teacher D's use of ignoring strategies are found in the data, none of the found examples exhibit the sort of use depicted in the interview response. Regarding this observation, it is important to note the level of uncertainty concerning the results of the strategy analysis. As mentioned in Section 4.2.1, in order for the teacher's lack of reaction to be categorized as the use of an ignoring strategy, it needs to be ascertained through the context or an explicit verbal or nonverbal indication that the teacher is aware of the impoliteness occurring. Despite this, there is no way to always ensure that the teacher's choice to ignore the impoliteness is conscious. Furthermore, the use of ignoring strategies may sometimes be motivated by the fast-paced nature of classroom interaction; even if the teacher notices the occurrence of impolite behaviour during the lesson, they may choose to either bring it into private discussion with the student later, after the lesson has ended, or to monitor the situation before intervening. Such cases should then be regarded as the use of restrictive strategies, despite them initially appearing otherwise.

Continuing the consideration of rejecting strategies, there is a notable discrepancy between the rejecting strategies used during the lessons and the ones reported in the interviews. In the classroom data, examples of the use of rejecting strategies typically include single utterance remarks and warnings, while in their interview responses the teachers more heavily emphasized the consideration of the reasons behind the occurrence of impoliteness, e.g. discussions with students. This difference may once again tie into the possible mismatch between the teachers' idealized image of themselves as a teacher versus the actuality of their practices. Likewise, the aforementioned hectic nature of interaction in the classrooms may force teachers to adjust their strategies and leave longer disciplinary discussions to be held outside of lesson time. Within the recorded data there are two examples of the teachers demanding that a student stay behind after class in order to have a discussion with them about their classroom behaviour. Moreover, as the data for the current study is limited, it is possible that the impoliteness episodes found were not serious enough to warrant more than a short reminder of their inappropriateness and that such episodes were consequently not classified as impoliteness in the teachers' perceptions. Despite possible differences in their practices and perceptions, it is important to note that teachers are nevertheless the most qualified experts available in understanding and managing the behaviour of their students. Furthermore, the disciplinary practices observed during this study generally seemed to produce appropriate reactions in their context, i.e. the lessons were able to continue and the focus stayed on learning despite the occurrence of impoliteness.

As a final note regarding teachers' use of strategies towards impoliteness, I want to raise possible perspectives for future research. The results of this study suggest that teachers may lack familiarity with established guidelines and find it difficult to define the concept of classroom impoliteness with the kind of specificity it would perhaps benefit from. Against this background, it seems crucial to question whether teachers have enough knowledge about impoliteness and its effects in order to make informed decisions and whether there is enough guidance available. In order to examine these issues, research should be focused on the assessment of teacher training, teacher instruction, and the diversity and effectiveness of the practices found in the classroom.

## 6 Conclusion

This study was born out of a need to illustrate that classroom impoliteness is a multifaceted phenomenon, which causes various concerns and practical challenges for the teacher. By analysing classroom discourse in authentic interactive episodes, I have been able to show that the reasons behind the occurrence of impoliteness and the practices surrounding its use are affected by both the internal power relations of the classroom and more individual differences. Based on the results of the analysis, the role of situational impoliteness is emphasized in classroom interaction, and such use of impoliteness may function as a method of exercising power. Situational impoliteness can for example be used to challenge the teacher's authoritative position in the classroom and to raise the user's status. Mock impoliteness is also used commonly in communication between students to establish and maintain relationships with peers. Another notable aspect of classroom impoliteness is its general undirectedness; almost half of the impoliteness acts by students lack a specific target and are instead recognized as impoliteness based on their contextual intention or inherency value. The interviewed teachers' perceptions include most of these typically occurring forms of impoliteness, although the role of teacher-targeted impoliteness is slightly over-emphasized. Such discrepancy can be attributed to differences in the teachers' perceptions of impoliteness, teaching experience, and understanding of the classroom context.

