

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

”ALEXANDER STUBB. HIS SINGING IS QUITE INCOMPREHENSIBLE
AND BAD SOMEHOW”

– **A Study on Linguistic Role Models of Finnish Youngsters in English**

Bachelor's Thesis

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HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA KIELTEN LAITOS

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”ALEXANDER STUBB. HIS SINGING IS QUITE INCOMPREHENSIBLE AND BAD SOMEHOW” – A STUDY ON LINGUISTIC ROLE MODELS OF FINNISH YOUNGSTERS IN ENGLISH

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Kielelliset roolimallit syntyvät kielenoppijan muodostaessa käsityksiä ja mielipiteitä opittavan kielen kulttuurisesta kontekstista sekä kohdekieltä käyttävistä ihmisistä, ja ne muokkaavat pitkälti kielen oppijan motivaatiota kyseisen kielen oppimisessa. Kielellisiä asenteita ja roolimalleja sekä niiden vaikutuksia kielen opiskelumotivaatioon on tutkittu niin Suomessa kuin muuallakin maailmassa, ennen kaikkea globaalien englannin kielen kohdalla. Kuitenkin sitä, kuinka kielelliset roolimallit (idolit) sekä ”epäroolimallit” (inhokit) vaikuttavat nuorten kielenoppijoiden opiskelumotivaatioon tai mistä näitä esikuvia nykyään tulee, ei ole tutkittu. Käsillä olevassa tutkielmassa selvitettiin yläkouluikäisten (7.-, 8- ja 9.-luokkalaisten) kielellisiä roolimalleja englannin kielessä sekä niiden alkuperää niin mediassa kuin koti- ja kouluympäristöissäkin. Tutkimus myös selvitti yläkouluikäisten suosimat englannin kielen variantit.

Tutkimus toteutettiin keräämällä kirjallinen aineisto yhdeltä 7.-, 8.- sekä 9.-luokalta, yhteensä 49 vastaajalta, kyselylomakkeen avulla. Kyselylomakkeessa oli sekä avoimia kysymyksiä, että monivalintakysymyksiä seuraavista aihepiireistä: idolit, inhokit, esikuvat koti- ja kouluympäristöissä sekä englannin kielen variantit. Aineisto analysoitiin ensin kvantitatiivisin menetelmin kooten suosituimmat ja inhotuimmat roolimallit luokka-asteittain sekä sukupuolittain, minkä jälkeen tuloksista tehtiin kvalitatiivisia päätelmiä ilmiön yleisistä suuntauksista. Kielellisiä roolimalleja tarkasteltiin myös ryhmäidentiteetin määrittäjinä. Tulokset osoittavat, että roolimallit todella jäsentävät nuorten mieltymyksiä sekä ryhmäidentiteettiä, etenkin sukupuolittain, joskaan ei niinkään luokka-asteittain. Selkeästi yleisin idoleiden alkuperä ovat amerikkalaiset tv-sarjat ja elokuvat, mikä oli havaittavissa myös amerikanenglannin asemana suosituimpana englannin varianttina. Yleisimmät inhokit puolestaan olivat kotimaisia urheilijoita ja poliitikkoja, jotka julkisuudessa käyttävät englantia. Kielellisiä roolimalleja nuorille tulee niin koti- kuin kouluympäristöistäkin, positiivisten roolimallien ilmaantuessa ennen kaikkea opettajien ja vertaisryhmänä toimivien kavereiden keskuudesta.

Avainsanat: asenteet, englannin kieli, idolit, motivaatio, nuoret, oppiminen, roolimallit

Keywords: attitudes, the English language, idols, learning, motivation, role models, youngsters

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1 INTRODUCTION

Linguistic role models are formed when a language learner develops an attitude towards the target language, its sociocultural context, and people using that language. These language attitudes affect considerably the learner's motivation in acquiring the target language and, therefore, also his or her willingness to belong to or become a part the community using the language. Language attitudes and their effects on second language learning and learning motivation have been studied rather thoroughly, particularly considering the English language due to its global status of being the usual target language.

