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**TRANSLANGUAGING IN FINNISH ESL CLASSROOMS:**  
Views from Pupils

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# ABSTRACT

Riikka Iso-Pellinen: Translanguaging in Finnish ESL Classrooms: Views from Pupils

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This Pro Gradu thesis explores the parallel use of Finnish (L1) and English (L2) in Finnish ESL classrooms. The debate concerning the use of L1 and L2 in language pedagogy is long and unsettled. Some educators and language professionals deem that L2 should be the only teaching and learning language in second language classrooms, for immersion is the most efficient way to acquire a new language. Others advocate for the employment of multilingual methods, in which learners' mother tongue and/or other additional languages are utilized in L2 teaching, because other languages are viewed as an asset that enhances language learning.

This study continues to explore the relationship between L1 and L2 usage in the Finnish classroom context: how Finnish and English coexist (Translanguaging) in second language classrooms, what functions the given languages serve in class, and which language is the preferred choice of code for different teaching and learning situations. The data was collected by using an online questionnaire, which was filled in by a sample of Finnish lower secondary school pupils. The pupils reported why and when they and their English teachers use Finnish and English in class. The aim was to explore pupils' preferences and incorporate their voice into the L1 versus L2 debate: when do they want that their teacher uses English/Finnish, and how they as learners utilize these languages during their learning process. Pupils' point of view was chosen, because previous studies have often focused on interviewing or observing teachers. Listening to pupil voice helps teachers to challenge and improve their teaching practices, enhances pupils' satisfaction with the quality of teaching, and consequently increases learner motivation. The results were analysed by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. Because of the small sample size of the study, no statistical analyses were conducted.

The results showed that pupils viewed translanguaging a natural classroom phenomenon. They preferred a parallel use of the two languages (L1 and L2) in class, but reported that the L2 should be the dominant teaching language. Both the mother tongue and target language had important functions and the languages complemented each other. The pupil reports illustrated that pupils utilized their L1 to comprehend and internalize new linguistic information and to overcome cognitive challenges. Therefore, translanguaging should be seen as a beneficial tool that teachers and learners use when interacting with each other and the subject matter. Teachers should not try to avoid or criticize the usage of L1 in class, but instead incorporate multilingual methods and translanguaging into their teaching repertoire and become more aware of their benefits for language teaching and learning. However, some common guidelines and rules concerning the use of L1 and L2 in language teaching would be valid, for teachers and language learners could benefit from more systematized translanguaging and code choosing practices.

Keywords: translanguaging, codeswitching, ESL, L1, L2, L2 teaching, Finnish, English

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# TIIVISTELMÄ

Riikka Iso-Pellinen: Translanguaging in Finnish ESL Classrooms: Views from Pupils  
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Tämä Pro Gradu -tutkielma tarkastelee suomen (L1) ja englannin kielen (L2) rinnakkaiskäyttöä (translanguaging) suomalaisissa toisen kielen luokahuoneissa. Kielipedagogiikassa ja -tutkimuksessa on jo pitkään keskusteltu kohdekielen ja äidinkielen käytön suhteesta kielen opetuksessa. Toiset ovat sitä mieltä, että kohdekielen eli opetettavan kielen tulisi olla ainoa luokahuoneessa käytettävä kieli, koska immersio on tehokkain menetelmä, jonka avulla uusi kieli omaksutaan. Toiset tutkijat ja kasvattajat puhuvat vuorostaan monikielisten opetusmenetelmien puolesta, jolloin opetuksessa hyödynnetään oppilaan äidinkieltä ja/tai muita kieliä. Tämän ajatuksen kannattajat näkevät, että kielet ovat toisiaan tukevia työkaluja, jotka tehostavat uuden kielen oppimisprosessia.

Tämä tutkimus jatkaa edellä mainittua kohdekielen ja äidinkielen suhteen erittelyä. Päämääränä on tarkastella, kuinka kielen oppijat ja heidän opettajansa käyttävät kohdekieltä sekä äidinkieltä englannin kielen oppitunneilla sekä millaisiin käyttötarkoituksiin kieliä käytetään; suositaanko toista kieltä esimerkiksi tietyissä oppimis- ja opetustilanteissa enemmän kuin toista. Aineisto kerättiin kyselyn avulla, johon otos suomalaisia yläkoululaisia vastasi. Kyselyssä oppilaat kertoivat mistä syistä ja missä tilanteissa he itse ja heidän kielenopettajansa käyttivät englantia ja suomea oppituntien aikana. Tavoitteena oli tarkastella oppilaiden preferenssejä ja tuoda heidän äänensä kuuluviin ”L1 vastaan L2” -keskustelussa: miten oppilaat itse toivovat, että heidän opettajansa käyttäisi suomea ja englantia, sekä kuinka he kielenoppijoina hyödyntävät äidinkieltään ja kohdekieltä oppimisprosessinsa aikana. Oppilaiden näkökulma valittiin, koska aikaisemmin toteutetut samankaltaiset tutkimukset ovat usein keskittyneet haastattelemaan tai observoimaan opettajia. Oppilaiden äänen kuunteleminen ja huomioonottaminen auttaa opettajia haastamaan ja kehittämään omia opetusmenetelmiään, lisää oppilaiden tyytyväisyyttä opetukseen ja täten nostaa oppimismotivaatiota. Aineiston analyysissä hyödynnettiin sekä kvantitatiivisia että kvalitatiivisia menetelmiä. Tilastollisia menetelmiä ei käytetty, koska otoskoko oli liian pieni luotettavien tulosten saamiseksi.

Tulokset osoittivat, että oppilaat näkivät kielen rinnakkaiskäytön (translanguaging) olevan luonnollinen luokahuoneessa tapahtuva ilmiö. He pitivät siitä, että äidinkieltä ja kohdekieltä käytetään luokahuoneessa rinnakkain, mutta samalla ilmaisivat, että kohdekielen tulee olla hallitseva opetuskieli. Sekä äidinkielellä että kohdekielellä oli tärkeitä tehtäviä luokassa eli kielet täydensivät toisiaan. Oppilaat kertoivat esimerkiksi, että he hyödyntävät äidinkieltään ratkaistessaan kognitiivisia haasteita sekä sisäistäessään uutta kielellistä informaatiota (uusi sanasto, kielioppi jne.). Tästä syystä kielen rinnakkaiskäyttö tulisi nähdä hyödyllisenä työkaluna, jota oppilaat ja opettajat hyödyntävät ollessaan vuorovaikutuksessa toistensa sekä opetettavan aineksen kanssa. Opettajien ei tulisi vältellä tai kritisoida äidinkielen käyttämistä luokassa, vaan sisällyttää monikielisiä menetelmiä opetusrepertuaariinsa ja tulla tietoisemmiksi niistä hyödyistä, joita monikieliset menetelmät tarjoavat kielen opetukselle ja oppimiselle. Yhteisiä ohjenuoria ja sääntöjä kuitenkin tarvittaisiin koskien sitä, miten ja missä määrin äidinkieltä ja kohdekieltä tulisi käyttää kielen opetuksessa. Sekä oppilaat että opettajat hyötyisivät siitä, että kielen rinnakkaiskäyttö ja luokahuoneessa tapahtuva koodinvaihto olisi systemaattista ja järjestäytyntä.

Avainsanat: translanguaging, koodinvaihto, ESL, L1, L2, toisen kielen opetus, suomen kieli, englannin kieli

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck -ohjelmalla.

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## 1. Introduction

For several decades, there has been a rather strong tendency to use the monolingual (English-only) approach when teaching English as a second language (L2). Especially language-teaching literature has been conveying a message that any new language is most effectively learnt, when all the communication in language classrooms is done by using the target language; not the learners' mother tongue (L1) (see Hall and Cook 2012, 271). In extreme cases, this view led to banning students and teachers' L1 use in classroom contexts altogether. Recently, however, the monolingual approach has been challenged by multilingual approaches, which centre around the idea that teachers and language learners should utilize all languages they know when learning a new one (ibid., 272). Like Wei and Ho (2018, 35) remind, 'the purpose of learning an additional language is to achieve some degree of bilingualism or multilingualism rather than losing the language or languages we know or replacing one language with another'. It may be argued that monolingual teaching and monolingual ideals do not promote this purpose.

Naturally, the learners' mother tongue has been the most prominently utilized 'additional language' in foreign and second language classrooms all around the world. Following the rise of multilingual approaches and the increased use of L1 in language teaching, there has been a growing interest among researchers to explore the most *appropriate* ways to utilize L1 in language classrooms (Gulzar 2010, 24). Researchers have raised questions such as 'when is it beneficial for the teacher and learners to use L1?', 'where does one draw a line between excessive and appropriate L1 usage, before L1 becomes a hindrance for L2 learning?', and 'on what grounds do we decide which codeswitching practices are permissible?' (ibid., 23-24).

This Pro Gradu thesis will investigate similar questions from the language learner's point of view. The study aims to illustrate, how pupils aged 14-16 and their teachers use the L1

(Finnish) and L2 (English) in their English as a second language classroom. In other words, the study focuses on exploring how Finnish and English coexist (translanguaging) in English classrooms, what functions the two languages have, and which language is the preferred choice of code for different teaching/learning situations. Thus, this study will explore the fields of translanguaging and code-choosing practices in second language classrooms. The data is collected by using a questionnaire, in which a sample of pupils from three different Finnish lower secondary schools tell their views about their teachers' L1 and L2 usage and depict how they as learners utilize Finnish and English in class.

The topic of translanguaging has not yet been extensively studied in the Finnish lower secondary school context. Therefore, 'there is a need for increased awareness-raising around [the] question' (Nikula et al 2019, 237). It would benefit teachers and language learners if they had an understanding that translanguaging is not merely a pedagogic strategy, but 'also a feature of natural bilingual discourse, which [teachers] and their students can employ according to the situational demands' (ibid., 245). Thus, the results from translanguaging and code choosing studies are beneficial especially for language pedagogy, providing educators insight into choosing the most functional language for different classroom activities and purposes.

The point of view chosen was that of pupils. They provided the data for this research instead of teachers, because listening to pupils' opinions or 'pupil voice' as Flutter (2007, 344) puts it, is a catalyst for change that 'has been shown to lead to a range of positive wellbeing developments in classroom environments' and helps teachers to challenge and improve their teaching practices. Listening to learners' voice and involving them in the development of school and teaching practices increases their connectedness to school and satisfaction with the quality of teaching. This consequently increases school motivation and improves learning outcomes (ibid., 345). Furthermore, previous studies concerning translanguaging and code choosing practices in L2 classrooms have often focused on interviewing or observing teachers. For this reason, exploring the phenomena from pupils' perspective complements and enriches previous findings.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) According to pupils, in what situations do they tend to use their mother tongue in the English as L2 classroom and does the use of mother tongue affect their learning positively or negatively?
- 2) How do the pupils view their teachers' L1 and L2 usage?
  - A) In what situations does the teacher usually use Finnish?
  - B) In what situations do the pupils prefer that the teacher uses L1 over L2?
  - C) Do the teachers use L2 enough?
- 3) Do schools differ from each other regarding the way they perceive and report the amount of L1 and L2 used in the classroom?

The thesis consists of six sections. After the introduction, the second section summarizes and illustrates some relevant theory and previous studies concerning translanguaging, codeswitching and second language teaching and learning. The third section specifies how the data for the study was collected, presents the questionnaire, and the methods of analysis. Section four focuses on analysing the results yielded by the questionnaire. The results are divided into five themes: pupils' views on 1) teacher's use of Finnish, 2) teacher's use of English, 3) pupils' preferences and attitudes concerning monolingual versus multilingual L2 teaching, 4) pupils' code choosing practices and classroom communication, and 5) pupils' views on the effects that a parallel use of L1 and L2 might have on their language learning. The two final sections of the thesis offer further observations on the results, discuss pedagogical applications, and present conclusive thoughts on the study as a whole.

## **2 Theoretical background**

The following chapter explores some of the key themes and concepts concerning L2 teaching, multilingualism, translanguaging and codeswitching with the help of previous research conducted in these fields. The focus is on global research, but Finnish L2 teaching and translanguaging studies are included as a section of their own, in order to illustrate more specifically the context that the present study connects to.

