

# DOES ENGLISH FALL ON DEAF EARS?

A study of the motivational state of deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils of English

Candidate's thesis

Ville Anttila

University of Jyväskylä  
Department of Languages

English

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Ville Anttila

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Motivaation katsotaan yleisesti olevan yksi tärkeimmistä vieraan kielen opiskeluun vaikuttavista tekijöistä, ja se onkin sen takia paljon tutkittu ilmiö. Vähemmistöryhmät ovat kuitenkin näissä tutkimuksissa jääneet lähes huomiotta. Esimerkiksi kuurojen ja huonokuuloisten motivaatiota opiskella vieraita kieliä ei juuri ole tutkittu. Hyvänä esimerkkinä on kuitenkin ollut Hanni (2007), joka teki kvalitatiivisen tutkimuksen haastatteleamalla seitsemää kuuroa heidän englannin kielen opiskelukokemuksistaan peruskoulusta korkeakouluopintoihin. Koska kaikki kuurot, kuten kaikki kuulevatkaan, eivät mene peruskoulun jälkeen lukioon, saati korkeakouluihin, tarkempi peruskouluvuosien opiskelumotivaation tarkastelu on tärkeää. Juuri peruskoulussa luodaan perusta mahdolliselle tulevalle kielenopiskelulle. Tämän tutkielman tavoite on kuvata suomalaisten kuurojen ja huonokuuloisten yläkoulun oppilaiden englannin kielen opiskelumotivaatiota kuurojenkouluissa sekä selvittää eroja sukupuolen, oppivuosien ja kuulon tason perusteella.

Tutkimus on kvantitatiivinen ja sen aineisto on kerätty Turun, Jyväskylän ja Tampereen kuurojenkouluista standardoidun kyselylomakkeen avulla. Tulokset osoittavat, että kuurojenkoulujen oppilaiden asenne englannin kieltä ja sen opiskelua kohtaan on yleisesti positiivinen, mutta varsinkin oppilaiden kokemus omasta kompetenssistaan ja kyvyistään on varsin alhainen. Tyttöjen itsetunto on tällä alueella poikia alhaisempi, mutta tytöillä on myös suurempi halu onnistua englannin kielessä. Opiskelumotivaatio on ensimmäisinä vuosina varsin alhainen ja kasvaa opintojen edetessä, mutta laskee taas loppua kohti.

Asiasanat: EFL learning, motivation, deaf, hard-of-hearing

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

There is no doubt that motivation is among the most important factors influencing the learning of English or any second or foreign language, and this is why it is also widely researched. Motivation, however, has proven to be such a wide concept that devising a motivational theory that encompasses its multifaceted nature has been problematic. A recent attempt has been made by Williams et al. (2002).

Minorities with unique and distinguishable qualities, like the Deaf, have been much neglected in motivational studies (*Deaf* with a capital D is used to refer to the people who identify themselves as members of Deaf community and share its language and culture. See also page 8). However, a recent study by Hanni (2007) examined the experiences of seven Deaf adults in learning English from elementary school to adulthood. The study brought up many interesting points from the area of motivation and beyond, but more focus on the first 9 years of education is warranted since the foundation for future language learning is laid there.

The goal of the present study is to describe the state of motivation deaf and hard-of-hearing 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> graders in Finland have for learning English. It also makes comparisons between boys and girls, between those with less experience and those further in their studies, between younger and older pupils and between deaf and hard-of-hearing students, with the aim of supplying applicable information for teachers of English.

## **2 MOTIVATION AND THE LANGUAGE LEARNER**

### **2.1 Theories of motivation**

Motivation has been acknowledged to be one of the most crucial factors influencing the learning of English or any second or foreign language. Motivation itself is a very wide concept that has been studied exhaustively with a multitude of different theories. The problem, however, is that there has not been a theory that would represent motivation in its total complexity. According to Dörnyei (2001: 47), most researchers only deal with a narrow view of motivation, depending on their particular field and research priorities. Most theories focus only on a few of the many aspects that influence motivation and then make assumptions on a larger scale, which can only lead to a theoretical framework, not a descriptive one (Dörnyei 2001: 19).

However, there have been attempts to synthesize the different aspects of motivation, and one proposal has risen above others. Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model has been the basis of much research on motivation during the past two decades. Motivation, in this view, is seen to consist of motivational intensity (*effort*), *desire* to learn the language, and *attitudes* towards learning the language. A famous distinction in his motivation theory deals with integrative and instrumental orientations. *Integrative orientation* suggests a positive attitude towards the L2-group, which includes a desire to identify with and being part of the group, while *instrumental orientation* suggests more pragmatic reasons for mastering the L2, like better job prospects and a higher salary. These orientations arouse motivation and direct it toward a set of goals. Gardner's (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was for a long time the only standardized questionnaire for quantitative studies, but his focus has been criticized for being too narrow, requiring the incorporation of more cognitive approaches (Williams 2004:168).

