Young Finnish Adults Perspectives on Using English in Different Social Situations: Exploring the Influence of Affective Factors through Photo-Elicitation Interviews

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Abstract

Research on the influence of affective factors in language learning has grown in recent years largely due to the recognition of the role they play in second language (L2) acquisition (Henter, 2014). This study investigates two affective factors, confidence and anxiety, and how they impact young Finnish adults when using English in different formal and informal communicative situations. A multiple case study design is employed to gather different experiences and perceptions of young Finns' willingness to use English in different situational contexts. To explore confidence and anxiety in specific speaking scenarios, the study used photo-elicitation interviews, in which a set of photographs was used as a stimulus with regular interview questions (Harper, 2002). Findings show that young Finnish adults attribute the lack of authentic oral communication in their comprehensive English education as being partially responsible for their apprehension in speaking English, and that fear of judgment, particularly in more formal scenarios, often induces a sense of anxiety. Confidence in using English was sensed through the perception that their English was equal to or better than those around them and was also ameliorated by the familiarity and casualness of the situation. The photo-elicitation method proved fruitful for evoking more detailed and personal experiences and helped participants visualize the scenarios, providing more lucid and candid responses. The study affirms a need for more research on Finnish adults' affective factors in their use of English and advocates for the wider application of photo-elicitation in Applied Linguistics research.

Keywords: Finnish EFL education, affective factors, confidence, anxiety, photo-elicitation interview, visual research methods

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1. Introduction

There is a common perception that young Finnish people are confident and skilled in using English, yet several studies have reported that communicating effectively in English is a concern for many, even if they have performed well in English courses in school (Kalaja et al., 2011; Paakki, 2016). This perceived lack of communicative competence deserves increased attention given the growing role of English in Finnish society and its important implications for educational policies related to internationalization (Ranta, 2010; van Splunder, 2016). A study by Ranta (2010) highlights that younger teachers, concerned about the emphasis on native-like varieties in the English curriculum, wish to focus more on students' overall communicative competency rather than normative accuracy, and hope to convey to their students a sense that English is a 'universal language', thus acknowledging that the academic objective has not given adequate consideration to developing communication skills in the comprehensive education curriculum.

Most studies in the Finnish context have focused on general attitudes towards learning and using English in Finland (Dufva et al., 2007; Leppänen & Nikula, 2007; Ranta, 2010; Taavitsainen & Pahta, 2003), or on its expanding adoption in higher education (Soler-Carbonell et al., 2017; van Splunder, 2016), while little research has explicitly attended to young Finnish people's perceptions of speaking English in common communicative situations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and understand how young Finnish adults feel when speaking English and how the influence of certain affective factors —the emotional characteristics affecting how one responds to any situation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) —is perceived in different formal and informal situations. This study explores how affective factors can have either a positive or negative influence on one's oral performance in different communicative scenarios. A simultaneous focus of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of photo-elicitation in evincing greater detail in participant responses and its potential for better understanding the participants' feelings toward using English in different social circumstances. The study examines two research questions:

1) How do the affective learner variables of self-confidence and language anxiety influence young Finnish adults' communicative engagement in English in different social situations?

2) Does the photo-elicitation technique used during interviews aid in eliciting participants' responses concerning self-confidence and language anxiety?

The first question investigates how self-confidence and language anxiety influence young Finnish adults' oral engagement in English when encountering different formal and informal situations. In terms of language learning, self-confidence is defined by one's judgments and evaluations regarding one's skills and abilities to communicate in the foreign language (e.g., MacIntyre et al., 1998; Park & Lee, 2005). In contrast, language anxiety refers to the apprehension and unease experienced when using the target language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). High self-confidence is thought to have a positive influence on performance and willingness to speak (e.g., Ni, 2012; Park & Lee, 2005) whereas language anxiety is often negatively associated with both (e.g., Habrat, 2018; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Woodrow, 2006). The second research question explores how photo-elicitation interviews, the use of a set of photographs as a stimulus during an interview (Meo 2010), influences the participants' answers and helps participants analyze patterns concerning the affective factors of self-confidence and language anxiety. It has been suggested that photos add richness to interviews, can trigger participants' memories, and evoke different kinds of responses than regular verbal interviews (Meo, 2010; Shaw, 2013). This study queries how the approach helps to evoke such insights as it pertains to participants' affective domain when using English in different communicative situations.

2. Literature Review

Although English does not have an official status in Finland (Kalaja et al., 2011), it is arguably needed more than ever before because international relations, political processes, and the broadening cultural diversity within Finland require good language skills from more people (e.g., Harjanne & Tella, 2010; Kopperoinen, 2011; Leppänen & Nikula, 2007). Because of this growing need for English competency in daily interactions, along with its prevalence in mass media (e.g., music, movies, news, TV-series, and video games), English occupies a remarkably prominent part of young people's lives (Ranta, 2010; Taavitsainen & Pahta, 2003) and has, accordingly, become the most common first foreign language of study for most students in Finland (Leppänen et al., 2011; Taavitsainen & Pahta, 2003).