### **2.1 Multilingual Turn in Second Language Teaching**

Second and foreign language teaching have favoured monolingual teaching practices for several decades. This means that teachers have used and promoted the use of the target language (L2) in language classrooms, while often discouraging the use of other languages. Usually, these ‘other languages’ refer to the learners’ mother tongue (L1) and other additional languages that the learners are proficient in. Like Prada and Turnbull (2018, 12) state, language pedagogy ‘has traditionally failed to accept the notion of developing language skills in cooperation with pre-existing language knowledge, focusing instead on language separation and language development in competition’. Indeed, the ideology behind monolingual teaching is rooted in ‘the centralization of monolingual speakers as the standard for linguistic mastery’ (ibid., 9). Consequently, second and foreign language classrooms were, and still are to some extent, created to resemble monolingual environments.

However, the monolingual tradition fails to fully recognize the realities of the modern world. Following the rise of mass media, internet and globalization in general, people everywhere around the world encounter and interact with different languages more and more every day. This leads to a growing number of bilinguals and multilinguals in the world (Kootstra 2012, 2). According to some estimates, more than half of the world’s population is bilingual; meaning that bilingualism is hardly a new emerging trend, but instead has decades-long roots in human history (Mahootian 2020,



3). The growing number of bi- and multilinguals means that the contexts in which people interact with each other are also changing and becoming increasingly multilingual. Yet, in language teaching and learning ‘real bilingual and multilingual language users and how they use languages in real-life social situations are rarely used as a model’ (Wei & Ho 2018, 35-36). Why do many language classrooms still mimic monolingual speaking environments, even though the aim of language teaching should be to equip learners (i.e., emerging bi- and multilinguals) with similar multilingual skillsets that modern bilinguals possess and employ?

Indeed, language learners would benefit from possessing multilingual skills so that they can prosper in ‘the real linguistic world’. In that world, skills like the simultaneous use of two (or more) languages (translanguaging) and switching effortlessly from one language to another (codeswitching), are very valuable. In order to instill these skills in language learners, language educators should 1) incorporate multilingual and translingual practices into foreign and second language teaching, and 2) move away ‘from thinking of multilingualism as an object of pursuit to consider it as a central strategy to pursue [and to promote]’ (Prada & Turnbull 2018, 9-10).

## **2.2 Bi- and Multilingual Language Use: Codeswitching and Translanguaging**

Concerning bi- and multilingual communication, codeswitching has been a popular research topic in linguistics and other scientific fields. Codeswitching is defined as ‘the alternating use of two or more ‘codes’ within one conversational episode’ (Auer 1998, 17). Grosjean (1989) views bilinguals as having two different modes or ‘settings’: monolingual mode and bilingual mode (as cited in Cook 2016, 184). In the monolingual mode the speaker uses only one language, whereas in the bilingual mode they use two (or more) languages simultaneously, i.e., codeswitch between them. Codeswitching is indeed one of the most common by-products of bilingualism alongside borrowing

and other types of language mixing. Codeswitching is an ordinary part of everyday life in multilingual societies, when a listener and speaker share the same two languages (Mahootian 2020, 3; Cook 2016, 184).

In codeswitching theory, the focus is often on the different social, psychological and/or linguistic effects of bilingualism and how the speaker's L1 and L2 interact, or in some cases interfere, with each other. Modern theories and studies view codeswitching as a predominantly conscious, intentional, and systematic linguistic behaviour found in informal contexts, especially. An often-cited theory on codeswitching is the matrix language frame model (later updated and called the 4M model) by Myers-Scotton (2005). The theory views the relationship between the languages used in codeswitching similarly to the relationship between a picture and its frame: the frame (matrix language; often the L1) provides the grammatical structure of the sentence, while the picture (embedded language; often the L2) provides the content words that fill out the frame. The theory neatly coincides with the estimates stating that up to 84% of codeswitches are indeed single content word switches taken from the vocabulary of the second language (Cook 2016, 185-186).

Linguists have been interested in exploring the reasons behind speaker's codeswitches, which can vary to a considerable degree depending on the individual and the context in which the speech event takes place. Kootstra (2012, 7) lists three factors that influence and induce codeswitching: discourse-situational factors, factors related to languages overlapping, and speaker-related factors. Discourse-situational codeswitching is influenced by social and pragmatic factors. This occurs, for instance, when a speaker wishes to make the conversation more formal/intimate, tries to highlight particular information, or wants to signal that they belong to a certain ethnic or social community by switching into another language or dialect variety (Mahootian 2020, 56). Furthermore, codeswitching is also influenced by the languages themselves and the linguistic properties they possess. Especially languages that are lexically similar, can 'trigger' codeswitching by causing cross-language activation in the bilingual's mind. 'The triggering hypothesis holds that words that overlap

across languages (i.e., cognates and false friends) can be seen as bridges between languages and can thus trigger a switch into another language' (Kootstra 2012, 8).

In addition to situational and linguistic factors above, codeswitching is influenced by speaker-related factors, from which the most apparent one is the speaker's relative proficiency in the language(s) used (Cook 2016, 184). One might induce that low language proficiency leads to more codeswitching, which functions as a compensating tool. This is indeed sometimes the case, but like Kootstra (2012, 10) notes, when a speaker is *highly proficient* in two or more languages, switching between them becomes effortless. This leads to a higher degree of codeswitches, because all the languages are nearly equally dominant and thus easily activated in the speaker's mind. Therefore, it is evident that codeswitching should not be regarded as a sign of a poor language proficiency, but instead a sign of a competent bilingual able to access different languages simultaneously.

This being said, codeswitching has often been frowned upon in L2 classrooms, because of the fear of the learners not being able to 'keep their languages separate' (Cook 2016, 187). This is a reasonable fear to some extent from the teacher's perspective, because they cannot always know if the switching is a result of the learner's lacking skills, or because they are highly proficient in both languages. From the learner's perspective, switching between different languages is merely a bonus that helps them to communicate efficiently. Like Cook (*ibid.*, 188) states, it is a pretence that an L2 classroom is a monolingual context, when at most one of the languages is *hidden* at times. In classroom context therefore the relevant question should be: 'is the learner's codeswitching intentional or unintentional?'. If it is intentional, there should be no need for the teacher to be against it. If the switching is unintentional and caused by the learner's struggles with the L2, there is still no need to condemn or prohibit it in any way, but simply provide the learner some additional help with their vocabulary.

A similar term to codeswitching is translanguaging. 'Translanguaging' originates from the Welsh term 'Trawsieithu', which was originally used in Welsh language pedagogy. The term was

coined by Cen Williams in the 1980s, who defined translanguaging as a ‘purposeful cross-curricular strategy for the planned and systematic use of two languages for teaching and learning inside the same lesson’ (Conteh 2018, 445). The key words of the preceding definition are ‘planned’ and ‘systematic’, which imply that employing translanguaging practices in language classrooms is a deliberate choice; instead of being purely spontaneous or motivated by the lack of proficiency in L2, for instance. In Welsh pedagogy, the rise of translanguaging stemmed from the dissatisfaction towards language hierarchies and ‘colonial and modernist-era language ideologies [that] created and maintained linguistic, cultural, and racial hierarchies’, which still are very visible in different societies around the world (Vogel et al 2017). In language pedagogy this meant that there was a growing interest and desire to incorporate the learners’ different mother tongues into language teaching, so that children are able to utilize and ‘expand their communicative repertoire...and develop the linguistic security and identity investment that they need to learn and be successful’ (Garcia 2009, 157).

Indeed, the translanguaging theory ‘challenges the hitherto educational belief in language separation in bilingual education’ (Lewis et al 2012, 667). Instead, language equality is emphasized because of the term’s Welsh origins; Welsh being a minority language battling against language extinction to this day. The term has kept its emphasis, though, even after spreading out all over the world, perhaps resulting from globalization and the need to protect minority languages and language diversity everywhere. In the field of language pedagogy, the most recent translanguaging studies still maintain the original emphasis of language equality. However, especially in non-minority-language contexts, the focus has shifted more towards the individual and how they benefit from translanguaging techniques as language users and learners. Translanguaging functions as a powerful resource that operates at the interface of different languages: it ‘stimulates skill transfer from the more dominant (more rehearsed/practiced/automatized) language(s) to support the weaker ones’ (Prada & Turnbull 2018, 16). Thus, when learning a new language, it is very beneficial to use

other languages to assist the learning process when for example taking notes, discussing, and writing. This may lead to faster and deeper learning. Like Garcia (2011, 147) emphasizes, translanguaging is not solely ‘translating’ or ‘codeswitching’ that helps to scaffold the learning of a new language, but instead part of ‘a regime’ that modern students should/must possess in bilingual classrooms.

Translanguaging is a near synonym for codeswitching, but many researchers deem that the two terms have slightly different focuses and tones. The main difference between ‘translanguaging’ and ‘codeswitching’ seems to be the degree of autonomy that different language systems are considered to possess. In codeswitching literature, the speaker is often described to alternate between two or more *separate* language systems or codes; whereas in translanguaging theory, the key notion is that bilinguals and multilinguals ‘select and deploy particular features from *a unitary linguistic repertoire* to make meaning and to negotiate particular communicative contexts’ (Vogel et al 2017). This means that in translanguaging theory, different languages are considered more equal than in traditional codeswitching literature: all the languages one knows, create a unitary ‘hybrid language’ in the cognition, in which all the languages exist side by side (Vallejo 2018, 88). In practice though, it might be difficult to differentiate translanguaging from the process of codeswitching. Jakonen et al (2018, 19) summarize that translanguaging ‘includes phenomena such as translation and morphological derivation’, which do *not* usually occur in codeswitching. However, Lewis (2012, 659) sees that the nature of the distinction is perhaps ideological; not linguistic.

Translanguaging theory has been criticized for its stance that different languages create a unitary system in the learner’s mind. Mahootian (2020), for instance, notes that translanguaging theory ‘proposes to dismantle much of the research and findings of the last 70 years, not to mention the centuries of descriptive and comparative language studies’ that support the separate-system hypothesis. However, this question is not central for the purposes of the present study. Translanguaging theory was selected for the framework of this study because it offers a nice viewpoint for the reality of language learning: how languages coexist, interact, and build on each

other. Hence, the more cognitive linguistic matters are left unexplored, and no assertions are made concerning the nature of organization of languages in the human mind.

Finally, concerning the terminology employed in this study, ‘translanguaging’ will be used when referring to the act of alternating between Finnish and English in classroom context. ‘Translanguaging’ is employed instead of ‘codeswitching’ because, ‘translanguaging’ has been used increasingly more in recent research concerning language pedagogy, language teaching and language altering especially in bilingual and near-bilingual classrooms, which as a field is most relevant for our purposes. Furthermore, no distinction is made between the terms ‘second language’ and ‘foreign language’. The study will follow Cook (2016, 15) and UNESCO’s definition, which states that ‘second language’ is any language that is not the person’s mother tongue; in other words, any additional language that is acquired on top of the individual’s L1.

### **2.3 How the Parallel Use of L1 and L2 Benefits Language Teaching and Learning**

For a second language to be learnt, one must be exposed to the target language. This is naturally one of the reasons why second and foreign language teaching have long been preferring the employment of the target language in classrooms. Indeed, essentially all modern teaching methods imply that ‘the less the first language is used in the classroom the better the teaching’ (Cook 2016, 190). The preference to use L2 in language teaching emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was argued that a monolingual teaching approach created a natural learning environment, in which L2 is acquired most effectively. The revolution began as a counter movement against grammar-translation method, which was the most widely adopted language teaching style at that time, focusing on text translating and emphasizing the importance of grammatical knowledge (ibid., 3). Following the rise of the L2 (i.e.,

monolingual) method, the new focuses in language teaching were spoken language, fluency and communicative skills.

The 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have brought with them several advances in language theory and acquisition research, but the monolingual approach has survived well through these changes and is still a widely employed method in many language classrooms. However, the approach brought with it a belief that the goal of language learning is to become as skilful and fluent as a native speaker is. As Sridhar and Sridhar (1986) put it: ‘There was little or no acknowledgement of the need of many learners to operate in bilingual or multilingual environments, where translation and appropriate code-switching are needed and valued skills’ (as cited in Hall and Cook 2012, 276). These observations have now led to the rise of bilingual and multilingual approaches in language teaching. Interestingly though, the proponents of multilingual approaches often share many beliefs with those, who have advocated monolingual teaching over the history: both parties emphasize the importance of communication skills and learner needs (*ibid.*, 276-277).

