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“Do we put the star map after the first aid kit?” – The Use of Questions as Indicators of Interactional Fluency in L1 Finnish and L2 English Interaction

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Master's Thesis

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This thesis examines English L2 learners' use of different question types in L1 Finnish and L2 English interactions and how their question use affects interactional fluency. In addition, this study aimed at comparing the question types used in L1 and L2 interactions. This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, analyzing some aspects of the data quantitatively and some qualitatively. This was done in order to meet the goals of the study more appropriately. The data of this study consisted of 54 audio-recorded interactions, 26 of which were recorded in English (L2) and 26 in Finnish (L1). For the recordings, the participants had to complete problem-solving tasks. The number of participants was 54, all being advanced learners of English. The data set is part of the data collected originally for the FDF2 project, which is funded by the Academy of Finland. This thesis examines aspects that have not been widely explored before in L2 interaction research, namely the effect of question use on interactional fluency as well as raising attention on the importance of comparing the performance of the same speakers across L1 and L2.

In the analysis of the data, five question categories were utilized. The categorization was based on previous research but, for the purposes of the present study, a system working for Finnish and English was created to correspond to each question type utilized in the data. All questions were then collected from the data and placed into the corresponding categories. The L1 and L2 data were categorized separately, although the categories were the same for both languages. After the categorization, the overall number of questions in the data as well as the number of questions presented by each pair in the L1 and L2 were calculated. In addition to this quantitative information, the results were analyzed qualitatively with examples drawn from the pair interactions. The qualitative analysis was done to illustrate and compare the use of questions from an interactional fluency perspective in the L1 and L2 interactions.

The study discovered that questions were used extensively in both the L1 and L2 discussions, although the number of questions was notably higher in the L2 interactions. The total number of questions in the L2 interactions was 546, whereas the total number of questions in the L1 interactions was 444. Questions helped the interlocutors to maintain interactional fluency by helping them reach agreement and overcome communicative problems, such as lack of vocabulary knowledge in both languages. The results also showed that differences in question use across the languages might be due to, for example, structural differences between languages. The present study also offered insight into the importance of using interactive spoken tasks in L2 classrooms, since the results show how questions, an aspect of speech, affect interactional fluency positively. This relation between interactional fluency and L2 learning is something that could be acknowledged in future research as well.

Key words: interactional fluency, questions, fluency across L1 and L2, L2 learning, mixed-methods approach

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Abbreviations

L1 = first language

L2 = second language

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

CA = Conversation Analysis

1 Introduction

We have all asked a question in a conversation, right? That is because questions are almost inevitable when having a conversation with other interlocutors. Whether wanting to clarify meanings, get confirmations from others or just simply seeing whether others agree or disagree with you, questions step into the picture. Questions can also invite other people to join a conversation or engage the existing interlocutors more into the conversation. With this being said, we can see that questions are connected with the flow of conversation and therefore, also affect the fluency of interaction, which is the main interest of this study.

Fluency is considered as one of the measurements of oral proficiency as well as good performance in a foreign language (Housen and Kuiken 2009, 461). That makes fluency a central concept when studying second language (L2) performance as well as second language acquisition (SLA). Fluency is a multifaceted term, but according to the broadest definition of fluency, it is seen as “general language proficiency in any language” (Lintunen, Mutta and Peltonen, 2020, 3). When studying a foreign language, it can be assumed that many learners would desire to be fluent in the L2 and especially when speaking the L2, since speech is often a major part of the impression we give to others. Indeed, speech fluency is the main interest of this thesis and more specifically, fluency in interaction, where all interlocutors are responsible for the fluent flow on interaction (McCarthy 2010, 7). It is worth mentioning that L2 interaction skills and oral proficiency are also noted in official documents like The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001), and with the influence of CEFR also in all of the National Core Curricula in Finland (Opetushallitus 2014; 2019). These documents guide language assessment and teaching. Therefore, it is important to study learners’ and speakers’ skills regarding L2 oral proficiency and interaction.

Fluency has been an interest of investigation for decades and therefore, it has been widely studied. Nonetheless, after many years of research, fluency still manages to be a relevant research topic. However, the majority of these previous studies have focused only on fluency in monologue, leaving interactional fluency to little attention (Peltonen 2020, 29). This is why the present study focuses on L2 interactional fluency and, more in detail, how the use of questions affects the fluency of interaction. Questions are a natural part of conversation and thus, studying their effect on interactional fluency can offer new insights into fluency research. In addition, especially the comparison of L1 and L2 interactional fluency has previously received very little attention, therefore offering a great opportunity for investigation.

This is a mixed methods study including a comparative aspect as well. The participants are university students of English and therefore, they are also advanced learners of English. The data utilized in this study are from a larger project called Fluency and Disfluency Features in L2 Speech (FDF2), which is funded by the Academy of Finland. The data consist of audio-recorded interactions done in pairs. Each pair completed two different problem-solving tasks orally for the recordings. Both the data and data collection will be presented more in detail in Section 4. The goal of the present study is to find out how questions are used in interaction. Furthermore, this study aims to examine whether there is a difference in question use between L1 and L2 interactions. The research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent do advanced learners of English use different question types to maintain interactional fluency in L1 Finnish and L2 English interactions?
2. What kinds of differences and similarities can be observed in the types of questions across L1 Finnish and L2 English interactions?

In Section 2, the concept of fluency will be explained in more detail with Section 2.1 defining what is meant by fluency and Section 2.2 examining interactional fluency. These are followed by Section 2.3 which elaborates fluency across L1 and L2. These sections also present some previous studies on the matters to offer a wider view on the topic. Section 3 will shed light on interactional competence with Section 3.1 discussing earlier studies on the matter. In addition, some common approaches for studying the topic are also briefly introduced. Section 3.2 will present definitions of questions along with question-related studies. After this, Section 4 will present the materials and methods of the present study in more detail. This is done so that Section 4.1 introduces the participants, Section 4.2 elaborates on the data collection and preparation and Section 4.3 elaborates on the analysis of the data in more detail. Following these, Section 5 will present and discuss the results of the present study by first focusing on question use in L2 interaction in Section 5.1. In Section 5.2, the focus will be shifted to question use in L1 interaction. Then, Section 5.3 will discuss the comparison of question use between L1 and L2 interaction. Lastly, Section 6 will conclude the study.

2 Fluency

In this section, the central concepts regarding fluency and the present study are defined and explained. First in Section 2.1, definitions of fluency will be introduced. Following this, in Section 2.2 interactional fluency will be presented in more detail together with earlier studies conducted on the matter. Lastly, Section 2.3 will shed light on previous studies investigating fluency across L1 and L2.

2.1 Definitions of fluency

As already stated before, this study focuses on speech fluency and excludes, for example, fluency in writing. Therefore, the definitions of fluency in this study are also focused only on speech fluency. As Peltonen (2020, 1) states in her study, being able to communicate efficiently in the L2 is among the most important goals for L2 learners. She elaborates that in order to make communication efficient, L2 learners need to be capable of speaking quite effortlessly and with ease (*ibid.*). This is one of the reasons why fluency is a central topic when discussing Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and L2 interaction. Next, we will take a look at the definitions of fluency.

Housen and Kuiken (2009, 461) define fluency as one measurement of language proficiency in a foreign language and good performance. The other measurements defined by Housen and Kuiken are complexity and accuracy. Together these three components are referred to as CAF. However, from these three components, only fluency is relevant to this study and hence, complexity and accuracy are not further discussed in the present study.

As can be seen, fluency is a very central concept in language proficiency and L2 competence altogether. Indeed, fluency is a concept that many L2 speakers surely consider important, because being understood is crucial in communication. As already brought up in the Introduction of this thesis, fluency is a multifaceted term and therefore, it can be defined in many ways. According to Lennon (1990, 388), there are two senses of fluency which are the broad sense and the narrow sense. He states that in the broad sense, fluency is an umbrella term for oral proficiency, indicating that “fluent” is the highest level of oral proficiency a speaker can have (Lennon 1990, 389).

Whereas the broad sense looks at fluency in a bigger picture, the narrow sense defines fluency in a more specific context. This narrow sense of fluency is also particularly relevant for the present study, since this study also examines fluency on a more detailed level. In his study, Lennon (*ibid.*) defines the narrow sense of fluency to be focused on one particular aspect of oral proficiency. The present study also examines fluency in the narrow sense, focusing on an aspect of oral proficiency,

which is fluency in interaction, instead of discussing fluency as a more general skill of L2 oral proficiency.

Another aspect of the narrow sense of fluency is that, as Witton-Davies (2013, 17) states, the narrow sense of fluency is usually utilized in the context of language learning and teaching. He states that in the narrow sense, fluency is seen as a criterion among other criteria for speaking abilities and their assessment (2013, 17-18). He adds that other criteria used to assess speaking would focus on, for example, grammar and pronunciation (*ibid.*). The present study locates to the field of SLA and therefore, it is all the more reason to approach fluency in the narrower sense.

In addition to Lennon's (1990) take on fluency definitions, Chambers (1997) offers another early suggestion for a definition of fluency. She determines that "speed and effortlessness seem to be the two main characteristics of a fluent performance" (Chambers 1997, 535). Chambers (1997, 538) considers temporal variables for measuring fluency. These temporal variables include, for example speech rate, pauses and length of run. These can be measured quantitatively and thus are suitable for fluency assessment (Chambers 1997, 538). Thus, this take on fluency also emphasizes the smoothness of speech, and the same characteristics are applicable for fluency from an interactional perspective as well.

Segalowitz (2010) discusses the distinction between L2 utterance fluency and cognitive fluency. He states that utterance fluency requires automatization, which on its part requires repetition (Segalowitz 2010, 75). Then, the automaticity increases the flow of the underlying cognitive processing, leading to increased cognitive fluency (*ibid.*). That is, cognitive fluency regards the cognitive processes utilized by the speaker when speaking (Segalowitz 2010, 48). He explains that in an L2, users need cognitive fluency for creating links between word and meaning and "for the more complex aspects of message formulation and comprehension, such as handling phrase and sentence constructions" (Segalowitz 2010, 76). This enhances the concept of fluency as a multidimensional phenomenon. In the present study, the focus is on utterance fluency since interactional data is utilized. As can be seen, most fluency definitions have focused on fluency as an aspect of an individual's performance. However, this present study will include an interactional perspective to fluency, and studies regarding that will be introduced next.

2.2 Interactional fluency

As already stated earlier in this thesis, interactional fluency has not been as widely studied as monologic fluency. However, many relevant and recent studies can be found examining fluency in

interaction. In this subsection, a definition of interactional fluency is first presented, followed by the introductions of some previous studies conducted on the matter.

As briefly mentioned already, when it comes to fluency in interaction, every participant of the conversation is responsible for creating fluent interaction and keeping the interaction running smoothly, meaning that also the interlocutors whose turn is not to speak are a part of the fluent flow of the conversation (McCarthy 2010, 7). McCarthy (*ibid.*) elaborates that in conversation, each participant is responsible for filling silences and pauses to prevent them from becoming uncomfortably long. An interesting point of view to what contributes to interactional fluency is given by Pallotti (2009). He suggests that the underlying constructs of CAF should be more clearly separated from other constructs (Pallotti 2009, 599). Among those underlying constructs, he mentions one that is particularly interesting for the present study, that is adequacy (*ibid.*). He specifies that adequacy means “the appropriateness to communicative goals and situations” (Pallotti 2009, 599), and that it should be viewed as a means for construing CAF measures. He adds that adequacy should also be treated as “an independent construct based on task success” (*ibid.*). Pallotti (2009, 596) elaborates that as a separate construct, adequacy describes how efficiently a learner’s performance achieves the goals set for a task. In addition, Pallotti (2009, 596–597) highlights that while a performance might be highly efficient in the light of the CAF measures, it is possible that the task’s goals are still not reached, thus the performance is inadequate. This perspective is interesting for the present study, since using questions most likely contributes to the communicative adequacy of an interaction, especially with such task performance that the data consist of. Also, this shows how the adequacy of the interaction can be connected with interactional fluency. Next, some earlier studies on interactional fluency are introduced.

In his study, Witton-Davies (2013) studied Taiwanese university students’ oral skills in English over a period of four years. He investigated the development of fluency over time as well as the development of fluency in both monologue and interaction, the latter being particularly interesting in the light of the present study. The study included 17 participants, all university students and L2 learners of English. The data were collected by recording monologic and interactive speech during the students’ first and fourth year at the university. Witton-Davies (2013, 240) concludes that the participants of his study were overall more fluent in the interactions than in the monologues. For example, the speech rates were higher in the interactions and interactions had less repair and shorter pauses than monologues (*ibid.*). He also discovered that there were broader and greater differences between monologic and interactive fluency than between the differences in fluency over time (Witton-Davies 2013, 251). He argues that this shows how performances can vary between different

modes of interaction (*ibid.*). This gives insight into the importance of studying interactional fluency, not only monologue fluency, given that the results for monologue and interactional fluency were different. Thus, the nature of fluency varies depending whether it is monologic or interactive. Additionally, knowledge on interactional fluency can give information on overall fluency. Witton-Davies' (2013) study gives insight into the matter of the present study as well since the participants of his study were also university level L2 English students.