The model used in the present study was developed by Williams et al. (2002). It is a multifaceted model that emphasizes the dynamic interaction between external and internal factors. External factors include parents, teachers and the learning environment, while internal factors have been categorized into three groups: Attitude (What do I think about it?), Identity (How do I see myself?) and Agency (How do I do it?). The model has also integrated and taken into account a person's cognitive processing, which starts with the individual construction of meaning (importance of the language studied), leading to goal-setting and decisions on appropriate action, and finally to self-regulating action. The model was then used by Williams et al. (2002) in the construction of a new questionnaire, referred to as the Language Learning Motivation Scale (LLMS).

The LLMS draws many elements from Gardner's motivational model and the AMTB, but incorporates a number of other motivation theories and factors recognized as contributing to the motivational process. Most of these can be traced to the area of achievement theories in cognitive psychology—a group called *expectancy-value* theories. Generally speaking, expectancy-value theories are interested in the relationship between an individual's expectancy of success and the value attached to it, suggesting that motivation to perform a task is greater when success is more likely and the goal offers a greater incentive (Wigfield 1994, cited in Williams et al. 2002:506). The expectancy dimension can be divided into *attribution theory*, *self-efficacy theory*, and *self-worth theory*, while the value dimension consists of *attainment value*, *intrinsic/extrinsic value* and *cost*. Self-efficacy theory and self-worth theory are about judging one's own abilities and competence to perform a given task,

and about maintaining one's self-esteem while doing so, respectively. For example, if doing badly at a task feels threatening to one's self-esteem, this probably results in a lack of effort. From the value dimension, attainment value attaches a personal importance on mastering a task, intrinsic value finds an innate gain in doing the task itself (just for the sake of it), and extrinsic value finds value in how completing the task helps in gaining future goals. Cost relates to the emotional costs of expending effort to a task. (Dörnyei 2001:20-25.)

Williams's own research background is in attribution theory, which, according to Dörnyei (2001:57), is "the analysis of how people process past experiences of failure (and success), and what consequences these will have on future achievement strivings." In other words, what we see as the reasons for our failures and successes have a great effect on our motivation. Attribution theory dates back to the 1940s and 1950s, but the groundbreaking work was done by Weiner (1986), who in his early writings recognized the four main causes for success and failure to be *ability*, *effort*, *task difficulty* and *luck*. These four have remained the main focus of many studies that have followed, although many other attributions have also been recognized (Williams and Burden 1999:194). These attributions are placed along three dimensions, which are *locus of control* (internal/external), *stability* and *controllability*. For example, mood, during a given task, would be understood as an internal, unstable and uncontrollable attribution.

Having established by now that motivation is an extremely difficult concept to pin down in its total complexity, why should motivation research even be considered important? Is it worth the trouble? As mentioned above, motivation has been recognized as one of the most important factors influencing the learning of any second or foreign language, and since these languages are usually mandatory subjects in schools, success in learning them is considered to be a goal. Dörnyei (2001:183) points out that the aim of motivation research is not only to understand the motivational factors and processes in the course of learning, but it also aims to explore ways to optimize student motivation. Motivation research thus has the learners' best interests in mind.

A highly charged motivation does not, however, guarantee success in learning a second language or getting high grades. Dörnyei (2001:198) also points out that motivation is followed by action, not achievements, and while good motivation is likely to generate greater effort in learning practices, actually succeeding has also got to do with the student's actual abilities and the quality of teaching methods. Still, with no action there is no reaction and without effort hardly any learning. Motivation is present and affects the learner from start to

finish of the learning process, and teachers, as well as learners themselves, would be wise to try to use it to their advantage.

## **2.2 The language learners who cannot hear**

Although students' motivation to learn English has been well researched in Finland, hardly any research has been targeted to the deaf and hard-of-hearing minority. Their disability makes the task of learning English and other foreign languages unique and challenging: In addition to mastering Finnish Sign Language (FinSL), which is the first language for most of them, they have to learn the written form of the language of the majority, Finnish, and also learn to read using this (second) language. After that they have to immediately expand to other foreign written languages—in this case English, later Swedish, and additionally one or more foreign sign languages. Furthermore, they cannot use English as a spoken language (or in the case of hard-of-hearing pupils, they are mostly unwilling to), which means English cannot be used in personal communication situations, other than in written form. The additional help of acquiring the language by “picking it up” from natural communication situations is also closed for them. (Hanni 2007:33.)