Indeed, there are several advantages in utilizing the students’ mother tongue in the classroom. Like Stern (1992, 282) notes: ‘whether we like it or not, the new knowledge is learnt on the basis of the previously acquired language.’ Therefore, the coexistence of L1 and L2 (translanguaging) should be considered a beneficial cognitive tool instead of a linguistic threat. The use of L1 allows the students to make linguistic comparisons between the L1 and L2, which usually assists the learning process by making the students consciously aware of the differences between the two languages (Gajšt 2017, 98). Even in the 1940’s and 1950’s when the monolingual approach was the dominant method of language teaching, this contrastive analysis was a rather widely utilized method, for teachers had noticed the usefulness of linguistic comparisons (Hall and Cook 2012, 276). Multilingual methods therefore were present even in monolingual teaching, although they were not ‘officially allowed’.

From the learners' perspective, translanguaging may promote language learning itself. Previous research has shown that translanguaging strategies 'can be used in activities involving any or all of four main language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) ...to enhance the learning and development of the [target language] by students of all ages and proficiency levels' (see Prada & Turnbull 2018, 16). Translanguaging is an effective tool for learning, for its utilization allows the stronger language to complement the emerging language(s), enhancing the learning process. Furthermore, like Baker (2000) notes, 'to read and discuss a topic in one language, and then to write about it in another, means that the subject matter has to be properly 'digested' and reconstructed' (as cited in Nikula 2019, 238). This means that learning is also deeper when one uses two or more languages during the process. Thus, the parallel use of L1 and L2 functions as a bridge between the comprehension of new linguistic content and its internalization.

According to teachers' reports, L1 is used especially for classroom management, maintaining discipline, when giving instructions, and resolving emotional conflicts (Auerbach 1993, 21). Teachers have noticed that the use of L1 decreases the number of misunderstandings and unnecessary repetition that the students' possible L2 vocabulary constraints might otherwise induce. For example, Bakić et al (2017, 44) found in their study that for some bilinguals, expressing and receiving emotional content is easier and more effective in the individual's mother tongue, because usually one feels that their L1 is more emotionally charged than their L2. Consequently, it might be reasonable for the teacher to use the students' mother tongue to carry out all the emotional communication and management in the classroom, for it may indeed be more effective and influential. Like Cook (2016, 193) notes, a teacher often slips into the first language 'if it's something really bad' that the students have done. Thus, the switch to L1 communicates the students that they perhaps should stop the 'kidding around for real' this time.

In addition to communicational and disciplinary benefits, using L1 alongside L2 may help students to feel safer and more confident in the classroom. Especially beginners and students



struggling with the L2 benefit from the comfort that their mother tongue brings to the classroom interaction (Gajšt 2017, 98). According to Schweers (1999, 6) ‘the L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners’ lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves.’ Therefore, the use of L1 helps the students to ‘maintain’ their individual identities and alleviates the anxiety that speaking a new language might cause. Using L1 alongside L2 makes the learner feel that they are able to express their individual personalities and thoughts in communicational situations, even if their L2 vocabularies alone are not yet vast enough for that. Like Cook (2016, 222) states, the goal of second language teaching should be to ‘equip people to use two languages without losing their own identity’. Being able to express oneself in classroom increases the students’ level of comfort and confidence, which in turn lead to increased motivation and investment to learn the new language, or any new skill in that matter.

However useful it would be to utilize multiple languages when teaching a new one, sometimes it is not possible for practical reasons. For instance, the teacher might be a native speaker of the second language, and thus they do not share a common language with their students. Consequently, the teaching becomes monolingual. In addition, teaching materials might limit or steer teaching towards monolingualism. Textbooks and other additional material distributed by publishers are, more often than not, written in the target language, making them more useful and accessible to all users in international contexts (Sampson 2011, 293). These factors, especially the mother tongue of the teacher, limit the possibilities for students and pupils to use translanguaging and codeswitching in class, for the monolingual environment does not encourage them to do so.

Lastly, it should be noted that different countries have different curricula, which in turn differ in how explicitly they cover the role of L1 and L2 in language teaching. For instance, the Finnish National Curriculum does not provide straightforward guidelines for the usage of the mother tongue and target language in the classroom. In a section that details the aims for 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> -grade English teaching, there is one general mention stating: ‘English should be used whenever possible’

(OPS 2014 Opetushallitus, 399). The curriculum also emphasizes the importance of interactional skills and the ability to have conversations using the target language, hinting towards favouring the target language in communication. In practice, the norm in Finland when teaching younger pupils and students, is that grammar is taught in Finnish while other topics are covered using English. In other words, translanguaging is perhaps often used as a scaffolding technique, while the monolingual use of the target language remains the main goal (Nikula 2019, 240). This being said, there is variation, because in Finland it is essentially up to the teacher to interpret the curriculum and then decide, how much and in which situations the class should use the L1 and L2.

## **2.4 Previous Studies on Translanguaging and Codeswitching in the Finnish Classroom**

### **Context**

Both teachers' and learners' codeswitching tendencies have been studied globally in various speech environments. In the Finnish context, for instance Halmari (1994) studied the conversations of bilingual children in the framework of register shift. Her findings illustrated that Finnish-English bilingual children codeswitched, when the nature or function of the conversation changed; 'providing evidence for code-switching as a register variation' (ibid., 427). Nikula (2007), on the other hand, has studied codeswitching from a pedagogical perspective. She studied for instance students' codeswitching practices in Finnish content-based classrooms, concluding that students 'slip in and out of English and Finnish' (ibid., 206) rather naturally. The students codeswitched between their L1 and L2 throughout the lessons very confidently, creatively, and often playfully 'as a resource for the construction of both official and off-record classroom activities' (ibid., 220-221). Hence, Nikula's (2007) findings emphasize that the students were not merely learners or 'receivers' of the L2, but indeed active users of English and emerging bilinguals in a bilingual classroom.

Translanguaging in language teaching and learning has not yet been widely studied in Finland. Kultti and Pramling (2017) for example have studied the ‘translation activities in bilingual early childhood education’, which touches on translanguaging as a concept, but the main focus of the study is on translating as a teaching method for very young language learners. However, in addition to her codeswitching studies, Nikula (2019) has studied Finnish CLIL classrooms and the translanguaging practices in them. CLIL stands for *content and language integrated learning*. It is a method in which the learning of different school subjects such as history or geography is done by using a foreign language; thus, combining content learning and language learning. In her 2019 study, Nikula collected data from CLIL classrooms from Austria, Finland and Spain. The results showed ‘that both pedagogic and interpersonal motivations can influence language choices [in bilingual classrooms]’ (Nikula 2019, 237), and that overall, the students’ L1 should be appreciated as a beneficial tool in language pedagogy.

Jakonen et al (2018) also studied translanguaging in Finnish CLIL classroom, in which history was being taught in English. The idea was that the students must use only English throughout the lessons. This did not happen, however; the students naturally ‘translanguaged’, especially when they were discussing with each other during transition points. Jakonen et al (ibid.) also examined the functions and role of translanguaging that occurred in the classroom, stating that traditionally translanguaging has been seen as a teaching method that allows all students to join and engage in class by utilizing their diverse language backgrounds. The findings of their study illustrated that translanguaging was *not* merely an instructional strategy, but an act of ‘language play’ employed and initiated by the students themselves. In this language play, students mixed English, Finnish and Swedish. However, sometimes the function of the language play was to entertain other classmates (ibid., 19). Thus, the act of translanguaging actually seemed to disturb the teaching in this context, when the teacher’s aim was to use English monolingually (ibid., 19). According to Jakonen et al (ibid., 18-19), this calls for rules or practises concerning ‘how best to adapt crosslinguistic pedagogies

such as translanguaging to the different contexts of bi- and multilingual education' so that these conflicts could be avoided.

In addition to the above research that centres around students and pupils, Alisaari et al (2019) explored how Finnish-speaking teachers view multilingualism, linguistic diversity and translanguaging in classrooms. Alisaari et al found that teachers had mainly positive beliefs and opinions on multilingualism and translanguaging, but too often especially immigrant children 'are not allowed to speak their own languages at school' (ibid., 48), because many teachers still value monolingualism over multilingual ideologies and practices. This may result in poor learning outcomes because language is a vital cognitive tool utilized to seek and comprehend new information (ibid., 57). For this reason, Alisaari et al conclude that there is 'a need for professional development for all teachers to promote a move away from maintaining monolingualism to advocating for multilingualism' (ibid., 48), so that all learners would be able to benefit from their individual linguistic repertoires in classroom. Teachers' awareness and professional development might be enhanced by studying translanguaging and other multilingual teaching and learning practices more in the Finnish context. Further exploration would make the topic more visible in the field of pedagogy and thus raise teachers' awareness concerning the benefits of translanguaging, while also providing more practical information on how translanguaging can be incorporated into the everyday practices of different classrooms.

Indeed, both codeswitching and translanguaging have been rising topics in the Finnish pedagogical and linguistic fields. However, several studies mentioned here have been conducted in CLIL contexts, not in foreign or second language classrooms, therefore differing from the present study. Most studies have also been rather small-scale and focused on examining individual groups of learners (Nikula 2007, 220). For instance, Jakonen et al's (2018) study mentioned above, focused on analysing the translanguaging practices of three individual students altogether. Therefore, it is difficult to draw far-reaching conclusions based on single studies. This being said, Nikula (ibid., 220)

states that it is important to conduct these fine-grained studies, for they offer ‘to take a close look at the ways in which students make use of English as part of their classroom activities’.

Furthermore, translanguaging studies provide information about the state of language education in Finland and perhaps even illustrate larger societal changes taking place in Finnish society (Nikula 2007, 221). Concerning these societal changes, Nikula refers to the fact that based on her findings, Finnish teenagers seem to be very proficient in switching between Finnish and English in classrooms and successfully utilize *both* languages in different communicational situations. This suggests that the status of English in Finland is perhaps becoming more prominent than the status of our second official language Swedish is. For this reason, it is interesting to continue examining the use of English and Finnish: how their side-by-side existence develops and consequently affects Finnish culture.

### **3 Data and Methods**

This section begins by describing how the data for the study was collected, how the questionnaire was designed, and how the methods were used for the analysis of the data. Participants’ demographic background will also be summarized.

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

This study explores the quantity and quality of the use of the students’ mother tongue (Finnish) and the target language (English) in second language classrooms. The aim is to study the coexistence of Finnish and English in L2 classroom: the amount of translanguaging occurring and the functions different languages seem to possess. The data was collected during the autumn and spring terms of

2020-2021 by using an online questionnaire that sixty (60) pupils from three Finnish lower secondary schools filled in. The reason for selecting lower secondary school students over younger or older students was mainly practical: young English learners would have difficulties trying to answer some of the more complex questions in the questionnaire, whereas lower secondary school students are already very capable of answering the questionnaire without assistance.

Regarding selecting lower secondary school students over older students (i.e., upper secondary school/vocational school/university students), lower secondary school was selected based on personal experience and interest: usually older language learners are taught by using mostly or only the target language. In other words, there usually is less variation concerning the amount of L1 and L2 used, for instance, in upper secondary school language classrooms. Therefore, there might be more variation in lower secondary school classrooms, because the learners' skill levels are not yet as advanced as older students', which makes the use of L1 still necessary. In this environment translanguaging occurs more frequently, providing more data for the purposes of this study.

The methods of this research evolved during the research process, because the data was collected during the Coronavirus pandemic. Firstly, the sample size of the study changed: sixty participants filled in the questionnaire, even though a sample of 100 or so participants was the study's initial target. Numerous different schools were contacted and asked to participate in the study. The most common answer received was: 'because of the pandemic and our school's hectic life, we simply cannot put anything special on our schedules for the time being'. This of course is an understandable answer, for which teachers are not to be blamed. During the time of the data collection, teachers everywhere were still trying to navigate the changed teaching circumstances, and everything was very uncertain. Furthermore, because institutions and people everywhere are somewhat 'bombarded' with questionnaires today, the final response rate in survey research is not always what the researchers wish it to be. Unfortunately, simply the sheer volume of survey invitations sometimes leads to reluctance to take the time to engage and participate in them.

