Perspectives on the quality of English language proficiency

An explorative account of six Western European countries

Suzanne de Steur

Leiden University

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Supervisor: Dr. Smakman

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

The predominance of English in Europe can be seen everywhere. English is by far the most widely used language of communication today. Almost half of Europe's population speaks English as a second language. However, the quality of English among Western Europeans varies considerably. The Human Development Index lists all Western European countries as nations with very high development.[1] Even so, it is striking that the level of English varies so much. In the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, it is generally assumed that nearly everyone speaks English. According to the latest European barometer, for instance, at least 80 per cent of the Dutch, Danish and Swedish respondents claim they speak English well enough (European Barometer 2012). Germany's overall proficiency in English is not alarming, though of a different scale than, say, the Scandinavian countries. The state of English in France is of an entirely different level and well below average.[2]

In trying to grasp these differences, this thesis aims to explain English language proficiency by exploring several factors that may have influenced the state of English in six European countries. The countries that will be looked at are the three Nordic countries of Finland, Norway and Sweden, as well as France, Germany and the Netherlands.[3] In most international proficiency ratings, the Nordic countries and the Netherlands often stand out. In fact, at the time of doing research, the 2012 EF English Proficiency Index listed Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Norway as countries with the highest English proficiency levels. The 2011 EF English Proficiency Index presented similar results. Given Scandinavia's high proficiency ratings in English, it was considered to be important to include as many Scandinavian countries as possible. The Netherlands was included for similar reasons. The inclusion of Finland was considered to be particularly insightful, as Finland is the only country that has very high English proficiency rates as well as a national language that is non-Germanic. For this reason, Finland could serve as a good contrastive country. For the comparison, Germany and France were also included because both countries are non-subtitling nations. In addition, Germany's proficiency of English is generally lower than that of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, which calls for a comparative analysis. France's performance is altogether of a very different level and therefore all the more interesting to explore (EF English Proficiency Index 2012).[4]

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[1] The Human Development Index can be accessed at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries

[2] To be precise, in Denmark and Sweden 86% of those interviewed claim they speak English well enough. In the Netherlands this is even 90%. Finland does not reach the same levels, although still 70% claim they speak English well enough. In Germany, 56% claim they speak English well enough and in France 39% (2012 European Barometer: 21). The European Barometer can be accessed at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf

[3] Originally, the research also included Denmark and Belgium, the latter divided into Flanders and Wallonia.

[4] The 2011 and 2012 EF English Proficiency Index, which this thesis is based on, can be accessed at: http://www.ef.nl/epi/downloads/

By exploring various claims in the literature through extensive literature reviews, as well as presenting qualitative data from experts and laymen, this thesis investigates factors that logically influence the quality of English among Western European countries. The factors explored in this thesis are the following:

(1) Linguistic distance between the mother tongue and English;
(2) The effect of dubbing versus subtitling;
(3) Teaching methods.

The thesis aims to find out which of these factors appears to be most dominant in trying to explain the differences in the quality of English.

My choice for each factor calls for a brief explanation in this introductory chapter. In the literature, it is firstly commonplace to point to the effect that the mother tongue has on second language acquisition (Igawa & Yagi 2011: 106).[5] Linguists such as Ringbom (1987) and Swan (2001) argue that a speaker's native tongue can influence one's learner language significantly. They claim that learning a new language is easier when the native language is close to the learner language. This would mean that Finnish learners, for instance, have greater difficulty in learning English than, for instance, German learners, whose language is part of the same language group as English.

Yet, it is clear that linguistic affinity alone cannot explain why English in the Netherlands and Scandinavia has nearly become a second language and why France is drastically falling behind. Finns are among the best learners of English in the world and German speakers of English generally seem less fluent in English than Dutch and Scandinavian speakers (EF English Proficiency Index 2012). This calls for an exploration of other factors.

In France there is very little exposure to English. Television programmes, for instance, are not subtitled but dubbed. In the Netherlands as well as the Scandinavian countries, people are exposed to English on a daily basis, including subtitled television. Dubbing versus subtitling is therefore another factor explored in this thesis.

Finally, this study also investigates the choices that were made in English language teaching in Europe, particularly countries' choices in teaching approaches. Despite evidence that European countries have generally moved into the direction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as claimed by Trim (1992) and Richards (2006), the impression is that English language teachers still mostly focus on form rather than create real communicative situations, at least when it comes to English language teaching in the Netherlands. Yet, if there are striking differences in the way that languages are taught in Europe, it would mean that methods in language education could provide an explanation too.

[5] Igawa & Yagi (2011) present similar arguments and also investigate the factors that influence English language proficiency, but then for Sweden.

1.2 Research questions

Based on the three factors that influence English language proficiency (i.e. linguistic distance, dubbing versus subtitling and English language teaching methodology), this study is to explain the extent to which each of these factors may explain differences in English proficiency levels among Europeans. The main research question that was formulated for this thesis is thus as follows: *What explains the differences in the quality of English proficiency among Western Europeans?*

The sub-research questions that were formulated are:

(1) To what extent does linguistic distance between the L1 and English affect English language learning?
(2) Are there striking differences in English teaching methodology among countries?
(3) To what extent does subtitled television help foreign language learning as opposed to dubbed television?

The thesis is of an explorative nature and aims to provide data for future research into the situation in each of these countries. In doing so, this research includes extensive literature reviews on each of the three factors. In addition, empirical data were gathered by interviewing laymen, linguists as well as English language teachers from six Western European countries.

1.3 Structure

After the current introductory chapter, chapters two to four will provide extensive literature reviews of the three factors that may explain the success stories of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands as opposed to France and, to some extent, also Germany. Thus, in chapter 2, I will explore the notion of linguistic affinity between the mother tongue and English in the literature and also provide an insight into the phonological and grammatical problems that each of the countries typically have when learning English. Chapter 3 will explore English language teaching methodologies in each of the six countries to find out if there are large differences in the way that English is taught in these countries. The final literature chapter, chapter 4, will explore the effect of English exposure by looking at dubbing versus subtitling on television.

Following the literature reviews, chapter 5 will present the methodology of the empirical research. In interviews, English language teachers were asked about their methodological approaches in teaching. The main focus here is to determine whether teachers still largely focus on grammar or whether communicative skills are also emphasised. Furthermore, laymen from various countries were asked about their preferences as regards dubbing or subtitling and whether subtitled television helps their English language acquisition. Linguists, finally, were asked which of the three factors weighs most in explaining the success stories of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. The results of the empirical research, as presented in chapter 6 of this thesis, together with the literature reviews, will serve as concluding hypothesis in the final chapter of this thesis, chapter 7.

Part I

Literature reviews

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2. L1 Interference

2.1 Overview

The present chapter aims to explore what is said about language interference from the mother tongue in the literature. As specified in chapter 1, it is often argued that learning a new language is easier when the native language is close to the learner language. This would mean that French and particularly Finnish learners, whose language is linguistically very distant to English, have greater difficulties when learning English than, for instance, Dutch speakers.

As discussed in Swan (2001), most scholars nowadays agree that a speaker's native tongue can influence one's learner language in many ways. It is generally thought that transfer errors are more likely to occur when a learner's L1 language background is significantly distant from English. At the same time, learning is said to take place easier when the native language has a "close equivalent for a feature". Where there is no such equivalent feature, learners are said to be more likely to make mistakes (Swan: xi). Jenkins (2000) presents a similar view on phonological transfer: "English is always – and often to some considerable degree – characterized by phonological transfer from its speakers' first languages" (Jenkins 2000, as cited in Kivistö 2005: 39). This suggests that linguistic affinity is an important factor in explaining proficiency levels.

The current literature review will outline the typical learner difficulties of Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Dutch, French and German learners of English. For each of the nationalities the common phonological and syntactic learner difficulties will be discussed.[6] As Finnish and French are the only non-Germanic languages investigated in this paper, it would therefore be interesting to explore whether Finnish and French learners generally make more significant transfer errors than, say, Swedish or Dutch learners. This is done with the aim to find out if linguistic distance results in lower proficiency levels. Finnish learner errors will be discussed first.

2.2 Finnish learners

Ringbom claims that Finnish learners generally have greater difficulty in learning English due to their distinct mother tongue: "The acquisition of English has been found to be difficult for Finns due to the great genetic and typological distance between the L1 and L2" (Ringbom 1987, as cited in Merilainen 2010: 53). As an Uralic-Finnic language, Finnish shares the same language family with Estonian and Hungarian, whereas English is part of the Germanic language branch

[6] A complete list of all learner difficulties and errors is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, what is discussed in this chapter is only an overview of the most common learner errors.

and therefore much closer related to Dutch, German and the other Scandinavian languages. Finnish, for instance, does not share any cognates with English, as the two languages are from different language families (Shoebottom).[7]

Merilainen (2010) observes that Finland is an "ideal setting" for investigating the effect of L1 influence because it has two language groups – Finnish, the first language of most Finns, and Swedish, which belongs to the same language group as English (53).

As early as 1987 it was observed by Ringbom that the mother tongue can certainly help the learner in reaching greater proficiency in the L2. In his study, Ringbom argues that Swedish and Finnish speakers learn English differently due to "cross-linguistic influence" (Ringbom 1987, as cited in Olsen 1999: 193). Finnish learners, Ringbom argues, are said to have major difficulties when it comes to using articles and prepositions in English, whereas Swedish speakers, whose language is more similar to English, do not (ibid). Merilainen, however, observes that Ringbom's findings may no longer be valid today:

> The studies that were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s did reveal many aspects of Finns as learners of English and certain transfer errors in their English production, but it is another question whether these findings are applicable to today's Finnish youngsters, who are learning and using English in a different context and in different ways (53).

Indeed, Ringbom's findings applied to the state of learning English in Finland more than twenty years ago. As was established in the introductory chapter, today Finns are among the best speakers of English in the world (EF English Proficiency Index 2012). Therefore, the Finnish example arguably shows that linguistic distance may not necessarily result in poorer proficiency levels.

Nevertheless, research on the proficiency of Finns' English suggests that Finnish learners can make transfer errors in a number of areas. Table 2.1 in section 2.7 presents a summary of potential phonological learner difficulties for each of the countries investigated in this paper, including Finland. The most common Finnish learner difficulties will be discussed next.

According to Merilainen, Finns may, first of all, encounter problems with the English stress pattern, especially when it comes to unstressed sounds in English (62). Merlilainen argues that this is the result of "phonotactic differences" between the two languages (ibid). Shoebottom as well as Sajavaara and Dufva (2001: 251) make similar observations. As opposed to English, Finnish always puts primary stress on the first syllable of a word. Finnish, therefore, has what Shoebottom calls a "predictable stress pattern". The stress pattern of the English language, however, is much more unpredictable. Beginning learners of English, in the words of Shoebottom, may have difficulties in making themselves understood and often tend to place stress on the first syllable of an English word (Shoebottom).

Although most studies have looked at segmental features for Finnish learners, Shoebottom states that Finns also have problems with the rising intonation of English questions,

[7] Shoebottom's account on Finnish learner errors can be retrieved from: http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/finnish.htm

as Finnish intonation is naturally falling. Sajavaara and Dufva make similar observations: "Finnish intonation lacks sharp rises and falls, and this general patterning, when transferred over to English, may sound pragmatically or sociolinguistically inappropriate, contributing to a 'Finnish accent'" (251). However, as English also knows falling intonation patterns in questions, it is assumed that Finns may not always encounter problems with the intonation in English questions.

The literature points to additional phonological problem areas for Finnish learners of English. According to Sajavaara and Dufva, the English vowel system does not present serious difficulties for Finns (249). Nevertheless, Finnish learners of English are sometimes unable to distinguish between short and long vowel sounds in, for instance, pairs such as *sit/seat* (Shoebottom, Sajavaara & Dufva: 249).

Saravaara and Dufva go on to discuss the difficulties that Finns may have with the English consonantal system which, they argue, may generally cause greater problems for Finnish learners (249). The English stop system, first of all, can be difficult for beginning learners, who may tend to pronounce the voiced sounds of /b/ and /g/ as unvoiced. Given the lack of aspiration in Finnish, Finns may also have difficulties with the production of aspiration in /p/, /t/ and /k/ (Saravaara & Dufva: 250; also discussed in Tergujeff 2012: 600). Furthermore, Finns may initially have problems with the pronunciation of dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, as there are no dentals in the Finnish language. (Saravaara & Dufva: 250, Shoebottom). A final feature, as observed by Shoebottom and Morris-Wilson, among others, is that /w/ sounds are generally pronounced as /v/ for Finnish learners, so that *wine* would become *vine*. (Morris-Wilson 2004: 58, as cited in Timonen 2011: 11).

Table 2.2 in paragraph 2.7 presents a summary of typical grammatical learner errors, including potential errors for Finns. When it comes to syntactic learner difficulties, Merilainen argues that there is more evidence for L1 influence on the production of English in the field of syntax than there is in other fields: "Finnish increased exposure to and use of English may have a positive impact on their lexical development in L2, but not in syntactic structures" (60). According to Merilainen, her earlier studies (2006, 2008), for instance, show there has been some improvement in students' competence of lexicon between 1990 and 2005.[8] This improvement, as Merilainen puts it, can be explained due to the increased exposure to and use of English along with communicative language methods at schools (51).

Indeed, Merilainen's study clearly shows that Finns have greater difficulty than their Swedish counterparts in the field of syntax. Features such as the use of prepositions, pronoun constructions with *it* and *there*, the passive and subordinate clauses were all easier for Swedes to grasp than for Finns. Merilainen's claim here is that this is due to their different language backgrounds, which makes it easier for Swedes to learn English (51).[9]

A further grammatical Finnish learner error is that Finnish learners may make mistakes with the progressive form. As Finnish does not have a progressive verb form, Finnish learners

[8] See other works listed by Merilainen in Merilainen 2010, p.52.

[9] Difficulties with pronoun constructions *it* and *there*, the passive and subordinate clauses, however, were not found in other sources on Finnish learner errors. For this reason, these difficulties are presumed minor errors. Therefore, they are not included in the overview of section 2.7.

may say "*I watched television when they arrived"* rather than *"I was watching"* (Shoebottom). Pietilä (2012) explains how the lack of the progressive form in Finnish may also lead to its overuse by Finnish learners (317). When it comes to other errors in tense, Finns may also use the Present Simple to talk about future events ("*I tell him when I see him'*), whereas in English it would be more correct to use auxiliary *will* (Shoebottom, Merilainen: 54).

Another characteristic feature is that Finnish is an "agglutinative language", which means that most words are formed by putting morphemes together. Thus in the Finnish tense system, Shoebottom observes that Finnish verbs show tense change by successive addition of suffixes. As mentioned by Shoebottom, this is very different to English, which often makes use of auxiliary verbs. As a result, Finnish students often have difficulties in forming negatives and questions in English, particularly in the early stages of learning the language (Shoebottom). Roiha (2008), whose research investigated question development in the writing of Finnish learners of English, makes similar observations. In the study it was found that the majority of errors made in forming questions were caused by the omission of *do*-support (60).

As was previously discussed in the work by Ringbom, mistakes in the use of the definite and indefinite article are finally said to be common, because the Finnish language lacks articles (Shoebottom, Pietilä: 317).

2.3 Swedish and Norwegian learners

In paragraph 2.2 it was suggested that Swedish learners of English tend to grasp certain features more easily than Finnish learners as a result of linguistic affinity with the English language. Olsen (1999) argues that learning English comes quite easily for Norwegians too. Again, this is partly said to be the case because Norwegian and English is quite similar. In the words of Olsen: "Norwegians have a reputation for learning English easily since their first language facilitates the learning" (192).

Simensen (2010) makes a similar case and maintains that the linguistic conditions for the learning of English in the Scandinavian countries may be comparable (472). Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder (2001) confirm this observation: "Considerable contact in past and present between the English and Scandinavian languages, as well as common outside influences, have served to keep up and reinforce the close relationship between the languages. English is therefore relatively easy for Scandinavians[10] to learn" (21).

Nevertheless, some problems may still arise. According to Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder, Scandinavian speakers of English often make the same errors in English (21). For this reason, it is possible to speak of common "Scandinavian errors" that apply to both Sweden and Norway.[11] A brief overview of some of the most typical Swedish and Norwegian phonological and syntactic errors will be discussed from here onwards.

[10] Their definition only includes Danish, Norwegian and Swedish learners and excludes Finnish learners.

[11] Denmark is not included in this thesis. In the account by Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder, common Scandinavian errors apply to Danish learners of English as well.

Some problems may firstly arise in the field of phonology, although these are generally said to be minimal. Most features of English pronunciation, so Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder argue, "do not present serious difficulty" (21). This observation is shared by Jenkins, who reports that Swedish English is often seen as "native-like": "Swedish speakers' English accents are constantly rated high among other non-native speakers' accents and is often said to be a 'near British accent'" (Jenkins 2007, as cited in Igawa and Yagi 2011: 107).

Having said that, Scandinavians may still have some problems in pronunciation. Scandinavians may firstly have difficulties with the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ (as in *thin* and *then*). According to Norell (1991: 6) as well as Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder (23), these phonemes are pronounced "too dentally". As the /θ/ and /ð/ are non-existing in Norwegian or Swedish, these typically English sounds are often replaced by /t/ and /d/ respectively (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 23).

Another common learner error made by Norwegian and most Swedish speakers is that the /r/is often pronounced by what Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder call "other non-English tip-of-the-tongue r-sounds" (23). Approximant /ɹ/ is similarly identified as a typical Norwegian learner error by Hordnes (2013: 48), although no further evidence for this is found in works on common Swedish learner errors.[12] Another typical feature found in the works by Norell as well as Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder is that Swedish and Norwegian speakers may find it difficult to produce a dark /l/, as in *fill*. Instead, they often use a clear /l/, as in *life* (Norell: 6, Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 23).[13]

Scandinavian speakers, furthermore, tend to pronounce /z/ as /s/, so that *razor* becomes *racer*. This feature is listed in many works on typical Swedish and Norwegian learner errors (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 28, among others). Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder also mention that the /w/ is often replaced by a /v/ sound, as in *vine* for *wine* (23). Interestingly so, however, Norell (1991) as well as Hordnes (2013) report that the /v/ can also be pronounced as a /w/sound (6 and 49 respectively). Additionally, as the voiced palatal fricative /ʒ/ does not exist in the Scandinavian phonemic system, it is often pronounced as a palatal fricative /ʃ/ (so that *measure* becomes *mesher*) (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 23).

Another potential learner difficulty with regard to placement of stress is that Scandinavians often place too much stress on words such as *but* and *the*, because Norwegian and Swedish have fewer weak forms than English (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 25). According to Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder, this makes it more difficult for learners to require a natural sentence rhythm (25). In his account on Swedish errors, Shoebottom identifies this as a learner error as well, although no further evidence on this feature is found for Norwegian learners.

When it comes to intonation, Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder mention that the fall-rise tone is difficult for Scandinavian learners of English (25). Shoebottom adds to this by saying that Swedish is a tone language whereby word meanings can be differentiated by "differences in

[12] For this reason, it is presumed that pronunciation difficulties with approximant /ɹ/ should be considered minor errors, at least when it comes to approximant /ɹ/ for Swedish learners of English.

[13] Norwegian pronunciation errors with dark /l/, however, should arguably also be considered minor errors, as no further evidence for this feature is found in Hordnes' account on Norwegian phonological errors.

pitch". As a result, the production of statements in English may sound like questions or sentences may not sound complete (Shoebottom).[14]

All in all, it should be observed that the aforementioned Scandinavian phonological learner errors do arguably not cause great interference. As Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder observe as well, it is only from a "bird's-eye view" that it makes sense to talk about a "Scandinavian accent" (22).

When it comes to syntax, Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder do not explicitly mention the extent to which grammatical features are grasped by Scandinavian learners. However, as can be seen in table 2.2 in paragraph 2.7, the list of grammatical learner difficulties does seem to be considerable.

According to Olsen (1999), Norwegians particularly have difficulties with constructions starting with *it* and *there* (200). Shoebottom similarly defines constructions with *it* and *there* as a potential learner difficulty for Swedish learners. There is evidence for this in the analysis by Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder as well, who argue this applies to all Scandinavian learners (27).[15]

When it comes to errors in inflection, mistakes with the third person singular *–s* are also commonly made, both by Swedish as well as Norwegian learners, most often by forgetting to add *–s* to the infinitive (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 30, Olsen: 196, Shoebottom). According to Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder, inflection does not exist for person or number in Scandinavian languages. Even very advanced speakers tend to make mistakes in inflection occasionally (30).

The literature suggests that there are further difficulties in tense and use of verbs. Like many other learners of English, Scandinavians firstly have difficulty with forming questions and negatives using *do* support (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 30, Westergaard: 95, Shoebottom). Furthermore, the Scandinavian languages do not have a gerund or *–ing* construction. As a result, this makes Scandinavians often use the infinitive instead: "*I must stop to smoke*" instead of "*I must stop smoking*" (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 31, Per Moen: 10, Brook: 26). In the Scandinavian languages, the infinitive is also used after prepositions instead of the gerund, so that "*we look forward to meeting you next week*" becomes "*we look forward to meet you next week*" (Per Moen: 10). Another difficult feature is the use of the progressive form, which is absent in the Scandinavian languages. According to Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder, beginners often use the Present Simple instead (e.g. "*the man plays the piano now*"), whereas other learners use the progressive too much (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 31, Olsen: 196, Shoebottom). Another common mistake is the use of the Present Perfect in instances whereby British English would use the Past Simple, e.g. "*I have met him last week*" (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 7, Per Moen: 5, Shoebottom). A final feature that causes confusion for Scandinavian learners is the use of *will* for future tenses. Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder, among others, mention that future tenses in the Scandinavian languages are not used when the context of the sentence already makes it clear that the reference is to the future. As a

[14] Once again, no mention of this learner error is found in works on Norwegian learner difficulties other than in the work by Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder.