English is emphasized in the Finnish educational system as it is a compulsory subject in both primary and secondary education (Kopperoinen, 2011; Ranta, 2010). In primary schools, it is the first, and sometimes only, foreign language available. In secondary education, which spans from ages 13-19, students have the option to enrol in other foreign languages, including German, Spanish, Russian, Italian, and French, as part of their compulsory requirements, but the vast majority of students will continue to study English. Previous studies have reported that the teaching of English in Finnish schools is generally effective as it covers the basic aspects of language learning and provides significant opportunities for students to become skilled in the use of English (Aro, 2013; Kalaja et al., 2011).

The National Survey on the English Language in Finland (NSELF) (Leppänen et al., 2011) found that 16% of the 1,495 survey participants who had studied English for over ten years considered their skills as "great." The authors of the survey offered this as support for the assumption that many young Finns are confident in English, but when extrapolated to the general population of Finnish citizens between the ages of 15-24, this equates to a proportionally small number of people, and the survey is likely skewed by selection bias. Further, the figure refers to students' self-evaluation of "general English ability", but many Finnish people find speaking more challenging than other language skills such as listening and reading (Leppänen et al., 2011; Paakki, 2016). Studies have shown that students evaluate their passive, receptive skills in English better than productive skills (Leppänen et al., 2011) and hence would prefer more communicative language teaching to increase their confidence to speak English in authentic communicative situations (Aro, 2013; Kalaja et al., 2011; Paakki, 2016). Indeed, there is said to be a significant difference between the oral skill practices in school and the authentic communicative situations that are plausible in real life, inferring that many believe the English speaking activities in the curriculum are not especially authentic (Kalaja et al., 2011). It is also worth noting that, although most English communication in the real world takes place between two (or more) non-native speakers, the listening material in the Finnish national curriculum textbooks is dominated by native-speaker varieties (Kopperoinen, 2011).

The participants in Ranta's (2010) study, which examined Finnish teachers' and students' general awareness of the global role of English in the context of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as well as their attitudes toward native and non-native varieties of English, reported that, in their experience, English education pays more

attention to grammatical correctness than students' ability to communicate. This can negatively influence students' confidence and willingness to take part in classroom speaking activities as the fear of mistakes is said to originate from teaching (Ranta, 2010). One reason for this might be that a significant part of English learning occurs through textbooks instead of communicating with peers (e.g., Dufva et al., 2007; Kalaja et al., 2011). This could explain why students feel textbooks mostly focus on grammar and vocabulary and that oral skills are overlooked in comparison (Harjanne & Tella, 2010; Kalaja et al., 2011). Despite claims of grammar-based teaching (Harjanne & Tella's, 2010), and evidence of a greater grammar focus in English textbooks when compared to some other European nations (Tammenga-Helmantel & Maijala, 2019), young Finnish people have generally expressed that the curriculum enables them to use English independently (Aro, 2013; Ranta, 2010), however, recent research on young people's perspectives of English education is lacking in the Finnish context. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that the NSELF survey, the last such large-scale survey taken on the attitude toward and use of English in Finland, was conducted nearly a decade ago, but English remains the dominant choice for foreign language study (Jaatinen & Saarivurta, 2014). In light of the ever-increasing presence of English in Finnish society and recent innovations in the English curriculum as more schools implement CLIL and other approaches to English-mediated instruction (EMI) (Roiha, 2019), there is a need to better understand young Finns' current perspectives toward studying and using English in school and in social interaction, and the affective factors that impact actual communicative practice.

2.1. Affective Factors in Learning and Speaking a Foreign Language

The term *affect* refers to the various aspects of emotions and feelings (e.g., Brown, 2000; Guo & Wang, 2013; Park & Lee, 2005) which influence individuals' learning outcomes and how they react to different situations (e.g., Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Ni, 2012). In foreign language learning, the affective factors refer to individual variables of learners which can affect a learning experience either negatively or positively (e.g., Ni, 2012; Park & Lee, 2005). The affective factors under investigation in this study were self-confidence and language anxiety, which are highly correlated with each other and strongly related to oral performance and speaking achievement (Henter, 2014; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Ni; Park & Lee, 2005;

Riasati, 2018).

Self-confidence involves judgments, beliefs, and evaluations about one's own skills and values (Park & Lee, 2005). In foreign language speaking situations, trait-like self-confidence is often separated from state self-confidence, which is a momentary feeling of confidence in a given situation (MacIntyre et al., 1998). State self-confidence refers to one's self-appraisal in particular situations (Brown, 2000), and it is connected to reduced anxiety and perceived competence, which means having the capacity, knowledge, and skills to communicate effectively in a given moment (MacIntyre et al., 1998). However, studies have shown that self-confidence can be negatively influenced by teachers' exceedingly high expectations of performance, for example (Habrat, 2018), and people considering themselves in some way limited in the target language (Park & Lee, 2005). As these factors can exacerbate one's lack of confidence, they can, therefore, also trigger language anxiety.