Secondly, in addition to changes in the sample size, the research methods had to be adjusted: initially the plan was that there would be additional interviews or observations to complement the data that the questionnaire yielded. However, because of the pandemic, only the school staff and pupils were allowed to be on the lessons. Therefore, observation or in-person interviews were not possible. Online interviews via Zoom or other platforms were considered, but after consulting the teachers it was decided that interviewing pupils this way would be a rather challenging task to carry out during school hours. Thus, to ensure that the data collection would be as efficient and smooth to all parties involved, the questionnaire was selected as the main research method.

### **3.2 Questionnaire: Background**

The online questionnaire used in the current study was compiled using two existing questionnaires from Gaebler (2014) and Schweers (1999), which both explore codeswitching and the use of mother tongue in second or foreign language classrooms. Concerning Schweers' (1999) research, his main goal was to explore the most 'appropriate' ways to use L1 in L2 class. The research was conducted in the University of Puerto Rico. Thus, the students' L1 was Spanish and they studied English as a foreign language. Schweers (*ibid.*, 10) mentions that the motivation behind the study stemmed from the rather negative attitudes that students had towards English: Puerto Rican students often felt that English is threatening their vernacular, and therefore their motivation to learn English was low. This resistance led Schweers to investigate how students would feel if Spanish was a more visible part of their English lessons. The results showed that 88.7% of the students wanted to use and hear Spanish in their English class. Students reported that they feel more at ease in class and are able to express their thoughts and ideas better, when they are allowed to use their mother tongue (*ibid.*, 9-10).

Furthermore, both students and teachers felt that Spanish had affective and pedagogical benefits that justify its usage in class (ibid., 13). Schweers (ibid., 12-13) concluded that recognizing and welcoming the students' L1 into the classroom could be one way of increasing receptivity to learning a new language.

Gaebler's (2014) study is very similar to Schweers' in that it explored 'participant perspectives on L1 use in foreign language classrooms' (ibid., 66). However, the context was different. The study was conducted in the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) in California. The participants (a sample of teachers and students) all spoke English as their L1. There were two groups of students: some were studying Spanish and some Japanese as a foreign language. To collect the data, Gaebler used a combination of classroom observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The study used two slightly different questionnaires: one that the professors filled in, and one that was filled in by the students. The aim of the student questionnaire, which was the one that the present study also utilized, was to investigate how students used their mother tongue during their L2 classes, and how the parallel use of L1 and L2 seemed to benefit the students. Gaebler's data showed that 'while some students found comfort in L1 use, others felt threatened by the L1 and viewed it as an interference' (ibid., 66). Mostly the students and professors used the L1 in class as a learning and teaching strategy that facilitated communication (ibid., 73). Gaebler (ibid., 73-74) also noted that 'the participants "translanguage" during the classroom activities and discussions': the students used their L1 for instance 'if they lacked L2 vocabulary or grammar while the professors used English to compensate for students' L2 gaps.'

Gaebler and Schweers' student questionnaires are very much alike, but Gaebler does not explicitly mention that he would have used Schweers' questionnaire when compiling his own. The main difference between the two questionnaires is that Gaebler's is vaster: it has ten multiple choice questions, while Schweers' questionnaire has seven. Furthermore, the questionnaires have slightly differing emphases: Gaebler's questionnaire contains more questions regarding students' peer



communication and classroom communication tendencies, whereas Schweers' questionnaire focuses more on exploring the affective benefits of L1 usage and how students would feel more comfortable in class.

There were two reasons why Gaebler and Schweers' student questionnaires were considered good bases for the present study. Firstly, the aims of their research resembled the current study: all three studies aim to explore the usage of L1 and L2 in second/foreign language classrooms. Thus, the research questions, themes, and ideologies behind Gaebler and Schweers' questionnaires coincide with the aims of this study. Secondly, as mentioned above, the questionnaires had slightly different emphases and lengths. In other words, the themes and designs of the questionnaires complemented each other. For the purposes of this study, the best option was to borrow elements and themes from both questionnaires, because the questionnaires would not have fulfilled the purposes of this study if only one of them was utilized. For instance, if Schweers' questionnaire was employed alone, the data of this study would have lacked information concerning pupils' classroom communication tendencies, which Gaebler focused on in his questionnaire. On the other hand, one purpose of this study is to explore the affective benefits of L1 usage in second language classrooms. This theme would not have been sufficiently represented in the data if Schweers' questionnaire was not included.

### **3.3 Design of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire of this study investigates the parallel use of L1 and L2 in second language classrooms from pupils' point of view. Thus, the questionnaire aims to give insight into the *current* translanguaging practices in lower secondary school L2 classrooms, while also requesting the pupils to share their opinions on the *ideal* translanguaging and code choosing practices that they wish were

used in class. Pupils were asked to report how and when their teachers use the mother tongue and the target language, and how they themselves as language learners perceive and utilize these languages during lessons. The questionnaire began with a series of demographic questions for the pupils, which were: 1) age, 2) gender, 3) mother tongue, 4) which school the pupil attends to, and 5) grade. These were selected so that it is possible to compare, for instance, whether gender or the geographic location of the pupils' school (rural versus urban) affects their attitudes towards the languages in question and the degree to which the languages are used in class.

The questionnaire contained nine multiple choice questions and two entirely open-ended questions (see Appendix 1). The questions borrowed and modified from Gaebler (2014) and Schweers (1999) were questions number 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, and 11. For instance, the first question ('How often should your English teacher use Finnish in class?') was used by both Gaebler and Schweers, with a slightly different phrasing. Schweers' phrasing for instance was 'do you or would you like your teacher to use L1 in class', which yields yes/no/sometimes -answers instead of answers relating to frequency. The questions nine and three ('How often do you and your classmates use Finnish in English class?', and 'In which situations do you usually use Finnish in English class?') were borrowed from Gaebler, using his phrasing and multiple-choice options.

Concerning the sixth question ('In what situations does your teacher usually use Finnish in class?'), two questions from Gaebler and Schweers' were combined, but the emphasis was altered: in their questions, Gaebler and Schweers used the word 'appropriate' as in 'when do you think it is appropriate for your professor to use English in the classroom?' (Gaebler 2014, 85). 'Appropriate' has an underlying tone that measures attitudes and stances, which were not the main concern in this study. Therefore, the wording was altered so that the question is more neutral and simply measures pupils' perceptions concerning the quantity of their teachers' L1 use. Furthermore, the multiple-choice options provided in the question were also a combination of Schweers and Gaebler: the options referring to grammar, vocabulary teaching, and instructing were from Gaebler, while the options

concerned with creating a relaxed atmosphere in class, and teacher-student small-talk were from Schweers' questionnaire.

The two final questions (question 10: 'Does the use of Finnish in class affect your learning of English?', and question 11: 'In what ways does the use of Finnish affect the way you function in class?') were borrowed from Gaebler. However, in question number ten, the multiple-choice options were reformulated. The options that Gaebler provided measured *how much* L1 affects students' language learning (a lot, a fair amount, a little, not at all). For the present purposes, the options were changed to measure *the quality of pupils' experience*. Thus, the options formulated were: A) Yes, L1 affects my learning process positively; B) Yes, L1 affects my learning negatively; and C) A little or not at all, i.e., the effect of L1 on my learning process is neutral.

The above questions were borrowed and adapted for the present purposes from Schweers (1999) and Gaebler (2014), but the remaining five questions were formulated by me. These were the questions number 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8. They were concerned with additional inquiries and themes present in the aims of this study, which were not explicitly represented in Schweers and Gaebler's questionnaires. These themes were 'teacher's use of L2' and 'pupils' preferences and attitudes concerning monolingual versus multilingual L2 teaching' (see section 3.5). Schweers and Gaebler's studies focused especially on the use of L1 in language classrooms. Consequently, it is natural that the above themes, which are more concerned with the teachers' use of L2 and the parallel use of L1 and L2 in class, are not emphasised in Schweers and Gaebler's student questionnaires. For example, the second question used in the questionnaire of the present study was 'in your opinion, does your English teacher use enough English in class?', and the seventh question was 'in which classroom situations do you wish your teacher would use English?'. These both belong to the theme of teachers' L2 use.

As noted above, teachers and pupils' L2 usage was not the main focal point that Schweers and Gaebler had in their studies. The present study on the other hand aimed to explore

translanguaging, i.e., the parallel use of mother tongue *and* target language in L2 classrooms. Thus, the questions four, five and eight were formulated to represent this theme. The fourth question (‘Which language you wish was used *the most* during English classes?’) explored pupils’ preferences concerning the dominant teaching and learning language in class. The following fifth question continues the theme complementing the fourth question, for it asks the pupils to explain in their own words, why they chose English/Finnish in the previous question (i.e., in question 4). Finally, the last question formulated by me was question number eight, which inquired ‘why do you think it would be important to use English in class?’, concentrating especially on the attitudes that pupils have concerning L2 use in class and how they perceive its benefits.

The questionnaire was created by using Microsoft Forms. Some questions (questions number six, eight, nine, and eleven) had one open-ended option, allowing the pupils to fill in an answer of their own if they do not find a fitting one from the prefabricated options. In addition, there were two entirely open-ended questions, which focused on asking the pupils about their preferences relating to their teacher’s code choosing practices, for instance: ‘In which classroom situations do you wish your teacher would speak English instead of Finnish?’. The questionnaire was entirely in Finnish in order to minimize misunderstandings, because at this stage of learning English, the pupils’ proficiency levels can differ quite remarkably from each other. Some learners may already actively use English outside the classroom, but others still have difficulties grasping the basic concepts of their L2.

Before the questionnaire was sent out to teachers, the final questionnaire was edited with the help of the comments received from my MA thesis seminar, which consisted of other English majors. Based on the comments, some adjustments were made for instance relating to the order of the questions and word choices, so that the finalised questions were less leading and as clear as possible. After this the questionnaire was piloted on four young English learners who were not included in the main study. They did not report any difficulties after filling out the questionnaire.

### 3.4 Participants' Demographic Background

The total number of participants for this study was 60. As mentioned in the previous sections, the sample size was smaller than intended. The data was collected during COVID, and schools among many other institutions were affected by the pandemic. Based on the comments teachers provided, the situation lowered their willingness to participate in the study. The sample collected was nonetheless diverse enough, because three different schools from two different areas in Finland participated. Therefore, the results are indicative and provide valid information on the usage of L1 and L2 in Finnish ESL classrooms, which future research can then build on.

The demographic questions asked from the participants were: 1) age, 2) gender, 3) mother tongue, 4) which school the pupil attends to, and 5) grade. The age distribution was 14-16; fifteen years of age being the most common. Most of the participants were on the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of lower secondary school (42 pupils), whilst 18 pupils were 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Out of sixty participants, 25 were male, 31 female, and 4 pupils genderfluid or did not want to specify their gender. Therefore, there were more female participants, but gender distribution was nonetheless quite even. Concerning the participants' mother tongue, 58 pupils' L1 was Finnish. Two (2) pupils reported that they are bilingual: their mother tongues were Finnish and Russian.

The participants were from three different schools: one located in Eastern Finland, two in South Ostrobothnia. One of the schools was smaller and more rural than the two other lower secondary schools, which were located in larger cities. Out of the sixty participants, 29 were from the school located in Eastern Finland, whereas groups of 16 and 15 participants were from the two different South Ostrobothnian schools. Even though one school is over presented, the distribution between Eastern and Western Finland is even: 29 pupils from East, and 31 from West.

### 3.5 Analysis of the Data

Quantitative and qualitative methods were combined for the analysis of the data that the questionnaire yielded. Because of the smaller sample size of the study (under 100 participants), no statistical analyses were conducted, for they would not have yielded valid results. Therefore, only quantities of different answers and their percentages were calculated. In addition, the questions in the questionnaire were classified thematically, which led to five classes that contain questions with similar themes. The results will be analysed thematically by using these following classes:

- 1) **Teacher's use of Finnish** (pupils' preferences concerning the quantity of their teacher's L1 usage, and how the teacher uses L1 currently):

Question 1: How often should your English teacher use Finnish in class?

Question 6: In what situations does your teacher usually use Finnish in class?

- 2) **Teacher's use of English** (how much should be used and in what situations):

Question 2: In your opinion, does your English teacher use enough English in class?

Question 7: In which classroom situations do you wish your teacher would use English?

- 3) **Pupils' preferences and attitudes concerning monolingual versus multilingual L2 teaching:**

Question 4: Which language you wish was used *the most* during English classes?

Question 5: Explain why you chose English/Finnish in the previous question (question 4)

Question 8: Why do you think it would be important to use English in class?