[15] Olsen provides a useful explanation for the confusion between *it* and *there* and the overuse of *it* in some instances: "sentences containing existential *there* are not distinguished from *it*-sentences in Norwegian, since both start with *det*" (200).

result, students may use the Present Simple instead. For instance, Scandinavian speakers would say "*we talk about it tomorrow*" rather than "*we will talk about it tomorrow*" (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 31).

Other features that may cause errors for Scandinavian learners are the use of prepositions and the use of adverbs. According to Olsen, Norwegians frequently make mistakes with prepositions: "the use of prepositions is quite difficult, and often the Norwegian preposition *på*, which has a wide usage, is translated into *on*, making the English sentence very Norwenglish: *and you don't have to sit on the school every day*" (199). Luengo (2014) as well as Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder (33) present similar findings. Scandinavians, like many other learners of English, may also make errors with adverbs. According to Davidsen-Nielsen and Harder, adverbs often have the same form as adjectives, which causes a lot of mistakes, such as "*to dance very good*" instead of "*to dance very well*" (29). Shoebottom argues this is a common error for Swedish learners too, although no further evidence was found that Norwegian learners have difficulty with the use of adverbs and adjectives.

Word order, finally, is not among the list of significant Scandinavian learner errors, as both Swedish as well as Norwegian are Subject-Verb-Object languages, and so is English (Shoebottom). The position of adverbials, however, may be a difficult feature for both Norwegian and Swedish learners to grasp (Shoebottom, Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder: 27, Per Moen: 12). Shoebottom, for instance, explains that it is common in Swedish to invert subject and verb (e.g. "*my dictionary have I forgotten*").

2.4 Dutch learners

The Dutch, like the Scandinavians, have a reputation for being able to learn English quite easily. This view is confirmed in Tops *et al.* (2001), who observe: "Dutch and English being so closely related, they have many similarities in all areas of their grammars, and Dutch speakers regard English as easy to learn, at least initially, when they make rapid progress" (1). This observation, however, suggests that linguistic affinity alone is the deciding factor. Also, the claim suggests that all Dutch speakers regard the learning of English as "easy to learn". When exploring the phonological difficulties that Dutch speakers of English may have, Shoebottom similarly argues that Dutch speakers generally do not face many problems: "the Dutch and English sound systems are similar, so Dutch learners tend not to have significant problems perceiving or producing oral English".[16] As reported in the work by Tops *et al.*, however, Dutch learners may have strong regional accents in their dialects. The difficulties that Dutch learners have with English may therefore vary (1).

The main works that deal with pronunciation errors by Dutch speakers of English are Collins and Mees (2003) as well as Gussenhoven and Broeders (1997). Collins and Mees have analysed the most significant pronunciation errors made by Dutch speakers of English. In their hierarchy of errors in pronunciation, Collins and Mees present the view that some errors are

[16] Shoebottom's account on Dutch learner errors can be retrieved from: http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/dutch.htm

more significant and persistent than others. Those errors that are considered most significant are errors which may result in a "breakdown in intelligibility", or level 1 errors (290). Level 2 errors are still considered significant, although they do not involve "a loss of intelligibility" (ibid). Therefore, only the most significant as well as persistent learner errors that Collins and Mees list will be discussed in the following analysis.[17]

One of the most common errors that are persistently made by Dutch speakers of English is that Dutch learners have a tendency to devoice consonants at the end of a word (Collins & Mees: 290). According to Tops *et al.*, this confusion may result in mistakes such as *dock* instead of *dog* and *leaf* instead of *leave*. Errors such as these are made because words in Dutch typically do not end with a voiced consonant (2). As pointed out by Gussenhoven and Broeders as well (1997), Dutch learners should give attention to the fortis/lenis distinction in syllable-final position (16).

Collins and Mees list further phonological difficulties that are said to be difficult for Dutch speakers. When it comes to consonants, Collins and Mees argue that mistakes in the articulation of dental fricative /ð/are often persistent. The replacement of /θ/ by either /s/, /t/ or /f/is also listed as a level 1 error by Collins and Mees although considered non-persistent (290/291, furthermore discussed in Gussenhoven & Broeders: 16). Another significant error made by Dutch speakers is the confusion between /w/ and /v/ (Collins & Mees: 290). As a result, *wine* may become *vine* (Shoebottom). Additionally, Collins & Mees argue that the confusion of "initial and medial /f – v/ contrast" is another persistent error (290), which is also mentioned by Tops *et al.*, especially found among Dutch learners from Northern parts of the Netherlands (3).

When it comes to the realisation of vowels, Dutch learners may find it difficult to distinguish between /ʊ/ and /uː/, as in "foot" and "goose" (Collins & Mees: 290). As Dutch has no equivalent for /ʊ/, Gussenhoven and Broeders point out that it may be replaced by the Dutch vowel /u/ (17). The confusion of /e/ - /ae/ (the "dress" versus "trap" vowel) is discussed by both Collins and Mees as well as Gussenhoven and Broeders (290 and 17 respectively). According to Gussenhoven and Broeders, Dutch learners should concentrate on the distinction of words such as *bed* – *bet* – *bad* (17). Additionally, Collins and Mees list the confusion between /e/- /ae/ with /eə/ (the "square" vowel) as a level 1 error. Although Gussenhoven and Broeders do mention that some Dutch learners make the realisation of /eə/ too short – in, for instance, words such as "*Mary"* and "*scary"* – they are not listed as points to emphasise for Dutch learners (16/17).[18]

In addition to these specific problems there are a number of other difficulties Dutch learners may have with stress and assimilation. As regards stress, Collins and Mees report the "lack of weak and contracted forms" as a persistent error (290). Similarly, Gussenhoven and

[17] In order to be as concise as possible, errors that are defined as level 2 errors by Collins and Mees were not included in this analysis, nor level 1 errors that were labelled as non-persistent.

[18] For this reason, the confusion of /e/- /ae/-/eə/, as discussed by Collins and Mees, is not included in the overview of table 2.2, as no second source confirms it.

Broeders suggest that weak and strong forms should be focused on when teaching English pronunciation to Dutch students (16), which shows they believe this to be a major error as well. Similarly to Swedish speakers, Dutch learners may, for instance, put too much stress on words such as *but* and *than* as well (Tops *et al.*: 4).[19] Gussenhoven and Broeders also point out that many English words are often mispronounced with the stress on the wrong syllable (16). However, Collins and Mees do not confirm that primary stress is a persistent error (291).

With reference to assimilation, finally, Dutch learners may use incorrect assimilations, which both Collins and Mees as well as Gussenhoven and Broeders list as major errors and priority areas (290 and 17 respectively). As Collins and Mees explain: "Dutch assimilation patterns are employed, which contribute to the confusion of the lenis/fortis contrast at syllable boundaries, e.g. *iceberg* */'aizb ɛ:g/" (285).

Moving on with a discussion of Dutch grammatical learner errors, the following analysis is mostly based on the work by Tops *et al.* (2001) as well as Shoebottom. There is no mention on the extent to which Dutch learners have difficulties with English grammar in the work by Tops *et al.* Shoebottom only states that certain differences between English and Dutch may result in negative transfer. As an English language teacher, the author of this paper would argue that grammatical difficulties should not be left out, as there are plenty.

The English tense system may firstly present difficulties for the Dutch learner. Tops *et al.* as well as Shoebottom state that Dutch learners may initially also have difficulties with forming questions and negatives using do-support (6). According to Shoebottom, Dutch learners may furthermore make errors with the progressive form in English, as the progressive verb form does not exist in Dutch. This may result in errors such as "*I watched TV when my mum called*" (Shoebottom).[20] Tops *et al.* also state that Dutch learners may overuse the progressive form (7). What is more, Dutch learners often mix up past tense and perfect tense as well, as in Dutch it is possible to use both tenses in a similar context (Tops *et al.*: 7, Shoebottom). Just like in Finnish, as well as the other Scandinavian languages, Dutch can use the present simple to talk about the future, e.g. "*I talk to you tomorrow*" (Tops *et al.*: 8, Shoebottom).

Some general learner difficulties have yet to be discussed. Like English, Dutch also has the same basic "Subject-Verb-Object" word order (Shoebottom). Overall, problems with word order may vary considerably. As Tops *et al.* observe: "Some of the most striking differences will only interfere at an elementary level, but other Dutchisms may be so deeply rooted that they will yield problems at a more intermediate or even advanced level" (11). Indeed, Tops *et al.* report many examples of Dutch interference, particularly when it comes to the positioning of adverbials. Similarly to German, inversion of subject and verb occur in Dutch if the sentence opens with an

[19] Collins and Mees report that Dutch learners also have a fairly "restricted intonation range" (291). However, Collins and Mees identify this as a level 2 error rather than a level 1 error. For this reason, errors with regard to intonation are not included in the discussion, nor do Gussenhoven and Broeders include the error in their list of priority items in the teaching of English pronunciation. (16).

[20] Shoebottom's account on Dutch learner errors can be retrieved from: http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/dutch.htm

adverbial or other constituent: *"tomorrow shall I see him"* (11).[21] Shoebottom makes a similar case, thereby stating common errors such as *"I play often chess with my friend"* (Shoebottom).

Tops *et al.*, as well as Shoebottom, finally report that Dutch learners may also have considerable difficulty with the difference between adverbs and adjectives, e.g. "*I know him good"* (Tops *et al.*: 12).

2.5 German learners

The following analysis on German learner errors is mainly based on the account by Swan (2001) and Shoebottom,[22] who discuss both phonological and grammatical learner errors. Neither work, however, mentions whether German learners generally have more difficulties with the English phonological system or the English grammar system. Swan argues that German learners of English generally do not have that many problems with learning English:

> because of the close relationship between English and German, there are many similarities between the two languages as regards phonology, vocabulary and syntax. German speakers therefore find English easy to learn initially, and tend to make relatively rapid progress (Swan: 37).[23]

Judging from the works by Swan, Shoebottom as well as the phonological account by Bastug (2011), however, it seems that errors are fairly widespread, both in terms of English phonology as well as English grammar. Although Swan claims that Germans do not have great difficulty with the production of most English sounds, Swan does mention that certain German features may produce a "German accent" when speaking English (37). This suggests that a discussion of typically German phonological errors should not be left out. The following analysis will outline the main difficulties German learners of English are often confronted with.

According to Bastug[24] and Swan (39), the English phonemes /θ/, /ð/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/and /w/ are not common in the German language. Similarly to Scandinavian and Dutch speakers, the dental fricatives /θ/, /ð/ are often replaced by other sounds, in the case of German by /s/ and /z/ respectively, so that *youthful* becomes *useful* and *withered* may become *wizard* (Swan: 39). This may arguably lead to great intelligibility. The realisation of /v/for /w/, so that words such as *wine* become *vine*, is very common for German learners of English. Shoebottom defines this as a

[21] See Tops *et al.* for a more detailed account (11).

[22] Shoebottom's account on German learner errors can be accessed at:
http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/german.htm

[23] It may be the case that Germans make rapid progress, but when comparing the proficiency of German speakers to Dutch, Finnish or Scandinavian speakers, however, Germans generally score high but not very high. See the EF English Proficiency Index 2012.

[24] For the account by Bastug (2011) an excerpt was used. The excerpt does not include page numbers.
http://www.grin.com/en/e-book/195175/a-contrastive-analysis-of-the-english-and-the-german-sound-system

typical German learner error too. When it comes to affricates /ʒ/, /dʒ/, Swan argues that German speakers often replace them by /ʃ / and / tʃ /(39). Swan mentions that approximant /r/ and dark /l/ may furthermore cause problems. Similarly to other learners, dark /l/ does not exist in German either. Therefore, German learners may replace the /l/ as in *fill* and *full* by a clear /l/ in, for example, *light*. Although difficulties with approximant /r/ and dark /l/ may not necessarily lead to great intelligibility, Bastug lists them as a learner error as well.

German learners of English may furthermore encounter difficulties in a number of other fields that may affect the pronunciation of certain words, particularly when it comes to final devoicing. Voiced consonants, as in Dutch, are generally pronounced with "unvoiced equivalents" at the end of words. English "*rise"*, for example, would therefore become "*rice"* (Swan: 39). Bastug confirms that final devoicing is a typically German learner error too.

As discussed by Swan, German speakers generally use more "energetic aspiration" and "explosive stop consonants" (37/39). This observation is shared by Bastug, who says that "the most common difficulty of German students regarding English allophones lies in the aspiration of the voiceless plosives /p/, /t/, and /k/, especially if they are in word final position". According to Bastug, word final positions are generally more aspirated in German than in English, which may result in over-aspiration by German learners of English (ibid).

Bastug and Swan finally also analyse the difficulties that German learners of English may have with the English vowel system. Bastug argues that the contrast between certain vowels of both languages is rather complex, as "the vowel system of English deviates widely from the vowel system of German" (9). Nevertheless, the only feature of which both Bastug as well as Swan state that it may cause confusion is the contrast between /e/ - /ae/ (Bastug, Swan: 38).

When it comes to grammatical features, many errors that Germans typically make are very similar to the errors that have so far been discussed in sections 2.2 to 2.4. Research suggests that there are some typically German mistakes (and there are many),[25] though errors are also strikingly similar. Problems with auxiliary *do*, the lack of progressive forms and the gerund in German, the present tense that is often used instead of the future tense and the misuse of the Past Simple and Present Perfect, are all among the list of typically German errors (Swan: 41/42, Roe 2007: 222, Shoebottom).

Word order, as Swan puts it, is quickly learnt by German learners of English, although beginners may make mistakes in a number of areas (45). Rhoe briefly discusses the difficulty that German learners may have with the position of adverbials, although no explicit examples are given (222). Swan reports mistakes such as "*You speak very well German*", which can be made because adverbs in German may separate a verb from its object (45). Nicholls (2003), finally, also mentions the example of "*I have my passport forgotten*" (German: "*Ich habe meine Reisepasse vergessen*"). Mistakes in word order such as these may be made because infinitives and past participles are often put at the end of a sentence in German, as opposed to English (Nicholls).[26]

[25] For a full account see Swan (2001).

[26] The account by Nicholls (2003) does not include page numbers. It can be accessed at: http://www.macmillandictionaries.com/MED-Magazine/October2003/12-language-interference.htm

2.6 French learners

French and English have been in contact at various stages of their development. After the Norman Conquest, many English words were borrowed from French. As a result, more than seventy per cent of the English lexis originates from French and Latin (Choroleeva 2009).[27]

Despite lexical and syntactic similarities between the two languages, it seems that French learners of English may also encounter many difficulties, especially in terms of phonology. Capliez (2011) confirms this observation: "French learners of English very often fail to be properly understood by native English speakers" (1). Walter (2001) similarly argues that Francophone speakers may come across learner difficulties in phonology:

> The phonological systems exhibit some important differences, and this usually presents French speakers with problems in understanding and producing spoken English, and in making links between spelling and pronunciation (52).

These observations suggest that linguistic distance, again, is seen as an important factor in explaining lower proficiency levels, as argued in the literature.

Perhaps one important difference compared to other learners, as discussed in the literature, is that French learners generally both have problems with the pronunciation of certain consonants as well as the production of vowels. Although the latter is often emphasised by teachers in French classrooms, Capliez maintains that errors made in the production of vowels and consonants are equally important: "both have equally visible differences with the French sounds, and the errors made by learners are as significant" (9).

Walter (2001) discusses all possible learner difficulties for French L2 learners of English. As argued by Capliez, however, not all segmental learner errors are relevant, as not all errors lead to unintelligibility (9). Admittedly, there are bound to be many pronunciation errors, as the work by Walter demonstrates, but only the most significant ones will be discussed in the following analysis.

To begin with, most English and French consonants do not present serious difficulties at the segmental level, although some features do stand out. Francophone speakers, just like most learners, typically also have difficulties with the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ (Capliez: 11, Shoebottom)[28]. According to Capliez, the mispronunciation of /θ/ and /ð/ is "one of the best-known and systematic instances of production difficulty for French speakers" (11). Another typical consonantal error is that /tʃ/ may sometimes be realized as /ʃ/ and /dʒ/ as /ʒ/, so that *church* is pronounced as *shursh* and *joke* as *zhoke* (Walter: 54, among others). According to

[27] Choroleeva's account does not include page numbers. It can be accessed at: http://www.google.nl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.hltmag.co.uk%2Foct09%2Fmart02.rtf&ei=nLedU62GKonjOsG3gOgN&usg=AFQjCNH9mRZJSGva5ETlTHhqltwtkV-jRQ&bvm=bv.68911936,d.ZWU

[28] Shoebottom's account on French learner errors can be retrieved from: http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/french.htm

Choroleeva, the realization of /tʃ/ as /ʃ/ is probably the influence of French (e.g. think of many French words that start with /ʃ/, such as *Chablis*) (Choroleeva).

Further typically French features that may cause more significant errors in the field of phonology involve the final -s morpheme and the omission of the /h/ sound at the beginning of words. Choroleeva as well as Walter (55) explain that in French the final –s is usually not pronounced. When pronouncing English plurals French speakers may drop the –s morpheme after voiced consonants as well, as in "*two tin*" (Walter: 55). The /h/ sound at beginning of words is often omitted too, because in French the /h/ is always silent (Choroleeva, among others). Moreover, a typically French learner error, as discussed by Capliez (10) and Walter (54), is the tendency to pronounce approximant /r/ with the back of the tongue, as in French.

Walter discusses many difficulties in the pronunciation of vowels. Yet, not all of these lead to unintelligibility. As discussed by Capliez (12) as well as Walter (53) and Shoebottom, a more significant error concerns the production of pure vowels – or to be more precise, the inability to distinguish between "short" and "long" vowels (Capliez: 12). According to Capliez, the French language only has one single type of vowel. Also, French vowel duration is the same for all vowels, which may lead to confusion in minimal pairs in, for instance, "*live"* versus "*leave"* (ibid: 12/13).[29] Choroleeva also discusses the "orthographic interference" of the vowel /ə/ or "schwa". To be more precise, French learners often have a tendency to change the spelling of words, thereby adding an extra –e in, for instance, "*groupe*" instead of "*group*". Capliez, adds to this by saying that the "widespread problem" of the schwa is a result of the difficulties that French speakers have with the English stress pattern and the rhythm of English (14).

As discussed by Capliez, the suprasegmental features of the English phonological system – such as rhythm and stress – may be difficult for French learners. Capliez observes that French and English have very different stress systems. Learner errors, therefore, are frequently made (16). As word stress in French is regular, French learners may have difficulties with the unpredictable stress pattern of the English language. As Capliez puts it: "the transfer of the L1 pattern on the L2 production is almost systematic and unconscious with French speakers, who simply assign equal stress and weight to all syllables when they speak English" (16). The distinction between placing primary stress on the first syllable of an English noun (e.g. '*present*) as opposed to placing stress on the second syllable of a verb (e.g. *pre'sent*), may be difficult for French learners (ibid).[30]

Another difference between English and French is that English is a stress-timed language whereas French is a syllable-timed language. As specified by Capliez, stress-timed languages are languages whereby its rhythmic stresses take place at fairly regular intervals. Syllable-timed languages, such as French, are languages whose syllables take up approximately the same amount of time to pronounce, whether they are stressed or unstressed (19). As French does not reduce the time given to the pronunciation of its syllables, French learners can have difficulties with the English rhythmic pattern. This may explain, as Walter (53) and Shoebottom mention as well, why

[29] Also specified in Walter (53) as well as Choroleeva and Shoebottom.

[30] This is also mentioned by Walter (53/55) and Shoebottom.

French learners of English have trouble with vowel reduction in unstressed syllables in English. As a result, French learners of English may typically speak with an accent that sounds "monotonous" or "staccato" (Walter: 53).

It was suggested earlier that French speakers mostly have problems with understanding and producing spoken English. Even though the French and English grammar systems are very similar, French speakers may also encounter a number of difficulties with the English grammatical system.

The literature suggests that similarly to Dutch, Scandinavian and German learners, French learners typically have difficulties with auxiliary *do* (Shoebottom, Walter: 58). Another common error, as discussed in the works by Walter (58) and Shoebottom, is that French learners commonly mix up the Past Simple with the Present Perfect as well, thereby producing sentences such as "*I have played tennis yesterday*" (Shoebottom). Another typical learner error is that the Present Simple may be used instead of the Present Continuous in, for instance, "*I do my homework*" (ibid). According to Walter, this is because French lacks a present progressive form (59). Furthermore, the Present Simple may also be used when English would use the Present Perfect, such as in "*I live in London since last year*" (Shoebottom, Walter: 58). A final feature, as discussed by Walter (60) and Shoebottom, is that French learners may use the future tense after constructions with *when* and *as soon as* in cases where English speakers would use the present tense (e.g. "*I will tell you as soon as I will know*") (Shoebottom).

Although French and English both have a Subject-Verb-Object structure, problems with word order may still arise. A common error, for instance, is the misplacement of adverbs, as in "*I play sometimes golf*" (Shoebottom). Also, as most attributive adjectives in French are placed behind the noun, French learners may make mistakes as in "*she is the woman the most beautiful that I know*" (Walter: 63). What is more, certain expressions of quantity are placed before the past participle in French, resulting in errors such as "*I have too much eaten*" (ibid: 64).

Finally, then, some interference from French may also be found in the use of the definite and indefinite article (too many to list) and the use of pronouns. French learners may notably make mistakes with the gender of pronouns. As French pronouns agree in gender with the noun they are associated with, interference in this area may lead to errors such as "*I met John and her wife for dinner*" (Shoebottom).