Regarding intervention strategies, there is notable variation in the knowledge teachers possess concerning available guidelines and acceptable practices. Based on the teachers' own interview responses and the interactional data, it seems that teachers mostly rely on their own experiences and use them to construct individual procedures for the prevention of impoliteness. On the other hand, the results also highlight differences in the teachers' attitudes towards impoliteness. The teachers' uncertainty regarding the definition of impoliteness and the identification of concrete response strategies suggests that the topic may suffer from too little exposure in teacher training and instruction. Although the reported increase in undesired behaviour has been brought up in the frames of this study, there is still a distinct lack of research data especially in relation to classroom impoliteness and the practices of responding to it. In the future, I hope this study will provide a spark of inspiration in examining the nature of impoliteness and undesired behaviour in the classroom. Research on classroom impoliteness may for

example help indicate whether specific types of intervention strategies are useful in responding to specific forms of impoliteness. In this way, we can obtain much needed tools for addressing the rise of disciplinary problems in schools.

This study can also be credited with the development of a functional framework for the analysis of classroom impoliteness, which I hope will further encourage researchers to familiarize themselves with the phenomenon. The chosen combination of research methods has also been deemed as an appropriate manner of collecting information about the relationship between teachers' beliefs and attitudes and their actual practices. There are numerous possible research prospects in the study of classroom impoliteness that can be implemented according to the example presented by this study. Such possibilities include for example assessing the effect of code-switching in the emergence of impoliteness in the language classroom, which in this study is only briefly touched upon. The research of classroom impoliteness in more detail is meaningful, as such exploration can help teachers' and experts in the field of education to increase their awareness and develop more functional procedures for challenging classroom situations.

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## Appendix 1

<b>Conventionalized impoliteness formulae (Culpeper 2010: 135-136) with invented examples</b>	
<b>Insults</b>	you [fucking] moron, she's [so] gross
<b>Pointed criticisms/ complaints</b>	that was [absolutely] horrible
<b>Unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions</b>	why do you make my life impossible?, What [the hell] is wrong with you?
<b>Condescensions</b>	that's childish
<b>Message enforcers</b>	listen here [punk]
<b>Dismissals</b>	Go away
<b>Silencers</b>	shut [the fuck] up
<b>Threats</b>	I'll bash your face in
<b>Negative expressives</b>	Go kill yourself

**Appendix 2**

<b>Transcription tools</b>	
<i>italics</i>	translated from Finnish
[S], [indistinct]	information omitted or indistinct
{sarcastic tone}	additional information
(.)	short pause
?	rising intonation
!	loud voice
—	disrupted speech
//	overlap begins

### Appendix 3

#### Translated and simplified interview structure

1. Could you briefly introduce yourself and your work history as a teacher?
2. Do you feel that you, in your work as a teacher, come across impolite behaviour?
  - What sort of behaviour does this typically entail? Please describe a typical situation or give an example from real life.
  - How frequent is classroom impoliteness in your opinion? Is some form of impolite behaviour more common than others?
  - Has the frequency of impoliteness changed or increased during your time as a teacher?
3. How do you believe teachers should approach impoliteness in the classroom?
  - How should the teacher react in a situation where a student is behaving very noticeably impolitely, for example swearing, throwing insults, or behaving aggressively?
  - How should the teacher react when the used impoliteness is not as noticeable, for example when a student is joking maliciously with a friend or when a student is being intentionally difficult or somehow disruptive during the lesson?
  - Do you think it affects the teacher's decision to react if the used impoliteness is directed at the teacher or at another student? Is it easier to intervene if the impoliteness is directed at a student? Do you ever feel uncertain about intervening when you think the impoliteness may just be a joke between friends?
  - Does the choice of language affect the teacher's decision to intervene? For example, is it more acceptable to swear in English than in Finnish during the lesson?
4. What sort of effects or consequences do you believe impoliteness or disruptive behaviour has in the classroom or on student learning?
  - Does the wish to prevent bullying affect the decision to reject and discourage even slight impoliteness or misbehaviour?
  - Do you think that ignoring or tolerating impoliteness could have positive results?
5. Is there anything else you would like to say about classroom impoliteness?

## Appendix 4

### Original transcript excerpts from the classroom data

- (1) The teacher is collecting all unnecessary items from desks before a listening comprehension test after asking the students to put away their belongings multiple times. (Teacher A, Lesson 2).