4) **Pupils' code choosing practices and classroom communication:**

Question 3: How often do you and your classmates use Finnish in English class?

Question 9: In which situations do you usually use Finnish in English class?

5) **Pupils' views on the effects that a parallel use of Finnish and English has on their L2 learning:**

Question 10: Does the use of Finnish in class affect your learning of English?

Question 11: In what ways does the use of Finnish affect the way you function in class?

## 4 Analysis & Results

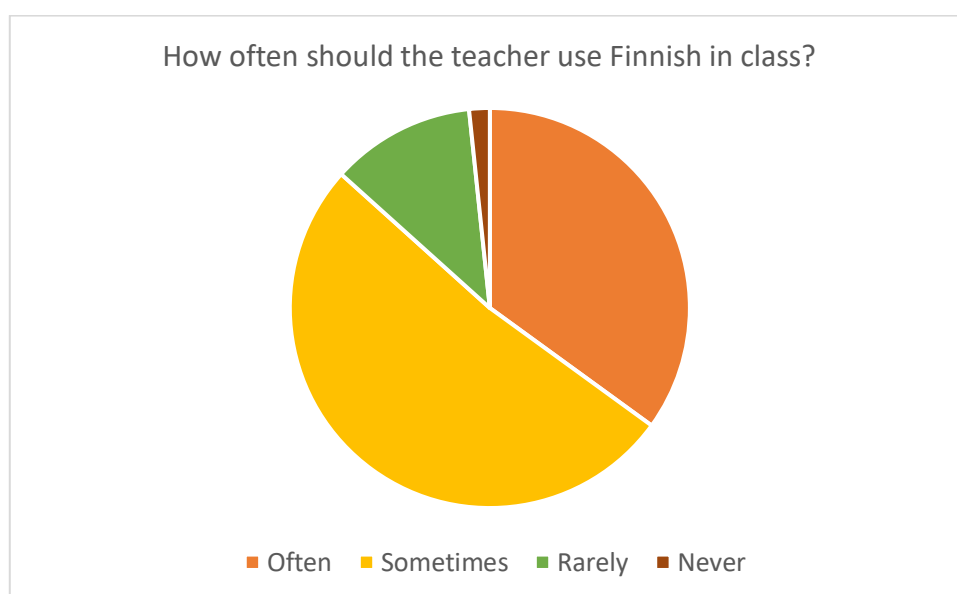
The data provided by the questionnaire presented a rather consistent picture of the use of Finnish and English in the classroom from the pupils' point of view. The aim of this section is to provide an analysis regarding the extent to which translanguaging occurs in the classrooms, the nature of the side-by-side employment of Finnish and English, and what different functions the given languages seem to possess. The results of the questionnaire are examined thematically in five sections.

### 4.1 Questionnaire Theme 1: Teacher's Use of Finnish

The first theme of the questionnaire consists of two questions concerning the pupils' views on their teacher's use of Finnish: 1) how often the pupils think an English teacher *should* use Finnish in class, and 2) in which situations does their teacher usually use Finnish. The pupils were rather unanimous regarding the employment of their mother tongue in teaching: 52% (n=31) said that they want their teacher to use Finnish 'sometimes', 35% (n=21) said that they wish to hear Finnish 'often', and 13%

that they want their teacher to use Finnish ‘rarely’ (n=7) or ‘never’ (n=1). The results show that over 80% of the learners in this sample deemed the teacher’s L1 usage preferable (See Figure 1). On the other hand, there also were pupils whose opinion was that the teacher should not use the mother tongue in L2 class, or at least use it very sparingly.

These results are expected when one considers the age and L2 proficiency of the participants. The sample consisted of pupils aged fourteen-to-sixteen-years, who had thus studied English for six to seven years at this stage. This means that some may already be very proficient linguistically and would not have difficulties in keeping up even with monolingual English teaching. These pupils perhaps wish to hear English more, so that the teaching coincides with their higher skills and enhances them even more. On the other hand, the differences between pupils’ proficiency levels can be quite large in Finnish classrooms, because pupils with special needs or disabilities are often integrated in ‘mainstream’ classrooms. These pupils, and everyone with lower English proficiency, need the mother tongue to assist their learning; therefore, they advocate for the use of Finnish by their teacher.



**Figure 1.** Pupils’ wishes concerning teacher’s L1 usage.



The second question in this theme focused on investigating the concrete situations in which the teacher uses Finnish in class. In other words, what functions is L1 used for in language teaching from the pupils' perspective. The pupils' reports are listed in the table below. Notice that in this question the pupils could select more than one option, so the total number of the answers is higher than the total number of participants.

Situation	Number of answers
Teaching and explaining grammar	50
Teaching new vocabulary	40
Giving instructions for the class	35
Discussing non-school related matters with the pupils (small talk)	27
When trying to achieve a relaxed mood in class	12

**Figure 2.** The most common situations in which the teacher uses L1 in classroom.

The results above are consistent with previous research concerning teachers code choosing practices and translanguaging. For instance, Tódor and Dégi (2018, 143) found that '[teachers'] code-switching is related to conveying meaning, ensuring understanding' and managing the classroom. Therefore, grammar and new vocabulary is often taught with the assistance of L1 to minimize misunderstandings and consequently save time. The same applies for the third most common L1 situation 'giving instructions'. Several previous studies have collected their data through classroom observation or by interviewing the teachers themselves. It is interesting to note that pupils' observations coincide with this previous data rather well: illustrating that pupils are explicitly aware of the different functions their teacher uses the languages for. When filling in the questionnaire, the participants could also

choose an option where they added their own ‘L1 situation’, if they felt it was missing from the given options. However, these additional answers could be categorized into the existing classes presented in the table above. Following this, one can deduce that even though there are no official rules or guidelines for the employment of L1 and L2 in language teaching, different teachers across different schools use the mother tongue in similar ways. This similarity might stem from the traditions of language teaching and teacher socialization. In teacher socialization, teachers ‘acquire the values, attitudes, norms, knowledge, skills, and behaviors of the teaching profession or educational culture’ (Staton 2008, 4990). Therefore, the norms and traditions concerning the employment of L1 and L2 pass from one generation of teachers to the next.

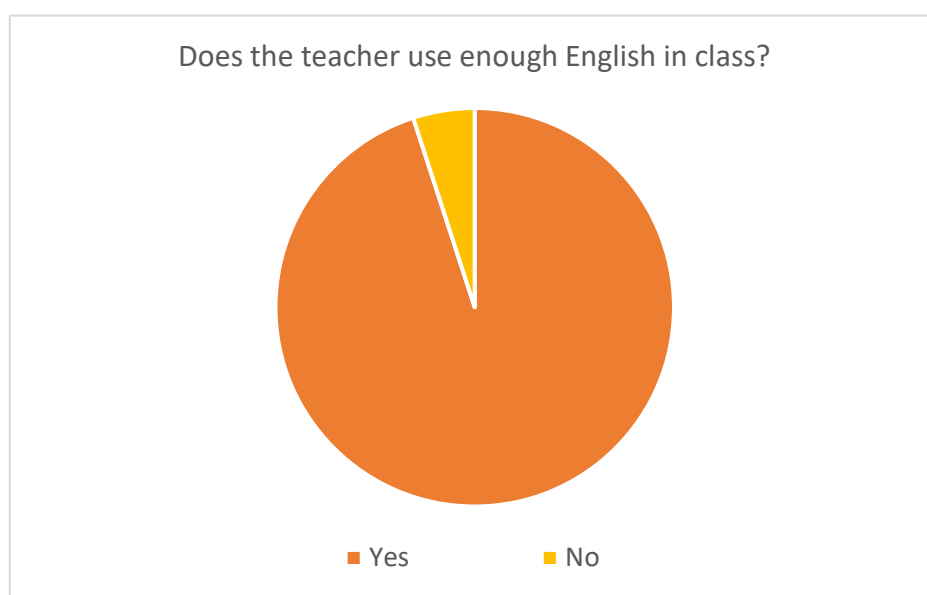
In translanguaging and code choosing literature, many researchers emphasize that the mother tongue is a useful tool for achieving a relaxed mood in class and to manage conflicts (see section 2.3). In this data however, this function was not as prominent: only twelve pupils chose the option representing it. The explanation behind this could be that this function of L1 is not visible or made explicit to pupils. Teachers manage conflicts and maintain a positive mood in class by employing several strategies that are ‘hidden’ from pupils and students. If the pupils were aware of these pedagogic and socio-psychological tactics, the tactics would not necessarily be as effective tools for classroom management anymore. Furthermore, the participants in this sample were pre-teens, whose skills to detect these more subtle social functions are not yet highly enhanced. As a result, the pupils’ reports perhaps mirror this unawareness.

#### **4.2 Questionnaire Theme 2: Teacher’s Use of English**

The second theme continues to explore teachers’ language use. Here the pupils were asked two questions concerning their teacher’s use of English: 1) ‘Does your English teacher use enough English

in class?’ and 2) ‘In which classroom situations do you want your teacher to use English?’. Thus, the aim was to illustrate what an ‘ideal amount of L2 use in class’ looks like from the pupils’ perspective.

The pupils were rather content with the overall quantity of English they hear from their teacher: 95% of the participants (n=57) reported that their teacher uses enough English in class, whereas only three pupils said that the teacher’s English use is insufficient. Two of these pupils were from the same school, so perhaps this particular teacher used English less than the other language teachers of the sample.



**Figure 3.** Quantity of the teacher’s use of English.

Turning from the quantity of the teacher’s use of English to the quality of it, the second question of this theme aimed to explore the functions English has in L2 classroom. The pupils were asked to list situations in which they want the teaching to be carried out in English. The question was open-ended, so the participants could write answers of their own. However, there was a mention that they could utilize the options given in a previous question that listed different classroom situations in which the teacher might use L1. Several pupils did utilize these prefabricated options but added details that showed their individual preferences and differences.

The pupils' reports showed that they wish their teacher to use English when the teacher gives instructions for the entire class, checks homework exercises together with the pupils, and when new vocabulary is introduced. These reports coincide with SLA literature and research that has considered the functions second language usually possesses in language teaching. In other words, target language is employed when the subject matter, phonology and/or vocabulary is the current focus of the lesson. Therefore, the pupils' opinions on 'when English should be employed' seem to correspond to the ways English *is* used in L2 classes. Indeed, several participants emphasized that they want their teacher to use English when learning new vocabulary is on the agenda, because the pupils wish to hear the correct pronunciation before 'having a go' with the newly learnt words themselves. Some pupils said that they wish to hear English as much as possible, no matter the classroom situation, because their own personal goal is to learn vocabulary they can utilize in everyday communication.

When comparing these results with the functions of L1 explored in the previous section, one notices that the functions of L1 and L2 overlap to a great extent. 'Teaching grammar' and 'discussing non-school related matters' seem to be the functions that the mother tongue clearly dominates, because the pupils did not report that L2 would be the most often opted language in those situations, nor did they report that they would want it to be. However, the use of L1 and L2 overlap when considering all the other teaching situations listed here (i.e., providing instructions, teaching vocabulary, and teaching pronunciation).

The functional overlap quite probably stems from two sources: 1) the pupils did use the same set of 'functions' as an inspiration, when they were answering questions concerning the teacher's use of Finnish *and* English in class, and 2) Finnish and English are in reality employed simultaneously throughout different teaching situations. The second point seems to be valid, when one considers the results other studies on L2 teaching have provided, and when one analyses the longer answers the pupils provided for the open-ended question about their teacher's use of English

in the present study. Here the pupils' answers showed that their teachers usually mix languages and use them alongside each other, instead of drawing harsh boundaries between the mother tongue and target language or assigning them functions that the other language cannot be used for.