2.7 Summarising results

Table 2.1 and 2.2 on pages 18 and 19 present an overview of phonological and grammatical errors of each of the L1 learner languages as discussed in this chapter. For the purposes of the chapter, only significant learner errors were considered relevant. In his reference work on Dutch, French, German, Swedish and Norwegian learner difficulties, Swan (2001) lists every single potential learner error, including minor ones. When a learner error was discussed in a second source, it was considered to be a typical learner error and therefore included in the overview.

Phonological error	FIN	FR	GER	NL	NOR	SWE
English stress pattern	✓	✓				
Weak vs strong forms						
Primary vs secondary stress						
English rhythmic pattern		✓				
Overstress 'but'/ 'the'				✓		✓
Assimilation				✓		
Confusion short + long vowel sounds	✓	✓				
"schwa"		✓				
/ʊ/ - /uː/				✓		
/e/ - /ae/			✓	✓		
/w/ - /v/	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
/f/ - /v/				✓		
Final devoicing	✓		✓	✓		
Aspiration of /p t k/	✓		✓			
Dentals /θ/ and /ð/	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
/ʒ/ ⟶ /ʃ/			✓		✓	✓
/ʤ/ ⟶ tʃ			✓			
Approximant /ɾ/		✓	✓		✓	
Dark /l/			✓			✓
/z/ ⟶ /s/					✓	✓
Rising intonation EN Q	✓					
EN fall-rise tone	✓					✓
/tʃ/ realized as /ʃ/		✓				
/dʒ/ realized as /ʒ/		✓				
Omission of/h/		✓				
-s morpheme		✓				

Table 2.1. Common phonological errors of Finnish, French, German, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish learners of English.

Grammatical error	FIN	FR	GER	NL	NOR	SWE
Do-support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prepositions	✓				✓	✓
Definite/indefinite article	✓	✓			✓	✓
Pronouns + determiners		✓				
Constructions with *it/there*					✓	✓
Present Simple instead of Present		✓				

Grammatical error	FIN	FR	GER	NL	NOR	SWE
Perfect						
Future tense *will* instead of Present Simple		✓				
Future tense (lack of *will*)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Third person singular –s					✓	✓
Overuse of 'are' instead of 'am' or 'is'						
Difficulties with gerund or -ing and/or overuse of infinitive			✓		✓	✓
Progressive form	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Present Perfect instead of Past Simple		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adjective or adverb?				✓		✓
Word order		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
's genitive					✓	✓

Table 2.2. Common grammatical errors of Finnish, French, German, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish learners of English.

2.8 Conclusion

Undeniably, there are bound to be more interfering phonological and grammatical learner errors, although research suggests that the ones discussed in this chapter seem to be the most frequently made. Resulting from the overview on common learner errors, it appears that many Dutch, Finnish, French, German and Scandinavian learners often make similar errors in their L2 learner English. As outlined in this chapter, claims on L1 interference are evidently widespread in the literature; they all suggest that linguistic affinity certainly helps when learning English. At the same time, linguistic distance, as is the case for Finnish and French, is said to result in more learner errors. However, this literature review has also shown that each L1 language comes with its own learner errors one way or another. This observation suggests that Germanic languages that are linguistically similar to English do not necessarily have an advantage over French or Finnish. For this reason, the mother tongue may not necessarily be the sole argument in the discussion. Admittedly, further research in this field should investigate these claims in more detail. In the next chapter, we will examine the extent to which teaching methodology is said to influence English language learning in the six countries investigated.

3. Perspectives on English language teaching

3.1 Overview

The present chapter investigates the common claims on English language teaching methodology in each of the six countries looked at in this study. The purpose of this literature review is to find out how English is nowadays taught in the six countries investigated and whether there are notable differences in the way that English is instructed.

In order to shed some light on the teaching of foreign languages in Europe, popular methods of language teaching will be introduced first. The chapter will then go on by discussing the available literature on English language teaching in each of the six countries of this thesis in greater detail.

3.2 Language teaching methods

The concept of "teaching methods"[31] has been a debate among teachers and linguists for a long time. The twentieth century witnessed the introduction of an extraordinary wide range of methods (Korhonen 2010 : 4).

The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), first of all, is one of the oldest methods in language teaching. It was a popular method until the 1950s. The method was used for the teaching of classical languages, Latin and Greek, and one of its main principles was the teaching of languages through a set of rules (Lowe 2003: 1). As Lowe explains:

> Practice was done through written exercises; the medium of instruction was the mother tongue; vocabulary was learnt via translated lists, often related to the comprehension of written texts; written text was seen as the 'real' language, superior to the spoken version; written texts were translated and composition in L2 was regarded as the apex of language ability; speaking and listening were seen as less important (ibid).

The Grammar-Translation Method, however, did not teach students to communicate in the foreign language effectively (Larsen-Freeman 2000: 23, as cited in Korhonen: 2/3). As a result, the Direct Method became a popular method. According to Lowe, speaking and listening were considered to be the most important learning skills. Also, with the Direct Method, the medium of instruction was the target language (1). Lowe furthermore explains: "students learnt sequences of strictly-chosen (i.e. centrally-scripted) grammatical phrases by listening and repetition; grammar 'rules' were avoided, and replaced by phrases" (ibid).

Rodgers mentions that the period from the 1950s to the 1980s witnessed the introduction of a particularly wide range of methods. The period became known as "The Age of Methods" in which the Audio-Lingual method and Situational Language Teaching were introduced, as well as

[31] Rodgers (2001) describes the concept as "the notion of a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning". Rodgers (2001) does not include page numbers. It can be accessed at: http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/rodgers.html

the Silent Way, Suggestopedia and Community Language Learning. A description of these methods is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, as Rodgers explains: "In the 1980s, these methods in turn came to be overshadowed by more interactive views of language teaching, which collectively came to be known as Communicative Language Teaching" (CLT).

According to Klein (2002), CLT was a response to previously-held views on the teaching of foreign languages (31). In the words of Klein: both GTM and the Audio-Lingual Method "blatantly failed to produce learners with sufficient competence to be able to speak a foreign language" (31). As a result, language use was now considered to be more important than structure and form. Rodgers explains that fluency was seen as an important principle of CLT. Errors were therefore considered to be less important. As Rodgers observes, learning was now seen as a "process of creative construction", which meant that learning was about "trial and error". With the introduction of the CLT approach, the integration of different language skills was also considered to be important. Finally, CLT also meant that "authentic and meaningful communication" was supposed to be the ultimate goal of language lessons (Rodgers).

Richards (2006) argues that CLT has been of significant influence for the teaching of languages: "many of the issues raised by a communicative teaching methodology are still relevant today" (1). Indeed, approaches that followed, such as the Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, Content-Based Teaching, and Task-Based Teaching, were all considered, what Rodgers calls, "CLT spin-off approaches" that share similar assumptions with CLT. As pointed out by Rodgers as well, the differences between these approaches cannot easily be explained, though each of these spin-offs of CLT was intended to make the teaching of languages more communicative (Rodgers). Task-Based Teaching (TBT), for instance, aimed to create authentic language situations in which learners carried out tasks using the target language. This is not to say that communicative approaches have replaced traditional methods altogether. As will become clear in the following sections of this chapter, language teaching methodology has generally added communicative approaches. Grammar explanation, so it seems, has still not disappeared.

3.3 English language teaching today

According to Kumaravadivelu (1994), as cited in the work by Liu (2004: 138) and Korhonen (2010: 1), we now live in the "post methods era", which means that the word "method" may arguably be a term that should no longer be used. As Graddol (2006) observes as well, there is an "extraordinary diversity" in the way that English is taught and there is no single way of doing so (82). Nevertheless, for the purpose of this thesis it is still valid to find out whether the general consensus is one that follows a communicative approach or whether lessons are still largely grammar-based.[32]

Evidence by Trim (1992), first of all, suggests that a consensus on what constitutes language learning has for the most part been achieved. According to Trim, the 1975 Threshold Level report, which ultimately lay the foundations for the Common European Framework of

[32] Korhonen (2010) presents a similar account on Finland.

Reference (2001), presented the idea that focus on form no longer took a central position: "the formal structure of a language has been displaced from its central position, command of grammar and vocabulary is seen as an indispensable means to a communicative end rather than as an end in itself" (10).

Interestingly so, recent observations made by De Bot (2007) present a very different picture. De Bot argues that language teachers largely still focus on form and that they like to "teach and talk about grammar" (275). This suggests that the teaching of grammar is still popular. A study by Liu (2004) partly confirms de Bot's observations. Liu investigated whether language teaching methods still have a place in the teaching of languages today. The study indicated that CLT is among the most popular teaching approaches. GTM, the study demonstrates, is still used, particularly when teaching lower levels and large groups of students (Liu 2004, as cited in Korhonen 2010: 7). De Bot furthermore argues that language teaching is often

> teacher- rather than student-centered, focused on form rather than content, frontal rather than interactional, focused on control rather than autonomous development, and taught through the L1 rather than the L2 (275).

Having said that, De Bot also says that change is on the way. With regard to English, De Bot argues that English language teaching still seems to be effective in Western Europe, "whatever the nature of classroom practices" (276). De Bot also refers to many examples of new teaching approaches that are being introduced in language classrooms more and more, including methods of content-based learning and immersion programmes, but also the introduction of bilingual streams in Dutch schools (ibid).

What we have seen so far is that language teaching methodology has generally added a communicative approach from the 1970s onwards. At the same time, however, the teaching of grammar has not disappeared either. A brief discussion of Europe's most recent innovation for the teaching of languages, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), is to follow next. A discussion of the CEFR is useful because it generally confirms that European countries have moved more in the direction of communicative approaches in language teaching, at least in theory.

The CEFR was published by the Council of Europe in 2001 to "provide a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe" (2001a: 1). The general aim of the Framework is to enhance transparency and international co-operation in the teaching of modern languages (ibid). Goullier (2007) presents a clear outline of the Framework's proposals, which include:

(1) A common methodology for analyzing and describing situations and choices in language teaching and learning.
(2) A common terminology for all languages and educational contexts.
(3) A common scale of levels of language proficiency to assist with goal-setting and learning outcome assessment.

From: Goullier, Council of Europe Tools for Language Teaching (2007: 6).

Although refraining from telling teachers how to teach (CEFR 2001a: xi), literature sources claim that the CEFR does include objectives that follow a communicative approach.[33] Little (2006) and Goullier (2007) argue that certain principles in the Framework show a clear communicative orientation. According to Little, the action-oriented approach along with the assessment criteria suggest that the document has "a strongly communicative orientation" (169). Additionally, the document also devotes an entire section on Task-Based Teaching and Learning (ibid) which, as we saw earlier, is a communicative approach. Whether individual countries show a communicative orientation as well will be analysed from here onwards.

3.4 Germany[34]

The teaching of English in German schools cannot be understood without firstly setting a brief overview of the German education system and presenting the language teaching context.

Compulsory education in Germany starts at the age of 6 and continues until the ages of 15 to 19. In Germany, secondary education begins at the age of 10. The age at which pupils finish secondary school depends on the track that pupils are enrolled in. Germany has a tripartite school system, which means that secondary education is divided into three tracks: grammar school (*Gymnasium*), middle school (*Realschule*) and main secondary school (*Hauptschule*). The Gymnasium track prepares students for university education. Both the Hauptschule and the Realschule offer what Hilgendorf (2005) calls a "duales system", i.e. schooling that offers general education as well as professional training in a trade (in the Hauptschule) or business (in the Realschule). Students that go to Realschule are offered a more extensive general education, whereas students at the Realschule are offered a basic general education.

As put by Hilgendorf (2007), English is nowadays the dominant foreign language in Germany. English has also become the first foreign language in both Germany's primary and secondary schools (135). According to Hilgendorf, the teaching of English in German schools usually starts in the fifth grade (2005: 54).

According to Bonnet *et al.*, it is particularly important to consider Germany's post World War II developments, as English has not always been the dominant foreign language for the whole of Germany (41). Eastern and Western Germany, first of all, both had very different education systems. Western Germany, as explained by Bonnet *et al.*, was a federal state in which education was dealt with by the federal states as opposed to the central Western German government. In Eastern Germany, however, education was the full responsibility of the central government. Another difference is that students in Western Germany mostly studied English as a first foreign language, whereas students in Eastern Germany usually learned Russian as a first foreign language at school (ibid).

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[33] Admittedly, the CEFR is very difficult to read and understand. Therefore, it also proved to be difficult to cite evidence from the CEFR itself. Evidence from a number of sources, including Little (2006) and Gouiller (2007), suggests that the Framework follows a communicative approach.

[34] The overview on Germany's education system presents general information. The information is taken from the following sources: Hilgendorf (2005; 2007), Bonnet *et al.* (2002), as well as Wikipedia entries.

With Germany's reunification in 1992, Western Germany's federal system was adopted for the whole of Germany, which now counts sixteen federal states. Bonnet *et al.* argue that Germany's reunification also led to some problems in the German education system, problems that are still visible today: "In the east of Germany there is a deficiency of English teachers today and an overload of Russian teachers. Furthermore, a lot of eastern pupils do not achieve as well as their western contemporaries" (ibid). Similar observations were made in the 2012 EF English Proficiency Index, which states that Germany's lower level of English proficiency can partly be explained by Germany's earlier division between East and West.

An analysis of Germany's current education policy and language instruction is complicated because Germany's language policy is the responsibility of the state and not the German federal government. The little explicit information available, however, hereon shows that Germany has made efforts to move into the direction of CLT.

Bonnet *et al.* mention that the learning of English was made compulsory in all types of German schools with the implementation of the 1964 Hamburg treaty of the German states. Ever since then, the insistence on "grammatical accuracy" as a learning objective was questioned more and more (42). Similar to developments in other European countries, communicative competence became a very powerful teaching approach until the seventies. According to Bonnet *et al.*, the focus on communicative competence has also had a great impact on the syllabi and the textbooks in the years that followed. Bonnet *et al.* argue that Germany moved into the direction of CLT even further in the 1990s (ibid). The CEFR has also been a major influence:

> In the nineties FL teaching became more and more European in scope and the concept of cultural and intercultural learning shifted the focus still further from grammar-based to communication- and culture-based objectives. The Common European Framework of Reference is now a major force in an ongoing process of curricular changes (ibid).

Indeed, as observed by Kurtz (2008), the construction and implementation of national standards, curricula and assessment programmes have been "inspired and guided" by the CEFR (Kurtz).[35] According to Kurtz, however, "teaching for accuracy" has always been stressed by German teachers of English. Interestingly so, Kurtz believes that these old beliefs are still very much evident in the instruction of English in Germany. Kurtz puts it as follows: "So far, the reforms have been more or less ineffective in bringing about noteworthy changes in promoting complexity, fluency and appropriateness in target language production". In addition: "the prevailing monoculture of primarily form-focused, teacher-dominated instruction with its typical procedural infrastructure of interaction is still largely intact and pervasive" (Kurtz).

[35] Kurtz (2008) does not include page numbers. The account can be accessed at: http://juergenkurtz.wordpress.com/2008/02/09/a-personal-view-of-foreign-language-education-in-germany-today/

3.5 France[36]

Before exploring the common views on English language teaching in France, an overview of the French education system, along with its language teaching context, will be presented first.

The French education system is split into three stages: primary school (*école*), lower secondary school (*collège*), and upper secondary school (*lycée*). Primary and secondary education is mandatory between the ages of 6 to 15. After primary education, at the age of 11, all children attend a *collège* for the next four years. Pupils may decide to take another three years of secondary schooling at a *lycée*.

Students generally choose their first foreign language at the age of 11 in grade 6 of the *collège*. Most students choose English, but students can also choose Spanish (the second most popular foreign language), German, or Italian. When students are in grade 8 (at the age of 13) they then choose a second foreign language. At some *lycées*, a third language is optional.

Moving on to France's national guidelines on foreign language instruction, the website of the French Ministry of Education states:

> Each pupil should be able to communicate in at least two modern languages when reaching the final stages of secondary education. In order to reach this objective, the instruction of languages has profoundly changed and falls within the framework of a strong European perspective (Ministère de l'éducation nationale, Les langues vivantes étrangères; 2013).

The same source also reports that oral communication is given priority in all levels and types of secondary education. Bonnet *et al.* observe that teachers are obligated to follow the curriculum objectives. Educational programmes, as put by Bonnet *et al.*, are highly centralised and regulated by the French Ministry of Education. When it comes to the syllabus, materials and teaching methods used in class, however, teachers are "free to exercise choice within the statutory framework" (36). Given this freedom, Bonnet *et al.* argue that teachers in France may not strictly adhere to the principles of communicative teaching as outlined in the national curriculum. Additionally, it would be reasonable to assume that French pupils have very little exposure of English outside the classroom. This means that French pupils are at a huge disadvantage when compared to Dutch and Scandinavian pupils. Similar observations are made by Bonnet *et al.*: "pupils have far too little contact with English as a language and assume a passive attitude regarding learning it. It is as though the role of English as a "language of communication" is neither understood nor felt" (129).

[36] Various sources were consulted for the general overview on the French education system , including Bonnet *et al.* (2002), Wikipedia entries and france.fr: http://www.france.fr/en/studying-france/french-education-system-nursery-school-high-school

3.6 The Netherlands[37]

Before exploring the English teaching context in the Netherlands, the Dutch education system will be presented first. Education in the Netherlands is compulsory from the age of 5 until 18. When pupils are 12 years old, Dutch children go to secondary school (*Voortgezet Onderwijs*). From secondary school onwards, the Dutch education system is strongly characterised by division, which means that Dutch pupils take different levels. Depending on the level that pupils are enrolled in at secondary school, pupils attend secondary school education until the age of 16, 17 or 18. Dutch secondary education generally has three levels: 6 years of VWO (pre-university education); 5 years of HAVO (senior general secondary education), which prepares for Higher Professional Education, and 4 years of MAVO (pre-vocational secondary education).

The Dutch learn many languages at school, including French and German. English, however, is by far the dominant foreign language in schools. In 1986, English became a compulsory subject in the last two years of primary school. In 1988, English was introduced as the only compulsory language in secondary school (Bonnet *et al.*: 45). Today, the teaching of English in the Netherlands usually starts in Grade 7 of primary school when children are 10 years old.[38] Depending on the track that pupils are enrolled in at secondary school, pupils learn English for 6 to 8 years altogether.

Ironically, no official policy on how languages should be taught in the Netherlands exists. According to Van Els (1994), the Dutch governments does not interfere in the didactics of foreign language teaching or the type of course materials that are used (42): "There have always been strict regulations regarding which languages are to be offered and learned but none regarding the exact contents or the methods of teaching" (44). The Dutch national policy does include objectives for each final examination program (ibid: 43), thereby setting attainment levels based on European guidelines and the CEFR.

In the remaining analysis on the Netherlands, claims from the literature point to contrastive findings as to whether language teaching in the Netherlands is truly communicative. On the one hand, there is evidence in the literature suggesting that the Netherlands is set as an example when it comes to communicative teaching approaches. In her account on what the United States can learn from foreign language policies in Europe, Pufahl (2001) refers to Communicative Teaching Methods in a number of countries, including the Netherlands:

> In Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, and Spain, a focus on communicative and intercultural learning has not only stimulated a productive discussion of teaching objectives, methods, and underlying rationales that are now reflected in curricula and textbooks, but has also resulted in increased oral and written proficiency for their students.[39]

[37] The overview of the Dutch education system presents general knowledge. Most information is taken from the website of the Dutch Ministry of Education: http://www.government.nl/issues/education/secondary-education. Wikipedia sources were also consulted, and some information is my own.

[38] Some primary schools start earlier with the teaching of English.

[39] Pufahl's account can be accessed at: http://www.ericdigests.org/2002-2/countries.htm

Lijcklama à Nijeholt (2012) presents a similar stance and claims that language methods in the Netherlands may be more progressive than teaching methods in Germany (4).

On the other hand, however, there is also evidence suggesting that communicative methods are not always practiced accordingly. Withagen *et al.* (1996), as cited in the work by van Essen,[40] provides a very different perspective into the teaching of foreign languages in the Netherlands:

> Mainstream foreign-language teaching, in which the foreign language concerned is both the object and the medium of instruction, constitutes some 98 per cent of foreign-language education in the Netherlands. Language teacher training colleges have to cater for the needs of teachers at these schools and the training programmes are a reflection of this. They are, at least officially, largely communication-orientated but classroom practice not seldom presents a different picture (cf. Withagen *et al.*, 1996).[41]

Given the fact that Dutch teachers are free to decide which material they can use and which teaching methods they can apply in their lessons, it is presumed that the extent of communicative teaching approaches varies considerably among teachers. Based on my own experience as an English language teacher, the impression is that the nature of English language teaching in the Netherlands, in fact, varies considerably. Even at the school where I teach teaching styles vary from one teacher to the next. Some teachers are very much in favour of practising communicative skills, whereas others are more traditional and mostly only explain grammar rules. Furthermore, Dutch teachers currently also face large groups, which can hinder communicative teaching. All in all, it is presumed that real communicative situations are often overlooked, as writing and reading skills are still practiced more than listening and speaking.[42]

3.7 Norway and Sweden[43]

The present sub-chapter will explore the teaching of English in the two Scandinavian countries of Norway and Sweden. I have chosen to present Norway and Sweden together, as the two Nordic countries are linguistically and culturally very similar.[44]

As is well-known, the level of English proficiency in Scandinavia is generally very high. In fact, the Scandinavian countries are often referred to when looking for new ways to learn in the

[40] No publication date, nor page numbers are included in the work by Van Essen. The account can be accessed at: http://www.celelc.org/projects/Past_Projects/TNP_Languages/TNP1_resources/SP6NatRepNL.pdf?1372922476

[41] Withagen *et al.* (1996), as cited in Van Essen.