Next, two different studies by Peltonen (2017a, 2017b) will be presented. It is worth noting that both of her studies have used similar data to the present study, which raises interest for the results of the present study. Peltonen's (2017a) study on L2 spoken interaction investigated the effect of certain interactional practices on maintaining fluency in L2 interaction. These practices were other-repetitions, which mean "words or longer stretches of interlocutor's speech repeated without modification" (Peltonen 2017a, 119), and collaborative completions which are "contributions filling in an utterance that the previous speaker has started" (*ibid.*). Her study views these practices as factors indicating the fluency of interaction. The participants were four Finnish L2 learners of English, and they performed a communicative problem-solving task in pairs. In the task, they had to discuss and rank given items in order of importance, considering survival on a desert island. The findings show that other-repetitions created cohesion to the interaction (Peltonen 2017a, 131). The participants also elaborated their utterances which helped the smooth flow of interaction, contributing to the fluency of the interaction (*ibid.*). Besides increasing the interactional fluency, other-repetitions were also found to increase the speaker's own fluency (*ibid.*), which affects the overall smooth flow of conversation. Regarding collaborative completions, they created cohesion as well (*ibid.*). Additionally, Peltonen's (*ibid.*) study discovered that collaborative completions were crucial when an interlocutor indicated a shared perspective with their pair. Furthermore, collaborative completions were important in demonstrating agreement with something the other interlocutor had said (*ibid.*). Another study by Peltonen (2017b) has discovered similar results, which will be taken a closer look at next.

In another study, Peltonen (2017b) examined a larger sample of Finnish L2 learners of English. She investigated two L2 groups from different school levels, one group consisting of 16 ninth graders (G1) and the other group consisting of 26 learners in their second year of upper secondary school studies (G2). The focus of her study was on the ways with which L2 learners maintain speech fluency despite problems. The interactional task completed by the participants was a problem-solving task where subjects were required to rank items in order of importance, being a very similar task to the one of the present study. The results show that G2 performed overall more fluent

interactions, speaking faster and producing shorter and fewer turn pauses than G1 (Peltonen 2017b, 6). G2 speakers used more other-repetitions and fillers, which enhance interactional fluency by helping to maintain the flow of interaction (Peltonen 2017b, 10). As can be seen, the findings show that factors such as faster speech, cohesion creating tools, for example other-repetitions, and shorter pauses increase interactional fluency. Both of Peltonen's (2017a, 2017b) studies are particularly interesting for the present study, since she has also studied interactional fluency and moreover, with Finnish L2 learners of English. The findings of her studies also demonstrate how the interlocutors construct the flow of speech in interaction collaboratively.

Having elaborated how fluency is defined in interaction, next a study comparing the characteristics of monologue and interactional fluency will be introduced. Tavakoli's (2016) goal was to discover if both monologue and interactional fluency are characterized by the same fluency aspects. The 35 participants of her study were university students who were L2 speakers of English. The participants had diverse L1 backgrounds. The subjects performed two tasks, one of which was monologic and the other dialogic. The monologic task was to retell a past experience, the topic of the experience being given and not chosen freely by the participants. In the dialogic task, the participants were to position themselves either for or against a certain topic. The performances were then recorded, and the data were transcribed for the analysis. Tavakoli's (2016, 146) study revealed that the L2 speakers of English were more fluent in the interactive tasks than in the monologic ones. She specifies that the interactions were more fluent "in terms of speed, length of pause and repair measures" (Tavakoli 2016, 146). Additionally, she discovered that longer runs of speech and more filled pauses were performed in the interactions than in the monologues (*ibid.*). She states that when measuring fluency, it might not be the most successful way to use the same measures for dialogic and monologic speech (Tavakoli 2016, 148). Tavakoli (2016, 147–148) concludes that in interaction, several other factors affect the fluency than just the flow and speed of speech, which are common characteristics of monologic fluency. Of these other factors, she has mentioned fewer reparations and more filled pauses. (Tavakoli 2016, 148). The findings of Tavakoli's study indicate why it is important to study fluency from an interactive perspective, which is what the present study also contributes to.

2.3 Fluency across L1 and L2

Studies comparing L1 and L2 fluency from the same learners are quite rare overall. It is even more exceptional to study this comparison in an interactional context. The present study is interested in examining this relationship between L1 and L2 interactional fluency and therefore, some

characteristics and earlier studies on the matter must be taken into account. Thus, in this section, some common understandings of the said relationship are presented together with studies on the topic.

In their study, Derwing et al. (2009, 534) argue that fluency “is a language-specific state” (ibid.) and that a learner’s L2 fluency is not determined by the degree of their fluency in their L1, for example. They state that a speaker can, in fact, be very fluent in one language and dysfluent in another (ibid.). However, they also acknowledge that the features of fluency differ so that while some features might be more trait-like, other features might be more state-like (ibid.) This is an interesting aspect considering the second research question of the present study, which examines the possible differences and similarities in question use between L1 and L2 speech.

Derwing et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal study of two years comparing L1 and L2 English fluency. The participants of the study were from three different L1s: Slavic-speakers (consisting of Russian- and Ukrainian-speakers) and Mandarin-speakers. All the participants had immigrated to Canada and were adults. The participants’ fluency was measured with fluency-ratings through monologue data. Their study found out that there was a relationship between L1 and L2 fluency at the early stages of exposure to the L2, that is English (Derwing et al. 2009, 552). However, they also discovered this relationship to be stronger among the Slavic-speakers than among the Mandarin-speakers (ibid.). The results of their study lead us to understand that there, in fact, might exist a relationship between L1 and L2 fluency. However, as can be seen, the languages in question might affect the strength of the relationship and whether it is noticeable or not. Their study compared fluency between L1 and L2 in monologues, whereas the present study aims at offering a new perspective by comparing L1 and L2 interactive fluency.

Peltonen (2018) investigated what kinds of connections exist between L1 speech fluency and L2 speech fluency. Her study utilized a mixed methods approach, and the data were monologue speech samples in both the participants’ L1 and L2. The participants were Finnish 9th graders and upper secondary school students, the total number of participants being 42. In the study, 13 different measures were examined from the speech samples, all of the measures capturing some aspect of fluency. Her study discovered that, to some degree, L1 fluency measures predict certain L2 fluency measures (Peltonen 2018, 689). Overall, the findings of her study suggest that L1 fluency plays an important role when explaining L2 fluency. She also implies that L1 fluency should be taken into account more often when studying L2 fluency and also in L2 pedagogy (Peltonen 2018, 690).

Peltonen’s study is particularly interesting for the present study because she investigated Finnish L2

learners of English whose L1 is Finnish, and the present study is also conducted in the Finnish context. Peltonen's (2018) study on the matter offers exclusive insight into the matter with Finnish learners.

In their longitudinal study, Huensch and Tracy-Ventura (2017) examined "the extent to which L1 fluency behavior, cross-linguistic differences, and proficiency predict L2 fluency behavior over time" (Huensch and Tracy-Ventura 2017, 756). They were interested in university students from the United Kingdom, and the participants spoke English as their L1. The study had 24 participants who studied L2 Spanish and 25 participants who studied L2 French at university level. The participants spent an academic year in countries where their L2 was spoken, L2 Spanish students either in Spain or Mexico and L2 French students in France. For data collection, L2 oral narrative tasks were recorded before and after the participants' exchange years, allowing the comparison of their L2 fluency and proficiency before and after living in a country where the L2 is spoken. In addition, the narrative was completed once in their L1 as well. To enable cross-linguistic comparisons between English, French and Spanish, two additional groups of L1 speakers of Spanish and French were included. These L1 groups completed the oral narrative task in their L1s. As a result, Huensch and Tracy-Ventura (2017, 774) discovered that both L2 groups' L2 proficiency and L2 fluency improved notably during their exchange. The L1 groups (English, Spanish, French) differentiated on some fluency measures, for example speech rate (Huensch and Tracy-Ventura 2017, 779). These differences have to do with the structures of their L1s and so, L1 can affect L2 fluency (*ibid.*). Their data were quite similar with the data of the present study, both studies having recorded speech samples, with the difference that their study utilized monologue data instead of interactional data. In addition, both studies investigated L2 speakers at university level. These factors make Huensch and Tracy-Ventura's results even more interesting regarding the present study, especially the finding that the structure of the L1 might indeed have an effect on L2 fluency. However, as already stated, their study investigated this phenomenon from a monologic perspective. The present study offers new insights into this topic by examining it from the perspective of interaction.

De Jong et al. (2015) examined if L2 measures considering oral fluency should be corrected for L1 fluency behavior. They suggest that this would reflect L2-specific processing (De Jong et al. 2015, 224). Regarding the L2 oral measures, they mention the number of filled pauses as an example (*ibid.*). De Jong et al. (*ibid.*) suggest that original ("uncorrected") L2 fluency measures might be composed of the speaker's personal style to speak and their L2-specific skills. They go on to elaborate that by linking ("corrected") L2 fluency measures to the speaker's L1 behavior, it would be possible to measure L2 processing more accurately (*ibid.*). Their study focused on investigating

utterance fluency, which was operationalized in two different ways. These were the original fluency measures (uncorrected) and measures that were adapted for L1 behavior (corrected). They “related both types of objective measures to a measure of L2 proficiency (vocabulary knowledge) to find out whether the corrected measures better reflect L2 cognitive fluency as indicators of L2 speaking proficiency” (De Jong et al. 2015, 225). They examined two different L1 groups (English and Turkish) who shared the same L2 (Dutch). They had chosen the L1s so that one would be topologically close to Dutch (English) and the other typologically distant from Dutch (Turkish). They elaborate that this was done in order to being able to distinguish possible differences between fluency behavior in the L1 and L2. The L1 speakers of Turkish or English performed tasks orally in their L1 as well as in their L2 (Dutch). Both of these tasks were similar to each other, allowing the comparison between languages. The study discovered that, to some extent, all fluency measures could be predicted from L1 behavior (De Jong et al. 2015, 236). These findings are relevant for the present study especially since the present study aims to compare the fluency of the same speakers using their L1 and their L2. The present study adds an interactive aspect to this comparison as well.

3 Interactional competence

This section will provide definitions on interactional competence, relating it to interactional fluency. Interactional competence is one of the frameworks used for studying L2 interaction. Moreover, the concept of interactional competence is crucial for the present study since questions are a way of organizing interaction, hence they have to do with interactional competence. First, in Section 3.1, some previous studies on this matter will be presented. Some common approaches to these topics, Conversation Analysis (CA) and CA-SLA, will also be briefly introduced. Lastly in Section 3.2, the concept of questions will be defined.

3.1 Previous studies on interactional competence

When studying conversations, the many aspects that affect interaction have to be taken into account. A broad and important concept considering these aspects is Interactional competence. In a study discussing this concept, Pekarek Doehler (2018, 5) states that interactional competence includes the practices and methods the interlocutors utilize in order to organize interaction. Furthermore, interactional competence relates to “turn-taking, disagreeing, repairing, opening or closing a conversation” (Pekarek Doehler 2018, 5). Interactional competence includes interactional fluency, which is understood as the joint efforts between participants to maintain the flow of speech across turns and also, to diminish silences between turns (Peltonen 2020, 31). Questions relate, for example, to the aforementioned turn-taking and disagreeing or agreeing on something, especially when dealing with the particular data utilized in this study. Additionally, questions are important for interactional fluency specifically. That is because questions are often directed at the interlocutor and therefore, can function as a way of engaging the other participant in the interaction and so maintain the flow of the conversation.

Continuing on how individuals can utilize their interactional competence, Roever and Kasper (2018, 334) conclude that “[p]articipants’ IC is their repertoire of methods and their ability to adapt them to the interactional context at hand.” By methods, they mean the generic, context-free tools with which speakers solve interactional problems (*ibid.*). According to their study, these methods for solving interactional problems form the basis of interactional competence. They also state that these methods are utilized always when turn-taking occurs, for example when a speaker takes a turn, gives an answer or shows that they follow the conversation. This makes IC particularly interesting in the light of the present study, since interactional competence is involved also in giving an answer, which is a central part of the questions in the present study. Roever and Kasper state that

interactional competence helps speakers to aim at achieving mutual understanding in their conversations (ibid.). When considering this present study, achieving mutual understanding in the conversations of the data is one of the main goals of the recorded interaction, and speaker's interactional competence is very relevant for that.