1 T: can you like put all the extra stuff here?  
 2 S: {whining tone} eiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii  
 3 T: yes (.) you don't need it right now (.) let's put everything extra in  
 4 here

- (2) The teacher instructs the students to read words out loud. (Teacher D, Lesson 1).

1 T: say them in Finnish as well  
 2 S: mä en haluu tehdä tätä tehtävää  
 3 T: you can just— just say it out loud  
 4 S: se on niin tyhmä  
 5 T: {moves away}

- (4) Teacher opens the classroom door and greets the arriving students. (Teacher A, Lesson 2).

1 T: huomenta, [S]!  
 2 S: waddup, niggers

- (5) The students invent questions they want to ask from an upcoming guest speaker on anonymous online message board Flinga. (Teacher D, Lesson 1).

1 S: {laughing} mä laitoin you mom gayyy!  
 2 T: shh (.) please put appropriate questions

- (6) After a presentation by S1 and another student, which the other students have to grade, S1 asks S2 about what they had written on the review sheet. (Teacher D, Lesson 3).

1 S1: no mitä sä kirjoitit siihen?  
 2 S2: {laughing} et sä puhut niinku vammanen  
 3 T: shh! hei! {speaking quietly to S2} me ei sanota tollasia

(7) S1 is complaining about the lesson plan to S3 while the teacher is setting up a video. (Teacher A, Lesson 1).

- 1 S1: mä en halua kattoo mitään vitun Nalle Puhia
- 2 S2: {turns from their seat towards S1} language
- 3 S1: vittu turpa kii
- 4 S2: language
- 5 S1: oikeesti tuki se vitun suus {raises middle finger}
- 6 S2: finger language
- 7 S3: [S2], toi ei oo oikeesti hauskaa

(8) A group of students is having a disagreement about their joint presentation. (Teacher C, Lesson 2).

- 1 S1: joo mut eiks se oo—
- 2 S2: turpa kiinni!
- 3 T: hey! no

(9) Conversation between students during exercise. (Teacher A, Lesson 1).

- 1 S1: emmä tiedä mut rumat ne ainaki on
- 2 S2: I mean look at your shoes
- 3 S3: [S4:n] kengät on vitun //rumat
- 4 S4: //mun kengät maksaa enemmän ku
- 5 // [indistinct speech]
- 6 S1: //it's not about the price man
- 7 S2: onpas
- 8 S3: it's about the swag
- 9 S1: those are ugly (.) those are ugly as fuck (.) those are women
- 10 shoes (.) you're a woman (.) those are fucking (.) gay shoes

(11) The teacher tries to get the class to quiet down before a listening comprehension exercise. (Teacher C, Lesson 1).

- 1 T: okay, here we go (.)
- 2 {students continue chattering}
- 3 S1: shh! shh!
- 4 T: {disappointed tone} joku opettaja sanoi ykkösjaksossa että hän
- 5 alkaa pitää listaa mihin hän merkkää aina kun joku metelöi {sighing}
- 6 mun pitää varmaan myös alkaa tekemään samoin (.) se on jotain mitä
- 7 mä en haluais tehdä eikä mun ei oo koskaan aiemmin tarvinnu tehdä
- 8 niin (.) mutta mun on vaan ihan pakko jos aina pitää //odottaa—
- 9 S2: // {indignant tone} no tee se sit!
- 10 T: [S2]! {snaps fingers and points} nyt hiljaa!
- 11 S2: {mocking tone} suu kiinni!
- 12 {a few students laugh}
- 13 T: et puhu nyt enää

- (10) The teacher pauses the tape during a listening comprehension test.  
(Teacher A, Lesson 2).

1 S: {accusing tone} miks hitossa sä nyt siihen pausetit?  
2 T: because these are like—because after this we are going to hear the  
3 answer to the next question

- (12) The teacher ups the difficulty in a memory game. (Teacher B, Lesson 2).

1 T: next (.) I'm gonna take out two words!  
2 S1: oho  
3 S2: oho  
4 S3: woah  
5 S1: {sarcastic tone} sähän käyt villiks  
6 {students laugh}  
7 T: {sarcastic tone} thanks

- (13) S1 and S2 are discussing mean messages S2 has received on Snapchat.  
(Teacher A, Lesson 1).