Anxiety is a negative affective variable which is often associated with self-doubt, worry, and uneasiness (Guo & Wang, 2013). In foreign language situations, there is also a distinction made between the more stable and general trait anxiety and situation-specific anxiety (Park & Lee, 2005; Woodrow, 2006). Foreign language anxiety is a type of situational anxiety described as apprehension experienced when attempting to use and communicate in the target language in which the individual is not fully proficient (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Ni, 2012). Park and Lee (2005) showed that criticism and fear of negative evaluation can adversely influence students' oral communication and performance, and Woodrow (2006) reported in her study that interaction with native speakers and performing in front of others were major causes of anxiety. While high self-confidence and positive evaluation generally encourage learners to speak the target language, the negative impact of anxiety often decreases this willingness (Habrat 2018; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Riasati, 2018). As anxiety negatively correlates to self-confidence, anything that increases anxiety, such as repeated unpleasant prior experiences or the size of the audience, can serve to lower self-confidence (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Low competency levels can result from the sustained feeling of anxiety in the language learning process, and this, in turn, will negatively affect self-confidence, especially in unfamiliar situations (Alnuzaili & Uddin, 2020; Jin et al., 2017; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Riasati, 2018).

Based on Park and Lee's (2005) study, self-confidence and oral performance are

positively related to each other, but there is a negative relationship between anxiety and oral performance. Henter (2014) concurs, stating that language anxiety has a devastating effect on oral performance and, according to Guo and Wang (2013), worry and self-doubt can contribute to poor performance. These feelings can be associated with the fear of negative evaluation which can exacerbate language anxiety in oral performance (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Habrat, 2018). This fear is a social factor described as, "apprehension about others' evaluation from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others" (Park & Lee 2005, p. 199). Indeed, the fear of making mistakes has been reported as a significant cause of anxiety for many students (e.g., Guo & Wang, 2013; Habrat, 2018; Park & Lee, 2005).

This study seeks to explore confidence and anxiety in young Finnish adults. Rather than simply asking participants to imagine or remember, the researchers intend to capture the emotional, psychological, intellectual, and dispositional inclinations of the individual participants by, to the extent possible, simulating the dynamicity of the lived experiences of English use in somewhat typical communicative scenarios. As it would have been quite difficult, and arguably unduly invasive, to ask participants to record or photograph an event whenever they spoke English in their daily life or for the researchers to be present in such occurrences (particularly "formal" situations), photo-elicitation was chosen as a step toward greater authenticity and situatedness in eliciting responses related to personal experiences and attitudes.

2.2. Photo-elicitation Interviews

The visual research method called photo-elicitation, introduced by John Collier Jr. (1967), simply means adding images into the interview process (e.g., Harper, 2002; Lapenta, 2011; Shaw, 2013). Many researchers assert that photos can stimulate talk about personal experiences, memories, and thoughts and add richness to the data through more idiosyncratic interpretations (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Marion & Crowder, 2013; Shaw, 2013), and facilitate longer, more comprehensive interviews while simultaneously alleviating the fatigue and repetition of traditional interview approaches (Collier, 1967; Meo, 2010). Photos can be a powerful addition to interviews because they enhance participation (Meo, 2010), educe insights that

would not be acquired from verbal interviews alone (Clark-Ibáñez 2004; Leonard & McKnight 2015; Shaw, 2013; Tinkler, 2013), and activate more of the brain due to the need to process both images and words (Harper, 2002). Shaw (2013, p. 794-795) lauded the approach in her study, describing photos as "springboards" which helped the participants to speak about their feelings and experiences, and believing they "allowed the participants to be creative, imaginative, and metaphorical" in their responses.

Beyond the capacity to obtain more in-depth and personalized accounts, the use of photos has also been reported to aid in the interview process itself. For example, Leonard and McKnight (2015) state that the participants are "less likely to feel they are being put on the spot" (p. 632) when they are questioned through photos instead of directly by the interviewer. In their studies, Clark-Ibáñez (2004) noticed that the method was particularly useful with children and young people as it reduced the power dynamics between adult researchers and younger respondents and made the interviews less challenging as they provided "a clear, tangible prompt" (p. 1512) on which to focus. It has also been suggested that black-and-white photography is "more evocative than colour photography as it stimulates a faster onrush of memories" and has a greater potential to evince emotional responses (Berger, 1992, pp. 192-193). The positioning of photos is also meaningful because the photo-interviews can be shaped by the temporalities of the visual-verbal relationship as people might look at the photos differently depending on whether they are presented before or after the verbal narrative or used as the starting point for conversation (Tinkler, 2013).

The photos can be selected by the researcher, using existing photos (e.g., from the internet) and/or photos taken specifically for the study, or they could be captured by the research participants themselves (Birkeland, 2013; Leonard & McKnight, 2015; Matteucci, 2013; Tinkler, 2013; Wang & Burris, 1997). Both approaches have pros and cons. For example, studies where the participants have taken the photos themselves show that the method helps them to be more creative and actively involved in the interview process (Meo, 2010; Shaw, 2013), but those photos might also fail to answer the research questions and participants tend to produce photos that show themselves in a positive light (Leonard & McKnight, 2015). In contrast, researcher-found images can have a more detailed focus on the research topic but might be influenced by the researcher's bias or miss entirely what the participants think is most significant (Matteucci, 2013). Additionally, the photos

"...may lack the narrative power that visual materials assembled by research participants may have" (Matteucci, 2013, p. 196). This study opted for "researcher-found" images for three primary reasons. First, it ensured a focus on the specific affective variables under consideration. Secondly, it may have been difficult for participants to capture instances of their own English language use, particularly in more formal scenarios, within the scheduled data collection period. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, self-generated photos may have created unease for participants who would need to inform non-participants of the purpose of the photos and gain permission to take and use them.