In 2006, there were only 206 children in 13 schools for the deaf in Finland (and 261 children with a hearing disability in regular schools) (Sume 2008: 59). Children in schools for the deaf normally start their English lessons in their third year of school, just as in hearing schools. However, each pupil's linguistic background, competence in FinSL and Finnish, their facility to learn and the level of their hearing, all affect the decisions made on individual goals, and thus some start their English lessons in their fourth year, or even later. Because of this, and because there are so few Deaf children in the first place, the study groups are small and very heterogenic, which also poses a challenge to deaf education. The contents and methods of teaching in English lessons can thus vary greatly depending on each group's particular demands and limitations. The scope of this study, however, does not allow a focus on teaching methods, which would be an entirely different field of research, but remains focused on the motivational state of the deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils.

Hanni (2007) researched the experiences of the Deaf on learning and studying English. Her study was a qualitative one and was based on data gathered in interviews from seven deaf adults studying in the University of Jyväskylä at the time of the study. Her research revealed many insights on the students' motivation on learning English in various

stages of their education, as well as positive and negative factors affecting the learning experience. The results show that the informants' motivation towards English was mostly external and instrumental in their elementary school years; the teaching was very formalistic and by the book with a heavy focus on vocabulary, grammar and reading with almost no communicative practices. Motivation started to become more integrative in time as personal experiences with practical everyday needs, international contacts and travelling were gained.

When talking about deaf people, it is important to note that the deaf are not just Finnish individuals with problems with their hearing. In fact, they form a socio-cultural group that is bound together by a shared language and the experiences of living with deafness (Malm and Östman 2000:11). The term 'Deaf' with a capital D is used to refer to people who belong to this group, while the lowercase 'deaf' is used to refer to the actual audiological condition (Padden and Humphries 1988: 2). As the shared language is the most important factor in defining this group, it also includes hard-of-hearing signers, as well as hearing signers brought up in or closely acquainted with Deaf culture.

### **3 STUDY QUESTION**

The present study aims at exploring the different areas of motivation deaf and hard-of hearing pupils of 7th, 8th and 9th grades in Finland have towards learning English as a foreign language in school. The study will also examine how motivation differs between boys and girls, as well as depending on age, how many years the pupils have studied English, and whether there is a difference between deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils' motivation. The study also intends to reveal the factors that are particularly strong and weak in affecting the target group's English learning motivation, with the aim of providing applicable information to the teachers and pupils for the advancement of their learning of English.

Based on the original study by Williams et al. (2002) in which the LLMQ is used, two hypotheses can be made: first, that girls will be more motivated than boys to learn English, and second, that pupils' motivation will decrease in time. Also, it can be hypothesized that hard-of-hearing pupils, who have a (limited) ability to hear English and are thus able to apply auditory methods in their language learning, will have a higher motivation than those who are profoundly deaf.

## 4 DATA AND METHODS

The data for the present study was collected by means of The Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire (LLMQ), composed by Williams et al (2002). It consists of 16 constructs (elements that relate to motivation), each of which is represented by four items (statements that relate to English). The 16 constructs are subdivided into four areas, as shown in Table 1 below. Participants respond to the items along a four point scale ranging from *definitely true* to *definitely not true*, which results in a maximum of 16 points and minimum of 4 points for each construct.

The questionnaire was translated from English to Finnish, in the process of which some adjustments were made to accommodate the deaf target group: References to *speaking* and *talking* in English were changed into *communicating in* and *using* English, which allow other forms of communication to be considered, like written communication over the internet (e-mail, instant messaging). Additionally, in an item relating to talking with English people, a hyphenated choice/clarification of communicating with English *signers* was added to reduce the intimidating impression of being forced to *talk* with a hearing person.

**Table 1.** LLMQ constructs and item examples (adapted from Williams 2004:171)

	<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Item examples</b>
1. Attitude	Enjoyment and interest Desire Perceived importance Integrative orientation Intrinsic motivation	I enjoy English lessons I want to be good at English It will be important for me to know English I'd like to meet English people I'd like to learn English even if I didn't have to
2. External influences	Teacher influence Parental influence Group ethos	My teacher is helpful to me in learning English My parents encourage me to learn English The students in our class work well together as a group
3. Identity	Sense of competence Perceived ability	I usually do well in English lessons I think I'm good at English
4. Agency	Expended effort Effort outcomes Attributional awareness Strategic awareness Sense of responsibility Metacognitive strategies	I work hard at English However hard I try, I'll never do well in English When I get good marks in English I usually know why If I do badly at English, I usually know how to do better next time Doing well in English is up to me I try to set myself goals when I study English

The translated questionnaire was sent to three schools for the deaf located in Turku, Jyväskylä and Tampere. After parental consent, a total of 21 pupils from grades 7 to 9 filled the questionnaire under teacher supervision as part of their English lessons. The filled forms were then sent back to the researcher. One of the 21 was disqualified from the analysis because of insufficiently filled background information. The final 20 informants are made up of 10 boys and 10 girls of whom 3 are year 7, 10 are year 8 and 7 are year 9 pupils. Although a larger group of informants would have been beneficial for the reliability of quantitative analysis, the amount of data gathered was considered to be sufficient, considering the scope of this small-scale study. Moreover, the small number of informants reached still amounts to approximately 10% of the whole target group.