Understanding the basis of CA (Conversation Analysis) and CA-SLA (Conversation Analysis for Second Language Acquisition) is of importance in the present study, since it deals with interaction and questions, which usually require a response. The method often used for studying interactional competence is CA-SLA. In other words, the CA method is used in the field of SLA. Kasper and Wagner (2011, 117) mention in their article that in CA-SLA, the focus of research is on the social aspects of language learning. They elaborate that the procedures that interactional competence contains are the following: turn-taking, sequence organization, turn-construction, and repair (Kasper and Wagner 2011, 118). They highlight that these are interactional procedures. As Kasper and Wagner (2011) note in their article, in research, CA focuses primarily on analyzing talk-in-interaction as well as recorded interaction. The procedures mentioned above are important practices for CA because speakers "organize the intersubjective meaning of any activity or practice" through these practices (Kasper and Wagner 2011, 122). These practices are important in conversation and thus, they need to be considered when discussing interactional fluency. Of the procedures explained above, sequence organization is most closely linked to the present study since question-answer pairs are an essential part of the data.

Rossen et al. (2020, 722) elaborate that, in CA, interaction is seen as sequential, meaning that talk has some kind of temporal linearity, and that this is constructed turn by turn and with a certain order. Narrowing down the concept of the aforementioned sequence organization, Rossen et al. mention the concept of adjacency pairs, which are the unit made up of an utterance and the response the utterance requires (ibid.) They specify that "[f]or example, a question, an evaluation or a greeting, make relevant a certain type of response, for example, an answer, a (dis)agreement, or a greeting." (Rossen et al. 2020, 722). The present study is interested in adjacency pairs since question-answer pairs form an adjacency pair. Rossen et al. argue that the nature of interaction requires talk to be analyzed with respect to the turns surrounding a certain unit (ibid.). They reason this with saying that an interlocutor's response shows their understanding of the previous turn (ibid.). This is the reason why the present study includes qualitative analysis in addition to quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis considers the questions in their context by including the answer as well. Understanding the basis of CA and CA-SLA is of importance in the present

study, since it considers interaction and questions, which usually require a response. In the next subsection below, the concept of questions will be discussed more closely.

3.2 Defining questions

In this subsection, the concept of questions will be further examined. Questions play a central part in this study and therefore, it is essential to provide both a definition of questions as well as studies related to question use. However, how questions were approached in the data of the present study will be discussed more in detail in Section 4.

Questions can be recognized in several ways in speech as well as in writing and with the help of both grammatical and non-grammatical cues. In the following, a closer look will be taken at the definition of questions and how questions can be recognized. First, the term question will be defined. Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019) state that “a question asks for information and expects a linguistic response” (2019, 248). They further explain that questions are a type of independent clause, meaning that a question can function on its own without being a part of any larger clause structure (*ibid.*). In addition, they mention that independent clauses carry out speech-act functions, which for questions is to elicit information (*ibid.*). Next, we will take a closer look at the cues from which questions can be recognized.

The clause type of questions is interrogative clause (Biber, Conrad and Leech 2019, 248).

Therefore, questions can also be referred to as interrogative clauses, and the term will be used in the following text in combination with the term question. Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019) state that “an interrogative clause can be recognized by two structural cues, which often occur in combination: a VS (verb-subject) structure and an initial *wh*-word.” (2019, 249). They go on to elaborate that, in speech, rising intonation is a non-grammatical cue of a question while a question mark is a non-grammatical cue in writing (*ibid.*). Especially important from the perspective of the present study is their mention of the rising intonation in speech. It is an essential feature when studying questions in audio data, like has been done in the present study. Biber, Conrad and Leech (*ibid.*) declare that, for independent interrogative clauses, three main types can be found. These three types are *wh*-questions, alternative questions and *yes/no*-questions. They go on to explain that these three question types are most commonly used to elicit information (*wh*-questions), to ask if something is true or false (*yes/no*-questions) and to ask which of the possible options is the case in a particular situation (alternative questions) (*ibid.*). In addition to interrogative clauses, a declarative clause can also function as a question, therefore being called a declarative question (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2019, 249). The structure of this type of clause is SV (subject-verb) and especially in conversation,

declarative clauses can function as questions (ibid.). In speech, declarative questions can be recognized by rising intonation (ibid.). This makes declarative questions also an essential type of a question when studying question use in actual interaction.

Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019, 252) elaborate that, often, questions are more commonly used in conversation than in writing and that this is due to the interactive nature that conversation possesses. This high frequency of questions in speech makes it all the more interesting to study the effect of question use on interactional fluency. However, despite presenting the most common question types above, Biber, Conrad and Leech (ibid.) specify that almost half of the questions used in conversation are made up of fragments or tags.

Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019, 251) declare that question tags are not independent clauses and that they are used when the speaker wants to “seek confirmation of the statement the speaker has just uttered” (ibid.). They go on to explain that question tags are composed of operator + pronoun subject, the operator being “a repetition of the operator in the preceding declarative clause; if there is no operator, the dummy operator *do* is used” (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2019, 251–252). An example of a question tag would be the following (in bold):

We don’t need umbrellas, **do we?**

Table 1 below summarizes the division of these question categories in relation to the main categories to which they belong to.

Table 1. The question types under their main categories (main categories in bold)

interrogative clauses	declarative clauses	tags
<i>wh</i> -questions	declarative questions	-
alternative questions	-	-
<i>yes/no</i> -questions	-	-

Next, some question-related studies, which carry importance in the light of the present study, are presented. In her study, Dumitrescu (2016) discussed an action-reaction exchange in Spanish and Romanian interaction examples collected from several corpora. In particular, she examined the exchange of questions being answered by questions as the following reactive speech act. She identifies these reactive speech act questions as proper answers by the fact that they fulfil the information sought in the initial question. She called these Interrogative Echo Responses (IER) (Dumitrescu 2016, 208-209). By presenting examples from the corpora, Dumitrescu (2016)

exemplifies that an IER functions as an answer to the original question in the way that when the used IER is negative, it is understood as an affirmative response to the initial question and vice versa (Dumitrescu 2016, 209). She differentiates these IERs from other exploratives, for example from requests of clarification, by declaring that IERs actually fulfill the claim in the initial questions, which, for example, requests for clarification do not succeed in (Dumitrescu 2016, 208). This differentiation between questions used as answers needs to be taken into account also in the present study.

Questions are often utilized when speakers feel the need to discuss what is meant by an utterance. Gass (2013, 349) addresses that this negotiation of meaning occurs when interlocutors “need to interrupt the flow of the conversation in order for both parties to understand what the conversation is about” (Gass 2013, 349). Gass (2013, 350) argues that confirmation checks, comprehension checks and clarification requests are frequently used when native speakers are conversing with non-native speakers. This leads us to understand that they are used in conversations between non-native speakers as well. For example, ‘do you mean this?’ functions as a confirmation check, ‘do you know what I’m trying to say?’ acts as a comprehension check and ‘what do you mean?’ has the function of a clarification request. This kind of negotiation of meaning can be expected to occur in the data of the present study as well, especially in the L2 English interactions since the participants are speaking in a language of which they are non-native speakers.

4 Materials and methods

This section will provide more detailed information about the data, participants and the procedures of the present study. In Section 4.1, the participants will be introduced along with necessary background information. Following that in Section 4.2, the data collection will be elaborated further as well as the procedures which were done for the purposes of the present study. Finally, section 4.3 will present information on how the data were analyzed.

4.1 Participants

The participants consist of university students of English, the total number of participants included in the present study being 54. The participants participated in a larger project for which the data was also originally collected. The original project will be introduced more closely in Section 4.2. The following information regarding the participants is collected through a background questionnaire that the participants answered prior to the actual research data. 46 of the participants studied English as their major subject, with eight participants being minor students of English. On average, all participants had also studied English for a long period of time before entering university studies, the time range being from nine years to 15 years of prior studies, the average being 10 years. This is, of course, also due to the Finnish education system that includes English as an obligatory subject already at an early stage of basic education. The years studied English at university level was 0,5 years on average, the vast majority of the participants being on their first year of university studies and one participant reporting six years of English university studies. Almost each participant reported their L1 to be Finnish, with just one participant saying their L1 is Swedish. The pair with the L1 Swedish participant was excluded from the present study in order to enable the comparison aspect between L1 Finnish and L2 English. Thus, the present study included 54 participants from the 56 participants who had participated in the original data collection. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 40 years, the average age being 22. The questionnaire also asked the participants' self-assessments on their English proficiency. The assessment was made regarding the following skills: listening, reading, speech production, discussing and writing. The participants had to rate these skills on a scale from one (=weak) to five (=excellent). The average rating of these skills was four, reading rated as the most proficient on average (4,4) and speech production as the least proficient on average (3,7). The participants also completed a LexTale vocabulary test, which will be introduced in the next section. As for the LexTale results, the percentages can be altered to the CEFR's proficiency levels based on Lemhöfer and Broersma's (2012) article. Thus, the LexTale

results offer an overview of the participants' English proficiency, which was very high, the level being C1/C2 on average. None of the participants reported having any language impairments.

4.2 Data collection and preparation

For the present study, an already existing data set was used. The data utilized here were originally collected for a project called Fluency and Disfluency Features in L2 Speech (FDF2). FDF2 is a research project carried out in the Department of English at the University of Turku, and it is funded by the Academy of Finland (decision number 331903). The data consist of 54 audio files in total, all of which are interactions done in pairs, and each pair's discussion is based on one of two tasks. 27 of the audio files (interactions) are in English and 27 are in Finnish, so there are two audio files per pair, one in English and one in Finnish. The fact that there are recordings both in English and in Finnish by each pair enables the comparison between languages as well as between question use in L1 and L2.

As a part of participating in the data collection, the participants' vocabulary proficiency was tested with a lexical test called LexTALE (Lexical Test for Advanced Learners of English) which is developed by Lemhöfer and Broersma (2012). In addition, all participants had to answer an online questionnaire collecting background information. The interactional data was collected by research assistants, who had precise instructions considering the recording situations. The participants were in pairs of two, having dialogues about a given topic in the form of problem-solving tasks (elaborated below). The conversations of each pair were recorded and videotaped, but the video tapes are not necessary for the purposes of this present study and therefore, were not used. Regarding that, research ethics are discussed later on in this section. When recording the discussion data, the participants were given one of two possible tasks to discuss, both provided with short instructions on what they were expected to do. Overall, each pair completed two different tasks in total, one in their L1 and one in their L2. The tasks are presented in Appendices 1 and 2. The order of tasks and languages was counterbalanced across the participants, meaning that some pairs did the L1 task first and the L2 task second, and other pairs did them the other way around. Also, some pairs started with the desert island task and some pairs with the space task.

In the tasks, the participants had to discuss the necessity of given items when being either on the Moon or on a desert island. During their interaction, they had to rank the items in order of importance, from the most important item to the least important. The number of given items in both scenarios was sixteen. The participants had two minutes to individually prepare in advance, and they were given about six minutes for the actual discussion. The discussion was interrupted only to

inform the participants when they have about one minute of time left. Otherwise, the responsibility of the course of discussion was on the participants themselves. It needs to be noted here that the pairs were made up quite randomly, but they were familiar with each other on some level. How well they knew each other in advance might, however, affect the pair's dynamics and so affect the fluency of the interaction as well. Despite that, this present study does not examine the pairs' familiarity with each other because no such information was requested as part of the original data collection.

Research ethics have to be considered when dealing with data including personal information, and the present study has also taken that aspect into account. Before having been given access to the data, I signed a Data User Agreement with information and instructions on how to handle the data to best protect the participants' privacy. I did not have access to the full project data set but only to the recorded interactions and the participants' background information. Having access to the whole data collected for the FDF2 project would not have been necessary for the present study. Although one's voice is considered as identifying information, for the purposes of the present study access has been given only on the audio files, not on the videos that have been recorded of the discussions. This protects the participants' privacy. In addition, the background information does not include any information from which the participants could be identified. The anonymity of the participants has been protected by identifying them only by participant numbers in all of the data. Moreover, no personal information is presented in the data. Before data collection, the participants had to sign a consent form including a privacy notice detailing how personal information would be handled. Hence, the participants were informed how the data will be used and what for. Moreover, participation in the data collection was optional, and the participants had the right to decline their participation. Next, how the data was handled in this thesis will be explained.

For the purposes of this present study, the data, both English and Finnish audio files, were first transcribed, so that all the relevant information necessary for this study would be available in the transcriptions. The transcriptions were made following the guidelines prepared for the projects used at the English department, including the FDF2 project as well. In the transcriptions for the present study, some details were not included because they were irrelevant for the transcriptions. For example, the length of pauses was calculated by ear (short, medium, 1 second or longer) because more specific calculations of pauses and silences would have been irrelevant for this present study. The conversations were transcribed by two different people, me and another student who also utilized the same data for their Master's thesis. The audio files were divided in half by our supervisor so that each transcriber did the same number of transcriptions. After completing the

transcriptions, they were cross-checked by me and the other student. This was done to secure that the transcriptions are accurate and to increase the reliability of the analyses.

4.3 Data analysis

In the discussions, the participants had to reach agreement on the necessity of the given items. Due to the nature of the discussions, questions could be expected to be a frequent feature in them. That made the use of questions interesting in that particular data, which led to selecting question use in interaction as the topic of the present study. The topic is also partially based on earlier studies, since questions can tell us something about interactional competence and interactional fluency. Next, how questions were approached and selected from the data will be elaborated.