[42] The Dutch final examinations, for example, which count for 50 per cent of the final mark, only test reading skills.

[43] The sources that were consulted for the general overview on the Swedish and Norwegian school system are Bonnet *et al.* (2002) and Simensen (2010). Wikipedia entries were also consulted. Information was furthermore obtained from the Swedish and Norwegian Ministries of Education: www.government.se and www.regjeringen.no respectively.

[44] For this reason, Finland is looked at separately.

field of language instruction. Nichols (1959) even mentioned the effectiveness of Scandinavia's language instruction as far back as the 1950s (321). More recent, Simensen (2010) described the English in Scandinavia as "a success story" (472). Before examining the choices that Norway and Sweden have made in foreign language instruction, the Swedish and Norwegian school systems will be presented first.

In Sweden, education is compulsory from the age of 7 until 16. The Swedish comprehensive school, or *Grundskola*, thus lasts 9 years and is divided into two tracks, primary education (grades 1-6) and lower secondary education (grades 7-9). After comprehensive school, most pupils attend upper secondary school, which is non-compulsory. Upper secondary education, or the *Gymnasieskola*, generally lasts three years, and is again divided into two tracks: pupils can either opt for vocational programmes or preparatory programmes. The latter prepares for higher education.

Compulsory education in Norway, generally lasts 10 years. Children start school when they are 6 years old and finish compulsory education at the age of 16. In Norway, compulsory education is divided into primary schools, or *Barneskole,* which is attended by pupils who are 6 to 13 years old (grades 1 to 7) and lower secondary schools (called *Ungdommskole*), which caters for pupils who are 13 to 16 years old (grades 8 to 10). As in Sweden, Norway also has upper secondary schools for 16 to 19 year-olds, called *Videregående skole*. Upper secondary education is optional, though most pupils continue their education at an upper secondary school which, similarly to upper secondary schools in Sweden, offers general or vocational programmes.

Today, English is evidently the first foreign language in all schools in Scandinavia. Both Norway and Sweden introduce English very early in the curriculum. Simensen (2010) states that children generally start learning English in grade 1 in Norway and usually also in grade 1 in Sweden (475).[45]

According to Simensen, European institutions have been of great influence in the development of language instruction and in the teaching of languages in Scandinavia today. In fact, it seems that Scandinavia also implemented the new ideas of communicative teaching that were emphasised by the Council of Europe (CoE) from the 1970s onwards: "In essence the most recent ideas caused a shift towards a focus on meaning and on communicative purposes in foreign language teaching" (Simensen: 477). The Council of Europe's latest innovation, the CEFR, has clearly been of great importance as well to the teaching of languages in Scandinavia. In the words of Simensen: "the document is one of the most powerful influences ever in the field of assessment and testing in the Scandinavian countries" (480).

Admittedly, when exploring Norway's and Sweden's official guidelines for the teaching of foreign languages, it seems conclusions are difficult to draw. Official documents are often complex and introduce complex terms that are hard to understand.[46] In addition, none of the curriculums advise on the best method for teaching. Nevertheless, communicative competences, at first sight, seem to be valued considerably.

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[45] However, Simensen observes that Sweden has some flexibility in starting age (475).

[46] See, for instance, Lund (2008) who attempts to clarify the most recent notion of "intercultural competence" outlined in Norway's curriculum.

Norway's English subject curriculum, to start with, is outlined in the "National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training" that was launched in 2006 (called the LK06).[47] The curriculum outlines the main subject areas, the number of teaching hours and basic skills for the teaching of English in grade 1 to 10 of compulsory education as well as the two years of upper secondary schooling (Vg1 and Vg2). The introductory lines of the curriculum state that

> The subject shall help build up general language proficiency through listening, speaking, reading and writing [..] development of communicative language skills and cultural insight can promote greater interaction, understanding and respect between persons with different cultural backgrounds (LK06).[48]

This shows that the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as communicative language skills are all considered important. The curriculum furthermore encompasses the four subject areas of language learning, oral communication, written communication as well as knowledge of culture, society and literature.

The goals for the teaching of English in Sweden are outlined in the curriculum for the compulsory school (Lgr 2011).[49] The Swedish curriculum for the compulsory school states that "through teaching, pupils should be given the opportunity to develop all-round communicative skills" (Lgr 2011 English version: 32). Amongst these is the ability to use different types of language strategies when language ability is lacking, such as the use of "reformulations, questions and explanations" (35). In each of the forms, the core contents of the curriculum focus on the following three main areas:

(1) *Content of communication*, with a focus on different content areas, such as interests, daily situations, views, experiences and so on (depending on the year).
(2) *Receptive skills,* with a focus on listening and reading.
(3) *Productive and interactive skills*, with a focus on speaking, writing and discussing.

Source: Swedish curriculum for the compulsory school (Lgr 2011).

Observations in the literature also point to a strong focus on communicative approaches. Simensen reports that "all the syllabi in force in Scandinavia contain elements that belong to a communicative approach to teaching" (476). In addition, there is a focus on much exposure to

[47] The English subject curriculum states that it is valid from August 2013. Presumably, the curriculum was recently updated. From: http://www.udir.no/Stottemeny/English/Curriculum-in-English/Curricula-in-English/

[48] All information on Norway's curriculum for the teaching of English is taken from: http://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Formaal/?lplang=eng

[49] Sweden also has a curriculum for upper secondary schooling (Gy 2011). The extraordinary wide range of subjects of the curriculum is well beyond the scope of this thesis. The curriculum can be obtained from: www.skolverket.se/publikationer

the English language. Simensen furthermore states that there is a "lenient stance" to grammatical errors (ibid). These observations evidently point to a strong focus on communicative approaches.

Similar observations were made in the study by Bonnet *et al.*, which shows that around two-thirds of the Norwegian English language teachers speak the target language more than half the time in the classroom (148). According to Bonnet *et al.*, Sweden's English language instruction is particularly communicative: "students claim that teachers speak a great deal of English during lessons and that students are encouraged to use the language actively". Moreover, "incentives for learning English are clearly functional and communicative" (156).

A similar argument can be seen in the work by Igawa and Yagi (2011), who state that English language teaching in Sweden's primary and lower secondary schools follows a CLT approach. As regards the lessons that one of the authors visited, Igawa and Yagi claim: "with the exception of some young pupils in the 1st and 2nd grades, all of the classes were conducted in English; teaching English through English" (104).

In her discussion on Norway, Lund (2006) finally states that Norway's learning objectives also moved away from the notion of linguistic competence: "in recent years, there has been a growing awareness that linguistic competence alone does not ensure successful communication" (14). Lund furthermore argues that the communicative approach is probably "the most prevalent approach" in most of Norway's foreign language classrooms (111). Having said that, Lund also refers to observations made by Johnson, Lorentzen, Selander and Skyum-Nielsen (1997), who claim the contrary stance:

> In an investigation of English language textbooks for upper secondary schools in Norway, they trace influences from different approaches throughout the last century and argue that the teaching of English can be compared to a long train where new cars are attached, but old cars are never disconnected (Lund 2006: 58).

3.8 Finland[50]

The Finnish education system has a very good reputation and receives much praise internationally.[51] For this reason, a discussion on Finland's approach to English language instruction could be very insightful.

In presenting Finland's schooling context, the educational reforms of the 1970s are particularly important, as they established Finland's unified comprehensive school as "the core of the educational system" (Jousmäki *et al.* 2011). This meant that all pupils, from the age of 7 to 16, received the same level of general education. To date, this system in Finland is still in place. As such, Finland's school system consists of two stages: nine years of basic education at a comprehensive school plus a post-compulsory three years of upper secondary education (*Lukio*).

[50] The overview presents general information from the following sources: Jousmäki *et al.* (2011); Finnish Ministry of Education: http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/koulutusjaerjestelmae/?lang=en

[51] See the latest PISA report: http://www.oecd.org/pisa/

Upper secondary schools offer either vocational training that prepares students for higher education at a polytechnic or general education that qualifies for higher education at a university.

According to Jousmäki *et al.*, the teaching of foreign languages has a long history in Finland. With the reforms of Finland's educational system it became compulsory for pupils to study both Finland's national languages, Finnish and Swedish, as well as at least one foreign language. In the period from 1967 to 1988, English became the most popular foreign language studied in schools and it overtook German in popularity. Today, the starting age for learning English is usually from grade 3. This means that pupils learn English for a total of 10 years.

Jousmäki *et al.* argue that Finland's high proficiency rates in English can largely be explained through the country's effective language teaching policies. Indeed, when exploring Finland's national curriculum it seems that policies for the teaching of languages in Finland are well defined. Finland's foreign language policies are also based on European language objectives (Jousmäki *et al.*, Korhonen 2010). Finland has two National Curricula, the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004), which outlines teaching objectives for Finland's comprehensive schools, and the National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education (2003).[52] Both curriculums appear to have a strong focus on communicative and intercultural competence. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, for instance, reads:

> foreign language instruction must give the pupils capabilities for functioning in foreign language communication situations. The tasks of the instruction are to accustom the pupils to using their language skills and educate them in understanding and valuing how people live in other cultures, too (National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004: 137).

Some Finnish schools start with foreign language instruction before grade 3. Even at such a young age, oral communication in grades 1 to 2, is emphasised: "the focus at first is on comprehension, repetition, and application of what one has heard, and on practicing oral communication" (137). In the final grades of comprehension school, objectives in language instruction focus on all kinds of skills, including language proficiency, cultural skills as well as learning strategies (139). Grammatical structures are also included in the core contents of lessons (142). Finally, communication strategies, such as being able to compensate for a lack of language kills, are also taught (ibid). No advice is included on a preferred method of teaching languages, however (Korhonen 2010).

The objectives in the National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education, are well defined as well. The curriculum states that "students must be provided with opportunities to listen, read, speak and write", which suggests that attention should be paid to all communicative skills. As argued by Korhonen (2010) the curriculum seems to have a strong focus on communicative competence as well. This can, for instance, immediately be seen in the first lines, which state that "instruction in foreign languages will develop students' intercultural communication skills" (100). In addition, there are even special courses taught at upper secondary level that are called "communication and leisure", focusing on oral communication only.

[52] Both curriculums are currently being reformed and will be introduced in August 2016. Source: http://www.oph.fi/english/curricula_and_qualifications/basic_education

Moving on then to final insights that may explain Finland's high proficiency levels of English, Jousmäki *et al.* mention that the Finnish government, to name one example, has invested in the teaching of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to a large extent. As Graddol (2006) explains:

> CLIL is an approach to bilingual education in which both curriculum content – such as Science and Geography – and English are taught together [..] and is regarded by some of its practitioners as the ultimate communicative methodology (86).

Graddol mentions that CLIL originated in Finland in the 1990s and that many countries have adopted various forms of content-based teaching. The extent to which communicative approaches such as CLIL have influenced the quality of English in Finland, however, is difficult to assess. Notably, there is also some evidence that reading and writing are still considered to be the most important skills. As the study by Huuskonen and Kahkonen (2006, cited in Korhonen 2010) suggests, communicative oral skills are arguably not taught sufficiently. As the Finnish Matriculation Examination does not include an oral test, teachers in upper secondary school still mainly focus on written skills (1).

3.9 Concluding results

To summarise, table 3.1 presents information on starting age and the common teaching approach in each of the six countries as discussed in this chapter:

Country	Starting age	Teaching approach
Finland	3rd grade	Communicative
France	6th grade	Communicative
Germany	5th grade	Differs per Länder (general impression: communicative)
Netherlands	5th grade	Communicative
Norway	1st grade	Communicative
Sweden	1st grade	Communicative

Table 3.1. Overview of starting age and common teaching approach in 6 countries. A selection of data from various sources: Bonnet *et al.* (2002), Simensen (2010), Hilgendorf (2005) as well as national guidelines for the teaching of English.

An investigation into the effect of an early start on English language acquisition is beyond the scope of this thesis, although results on starting age, as presented in table 3.1, do show some striking differences. Scandinavian pupils thus learn English for more years than German, French or even Dutch pupils. It is, however, difficult to draw conclusions from this, as Dutch children, for example, also attend more weeks of schooling than, say, Swedish pupils.

While there are clear differences in starting age, the literature on English language teaching methodology presents a more similar picture. On the basis of the information gathered on teaching approaches, we can preliminary conclude that each of the six countries explored in

this thesis has moved in the direction of communicative language teaching. Largely based on national and European guidelines, it seems that buzzwords on communicative and intercultural approaches on foreign language instruction are nowadays the consensus.

Having said that, the review has also shown that grammar instruction is still widely practised. Today, communicative teaching approaches may be valued considerably although, at the same time, it is well known that language teachers are often more occupied with teaching goals and tests rather than teaching methodology. Additionally, language teachers are often unfamiliar with their country's teaching policies. The extent to which English language lessons are truly communicative, therefore, is difficult to assess. Extensive research, even in the case of Scandinavia, seems scarce. Therefore, it is arguably complex to know whether the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries truly stand out in their choices in language teaching.

4. The effect of dubbing and subtitling

4.1 Overview

The present chapter investigates the advantages and disadvantages of dubbed and subtitled television programmes. For the purposes of this study, it is of particular importance to know whether subtitling can have a positive effect on language acquisition. Although there is no general consensus as such, the literature overwhelmingly suggests that viewers' language acquisition can benefit from watching subtitled television, particularly when watching English television. As will become clear from the evidence of a number of studies – including De Bot *et al.* (1986), d'Ydewalle & Pavakanun (1992; 1997) and Koolstra & Beentjes (1999) – there may well be a correlation between the high levels of English proficiency in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, and the fact that these countries usually do not have the tradition of dubbing their television programmes.[53]

4.2 The current state of affairs

In analysing the pros and cons of dubbed versus subtitled television, the differences in these methods should be clarified first. Kilborn (1993) provides an excellent definition of the dubbing process:

> Dubbing involves replacing all, or at least the majority of source language utterances on the original sound track with speed and dialogue in the target language. In the process particular attention will be paid to the synchronization of lip movements in order to create the illusion for the viewer that the words emanating from the loudspeaker 'belong' to the respective on-screen characters (642/43).

Subtitling, on the other hand, is a technique whereby "the original sound track is left intact while subtitles in the target language are projected at the bottom of the screen" (Koolstra & Beentjes 1999: 52).

As observed by Koolstra *et al.* (2002), there is a "real watershed" between European countries in their choice between either dubbing and subtitling (326). Appendix A, B and C show the general division between traditionally dubbing and subtitling nations in Europe. Typically dubbing nations are countries with large populations, such as France and Germany, whereas much smaller nations, such as the Scandinavian countries, generally favour subtitled television. Besides France and Germany, other European countries that are strong advocates of dubbing are Austria, Italy and Spain. Besides the Nordic countries, almost all programmes are furthermore subtitled in Greece, Portugal and the Netherlands.

Kilborn observes that "broadly speaking, the larger and more economically powerful the country, the more likely it is that dubbing will have assumed a position of dominance" (643).

[53] Note that subtitling in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries is the usual method. Children are not able to read subtitles before at least the age of 8 or 9. Children's programmes, therefore, are often dubbed.

However, as can be observed from data in table 4.1, this is certainly not always the case. Data in table 4.1 show the level of economic success in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) for a selection of European countries and includes information on where dubbing or subtitling is generally used for television broadcasts. GDP rankings on traditionally dubbing nations such as Germany, France and Italy indeed confirm Kilborn's observation in that dubbing often correlates with large and economically powerful countries. However, Spain also has a tradition of dubbing, but it ranks much lower in the list. Countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia generally also have the tradition of dubbing their television programmes, even though they have much smaller populations and are economically less powerful.

Country	TV Language transfer method	Approximate population (in millions)	Dominant language	World language?	GDP Ranking (2013)
Germany	Dubbing	80,716,000	German	No	4
France	Dubbing	65,885,000	French	Yes	5
Italy	Dubbing	60,021,955	Italian	No	9
Spain	Dubbing	46,609,700	Spanish	Yes	13
Netherlands	Subtitling	16,848,700	Dutch	No	17
Switzerland	Dubbing	8,136,700	French/German/Italian	French only	20
Sweden	Subtitling	9,658,301	Swedish	No	22
Poland	Voice-over*	38,217,000	Polish	No	24
Norway	Subtitling	5,109,056	Norwegian	No	25
Flanders	Subtitling	6.350.765	Dutch	No	26
Wallonia	Dubbing	3.563.060	French	Yes	26
Austria	Dubbing	8,504,850	German	No	28
Denmark	Subtitling	5,627,235	Danish	No	34
Finland	Subtitling	5,453,784	Finnish	No	41
Greece	Subtitling	10,815,197	Greek	No	42
Portugal	Subtitling	10,477,800	Portuguese	No	48
Czech Rep	Dubbing*	10,512,400	Czech	No	52
Hungary	Dubbing	9,879,000	Hungarian	No	59
Slovakia	Dubbing*	5,415,949	Slovakian	No	62

Table 4.1. A selection of data (From: Wikipedia, List by the International Monetary Fund 2013)

1 The definition of world language is based on the following Wikipedia entry: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_language

2 Belgium is not listed here, but it is included as two separate linguistic areas: Dutch speaking Flanders and French speaking Wallonia.

3 * Cinema productions in Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia, however, are generally shown in the original version with subtitles (Source: Media Consulting Group, 2008).

The language in question is arguably a more important factor. Indeed, according to a study on dubbing and subtitling needs and practices in the EU, published by the Media

Consulting Group,[54] Europe's division between dubbing and subtitling nations can also be explained by looking at "linguistic areas" (2007: 4). This is to say that the broadcasting practices of a number of smaller European nations will generally depend on the practices of a largely populated linguistic neighbour. Depending on which definition is used to identify a world language, the overview in table 4.1 generally confirms this observation. It shows that when the dominant language of a country is seen as a world language, dubbing is mostly used as a language-transfer method. Although German is not classified as a world language, the examples of Austria and the German-speaking part of Switzerland do show that small countries adopt the same language-transfer method as a large linguistic neighbour. In Austria and the German speaking part of Switzerland, many TV programmes and foreign movies are dubbed for the German dubbing market. Belgium fits this picture too. In Belgium, French broadcasts are usually dubbed, whereas Dutch broadcasts are generally subtitled.[55]

Based on overviews by the Media Consulting Group and Wikipedia (see appendices A, B and C), table 4.2 presents a summary of the dubbing and subtitling practices of the 6 European countries investigated in this paper in greater detail:

	Dubbing			**Subtitling**		
Country	TV Works	Cinema works	Anima-tion	TV works	Cinema works	Anima-tion
Finland			✓	✓	✓	
France	✓	✓	✓			
Germany	✓	✓	✓			
Netherlands			✓	✓	✓	
Norway			✓	✓	✓	
Sweden			✓	✓	✓	

Table 4.2. Preferred method of dubbing and subtitling practices for TV broadcasts and cinema works in 6 European countries (From: Wikipedia and the Media Consulting Group, 2008).

It must be noted that the findings here are listed as the 'preferred' method. Generally speaking, the six European countries investigated in this thesis can clearly be divided into either dubbing nations or subtitling nations. However, as argued by the Media Consulting Group study, the actual situation in Europe is rather complex (2007: 4). A distinction should firstly be made between television broadcasts or cinema works. Additionally, the choice between dubbing or subtitling may also depend on the genre of the work (ibid).

As outlined in table 4.2, most productions – whether cinema productions or television broadcasts – are subtitled in the Nordic countries as well as in the Netherlands. Similarly to

[54] The Media Consulting Group is a consulting company that offers advice, training and coaching. For further information, see http://mediacg.tv/

[55] As regards cinema productions in Brussels, some cinemas offer movies in their original language with subtitles in Dutch, French or both languages. Other cinemas offer both dubbed as well as original movies with subtitles. Source: http://www.xpats.com/seeing-movie-brussels-maze-dubbing-and-subtitles

dubbing nations such as France and Germany, children's animation television programmes and movies, are almost always dubbed in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries as well. It must be noted though that large cinemas in the Netherlands may sometimes also show animated movies in the original language with subtitles.

As regards cinema works in traditionally dubbing nations, there are some contrastive findings in the literature. It is pointed out in the Media Consulting Group study that some dubbing nations are now also inclined to use subtitles in works shown in cinemas. According to the report, only Italy and Spain have resisted this development (4). Especially in large French and German cities, there are also cinemas that show movies in the original language with subtitles as well. Additionally, DVDs often have the option that enables viewers to choose between the dubbed or the subtitled version in both France and Germany (personal correspondence). Blinn (2008), however, quite clearly argues that Germany's dubbing practices are generally difficult to change: "It has proved that changing the mode of language transfer of foreign films is difficult terrain; there are strong hidden barriers prohibiting a major change. Germany seems to be bound to dubbing" (2). According to Blinn, Germany's "lock-in" to dubbing can be explained by "habituation to dubbing" (20). Blinn puts it as follows:

> All interviewed film distributors and exhibitors converged in the same conviction that the German audience in general is strongly habituated to dubbing and quite inflexible with respect to any new language-transfer formats. They have become used to dubbing over a long period of time (19).