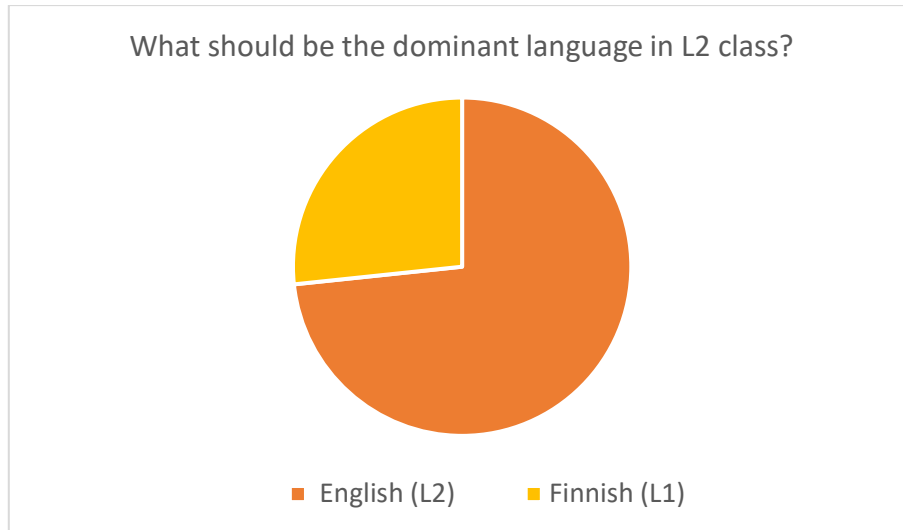
### **4.3 Questionnaire Theme 3: Pupils' Preferences and Attitudes Concerning Monolingual Versus Multilingual L2 Teaching**

The fourth theme focuses on the teaching style that pupils prefer: is it monolingual ('L2 dominant') or multilingual, which includes translanguaging between the L1 and L2. The theme consists of three questions: 1) 'which language (Finnish or English) do you wish was used the most in English classes?', 2) 'explain why you chose Finnish/English in the previous question', and 3) 'why do you think it is important to use English in class?'. The third question explores the pupils' attitudes towards the L2 and how important they deem it. The answers to this question will be analysed in conjunction with the answers the second question yielded, because the answers overlap to some extent.

Mirroring the answers pupils provided for previous questions, 73% (n=44) said that they wish English to be the dominant language in class, while 27% (n=16) reported that they want to hear Finnish more than English. Thus, preferences vary, but most pupils consider that English should be the focus in L2 classes (see Figure 4.)

Answers for the second question provided the reasoning behind the pupils' preferences. The pupils who reported that English should be the dominant language used in class, explained their answer by stating that when English is the dominant language, using it becomes more natural, learning is quicker, and the learners gain more confidence as L2 users when one 'has to' use English. In other words, the threshold of using the second language becomes lower, when one is surrounded by it.

Consequently, making errors does not feel as daunting, because they become a natural part of the learning process, signalling that the learner's language skills are evolving.



**Figure 4.** Pupils' preferences concerning the dominant teaching language.

Altogether the participants emphasized the importance of acquiring good communicative skills, a goal which they said is achieved through exposure to English. The reasonings pupils provided distinctively echo Sampson's (2011, 301) findings, in which the students said that 'I've come here to study English, so I want to do things in English—otherwise I'm wasting my time'. The pupils' emphasis on communicative skills seems to show that the goal of their learning is very practical: they are not learning English for the sake of academic success, but because they want to become proficient *users* of the language.

The answers for the third question of this theme followed a similar line of thought. The pupils were asked, why they think using English in class is important/useful. The results illustrated that pupils deem especially the teacher's use of English important, because the learners want to enhance their listening skills (n=44) and pronunciation skills (n=41), for which the teacher acts as a linguistic model. Thus, if the teacher uses L2 very sparingly or not enough, the pupils miss an

opportunity to learn from the teacher's example. Like Cook (2016, 190) pointed out, if the teacher uses the second language a lot, it encourages the learners to 'follow suit'. What was notable in the present results, was that only eleven (n=11) pupils reported that using English in class is important because it is the only place in which they use the language. One might therefore hypothesize that even though the pupils were Finnish, they do use English outside class for instance with each other and on social media. However, some pupils said that the classroom is 'the safest space' to learn how to use the language correctly. This shows that formal language teaching still maintains its significance, even if English is a lingua franca widely heard and used practically everywhere outside the classroom nowadays. In addition to these positive results, six pupils said that when it comes to classroom communication, using the L2 is not important. The reasonings behind these reports is impossible to determine, because this question did not ask the pupils to elaborate where their opinion stems from.

Moving on to pupils who said that the dominant language in class should be Finnish. These learners reported 'comfort' as one of the main sources their preference stems from. The pupils commented that they feel uncomfortable if they have to use English all the time, when their skills are lower than others'. They also said that if the teacher provides all instruction in English, they have difficulties keeping up with the teaching: 'Finnish gets the job done quicker, so I learn quicker when it is used instead of English'. Some pupils thus feel that the cognitive load is smaller, when one can process new information in L1, which they feel more at home with. These findings coincide with the studies discussed earlier, which stated that one of the main functions of the mother tongue is to assist learning and make learners feel at ease in L2 classrooms. Like Sampson (2011, 301) says, there is 'a positive relationship between encouraging learners to communicate in L1 and increased learner motivation'. In practice this means that those learners who are not as proficient as their classmates, benefit from the teacher's use of L1, and feel more comfortable when the teacher allows or encourages translanguaging in class. As a result, the learners' motivation to participate in class is increased, because they have a safe language they can participate with.

The above phenomenon was also noted by some of the more proficient learners, who wished English to be the dominant language used in L2 classes. Some of them commented that their own skills are quite good, so they like hearing and speaking English a lot, but their classmates have difficulties if the teaching is monolingual (i.e., English-only). Thus, for the sake of their classmates, some pupils preferred a teaching style where translanguaging between different languages occurs. It is evident that even learners themselves are aware that the ‘L1 versus L2’ question is challenging. Learning a new language requires that one is exposed to the language and uses it actively, but learning as a process happens *via* language. If one does not understand the language the teacher uses, learning itself becomes a rather difficult task cognitively. Therefore, to summarize the results of this theme, there needs to be a certain balance between the usage of L1 and L2, for both are required to fulfil different functions for learners with differing proficiencies and preferences.

#### **4.4 Questionnaire Theme 4: Pupils’ Code Choosing Practices and Classroom Communication**

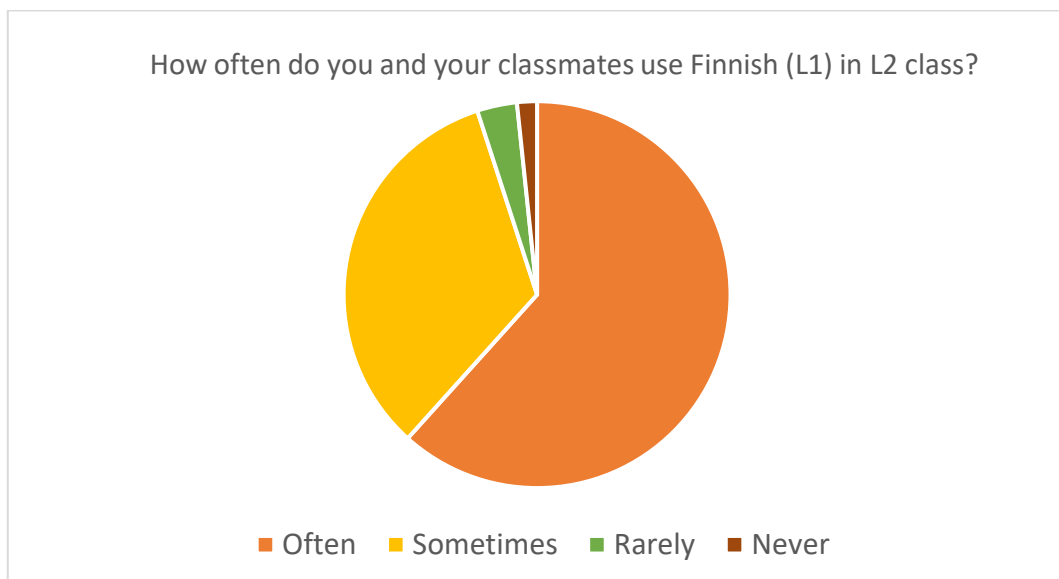
The previous themes have focused on teachers’ code choosing and translanguaging practices. Here we turn to pupils’ L1 and L2 usage. As it was noted in the theory section, language teachers are encouraged to use the L2 as much as possible in classroom communication. This applies to the language learners as well: teachers tend to instruct pupils and students to use the target language in class whenever they are able to do so, depending on the level their studies are on. Like Sampson (2011, 297) states, in EFL and ESL classrooms ‘a great deal of language practice can feel artificial, because it either makes reference to or simulates events outside the classroom’. For this reason, especially peer communication situations are ‘ideal opportunities for teachers to encourage learners to use L2 for real, immediate purposes’ (ibid., 297). This being said, previous studies have illustrated



that during peer interaction, learners employ the language they feel more comfortable with and are the most competent in (Reyes 2004, 93). Often this language is the learner's mother tongue.

Thus, the aim here is to explore whether the previous findings on language learners' peer interaction coincide with the current sample. It is important to investigate the learners' peer communication and the functions L1 has in them, for this provides educators valuable information on how language learners utilize different languages to aid their learning process (Sert 2005, 1). To explore the pupils' peer communication, concentrating especially on the role that the mother tongue plays in it, the pupils were asked: 1) 'how often do you and your classmates use Finnish in English class?', and 2) 'in which situations do you usually use Finnish in class?'

Concerning the amount pupils use Finnish (L1) in class, 62% (n=37) reported that they speak Finnish 'often' and 33% (n=20) said they use it 'sometimes' when communicating with their classmates. Only three pupils (5%) said that they use Finnish 'rarely' (n=2) or 'never' (n=1).



**Figure 5.** Pupils' L1 usage in peer communication.

It is therefore evident that pupils tend to select their mother tongue especially when they are interacting with their peers. Thus, these findings coincide with previous studies on language learners' classroom communication tendencies. When asked about the concrete situations in which the pupils employ their L1, the most common answer was that they prefer to speak Finnish when they are doing exercises together or talking about them with their classmates. Several pupils also said that they speak Finnish when doing group work or group projects in class, even though these situations could be considered 'the ideal opportunities to use language for real, immediate purposes', which the quote from Sampson referred to above. The second most common function for L1 was 'discussing personal matters' with classmates, i.e., matters that do not relate to learning per se, but which are important for building social bonds and group solidarity in class. In addition to this, fifteen pupils reported that they use Finnish also with the teacher, for example when answering a question that the teacher has asked from the class.

Based on these findings, the pupils utilize their mother tongue regularly in L2 classrooms to aid the cognitive learning processes (for instance, when analysing and doing exercises), and as a means of socializing/maintaining group solidarity with their peers. Sert (2005, 1) acknowledges that even though the native language may not be favoured by many language teachers, educators should have an understanding of the functions that the native language has in classroom discourse. When teachers understand the reasons behind the learners' use of L1, it becomes easier to assist their learning processes and to instruct the learners to utilize their linguistic repertoires, especially in those learning situations when the teacher sees that the learners would benefit from their mother tongue.

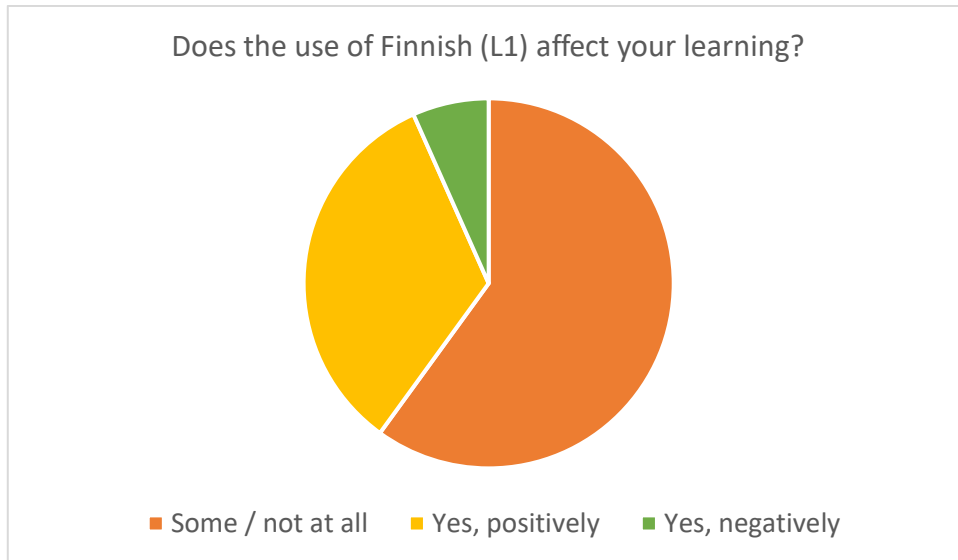
Moreover, it is important that educators are aware that codeswitching and translanguaging are not 'signs of cognitive confusion' (Reyes 2004, 94). Several studies, including the present one, have found that the native language is not 'a crutch' that the learner reaches for when they feel that their L2 skills are lacking. The L1 is, and should be viewed, as a beneficial resource to

analyse and consolidate the new linguistic information that is being learnt. However, there still needs to be more awareness-raising around this matter amongst educators because the principles and values of 'pure' monolingual teaching persist in the minds of many teachers. For practical reasons, common guidelines for the use of L1 in language teaching would also be beneficial, so that language teaching practices would be more uniform and consistent across different classrooms.