After completing the transcription process, the questions presented in the data were identified and categorized. The categories were created based on the definitions of questions by Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019) presented earlier in Section 3.2 of this thesis. Of course, the types of questions that emerged from the data also affected the creation of the categories to some extent. The question type fragments mentioned in Section 3.2 by Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019) was not included because no questions emerged from the data that would have suited that category. The categories utilized in this study are the following (structural characteristics and main function of each type defined by Biber Conrad and Leech (2019) in brackets): *wh*-questions (VS-structure, elicit information), alternative questions (VS-structure, which option is the case), *yes/no*-questions (VS-structure, truthfulness), declarative questions (SV-structure and rising intonation) and tags (operator + pronoun subject, seek confirmation). These were the categories for both the English and the Finnish data. It needs to be noted that the same structural characteristics do not apply for the Finnish questions but nonetheless, the Finnish questions fall into these categories seamlessly, as will be explained below. Table 2 below provides examples of the possible questions of each category. The examples are selected from the data and thus, the pair numbers are provided in brackets.

Table 2. Example questions of each category

Category (word order)	Example question
<i>Wh</i> -questions (V–S)	<i>What was it?</i> (67–65)
Alternative questions (V–S)	<i>Was the knife or the first aid kit?</i> (63–61)
<i>Yes/no</i> -questions (V–S)	<i>Can you do that in space?</i> (55–53)
Declarative questions (S–V)	<i>The first aid kit is eleven?</i> (57–81)
Tags	<i>It's like 24/7 lighted, isn't it?</i> (28–74)

There are some issues that need to be noted when discussing the identification and collection of questions and these will be explained next. First of all, an utterance was counted as a question only if the utterance functioned as a question as a whole. For example, if the speaker started an utterance with what seems to be a question, but it ended up not functioning as one, it was not counted as a question. For example, an utterance like “but what is (.) it’s a boat (.) it’s dry on the Moon” (Pair 55–53), the “but what is” was not counted as a question because it was not completed. In addition, utterances that started off as one type of question but, before being completed, ended up as a question of another type were counted as one single question, not as two separate questions. In other words, only the latter question in these cases was counted and categorized. For example, “yeah and then what (0.) which of these would be good for the (.) three hundred kilometers (0.) we will have to?” (Pair 46–48) was counted as one question, that being a *wh*-question. Thus, the first *wh*-word “what” was not counted as a question since it was not completed. In addition, questions presented by the research assistant (“are you done?”) or questions made for the assistant (for example, asking what they were meant to do) were not counted in the data. These questions were very rare, but this needs to be noted since there were a few situations like this. They were excluded because they were not contributing to the fluency or disfluency of the participants’ interaction in any way.

Since the present study compared the use of questions between the L2 English and L1 Finnish speech, a brief look at questions from the perspective of Finnish grammar must be taken as well. Hakulinen et al. (2004, 1588) state that in Finnish, an interrogative clause can be recognized by an interrogative pronoun or an enclitic particle. Next, I will briefly elaborate how the Finnish question types correspond to the English ones and what was the logic for placing the Finnish questions into the same categories as the English ones.

Hakulinen et al. (2004, 1591) use the term search query questions (*hakukysymykset*) for referring to questions that start with an interrogative pronoun, for example “Mitä mieltä olet?” (“What do you think?”). Hence, these types of questions in the Finnish data are placed under the category of *Wh*-questions, because that is the category for eliciting information in both languages. Hakulinen et al. (2004, 1590) refer to one question type as disjunctive questions. These types of questions give two alternatives and expect the repetition of one of the options as an answer. As can be seen, this question type corresponds to the alternative questions of English and hence, disjunctive questions occurring in the Finnish interactions were categorized under Alternative questions. In the Finnish language, one way to mark questions is by using enclitic particles (for example *-ko*, *-kö*). In the Finnish context, these are called polar interrogative clauses and these types of questions relate to the

acceptance of the proposition presented in the clause (Hakulinen et al. 2004, 1589). Enclitic particles can be attached to a finite verb, the auxiliary *be*, to a negative verb, or to a nominal clause or adverb phrase (Hakulinen et al. 2004, 1597). Hakulinen et al. (2004, 1590) state that these kinds of questions can be answered with, for example, *yeah* or *no*, therefore either accepting or declining the proposition of the clause. For this reason, in the Finnish data questions with enclitic particles are categorized into the category of Yes/no-questions, because they function very similarly and the expected answer is in line with the equivalent English question type. Declarative clauses can be interpreted as questions also in the Finnish language (Hakulinen et al. 2004, 1152). Hakulinen et al. (ibid.) explain that the recipient can ask for the speaker to elaborate their utterance or check if they have interpreted the utterance correctly. They elaborate that this can be done by using a declarative sentence or only by using a single word (ibid.). In Finnish, these questions are marked with rising intonation like in English as well. With this being said, this Finnish question type is equivalent to the English one and therefore, in the Finnish data, these kinds of questions are categorized into the Declarative questions -category. Questions in the Finnish interactions that functioned in the same way as tag questions in English, that is as seeking confirmation for what has been just said, were counted as tags. With all that being said, the Finnish questions were placed into the same categories as the English ones because the functions of the Finnish questions correspond to the functions of the English questions. Hence, the same category names can be applied for questions in both languages.

The questions in the English and Finnish transcriptions were collected separately, but the same procedure was followed with both languages. After creating the categories, all questions were collected from the transcriptions. After collecting the questions, they were color-coded according to the category they belonged to. This was done in Excel where the questions were placed in their suited categories pair by pair so that the overall number of questions as well as the number of questions in all the categories was visible with each pair. This made it possible to calculate both the overall number of questions and the number of questions by pair. The L1 and L2 questions were collected into separate tables. The collection and categorization of the questions was done manually.

As for analyzing the data, a mixed-methods approach was utilized. Mixed methods research allows combining “numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data.” (Dörnyei 2007, 45). He suggests that by using a mixed-methods approach, it is possible to get a more detailed view due to the features of qualitative (words) and quantitative (numbers) methods complimenting each other (ibid.) In the analysis of the present study, the mixed methods strategy utilized for analyzing the data is data transformation. Dörnyei (2007, 269) explains that in data

transformation, “qualitative data is turned into quantitative and vice versa”. In the present study, qualitative data is transformed into quantitative, which is called “quantitizing data” (Dörnyei 2007, 269). Dörnyei (ibid.) adds that this method is common among qualitative researchers when they want to include some numerical information of some aspects of their data. This is what the present study also desires to do. The present study reports quantitatively the numbers of different questions occurring in qualitative data, the interactions. In other words, a certain aspect of the qualitative data is quantified. To accompany the numerical results of the data, qualitative examples are provided in the analysis as well, forming the qualitative part of this mixed methods study.

5 Results and discussion

This section of the thesis will present the results of the present study as well as discuss them, relating them also to earlier studies on the matter. First, Section 5.1 presents a general view of the questions that emerged from the L2 data, answering the first research question from the L2 perspective. The first research question was “*to what extent do advanced learners of English use different question types to maintain interactional fluency in L1 Finnish and L2 English interactions?*”. Section 5.1 will include a more detailed, qualitative view on the question types that emerged from the data. Thus, in Section 5.1, the results from the L2 English data will be presented and discussed. Section 5.2 follows the same pattern but with the L1 Finnish data. Lastly, these will be compared in Section 5.3.

5.1 Question use in L2 interaction

In the L2 English interactions, the total amount of questions was 546. As can be seen from Table 3 below, the category containing the highest number of questions was declarative questions, the number being 232 questions, whereas the category with the lowest number of questions was tags, containing 2 questions in total.

Table 3. The distribution of questions between pairs and categories in the L2 English interactions

L2 pairs	wh-q.	alternative q.	yes/no-q.	declarative q.	tags	total per pair
45_47	2	0	4	4	0	10
46_48	5	0	0	1	0	6
55_53	9	2	16	11	1	39
56_60	4	0	5	5	0	14
54_51	5	0	6	6	0	17
30_58	8	1	6	6	0	21
57_81	6	1	3	4	0	14
62_77	4	0	2	0	0	6
63_61	11	1	5	5	0	22
66_69	4	0	1	2	0	7
67_65	10	1	0	4	0	15
26_75	15	0	9	4	0	28
28_74	10	0	9	10	1	30
41_32	2	1	5	0	0	8
76_40	4	0	1	7	0	12
80_82	6	0	2	5	0	13

L2 pairs	wh-q.	alternative q.	yes/no-q.	declarative q.	tags	total per pair
36_42	2	0	3	23	0	28
37_25	9	2	5	21	0	37
29_38	7	3	1	22	0	33
27_34	0	0	1	16	0	17
14_05	9	0	10	7	0	26
17_21	3	0	9	14	0	26
19_12	11	1	17	12	0	41
6_4	8	0	3	23	0	34
9_10	7	2	1	8	0	18
71_72	2	0	4	2	0	8
78_73	3	2	1	10	0	16
in total	166	17	129	232	2	546

Table 3 above shows that there was great variation in how many questions the pairs posed during their interactions. As can be seen, the highest number of questions among the pairs was 41, the lowest number being 6. The average number of questions used by the participants was 20.2. Table 3 also demonstrates how the distribution of questions between the categories was not even. As for answering the first research question, it seems that the pairs used a variety of different question types to maintain fluency in their L2 discussions. Also, questions were used frequently, leading to the interpretation that they help L2 learners to maintain the flow of conversation. However, it needs to be kept in mind that the nature of the task also encourages the speakers to ask questions. This is because the interlocutors need to reach agreement and questions help in that. On the other hand, asking questions can help the speakers overcome difficulties in their speech and so keep the interaction efficient. As the average number of questions by pairs was quite high as well, it seems that the pairs' interactional competence was quite high, meaning that they can modify their speech (in this case, ask many questions) according to the task at hand. Next, each question type will be discussed in more detail.

5.1.1 The effect of question use on L2 interactional fluency

The following subsections will present the results by question type and discuss them further category by category, focusing solely on the L2 data. The findings of the present investigation will also be related to earlier studies on the matter. Section 5.1.2 will discuss *wh*-questions, followed by Section 5.1.3 examining alternative questions. After these, Section 5.1.4 will present results and

discussion on *yes/no*-questions, followed by Section 5.1.5 presenting results on declarative questions. Lastly, Section 5.1.6 examines tags.

5.1.2 *Wh*-questions

Overall, the L2 data contained 166 *wh*-questions. The most frequent type of *wh*-question was to ask the interlocutor's opinion on or knowledge of something, hence the typical purpose of *wh*-questions, to seek information (Biber, Conrad and Leech 2019, 249). As can be seen from Table 3 above, there was one pair who did not ask any *wh*-questions (pair 27–34). This is interesting, since *wh*-questions are very natural considering the goal of the pairs, reaching agreement, as well as the nature of the discussions, which is to rank items. Both of these factors require acknowledging the opinion of the other interlocutor, which also was a common reason for the pairs to ask these questions. Thus, it could be assumed that the pair is not interactionally very competent which leads to their interaction being less fluent as well.

Example 1 below demonstrates a very typical and frequently occurring *wh*-question in the data. B asks A if a certain object would be suitable as the next item to take with them (to the Moon). A answers this question with some uncertainty due to the fact that B does not have any definite knowledge whether rope would be useful or not. As for the pause markings, (.) marks a micropause shorter than 0.25 seconds, (0.) marks a short pause of 0.25–1.00 seconds, and (1) marks a long pause of more than 1.00 seconds, the number in brackets being the estimated pause duration in seconds.

(1)

B: what about (.) rope? (2)

A: well that could be (0.) depends on (0.) what kind of terrain there is (0.)

(Pair 46–48)

Another example of a *wh*-question is presented in Example 2 below, where a *wh*-question (in bold) is used to answer a previous question. In the third turn, B asks if the boat can float (on the Moon) and A answers it by giving the needed information and also by asking a *wh*-question in response.

(2)

A: actually (.) you know what? (.) the boat maybe has air in it (.)

A: so (.) at least the boat is before the [whistle]

B: [wait] (0.) can it like (0.) float?

A: no it's (.) it's a motor boat (.) isn't it? (2) **how would it float?** [there]

B: [like] (0.)

B: there's the (2) okay never mind haha
(Pair 55–53)

The *wh*-question A gives as a response is what Dumitrescu (2016, 209) calls an Interrogative Echo Response (IER). IERs can be considered as proper answers because they answer the previous question so that the sought information is fulfilled (Dumitrescu 2016, 208-209). The *wh*-question (IER) given by A expresses their opinion indirectly, the question implying that it would be impossible for the boat to float on the Moon. Thus, A answers B's question about whether the boat can float or not with an IER, instead of saying no directly. The exchange is then continued by B trying to explain their thoughts but B gives up, probably realizing that A is right. This is indicated by the abandoned part "there's the" and the "okay never mind" in the last line.