The scores of each questionnaire were calculated manually and retyped into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for quantitative analysis. Comparisons are made between boys' and girls' mean scores and between groups with different amounts of experience in English lessons. Some comparisons are also made between deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils. Statistical significance of the differences is measured using an independent samples *t*-test (2-tailed), the results of which are found in the tables' sig-columns. The most significant results are found at  $p \leq 0.01$  (marked with three asterisks), which indicates a possibility of only 1% or less that the difference is more due to chance than actual difference.

The quantitative method was selected to provide a set of measureable data on the field of motivation from the deaf and hard-of-hearing target group, which has not been done before in Finland. It was also selected to potentially substantiate and corroborate with qualitative data already gathered and researched (Hanni 2007) and to provide a point of comparison for other studies in this field to come.

## **5 LOOKING AT SILENT MOTIVATION**

The mean scores of the entire group, as well as the boys' and the girls' scores separately and the difference between them have been gathered in Table 2 below. The general findings on the scores of the entire group will be discussed first, followed by comparative examinations on differences based on gender, experience/age (Tables 3 and 4) and the level of hearing (Table 5) while considering possible reasons for specific results found.

## 5.1 The big picture

Of the four areas of motivation listed in Table 2, *Attitudes* proves to be the strongest with overall highest scores (12.99). The pupils show a very strong desire to learn English well (14.15) and perceive it to be an important skill to master (13.70). In fact, the *desire*-construct ranks highest of all the 16 constructs, which suggests a fertile starting point for other areas of motivation to be positively influenced. Still, the pupils *enjoy* English lessons and learning English considerably less (11.60), which might suggest that there is a conflict between the wants and needs of the pupils and how those needs are met (does the “supply” meet the “demand”?). It poses a challenge for teachers to find ways of making the learning experience more enjoyable. The pupils also showed a strong integrative orientation (13.55) and a fairly positive level of intrinsic motivation (11.95).

**Table 2.** Mean scores and the difference between boys and girls

	All N = 20	Boys N = 10	Girls N = 10	Difference Girls - Boys	sig
<b>ATTITUDE</b>	<b>12.99</b>	<b>12.74</b>	<b>13.27</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.302</b>
enjoyment and interest	11.60	12.30	10.90	-1.40	0.263
desire	14.15	13.10	15.20	2.10	0.009 ***
perceived importance	13.70	13.10	14.30	1.20	0.233
integrative orientation	13.55	13.70	13.40	-0.30	0.778
intrinsic motivation	11.95	11.50	12.40	0.90	0.331
<b>EXTERNAL INFLUENCES</b>	<b>11.68</b>	<b>12.27</b>	<b>11.10</b>	<b>-1.17</b>	<b>0.074 *</b>
teacher influence	11.65	12.50	10.80	-1.70	0.155
parental influence	12.25	12.10	12.40	0.30	0.811
group ethos	11.15	12.20	10.10	-2.10	0.033 **
<b>IDENTITY</b>	<b>10.80</b>	<b>11.70</b>	<b>9.90</b>	<b>-1.80</b>	<b>0.018 **</b>
sense of competence	10.80	11.70	9.90	-1.80	0.112
perceived ability	10.80	11.70	9.90	-1.80	0.100 *
<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>11.86</b>	<b>11.57</b>	<b>12.15</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>0.184</b>
expended effort	12.10	11.90	12.30	0.40	0.699
effort outcome	12.35	12.00	12.70	0.70	0.493
attributional awareness	11.75	11.60	11.90	0.30	0.684
strategic awareness	11.20	10.50	11.90	1.40	0.189
sense of responsibility	12.70	12.30	13.10	0.80	0.513
metacognitive strategies	11.05	11.10	11.00	-0.10	0.943

\*\*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$

\*\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

\* =  $p \leq 0.1$

Feelings of *Agency* ranks second of the four areas (11.86). The pupils show a fairly strong sense of responsibility for their own learning (12.70). They also generally feel that they make an effort to learn English (12.10) and experience a connection between effort and positive learning outcomes (12.35). The pupils have a fairly positive level of awareness about the reasons behind doing well or poorly in English lessons (11.75), but seem to have a slightly harder time utilizing strategies to improve their learning results (11.20). The use of metacognitive strategies is also fairly limited (11.05).