#### **4.5 Questionnaire Theme 5: Pupils' Views on the Effects That a Parallel Use of Finnish and English has on Their L2 Learning**

The final theme concentrates on how the pupils' view the use of Finnish and English in language teaching: how do they think the parallel use of L1 and L2 affects their learning and the overall learning environment in class? Thus, the theme summarizes how the learners view and experience the code changes and translanguaging that are occurring. The focus is on the learners' mother tongue, because the aim was to investigate if the learners find code changes and translanguaging (i.e., mixing of different languages) distracting or harmful to the process of learning a second language. To explore these perceptions, the pupils were asked: 1) 'Does the use of Finnish in class affect your learning of English?', and 2) 'In what ways does the use of Finnish affect the way you function in class?'

Regarding the first question, 60% (n=36) of the pupils said that the teacher's and their own use of Finnish in class affects their learning process a little or not at all; 33% (n=20) reported that the use of Finnish affects their learning positively, while 6% (n=4) deemed the use of Finnish distracting.



**Figure 6.** Pupils' perceptions on the effects that L1 has on their learning.

The overall perception therefore seems to be that the pupils consider the use of their native language neither an utterly negative nor positive matter when it comes to second language learning; the nature and functions of the mother tongue are considered neutral or somewhat helpful. This being said, it has been established in the previous sections that the majority of the pupils in this sample prefer a parallel use of Finnish and English in class, especially concerning their teacher's language use. Thus, translanguaging is preferred by many, but the effects it has on language learning itself, may not be as straightforward or easy to detect subjectively. The pupils who deemed Finnish distracting, may perhaps aim for native-like skills in English and for this reason prefer teaching that nears a monolingual style.

When asked how Finnish affects the overall learning environment, and the way that the pupils function in class, the most common answers were that L1 helps to understand the subject matter, assists learning overall, and makes it easier to explain oneself when working with classmates. Moreover, several pupils said that the presence of the native language makes learning environment more relaxed and consequently leaves them less tense or anxious. Eight pupils said that Finnish distracts them and thus affects the learning environment negatively. These results coincide with what

has been established in the previous sections concerning the views this sample has provided. The key here seems to be that pupils deem the use of L1 positive/neutral, as long as the use of the native language is *appropriate* and does not overshadow the aim of the class, which should be on second language exposure.

Therefore, this theme could be summarized as follows: translanguaging between the target and native language is a welcomed teaching style by many learners. The presence of L1 helps the learners to comprehend the subject matter, makes classroom communication easier and renders the learning environment less stressful. However, some consider the parallel use of L1 and L2 distracting because the usage of L1 naturally decreases the amount of L2 exposure vital to efficient language acquisition. The pupils' answers also illustrated that the effects of translanguaging on language learning was a challenging matter for some learners to ponder. This might be at least partly due to the participants' young age.

## **5 Discussion**

This section offers observations and discussion on the results, addresses the research questions, and considers the pedagogical implications the results have to offer for educators working in the field of language teaching.

### **5.1 Observations on the Results and Addressing the Research Questions**

The debate on the relationship between L1 and L2 in language teaching is long and unsettled. Some educators and language professionals deem that L2 should be the dominant teaching and learning

language in second language classrooms, for immersion is the best way to achieve fast language learning (Grim 2010, 193). Others favour multilingual methods and prefer to utilize the mother tongue, and/or other additional languages, because they consider other languages as an asset that the learner can benefit from. Today, perhaps the most often employed teaching method is more on the multilingual side of the continuum, where L1 and L2 are used simultaneously while aiming for the maximal use of the L2 (ibid., 193-194). This applies for elementary school and lower secondary school level language teaching specifically.

The present study focused on investigating how Finnish (L1) and English (L2) coexist (translanguaging) in English classrooms from the language learners' point of view. The aim was to hear what lower secondary school pupils have to say and incorporate their voice in the L1 versus L2 debate: the results illustrated how *they* wish English and Finnish were used in class. The research questions were:

- 1) According to pupils, in what situations do they tend to use their mother tongue in the English as L2 classroom and does the use of mother tongue affect their learning positively or negatively?
- 2) How do the pupils view their teachers' L1 and L2 usage?
  - A) In what situations does the teacher usually use Finnish?
  - B) In what situations do the pupils prefer that the teacher uses L1 over L2?
  - C) Do the teachers use L2 enough?
- 3) Do schools differ from each other regarding the way they perceive and report the amount of L1 and L2 used in the classroom?

Regarding the first question, the pupils deemed the presence of L1 neutral and/or beneficial. Therefore, translanguaging was considered a natural phenomenon that takes place during lessons. The results showed that the pupils usually utilized their L1 when they were doing exercises alone or together with their peers to assist communication and comprehension of the subject matter. L1 was also the preferred code when having non-school related small talk with classmates or the teacher. However, it should be noted that it depends on the teacher whether or not they allow the use of L1 in these situations. Thus, based on these pupil reports it would be beneficial for their learning if the teacher allowed them, or even encouraged them, to use their mother tongue alongside with the second language especially when the pupils are working with their classmates or encountering challenging linguistic concepts. Furthermore, some pupils with lower proficiency in English reported that hearing and using Finnish makes the classroom atmosphere more relaxed. Thus, the L1 functioned as a cognitive tool during learning situations, and as a bridge to maintain or build solidarity and social bonds in class. These, and similar findings from previous research therefore suggest that banning the use of L1 ‘would be detrimental to the amount of communication and learning taking place [in class]’ (Sampson 2011, 302).

The second research question examined the teachers’ L1 and L2 usage. The overall consensus was that teachers do use enough English, and that the pupils prefer the simultaneous use of L1 and L2, as long as L2 is *the dominant* teaching language. It seemed that this sample of pupils was quite content with the L1 to L2 ratio their teachers used. The pupils’ reports illustrated that the teachers employed the L1 for the teaching of grammar and other new or challenging linguistic matters. The teachers also used Finnish when providing instructions for the class and during small talk with the pupils. These findings coincide well with previous studies investigating teachers L1 usage, like Grim (2010, 193) reviews: ‘in previous research, teachers employed the L1 for metalinguistic explanation, class management/discipline, empathy/solidarity, and task instruction.’ It should be noted however that the studies Grim refers to used teachers’ self-reports or objective

classroom observation as their research methods. Because these self-reports and observational results go so well together with the pupil reports of this study, it can be said that the present results offer a valid depiction of the linguistic behaviour that is occurring in L2 classrooms.

The other focus point of the second research question was to explore the teaching/learning situations in which the pupils prefer the usage of L1 over L2. The findings illustrated that this sample of learners preferred to hear and use Finnish especially when grammar or other more complex linguistic matters were being taught. This suggests that when the subject matter is challenging, the mother tongue is needed to reduce the load on cognitive processing. In other words, challenging linguistic structures and rules are easier to comprehend and internalize when one does not have to use a challenging code (i.e., a second/foreign language) to comprehend and internalize them. When a linguistic structure, for instance, is learnt and deeply understood in L1, *then* encountering it in a second/foreign language is not a problem anymore, because less cognitive processing is now needed to comprehend it.

The third and final research question asked if schools differ from each other regarding the way that they perceive and report the amount of L1 and L2 used in the classroom. There were no considerable differences found between the three schools that participated in this study. All pupils reported that their teachers use L1 and L2 similarly in class, and the languages therefore had similar functions. However, regarding the question of ‘does your teacher use English (L2) enough?’, there were more ‘no’ -answers from one particular school when comparing the pupil reports. This illustrates that even though the two languages were utilized similarly in language teaching, the quantities of their use were different. This result is expected, because teachers are not provided ‘rules’ for the usage of the L1 and L2 in the Finnish national curriculum. It follows that there is variation between different teachers and their teaching styles. This could be overcome, if some recommendations or guidelines on the use of the L1 and L2 were provided already in teacher training, for instance.



To summarize, the results this study yielded coincide with previous research concerning the use of L1 and L2, and the benefits of L1 usage in L2 classrooms (See sections 2.3 and 2.4). As mentioned in the Methods section, the data collection did not go as initially planned, so the research methods lacked additional observation/interviews, which would have provided more nuanced information on the classrooms' translanguaging practices. A questionnaire tells what a participant *reports* they think or do, but these reports may not always reflect reality objectively. In addition, several participants lived near the Russian border and some near the Swedish speaking areas in Finland, and probably also study other foreign languages in school. Thus, it would have been interesting to investigate the degree to which pupils utilize their entire language repertoires in class. This being said, the present results do provide valid and interesting data from the learners' perspective, giving their opinions a voice that educators and other language professionals can utilize in practice when planning language lessons.

## **5.2 Pedagogical Applications: Translanguaging – How and Why?**

In the Introduction of this thesis, a question was raised regarding the 'appropriate ways to utilize L1 in language teaching'. Based on the pupil reports provided by this study, 'appropriate' for them means that L1 can be used in class when it is needed to aid the learning process and internalization of new information, or to build social bonds and assist communication with the teacher and classmates. The pupils did also emphasize that they wish to hear English as much as possible, because several learners wanted to achieve native-like competence in their L2. Thus, teachers have to ponder how all of the above are put into practice: learners prefer to use more than one language when they are learning a second one, but they also want the L2 to be the dominant language in class. How to incorporate multilingual methods and translanguaging into L2 teaching, while still ensuring that the learners are

exposed to the target language *the most*? Should every individual language be assigned certain functions that they may be used for (guidelines/rules for teachers and learners: i.e., ‘controlled’ translanguaging), or should languages be allowed to naturally interact with each other, without limiting their functional overlap and usage (i.e., ‘pure’ translanguaging)?

These pedagogical contemplations may become rather complicated when one begins to scrutinize the different definitions ‘translanguaging’ has. Garcia (2009, 78-79) for example states that in translanguaging ‘languages are no longer assigned separate territories or even separate functions, but they may co-exist in the same space’. Whereas Baker (2011, 288; as cited in Lewis et al 2012) considers that ‘translanguaging is the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages’. Garcia and Baker’s definitions differ in how they perceive the relationship between different languages: according to Garcia, there should be no language separation or discrete functions of use, while Baker simply considers that the requirements of ‘translanguaging’ are met when two languages exist in the same place at the same time. Furthermore, some emphasize that pedagogical translanguaging should be planned and structured, because this way translanguaging is differentiated from spontaneous codeswitching (Conteh 2018, 445). Thus, some definitions and opinions on translanguaging collide with each other: translanguaging should be structured and planned, but different languages should not be separated or given different functions. There is an evident contradiction there, because ‘planned’ and ‘structured’ mean that some rules are needed, and rules are made to limit something by definition.

Nevertheless, what most advocates of translanguaging do agree on is that languages should be ‘used in a dynamic and functionally integrated manner to organise and mediate mental processes in understanding, speaking, literacy, and, not least, learning’ (Lewis et al 2012, 655). Following this, if a teacher wishes to incorporate translanguaging and other multilingual methods into their teaching, they should aim to create a linguistic environment in which different languages overlap functionally in the classroom. The results of this study illustrated that the mother tongue and target

language did have quite discrete functions in class. This may have resulted from the design of the questionnaire, where participants were given a set of options from which they chose their answers. However, as mentioned in the Methods section, some of the multiple-choice questions did have an open-ended option where pupils could fill in answers of their own. Naturally, these answers were a part of the analysis as well, but they did not change the main findings concerning the functions of L1 and L2; the functions still remained rather discrete. Some overlap was found, and the languages were in close contact with each other, but there seemed to be an understanding amongst the pupils concerning the territories the two languages possess. This tendency to separate languages from each other in language teaching stems from the history of language pedagogy, in which languages were often seen as discrete units that were kept apart, so that languages do not ‘get mixed’ (Vallejo 2018, 90).