As stated previously, *wh*-questions were very frequent in the data, which can be due to the nature of the interactions: the interlocutors had to make a list of the most necessary items, and this requires agreement. Reaching agreement, on its part, requires questions (or suggestions) which aim at finding out what the other speaker thinks about a certain matter as well, as illustrated in Example 1. As Roever and Kasper (2018, 334) state, giving an answer is one way to solve interactional problems and that knowing the methods to solve these problems is at the base of a speaker's IC. They add that IC helps interlocutors to achieve mutual understanding (ibid.). Considering these statements, the participants in the present study are interactionally competent, providing answers to questions. This, on its part, adds the fluency of the interaction overall. In addition to increasing interactional fluency, giving answers to questions presented by the other interlocutor also helps the participants to accomplish the task of choosing the best items.

5.1.3 Alternative questions

In the data, there were 17 alternative questions in total and there were 11 pairs that presented these questions in their interactions. These alternative questions present at least two options from which the interlocutor can choose and typically, they ask which of these options applies in a given situation (Biber, Conrad and Leech 2019, 249). Considering the nature of the interactions, it could have been expected that alternative questions occurred more frequently, since it would be logical to ask between two or more items in the list of given objects to find out what the interlocutor thinks. However, this turned out not to be the case.

Example 3 below demonstrates an exchange where an alternative question (in bold) is used and answered. The pair was discussing whether to place a pot, fishing rod or hammer and nails as their

next item on their list. They pondered different perspectives, which led to the exchange in Example 3. In their turn, A starts with asking a *wh*-question but does not give B an opportunity to answer it. Instead, A goes on to ask a question presenting two different options of what could be the next item on the list. A uses the alternative question to specify the previous *wh*-question and thus, an answer can be expected to the alternative one rather than the *wh*-question. As for answering A's question, B also ignores the first *wh*-question and goes straight to answering the alternative one, choosing one of the given options as their answer. In the third turn, B continues by justifying their choice.

(3)

A: I don't think like so which one is it? (0.) **is it the pot or the hammer and the nails?**

B: I feel like the pot is more important than the hammer

B: because it's it can be useful like if you have like fish and something

(Pair 57–81)

Here, B does as is expected with responding to alternative questions and chooses one of the two given options as their answer. This keeps the interaction smooth, increasing the fluency of the interaction. However, because there were very few alternative questions presented in the data, it might mean that, for some reason, the participants did not feel comfortable asking these kinds of questions. Another reason could be that asking alternative questions did not feel natural for the participants, although using them would have been very natural considering the nature of the data. This could signal a weakness in their L2 IC. On the other hand, however, the participants are very proficient in their L2, so it would be unlikely that almost every participant would feel uncomfortable using alternative questions in the L2.

5.1.4 Yes/no-questions

Yes/no-questions were the third most frequently used question type in the L2 English data with 129 questions in total. As mentioned in Section 3.2, Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019, 249) stated that *yes/no*-questions ask whether something is true or false. In the data, *yes/no*-questions were usually related to two aspects and these were the given items or the imagined environment (the Moon or desert island). The next example demonstrates a typical exchange of turns with the first turn including an incomplete *yes/no*-question relating to the items.

(4)

A: Okay mm **do we need the?**

B: [Mm]

B: Kettle

A: [What] is this? pot

B: The pot eh
 A: [Yeah]
 A: n (.) not necessarily but
 B: [Yeah] no maybe not
 (Pair 63–61)

Peltonen (2017a, 131) discovered that in interaction, collaborative completions create cohesion. This can be seen in Example 4 above, where A does not remember the word for an item and B completes A's question with giving the name of the item. Right after B's turn, A also names the item with B repeating it, giving confirmation that they are talking about the same item. After these turns, A answers the question for themselves, followed by B expressing agreement with A's own answer to the question. Overall, this turn-exchange including a collaborative completion, followed by mutual answers to the question, demonstrates that both interlocutors take part in keeping the interaction flow fluently and effortlessly. This example demonstrates how the interlocutors express agreement with each other in the interaction. Peltonen's (ibid.) study also discovered that collaborative completions were important in expressing agreement with the interlocutor's utterance as well as in demonstrating a shared perspective with the other interlocutor. Her findings are also visible in the L2 interactions of the present study.

(5)

B: [So :] *pt* **do we put the star map after the first aid kit?** and before the flashlight what do you think?
 A: Hm maybe before the flashlight but I don't know if they should go before the: rope
 (Pair 56–50)

Example 5 above demonstrates another typical type of *yes/no*-questions in the data. As can be seen, B asks A's opinion on their order of items. A takes the turn, starting with a filled pause "hm" which gives A time to ponder their answer without actually breaking the flow between turns. The turn-taking remains smooth due to the filled pause and A's answer gives the desired information, which is their opinion on the order of items. As Rossen et al (2020, 722) stated, the required response, in this case an answer, to an utterance, a question, proves that the interlocutor has understood the other speaker's previous utterance. As Example 5 shows, this adjacency pair makes the interaction more fluent.

5.1.5 Declarative questions

Declarative questions occurred most frequently in the L2 English conversation, the overall number of questions belonging to this category being over 200. These were presented almost by every pair,

two pairs presenting zero declarative questions. The fact that two pairs did not present any declarative questions in their interactions is interesting, especially when considering the large number of declarative questions overall. The pairs with no declarative questions presented very few other question types as well. This can lead to the assumption that the pairs with few questions overall were less interactionally fluent compared to pairs with plenty of questions.

The interaction in Example 6 includes two separate declarative clauses, the first in the first turn and the second in the third turn. Both questions are presented by the same speaker. The first declarative question is signaled by rising intonation in speech, which is a typical way of recognizing declarative questions in speech (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2019, 249). The second declarative question is made up of one word “yeah”, and it is also recognized in speech from rising intonation. Within these turns, this second question functions as a (minimal) confirmation check since A aims at seeking confirmation from B on their decision. Gass (2013, 349) states that confirmation checks, which are a part of meaning for negotiation, are needed when both speakers need to be sure of their understanding of the conversation. This is what A aims at when checking B’s comprehension on the matter.

(6)

A: So that’s the next one and then after that (0.) **maybe a flashlight?**

B: Okay

A: **Yeah?** (0.) cause then we will see also in the dark

B: Yes

(Pair 78–73)

Another example below demonstrates a declarative question used as a way of asking what an item is. Instead of using a *wh*-question, the speaker forms the utterance by rising intonation, thus indicating a question to the other interlocutor. The pair is discussing the function of the items in general and in Example 7, they are wondering the function of the last item they have not yet discussed. The pair was discussing the desert island -task.

(7)

A: I’m not sure what the (0.) last thing is **I don't know if they are like torches or something?**

B: Yeah I: I think it could be some kind of an (.) eh emergency torch or something
(pair 66–69)

In the above example, A’s declarative question functions as a comprehension check in the way that A indirectly asks B whether they know what they are talking about. On the other hand, A also

indirectly asks B for the name of the of the item. B answers by fulfilling the missing information, saying that the item might actually be some kind of a torch. This negotiation for meaning actually keeps the discussion going and prevents unnecessary silent pauses. Asking the question also increases the adequacy of the communication. As Pallotti (2009, 599) highlighted, adequacy relates to how appropriate an utterance is in terms of communicative goals. Here, as well as in the data in general, questions are very appropriate considering the goal of the tasks, which is to reach mutual agreement between the interlocutors. This requires solving communicative problems, negotiation for meaning and simply ask for the other speaker's opinion. Questions are very convenient for these purposes and thus, increase adequacy of the communication. This, on its part, increases interactional fluency.

5.1.6 Tags

Tags appeared very rarely in the L2 data with only two occurrences, both presented by different pairs. In Example 8 below, several questions are presented and thus, the tag is bolded for clarity. The pair is discussing the task related to the Moon.

(8)

A: Well how about the lamp?

B: I mean we're on the lighted side of the moon (1) and it's like it's 24/7 lighted **isn't it?**

B: Because it's in the same spot I guess no

A: But I wonder if the mother ship is somewhere that's not on the lighted side?

B: [Is it is it lighted possibly]?

B: True yeah the lamp let's go with the lamp

(Pair 28–74)

In the second turn, B answers A's question presented in the first turn and asks a tag question as well. By presenting the tag question, B asks for reassurance for their claim that there is always light on the same side of the Moon and before giving the interlocutor space to speak, B continues their turn by justifying their claim. A continues with another question (declarative question). The example above demonstrates the exchange of questions and how the interlocutors are able to come up with a solution with the help of asking questions from one another. According to Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019, 252), tag questions are very frequent in conversation, making up almost half of the questions used in interaction. Considering this claim, it can be assumed that tags are quite a natural part of conversation, which makes it interesting that only two tags occurred in the data of the present study, presented only by two pairs. The absence of tag questions in the data can be due to the non-nativeness of the speakers, meaning that tag questions did not come naturally when

speaking in their L2. Furthermore, this can lead us to think that their L2 interactional fluency could have been increased with using more tags, since using tags is natural in speech.

5.2 Question use in L1 interaction

In this subsection, the results regarding the L1 Finnish data will be presented in more detail along with a discussion on the findings. First, a general view of the questions in the interactions will be presented, aiming at answering the first research question from the perspective of the L1 Finnish data. The first research question was “*to what extent do advanced learners of English use different question types to maintain interactional fluency in L1 Finnish and L2 English interactions?*”. This will be followed by a closer look at the questions category by category.

Table 4. The distribution of questions between pairs and categories in the L1 Finnish interactions

L1 pairs	wh-q.	alternative	yes/no-q.	declarative	tags	total per pair
45_47	2	0	2	3	0	7
46_48	4	0	3	1	2	10
55_53	6	1	10	5	0	22
56_50	7	1	8	1	0	17
54_51	1	2	7	8	0	18
30_58	3	0	12	1	0	16
57_81	5	1	7	2	0	15
62_77	2	1	4	0	0	7
63_61	1	0	10	5	0	16
66_69	4	0	3	0	0	7
67_65	7	0	6	2	0	15
26_75	2	2	4	2	0	10
28_74	7	2	10	2	1	22
41_32	3	1	4	3	0	11
76_40	1	1	3	2	0	7
80_82	4	0	5	4	0	13
29_38	10	0	8	8	0	26
36_42	8	0	9	9	0	26
37_25	6	1	6	8	0	21
27_34	7	1	8	6	0	22
14_05	4	0	15	3	0	22
17_21	6	0	12	3	0	21
19_12	8	4	13	5	0	30
6_4	12	0	10	4	0	26

L1 pairs	wh-q.	alternative	yes/no-q.	declarative	tags	total per pair
9_10	2	0	8	2	0	12
71_72	7	0	1	0	0	8
78_73	6	1	6	4	0	17
in total	135	19	194	93	3	444

As can be seen from Table 4 above, the total number of questions in the Finnish data was 444. The highest number of questions presented by a pair is 30, whereas the lowest number of questions is seven, with four pairs having seven questions in their L1 interactions. The average number of questions presented by the pairs is 8,4. As visible from Table 4, the distribution of questions into categories was not even but rather varied. As for answering the first research question, the pairs use different question types in their L1 interactions quite extensively, which can facilitate maintaining interactional fluency. However, the average number of questions presented by the pairs is rather low. This can be due to, for example, a more familiar vocabulary which results in less negotiations for meaning or comprehension checks. Nevertheless, when considering the overall numbers of the question types, it can be said that L2 learners of English also use questions in L1 interactions to maintain interactional fluency. In the following subsections, questions emerging from the L1 data will be viewed in detail.

5.2.1 The effect of question use on L1 interactional fluency

The following subsections present the findings from the L1 Finnish data more in detail as well as discuss them in the light of previous studies. This section follows the same organization as Section 5.1, which is analyzing the findings category by category, starting with *wh*-questions in 5.2.2, followed by alternative questions in 5.2.3, *yes/no*-questions in 5.2.4, declarative questions in 5.2.5 and ending with tags in 5.2.6.

5.2.2 *Wh*-questions

In the data, there were 135 *wh*-questions in total and these were presented by every pair. This is quite understandable when considering the nature of the interactions; the goal was, indeed, to reach agreement on the items. These *wh*-questions most often suggested an item to the interlocutor or asked what would be the next item.

(9)

A: [mikäs sit] sen jälkeen tuli?

B: öö ruoka ja vesi
(Pair 9–10)

Example 9 above represents a typical type of *wh*-question in the L1 data. It shows A asking B what was the next item on their list, followed by B giving the needed information in their answer. This exchange fulfills the purpose of *wh*-questions, which also in Finnish is to elicit information (Hakulinen et al. 2004, 1591). In terms of the L1 data, a rarer kind of *wh*-question can be seen in Example 10 below. The exchange concerns the weather conditions on a desert island.