1 S1: mä laitoin sille kuvan ja se se lähetti taas sen saman  
2 S2: no vastaa sille (.) niinku {holds up both his middle fingers}  
3 S1: pitäiskö mun //lähettää—  
4 T: //no! no I'm not letting you do that! that's naughty  
5 S2: okay okay okay (.) just this finger {holds up one of his middle  
6 fingers}  
7 S1: [laughs]  
8 T: no! [laughs]

- (14) The debate about the snapchat discussion continues with S3 joining in.  
(Teacher A, Lesson 1).

1 S3: mitä ne tekee sulle?  
2 S1: noi  
3 S2: kerro mitä ne sano sulle  
4 S1: huora  
5 T: hey—  
6 S1: {pointing at S4} ja toi on kuulemma [NIMEN] nainen  
7 T: hei! kysymys on että voitko sä— jos vaikka esimerkiks  
8 sosiaalisessa mediassa on tyypejä ketkä häiritsee sua niin voitko sä  
9 blokata ne tyytit? (.) mä suosittelen vaan blokkaamaan ne

- (16) The students are arriving into the classroom before the lesson.  
(Teacher A, Lesson 3).

1 S: meidän pitää kattoo leffaa tai mä lähen  
2 T: you can't say that  
3 S: no mä just sanoin niin  
4 T: {mocking tone} ooooh!

(32) The students negotiate who should be standing next to whom in an exercise, where they have to form a line based on how much they walk daily. (Teacher D, Lesson 3).

- 1 S1: {talking to S2} you can go over to the other side!
- 2 S2: I walk like // [indistinct]—
- 3 S3: // {talking about S2} he's a bit stupid if you haven't
- 4 noticed
- 5 S2: what?! you are stupid!
- 6 S1: //ooooh!
- 7 S4: //ooh! got you!
- 8 T: hey!
- 9 S4: vähän roastia tälleen
- 10 T: hei kuunnellaas kaikki (.) yksi kerrallaan

(33) The teacher has given S1 and another student some extra assignments and S1 questions the teacher's decision. (Teacher A, Lesson 1).

- 1 S1: miks aina meille? miksei koskaan noille?
- 2 T: no—
- 3 S2: because they are better at English than you
- 4 T: no!
- 5 S2: you need some extra teaching
- 6 T: [S2]!
- 7 S2: what?
- 8 T: you can't say things like that
- 9 S2: I did
- 10 T: well it's really annoying (.) you can't say things like that—
- 11 S1: no mut mekin voidaan sanoa et se on yksinäinen ja
- 12 ulkopouolinen
- 13 S2: yes
- 14 T: but (.) why don't we just— just don't say anything (.) we can all
- 15 be friends

(37) S1 is working on a written assignment, when S2 suddenly grabs their notebook. (Teacher D, Lesson 2).

- 1 {S2 snatches notebook out of S1's hands}
- 2 S1: mitä helvettiä—!
- 3 {S2 tries to draw in the notebook}
- 4 {S1 struggles with S2 to retrieve the notebook}
- 5 S3: hei (.) mitä te teette?
- 6 {S1 gets the notebook back}
- 7 S1: no mä vaan sanoin et mulla on jo kolkyt sanaa ja toi vitun homo
- 8 otti mun vihon ja alko sotkee sitä
- 9 {S2 laughs and returns to their seat}
- 10 S4: tollaset tyypit pitäis hakata oikeesti
- 11 S3: väkivalta ei oo ratkaisu

(39) A student is crying in outrage after having answered incorrectly.  
(Teacher A, Lesson 4).

- 1 L1: mä en nähny mitään ku [L3:n] //iso—
- 2 L2: //nii (.) perse oli tiellä
- 3 T: [laughs]