Language attitudes towards English have been studied also in Finland, but an up-to-date view is lacking on what kinds of rolemodels in English young people in Finland have. Neither these positive role models, idols, negative role models, peeves, nor their origins have yet been mapped among Finnish pupils. Moreover, the role of linguistic idols and peeves in constructing youngsters' group identity has not been studied either.

Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) Who Finnish youngsters look up to or look down on as users of English today?
- 2) Where do they find these role models in English these days? Are they of domestic or foreign origin?
- 3) Do linguistic idols and peeves affect youngsters' group identity?
- 4) Which variants of English do young people prefer?

The present study uses a questionnaire to collect data from pupils at grade levels 7, 8, and 9 in a Finnish school to find answers to the study questions above. The results are analysed both qualitatively to gain specific numerical data of the phenomena, and quantitatively to make generalizations of the issues in a broader context. As hypotheses of the study, it is assumed that the most common origins for linguistic idols are American and British popular cultures, and the most common sources for peeves the domestic Finnish popular culture. Therefore, it is also supposed that the most preferred variant is either American English or British English. Moreover, it is assumed that these idols and peeves are rather significant as determiners in group identity of youngsters, by appearing in sets of "approved" and "disapproved" role

models for each group. The paper will begin by reviewing some previous studies on the issues, and outlining the aims and methods of the present study in more detail. Later, the results will be presented and analysed, and finally discussed.

2 MOTIVATION, CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY, MEDIA, AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONTEXT IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Who a learner looks up to or looks down on as a model of using the second language has a great impact on his or her learning. Second language acquisition may get a boost when a learner finds an idol, whereas a model who arouses highly negative emotions may hinder learning. In a way linguistic idols and peeves determine the borders within which a learner aims at acquiring and using the language – “definitely like this” and “certainly not like that”. These kinds of models are particularly important for young people and their learning as their everyday lives are filled with characters of popular culture that are either very strongly looked up to or looked down on, depending on the common opinions of the group of peers. Consequently, second language acquisition of a young person, particularly in the form of learning motivation, as well as construction of his or her identity, are deeply affected by idols and non-idols they face in the present media-dominated world.

2.1 Second language learning: linguistic attitudes and motivation

Linguistic attitudes, which refer to attitudes that people have towards a language or its social or regional variants and its users (Kalaja and Hyrkstedt 2000:369), and motivation in second language learning have been studied rather thoroughly. According to Lightbown and Spada (1993:39), motivation can be defined by two factors: learners’ communicative needs and their attitudes towards the second language community. Therefore, when a learner has positive attitudes towards the speakers of the language, he or she is willing to be more and more in contact with them. Lightbown and Spada (1993:40) also note that since a learner’s identity is closely related with the way of speaking as learning a language involves adopting identity markers of another cultural group, depending on the attitudes, learning a second language can be either a source of enrichment or a source of resentment. Dörnyei (2001:65-66) also remarks that being motivated in learning the second language, a learner must take on a host of

behavioural and cognitive features of another sociocultural community, which is why, according to Dörnyei, learning and teaching a foreign language in a school is not a socially neutral field.

Kalaja and Hyrkstedt (2000:369-381) introduce research performed on linguistic attitudes. According to them, William Lambert was the first to systematically study these issues from a mentalistic point of view, which has been a predominant trend since its creation in the 1960s. In the mentalistic approach, language attitudes are defined as inner, mentalistic conditions as reactions to some way of talking. The discursive view derives from sociopsychology and it is interested in social and psychological phenomena in a language, not just in a user's inner experience. For example, Gardner and Lambert (1972:132) name intellectual capacity, language aptitude and perceptions of the other ethnolinguistic group as the three aspects on which mastering a foreign language depends. By the importance of these perceptions of the others they refer to attitudes that a learner has towards members of the group and his or her willingness to identify him- or herself with the features of behaviour, both linguistic and non-linguistic, that are characteristic of that another ethnolinguistic group.