*External influences* come in third place (11.68). The pupils' parents seem to provide a generally good influence on learning English (12.25), while teachers' (11.65) and groups' (11.05) effect is lower. *Identity* comes last and scores notably less than the other areas (10.80). The pupils' sense of competence and ability is questionable overall, but also shows a significant difference between boys and girls.

## 5.2 Gender differences

The first thing to address concerning gender differences would be the initial hypothesis: in the study by Williams et al. (2002) it was discovered that girls, overall, were more motivated than boys to learn foreign languages, and the same rule was hypothesized to apply here as well. Although the target group of Williams et al. was British children, and the foreign languages were French and German, making comparisons and hypotheses is justified, for one because the same questionnaire was used in both studies. The results (Table 2), however, show that the hypothesis is wrong: the girls in the present study score higher than boys only on 9 of the 16 constructs, whereas the girls in the British study beat the boys on as many as 14 constructs, which suggests that Deaf girls and Deaf boys are much more on the same line.

Although boys and girls are more equal in this study, many clear differences are present. In the area of *Attitudes*, the most interesting difference is a stronger contrast between desire and enjoyment among the girls: the girls clearly have a stronger desire to learn English (sig at  $p \leq 0.01$ ) and seem to perceive it as more important than boys do, but still seem to enjoy the learning process clearly less than boys. In *External influences* the boys experience a generally positive influence from teachers, parents and the learning group quite evenly, but for the girls the school-based external influences—teacher, and especially the learning group (sig at  $p \leq 0.05$ )—provide a much weaker effect.

A clear difference is also evident in the area of *Identity* (sig at  $p \leq 0.05$ ). While the boys have a fairly positive sense and perception of their competence and ability in English, the girls' equivalents are clearly low. In *Agency*, the boys and the girls are more equivalent with no significant differences, although girls still score higher on 5 of the 6 constructs. This could suggest that the girls do slightly more in order to learn English and are slightly smarter in analysing their learning process. It seems that it is especially hard for the boys to utilize strategies to improve their learning. The girls also seem to feel more strongly that learning English is up to them, although the sense of responsibility is the highest ranking construct of the area for both the boys and the girls.

It can be deduced from the gender differences mentioned above, that girls, even though (or perhaps because) they seem to have a poorer self-image as language learners, employ a greater desire to learn English, do more in order to be successful but are still more sensitive to and more easily affected by the limitations of the teaching methods and the teaching environment. Boys, on the other hand, are more "happy-go-lucky" with a more positive level of enjoyment and interest and contentment with the teacher and the teaching environment. They see themselves more positively, but are less self-analytical about their learning process.

The reasons behind the girls' poor self-image of their language skills are particularly interesting: do the low scores actually portray an analytically correct assessment of their own skills and abilities, or just typical Finnish modesty and setting the bar too high? This would apply to both the boys and the girls, and is a question which Hanni (2007:85) also brought up. Her informants were also hard on themselves and had felt the lack of language skills and the uncertainty of their abilities as discouraging. Her data does not, however, show a clear difference between boys and girls in this area. A possible answer to the gender difference could be found in the fact that the world has changed since Hanni's informants were in school, and English has come closer to the everyday lives of even school children. In written form, English is more clearly present in the internet and video games, which might be domains more attractive for boys (especially the latter). It could be possible that boys, with more contact with the English language, have also developed a better language identity, but this cannot be proven without qualitative research. Another explanation could be found from recent studies which indicate that girls in general have more self-esteem issues than boys during teenage years. Whatever the real reason, it seems that a lower self-perception has a negative effect on enjoyment, but increases the desire to be successful.

The low scores in *enjoyment* and *teacher influence* signals that there may be problems with teaching methods and materials, which is also backed up by Hanni's (2007:70-76) study. Her results show that English teaching was generally experienced as uninteresting and un-motivating: especially formal and repetitive teaching methods that followed books to the letter were experienced as uninspiring, while inventive deviations from the learning materials were experienced more positively. Teachers themselves were considered both negative and positive factors, depending on the teacher's personality. Competence in teaching and language skills (in both English and FinSL) were raised as problems, as well as the fact that some teachers' expectations for their pupils' language learning were too low and that they consequently demanded too little of them. This (like a self-fulfilling prophesy) led to poor learning results for the pupils. The heterogeneity of the learning group was also mentioned as a factor that did not particularly raise learning motivation, and might explain the low scores for *group ethos*.