Although photo-elicitation has many benefits, it also has potential disadvantages. The first is insufficient responses due to the participant's perception that an image does not need to be elaborated upon (Meo, 2010), and the possibility that an interviewee will find a photograph offensive and/or distressing (Marion & Crowder, 2013). Another potential hindrance is when the photographs take the participant in a direction other than that intended by the researcher (e.g., Meo 2010; Tinkler, 2013). This can occur because, as Leeuwen & Jewitt put it, photographs "…release vivid memories, feelings, insight, thoughts and memories" (2001, p 46), which can stimulate responses not necessarily coherent with the research focus. In some theoretical paradigms, this may be constructive for theory building, but in conceptually focused studies, it can render the interview data ineffectual. Incongruity with the research aims may also result from cultural differences in research traditions, in which participants find discussing photographs an unusual data collection technique (Birkeland, 2013). Finally, Rose (2016) points to ethical issues when using photographs, particularly photos taken by or of participants, including violating confidentiality if the participants' identities are revealed and potentially dehumanizing participants by blurring their faces. Such concerns should be given careful consideration when commencing research using visual research methods.

The type of image is also a crucial decision, with three important considerations for choosing images emphasized in the literature. The first is who produces the photos (i.e. the researcher, the participants, or a third party) (Birkeland, 2013; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Lapenta, 2011; Leonard & McKnight, 2015) as discussed above. The second is which type of visual image(s) would be most appropriate to gather the relevant data (e.g., paintings, drawings, maps, photographs, etc.)

(Matteucci, 2013). In this study, photos were chosen because they most accurately and realistically depict the scenarios in which students will use English. The last is attending to the specific purpose of the photo prompts (Tinkler, 2013). As discussed below, this study employed images to generate a visual stimulus and, ideally, to incite a personal memory of common uses of English for young Finnish adults.

3. Method

A multiple case study designed was used in this study as the goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of students English-use experiences and to gain multiple perspectives into how formal and informal speaking scenarios affect individuals differently (Rose et al., 2020). Participants were asked to share their feelings toward using English in various communicative circumstance and to articulate their personal experiences, allowing multiple realities to inform the qualitative analysis. Participants were selected through "purposive sampling", the selection process that accounts for the *purpose(s)* of the study by successively selecting respondents that represent *typical* cases of the phenomenon under investigation (Dörnyei, 2007). The phenomenon of interest was how young Finnish feel about their English education, and how it prepared them for using English in common situations, thus the specific criterion of selection included being a young Finnish adult between the age of 20-22, being a national of Finland, a native-speaker of Finnish, and having had experience learning English at both primary and secondary levels of comprehensive education in Finland.

3.1. Participants

The participants were five young Finnish adults, including two women, and three men. The findings did not show any significant differences in the responses between genders; hence, no distinction between them has been made. Therefore, to better ensure anonymity, the participants were given gender-neutral pseudonyms.

Table 1
Participant Information

Name	Age	Special Circumstances
Alex	22	
Charlie	20	
Jamie	21	2-month working abroad (England)
Joey	22	Attended technical school at the secondary level
Robin	22	

All participants were between the ages of 20 to 22 years old. This age group was chosen to increase the probability that participants have experienced speaking English in the different situations depicted int the photo prompts and because the demographic relates to the aforementioned assumptions that young Finns are skilled in English and use it frequently.

There are two reasons why the focus is specifically on those who have finished secondary education. The first is Habrat's (2018) rather intuitive assertion that longer exposure to learning results in higher self-confidence; so it is reasonable to assume that these participants, who have studied English continuously for more than ten years, would be at least moderately self-assured in their communicative skills. The other is Cummins' (1991) contention that there are two second language proficiencies: conversational language, which takes 2-3 years to develop and cognitive/academic language (i.e., language used in higher education), which takes about 7-8 years to achieve satisfactory proficiency. All participants went to a normal Finnish comprehensive school at the age of seven and began to learn English when they were nine. When they were sixteen, four of them continued to upper secondary school while one, Joey, went to technical school. All participants, including Joey, continued to receive English education until graduation at age nineteen. One participant, Jamie, lived abroad for two months as a caretaker for an English-speaking family. Otherwise, there were no significant differences between their learning backgrounds.

3.2. Design

Semi-structured interviews, using the photo-elicitation method, were conducted to

provide more variation among the answers and to provoke more detailed and personal responses. The photos were found from a Google image search and, following the recommendation of Berger (1992) were changed to black-and-white before printing. As outlined in the literature review, many researchers stress the importance of the selection process in photo-elicitation interviews (e.g., Lapenta, 2011; Matteucci, 2013). Thus, the photos were selected in consideration of four criteria: 1) a focus on representing the lives of young people, as previous studies have shown their appropriateness for this demographic (e.g., Leonard & McKnight, 2015; Meo, 2010; Shaw, 2013); 2) their capacity for 'retrieving' memories and 'jolting' people's minds (Tinkler, 2013, p. 186); 3) their potential to help participants make personal connections to similar situations, and; 4) their potential to facilitate greater engagement during the interview process.