(10)

A: **kuinkahan lämmin siel on?** no siel on varmaan kohtuu lämmin
A: ku siäl on banaanipuita ja kookospalmui (0.) nii
B: totta
(pair 28–74)

In the above example, A's *wh*-question is wondering about how warm it is on the desert island. Right after asking the question, A goes on to answer it themselves before B gets an opportunity to answer. A answers their own question by stating that it probably is quite warm and justifies this assumption by saying that there are banana trees and coconut palms. In the last line, B shows agreement by saying true. In this example, the other interlocutor does not actually answer the question presented. This is because the speaker who presented the question answers it themselves. Therefore, B participates by showing agreement with A. However, B showing agreement is important for the flow of the conversation. The fact that B indicates agreement instead of staying silent enables the discussion to continue effortlessly and leaves no room for uncertainty between the interlocutors.

5.2.3 Alternative questions

In the L1 Finnish data, there were 19 alternative questions presented in total, and these were presented by 13 different pairs. These questions were varied in the interactions, so that participants sometimes asked about which one of certain items should be next on their list, what a certain item was called, or just general alternative questions relating to the task at hand or the structure of the conversation. In Example 11 below, A presents an alternative question about how to proceed with the discussion.

(11)

A: okei (.) ömm (0.) **lähetäänkö me silleen (0.) mikä on tärkein vai (0.) vähiten tärkein?**

B: ehk sil tärkeimmäl tai (0.) sillee mä ainaki aattelin
(Pair 19–12)

In the above example, A asks a question with two alternative options on how to start listing the important items. More specifically, A asks whether they should start listing the items with the most important item or the least important one. B answers this question by choosing one of the given alternatives, B's answer being that they should maybe start with the most important item. This exchange fulfills the purpose of alternative questions very well, since alternative questions expect the repetition of one of the options as an answer (Hakulinen et al. 2004, 1590) This exchange is very smooth and by giving an appropriate answer, B enables efficient interaction. Furthermore, Rossen et al. (2020, 722) noted that an interlocutor's response to an utterance demonstrates their understanding of the previous turn. Hence, by answering appropriately B shows that they have understood A's question correctly. This on its part adds to the fluency of the interaction by not causing unnecessary confusion, for example long pauses.

5.2.4 *Yes/no*-questions

This question type was the most frequently occurring question type in the L1 data. *Yes/no*-questions appeared 194 times in the L1 data overall, being presented by all pairs. However, there was one pair (71–72) who had only one *yes/no*-question in their interaction, which is interesting due to the high number of appearances overall. What makes this all the more interesting is that this lack of *yes/no*-questions is in the L1 data, so it most likely cannot be due to a significantly lower level of the pair's IC. On the other hand, the same pair had a fairly low number of *yes/no*-questions in the L2 interaction as well (4) and the pair's total amount of questions presented in both the L1 and L2 interaction was eight. Thus, it might be that the pair's interactions were very straight-forward and that they had mutual understanding automatically. On the other hand, the low number of questions used might be due to the pair's dynamics and the present study does not discuss those aspects. Example 12 below exemplifies an exchange where a *yes/no*-question is utilized.

(12)
A: mut **toimiiks kompassi (0.) avaruudes?**
B: se on kyl hyvä kysymys (0.) en mä vaan tie
(Pair 62–77)

In Example 12, A asks B whether one of the items, a compass, works in space or not. B answers by stating that that is a good question. After a short pause, B continues by answering that they do not know. This fulfills the information that A's question seeks, although it does not solve the problem, which is their lack of knowledge on the matter. Although A did not receive an answer which would

have added their knowledge, the smoothness of the interaction was not bothered by B not knowing the answer. Example 13 below demonstrates another kind of yes/no-question, with which the interlocutor asks for the name for an item.

(13)

B: joo ja mä lisäisin vielä noi (0.) tupakat

A: onks [mis on tupakat?]

B: [vai **onks ne sellasii**] **hätä (0.) hätä?**

A: ne on hätäsoihtuja (0.) ne on mun mielestä tärkeimmät

(Pair 41–32)

The pair is discussing the most useless items to take to a desert island. In the first line, B says that they would add cigarettes to the list of most useless items. Due to this, A starts to wonder where the cigarettes are, since there are no cigarettes among the options. B realizes their mistaken interpretation and asks whether they are emergency torches. However, B does not remember the correct term (emergency torch) but can only repeat emergency. A helps B with completing the term, confirming that they are emergency torches. A's contribution to completing B's intended term functions as a collaborative completion, which is an indicator of a shared perspective and agreement between interlocutors (Peltonen 2017a, 131). Collaborative completions also add coherence to the interaction (ibid.). In addition to these functions of collaborative completions, in Example 12, A helps B to overcome a problem by giving the correct term B asks for. All these factors enhance interactional fluency.

5.2.5 Declarative questions

The number of declarative questions in the L1 data was 93. While the overall number of declarative questions was relatively high, there were three pairs who did not ask any declarative questions during their interactions. Example 14 below demonstrates an exchange with two declarative questions. The pair is discussing which necessities to take on a desert island.

(14)

A: oisko köysi?

B: nii mä mietin köyttä tai sitte tää (.) **lamppu?**

A: mm mä (.) mä en ite oikee nää tolle (.) lampulle (.) [mitään]

B: [no mut] **yöllähän siel on varmaa pimeä?**

A: no mut sit yöllä saatetaa nukkuu

B: no totta haha (0.) ehkä (.) ehkä köysi

(Pair 54–51)

The exchange starts with A's yes/no-question on whether they should place rope as the next item on their list. B answers this by showing agreement but goes on to give another option by asking a declarative question (in line 2). A answers this with expressing that they are not sure if the lamp would be of any use, to which B suggests that it will probably be dark at night. This second declarative question presented by B can be seen as justification for their previous declarative question about the lamp. With the second declarative question B elaborates their thoughts on why the lamp would be a good addition on their list of items. On the next line, A turns B's suggestion down by stating that they might sleep at night, indicating that the lamp is unnecessary because they are asleep when it is dark. Finally, B agrees with A stating that maybe rope should be the next item.

The above example demonstrates that although the pair was disagreeing at first, the interaction is still fluent. The use of questions enhances the fluency, since they elicit information from the other interlocutor, which is the speech act function of questions as stated by Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019, 248). Thus, although in disagreement, the other interlocutor still indicates that they are interested in the other speaker's thoughts by asking questions. Another fluency-enhancing aspect worth noting in the above interaction is the length of pauses. The pauses within turns are very short and there occur no pauses between turns. This indicates that the pair's turn-taking is efficient, keeping the interaction flowing smoothly. As Pekarek Doehler (2018, 5) noted, turn-taking is part of a person's IC, and IC influences interactional fluency. A's second turn starts with a filler *mm* which is a way of indicating that they are going to say something. In other words, A is using a filler to keep the floor. As Peltonen (2017b, 10) discovered, fillers help to maintain the flow of interaction. Peltonen (2017b, 6) also noted that shorter pauses increase the overall fluency of the interaction. Therefore, in addition to giving an answer to the question and keeping the interaction flowing, A's use of a filler also increases the fluency of their interaction by avoiding a pause.

5.2.6 Tags

Overall, three tag questions were used in the L1 data, making tag questions the smallest category in the data considering the L1 interactions. The tags were presented by two different pairs, one pair presenting two and the other presenting one tag question. Example 15 below describes a typical tag question in the discussions, since nearly all tag questions in the L1 data relate to confirming the order of the items.

(15)
 A: sitte oli onki (0.) **eikö?**
 B: joo
 (Pair 28–74)

In Example 15, A states that the fishing rod was the next item. After a short pause, A continues by asking a tag question, seeking affirmation to their previous statement, thus fulfilling the aforementioned function of tag questions presented by Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019, 251). B confirms A's statement simply by saying yeah, which is enough for the communication to continue effortlessly.

Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019, 252) declare that tags make up almost half of the questions used in speech. It needs to be noted though, that Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019) consider only English, and not Finnish. Still, the frequency of tags in speech does not become evident in the present study, regardless of the language used. However, the participants were performing tasks, and so the interaction was not as natural as just regularly conversing with a friend, for example. In addition, the number of participants in the present study is too low for making such generalizations. Nevertheless, it is an interesting finding that tags formed a minor part of all the questions used in the discussions. This is a contrastive finding to what Biber, Conrad and Leech (2019) report.

5.3 Comparing question use between L1 Finnish and L2 English interaction

The purpose of this section is to compare question use between the L1 Finnish and L2 English interactions and to discover whether there are some major differences. Thus, this section aims to answer the second, and final, research question, which is "*What kinds of differences and similarities can be observed in the types of questions across L1 Finnish and L2 English interactions?*". First, a graph will be presented to illustrate the use of the question types across the L1 and L2 samples. Then, the differences and similarities will be discussed more in detail.

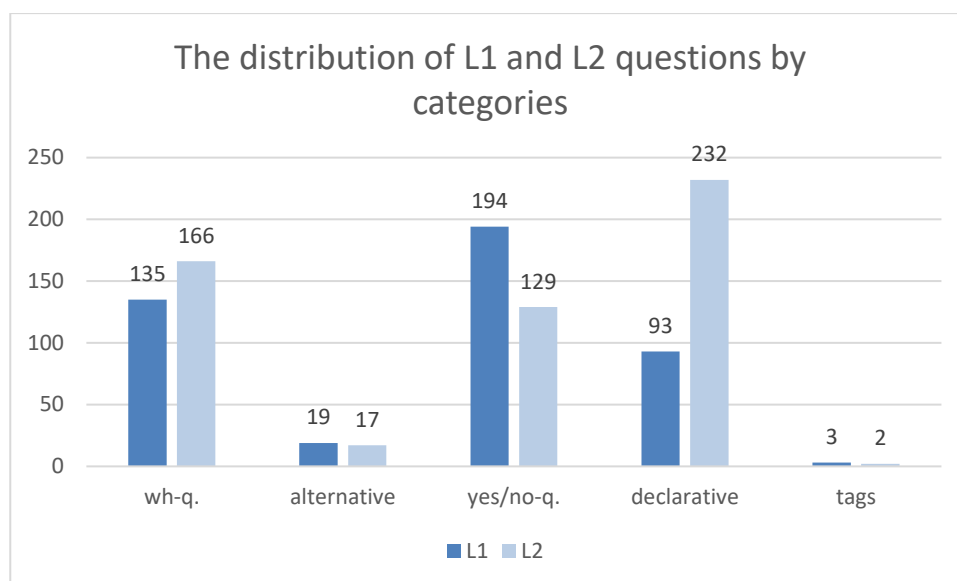


Figure 1. The distribution of L1 and L2 questions by categories

As can be seen from Figure 1 above, the categories with the most and the least questions can be quite easily distinguished in both the L1 and L2 data. What is also worth noting is that in both languages, the two categories with the smallest number of questions are the same, alternative questions and tags. This similarity allows the interpretation that using these questions is not typical for the speakers despite the language used. The findings of Derwing et al. (2009) support this interpretation. They stated that some fluency features can be trait-like and some state-like (Derwing et al. 2009, 534). Therefore, using, or better say not using, certain types of questions might be habitual to speakers and thus, these question types are (or are not) used regularly. This can be the case with the participants using tags and alternative questions. The fact that, for example tags were used only 2 times in the L2 and 3 times in the L1 would also suggest that the reason for not using them is independent of the language being used, but rather that the use of tags does not seem to be typical for the participants in these particular tasks, regardless of the language. In support to this option, it is interesting that one pair (28–74) presented tags in both the L1 and L2 interactions, hence presenting almost half of the five tags overall. This could mean that using tag questions in general is habitual for both or one of the speakers of this particular pair. Another possibility could be that the participants did not consider these types of questions useful for completing the tasks. Due to the similar results between alternative questions and tags across the languages, it can be assumed that using or not using these question types does not affect the interactional fluency significantly, at least in completing the type of task at hand.

On the other hand, the category with the highest number of questions is different depending on the language. In the L1 interactions, the highest number of questions is in the category of *yes/no-*

questions (194), whereas in the L2 interactions, the highest number (232) is in the category of declarative questions. As can also be seen from Figure 1 above, the difference in the number of declarative questions between the L1 (93) and L2 (232) interactions is substantial. Huensch and Tracy-Ventura (2017, 779) discovered that the structure of the L1 can affect L2 fluency, and this might partly explain the difference between the largest categories in the L1 and L2 in the present study. As already stated in Section 4.3, in the Finnish language, enclitic particles (for example *-ko*, *-kö*) are used for expressing the acceptance of the proposition presented in the clause (Hakulinen et al. 2004, 1589). As mentioned earlier, these questions belong to the category of *yes/no*-questions, which was the largest category in the L1 questions. On the whole, it must be taken into account that structural differences in question formation may also affect how speakers use questions. This could explain the difference in the largest categories between L1 and L2. However, the different structure of L1 question formation did not affect the fluency of the L2 interaction, which is potentially linked to the advanced level of the participants' L2 proficiency.