## Appendix 5

### Original transcript excerpts from the interview data

- (18) [Yleensä se käytös on] sellaista, että oppilaat voi olla epäkohteliaita toisiinsa kohtaan, mikä voi olla ulkopuolelle jättämistä tai sitten tällaista jonkinlaisista piikittelyä tai jopa aika suoraa törkeyksien latelemista. [Se voi myös olla] muuten vaan sellaista jarruttavaa ja kielteistä olemista ja tekemistä minua kohtaan. (Teacher A).
- (19) Minä myös tunnistan ja tunnustan, että joskus minun on itse vaikea suhtautua viileästi ja kohteliaasti siihen, jos vaikka koko ajan joku laittaa vastaan. Ehkä se johtuu siitäkin, kun on itse sen verran nuori, niin joskus todella tekee mieli sanoa takaisin samalla mitalla, vaikka tietää, että on asemassa, missä ei voi [tehdä niin]. (Teacher A).
- (20) Tyypillisimmillään [epäkohteliaisuus luokkahuoneessa] on varmaan sellainen tietynlainen tottelemattomuutta, että ei tehdä silleen, kun mä sanon tai sitten joskus myös ehdoin tahdoin vähän härnätään. Se on sellaista takaisin sanomista. (Teacher B).
- (21) No, tyypillisin (epäkohteliaisuuden muoto) on varmaan se, kun pyydän tekemään jotain, ja sitten sanotaan, että: ”en tee”. Tietysti sen voi sanoa muutenkin kuin niillä sanoilla ”en tee”-. (Teacher B).
- (22). Tyypillistä [epäkohteliaisuutta] on se, että metelöidään, eikä rauhoituta pyydettyä. Sitten kiroaminen, jos kiroaa jossakin [tunnilla], niin se on minulle kanssa sellainen, mikä tuntuu itsestä pahalta, vaikka se ei minuun kohdistuisikaan. (Teacher C).
- (23) Sitten on sellaisia nahisteluita, että jos he rupeaa koskettamaan [toisia oppilaita]. [...] Pahin on minun mielestäni se, että he huutaa jollekin toiselle oppilaalle, joka on vaikka esiintymässä. [...] Sillä voi sitten jollekin herkemmälle ihmiselle olla todella kauaskantoiset vaikutukset (Teacher C).
- (24) Esimerkkejä, mitä tulee yläkoulussa, niin tämä rasistinen nimittely ja toinen on homottelu. [...] Tyttöillä on tyttöjen kesken huorittelua, mutta siitä minä olen kuullut, että he ottavat sen sellaiseksi vitsiksi. [...] Vammaisuus teema nousee kanssa, että kaikki nämä ryhmät, jotka on olleet yhteiskunnassa syrjittynä, niin kyllä sen huomaa, että nämä [käytetyt] nimittelyt ryhtyy lyömään sitä lyötyä. (Teacher D).
- (25) Sellainen toinen mikä nousisi yleisenä tuon nimittelyn lisäksi, niin sellainen kärsimätön itsekkyyden on lisääntynyt. Sellainen ”minulle heti kaikki nyt” -asenne. [Oppilaat] saattaa jotenkin yrittää komennella opettajaa, että ”nyt tulet tänne”. (Teacher D).