Six scenarios (Table 2) presented in the photos (Appendix) were chosen to compare feelings of self-confidence and anxiety in various formal and informal communicative situations. These scenarios were also chosen based on their likely familiarity to participants, whom, at least to some extent, can relate their actual experiences and memories to these events.

Table 2
Situations Presented in the Photos

Formal Speaking Situations	Informal Speaking Situations
Giving a presentation	Giving directions to tourists
Encountering airport security/customs	Ordering food at a restaurant
Speaking in a job interview	Spending time with non-Finnish friends/colleagues

*See Appendix for photos

Prior to the interview, the main objectives of the study were explained, and participants were informed they could ask questions or express concerns about their responses at any point after the interview and/or withdraw from the study at any point.

3.3. Data Collection

The interviews began with three questions focusing on the participants' previous experiences in speaking English and their perception of their own skills. Photo-

elicitation was not used during these questions as a comparison of the content and level of detail with and without the photo prompts was of particular interest (Matteucci, 2013). The photos were then shown one by one, and the participants were asked questions regarding how confident and anxious they would be in each situation. After a photo was discussed, it was left in sight instead of removed from view; this serendipitous decision allowed participants to look at the previous photos and compare them with the other scenarios presented during the interview. After all the photos had been displayed and discussed, the participants were asked first about the English teaching they received at school and then about what they thought of the use of photos during the interview.

The duration of the interviews varied from 20 to 41 minutes as some of the participants were more open and gave more detailed responses, whereas others focused mainly on answering the questions and required more encouragement and follow-up questions to stimulate elaboration. It has been suggested that the use of the photos can lessen the pressure on an interviewee (Rose, 2016; Tinkler, 2013, p. 174), and diminish the need for eye-contact because "The potential tension generated by face-to-face contact is lessened by mutual gazing at a photograph or the act of exploring an object together" (Prosser & Burke, 2006, p. 409). This was indeed the case in this study as the interviews, which were carried out in Finnish, were cordial throughout, and most participants commented on feeling more at ease by focusing on the photos. The interview transcripts were translated into English, and the quoted excerpts of participants are the translations of the main investigator (who is a native speaker of Finnish) and are not necessarily word-for-word reconstructions of Finnish, but rather aimed to convey the content of their responses as clearly as possible.

3.4. Data Coding

Data coding and analysis followed an abductive approach, meaning existing theories provided methodological guidance and a foundation for understanding, yet the evaluative process allowed for the accommodation of new and anomoulous observations and perceptions (Rose et al., 2020). The study focused on the affective factors of *confidence* and *anxiety*, as they are defined in Applied Linguistics research, however, a bottom-up analysis of the empirical data was conducted to

explain the occurrences of confidence and anxiety in the interview transcripts, leading to the proposition of two additional subcategories for each construct based on the participants' experiences. As the epistemological position of this study is rooted in an interpretivist paradigm, the qualitative data was analysed simultaneously and cooperatively by the researchers with attention to the research agenda. Rather than working against predetermined rubrics or a specific definitional model to offer a numerical measurement of reliability, interpretation and understanding of the data was discussed and coalesced throughout the research project to devise the final coding schemata of two novel subcategories for both confidence and anxiety.

The data from the interviews were coded by using a combination of *descriptive coding*, a method providing the basic topic of a passage, and *emotion coding*, a method labeling the emotions experienced by the participants (Saldaña, 2013). This was followed by *pattern coding* to identify similarities in the coded data set. Through these processes, several codes relating to participants' confidence and anxiety in speaking English in different informal and formal situations were inductively devised by both researchers. The codes were chosen in consideration of the research questions and the possible similarities and differences between the participants' answers. The individual codes from both researchers were then extracted from the data and loosely clustered into like-item groups, for example, "anxious", "stress", and "afraid of making mistakes" in one group and "confident", "relaxed", and "satisfied with one's skills" in another. After this, the codes were modified and further refined several times before final code groupings were decided and agreed upon by both researchers.

In the next phase, pattern coding, a method of developing category labels that identify similarly coded data (Saldaña, 2013), was used to reorganize the most relevant codes into a smaller number of broader main categories based on their similarity. While some codes corresponded with more than one category, others were eliminated for lack of saliency. Four major categories, determined cooperatively by the researchers after multiple readings and reference to collated memos, were formed in relation to the main themes of the study. The two main themes — the affective factors of confidence and anxiety — were selected as the research focus prior to collecting data and remained in focus throughout the data analysis procedures. The subsequent inductive analysis of the main theme of "confidence in speaking in English" led to two subcategories, which are termed

"situational confidence" and "language ability confidence". The second theme, language anxiety, was respectively split into two subcategories as well, referred to as "negative-evaluation anxiety" and "communication anxiety". These categories and corresponding subcategories were then analyzed to explicate how they related to the different scenarios represented in the photos.