#### **5.4 The motivational curve**

Williams et al. (2002) discovered that motivation in foreign language learning is prone to decrease in time: 7<sup>th</sup> grade students showed higher levels of motivation compared to those of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. A similar examination was made in the present study, but since pupils in deaf schools start their English lessons at varying stages, this study chooses to focus rather on how many years they have studied English, making comparisons between those with less experience (2-4 years), and those with 6 years and those with 7 years of experience in English lessons. The significant results of these comparisons are shown in Table 3 (full table in Appendix I).

The results show a curve that differs from Williams et al.'s (2002) declining curve. Here the trend seems to be that pupils start with low motivation in their early years of English learning, but then leap higher by the 6<sup>th</sup> year, and then decline slightly on the 7<sup>th</sup> year of English studies. This happens in 9 of the 16 constructs. Three constructs (intrinsic motivation, parental influence and sense of responsibility), however, seem to ascend throughout the years while one (teacher influence) seems only to decline (see Appendix I).

The constructs of desire, perceived importance, and integrative orientation are found among the most significant increases (at  $p \leq 0.05$ ) from the early years to year 6: all of them rise from a fairly positive level to a very strong level by the 6<sup>th</sup> year. All three also

decline from year 6 to year 7, with the only fairly significant decline (at  $p \leq 0.1$ ) concerning the perceived importance. Significant increases (at  $p \leq 0.01$ ) can also be found in attributional awareness and effort outcome, rising from a questionable level to a good level by the 6<sup>th</sup> year, but with no significant decline by year 7. The pupils' sense of competence suffers a big blow moving from year 6 to year 7 with a significant decline (at  $p \leq 0.05$ ) from a healthy level to a very low level.

**Table 3.** Significant differences between mean scores according to years of experience

	2&4 yrs. (A) N = 5	6 years (B) N = 7	7 years (C) N = 6	Diff. B - A	sig	Diff. C - B	sig
<b>ATTITUDE</b>							
desire	12.20	15.43	14.67	3.23	0.017 **	-0.76	0.264
perceived importance	12.00	15.43	13.50	3.43	0.022 **	-1.93	0.079 *
integrative orientation	11.40	14.43	13.67	3.03	0.016 **	-0.76	0.556
<b>IDENTITY</b>							
sense of competence	10.80	12.14	9.17	1.34	0.329	-2.98	0.052 **
<b>AGENCY</b>							
effort outcome	9.80	13.86	13.17	4.06	0.002 ***	-0.69	0.420
attributional awareness	10.60	12.57	12.17	1.97	0.003 ***	-0.40	0.689

\*\*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$

\*\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

\* =  $p \leq 0.1$

In addition to the differences that come with the years spent learning English, a comparison is made based purely on the pupils' age—between 14-15 year-olds and 16-18 year-olds—to uncover any differences that come with maturity. This comparison reveals a curve that is clearly ascending with the older group scoring higher on 15 of the 16 constructs (see full table in Appendix II). Table 4 shows the significant leaps (at  $p \leq 0.05$ ) found in three constructs. The older group seems to be more interested in English, have a stronger integrative orientation and feel that they expend more effort to learn English.

In analysing the motivational curves, the results seem to go against the initial declining hypothesis based on Williams et al. (2002), which has been observed in numerous other studies as well. It could, however, be that this is only due to the special circumstances of the Deaf target group. The challenges of learning the written form of a spoken language quite certainly take their toll on motivation in the first years of language lessons. Then, when the pupils get past the first difficulties and get more familiar with the language, motivation also

rises and, in a sense, normalizes; the pupils experience the outcomes of their efforts more positively and understand the reasons for their failures and successes better. At this point the initial hypothesis takes effect, and motivational decline can be observed, as the boring repetitiveness and tedious grinding of grammar and vocabulary gets to the pupils.

Looking at the change brought on by maturity, similar findings were made by Hanni (2007: 62-64), who found that the motivation to learn English was improved overall over time as experiences are gained and international contacts made. This has a particular effect on integrative orientation, which in the case of Deaf young people usually refers more to their want to connect with other Deaf people around the world and being part of the global Deaf community through written English, and not to a desire to identify solely with people who speak English as a first language.