As for *wh*-questions, Figure 1 shows quite high and even numbers in both languages. *Wh*-questions were the second most occurring question type in both L1 and L2 interactions. This is most likely due to the nature of the task, because in both languages, *wh*-questions were very often used to ask what would be the next item, to ask for the names of the items, or how an item could be used. These kinds of questions can be seen as essential for completing the task in agreement and thus, were necessary regardless of the language. *Wh*-questions in the interactions can be seen as enhancing interactional fluency, since they forward the conversation towards the desired outcome. In addition, *wh*-questions were almost always answered by the interlocutor, making the interaction more efficient.

As already briefly mentioned, the most significant difference between L1 and L2 question use can be seen in the category of declarative questions. The difference between declarative questions occurring in L1 and L2 interactions is considerable. There can be several factors affecting this difference. First of all, despite the advanced L2 level of the participants, there most likely were more uncertainties when completing and discussing the tasks in the L2, for example relating to vocabulary or the functions of the items. Example 7 in Section 5.1.5 illustrates this. These kinds of uncertainties often led the interlocutors to state something with rising intonation, thus making it a declarative question. These kinds of uncertainties were far less common in the L1 interactions.

As De Jong et al. (2015), Derwing et al. (2009) and Peltonen (2018) have suggested, L1 might have some effects on L2 fluency. This can be seen also in the comparison of the present study. Derwing

et al. (2015) specify that the languages examined can influence the strength of the relationship. However, De Jong et al. (2015), Derwing et al. (2009) and Peltonen (2018) studied monologue fluency whereas the present study examines interactional fluency. Therefore, in addition to the participants' L1, also interactional factors affect the fluency of the discussions. As stated before, the nature of the tasks in the present study requires reaching agreement, which on its part can be seen to require asking questions. As Rossen et al. (2020, 722) have explained, in interaction, speech must be analyzed together with the surrounding turns, making adjacency pairs a central part of interaction. Asking questions in both the L1 and L2 data can be seen as a fluency-enhancing feature in both languages, since it engages the interlocutors more into the discussion. Peltonen (2018) discovered that L1 fluency has an impact on L2 fluency. This relationship can be seen in the comparison between L1 and L2 in the present study as well, since certain types of questions were used infrequently in both languages, while other question types were used noticeably more. However, using or not using certain types of questions does not make interaction more or less fluent, but the fact that high numbers of questions are used (and answered) in interactions in both L1 and L2 makes the interactions more fluent overall.

6 Conclusion

In this final section of the thesis, the most important findings of the study will be concluded. The two research questions will also be answered. Lastly, some directions for future research will be suggested.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how advanced L2 learners of English use different question types in L1 and L2 interaction and how this question use influences the fluency of the interaction. In addition, another goal was to examine whether the same L2 learners use question types differently in their L1 and L2 discussions. This thesis gave insight into L2 interactional fluency, especially into maintaining interactional fluency. This study offered a new perspective by comparing the same L2 learners' interactions in both their L1 and L2.

The first research question aimed at discovering the extent to which L2 learners of English use different question types to maintain interactional fluency in both L1 and L2. The answer to the first research question is that L2 learners of English use questions extensively to maintain interactional fluency in both L1 and L2 interactions. The L2 interactions contained more questions than the L1 interactions. This can be due to, for example, the more familiar vocabulary in the L1. Using questions helped the interlocutors to reach agreement, which was crucial for the problem-solving tasks. Asking questions seemed to help the interaction run smoothly. By asking questions, the interlocutors were able to help each other and so they reduced unnecessary pauses and performed collaborative completions, for example. These factors also enhanced interactional fluency. However, it needs to be noted that the nature of the tasks used in the data encouraged question use. On the other hand, this nature of the data made examining the influence of using different question types on interactional fluency more interesting. Based on the quantitative analysis, it was discovered that the participants used different kinds of questions frequently in both the L2 and L1 discussions, although the L2 data had a higher number of questions overall. Based on the qualitative analysis of question use, it seemed that these questions often helped in maintaining interactional fluency.

The goal of the second research question of this thesis was to find out what kinds of differences and similarities could be observed in the question types across L1 Finnish and L2 English interactions. This was examined by comparing the frequencies of different question types used by the participants. As for the second research question, this study discovered that the categories with the lowest number of questions were the same in L1 and L2 data. The category with the least questions

in both languages is tags, containing only a few questions in both languages. This indicates that individual speaking habits might simply influence the use of different question types. However, the most frequent question type depended on the language of the interaction. *Yes/no*-questions was the biggest category in the L1 interactions with 194 questions. As for the L2 interactions, declarative questions was the category with the most questions, containing 232 questions. This difference between the biggest categories across the languages can be explained, for example, by the structural differences between the L1 and L2. Nonetheless, both languages had *wh*-questions as the second most occurring question type. This can be due to *wh*-questions being useful for the task type in general, which requires completing the tasks in agreement. All in all, questions in the interactions can be seen as enhancing interactional fluency, since the purpose of using questions in the discussion often was to forward the conversation towards the desired outcome. In both languages, questions were used quite similarly to help overcome communicative problems, to negotiate meanings and to reach an agreement between the interlocutors. This increases interactional fluency in the particular data, since questions play a major role in fulfilling the functions.

The present study offered a new perspective by comparing L1 and L2 interactional fluency by the same speakers. This study gives insight into the importance of different factors, in this case questions, that affect interactional fluency. That is something that future research could take upon, since there is a need for studies related to interactional fluency, especially with the comparative aspect with same speakers. With this comparative setting, future research could be conducted, for example, on other aspects of turn-taking and interactional fluency. The fact that the participants of the present study are very advanced in the L2 can be seen as a limitation. The results cannot be as widely generalized, since the participants in the study do not represent the majority of L2 English learners in Finland. Thus, it would be interesting to conduct a similar comparative study on L2 learners that are not as advanced in the L2 as the participants in this present study. That would widen the view on interactional fluency across L1 and L2. The present study also offers insight into the importance of utilizing interactive tasks in L2 classrooms, since the results show how questions, an aspect of speech, affects the flow of interaction positively. This places another suggestion for future research, which could be to examine how L1 and L2 interactions could be utilized in L2 classrooms from the perspective of enhancing interactional fluency. This would give important insight that could be utilized in L2 teaching. The present study has offered new insights into fluency research by combining question use and interactional fluency and relating them to fluency across L1 and L2, forming the basis for further research on this topic.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Dialogue task A in English

STRANDED ON A DESERT ISLAND

You and your pair have been stranded on a desert island in the Pacific. All you have are the clothes that you are wearing. There is a fresh water spring, banana trees and coconut palms on the island.

The pictures show 16 items you may find useful for survival on the island. Your task is to organize all items in the order of usefulness. During the discussion, you should reach an agreement on the order of importance for all items.

Describe the items, discuss them and justify the order of importance.

You can now start preparing for the task by familiarizing yourself with the pictures.



Appendix 2 Dialogue task B in English

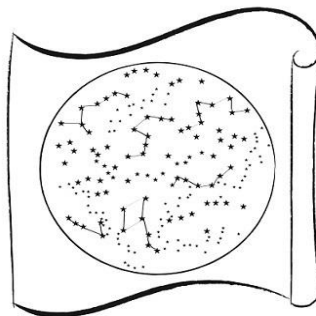
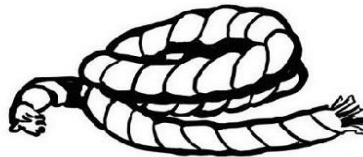
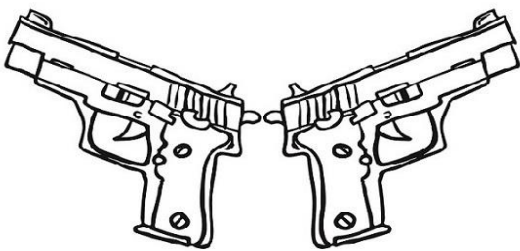
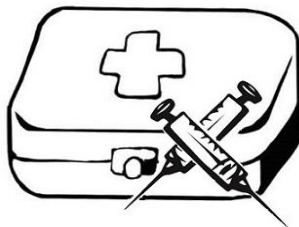
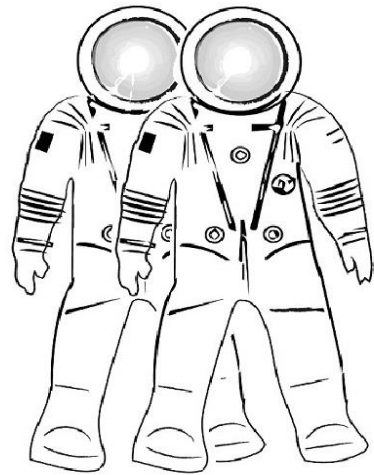
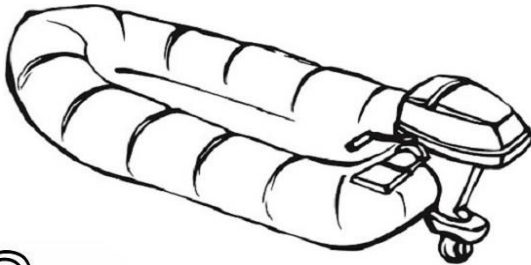
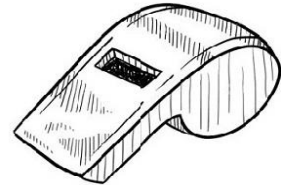
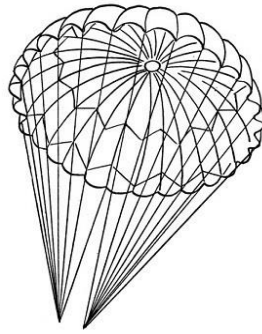
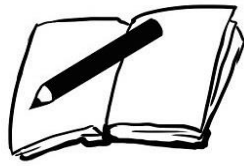
REACHING THE MOTHER SHIP

You and your pair are on board a spaceship that has, due to mechanical difficulties, crash-landed on the lighted side of the moon. The rough landing has damaged much of the equipment aboard.

In order to survive, you have to walk to the mother ship that is located some 300 kilometers from you. The pictures show 16 items that were left intact after landing.

Your task is to rank all the items in the order of their usefulness for the 300 km trip. During the discussion, you should reach an agreement on the order of importance for all items. Describe the items, discuss them and justify the order of importance.

You can now start preparing for the task by familiarizing yourself with the pictures.



Appendix 3 Finnish summary

Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman aiheena on kysymysten vaikutus sekä vieraskielisen (L2) että äidinkielen (L1) keskustelun sujuvuuteen. Tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää, miten englantia toisena kielenä opiskelevat käyttävät eri kysymystyyppejä L1 (suomi) ja L2 (englanti) vuorovaikutuksessa. Erityisesti haluttiin selvittää, miten näiden kysymysten käyttö vaikuttaa keskustelun sujuvuuteen ja ilmeneekö eri kysymystyyppien käytössä eroavaisuuksia tai samankaltaisuuksia suomenkielisten (L1) ja englanninkielisten (L2) keskusteluiden välillä. Laajimmillaan puheen sujuvuus tarkoittaa kielitaitoa missä tahansa kielessä (Lintunen, Mutta and Peltonen 2020, 3). Keskustelun sujuvuudessa puolestaan on kyse siitä, että vastuu vuorovaikutuksen sujuvasta etenemisestä on kaikilla keskustelijoilla (McCarthy 2010, 7). Sujuvuus käsitetään myös yhtenä suullisen kielitaidon määreenä vieraan kielen oppimisessa (Housen ja Kuiken 2019, 461). Näin ollen sujuvuus on keskeisessä roolissa tutkittaessa vieraskielistä puhetta ja keskustelun sujuvuuden tutkiminen onkin ajankohtainen aihe toisen kielen oppimisen (SLA) tutkimuskentällä. Kysymykset ovat myös olennainen osa puhetta. Kysymyksiä käytetään usein ja moniin tarkoituksiin, kuten tarkoituksen selkeyttämiseen, vahvistuksen hakemiseen tai esimerkiksi muiden keskustelijoiden mielipiteen selvittämiseen. Lisäksi kysymyksillä voidaan kutsua muita keskusteluun tai esimerkiksi saada muita keskustelijoita osallistumaan aktiivisemmin keskusteluun. Kuten käy ilmi, kysymykset liittyvät vahvasti keskustelun soljumiseen ja etenemiseen ja täten myös keskustelun sujuvuuteen. Tutkimuksen aiheen merkittävyyttä lisää se, että vuorovaikutustaidot vieraalla kielellä sekä vieraan kielen suullinen kielitaito mainitaan myös Eurooppalaisessa viitekehysessä (CEFR) sekä perusopetuksen ja lukion opetussuunnitelmien perusteissa.

Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma tarkastelee sitä, miten kysymysten käyttö vaikuttaa keskustelun sujuvuuteen. Tutkielman analyysi toteutettiin monimenetelmällisesti hyödyntäen sekä kvantitatiivista että kvalitatiivista analyysiä. Tutkimuksessa käytetyt kysymystyypit nimettiin ja kategorisoitiin perustuen Biberin, Conradin ja Leechin (2019) nimeämiin englannin kieliopillisiin kysymystyyppeihin. Näin saatiin selville mitä kysymystyyppejä ilmeni keskusteluissa eniten sekä oliko kysymystyyppien esiintyvyydessä eroja kielten välillä. Lisäksi analyysissä käytettiin aineistosta nostettuja esimerkkejä, joita analysoitiin kvalitatiivisesti. Näiden menetelmien avulla pyrittiin selvittämään, miten eri kysymystyyppejä käytetään ja miten ne vaikuttavat keskustelun sujuvuuteen. Pro gradun tutkimuskysymykset ovat seuraavat:

1. Kuinka laajasti edistyneet englannin oppijat käyttävät erilaisia kysymystyyppejä pitääkseen yllä keskustelun sujuvuutta äidinkielisissä (L1) sekä vieraskielisissä (L2) keskusteluissa?

2. Millaisia eroja ja yhtäläisyyksiä voidaan havaita kysymystyypeissä äidinkielisten (L1) ja vieraskielisten (L2) keskustelujen välillä?

Tutkielmassa selvitetään kysymysten vaikutusta äidinkielisten ja vieraskielisten keskusteluiden sujuvuuteen sekä sitä, kuinka laajasti L2 oppijat käyttävät erilaisia kysymystyyppisiä. Lisäksi tarkastellaan, onko eri kysymystyyppien käytössä eroja oppijoiden äidinkielen ja vieraan kielen välillä. Näin tutkimus pyrkii tuomaan esiin keskustelun sujuvuuden eri ulottuvuuksia sekä siihen vaikuttavia tekijöitä, sekä tarjoamaan uusia näkökulmia sujuvuuden tutkimiseen. Keskustelun sujuvuutta ei ole tutkittu yhtä paljon kuin yksilön puheen sujuvuutta. Vielä vähemmän löytyy tutkimuksia, joissa vertailtaisiin äidinkielisten ja vieraskielisten keskustelun sujuvuutta samojen puhujien välillä, kuten tässä tutkielmassa tehtiin. Joitakin aiempia tutkimuksia on tehty, joissa verrataan äidinkielen ja vieraan kielen monologin sujuvuutta, kuten Derwing ym. (2009), Peltonen (2018), Huensch ja Tracy-Ventura (2017) sekä De Jong ym. (2015).

Tutkielman teoriaosio alkaa sujuvuuden käsittelyllä. Ensin käsitellään puheen sujuvuus määritellään aiempien tutkimusten avulla. Tässä tutkimuksessa käytettyä sujuvuuden määritelmää tarkennetaan Lennonin (1990) sujuvuuden jaon perusteella. Lennon (1990, 388) jakaa sujuvuuden kahteen määritelmään, jotka ovat laaja (*the broad sense of fluency*) ja kapea (*the narrow sense of fluency*). Puheen sujuvuuden laajassa määritelmässä sujuvuus nähdään kaikkein korkeimpana suullisen kielitaidon tasona, joka puhujalla voi olla (Lennon 1990, 389). Kapeassa määritelmässä sujuvuutta tarkastellaan yksityiskohtaisemmin niin, että jokin tietty suullisen kielitaidon osa-alue on sujuvuuden keskiössä (ibid.). Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa sujuvuutta tarkastellaan kapean määritelmän mukaan. Sujuvuuden kapeaa määritelmää käytetään yleensä kielen oppimisen ja opettamisen kontekstissa (Witton-Davies 2013, 17), johon myös tämä tutkielma kuuluu.

Seuraavaksi teoriaosuus siirtyy tarkastelemaan vuorovaikutuksen sujuvuutta sekä äidinkielen vaikutuksia vieraan kielen puheen sujuvuuteen. Näissä osioissa määritellään, mitä tarkoitetaan keskustelun sujuvuudella (*interactional fluency*), sekä käsitellään aiempia aiheeseen liittyviä tutkimuksia. McCarthyn (2010, 7) mukaan keskustelussa jokainen puhuja on vastuussa taukojen täyttämisestä sekä liian pitkien taukojen syntymisen estämisestä. Osiossa käsitellyt aiemmat tutkimukset keskustelun sujuvuudesta osoittavat, että puhe on sujuvampaa dialogissa kuin monologissa, ja että dialogissa ilmenee useita keskustelun sujuvuutta lisääviä piirteitä, kuten toistoja ja lyhyempiä taukoja (Peltonen 2017a; 2017b). Mitä tulee äidinkielen vaikutuksiin vieraan kielen sujuvuuteen, osiossa esiteltyjen aikaisempien tutkimusten perusteella äidinkielellä voi olla vaikutusta vieraan kielen sujuvuuteen.

Lisäksi teoriaosiossa käsitellään vuorovaikutuskompetenssia (*interactional competence*). Se pitää sisällään ne tavat ja menetelmät, joita puhujat käyttävät vuorovaikutuksen jäsentämiseen (Pekarek Doehler 2018, 5). Kysymykset ovat yksi keino vuorovaikutuksen jäsentämiseen, jolloin ne liittyvät olennaisesti vuorovaikutuskompetenssiin. Roever ja Kasper (2018) mainitsevat, että puhujat käyttävät oman vuorovaikutuskompetenssinsa mukaisia menetelmiä aina, kun keskusteluvuoro vaihtuu. Tällöin myös tämän tutkielman kiinnostuksen kohteena olevat kysymykset (ja vastaukset) liittyvät vuorovaikutuskompetenssiin. Tässä osiossa esitetään lyhyesti myös keskustelunanalyysin (CA) perusteet.

Seuraavaksi teoriaosassa käsitellään kysymyksen käsitettä. Tutkielma määrittelee kysymyksen käsitteen Biberin, Conradin ja Leechin (2019) mukaan, perustuen heidän englannin kielen kieliopillisiin määritelmiinsä eri tyyppisistä kysymyksistä. Biber, Conrad ja Leech (2019, 248) toteavat, että kysymyksellä kysytään tietoa ja kysymys odottaa kielellistä vastausta. He jatkavat, että kysymyslause (*interrogative clause*) voidaan tunnistaa kahdesta, usein yhdessä ilmenevästä seikasta, jotka ovat VS- eli verbi-subjektisanajärjestys sekä kysymyssana lauseen alussa (Biber, Conrad ja Leech 2019, 249). Lisäksi he mainitsevat, että nouseva intonaatio on myös merkki kysymyksestä (ibid.). Tämä seikka on erityisen tärkeä tässä tutkielmassa, sillä nouseva intonaatio liittyy nimenomaan puheeseen. Biber, Conrad ja Leech (ibid.) jakavat itsenäiset kysymyslauseet kolmeen tyyppiin: kysymyssanalla alkavat kysymykset (*wh-questions*), vaihtoehtokysymykset (*alternative questions*) ja kyllä/ei-kysymykset (*yes/no-questions*). He lisäävät, että myös toteamuslauseet (*declarative clause*) voivat toimia kysymyksinä, jolloin ne ovat toteavia kysymyksiä (*declarative questions*). Toteavat kysymykset tunnistetaan nousevasta intonaatiosta sekä SV- eli subjekti-verbisanajärjestyksestä (ibid.). He lisäävät vielä erityisesti puheelle tyypillisen kysymystyyppin, liitekysymyksen (*tag question*) (Biber, Conrad and Leech 2019, 252). Tämän tutkielman kysymyskategoriat luotiin perustuen edellä mainittuihin kysymystyyppeihin, jolloin tutkielman käyttämät kysymyskategoriat ovat *wh-questions*, *alternative questions*, *yes/no-questions*, *declarative questions* sekä *tags*.

Aiempiä tutkimuksia liittyen kysymysten käyttöön puheessa ovat tehneet muun muassa Dumitrescu (2016) sekä Gass (2013). Kyseiset tutkimukset esittelevät teoriaosuudessa kysymysten määritelmien yhteydessä. Gass (2013, 349) kertoo merkitysneuvottelua (*negotiation of meaning*) käytettävän silloin, kun puhujan täytyy puuttua keskusteluun varmistaakseen, että kaikki osapuolet tietävät, mistä puhutaan. Hän toteaa muun muassa tarkistus-kysymysten olevan yleisiä natiivipuhujan ja vieraskielisen puhujan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa (Gass 2013, 350). Tämän perusteella voidaan

olettaa, että merkitysneuvottelulle tyypillisiä kysymyksiä esiintyy myös kahden vieraskielisen puhujan välisissä keskusteluissa tämän tutkimuksen aineistossa.

Tutkimuksen aineistona on 54 äänitiedostoa, jotka koostuvat parikeskusteluista, joissa parit keskustelevat heille annetusta tehtävästä. 27 keskustelua on äänitetty suomeksi ja toiset 27 keskustelua englanniksi. Näin ollen jokainen pari osallistui kahteen keskusteluun saman parin kanssa. Kaikki parit suorittivat yhteensä kaksi tehtävää, toisen englanniksi ja toisen suomeksi. Pro gradu -tutkielmaan sisällytetyistä 54:stä osallistujasta kaikki ilmoittivat äidinkielekseen suomen. Lisäksi kaikki osallistujat opiskelivat englantia yliopistotasolla, jolloin heidän kielitaitonsa on korkealla tasolla. Tutkimuksessa käytettävä aineisto on alun perin kerätty Turun yliopiston tutkimusprojektia varten (2020-2024). Projektin nimi on *Fluency and Disfluency Features in L2 Speech* (FDF2), ja sitä rahoittaa Suomen Akatemia.

Tutkimuksen analyysi on toteutettu monimenetelmäisesti. Analyysissa kvantifioidaan laadullista aineistoa, jotta saadaan kuvaavampaa tietoa kysymysten määrästä aineistossa. Tällaista menetelmää voidaan käyttää silloin, kun analyysiin halutaan sisällyttää numeerista tietoa jostakin aineiston osasta (Dörnyei 2007, 269). Analyysiä täydennettiin kvalitatiivisella analyysillä ja aineistosta nostetuilla esimerkeillä. Täten kyseinen menetelmä on sopiva tähän tutkimukseen. Ensin aineisto litteroitiin, jonka jälkeen aineistosta kerättiin kaikki kysymykset. Äidinkieliset ja vieraskieliset kysymykset sijoitettiin erikseen omiin kategorioihinsa, jotka ovat nimetty Biberin, Conradin ja Leechin (2019) kysymystyyppien mukaan. Näin saatiin selville, kuinka monta kertaa mikäkin kysymystyyppi esiintyi sekä äidinkielisissä että vieraskielisissä keskusteluissa. Lisäksi kysymyksiä analysoitiin kvalitatiivisesti aineiston keskusteluista nostettujen esimerkkien avulla.

Ensimmäiseen tutkimuskysymykseen liittyen tutkimuksessa selvisi, että englantia vieraana kielenä oppivat oppijat käyttävät erilaisia kysymyksiä laajasti ylläpitääkseen vuorovaikutuksen sujuvuutta sekä äidinkielisissä että vieraskielisissä keskusteluissa. Kysymysten määrissä kutakin kysymystyyppiä kohden oli suurta vaihtelua, eivätkä erityyppiset kysymykset esiintyneet tasaisesti eri kielisissä keskusteluissa. Vähiten käytetyt kysymystyypit olivat samat molemmissa kielissä, mutta eniten ilmennyt kysymystyyppi vaihteli kielestä riippuen. Tämä eroavaisuus vastaa osaltaan toiseen tutkimuskysymykseen. Kysymysten käyttö helpotti keskustelun sujuvuutta molemmilla kielillä. Toiseen tutkimuskysymykseen liittyen kävi myös ilmi, että kysymyksiä käytettiin samankaltaisesti sekä äidinkielisissä että vieraskielisissä keskusteluissa. Kysymyksiä käytettiin kommunikatiivisten ongelmien selvittämiseen ja merkitysneuvotteluiden käymiseen. Lisäksi kysymyksiä käytettiin keskustelukumppanin mielipiteiden tiedusteluun. On kuitenkin huomioitava,

että keskustelutehtävien tavoite itsessään kannustaa kysymään kysymyksiä, sillä tehtävien ratkaiseminen edellyttää yhteisymmärrystä puhujien välillä. Yhteisymmärrykseen pääseminen puolestaan helpottuu kysymyksiä esittämällä.

Tutkimuksen pohjalta voidaan ehdottaa mahdollisia suuntauksia jatkotutkimukselle. Keskustelun sujuvuutta voitaisiin tulevaisuudessa tutkia yhä laajemmin, huomioiden yhä enemmän erilaisia keskustelun sujuvuuteen vaikuttavia tekijöitä. Tulevaisuudessa voitaisiin myös tutkia, miten muut vuoronvaihtoon liittyvät piirteet vaikuttavat keskustelun sujuvuuteen. Lisäksi on tarve tutkimuksille, joissa vähemmän edistyneiden puhujien keskustelun sujuvuutta vertailtaisiin eri kielten välillä samojen puhujien kesken. Tämä laajentaisi käsitystämme sekä keskustelun sujuvuudesta että eri kielten sujuvuuksien vaikutuksista toisiinsa. Tämä tuottaisi tärkeää tietoa myös toisen kielen opettamisen kannalta.