4. Findings

The study found that all participants were generally satisfied with their current oral skills when it came to the basic use of language in everyday situations in school and at work but that anxiety or confidence in speaking English depended substantially on the social situations that were presented through the photo-elicitation method.

4.1. Self-Confidence

The two main components of self-confidence found in the data were "language ability confidence", meaning being confident about one's skills, and "situational confidence" referring to being able to confidently communicate in English in certain situations. The participants' "language ability confidence" in verbal communication varied as two participants, Jamie and Alex, said communicating in English is easy and they can have more advanced conversations while the other three, Charlie, Joey, and Robin, found it slightly more challenging but were still confident in their everyday English skills describing them as "semi-fluent" (Robin) and "generally good" (Joey). All participants were satisfied with their current skills and proficiency but implied that they would like to improve in one way or another:

  Jamie: I would like to improve my academic English skills

  Alex: There is a lot of room for improvement

  Joey: Yes, I would like to improve my speaking skills

  Robin: You could always improve your skills and become better

  Charlie: I try to improve my oral skills constantly

This is unsurprising as many language learners feel that their general language skill could be continuously improved. Participants in this study attributed their lack of proficiency to their formal education, feeling that it provided them with the basic skills, particularly grammar, but did not focus enough on authentic oral skills, which other studies in the Finnish context have similarly reported (Kalaja et al., 2011; Leppänen & Nikula 2007). Joey and Robin speak to this directly:

Joey: I don't think they taught enough about how to actually speak English.

Robin: Maybe we should have practiced speaking in everyday situations more.

These findings suggest that some young Finns feel more opportunities in classroom activities to practice authentically in English could enhance their confidence in oral communication skills (Guo & Wang, 2013).

Regarding situational confidence, four participants related that the situation in which they had the most confidence was speaking English at school with foreign and exchange students, while for Joey the situation that imbued them with the most confidence was having to speak English at work every day with non-Finnish co-workers (a situation not presented in the photo prompts). All participants disclosed that their confidence in these situations was borne out of the belief that their own skills are generally equal or better than others around them.

The findings also imply that the participants' oral performance was better in familiar situations as they did not feel the need to improve their skills, which made them notably more confident. They were also more comfortable and confident to speak in informal situations such as speaking with friends or ordering food compared to formal ones such as a job interview, and the reason for this might be that they are more familiar with the informal language by being exposed to it through, for example, movies and music, among others.

4.2. Language Anxiety

As mentioned, language anxiety was divided into two subcategories: "communication anxiety" and "negative evaluation anxiety." The former refers to how the participants perceive anxiety when communicating in English in different situations, whereas the latter relates to the fear of negative judgment of others and the critical evaluation of one's own skills.

Communication anxiety manifested in several ways. First, the fears of not meeting others' expectations and not being understood were described by Jamie and Alex. Both implied that in the interview scenario they would prefer to know what is expected from them prior to the conversation and they would want to know the level of English of their conversational partners, expressing the feeling of stress they would encounter if not properly understood:

Jamie: [A job interview] can make me feel anxious and stressed if I do not know what level of English is expected from me. Can I be relaxed or do I have to proof (sic) my English proficiency by using more advanced language.

Alex: I think I would be a little bit more anxious if I were asked [in a job interview] to just say or tell something in English. I would prefer to be given a specific topic to focus on to know what is expected from me. […] I might become more anxious and uncertain of my skills if it would start to seem that [people asking for help] do not understand me properly or if they have a strong accent and it is difficult for me to understand them.

The desire to know the level of English of one's interlocutors, and the intention to prepare for the situation adequately to avoid miscommunication, indicates that it is the specific nature of the interaction that can induce anxiety as such preconditions were not mentioned for more informal speaking scenarios.

In terms of "negative evaluation anxiety," Charlie and Robin both expressed less confidence in situations in which they felt others were judging their skills, such as in the "job interview" photo. Speaking in front of others is said to be the language activity causing the most anxiety in people (Guo & Wang, 2013), and the findings of this study confirm this position as all participants, including Charlie and Robin, admitted feeling anxious when asked about the "Oral Presentation" photo. Sentiments about anxiousness included:

Charlie: I already feel anxious when speaking in front of others and trying to make an impression and having to speak in English makes it even worse.

Robin: It makes me a bit anxious because I start to think how I should say something correctly and I pay too much attention to grammar which makes me

worry more even about simple things that I normally would not think too much.

The findings agree with Aro's (2013) conclusion that the fear of making mistakes and not remembering the correct vocabulary and pronunciation were among the most common causes of language anxiety. They also cohere with Riasati's (2018) study in which more than a third of the participants reported feeling anxious when they knew they were being evaluated. In the current study, speaking in front of others appeared to be one of the most significant causes of language anxiety as the participants evaluated the "oral presentation" and "job interview" photos as especially anxiety-inducing because they assume other people are judging their English ability. Alex connected the "oral presentation" photo with the negative experience of giving a presentation in school, and Charlie described the scenario as "a nightmare", saying they would be extremely nervous and worried to perform in such a situation. This supports the assumption that language anxiety has a negative influence on self-perceived oral performance (e.g., Guo & Wang, 2013; Henter, 2014).