Indeed, as Kilborn and Koolstra have pointed out, the choice between either dubbing or subtitling is often a matter of habit for most viewers. With regard to dubbing in Spain, for instance, Whittaker (2013) explains that dubbing is "ubiquitous" on Spanish television and dubbing is the preferred method by most Spaniards (296). In his study, Whittaker refers to the events of 1977, the year in which censorship was removed in Spain and many foreign movies were again shown in their original version. The reissue of *Casablanca*, for instance, turned out to be "disorientating to Spanish audiences" (296). Furthermore, there is also evidence that Dutch and German viewers are very satisfied with their own methods. A comparative study by Luyken *et al.* (1991) showed that more than eighty percent of Dutch and German viewers preferred their own method (Koolstra: 347). As Koolstra points out: "when viewers are accustomed to one adaptation method they seem not to worry about the disadvantages that go with the method." Koolstra also observes that viewers often have an aversion for the other method (347).

Tradition and habituation are not the only factors involved when explaining countries' choices for either dubbing or subtitling. Historical and political developments are also important, especially when analysing the history of dubbing in France, Spain, Germany and Italy. In Western Europe, dubbing became the preferred method in the early 1930s. According to Blinn, dubbing, subtitling as well as other techniques were in fact competing in Germany in the years prior to the 1930s (11). Yet, as outlined in several sources on dubbing and subtitling, political events triggered today's division between dubbing and subtitling nations in Europe. Italy, Germany and Spain, for example, were ruled by fascist governments in the 1930s. As a consequence, only dubbed versions of foreign films were allowed: "The highly developed and still active dubbing industries

in these countries are thus remnants of their political contexts of the early 1930s, when sound film emerged".[56] France's preference for dubbing has prevailed because it aimed to protect the French language from foreign influence, especially American.[57] The examples of France, Germany, Italy and Spain evidently show that these countries have been less exposed to Anglo-American culture than other nations in Europe, such as the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries. The advantages and disadvantages of dubbing and subtitling will be discussed in the next paragraph.

4.3 The pros and cons

Kilborn and Koolstra argue that both methods have their merits and drawbacks. Supporters of subtitling, to start with, mainly defend their stance by arguing that subtitling enables the viewer to have access to the original material, so that "original voice and dialogue remain intact" (Kilborn: 646, Koolstra: 326). A major disadvantage, as mentioned by Koolstra, is that there is often aversion about the "imperfect lip-synchronicity" in dubbed television programmes (326). Dubbing is also said to be much more expensive than other language-transfer methods, which often explains why smaller nations prefer the subtitling method (Blinn: 1). Cui (2013) finally also explores the cultural elements involved in dubbing, which are sometimes difficult to remove (115). Kilborn argues that a large cultural gap between languages may sometimes be a challenge when dubbing television programmes (645).

There are, however, also some shortcomings when it comes to subtitling. The most common complaint observed in the literature is that subtitles may be seen as distracting. Subtitles may therefore take attention away from the listening experience (Danan 2004, Kilborn 1993). Another setback of subtitles, according to some, is that subtitles may not be a convenient method for all viewers. Kilborn observes that viewers of subtitles need "a degree of literacy and visual acuity". For older viewers, for instance, subtitling may not always be convenient (Kilborn: 647).

There are further merits and setbacks mentioned in the literature, but as Koolstra has pointed out as well, it is often difficult to find evidence for these claims, as many studies seem strongly opinionated. The choice between dubbing or subtitling is therefore often one of preference for most scholars as well: "in many cases, we may be forced to fall back on 'indirect evidence' or common sense" (327). Indeed, there is plenty of evidence of people criticising either the dubbing method or subtitling method based on preference only without there being any empirical evidence. Whittaker himself does not beat around the bush by saying that Clint Eastwood's dubbing actor, Romero, is his much preferred actor: "Romero's voice is deeper and more resonant than that of Eastwood, and with a much cleaner, less husky timbre that makes him arguably more pleasurable to listen to" (298).

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[56] Filmreference.com: http://www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Criticism-Ideology/Dubbing-and-Subtitling-THE-DUBBING-AND-SUBTITLING-INDUSTRIES.html

[57] Ibid.

4.4 The linguistic perspective

What emerges from observations made in studies by Kilborn and Koolstra that we have analysed so far is that both dubbing as well as subtitling methods evidently have their advantages and disadvantages. Both studies have carefully balanced the pros and cons of dubbing and subtitling methods. Many works that primarily look at the merits of dubbing, however (see Chiu 2012, Whittaker 2013 and Cui 2013), seem to have overlooked one important advantage that subtitling has over dubbing practices – that is, the effect that subtitling may have on foreign language learning.

Many authors have pointed to the positive effect of subtitling on language acquisition (e.g. de Bot *et al.* 1986 and Koolstra & Beentjes 1999). Such positive views, however, are by no means generally accepted. For instance, the Media Consulting Group report states that "living in a country that favours TV dubbing does not correspond with a lower level of linguistic proficiency" in the L2 (2008: 20). Yet when exploring the literature, it would be hard to agree with their stance.

As observed by Simensen (2010) and Jousmäki *et al.* (2011), pupils in Scandinavia are no longer depending on the learning of English in schools; they are nowadays exposed to English by other sources as well. As argued by Simensen, "learners in Scandinavia, as in many other societies all over the world, are from an early age heavily exposed to, and accordingly influenced by, a number of varieties of English in the media" (474/5). Finns are similarly exposed to English: "English programmes have even provided an informal way of learning English, in the same way as the internet now presents opportunities for language learning" (Jousmäki *et al.*). [58]

In what way then can viewers learn from subtitled television? Koolstra and Beentjes (1999) argue that subtitled English television programmes may help the learner in various ways, including:

(1) Word meanings;
(2) Learning certain expressions or standard sentences (e.g. "here's looking at you, kid");
(3) Being able to discern separate words in the flow of spoken language;
(4) Improvement in word pronunciation;
(5) Proficiency in constructing correct sentences;
(6) The ability to discriminate between different ways of pronunciation (e.g. British or Texan) and the attached connotations (e.g. aristocratic, slang)

From: Koolstra & Beentjes (1999: 53).

When exploring empirical research, too, it seems that Koolstra and Beentjes may well have a point. As observed in the works by Danan (2004; 2010) and Koolstra *et al.* as well (2002), there have been a number of empirical studies conducted since the 1980s that have tested the

[58] One example of this would be Dora the Explorer, which is an educational animated TV series for children. It aims to teach children foreign words and expressions (usually English) in combination with the native language. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dora_the_Explorer

effect of various forms of subtitling. It was mentioned earlier that subtitling is often seen as distracting, thereby drawing attention away from the viewing and listening experience. According to De Bot *et al.* (1986), several studies claimed that viewers only have eye for subtitles when watching subtitled television (Schaller 1978, Peters 1974). De Bot's own results, however, demonstrate that some "incidental learning" may also take place. As pointed out by De Bot, foreign television programmes and films are good examples of what he calls "incidental contact" (72). For the experiment, students were shown a news item in which parts of the subtitling included some mistakes in the translation. By means of a multiple-choice questionnaire, students were asked questions about the news bulletin, thereby testing whether they had noted the conflicting information between speech and subtitles. The results of the experiment showed that speaker orientation did take place. Moreover, it indicated that "the hypothesis of an exclusive orientation on subtitles is untenable" (78).

Koolstra and Beentjes (1999) also mention a number of studies conducted by d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun that aimed to investigate whether subtitled television results in vocabulary acquisition (d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun 1992; 1997). In the first study by d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun (1992), two groups of university students were put to the test. One group of subjects watched a programme with subtitles and the other group of subjects watched the same programme without subtitles. It turned out that vocabulary acquisition for those subjects that watched the subtitled version was higher than for the control group. In their most recent study (1997), d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun tested the effect of the first language of Dutch speaking secondary school students from Belgium and the Netherlands on foreign language learning. The students watched television programmes in languages such as Afrikaans and German as well as Chinese and Russian. The results demonstrated that the acquisition of vocabulary from Afrikaans and German, languages similar to Dutch, was higher than the acquisition that students picked up from watching programmes in Chinese and Russian. All in all, both studies suggest that subtitled television helps the learning of foreign words, particularly when languages are similar (Koolstra & Beentjes: 54).

In their own study (1999), Koolstra and Beentjes demonstrated that subtitled television may also stimulate foreign language learning for elementary school children. Grade 4 and 6 children were divided into three subject groups. Group one watched an English programme with Dutch subtitles, group two the same soundtrack without subtitles and the third group (the control group) watched a programme of which the soundtrack was in Dutch. Results showed that children's vocabulary acquisition was highest for the group that watched the subtitled version. Additionally, the study also demonstrated that children who frequently watch subtitled television had better acquisition scores. Koolstra and Beentjes, however, remark that the differences between the three groups were small. This, they explain, may well be because the subjects were only exposed to one television programme (59). As Koolstra and Beentjes put it: "In real life, however, Dutch children spend about half of their viewing time watching subtitled programmes, which means that, through television, they are confronted with the English language day in, day out" (59). It must be noted, however, that Koolstra and Beentjes do not support this claim with quantitative analysis. It would be interesting to find out if the extent to which Dutch children are exposed to English television is truly this large.

Some interesting observations on English acquisition besides education are finally also made in a large international study by Bonnet *et al.* (2002). In the section on the Netherlands, the Bonnet study remarks that watching television and how often this is done has an impact on language proficiency, especially when it comes to listening (141). Bonnet *et al.* argue that education only partly explains the relatively high scores in English by Dutch students. As the study puts it:

> In a few countries in Western-Europe, the Nordic countries, The Netherlands and the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, TV programmes are not dubbed but subtitled. This means that TV is an important source of contact with foreign languages. On average, Dutch TV watchers will get at least one hour of English every day (46).

When asked what percentage of English language acquisition is attributed to school, media or other ways, many Scandinavian and Dutch pupils answered that a large proportion of their acquisition is attributed through media. Table 4.3 shows the results of the Bonnet study, where N is the number of subjects for each country and M and SD are the mean and standard deviation of the distributions among the three sources of language acquisition (school, media, other).

		% through school		*% through media*		*% other ways*	
Country	***N***	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***
Netherlands	1335	53.76	22.54	30.82	20.15	15.42	16,02
Spain	2242	63.36	24.79	14.55	15.77	22.09	25.80
Finland	1525	61.01	21.59	23.50	17.40	15.50	15.95
Denmark	1267	54.49	19.46	31.21	17.88	14.30	14.97
Sweden	1258	55.33	19.96	30.66	18.68	14.01	15.29
Norway	1203	52.07	20.96	34.48	19.85	13.45	15.82

Table 4.3. Acquisition of the English language: portions in percentages attributed by the pupils to school, media and other sources (From: Bonnet *et al.*, 2004).

Data in table 4.3 show that schools are still seen as an important source of English language learning in the six countries investigated. Unfortunately, data on Germany and France were not included in this particular study. However, results on Spain as compared to the other countries suggest that Spanish pupils rely much more on school for the learning of English. In Spain, only around 15 per cent of English acquisition is said to be attributed through media. In most other countries (Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway), this percentage is at least two times as high. In other subtitling countries too, results show that a large proportion of pupils' language acquisition is attributed through the media. According to De Bot (2007), this difference can be explained by the fact that in Spain television is dubbed, whereas in other countries nearly all television programmes and movies in English are subtitled (275). In the results of Spain, another interesting feature is the relatively large spread in the percentages that the respondents attribute to other sources. For all sources of English language acquisition the standard deviation (SD) in table 4.3 varies up to a maximum of 5 per cent among the countries, except Spain. For Spain, the

SD for other sources deviates over 10 per cent compared to the other countries. Apparently, in Spain, the importance of English language acquisition through other sources varies more from person to person compared to the other countries.

Among the countries investigated, Norway has the highest percentage (35 per cent) of English language acquisition through media. Bonnet *et al.* add to this by saying that "Norwegian pupils are massively exposed to English in many different ways [..] and those who watch English TV programs with or without subtitles have good test results" (146).

4.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter has explored various studies on the advantages and disadvantages of dubbed and subtitled television. Evidently so, both methods have their merits and drawbacks. Yet subtitling, as done in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, seems to have an additional advantage in that it may be beneficial in foreign language learning. Studies by Koolstra & Beentjes, among others, have demonstrated that viewers may be able to pick up foreign vocabulary by watching subtitled television. It was furthermore suggested that subtitled television can now also be seen as an informal way of second language acquisition and that schools may no longer be the only variety that pupils are exposed to.

Part II

Empirical research

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5. Methodology

5.1 Overview

Having provided extensive literature reviews, this chapter is to outline the methodological choices that were made for the qualitative research. In order to further answer the research questions, the empirical research follows a qualitative approach in that it explores points-of-view on the three factors from different target groups, including laymen, teachers and linguists. The procedure of the empirical research is to be explained next.

5.2 Procedure

As the research explores three factors that could influence English language proficiency rates (i.e. linguistic distance; dubbing versus subtitling and English language teaching methodology), three different interviews were conducted for different target groups. All interviews with laymen and English language teachers were conducted throughout the fall of 2013 and some also in 2014. Linguists were interviewed throughout 2014. A brief explanation of the three interviews and the choices that were made throughout the research is to follow next.

Interview I

Laymen

A first interview was conducted in English and French asking non-experts, from all six countries, what they liked and disliked about dubbing and subtitling (see appendices D, E and F). In addition, they were asked whether subtitles distract them from the images on television and in what ways subtitled television helps their English. The questions on dubbing and subtitling were modified throughout the research so as to fit the national context. This modification resulted in two different interviews: one for viewers of subtitled television and another one for viewers of dubbed television. Nevertheless, questions in both interviews remained largely similar so as to be able to test the same data.

Altogether, 59 laymen were interviewed. Participants were found through personal contacts. The interviews were answered digitally in Google docs so as to collect data more easily or, for most of the French respondents, through an interview on paper. The original interview in English was translated into French for the French respondents (appendix E).

Table 5.1 on page 44 contains an overview of the total number of respondents from each country along with the average age. Although age was not considered important, it does need to be noted that some of the French respondents, most particularly, were either very young or old. Some of the interviews, for example, were filled in by 14 to 15 year-olds in a secondary school in

Paris. Other French respondents were around the age of 60. The Swedish laymen were mostly in their thirties, although 3 Swedes, who were older than 60, filled in the questionnaire as well.

Country	Average age	Total
France	32.8	10
Finland	30.3	10
Germany	30.6	9
Netherlands	33.6	10
Norway	37.7	10
Sweden	43.5	10
Total	**34.8**	**59**

Table 5.1. Respondents interviewed on dubbing and subtitling from 6 countries.

Interview II

Teachers

A second interview was conducted to explore the factor of English teaching methods. In determining whether countries, broadly speaking, follow different teaching approaches, English language teachers from all countries were contacted through email and asked to participate in an interview.

Again, the interview was made in Google docs. As can be seen in appendix G, the teacher interview consisted of a large range of questions. Respondents were asked to answer multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions as well as questions through checkboxes. Most of the questions were my own, though research by Korhonen (2010) inspired me to divide the eight multiple-choice questions into similar questions that were either more grammar-based or communicative in focus. Some of Korhonen's questions were used and adapted for my own research.

Having explored various literature sources on English teaching methodology (chapter 3), it became evident that the literature review pointed out some contrastive findings. Some sources claimed that the teaching of languages is still predominantly grammar-based, whereas other sources argued that communicative approaches are the consensus. For this reason, grammar-based teaching versus communicative-based teaching, without labelling it as a specific method, still seems to be the greatest divide in the teaching of English. The questions of the interview were formulated along these lines.

Table 5.2 contains an overview of the English language teachers who participated in the interview.

Country	Respondent	City	# per country
Finland	1	Helsinki	2
	2	Helsinki	
France	3	Courcouronnes	5
	4	Courcouronnes	
	5	Courcouronnes	
	6	Courcouronnes	
	7	Hyères	

Country	Respondent	City	# per country
Germany	8	Düren	17
	9	Bavaria	
	10	Munich	
	11	Kuenzelsau	
	12	Alzey	
	13	Brühl	
	14	Sottrum	
	15	Munich	
	16	Hamburg	
	17	Krefeld	
	18	Alsdorf	
	19	Frankenthal	
	20	Cologne	
	21	Veitshöchheim	
	22	Bielefeld	
	23	Mainz	
	24	Cuxhaven	
Netherlands	25	Heemstede	5
	26	The Hague	
	27	The Hague	
	28	The Hague	
	29	Voorburg	
Norway	30	Fredrikstad	5
	31	Oslo	
	32	Oslo	
	33	Oslo	
	34	Oslo	
Sweden	35	Gävle	5
	36	Gävle	
	37	Gävle	
	38	Gävle	
	39	Gävle	

Table 5.2. Respondents in the teacher interview.

As for Sweden, the teachers that participated were all teachers teaching at the same school in Gävle. For France, I contacted an upper secondary school in Paris (Courcouronnes), from which 4 French teachers filled in the interview. One French teacher was from a different school in Hyères. Most Dutch teachers that took part in the research were teachers from the same school in the Hague as well as one teacher from Heemstede. The Norwegian teachers were mostly from schools in Oslo, but one teacher from Frederikstad also participated. The Finnish teachers were both from Helsinki and the German teachers, finally, were from all over Germany. Overall, five teachers per country were included in the results, although in the case of Finland only two teachers participated. German teachers of English, through the effort of a German colleague, were very keen to respond. Therefore, to make the German analysis more insightful, all German responses were included in the results.

It should finally be noted that during the research it proved to be impossible to distinguish between lower secondary and upper secondary education. As mentioned in chapter 3, each country has its own educational system. In France, and sometimes also in Norway, lower

secondary schools are entirely separate schools. In other countries, some teachers teach in both the lower forms and the higher forms of secondary education, as can be the case in the Netherlands.

Interview III

Linguists

In order to explore the effect of the mother tongue on English, dubbing versus subtitling as well as approaches in English teaching methodology, a third and final interview was conducted. A small group of linguists from each country was approached by email and asked which factor(s) explain(s) their country's high proficiency rates (or lower proficiency rates, as in the case of France and Germany). Table 5.3 includes an overview of linguists who participated. Linguists from various English departments were contacted. The English university departments that were contacted ranged from Faculties of Linguistics to English Philology. As can be seen, most experts either specialised in (English) Linguistics, English (as a World) Language, English as a Lingua Franca or in varieties of English.

The linguists were asked questions that aimed to find out which factor weighs most in determining the success stories of the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries (see appendix H). Linguists were asked to comment on the effect of all three factors, so as to allow for more perspectives.

Linguist	Male/Female	Area of expertise/research interests
1 (FA)	Female	Phonetics / linguistics / didactics / the learning of languages
2 (NL)	Male	English / foreign language /persuasion /advertising
3 (GER)	Female	Varieties of English / language variation and change /dialectology / language contact
4 (GER)	Male	English linguistics / change and variation in English
5 (GER)	Male	Linguistics
6 (FIN)	Female	English linguistics /discourse analysis /research methodology, etc
7 (FIN)	Male	Language variation /language contact /dialectology /sociolinguistics /historical linguistics /corpus linguistics
8 (SWE)	Female	English as a lingua franca for academic purposes / spoken academic discourse in general / academic literacy / linguistic equality / language change and language policy
9 (SWE)	Male	English Linguistics / World Englishes etc
10 (NOR)	Female	English / Modern English grammar / corpus linguistics / corpus development / contrastive linguistics / learner language
11 (NOR)	Female	History of Language / Older English / Academic English / Linguistics / Corpus linguistics
12 (NOR)	Male	English / linguistics / corpus linguistics

Table 5.3. Linguists interviewed

6. RESULTS

6.1 Overview

The results of the research data consist of three parts. I will first offer results of 59 laymen in paragraph 6.2 exploring preferences on dubbing as well as subtitling. In trying to understand the differences in the quality of English proficiency among Europeans, it is above all important to find out whether subtitled television is viewed as a method that supports English language learning. Paragraph 6.3, in turn, will summarise the results obtained from English language teachers with the aim to find out whether there are substantial differences in English teaching methodology. Paragraph 6.4, finally, includes linguists' opinions on all three factors, i.e. linguistic affinity between the L1 native language and the L2 learner language, the effect of dubbing versus subtitling as well as educational perspectives. The chapter will first turn to perspectives on dubbing and subtitling by laymen.

6.2 Perspectives on dubbing versus subtitling

Results I

In the literature review on dubbing versus subtitling (chapter 4) it was observed that viewers often have a strong aversion for the other method. Koolstra (2002), for instance, pointed to a study by Luyken *et al.* (1991), which showed that more than 80 percent of Dutch and German viewers preferred their own method.

Indeed, a strong preference can be seen in data presented in this thesis too. As observed in table 6.1, all viewers of subtitled television responded that they preferred subtitled television. In fact, this preference was met by 100 per cent of the Dutch and Scandinavian respondents.

Method in country	Country of respondent	Total nr. of respondents from this country	Preferred method (%)		
			Subtitling	Dubbing	Depends
Subtitling	NL	10	100%	0%	0%
	NOR	10	100%	0%	0%
	FIN	10	100%	0%	0%
	SWE	10	100%	0%	0%
Dubbing	GER	9	44%	11%	44%
	FR	10	20%	70%	10%

Table 6.1. Which method do you prefer?

Table 6.2 on page 48 presents data on what respondents like and dislike about subtitled television. Similarly, table 6.3 on page 49 summarises the results on what viewers like and dislike about dubbed television. Both questions were open-ended questions, which sometimes resulted in several answers for every respondent. As can be seen, respondents came up with an extraordinary wide range of reasons, especially when stating reasons for disliking dubbing. Both tables present some interesting findings.