**Table 4.** Differences in mean scores according to the pupils' age

	Age 14-15 (A) N = 9	Age 16-18 (B) N = 11	Difference B - A	sig
<b>ATTITUDE</b>				
enjoyment and interest	10.33	12.64	2.30	0.050 **
integrative orientation	12.22	14.64	2.41	0.020 **
<b>AGENCY</b>				
expended effort	10.89	13.09	2.20	0.024 **

\*\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

## 5.5 The hearing factor

Because English, like all spoken languages, is primarily meant to be heard and spoken, it is justifiable to question the motivational ramifications of having only the written form of the language at one's disposal and not being able to learn it using auditory means. This is why the present study also makes an effort to make comparisons between deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils. Hanni (2007:11) did not find any major differences between deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils' learning experiences in her qualitative study, since both needed similar learning arrangements and the hard-of-hearing students could not learn using auditory means. However, it is still possible that there are differences that are not that apparent, and differences that lie deeper in the subconscious.

There were only five pupils among the informants who listed themselves as hard-of-hearing, four of whom were girls. That is why, to avoid boys' and girls' inherent differences tipping the scale and affecting the analysis in this area, comparisons in hearing are made only among the girls. The results can be found in Table 5 (full table in Appendix III). Putting the two groups in opposition here is, however, admittedly somewhat artificial, since there is not enough detailed information on the severity of the pupils' hearing loss and whether the hard-of-hearing pupils actually are willing to use English as a spoken language.

**Table 5.** Significant differences between deaf and hard-of hearing girls

	Deaf (A) N = 6	Hard-of-h. (B) N = 4	Difference B - A	sig
<b>ATTITUDE</b>				
enjoyment and interest	10.17	12.00	1.83	0.056 *
<b>AGENCY</b>				
sense of responsibility	14.33	11.25	-3.08	0.024 **

\*\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

\* =  $p \leq 0.1$

Similarly to Hanni's (2007:11) findings, there are hardly any differences between deaf and hard-of-hearing girls. In most of the constructs the differences are minimal and without statistical significance. Still, the results show that hard-of-hearing girls clearly (sig at  $p \leq 0.1$ ) have a higher level of enjoyment and interest towards learning English, and that deaf girls have a significantly stronger sense of responsibility in doing well in English (sig at  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

The first difference is quite understandable, since having no hearing can make learning a spoken language that much harder and thus less enjoyable. Still, there is little to no difference in deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils' desire to learn English and their perception of its importance, which is notable. The second difference, however, is more interesting. It could be that being profoundly deaf, and thus clearly at a disadvantage in learning spoken languages, can make one realize that succeeding is even more decisively up to oneself. Deaf cultural history could also contribute to this, since the Deaf have always had to suffer the hearing majority telling them what they cannot do because of their deafness. This kind of oppression can make Deaf people even more driven to be successful in life, and this is made apparent with the advancements made within the Deaf community during the past decade.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis have brought up many interesting points, many of which could be useful information for English teachers in trying to enhance their pupils' motivation. First, the strong desire to learn English should be encouraging, but the relative weakness of enjoyment and perceived teacher influence should be taken as a challenge to diversify teaching methods. Second, the poor self-perception of girls, particularly, should be noted, and a positive feedback culture and encouragement should be kept up. Teachers' expectations should never fall too low, but instead try to build the pupils' belief in their own abilities. Third, the relative weakness of strategic awareness and metacognitive strategies also show an untapped source to positive results. Pupils should be encouraged to make plans, set goals and find their own ways of learning English. Fourth, because integrative orientation seems to become such a major motivational force in time, pupils should be guided towards networking, making contacts, and internalising the integrative orientation already early on, which may raise the low motivation of the first years of learning English. Diversifying teaching methods should also reduce the boredom effect of motivational decline in the last years of school.

Some limitations of the present study must be pointed out. Although the reasons behind the small set of informants were already explained and justified, it still makes statistical analysis more unreliable compared to what a larger set would provide. Since the target group in general is so small (which came as a surprise to me), it poses the question whether quantitative methods should be used at all to study the Deaf community. Pupils in deaf schools also make a personal plan of teaching methods (HOJKS, henkilökohtainen opetuksen järjestämistä koskeva suunnitelma), which could possibly alter the validity of making far reaching generalizations.

The present study may also suffer from a lack of certain validity tests a more experienced quantitative analyst could have done, although the tests and analysis made are quite sufficient considering the small scale of the study. From the point of view of experience gained, I could have benefitted from visiting the schools myself and advising the students in filling the questionnaires personally, although it would have been harder to arrange. This also could have prevented a small error in the questionnaire: the first of the items had somehow dropped from the questionnaire, which resulted in the enjoyment construct having only three items instead of four. The error was nevertheless easily fixed by simply adjusting the way the scores were calculated, leaving the construct comparable with the rest.

This study is mainly exploratory in nature, and tries to uncover new areas of study and interest, which I think it succeeds in. New and more explanatory studies could be more effectively done by qualitative methods. Problems in self-perceptions and changes in motivation over time, for example, could be interesting and useful subjects for further study. The personal plan of teaching methods, how it is realized and how it affects the ways generalizations can be made could also be an interesting field to cover in an in-depth qualitative study.