The findings also show that the fear of making mistakes was one of the significant factors causing language anxiety. All participants admitted that they were afraid of people judging them if they make mistakes and not meeting others' expectations, especially in the "job interview" scenario. Joey and Charlie also said they are afraid of the perceptions of others in the formal situations depicted in the photos:

Joey: The job interviewers] might think I am not smart enough if my English is not perfect.

Charlie: What they [airport customs] might think of me if I have to ask them to repeat themselves many times.

The participants linked this apprehension to the teaching they received at school, asserting:

Charlie: I was generally interested to learn English at school, but some teachers and their teaching and grading methods decreased my motivation.

Joey: English at school did not prepare me for these kinds of everyday situations very well [referring to the photos], it mainly focused on perfect grammar and writing.

Robin: I think the teaching of English at school was okay, but most of it was

grammar-based. I wish it would have been more practical and that we would have practised speaking more.

This supports the existing claims that the fear of mistakes originates from formal English teaching as it pays more attention to grammatical accuracy than to students' communication skills (Ranta, 2010).

Therefore, the young Finnish adults in this study cite the specific speaking situation as an important factor in their feelings of confidence and anxiety when using English. Further, participants offer the familiarity of the situation and their self-perceived ability relative to others, as well as the formality of the circumstances, as considerations impacting their situational confidence when interacting in English. In terms of anxiety, despite all participants self-assessing their proficiency as fluent or semi-fluent, they still acknowledge feeling anxious when they believe their language ability is being scrutinized by others and when they are concerned with making mistakes in more formal speaking situations. All participants contend that the lack of authentic oral communicative activities in their formal English education was partially responsible for their occasional apprehension, particularly in more formal scenarios such as presentations and interviews, which follows the findings of other studies (Kalaja et al., 2011; Leppänen & Nikula, 2007; Ranta, 2010).

4.3. Photo-elicitation Method

The use of photo-elicitation method alongside the verbal interview proved to be constructive as it helped participants give more detailed answers and talk more about their memories and experiences, as has been similarly reported in previous studies (e.g., Matteucci, 2013; Meo, 2010). They also allowed the emergence of topics that may not have been discussed in a normal interview (Leonard & McKnight, 2014), such as the participants being inspired by the people in the photos to explain how they would feel more comfortable to speak English when other speakers seem happy and open-minded, and when they have someone familiar with them to offer support. Most of the participants also said that the photos helped them visualize the situations better and made the interview more interesting:

Charlie: The photos helped to visualize the situations a little bit, especially the oral presentation one. Seeing the people standing in front of the class made me immediately think that I do not want that.

Jamie: Especially the last photo helped me to travel back to my memories when I was at an American airport waiting in a long queue to get through customs.

Robin: I guess the photos influenced me to some extent and gave some ideas.

However, the participants' focus on the photos varied. Some, for example, touched the photos to indicate certain aspects that caught their attention while others mainly focused on what was being asked, similar to a regular verbal interview. Some of them also paid more attention to the images by constantly looking at them and referring to the photos discussed earlier in the interview as in the case of Charlie who referred to the "oral presentation" photo when we were talking about the restaurant scenario, stating:

Charlie: The vocabulary is also easier [in the restaurant situation] and I would not have to think about grammar as much as in the previous situation [the oral presentation scenario]

The photo-elicitation method proved efficacious as the photos helped the participants to visualize the scenarios better as they gave more detailed responses with them compared to the beginning of the interview without visual stimuli. The images also provided insights into the participants' perceptions and thoughts as well as triggered their memories (Matteucci, 2013; Meo, 2010). Although Tinkler (2013) mentioned that people might sometimes only describe the photos rather than attempt to remember with them, in this study, the participants focused especially on remembering how they have felt when speaking English.

One of the most interesting findings was how the participants brought up the menu and the map presented in the "restaurant" and "giving directions" photos, respectively, and explained how they might use these objects to support their speaking. This attention to the "visual aids" within the photos may not have been captured in verbal-only interviews, supporting the claim that photos allow for the emergence of unexpected topics (Meo, 2010).

It was also useful to leave the photos visible throughout the interview as four of the five participants referred to the earlier photos. This comparative analysis may

not have occurred in regular interviews as participants may not recall or make connections to the previous scenarios if they have nothing tangible to remind them. An effective example of this is when Joey, despite stating that the photos did not help much, referenced the "oral presentation" photo throughout the interview and compared it with other scenarios, the "restaurant" photo in particular:

Joey: But compared to the oral presentation situation, this restaurant one is not causing any stress.

This could imply that the photos influence the participants' answers subconsciously which would be another way for unexpected topics to emerge.

The participants also looked at the photos rather than maintaining eye-contact with the interviewer which likely made the interviews more comfortable and less stressful as suggested by Prosser and Burke (2006, cited in Tinkler, 2013). Finally, some participants physically touched the photos when they were speaking, which could enhance their concentration and engagement, such as Charlie, who touched the restaurant photo when explaining how that situation is more comfortable for them than the oral presentation, and Jamie who held up the airport photo when describing a trip to the USA.