Even though the L1 and L2 were somewhat separated in the sample of this study, the pupils seemed to be rather content with the situation and viewed it positively. Hence, it may be reasoned that different classrooms benefit from different translinguaging styles. The teacher must first establish how they as an educator define ‘translinguaging’, and how a particular class would benefit from multilingual methods. In practice, the teacher has to be able to adapt translinguaging methods and perform case-by-case assessments with different groups of language learners. For instance, groups that are advanced and already quite proficient in the L2, benefit from a freer translinguaging environment, in which the different languages are used for similar functions, overlap, and are allowed to surface whenever they do so. This kind of environment mirrors the everyday life of many bilingual people, who use two or more languages effortlessly. On the other hand, like the results of this study illustrated, separating languages and assigning them different functions may be an appropriate translinguaging style for less advanced and intermediate language learners. Separating languages or ‘controlling’ when and how they are used, is a way to ensure that learners are exposed to the L2 enough, so that their emerging L2 skills have the best probabilities to develop. Therefore,

some transparent and collectively agreed guidelines and rules on the usage of L1 and L2 would be beneficial for beginners. These guidelines would also ensure that the learner does not resort to using their mother tongue every time they encounter difficulties with the L2, because making mistakes and facing difficulties ‘develops a crucial process of experimentation . . . which is essential to language progression’ (Sampson 2011, 302).

As mentioned, several pupils in this sample told that they wish to achieve native-like L2 skills and, for this reason, want the target language to be the dominant teaching language. L2 dominance and exposure is indeed beneficial so that pupils learn to be linguistically independent in monolingual L2 settings and manage without code switching when necessary (Sampson 2011, 301-302). Nevertheless, incorporating other languages into language teaching has valid reasons behind it as well: even though several learners idealize native-like proficiency in the second language, only a few of them will actually use the language in monolingual L2 settings. It is more important that learners acquire the needed skillset to thrive in multilingual settings. These skills could be enhanced by learning appropriate code choosing abilities and communication strategies that one can utilize in multilingual settings, where the speakers do not necessarily share the same L1 and/or L2. The teacher’s role therefore is to consider these future needs of learners and incorporate other beneficial languages or communication strategies into the teaching based on those considerations. Certainly it is important to listen to what pupils want, but it is also important to acknowledge that what the learner wants does not always coincide with what is beneficial for their learning and future.

Indeed, the idealization of the native speaker persists in the minds of many teachers and, as the results of the present study illustrated, in the minds of many language learners as well. Prada and Turnbull (2018, 9-10) argue that this idealization and monolingual-bias function as obstacles that may prevent translanguaging and other multilingual practices from truly gaining ground in L2 classrooms. Like the research by Alisaari et al (2019) mentioned in the theory section of this study showed, many Finnish teachers prefer monolingual approaches over multilingual. Whether

consciously or unconsciously, teachers pass these ideologies on to pupils. Therefore, ‘a move away from the monolingualism-as-standard default model’ is needed (Prada and Turnbull 2018, 10) for translanguaging to be considered a more standard approach in language pedagogy. The move away from monolingual ideals might also help language learners: for many learners, reaching the monolingual, i.e., native speaker, proficiency is not a realistic goal and sometimes not even possible. Thus, if multilingual and translingual ideologies and techniques were incorporated into language teaching, learners would not have to try and achieve native-like competency in the target language and then feel deficient for not reaching it (ibid., 11).

As illustrated above, incorporating translanguaging and other multilingual methods into language teaching benefits the learners in multiple ways. This being said, Grim (2010, 193) argues that currently the use of multilingual methods is rather haphazard, and teachers use especially the L1 ‘without any rationale’. This is a rather critical comment, however. It is true that there are no common, transparent rules for the use of L1 and L2 in language teaching, but several studies, including the present one, have found that teachers utilize the mother tongue and target language in similar ways in different linguistic environments and in different countries. In other words, there are no official rules, but certainly there is some consistency and logic, because different teachers’ language use shares so many similarities. Teachers have perhaps learnt to utilize different languages in practice, as a result of their teaching experience and through the process of teacher socialization. Undoubtedly, common rules for the use of other languages in language teaching would certainly benefit teachers. Rules or guidelines would increase teachers’ confidence to explore translanguaging and multilingual methods, which in turn would increase the awareness of how they enhance language teaching and learning.

Devising such nationwide guidelines is a challenging task, though. In Finland, teachers have a great degree of freedom, which allows them to adapt their teaching styles and aims for the needs of different learners and contexts. The Finnish national curriculum is not deemed a bible of sort

that should be followed verbatim, for teachers are allowed to apply the guidelines it provides quite freely, grounding decisions in their personal professionalism. Therefore, rules for the use of L1 and L2 would be beneficial, for they would ensure that different teachers in different schools around the country equip their pupils with similar talents, and all pupils would have the opportunity to prosper in mono- *and* multilingual settings. The rules and guidelines should be devised with care, however. They should not be too restrictive or lead to the losing of professional freedom.

To summarize some concrete suggestions that the results of the present study offer to language educators: learners' mother tongue assists comprehension and internalization of linguistic information, so it should be used when the subject matter is challenging (grammar, metalinguistic matters). The mother tongue also relaxes some learners, who perhaps do not feel 'at home' with the L2 yet. Teachers could therefore use the L1 when having small talk with the pupils before the class officially begins, or when they observe that some task/exercise makes some learners anxious. Other general instructions and discussion that relates to checking homework exercises should be in the target language. This ensures that L2 is the dominant teaching language and learners hear their teacher use colloquial English words and phrases that they can use in class discussions and outside class. Learners often want to hear their teacher pronounce new or challenging words first before they gain the confidence to use the words themselves. Furthermore, teachers should allow learners to use translanguaging in peer communication. The participants of this study reported that Finnish or other assisting languages are valid tools especially in groupwork situations. The most important matter above all else is that teachers should become more aware of the positive effects that the use of L1 and multilingual methods have on L2 learning. Neither the world nor the language learner's mind is monolingual; so why should the classroom be.

## 6 Conclusion

This Pro Gradu thesis explored how a sample of lower secondary school pupils and their teachers used their L1 (Finnish) and L2 (English) in Finnish ESL classrooms. The study examined the parallel usage of Finnish and English (translanguaging), and the different functions the languages serve in class. The point of view chosen was that of pupils' because previous studies have often focused on interviewing or observing teachers. Listening to pupil voice and investigating their preferences helps teachers challenge and improve their teaching styles.

The pupils viewed translanguaging a natural classroom phenomenon. They preferred a parallel use of the two languages (L1 and L2) while learning English but reported that the L2 should be the dominant teaching language. Both the mother tongue and target language had important functions in class. As a result, translanguaging should be seen as a beneficial tool that teachers and learners use when interacting with each other and the subject matter. The use of L1 is not a sign of confusion or lacking linguistic skills, for learners utilize their L1 to comprehend and internalize new information and overcome cognitive challenges. Thus, teachers should not criticize the use of L1 in class but instead incorporate multilingual methods into their language teaching and become more aware of their benefits for language teaching and learning. Languages do not exist in a vacuum, where they are separated units. They interact and influence each other, and function as messengers of information between the outside world and the human mind. Because this language interaction cannot be denied or escaped, multilingual language teaching and learning is a better route than monolingual.

The main limitation of this study was a small sample size. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all Finnish lower secondary school pupils and teachers. Further investigation with larger sample sizes is needed for a more nuanced illustration of the translanguaging that Finnish language learners and teachers employ. The data yielded by such studies is important for language

pedagogy and can perhaps be utilized to devise guidelines concerning the use of translanguaging and multilingual practices in language classrooms. Currently these common guidelines do not exist, which may be a challenge for some teachers who are unsure of the extent to which other languages should/could be used in teaching and learning.



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## Kysely suomen kielen käyttämisestä englannin oppitunneilla

### *Vastaajan taustatiedot*

1. Ikä

2. Sukupuoli

3. Äidinkieli

4. Koulun nimi

5. Luokka-aste

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### 1. Kuinka usein englannin opettajasi tulisi käyttää suomea englannin tunneilla?

Usein

Välillä

Harvemmin

Ei koskaan

### 2. Käyttääkö englannin opettajasi mielestäsi tarpeeksi englantia oppituntien aikana?

Kyllä

Ei

### 3. Kuinka usein sinä ja luokkakaverisi käytätte suomea englannin tunneilla?

Emme koskaan

Harvemmin

Välillä

Usein

### 4. Kumpaa kieltä toivot, että englannin tunneilla käytettäisiin eniten?

Suomea

Englantia

**5. Perustele vastauksesi, jonka annoit edelliseen kysymykseen. Eli kerro miksi toivot, että englannin tunneilla käytettäisiin eniten valitsemaasi kieltä**

**6. Missä tilanteissa opettajasi yleensä käyttää suomea englannin tunneilla? (Voit valita useamman kuin yhden vaihtoehdon)**

- A. Kun hän opettaa uutta sanastoa
- B. Kun hän opettaa ja selittää englannin kielioppiin liittyviä asioita
- C. Kun hän antaa ohjeita luokan edessä (esimerkiksi siitä kuinka jokin tehtävä tulee tehdä)
- D. Kun hän haluaa luoda luokkaan rennomman ja vapaamman tunnelman
- E. Kun hän puhuu oppilaiden kanssa koulun ulkopuolisista asioista (esim. vapaa-ajasta, lomasuunnitelmista, uutisissa olleista ajankohtaisista sattumista yms)
- F. Opettajani ei koskaan puhu suomea englannin tunneilla
- G. Joku muu, mikä?

**7. Missä oppitunnin tilanteissa haluat, että englannin opettajasi puhuu englantia? (Voit keksiä omia esimerkkejä tai tarvittaessa käyttää edellisen kysymyksen a-e vaihtoehtoja apuna)**

**8. Miksi englannin käyttäminen tuntien aikana luokahuoneessa on mielestäsi tärkeää? (Voit valita useamman kuin yhden vaihtoehdon)**

- A. Koska haluan että minun englannin kuullun ymmärtämistaidot kehittyvät
- B. Koska haluan että minun englannin puhetaidoni kehittyvät
- C. Koska luokahuone on ainoa paikka missä puhun ja kuulen eniten englantia
- D. Englannin käyttäminen tunneilla ei ole mielestäni erityisen tärkeää
- E. Joku muu, mikä?

**9. Missä tilanteissa sinä yleensä käytät suomea englannin oppituntien aikana?** (Voit valita useamman kuin yhden vaihtoehdon)

- A. Kun vastaan kysymykseen, jonka opettaja on kysynyt koko luokalta
- B. Kun puhun luokkakavereideni kanssa englannin tehtävistä tunnin aikana
- C. Kun puhun luokkakavereideni kanssa tunnin aikana koulun ulkopuolisista asioista (vapaa-ajasta, kavereista, viikonloppusuunnitelmista, harrastuksista jne.)
- D. Kun teemme englannin ryhmätoivia tunnilla
- E. Joku muu, mikä?

**10. Vaikuttaako suomen kielen käyttäminen englannin oppitunneilla sinun englannin oppimiseesi?**

- A. Kyllä, positiivisesti: suomen kieli auttaa minua oppimaan uutta kieltä
- B. Ei lainkaan tai vain vähän: suomen kielen käytöllä ei ole paljonkaan vaikutusta minun englannin oppimiseeni
- C. Kyllä, negatiivisesti: suomen kieli saattaa hankaloittaa uuden kielen oppimista

**11. Millä tavoin suomen kielen käyttäminen englannin tunneilla vaikuttaa oppimiseesi ja luokassa toimimiseesi?** (Voit valita useamman kuin yhden vaihtoehdon)

- A. Suomen kieli auttaa minua ymmärtämään vaikeampia englannin sanoja ja opittavia asioita ylipäänsä
- B. Minun on helpompi tehdä ryhmätehtäviä, kun voin selittää ajatukseni suomeksi
- C. Suomen käyttäminen tunneilla saattaa toisinaan vaikeuttaa oppimistani, koska haluaisin kuulla ja puhua englantia enemmän
- D. Oloni on rennompi ja vähemmän jännittynyt, kun puhun ja kuulen suomea tunneilla
- E. Joku muu, mikä?