	Reason	Subtitling viewers (40x)		Dubbing Viewers (19x)	
		Total	%	Total	%
Like	Contributes to understanding of programme	22	55%	4	21%
	Original voice or language preserved/more original/authentic	18	45%	9	47%
	It helps my (English) language skills / languages interest me	12	30%	7	37%
	Interesting to see how translations can vary / or your own assumption is correct	2	5%		
	Enables deaf people to watch TV	1	2,5%		
	It is easy to read in my own language	1	2,5%		
	I am used to it	1	2,5%		
	You can read and listen at the same time			1	5,3%
	No (clear) answer given / respondent states there are no reasons	3	7,5%	5	26%
Dis-like	Subtitles do not always convey the original message	19	48%	1	5,3%
	Subtitles sometimes take up space on the screen /not enough space to translate everything	6	15%	1	5,3%
	Subtitles can be distracting (from the images)	4	10%	5	26%
	Time mismatch between subtitles + soundtrack / at times too fast	4	10%	4	21%
	You can become lazy and just read everything	2	5%		
	It can be difficult for children to read subtitles fast enough	1	2,5%		
	When the original already contains subtitles and the letters overlap	1	2,5%		
	When they are in a language I do not speak	1	2,5%		
	It takes more effort to understand the movie			3	16%
	Difficult for the eyes sometimes/tiring to read			1	5,3%
	Sometimes it is more difficult to understand the story / confusing			2	11%
	The letters may be too small or its colours may not contrast well			1	5,3%
	It stresses me out and I cannot understand / I do not understand everything, especially in case of dialects etc			2	11%
	No (clear) answer given / respondent states there are no reasons	9	23%	3	16%

Table 6.2.[59] Could you explain what you like/don't like about subtitled television?

Data in table 6.2 show that viewers of subtitled and dubbed television, first of all, overwhelmingly indicated that subtitled television contributes to a general understanding of the programme[60] (55 per cent among subtitling viewers and 21 per cent among dubbing viewers).

[59] It must be noted that data in table 6.2 and 6.3 are divided into categories based on the author's own interpretations.

[60] Viewers often explained that subtitles enable you to fully understand what is going on. For instance, if you miss something, you can still read what is being said.

Another widespread answer is that subtitled television is more authentic, as the original voice or language is preserved (45 per cent and 47 per cent respectively). Interestingly so, 30 per cent of subtitling viewers and 37 per cent of dubbing viewers also believe that subtitles can help one's foreign language skills.

In exploring the downsides of subtitling, results in table 6.2 indicate that subtitles, first and foremost, do not always convey the original message correctly (48 per cent by subtitling viewers as opposed to only 5,3 per cent by dubbing viewers). In addition, 10 per cent of subtitling viewers and 26 per cent of dubbing viewers also believe that subtitles can be distracting from the images and that it takes the focus away. 21 per cent of dubbing viewers, furthermore, stated that the time mismatch between the subtitles and the soundtrack is a disadvantage (as opposed to 10 per cent of subtitling viewers). Table 6.3 presents the results on what laymen like and dislike about dubbing.

	Reason	Subtitling viewers (40x)		Dubbing Viewers (19x)	
		Total	%	Total	%
Like	It enables children to watch it	14	35%		
	You do not have to read and watch at the same time/not distracted / it allows you to have the full view	4	10%	5	26%
	It is easier to follow for those who have difficulties with the original language/gives access to those who do not speak the language	2	5%	6	32%
	It enables you to understand everything			5	26%
	It takes less effort to get everything/you can relax			3	16%
	Funny to listen to well-known actors with new voices in another language	1	2,5%		
	I like the dubbed cartoons I grew up with	1	2,5%		
	I you dislike the original voice actor	1	2,5%		
	It creates extra employment for the dubbing industry	1	2,5%		
	It is a good way to learn languages	1	2,5%		
	If the programme is dubbed well			1	5,3%
	No (clear) answer given / respondent states there are no reasons	14	35%	5	26%
Dis-like	Dubbing is not authentic, lip movements and/or voice do not match	21	53%	6	32%
	You get to hear the same voices over and over again	1	2,5%		
	No exposure to the foreign language/opportunity to learn	6	15%	2	11%
	It is annoying / sounds horrible / seems childish	3	7,5%	1	5,3%
	Sometimes translations / jokes do not work in the dubbed language/a lot of meaning and or beauty of the language is lost in translation	1	2,5%	6	32%
	Unprofessional speakers / bad or lower quality / original voice actors are better	3	7,5%	1	5,3%
	If the original language is gone, it can be difficult to get the expression of feelings/emotions	1	2,5%	3	16%
	Loss of original language/voice/character / idea / vision of	10	25%	4	21%

Reason	Subtitling viewers (40x)		Dubbing Viewers (19x)	
	Total	%	Total	%
filmmaker				
If the dubbed programme is in a language that I do not understand	2	5%	1	5,3%
It underestimates the viewer	1	2,5%		
It is not necessary when you understand the original language	1	2,5%		
No (clear) answer given / respondent states there are no reasons	3	7,5%	6	32%

Table 6.3. Could you explain what you like/don't like about dubbed television?

Most dubbing viewers mentioned that with dubbed television you do not have to read and watch at the same time and it allows you to have the whole view (26 per cent). Also, it generally enables you to understand everything (26 per cent). 35 per cent of the subtitling viewers indicated that dubbing enables children to watch television.

Viewers of subtitled television clearly had less difficulty coming up with something they did not like about dubbing. 53 per cent of the subtitling respondents answered that they were annoyed about lip movements and/or the voice that does not match. 32 per cent of dubbing viewers also mentioned this to be a disadvantage. In addition, 32 per cent of dubbing viewers indicated that certain translations, or plays of words, cannot always be translated properly in the dubbed language.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is particularly important to know whether subtitling contributes to foreign language learning. In section 4.4 of the literature review on dubbing versus subtitling, it became clear that many works have pointed to the positive effects of subtitling for foreign language learning. Koolstra and Beentjes observed that subtitled television may result in various types of foreign language acquisition, including the learning of word meanings, word pronunciation and the ability to discriminate between different Englishes (53). Indeed, similar observations on the effects of subtitled television on language learning can be drawn from data in table 6.4:

	Subtitling			Dubbing		
	FIN	NL	NOR	SWE	GER	FR
Not at all	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
English vocabulary acquisition	90%	80%	90%	100%	100%	70%
English listening comprehension	100%	100%	90%	80%	89%	80%
English word pronunciation	90%	70%	80%	80%	67%	70%
Discriminate between Englishes	70%	40%	90%	30%	56%	10%

Table 6.4. Results to the question:

In what way does subtitled television help your English language learning? (for subtitling viewers)

Suppose your country would switch to subtitled television. In what way do you think would subtitled television help your English language learning? (for dubbing viewers)

Viewers of subtitled television were asked in what ways subtitled television helps their English language learning. This question was slightly adapted for viewers of dubbed television so as to fit the national context. Thus, in the case of viewers who are used to dubbed television, the following hypothetical question was asked: "Suppose your country would switch to subtitled television. In what way do you think would subtitled television help your English language learning?". Respondents were given five different answers and were able to choose more than one answer – namely, not at all; English vocabulary acquisition; English listening comprehension; English word pronunciation; and discriminate between different Englishes.

Results varied between countries. Nonetheless, even though only 59 laymen were interviewed, one important conclusion can still be drawn – that is, all respondents, with the exception of one Frenchman, believe that subtitled television helps their English language skills one way or another. Even the majority of viewers who are used to dubbing believe that subtitled television would help their English in various ways if their country were to switch to subtitled television.

Viewers of subtitled television from the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands were asked to what extent they have learnt English through means of watching subtitled television. For obvious reasons, this question could not be asked to French and German laymen. Data in figure 6.1 present an average score for every country.

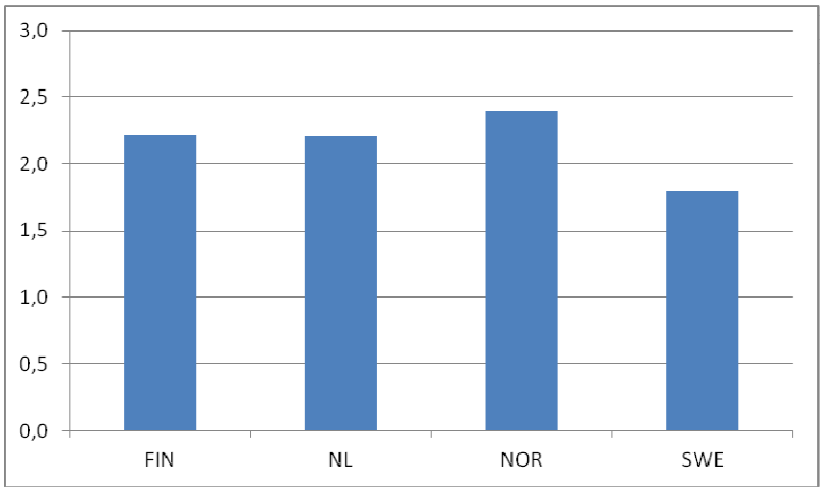


Figure 6.1. Only for subtitling viewers: to what extent have you learnt English through means of watching subtitled television? (0 = not at all; 1 = just a little; 2 = quite a bit; 3 = to a great extent)

Respondents were asked to choose one of the following answers: to a great extent; quite a bit; just a little; not at all; or I don't know. In order to calculate the average for each country, different values were assigned from 0 to 3 (0 = not at all; 1 = just a little; 2 = quite a bit; 3 = to a great extent). One answer of a Finnish layman, who said she did not know, was not included in the results. Data indicate that there are small differences between countries and that the Swedish respondents, in particular, were slightly less positive on the extent to which they have learnt English through subtitled television. Conclusions on evident fluctuations, however, cannot be

explained based on the small number of laymen that were interviewed. To explore real differences between countries, more quantitative research is needed. Nevertheless, the average of all countries (except Sweden) can be given the value 2 (quite a bit). This shows that all laymen believe that subtitled television has increased their English language acquisition. This thesis will now turn to data exploring differences in language teaching methodology.

6.3 Perspectives on English teaching methodology

Results II

In determining whether there are outstanding differences in the way that English is taught, English language teachers were asked a broad range of questions (see appendix G).

In order to test variation in material, teachers were asked how often they use the English language coursebook compared to other material. The response rate of the teacher interview was small, especially in the case of Finland, which makes it difficult to come up with hard evidence. Nevertheless, data in table 6.5 do indicate that the coursebook is still the number one resource used in most of English language classrooms. Some differences still stand out, most notably the answers of the Norwegian teachers, in which case 4 Norwegian teachers indicated that they "sometimes" make use of the coursebook and 1 "hardly ever".

Use of coursebook	FIN	NL	NOR	SWE	GER	FR
Most of the time	50%	60%	0%	0%	35%	20%
Quite often	50%	40%	0%	40%	41%	40%
Sometimes	0%	0%	80%	60%	24%	40%
Rarely	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hardly ever	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%

Table 6.5. How often do you use the English language coursebook compared to other material?

It was expected that most teachers make use of the coursebook quite often. Seeing this expectation was met for most of the results in table 6.5, exposure to English would arguably start with a coursebook that is entirely written in English. Results in table 6.6 show that all teachers in the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden use a coursebook that is entirely written in English. Again, the number of teachers that were interviewed was small and some teachers were from the same school. These data are therefore not fully representative. In the case of Germany, however, 17 teachers were interviewed, of which more than 50 per cent stated they use a coursebook that is completely in English. Note that 4 out of 5 French teachers were from the same school. Therefore, the 80 per cent is not a valid fluctuation.

Language of coursebook	FIN	NL	NOR	SWE	GER	FR
Yes	50%	80%	100%	100%	59%	20%
No	50%	20%	0%	0%	41%	80%
Not applicable	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 6.6. Is the coursebook entirely in English?

By asking more in depth questions on the focus of the coursebook, the content of the lessons taught at a school level and the focus of lessons at the national level, an attempt was made to find out whether there are outstanding differences between teachers and possibly also between countries. Table 6.7 presents data on three questions. Answers were categorised into grammar-based (G), communicative-based (C) and a mixture of skills or various approaches (M). Some teachers indicated that the nature of the lessons depended on various factors (D). In some instances, teachers also provided answers that could not be categorized (O). The latter answers will be explored separately.

	Course book				**Lessons school level**				**Lessons national level**					
	G	C	M	O	G	C	M	D	G	C	M	D	O	?
NL	0%	20%	80%	0%	20%	40%	20%	20%	20%	40%	0%	0%	20%	20%
NOR	0%	20%	80%	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%	0%	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%
FIN	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	
SWE	0%	20%	80%	0%	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	
GER	0%	18%	76%	6%	6%	35%	47%	12%	12%	35%	18%	30%	6%	
FR[61]	0%	80%	20%	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%	0%	75%	0%	25%	0%	

Table 6.7. Data on 3 questions:

1. What is the focus of the coursebook? (i.e. is it mostly grammar based or also communicative?)
2. Are English lessons generally more grammar based or communicative at the school where you teach?
3. And in your country generally? Please explain

Answers: G = Grammar; C = Communicative; M = a mix of methods; D = Depending; O = Other

Results based on the focus of the English language course book, first of all, indicate that teachers mostly either see the course book as a communicative method or a method that includes a mixture of approaches and/or skills. Even though the number of teachers interviewed was small, none of the teachers see the course book as a grammar-based method, notably. This shows that most language course books used in foreign language classes, at least in the case of those teachers that were interviewed, offer a good balance of either communicative exercises or a mixture of various (skills-based) approaches. One German teacher indicated this is hardly surprising, as most language course books nowadays offer a good balance of skills and approaches. Another German teacher indicated that the course book in use is a mixture of British and American culture, hence the result "other".

As regards the lessons taught at the school level, teachers had greater difficulty in determining whether lessons taught by colleagues were grammar-based, communicative or a mixture of approaches. Some teachers evidently answered that the nature of colleagues' lessons depended on the year of instruction or on the individual teacher. Indeed, as one Dutch teacher observed: "in the first two forms they are more grammar-based. That is due to a lack of time. We

[61] One French teacher only responded 'yes' to question 3. Her answer was not included in the results, as it could not be categorised.

do not use a course book in the upper forms, so as from the third form we dedicate more time to literature and the five CEF skills". Only 2 Finnish teachers participated in the teacher interview, hence the 50 per cent score for one teacher who answered it all depends on the course.

There are, notably, some tendencies that stand out. Out of the 39 teachers, only 2 teachers indicated that the lessons at their school are mostly grammar-based (one Dutch and one German teacher). As the results in table 6.7 show, most teachers again answered that lessons at the school level are either communicative or a mixture of skills and/or approaches. With the exception of 2 answers, a grammar-based approach at the school level, therefore, does not seem to have much ground.

When asked whether lessons are generally more grammar-based or communicative at the national level, some interesting results came up. With the exception of one Dutch teacher (20 per cent) and two German teachers (12 per cent), few teachers indicated that lessons are predominantly grammar-based. One German teacher answered that the focus is still on grammar, but that things are changing. 4 German teachers provided answers stating that it either depended on the individual teacher, the type of school or even the German Länder. Interestingly so, the Dutch teachers all gave very different answers. As one Dutch teacher put it: "Grammar-based. It all starts with knowing the basics of a language, so for at least the first few years grammar is important". Another Dutch teacher, however, who mostly teaches the higher forms of secondary school, said: "with the educational innovation of the "Tweede Fase" the four skills became the centre of attention. We shifted from grammar-based to communicative-based". A Finnish teacher, finally, also provided an answer saying it depended on the region: "In the Helsinki region there are many schools that focus on communicativeness. Further away there is more tendency to focus more strictly on grammar and fill ins, but that will change with the new curriculum".

The majority of French, German and Swedish teachers either indicated that lessons in their country follow a communicative approach or a combination of approaches. The Swedish teachers[62] answered that lessons in Sweden generally follow a communicative approach. One Swedish teacher, for instance, put it as such: "In my opinion, the English language education in Swedish schools focuses on communication to a great extent. I for one, focus on language structure when certain errors occur in for example, students' texts". Interestingly so, this answer is similar to observations made by Simensen in section 3.7 of the literature review on Scandinavia in that there is a "lenient stance" on grammatical errors.

Nevertheless, the extent to which lessons are truly communicative is difficult to determine. In the case of Germany, for instance, one German teacher said: "the guidelines given by the state say that lessons should be communicative". This statement confirms that lessons should be communicative, at least in theory, although it does not say whether their lessons truly are. Similarly, one French teacher stated: "It is more communicative. According to the CECRL the ultimate goal of teaching is communication".

All in all, however, communicative approaches, or a good balance of approaches, notably stand out. This suggests that lessons are certainly not grammar-based, at least not in the case of the majority of subjects interviewed for this research.

[62] Only two Swedish teachers responded to this question.

Results in table 6.8 generally confirm the tendency that teachers have moved away from grammar-based teaching. Table 6.8 presents data on 8 different statements. Statements 1 to 4 are statements that were more traditional or grammar-based in nature. Statement 5 to 8, in contrast, are statements that were more communicative. Each statement was assigned a different value, whereby 2.0 = I strongly agree, 1.0 = I agree to some extent, 0 = I neither agree not disagree (neutral), -1.0 = I disagree to some extent and -2.0 = I strongly disagree.

Overall, data on statements 1, 2 and 3 show that teachers generally either disagree to some extent or even strongly disagree with the statements that were largely grammar-based. On statement 1, for instance ("I spend most of my time teaching grammar"), most teachers disagreed to some extent. Finland notably stands out, although this is hardly a valid fluctuation, as only two Finnish teachers participated in the interview. Statement 2 ("my pupils often work on translation exercises"), which is an important principle of the GT method, similarly shows that most teachers disagreed to some extent. Only Sweden, notably, shows some agreement with the statement. As regards statement 3 ("I often explain grammar rules after which my pupils do exercises related to that topic"), most teachers again showed disagreement, particularly the French teachers. Dutch teachers, however, showed slight agreement.

Results in table 6.8 also present some contrastive findings. Data on grammar-based statement 4 ("the focus of my lessons is mostly on reading and writing") and communicative-based statement 5 ("I spend as much time on reading and writing as on speaking and listening), show some conflicting answers.

		Country					
Q	**average**	**FIN**	**NL**	**NOR**	**SWE**	**GER**	**FR**
1	-0,5	0,5	-0,6	-1,2	-0,8	-0,8	0,0
2	-0,8	-0,5	-1,6	-1,0	0,2	-1,5	-0,6
3	-0,6	-0,5	0,4	-0,8	0,0	-0,6	-1,8
4	0,6	1,5	-0,4	1,2	1,0	0,4	-0,4
5	1,2	1,0	1,4	1,4	1,6	1,4	0,4
6	1,0	1,5	-0,4	1,2	1,2	1,1	1,2
7	0,3	0,0	0,2	-0,4	0,6	0,5	0,8
8	0,4	0,5	-0,6	0,6	0,0	0,2	1,4

Table 6.8. Data on 8 statements:

1. I spend most of my time teaching grammar
2. My pupils often work on translation exercises
3. I often explain grammar rules after which my pupils do exercises related to that topic
4. The focus of my lessons is mostly on reading and writing rather than speaking and listening
5. In my lessons, I spend as much time on reading and writing as on speaking and listening
6. My lessons are usually completely taught in the target language
7. My pupils get to speak a lot in English during class
8. I often use role-plays in class creating communicative situations

Answers: 2.0 = I strongly agree, 1.0 = I agree to some extent, 0 = I neither agree not disagree (neutral), -1.0 = I disagree to some extent and -2.0 = I strongly disagree

For statement 5, most teachers indicated that all skills are given equal weight in their lessons. All teachers, with the exception of the French teachers, at least agreed to some extent. For statement 4, however, the same Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian teachers had also shown some agreement. This is striking, as presumably, when as much time is spent on all four skills equally (statement 5), then the focus of lessons would not be on reading and writing rather than speaking and listening, as some teachers had agreed on in statement 4.

On the final communicative-based statements, statements 6, 7 and 8, results show tendencies that point in the direction of communicative-based teaching. On statement 6, for instance (i.e. "my lessons are usually completely taught in the target language"), most teachers at least agreed to some extent. The Dutch teachers notably stand out; some Dutch teachers indicated they disagree to some extent. The other teachers show that there is great exposure to the target language teaching English through English. On the question as to whether pupils get to speak a lot of English as well (statement 7), teachers were slightly less in agreement. Yet, overall, answers were at least neutral. Some teachers even indicated that they often use role plays (statement 8), most notably the French teachers. The Dutch teachers seem to disagree more on the matter.

6.4 Perspectives on all three factors by linguists

Results III

In analysing perspectives on dubbing and subtitling, English teaching methods as well as linguistic affinity, linguists were interviewed and asked which factors weigh most in explaining proficiency levels of English among countries.

Table 6.9 on page 57 includes a variety of data on the extent to which the 3 factors explain the high proficiency levels between Scandinavian and Dutch speakers compared to French and German speakers. The question resulted into a variation of answers. As can be observed, most linguists responded to the question with answers along the range of "to a large extent", "to some extent" or "not at all". Linguist no. 4, however, numbered the factors in order of most important to least important. Also, linguist no. 9 used percentages.

As regards the influence of linguistic affinity, to start with, most linguists stated that it explains proficiency levels at least to some extent or that it helps. Some linguists also answered that it explains proficiency levels to a large extent. Linguist no. 11 responded with "perhaps". Not surprisingly, the two Finnish linguists stated that linguistic affinity is not a factor at play at all in the Finnish case.

