



## From obstacles to insights: Recently migrated adults discuss their L2-mediated EFL studies in Finnish adult basic education

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Low-qualified adults' access to education remains an unsolved challenge in the EU (CEU, 2016). Being 'low-qualified' emerges when an individual's skills are incompatible with society. Untransferable skills, incompatible language competencies, and unacknowledged qualifications continue to jeopardize international migrants' participation (e.g., OHCHR, 2018).

Finnish adult basic education (FABE) fosters the participation of low-qualified adult immigrants by providing skills needed to study and work in Finland. FABE studies include mandatory advanced syllabus English as a foreign language (EFL) studies. Although not a local language, English plays a vital role in integration into Nordic countries (e.g., Peterson & Peers Fägersten, 2024). FABE remains understudied, as does adult migrants' language learning. Also understudied is the teaching and learning of English as a non-local integration language (e.g., Pitkänen-Huhta & Mäntylä 2021), despite the apparent usefulness of English in education and work in the Nordics.

Informed by an interview study conducted among eleven FABE students, the presentation discusses their language learning backgrounds and investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015) in EFL and Finnish learning. The interview design, particularly the initial coding frame, was informed by a literature review and the author's experience in the field. Emergent themes were accounted for as the material was subjected to content analysis using thematic coding. The results indicate that although English is viewed positively, students' investment in English learning remains doubtful. Students portray English as ancillary and more as a language that is "generally good to know," whereas Finnish concretely permeates students' lives and is seen as essential. The results beg the question: how do the ideologies communicated in FABE support English learning, and are they grounded in reality?

**Keywords:** EFL, Adult basic education, Investment

### References

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