2.1.1 Social aspects of motivation

Gardner and Lambert (1972:143-144) argue that linguistic attitudes actually are formed and developed at a very early age at home, already before language teaching at school, and that these attitudes are brought to school from home. In addition, Dörnyei (2001:34-41) names the four most important factors contributing to pupils' motivation in a social context being parents, teachers, peer group and school. For instance, according to Dörnyei (2001:34), one of the parenting factors enhancing students' motivation actually is their function as highly motivated role models. As for the teachers' motivational influence, Dörnyei (2001: 35) names teachers as powerful *motivational socialisers*, meaning that as leaders within the classroom, they "embody group conscience, symbolize the group's unity and identity, and also serve as a model or a reference/standard". Therefore, it can be suggested that school and home environments may provide very strong idols for youngsters.

Regarding the strength of motivational impact of peer relationships, Dörnyei (2001: 37) explains that a learner's lack of motivation is often caused by a fear of being isolated or rejected by peers or being labelled negatively, for example, as a "nerd" or a "creep". As the

three main factors providing the framework for these group influences, Dörnyei names 1) the group's structure (intermember relations, group norms, group roles, and the status hierarchy within the group), 2) the group's developmental level (the group's degree of maturity in terms of cohesiveness, independence or self-reliance and productivity), and 3) the teacher's leadership style and behaviour (Ehrman and Dörnyei 1998, as cited in Dörnyei 2001:38). Finally, considering the school motivating pupils, Dörnyei (2001:40) makes a note that the school environment as a whole actually is an additional psychological environmental level between the learners' microcontext (class group) and macrocontext (sociocultural milieu).

Weiner's (1994) concept of *social motivation* consists of motivational factors that are directly connected to the individual's social environment (Weiner 1994, as cited in Dörnyei 2001:30). According to Urdan and Maehr (1995), doing well in school to gain the approval of peers or teachers is referred to as *social approval goals* (as quoted in Dörnyei 2001:30). Taking these aspects in consideration, it is obvious that the social contexts of home and school environments, involving family, friends, and teachers, are a source of motivation and idols, and, on the other hand, demotivation and peevishness for youngsters, at least as much as are the role models adopted via the media.

2.1.2 Demotivation

Dörnyei (2001:142) describes demotivation as various negative influences cancelling out existing motivation. He introduces "demotives" as being negative counterparts of "motives" in a sense that motives increase an action tendency whereas demotives decrease it. Interestingly, considering the case of demotivation further, Gardner and Lambert (1972:140) also note that negative stereotypes of the users of a foreign language definitely hinder, or even sabotage, learning the language and also the aims of teaching that language, given that these perceptions are accepted by the majority of students or pupils in the class. This view further highlights the fact that linguistic attitudes, whether positive or negative, determine the chances of learning when being shared by the peer group of learners.

As for recent studies in Finland, Muhonen (2004) has studied the factors demotivating Finnish pupils in learning English as a second language. The study involved written data from 86 9th graders and it revealed that the demotivating factors come down to five themes: teacher, learning material, learner characteristics, school environment, and learners' negative attitude

towards the English language (Muhonen 2004:70-72). Negative role models, other than the teacher, were not discussed as such, and negative attitudes as one of the causes of demotivation in Muhonen's (2004:74) work were said to be the least frequent of all themes and therefore did not provide much material for further analysis. However, as incorporating the school and home environments as sources of idols and peeves in the present study, it is interesting to see whether the present study supports Muhonen's findings as teachers as demotivators and therefore peeves, or even exactly the opposite: teachers as motivators and idols.

2.1.3 Motivation and the self

Considering the importance of motivation to an individual's learning, Dörnyei has done research on motivation and the self. According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009:9, 11), instead of being a mere communication code for a learner, a foreign language belongs to an individual's core, forming a significant part of his or her identity, and a learner's self-concept is usually seen as the individual's self-knowledge combined with how the learner views him- or herself at present. Carver et al. (1994, as cited in Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009: 11) posit that there are *possible selves* representing the learner's views of what he or she might become, what he or she would like to become, and finally, what the learner is afraid of becoming.