All linguists, with the exception of one German linguist, stated that dubbing versus subtitling is likely to influence proficiency levels (answers included "very important", "a major factor" and "to a large extent"). One French linguist said that it is "undeniably a factor". Others did not directly comment on the extent to which subtitling versus dubbing influences proficiency levels of English among Europeans, although their answers speak for themselves: "subtitles allow everyone to hear English from very early ages" or "I am absolutely sure that the absence of dubbing is a good thing and influences language proficiency".

Linguist	Linguistic affinity	Dubbing/ Subtitling	Teaching methodology	Other factors mentioned
1 (FR)	large extent	undeniably a factor	large extent	
2 (NL)	large extent	large extent (+ exposure to EN in general	large extent	
3 (GER)	?	?	?	
4 (GER)	2	3	1	
5 (GER)	Helps	very important factor	an advantage in the case of Germany	social class (in Germany)
6 (FIN)	none at all (in the case of Finland)	certainly likely	-	teachers FIN: highly educated
7 (FIN)	FIN: not at all. NL: probably to a relatively large extent	major factor	to some extent	FIN: high level of education of teachers
8 (SWE)	helps tremendously (SWE)	Subtitles: allow everyone to hear English from very early ages	not at all	
9 (SWE)	30%	70% (+ other factors of exposure)	0%	+ internet + low international usability of Swedish, relatively small number of speakers (=70%)
10 (NOR)	Valid	Valid	Valid	
11 (NOR)	Perhaps	absence of dubbing = good thing and influences language proficiency	?	Starting age of learning + no. of classes a week
12 (NOR)	to a considerable extent (in the Norwegian case)	Not just subtitling, but also other forms of exposure + cultural influence	The amount of English teaching more than any specific methodology	

Table 6.9. Question 1: To what extent (e.g. to a large extent/not at all) do the following factors explain the high proficiency levels of Scandinavian and Dutch speakers compared to say French and German speakers:

- linguistic affinity between the mother tongue and English?
- Subtitled television versus dubbed television?
- Approaches in English teaching methodology in schools?

Results on the effect of English teaching methodology differ considerably. Some linguists argued that approaches in teaching methods in schools may explain the differences in proficiency levels between countries to a large extent, whereas other linguists were of the opinion that it does not explain the differences at all. One German linguist did not fully answer the question and responded: "The teaching methodology in Germany puts great emphasis on communicative

skills, rather than on translation. Here I see an advantage compared to the situation in France" (linguist no. 5).

In order to identify the most important factor at play (i.e. either linguistic affinity, dubbing versus subtitling and teaching methodology), linguists were furthermore asked which factor is most important in explaining differences in proficiency levels in the 6 countries investigated in this paper. Table 6.10 presents the results.

Linguist	Linguistic affinity	Dubbing/ subtitling	Teaching methodology	Other factors
1 (FR)	x	x	x	
2 (NL)		x (exposure)		
3 (GER)	?	?	?	
4 (GER)			x	x
5 (GER)				
6 (FIN)		x	x	
7 (FIN)		x	x	x
8 (SWE)	x	x		
9 (SWE)		x (exposure)		
10 (NOR)	x	x	x	
11 (NOR)				
12 (NOR)	x			x
Total	**4x**	**7x**	**5x**	**3x**

Table 6.10. Question 2: [63] In your opinion, what is the main factor that explains the differences in the quality of English among European countries? (i.e. either linguistic affinity, subtitling versus dubbing or approaches in English teaching methodology).

As can be observed, some linguists were able to identify what they considered to be the main factor, whereas other linguists identified 2 factors to be equally important or even all 3 factors in the case of linguist no. 1 and 10. Even though linguistic affinity was considered to be of help or sometimes even very important in the results presented in table 6.9, in question 2 only 4 linguists identified linguistic affinity as the most important factor when explaining differences in proficiency levels between countries. Teaching methodology, which was mentioned by 5 linguists, was regarded as the second most important factor at play. Dubbing versus subtitling, finally, was ranked as the most important factor – 7 linguists considered dubbing versus subtitling to be the most important factor.

As can be seen in the results of tables 6.9 and 6.10, the questions that were posed to the linguists also resulted in a number of other factors that should not be left out. One Finnish linguist, for instance, did not comment on the extent to which teaching methods in Finland make a difference, although she did give great insight into the teaching of languages in Finland: "Language teachers in Finland have high-level pedagogical training and at upper secondary school level, they normally hold a MA in English if they teach English, BA or equivalent if in

[63] Linguist no. 5 and 11 did not respond to the second question.

lower secondary school" (linguist no. 6). Another Finnish linguist confirmed this observation and presented a similar answer (linguist no. 7). Arguably, this shows that there are other factors that should be considered in the case of Finland. Indeed, as one Norwegian linguist commented, the number of English lessons is yet another factor at play (linguist no. 12). In the field of dubbing versus subtitling too, other factors were mentioned. One Swedish linguist argued that overall exposure (e.g. via subtitled TV) is the most important factor, which suggests that dubbing versus subtitling is just one factor involved. One Norwegian linguist argued that in the Norwegian case "overall cultural influence is the main thing, along with linguistic affinity, and the fact that Norway itself is a small language community, where people travel a lot, thus encouraging language learning" (linguist no. 12). A German linguist (linguist no. 4) confirmed the latter view and also mentioned "language ideologies" and "attitudes surrounding English as a World Language" to be very important. As regards the situation of Germany, social class was also mentioned: "I think that proficiency in English in my country depends partly on social class. The more affluent or more intelligent students are very fluent; among the manual workers and people without a high-school education this is generally not the case" (linguist no. 5).

7. Conclusion

7.1 Main results

This thesis has explored factors that logically influence the quality of English among Western European countries. The EF English Proficiency Index for 2012 shows that there are considerable differences in the quality of English among Western European countries. Factors such as dubbing versus subtitling, linguistic distance as well as teaching methods have been investigated to determine what explains the differences in the quality of English between Western European countries. Looking at the information that we have gathered, the thesis proposes the following main results.

The literature review on L1 interference has shown that French and Finnish learners, particularly, are at a real disadvantage compared to Dutch, German, Swedish and Norwegian learners, as both languages are linguistically distant to English. For example, in section 2.2, claims by Ringbom (1987) as well as Merilainen (2010) suggest that Finnish learners have considerable difficulty with the English language, as both languages are linguistically very distant. In section 2.6 Capliez has similarly suggested that Francophone speakers face many obstacles in understanding and producing spoken English as a result of the phonological differences between English and French. At the same time, claims in the literature review in section 2.3 and 2.4 have also shown that Dutch, Swedish and Norwegian learners have a reputation for learning English quite easily as a result of linguistic affinity (Olsen 1999, Simensen 2010, Tops *et al.* 2001). Swan (2001) similarly suggests that German learners find English easy to learn due to the "close relationship" between the two languages (section 2.5).

Linguistic proximity versus linguistic distance could thus be considered an obvious factor when it comes to explaining the differences in English between Western European countries. However, having explored the type of phonological and grammatical errors that learners generally tend to make, the summarising results on typical learner errors in tables 2.1 and 2.2 do not fully support the claims in the literature review (section 2.7). Presuming that Finnish and French learners would typically also make more learner errors, the overview in table 2.1 and 2.2 shows otherwise. What is more, the overview in section 2.7 has also shown that all languages investigated, whether they are linguistically similar or distant to English, each come with their own learner difficulties.

The results of the empirical review in chapter 6 support the idea that linguistic affinity helps, although linguistic distance does not necessarily lead to poorer levels of English. For example, in section 6.4 we found that most linguists identified linguistic affinity as an important factor (table 6.9). Nonetheless, linguistic affinity was not rated as the most important factor by linguists when explaining the quality of English between countries. For example in table 6.10, both teaching methodology as well as dubbing versus subtitling were mentioned by linguists more than linguistic affinity. Additionally, the Finnish linguists did not consider linguistic affinity to be an important factor at play at all (see table 6.9 section 6.4).

The literature review on teaching methods has shown that claims on teaching approaches are by no means in agreement. In theory, the summary in section 3.9 has demonstrated that all

countries have embraced policies that emphasise a communicative approach. However, for each of the countries, except Sweden, the literature review has also shown that traditional focus on form has still not disappeared either. For instance in 3.4, we found that Germany has moved into the direction of communicative approaches (Bonnet *et al.* 2002). However, Kurtz (2008) has also claimed that old ideas are still very much evident in the instruction of English in Germany. In the case of France, national guidelines have indicated that teachers are supposed to teach according to a strong communicative framework, although Bonnet *et al.* has suggested otherwise (section 3.5). As for the Netherlands, Lijcklama à Nijeholt (2012) has claimed that language methods in the Netherlands are more progressive than in Germany. At the same time, however, Withagen *et al.* (1996) has presented a very different picture (section 2.6). In the case of Finland and Norway, results on teaching approaches are similarly contrastive, as sections 3.7 and 3.8 have well demonstrated. Sweden, notably, is the only country of which all sources have pointed to a clear communicative orientation (Simensen 2010, Bonnet *et al.* 2002, Igawa & Yagi 2011).

Although claims in the literature review on teaching methods have presented some contrastive findings, the results of the empirical review (chapter 6) have clearly shown that the focus of the lessons among those teachers interviewed tend to be more communicative than grammar-based. For example, in 6.3 we found that very few teachers regarded English language lessons at the national level to be grammar-based. On the contrary, most teachers either answered that lessons at the national level are communicative and/or a mix of approaches, but with few exceptions certainly not grammar-based (table 6.7). Furthermore, results in table 6.8 in section 6.3 have generally confirmed the tendency that teachers have moved away from grammar-based teaching, at least among those teachers interviewed.

It is striking that the literature chapters and the different empirical investigations on teaching methods and linguistic affinity versus linguistic distance have shown no unilateral direction. One factor of which its influence on English language learning is undoubtedly evident, however, is that of the effect that subtitled television may have on language learning as opposed to dubbed television programmes. Both the literature review as well as feedback provided by laymen and linguists in the empirical review point to the effect that subtitled television may have on foreign language learning. In the literature review of chapter 4, for example, we found that studies by de Bot *et al.* (1986), Koolstra & Beentjes (1999) and d'Ydewalle & Pavakanun (1992; 1997) have pointed to the positive effects of subtitling on language acquisition (section 4.4). The empirical review of this thesis has similarly shown how subtitled television helps English language learning (chapter 6). In table 6.4, for instance, all laymen who are used to subtitling indicated that subtitled television helps their English language learning – either in vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, word pronunciation or in being able to discriminate between different Englishes. Laymen responses in figure 6.1 have similarly shown the positive effects of subtitling; all laymen indicated that subtitled television has increased their English language acquisition (section 6.2).

7.2 Answers to the research questions

Having explored the main results, the thesis proposes the following answers to the sub-research questions:

1) To what extent does linguistic distance between the L1 and English affect English language learning?

As the examples of Finnish and French learners have pointed out, claims in the literature review on L1 interference suggest that linguistic distance affects English language learning considerably (section 2.2 and 2.6). At the same time there is evidence that linguistic affinity benefits English language learning (section 2.3 to 2.5). However, the overview on language errors has not shown that French and Finnish learners, whose languages are linguistically distant to English, make more transfer errors than Dutch, German, Norwegian or Swedish learners of English (tables 2.1 and 2.2 in section 2.7). The empirical review (chapter 6) has similarly shown that linguistic affinity helps (tables 6.9 and 6.10 in section 6.4). However, the majority of linguists believed that both teaching methods as well as dubbing versus subtitling are more significant factors when it comes to explaining differences in the quality of English between countries.

To summarise, linguistic affinity may help English language learning considerably, although linguistic distance does not necessarily affect English language acquisition, as the example of Finland well demonstrates.

2) Are there striking differences in English teaching methodology among countries?

As summarised in table 3.1 in section 3.9, all countries have embraced policies that emphasise communicative approaches, at least in theory. Observations in the literature have particularly pointed to a strong focus on communicative approaches in Sweden (section 3.7). As for France, Germany and the Netherlands, and to some extent also for Finland and Norway, the literature has also shown that old believes are still evident in the instruction of English besides communicative approaches (section 3.4 to 3.8). The outcome of the empirical review in chapter 6 was more evident; most teachers indicated that the focus of the coursebook, lessons at school level and lessons at the national level are more communicative than grammar-based and/or a mixture of approaches (table 6.7 in section 6.3).

Overall, both the literature review as well as the empirical review indicate that all countries have made efforts to move into the direction of communicative language teaching, at least in theory. Therefore, there are no obvious differences in teaching approaches between countries. Given the little literary information available and the small number of teachers that was interviewed, however, it is difficult to know whether this is truly the case.

3) To what extent does subtitled television help foreign language learning as opposed to dubbed television?

As both the literature review in chapter 4 and the empirical review in chapter 6 have shown, countries with subtitled television have one important advantage over countries that dub their television programmes – namely, the positive effect that subtitled television may have on language acquisition. Section 4.4 of the literature review has analysed a number of works that point to the positive effects of subtitled television (e.g. Koolstra & Beentjes 1999). Laymen and

linguists that were interviewed for the empirical review confirm the contribution of subtitled television to foreign language learning (tables 6.4, 6.9, 6.10 and figure 6.1 in section 6.2 and 6.4).

Based on the various literature sources, as well as laymen and linguists' opinions in the empirical review, results indicate that subtitled television helps foreign language learning to a great extent. Countries with dubbed television, therefore, are at a major disadvantage.

The thesis thus proposes the following answer to the main research question:

What explains the differences in the quality of English proficiency among Western Europeans?
The results of this thesis especially support arguments by De Bot (2007) and Bonnet *et al.* (2002) that there is much more exposure to English in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries outside the classroom than there is in France and Germany (table 4.3 section 4.4). Based on the information gathered in this study, differences in the quality of English among Western European countries can thus best be explained through differences in exposure between countries. Subtitled television, as laymen and linguists have pointed out in this study, may result in language learning. Linguistic affinity may certainly help, although linguistic distance does not necessarily lead to lower proficiency levels, as the Finnish example well demonstrates. Even though the different investigations into teaching methods have shown no obvious differences between countries (except for Sweden), it is assumed that teaching methods and education only partly explain the differences in the quality of English between countries.

7.3 Discussion

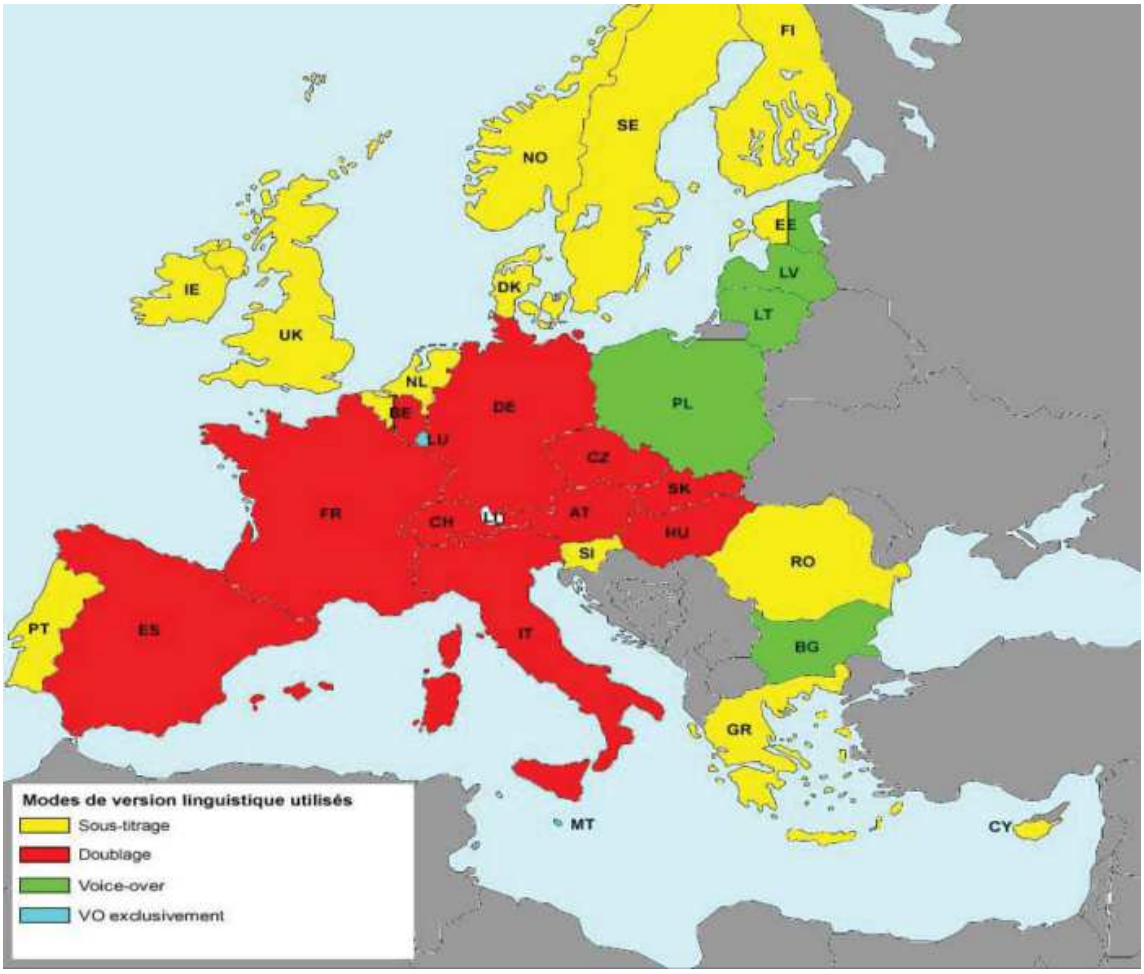
The study was of a wide exploratory nature. Therefore, there are also some shortcomings. Firstly, given the wide scope of the research, a number of other factors – such as starting age, size of speech community and countries' general attitudes to English as a World Language – also came up throughout the research. These factors were beyond the scope of this study and could therefore not be tested. Another limitation is that a small number of laymen, teachers and linguists were interviewed, which makes this thesis by no means statistically representative. Finally, the hierarchy of the EF Proficiency Index has fluctuated over the years when new issues were released in 2013 and 2014. The 2013 Index suddenly ranked the quality of English in Finland below that of Austria whilst the latter is traditionally a dubbing nation (however, Finland was still listed as a country with very high proficiency). The 2014 EF English Proficiency Index again listed Finland very high (4^{th}) and Austria a little lower in the scale (7^{th}).

Taken as a whole, however, results in this study add to a general understanding on what can be achieved in language learning as long as there is also exposure to the target language outside the classroom. Even though its language is linguistically very distant to English, Finland proves to be an excellent example of what can be achieved in English language learning when there is a great focus on much exposure. At the same time, the example of France shows that the teaching of English at school level is arguably not sufficient when there are no means to support the learning of English through other ways, including English television.

Appendices

Appendix A

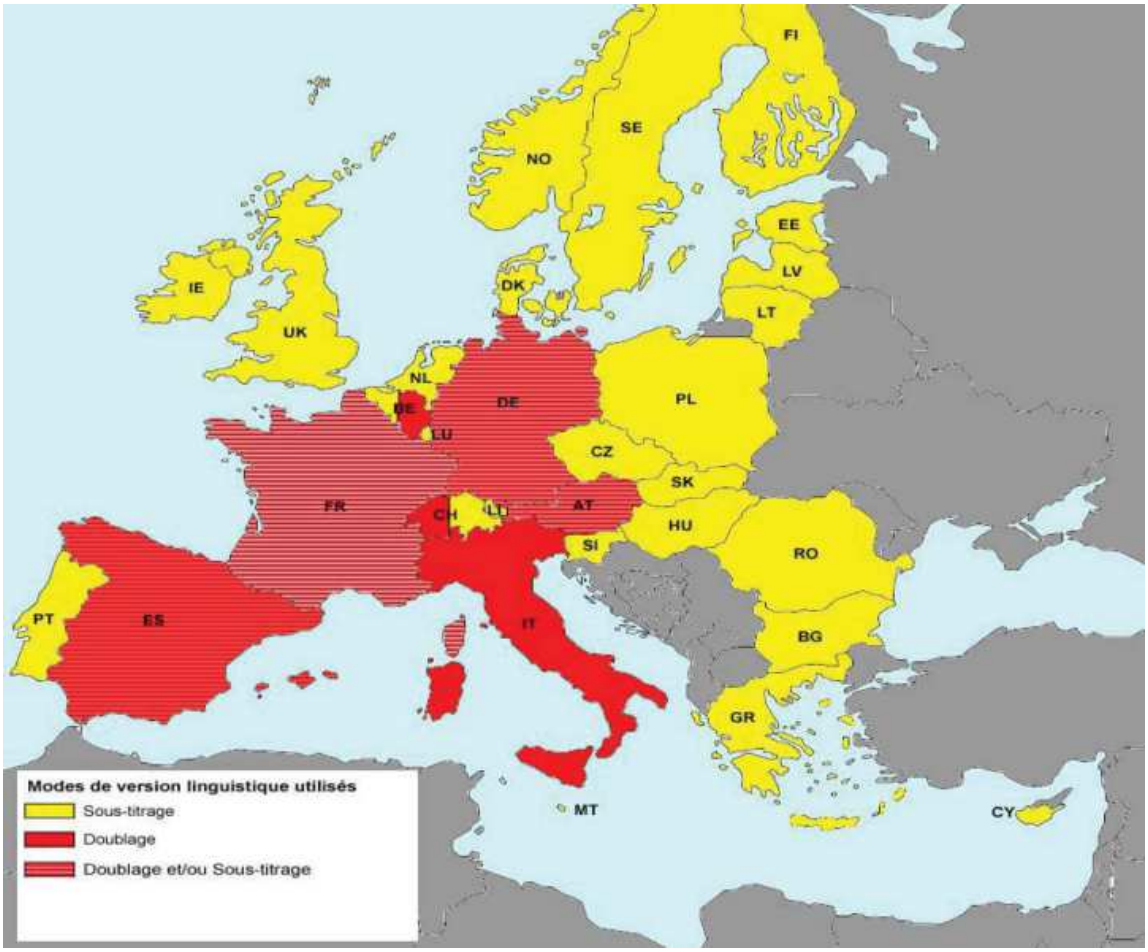
Language-transfer methods for TV broadcasts in Europe



Source: Media Consulting Group, Study on dubbing and subtitling needs and practices in the European audiovisual industry (2008).