- (26) Se riippuu varmasti ryhmästäkin aika paljon, mutta [...] kyllä sitä nyt aina jonkin verran on. (Teacher A).
- (27) Voi se olla ihan päivittäistäkin, mutta yleensä ei ehkä ihan niin [yleistä]. Mutta varmaan joka toinen päivä, kylläkin. (Teacher B).
- (28) Jos mietin kaikkia opetusryhmiäni, niin ei se kovin yleistä ole. [...] Se, että oppilaat tieteen tahtoen [olisivat epäkohteliaita], on minun mielestä jopa hyvin harvinaista, itse asiassa. (Teacher C).
- (29) Kyllä [epäkohteliaisuus] minun mielestäni on ihan päivittäistä. (Teacher D).
- (30) En ole kyllä kokenut mitään sellaista trendiä, että epäkohteliaisuus olisi lisääntynyt. (Teacher B).
- (31) Kyllä oma auktoriteetti kasvaa ihan selvästi. Epäkohteliaisuus vähenee sillä tavalla, että aina on keinot saada oppilaat käyttäytymään. (Teacher C)
- (40) Minun mielestäni opettajan pitäisi miettiä tai tapauskohtaisesti aina harkita, että missä määrin on kannattavaa puuttua. Minä esimerkiksi itse olen ottanut sen linjan, että minä herkemmin puutun sellaiseen epäkohteliaisuuteen, mikä kohdistuu toiseen oppilaaseen. Minä voin aikuisena ihmisenä olla sellainen, että kestan sen, jos minulle ollaan vähän hankalia. (Teacher A).
- (41) Se riippuu tosi paljon siitä tilanteesta, mutta yleensä ottaen kyllä siihen pitää reagoida jotenkin, koska muuten se viesti on vähän huono. Ainakin se pitää osoittaa jotenkin, että sen on nähnyt ja kuullut. Sitten se, että mikä se on se korjaava toimenpide, on ainakin mun mielestä tosi tilannekohtaista. (Teacher B).
- (42) Kiroilu minun mielestä pitää lopettaa. [...] Jos on sellaista, että se kiroilu on ihan opettajaa kohtaan tai haistattelua tai jotakin, niin se on minun mielestäni todella vakava teko ja siitä täytyy sitten puhua oppilaan kanssa. Samaten kiroilu, jos se jatkuu, niin sitten pitää puhua tunnin jälkeen kahdestaan. Jos se kohdistuu opettajaan, että on haistattelua ja muuta, niin sitten se pitää viedä eteenpäin rehtorille ja vanhemmille tiedoksi. (Teacher C).
- (43) Se pitää ehdottomasti viheltää poikki se tilanne. Jos siinä on muita aikuisia, niin voi olla, että toinen aikuinen lähtee sitten sen oppilaan kanssa pois. Kouluillahan on selkeät portaat siitä, että jos se on selkeä ylilyönti, niin voi ihan soittaa kotiin, että ”nyt tulkaa hakemaan lapsi täältä, että ei käy”. Ihan selvä viesti siinä pitää antaa, että kaikki oppiminen perustuu sellaiselle turvallisuuden tunteelle silleen, että missään luokassa ei kenenkään tarvitse pelätä. (Teacher D).

- (44) Sinänsä helpommin tunnistettavaan on helpompi puuttua, koska sen helpommin näkee. Mutta minä itse yritän enemmän puuttua sellaiseen, mikä on ilkeämielistä. Esimerkiksi, ellei se nyt ole ihan toistuvaa, niin en muista, että olisin hirveästi puuttunut kiroiluun, vaikka sehän on aika tunnistettavaa. Sitten taas, jos huomaa, että oppilaiden keskinäiset jutut alkaa mennä vähän [yli/epäkohteliaisuuden puolelle], niin kyllä minä yritän sanoa, että ”hei, meillä on meidän pelisäännöt ja me halutaan ja minä haluan, että tämä on turvallinen tila meille kaikille, eli ei tuollaista”. (Teacher A).
- (45) Ne ovat minusta sellaisia tilanteita, että tilannekohtaisesti ne pitää voida ottaa esille. Jos ryhmässä on tosi paljon sellaista jotenkin ilkeän kuuloista piikittelyä, mikä ei välttämättä kohdistu minuun mutta toisiin, niin se on kyllä yleisen keskustelun paikka. Tai jos ryhmä tuntuu kauhean tahmealta, nämä on kaikki sellaisia asioita, jotka minun pitäisi opettajana pystyä sanoittamaan-- (Teacher B).
- (46) Jos ilkeilee kaverilleen, niin kyllä minä sen selvitän ja kysyn, ellen siinä niin heti tunnin jälkeen, siltä kelle ilkeiltiin, että oliko tuo oikeasti [kiusaamista/epäkohteliaisuutta]. Tai sitten kaksi tyyppiä voi näyttää kaveruksilta, mutta enhän minä tiedä, että onko siinä takana mitä. Kyllä minä sitten yritän selvittää, että onko siinä takana kiusaamisesta kysymys. Siihen minä aika herkästi mielestäni reagoin-- (Teacher C).
- (47) Minä uskoisin, että pieni huono käytös saattaa poistua tällä niin kutsutulla sijaisvahvistamisella, eli kiinnitetään huomio siihen, mikä menee hyvin. Kaikkeen ei tarvitse koko ajan sanoa, koska muuten siitä opettajan puheesta saattaa tulla hirveän negatiivissävytteistä, jos koko ajan katsotaan vaan mikä menee huonosti ja ”älä tee sitä” ja ”älä tee tätä”-- (Teacher D).