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**Appendix I** Mean scores by study experience in years

	2&4 yrs. N = 5	6 years N = 7	7 years N = 6	Difference 6 – 2&4	sig	Difference 7- 6	sig
<b>ATTITUDE</b>							
enjoyment and interest	10.40	12.29	10.83	1.89	0.255	-1.45	0.354
desire	12.20	15.43	14.67	3.23	0.017 **	-0.76	0.264
perceived importance	12.00	15.43	13.50	3.43	0.022 **	-1.93	0.079 *
integrative orientation	11.40	14.43	13.67	3.03	0.016 **	-0.76	0.556
intrinsic motivation	10.80	12.14	12.67	1.34	0.289	0.52	0.664
<b>EXTERNAL INFLUENCES</b>							
teacher influence	12.20	12.00	10.17	-0.20	0.890	-1.83	0.274
parental influence	11.00	12.43	13.00	1.43	0.418	0.57	0.743
group ethos	12.20	10.29	10.83	-1.91	0.160	0.55	0.692
<b>IDENTITY</b>							
sense of competence	10.80	12.14	9.17	1.34	0.329	-2.98	0.052 **
perceived ability	10.40	11.00	10.67	0.60	0.648	-0.33	0.835
<b>AGENCY</b>							
expended effort	11.60	12.57	12.17	0.97	0.402	-0.40	0.797
effort outcome	9.80	13.86	13.17	4.06	0.002 ***	-0.69	0.420
attributional awareness	10.60	12.57	12.17	1.97	0.003 ***	-0.40	0.689
strategic awareness	10.80	12.14	11.67	1.34	0.351	-0.48	0.594
sense of responsibility	12.40	12.71	14.17	0.31	0.830	1.45	0.231
metacognitive strategies	11.80	12.00	10.17	0.20	0.890	-1.83	0.316

\*\*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ \*\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ \* =  $p \leq 0.1$

**Appendix II** Differences in mean scores according to the pupils' age

	Age 14-15 (A) N = 9	Age 16-18 (B) N = 11	Difference B - A	sig
<b>ATTITUDE</b>				
enjoyment and interest	10.33	12.64	2.30	0.050 **
desire	13.78	14.45	0.68	0.436
perceived importance	13.33	14.00	0.67	0.529
integrative orientation	12.22	14.64	2.41	0.020 **
intrinsic motivation	11.44	12.36	0.92	0.336
<b>EXTERNAL INFLUENCES</b>				
teacher influence	11.56	11.73	0.17	0.887
parental influence	12.00	12.45	0.45	0.725
group ethos	10.56	11.64	1.08	0.276
<b>IDENTITY</b>				
sense of competence	10.67	10.91	0.24	0.827
perceived ability	10.78	10.82	0.04	0.972
<b>AGENCY</b>				
expended effort	10.89	13.09	2.20	0.024 **
effort outcome	12.44	12.27	-0.17	0.871
attributional awareness	11.67	11.82	0.15	0.840
strategic awareness	10.89	11.45	0.57	0.587
sense of responsibility	12.44	12.91	0.46	0.695
metacognitive strategies	10.44	11.55	1.10	0.416

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\*\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

**Appendix III** Differences between deaf and hard-of hearing girls

	Deaf Girls N = 6	H-hearing G N = 4	Difference HOH - D	sig
<b>ATTITUDE</b>				
enjoyment and interest	10.17	12.00	1.83	0.056 *
desire	15.00	15.50	0.50	0.424
perceived importance	14.33	14.25	-0.08	0.960
integrative orientation	13.00	14.00	1.00	0.452
intrinsic motivation	12.67	12.00	-0.67	0.572
<b>EXTERNAL INFLUENCES</b>				
teacher influence	10.83	10.75	-0.08	0.967
parental influence	12.83	11.75	-1.08	0.505
group ethos	10.17	10.00	-0.17	0.908
<b>IDENTITY</b>				
sense of competence	10.33	9.25	-1.08	0.430
perceived ability	10.17	9.50	-0.67	0.638
<b>AGENCY</b>				
expended effort	12.67	11.75	-0.92	0.563
effort outcome	12.67	12.75	0.08	0.950
attributional awareness	11.83	12.00	0.17	0.857
strategic awareness	12.17	11.50	-0.67	0.526
sense of responsibility	14.33	11.25	-3.08	0.024 **
metacognitive strategies	11.17	10.75	-0.42	0.827

\*\*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ \*\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ \* =  $p \leq 0.1$