However, Dörnyei's own model of "L2 motivational self system" is designed to combine the constructs of theoretical L2 motivation and constructs of self research in psychology (Dörnyei et al. 2006: 145). The model has a three-dimensional structure: 1) *ideal L2 self*, 2) *ought-to L2 self*, and 3) *L2 learning experience*. First, *ideal L2 self* refers to the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self, and Dörnyei explains this to occur when a person one adores as a user of L2 becomes a motivator to learn the language since a learner aims at reducing the difference between his or her ideal and actual selves. In other words, *ideal L2 self* could be referred to as an idol. Second, *ought-to L2 self* concerns the attributes that a learner believes he or she should obtain and possess in order to avoid a possible negative outcome of using L2. Therefore, this self may bear very little resemblance to a learner's wishes and desires. Third, *L2 learning experience* refers to executive motives in the immediate learning environment and experience. (Dörnyei et al. 2006:145 and Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009:29.)

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009:20), as the ought-to self is closely tied to peer group norms and pressures, and learners', young learners' in particular, ought-to self, that contains peer-induced views, may get in conflict with the individual's ideal self. Thus, to obtain effective desired selves, and to avoid a clash between a learner's personal and social identity, the ideal and the ought-to selves should be in harmony and congruent with important social identities. Moreover, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009:16-17) highlight the importance of imagination and imagery as central elements of language self theories. Therefore, the role of even those idols and peeves that are distant and found via the media, and are almost "imaginary", seems to be undeniable, considering youngsters' self image as second language learners.

There has been much talk of the effects that the media has on young people today. Pääkkönen (2002, as quoted in Nurmi et al. 2008:115) has found out that Finnish teenagers spend about one third of their leisure time watching television or videos: 2-3 hours per day during the weekdays and up to 3-4 hours per day at weekends. Mustonen (2001:123) argues that media causes *identification*, which means emphasising with, for example, a movie character and his or her situation. As teenagers so strongly identify themselves with a vast variety of media characters, both fictional and real, positive and negative, and aim at being like them, many parents and teachers have become worried about the effects of these role models. Further, as Nurmi et al. (2008:158) point out, identities and thinking of the youth are currently much directed by constantly changing trends, which implies that there is no sustainability or stability considering these role models.

2.1.4 Linguistic attitudes

Dörnyei has done several studies regarding motivation in second language learning, and one of his most recent studies performed in co-operation with Csizer and Nemeth (Dörnyei et al. 2006) considers motivation, language attitudes and globalization from a Hungarian perspective. Considering language globalization, they observed the status of five target languages (English, French, Italian, German, Russian, and Hungarian) compared to each other during a 12-year period and found out that Hungarian teenagers appraised these five languages according to the following mental schema, consisting of five interrelated dimensions: integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes towards L2 speakers and L2

community, cultural interest, and vitality of the L2 community. English obtained the top scores among the young people who participated. (Dörnyei et al. 2006:142-143.)

Regarding linguistic attitudes in Finland, Kalaja and Hyrkstedt (2000) introduce Hyrkstedt's study (1997, as quoted in Hyrkstedt and Kalaja 1998) on Finnish attitudes towards the English language as pioneering in the whole world as relatively little study has been performed on attitudes of non-native English users. Furthermore, Kalaja and Hyrkstedt (2000) introduce their research on the attitudes of Finnish students towards English, from the perspective that English has power compared to other languages, such as Finnish. An interesting point they make is that the most powerful factors coming from outside our own language community and affecting particularly the language of young people in Finland, are "international/American youth and entertainment cultures". (Kalaja and Hyrkstedt 2000:369-386.) Furthermore, Kansikas (2002:109-110) has studied attitudes of Finnish upper secondary school students towards foreign languages. She found out that English was considered the richest, easiest and most precise language of the European languages dealt with in the survey, and it was also seen as an apt language for television and international communication and as a *lingua franca*.