Appendix B

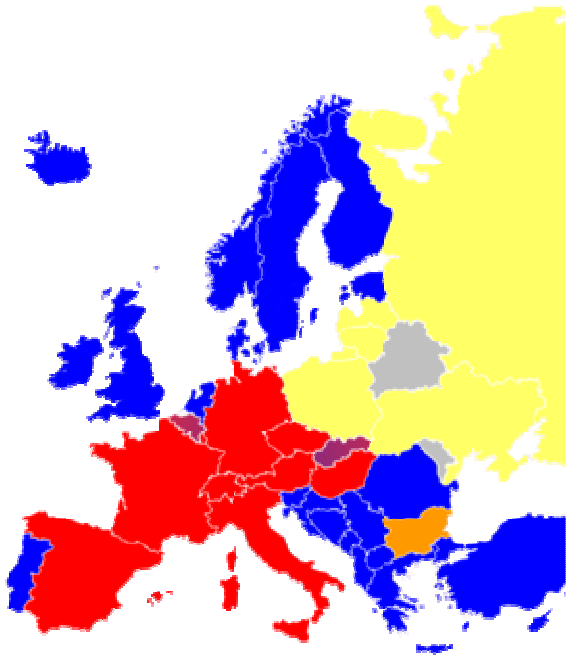
Language-transfer methods for cinema broadcasts in Europe



Source: Media Consulting Group, Study on dubbing and subtitling needs and practices in the European audiovisual industry (2008).

Appendix C

Language-transfer methods in Europe (Wikipedia)



Dubbing only for children: Otherwise solely subtitles

Mixed areas: Countries using occasional multiple-voice voice-overs on broadcast TV, otherwise solely subtitles.

Voice-over: Countries using usually one or two voice actors, otherwise the original soundtrack remains, such as in Poland and Russia. This method is used in TV broadcasting.

General dubbing: Countries using exclusively a full-cast dubbing, both for films and TV series, although in Polish, Czech and Slovak cinemas, only children's movies are usually dubbed.

Countries which produce their own dubbings, but often use dubbed versions from another country whose language is sufficiently similar that the local audience understands it easily (French and Dutch for Belgium and Czech for Slovakia.)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dubbing_%28filmmaking%29

Appendix D

Interview viewers of dubbed television

Dear respondent,

This interview is about dubbed versus subtitled television. You will be asked what you think about these methods:

- Dubbed means that the original voice of a television programme spoken in a foreign language (e.g. English) is replaced by the voice of a dubbing actor, who speaks the national language.

- Subtitled means that the original English voice is preserved, and that a translation into the national language is shown at the bottom of the screen.

The interview will take around 5 to 10 minutes. Your input will be used for my Master thesis at Leiden University in the Netherlands. I greatly appreciate your help, thank you very much!

*Required

Name *

Privacy statement: Your name will be used only once to validate the responses (e.g., to filter out any erroneously entered form data).

Age *

Country *

Could you explain what you like/don't like about dubbed television? *

Like:

*

Vul dit veld in.

Don't like:

Could you explain what you like/don't like about subtitled television? *

Like:

*

Don't like:

Which method do you prefer? Please explain *

You may have watched television programmes with subtitles in the past. If so, do you believe that the subtitles distract you from the images? *

In subtitled television, the original English voice is preserved. Suppose your country would switch to subtitled television. In what way do you think would subtitled television help your English language learning? *

Note: you can choose more than one answer

- [ ] Not at all
- [ ] English vocabulary acquisition
- [ ] English listening comprehension
- [ ] English word pronunciation
- [ ] Discriminate between different Englishes (e.g., American versus British English)
- [ ] Other:

Submit

Appendix E

Interview viewers of dubbed television translated into French

Chers participants

Ce questionnaire est au sujet du doublage et du sous-titrage à la télévision.
Son but est de vous demander de dire ce que vous pensez de ces deux méthodes.

- **Doublage**: signifie que la voix ou la langue d'origine d'une émission de télévision qui est parlée dans une langue étrangère (par exemple, un film en anglais) est remplacée par la voix d'un acteur, qui parle la langue nationale.

  Sous-titrage: signifie que la voix reste celle de la langue du programme/ film/émission mais qu'une traduction simultanée dans la langue nationale est imprimée en bas de l'écran.

Le doublage est appliqué dans les pays comme la France et l'Allemagne, alors que le sous-titrage est plus courant en Hollande et dans les pays scandinaves.

Ce questionnaire ne vous prendra pas plus de 15 minutes pour y répondre. Vos réponses seront utilisées pour ma thèse pour mon diplôme 'Master' de l'Université de Leiden aux Pays Bas.

Je vous remercie beaucoup de votre aide et votre participation!

Nom de famille:

Age:

Pays:

(pour le respect de la confidentialité, votre nom ne sera utilisé qu'une seule fois lors de la saisie des réponses (par exemple pour exfiltrer une information mal saisie)

1) **Pouvez-vous expliquer pourquoi vous aimez / n'aimez pas le doublage â la télévision?**

   J'aime:

   Je n'aime pas:

2) **Pouvez-vous expliquer pourquoi vous aimez / n'aimez pas le sous-titrage â la télévision?**

   J'aime:

   Je n'aime pas:

3) **Quelle méthode préférez-vous ? (doublage ou sous-titrage). Expliquez pourquoi. Merci.**

4) **Vous avez sûrement déjà vu des émissions de télévision avec des sous-titrages: si c'est le cas, pensez-vous que les sous-titres dérangent la bonne vision des images?**

   * Oui

   * Non

   * Je ne sais pas

5) **Dans les émissions sous-titrées, la version originale (ici, en anglais) reste inchangée. Imaginez que votre pays passe au mode sous-titrage anglais à la télévision. De quelle manière pensez-vous que la TV sous-titrée puisse aider vos connaissances en anglais?**

   - Pas du tout
   - Améliore mon vocabulaire
   - Améliore la compréhension orale
   - Améliore la prononciation des mots
   - Permet de différencier entre l'anglais d'Angleterre et l'anglais Américain
   - Autres

Appendix F

Interview viewers of subtitled television

Dear respondent,

This interview is about dubbed versus subtitled television. You will be asked what you think about these methods:

- Dubbed means that the original voice of a television programme spoken in a foreign language (e.g. English) is replaced by the voice of a dubbing actor, who speaks the national language.

- Subtitled means that the original English voice is preserved, and that a translation into the national language is shown at the bottom of the screen.

The interview will take around 5 to 10 minutes. Your input will be used for my Master thesis at Leiden University in the Netherlands. I greatly appreciate your help, thank you very much!

*Required

Name *

Privacy statement: Your name will be used only once to validate the responses (e.g., to filter out any erroneously entered form data).

Age *

Country *

Could you explain what you like/don't like about subtitled television? *

Like:

*

Don't like:

Could you explain what you like/don't like about dubbed television? *

Like:

*

Don't like:

Vul dit veld in.

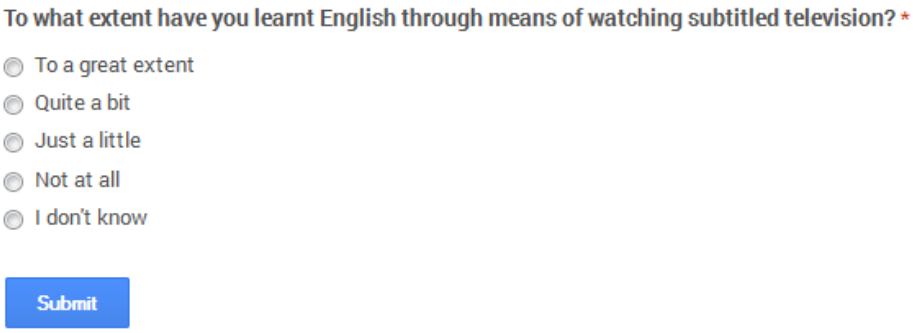
Which method do you prefer? Please explain *

When watching television with subtitles, do the subtitles distract you from viewing the images? *

In subtitled television, the original English voice is preserved. In what way does subtitled television help your English language learning? *

Note: you can choose more than one answer

- [ ] Not at all
- [ ] English vocabulary acquisition
- [ ] English listening comprehension
- [ ] English word pronunciation
- [ ] Discriminate between different Englishes (e.g., American versus British)
- [ ] Other:



Source: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CNnk3R1JbwTXlEYYkDbEKIJjdoidrxk1WSKqpDmPcVw/viewform

Appendix G

Interview English Language Teachers

Dear English language teacher,

This interview is about teaching methods. The interview consists of open-ended questions, as well as questions which can be answered through means of checkboxes or multiple choice.

The interview will take around 15 minutes. Your input will be used for my Master thesis at Leiden University in the Netherlands. I greatly appreciate your help, thank you very much!

*Required

Name *

Privacy statement: Your name will be used only once to validate the responses (e.g., to filter out any erroneously entered form data).

Where do you teach? *

In which city? *

Do you teach the lower forms or the higher forms of secondary school? *

Please also specify what this type of schooling is called in your country

How old are your students? *

What kind of material do you use in class? *

Note: you can choose more than one answer

- [ ] The English language coursebook
- [ ] Newspapers
- [ ] Magazines
- [ ] Movies
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Audio (such as songs, CDs, etc)
- [ ] Other:

How often do you use the English language coursebook compared to other material? *

- Most of the time
- Quite often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Hardly ever

What is the title of the English language coursebook that you use? *

Is the coursebook entirely in English? *

What is the focus of the coursebook? *

(i.e. is it mostly grammar based or also communicative?)

Are English lessons generally more grammar based or communicative at the school where you teach? *

And in your country generally? Please explain *

If pupils do have problems with the English language, does this mostly apply to grammar rules or pronunciation? *

Could you give some examples of the problems pupils have?

Only if applicable: If your country were to broadcast television programmes with subtitles instead of dubbed programmes, would this benefit your pupils when it comes to English language acquisition? Please explain.

Only if applicable: Scandinavian as well as Dutch speakers are said to be among the best speakers of English in the world. Do you agree, if so, what do you think explains this?

I spend most of my time teaching grammar *

- I strongly agree
- I agree to some extent
- I neither agree nor disagree
- I disagree to some extent
- I strongly disagree

My pupils often work on translation exercises *

- I strongly agree
- I agree to some extent
- I neither agree nor disagree
- I disagree to some extent
- I strongly disagree

I often explain grammar rules after which my pupils do exercises related to that topic *

- I strongly agree
- I agree to some extent
- I neither agree nor disagree
- I disagree to some extent
- I strongly disagree

The focus of my lessons is mostly on reading and writing rather than speaking and listening *

- I strongly agree
- I agree to some extent
- I neither agree nor disagree
- I disagree to some extent
- I strongly disagree

In my lessons, I spend as much time on reading and writing as on speaking and listening *

- I strongly agree
- I agree to some extent
- I neither agree nor disagree
- I disagree to some extent
- I strongly disagree

My lessons are usually completely taught in the target language *

- I strongly agree
- I agree to some extent
- I neither agree nor disagree
- I disagree to some extent
- I strongly disagree

My pupils get to speak in English a lot during class *

- I strongly agree
- I agree to some extent
- I neither agree nor disagree
- I disagree to some extent
- I strongly disagree

I often use role-plays in class creating communicative situations *

- I strongly agree
- I agree to some extent
- I neither agree nor disagree
- I disagree to some extent
- I strongly disagree

Submit

Source: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1lRnr9em8ocYPf84Fuh6xsCq4_DnFQ80NQq44QsnQNpc/viewform

Appendix H

Interview Linguists

Question 1: To what extent (e.g. to a large extent / not at all) do the following factors explain the high proficiency levels of Scandinavian and Dutch speakers compared to say French and German speakers:

- Linguistic affinity between the mother tongue and English?
- Subtitled television versus dubbed television?
- Approaches in English teaching methodology in schools?

Question 2: In your opinion, what is the main factor that explains the differences in the quality of English among European countries? (i.e. either linguistic affinity, subtitling versus dubbing or approaches in English teaching methodology).

Appendix I

Raw data laymen interview: could you explain what you like/don't like about subtitled television?

	Reason	Subtitling viewers (40x)		Dubbing Viewers (19x)	
		Total	%	Total	%
Like	Original voice or language preserved/more original/authentic	18	45%	9	47%
	Contributes to general understanding of programme	16	40%	4	21%
	It helps my (English) language skills	11	28%	7	37%
	Subtitles enable me to understand the programme when there is noise in it or when watching in a noisy environment	5	13%		
	Enables deaf people to watch TV	1	2,5%		
	It is a nice way to see that your assumption of the meaning of the words that are spoken is correct	1	2,5%		
	Subtitles are handy in films and series with heavy accents	1	2,5%		
	It is easy to read in my own language	1	2,5%		
	Different languages interest me	1	2,5%		
	I find it interesting how the translations can vary from the ones I make myself	1	2,5%		
	I am used to it	1	2,5%		
	You can read and listen at the same time			1	5,3%
	Respondent states there are no reasons			1	5,3%
	No (clear) answer given	3	7,5%	4	21%
Dis-like	Subtitles don't always convey the original message and/or may deviate from the original text	19	48%	1	5,3%
	Subtitles sometimes take up space on the screen/are in the way	5	13%	1	5,3%
	Subtitles can be distracting (from the images)/takes the focus away	4	10%	5	26%
	Time mismatch between subtitles + soundtrack / at times too fast	4	10%	4	21%
	You can become lazy and just read everything	2	5%		
	It can be difficult for children to read subtitles fast enough	1	2,5%		
	When the original already contains subtitles and the letters overlap	1	2,5%		
	Sometimes there isn't enough space to translate everything	1	2,5%		
	When they are in a language I do not speak	1	2,5%		
	It takes more effort/it is more difficult to understand the movie			3	16%
	Difficult for the eyes sometimes/tiring to read			1	5,3%
	It may be confusing			1	5,3%
	Sometimes it is more difficult to understand the story			1	5,3%
	The letters may be too small or its colours may not contrast well			1	5,3%
	It stresses me out and I cannot understand			1	5,3%
	I do not understand everything, especially in case of dialects etc			1	5,3%
	Respondent states there are no reasons	5	13%	1	5,3%
	No (clear) answer given	4	10%	2	11%

Appendix J

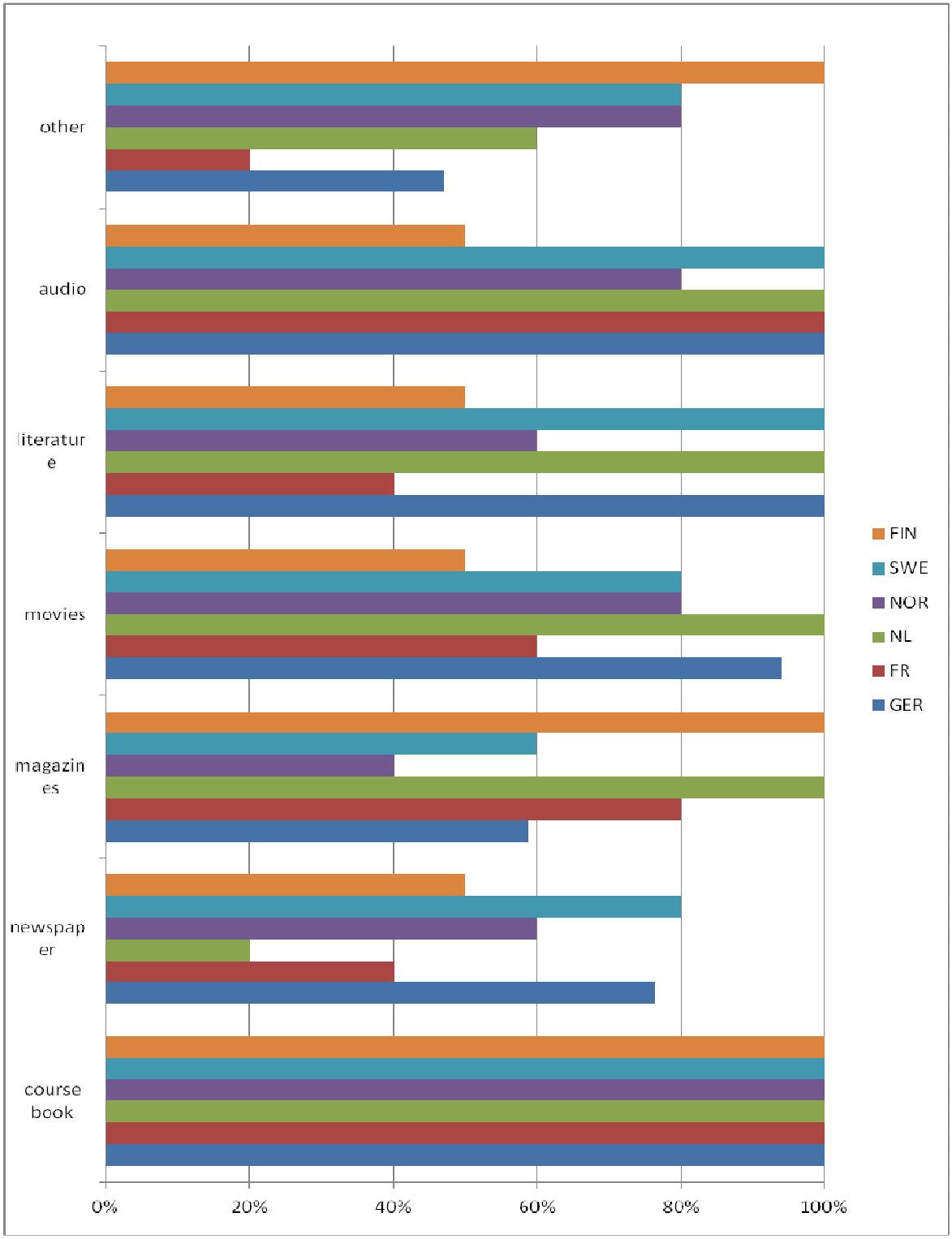
Raw data laymen interview: could you explain what you like/don't like about dubbed television?

	Reason	Subtitling viewers (40x)		Dubbing Viewers (19x)	
		Total	%	Total	%
Like	It enables children to watch it	14	35%		
	You don't have to read and watch at the same time/you are not distracted	2	5%	3	16%
	It allows you to have the whole view, you don't miss out on anything/you can concentrate on details	2	5%	2	11%
	It is easier to follow for those who have difficulties with the original language (because dubbed TV is always spoken in my own language)	1	2,5%	5	26%
	It enables you to understand everything			5	26%
	It takes less effort to get everything/you don't have to concentrate/you can relax			3	16%
	It also gives people who do not speak the language access			1	5,3%
	It can be funny to listen to well-known American/English actors with new voices in another language	1	2,5%		
	I like the dubbed cartoons I grew up with	1	2,5%		
	I you dislike the original voice actor	1	2,5%		
	Can be of use when you don't know anything about the original language	1	2,5%		
	It creates extra employment for the dubbing industry	1	2,5%		
	It is a good way to learn languages	1	2,5%		
	If the programme is dubbed well			1	5,3%
	It is not necessary to translate everything into your own language			1	5,3%
	Respondent states there are no reasons	11	28%	1	5,3%
	No (clear) answer given	3	7,5%	3	16%
Dis-like	Dubbing isn't natural/authentic, lip movements and/or voice don't match	21	53%	6	32%
	You get to hear the same voices over and over again	1	2,5%		
	No exposure to the foreign language/opportunity to learn/not enough language input	5	13%	2	11%
	The essence of the character is lost	1	2,5%		
	It is annoying	1	2,5%		
	It sounds horrible/the voices are awful	1	2,5%	1	5,3%
	The beauty of the language sometimes gets lost in translation			1	5,3%
	Sometimes certain translations/plays of words / jokes do not work in the dubbed language/a lot of meaning is lost in translation	1	2,5%	5	26%
	Unprofessional speakers			1	5,3%
	You miss the original vision of the filmmaker			1	5,3%
	If the original language is gone, it can be difficult to get the expression of feelings/emotions			2	11%

	Dubbed children shows rob kids of valuable language input	1	2,5%		
	Loss of original language/voice/idea	3	7,5%	3	16%
	If the dubbed programme is in a language that I do not understand	2	5%	1	5,3%
	It is too far removed from the original	2	5%		
	Dubbing seems childish	1	2,5%		
	It underestimates the viewer	1	2,5%		
	Bad/lower quality	2	5%		
	It destroys (the whole atmosphere of) the original	2	5%		
	It is not necessary when you understand the original language	1	2,5%		
	You don't get the feeling of the original language	1	2,5%	1	5,3%
	Dubbing destroys a big part of the artistic aspects of any TV or film content	1	2,5%		
	It doesn't allow me to listen to the original voice/soundtrack	1	2,5%		
	The original voice actors are better	1	2,5%		
	Respondent states there are no reasons	1	2,5%	1	5,3%
	No (clear) answer given	2	5%	5	26%

Appendix K

Data teacher interview: what kind of material do you use in class?



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