Overall, the photo-elicitation interviews proved fruitful for better understanding participants' perspectives and experiences of using English, and for drawing out more in-depth responses. Participants overwhelmingly engaged with the photos during the interview process, using them to: visualize the situation, reduce direct eye contact with the interviewer, refer to previously shown photographs to make comparisons, and articulate personal experiences beyond what was asked by the interviewer. There are two serendipitous findings of mention. The first is that leaving previous photos in sight can invoke extended and more comprehensive discussion, particularly for the purposes of comparing emotional experiences and for discovering connections between events and scenarios. The second is that participants noticing and alluding to the detailed, concrete elements as well as the 'characters' in the photos, engendered a greater awareness of the situational context and generated unexpected commentary about how various elements, objects, and people can help facilitate the communicative process in different social circumstances.

5. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study investigates the perceptions of only a small number of young Finnish people, most of whom had similar demographic and educational backgrounds, hence further narrative research concerning the influence of confidence and anxiety when using English could illuminate how these affective factors are experienced, perceived, and managed differently by a diverse range of participants, in particular individuals from different first language backgrounds within Finland (e.g. Swedish, Russian, Estonian, German, Arabic, Romi, and Sami languages). Also, this study examined a limited number of plausible scenarios, therefore future research should expand on the variety of social, academic, and professional circumstances presented (e.g., exchanging money, talking with classmates and/or teachers in school, occupation-specific speaking activities, using English as a lingu franca in everyday interaction, etc.) and could combine visual methods with more traditional data collection instruments such as observation and large-scale surveys. The narrow focus of this study, makes generalization difficult, especially in how the findings may be applied to individuals from different linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

In addition, more extensive, longitudinal studies considering multiple affective factors (e.g. motivation, agency, attitudes toward the L2, inhibition, willingness to speak, etc.) would contribute to formulating a better overall picture of how affective variables impact L2 speaking, and the influence of pedagogical approaches and curriculum policies on learners in the classroom and beyond. More specifically, longitudinal, ethnographic studies could explore whether students (and teachers) believe English education indeed overemphasizes grammar at the expense of communicative skills in Finland, and if and how this affects young people as they transition from school to the real world.

Concerning the use of photo-elicitation interviews in Applied Linguistics research, experimental studies, where the treatment group is interviewed with visual stimuli while the control group is given verbal-only interviews, could help elucidate whether the technique positively or negatively (or neutrally) influences participants' responses, and may also stimulate the construction of field-specific considerations, processes, and models. Moreover, in this study, photo-elicitation was used only once and the photos were selected by the researchers; going forward, longitudinal research might employ participant-selected and/or participant-produced photos to evoke more emotional responses and experiential connections, and to gather

extended accounts and descriptions of affective factors and other phenomenon. While widely used in other social science disciplines, the suitability of photo-elicitation interviews in Applied Linguistics research is still an open question.

6. Conclusion

The goal of this study was two-fold. First, it aimed to better understand how self-confidence and anxiety affect young Finnish adults' perspectives on speaking English as a foreign language in different communicative situations. Secondly, the paper explored how photo-elicitation interviews impact the participants' responses, with special attention to how they augment emotional recollection and vitalize more narrative accounts of experience.

In accord with previous research, this study found that (1) language anxiety negatively impacts one's willingness to speak, particularly when there is a fear of judgment; (2) concern about making mistakes originates from didactic teaching methods, and (3) participants possessed a greater sense of communicative confidence in familiar situations. However, this study indicates that personal narratives provide greater insights into the affective domain of young Finnish adults when using English in specific situations. In regard to the second research goal, the photo-elicitation method proved surprisingly useful for stimulating discussion of topics that may not have appeared in verbal-only interviews such as the participants' reliance on concrete material to support speaking and actively referring back to previous scenarios/topics to make comparisons. It also dynamized more reflective and detailed responses about the participants' personal experiences and feelings. Thus, this study offers insight into both the influence of self-confidence and language anxiety in speaking in different formal and informal situations among young Finnish adults and exemplifies the potential benefits of using photo-elicitation interviews in Applied Linguistics research.

Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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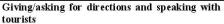Soler-Carbonell, J., Saarinen, T., & Kibbermann, K. (2017). Multilayered

85

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Appendix

Photos used in the interviews

Giving/asking for directions and speaking with tourists Retrieved from: http://helenadailyenglish.com/everyday-english-conversations-practice-lesson-12-asking-directions.html	**Giving an oral presentation** Retrieved from: https://terrylinhart.com/8-steps-presentations/
Ordering food in a restaurant Retrieved from: https://www.aaps.ca/blog/3-ways-food-safety-training-pros-say-online-food-ordering-may-lead-to-better-health.php	**Speaking English in a job interview** Retrieved from: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/relationships/work/7-secrets-to-ace-your-job-interview/articleshow/49478377.cms
Spending time with foreign students/non-Finnish friends Retrieved from: https://www.upliftingtoday.com/2018/07/15-things-i-wish-i-wouldve-known-in-my-20s/	**Passing customs or security check at the airport** Retrieved from: http://www.learnz.org.nz/airport/customs-and-immigration