2.2 Teenagers' construction of linguistic identity

Attitudes of teenagers towards the English language are relevant to be studied as idols and peeves have a special role in life at their age. This is an age when young people are developing their own identities, and idols and role models function as a reflection base with whose help they build their identities. According to Nurmi et al. (2008:14), development of language and personality is based on experience and, in particular, on feedback one gets of one's actions, which is also referred to as *observational learning* in psychology.

Secondly, what to like and what to hate form and sustain group memberships among the youth as they form in-groups and out-groups. This is also a part of youngsters' identity formation. According to Nurmi et al. (2008:115), youngsters are pressured to watch certain shows and programmes in order to be able to actively participate in conversations with peers, which again strengthens the group identity. Dörnyei (2001:37) explains that a learner's fear of being isolated or rejected by peers or being labelled negatively, for example, as a "nerd" or a "creep", may lead to lack of motivation. To fulfil these group expectations and to gain the

approval of peers is also referred to as *social approval goals* (Urdu and Maehr 1995, cited in Dörnyei 2001:30).

Covington (1998:77-78) has studied the ways of motivating young people and by his *self-worth theory* he explains that the demands for motivation are, first of all, accurate *self-knowledge*, and second, the need for *self-validation*. He defines self-validation as the need to gain approval, affection, and respect of others in a group. When needed, one disassociates oneself from aspects harming this validation, such as failure causing disapproval or rejection among others. Covington (1998:78) names establishing and defending a positive self-image as the *self-worth motive* and acknowledges self-acceptance to be “the highest human priority”. Finally, as discussed above, Dörnyei’s (2005) research on motivation and the self and his model of “L2 motivational self system”, *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* in particular, is relevant in considering teenagers’ construction of linguistic identity.

2.3 Sociolinguistics

In addition to second language learning and evident links to psychology, the present study also involves sociolinguistics as one of its main perspectives. Bell (1976:23-24) introduces sociolinguistics as a field investigating regular correspondence between linguistics and social structures, seeking correlating variables of social group and linguistic aspects with demographical units of social sciences, such as age, gender, social class, religion, and status. The main focus is on individual or group dynamics, that is, the relationship between the individual and the group.

Adding complexity to researching young peoples’ idols and peeves is the notion of Bell’s (1976:110) that not a single individual plays only one role, nor participates in one single social group or belongs to a single group and therefore is not monolingual, possessing only one code. The idea of *code-switching* obviously assumes that youngsters may have several different sets of idols and peeves, depending on the group they are involved in at the time. However, the present study does not go into such depth of investigating and separating the sets of idols and peeves in different social contexts, but only acknowledges this interesting fact that demonstrates the complexity and intricacy of the topic.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 The research question

The aim of the present study is to find out who 7th, 8th and 9th graders in Finland look up to and admire and who they resent as users of the English language. I expect these idols and peeves to be found first of all in the media, for example, in TV-series, the Internet and movies, music and literature, but also in pupils' close real-life environments such as family and school. Moreover, the study seeks the more specific origins of these idols and peeves, whether they are domestic Finnish ones or foreign, for example, American or British. Therefore, the preferred English variants of youngsters are also looked at. Lastly, the present study aims at drawing some conclusions about idols' and peeves' role from the perspective of group identity among the youth.

This kind of study is needed, first of all, since by surveying linguistic idols and role models of the youth the study materials in schools can be improved to interest pupils more. Some research has been made on linguistic attitudes and their effect on second language learning but a recent update of the situation with the youngsters at this age in Finland is lacking. Furthermore, since Finnish youngsters live rather far away and apart from the English speaking world and English speaking cultures, apart from the media, it would be intriguing to find out who pupils actually choose to look up to and to look down on from such a scattered, vast, ever changing and in a way distant mass of options.

Moreover, the topic is very interesting for me personally as I have observed these idols and peeves in my own family and friends in all age groups, which actually got me interested in the topic in the first place. In my opinion, the attitudes of this particular age group towards the English language are relevant to be studied as idols and peeves have a special role in life at their age. This is an age when young people are developing their own identities, and idols and role models function as a reflection base with the help of which they build their identities. Secondly, what to like and what to hate also form and sustain group memberships among the youth: in-groups and out-groups, which again is a part of identity formation. Lastly, the topic is also very current as there has been much talk of the effects that the media has on young people.

3.2 Data and methods

As a method of data collection I used a questionnaire administered to three school classes, one of grade 7, one of 8 and one of grade 9, in a school in Tervo in the northern Savo area. Altogether the three classes have 55 pupils but there were 49 pupils to participate in the present study. The questionnaire format was chosen as the method of data collection since it, first of all, was easy to customize for this specific study, and secondly, it enables a number of pupils to participate and provide elicited and comparable data. Furthermore, a questionnaire can be designed to provide both qualitative and quantitative information, as was the case in the present study. (Gass and Mackey 2005:94-96.)

3.2.1 The study method

The questionnaire was divided into four main sections in the following order: the idols, the peeves, English in the close real life circles, and different variants of English. The pupils got both open questions (questions 1, 2 and 3) and more guided “choose the best alternative” (question 4) questions to answer. Both in the idols and the peeves sections (questions 1 and 2), the participants were asked to name idols or peeves in each category of origin for media, music, movies, literature, and politics, and then to give reasons for why they chose the particular persons or characters as their idols or peeves. The division of the categories of origin was directly borrowed from Kalaja and Dufva (2005:114-115), as, in my opinion, it covers all the main areas clearly and would work well also in this kind of questionnaire. With the division of this kind, I expected the participants to be able easily to name multiple persons and characters as their idols but also as their peeves. The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) starts with a cover letter (see Appendix 1) for the participant, involving the report of the confidentiality and the anonymous handling of the data, as well as the aims of the study. The language of the questionnaire naturally was Finnish and not English in order not to place additional pressure of English language skills on the participants, and to enable them to write as freely as possible (Gass and Mackey 2005:96).

My aim was to get as authentic responses as possible and not to guide the participants in any direction or to give them ready answers. Nevertheless, I wanted to provide the participants with some examples of possible idols at least in some of the questions in order to make sure that they understand what the questions aimed at and what types of answers were needed.

Furthermore, I used a variety of pictures of different persons and characters who might rouse feeling or attitudes in the questionnaire. To acquire versatility and, again, to avoid guiding the participants in any direction, these characters represented different nationalities, sexes and areas of influence. The pictures were meant to give participants a clear idea of what the study is about without restricting their responses in any way. Instead, I expected that the pictures would not necessarily include the very idols and peeves of the pupils but remind them of alternatives and therefore prompt of their own choices.

As for the hypotheses for the results and aims of the study, I supposed that the present study would reveal the differences between the idols preferred by girls and, on the other hand, preferred by boys. Moreover, I hoped to find out if there are any correlations between foreign and domestic users of English as idols or peeves and whether youngsters overall favour native or non-native English users. Finally, one of my hypotheses was that the pupils actually prefer American variants over British or any other variant, for which I also hoped to find evidence.

3.2.2 The pilot study

Before gathering the actual data, I performed a small-scale pilot study in November 2009 in order to see what needed to be improved for the final version of the questionnaire (Gass and Mackey 2005:43). There were two participants in the pilot: a 14-year-old and a 13-year-old, both on the 8th grade. One of the participants goes to school in Vesanto and the other one in Keitele. Therefore, their schools are different from each other and from the target school of the actual study.

The pilot was successful and the participants did not report any major points for improvement. The only point emerging was that the questionnaire took a relatively long time to fill in as it took time for the participants either to remember the name of the idol or peeve, or, if they did not remember the name, to describe who they were. I did not have a time limit for replying for the pilot participants, but regarding their feedback I decided to advise the pupils in the actual questionnaire to spend 15 minutes for responding to the questions.

The questionnaire was revised also by the instructor after the pilot study. According to her advice, I made some minor improvements in the grammatical forms and added the instruction of “Give reasons” at the end of instructions of both the “Idols” and the “Peeves” sections in

the questionnaire. In addition, based on her and the pilot participants' feedback, I considered the option of adding the instruction of "You may explain or describe the person or the character if you don't remember his or her name" in the instruction of the questionnaire sheet. However, I decided to exclude this instruction since I thought that the pupils would naturally realise to use this kind of description when really needed without a specific mention of it. Moreover, I also thought that this kind of advice could easily encourage the pupils for "lazy" answers: vague answers such as "The girl in *Prison Break*". This clearly would not have produced valuable answers and would have made analysing the results difficult. Therefore, to maintain the questionnaire instructions simple and to avoid possible unclear or ambiguous responses, I did not include the specific advice on descriptions and explanations for idols and peeves.

3.2.3 The data

I was able to negotiate an agreement with the headmaster of the school for that he himself together with the English teacher of the school would distribute the questionnaires in classes and then return them to me by post. I provided the school with the questionnaires and my contact information for any possible questions emerging in classes. The data was successfully collected in December 2009 by these means and of the 55 pupils in grades 7, 8 and 9, 49 responded. Overall, the participants had answered very carefully and thoroughly to all questions, which provided a good-sized amount of valid data. The only feedback from the pupils, teacher and headmaster was that 15 minutes still was completely inadequate to fill in the questionnaire properly. Therefore, the English teacher had let the pupils take as long as they needed to answer the questions. The actual answering time varied and therefore was not reported as such.

3.2.4 Methods of analysis

As methods of analysis I firstly used quantitative methods to numerically calculate the results: who were the most common idols and peeves in each group by gender and grade, which were the most common origins for idols and peeves, what kinds of role models youngsters have in their every day life context (school and home environments), which were the most and least popular variants of English, and finally, how the answers of the different grade levels and genders differed.

In order for these aspects to be easily available for comparison, I used Excell grids (see Appendix 3) to collect the answers into a format that was easier to analyse than piles of questionnaire sheets. The data was grouped into grids according to the grade and gender as follows: 7th grade girls, 7th grade boys, 8th grade girls, 8th grade boys, 9th grade girls, and 9th grade boys. By this kind of organization of the answers, the differences between the genders and grades, as well as the most and least popular role models in English, were easy to see. Therefore, the data and the participants' profiles according to the grade level and gender could also be presented numerically.

Secondly, the results were analysed qualitatively to make generalisations of the phenomena found in the study. I expected the majority of the participants to name movie or TV-series characters as their idols, but supposed that some would mention also people from real-life, for example, family members or teachers. I also assumed that there would be differences in idols between boys and girls, and that foreign idols, probably American, would be more popular and occur more frequently than domestic Finnish ones.

4 YOUNGSTERS' LINGUISTIC IDOLS AND PEEVES IN MEDIA, SCHOOL AND HOME ENVIRONMENTS, AND PREFERRED VARIANTS

Firstly, I will introduce the idols and peeves of all the six groups (7th grade boys, 7th grade girls, 8th grade boys, 8th grade girls, 9th grade boys, and 9th grade girls) in each category of origin: media, music, movies, politics and literature, using charts. I will also provide the pupils' reasonings for their choices after each chart, in the analysis section. Moreover, I will introduce the idols and peeves in home and school environments, as well as the preferred English variants appearing in each group, again using charts.

Secondly, I will look at the group identity in each group. I seek to find how consistent the choices for role models in all the groups are, and how cohesive the groups are. Furthermore, I will examine whether there are significant differences in the group identities by comparing the cohesion in each of the groups, and whether differences between the genders or the grades

emerge. Thirdly, I will compare the girls' and boys' groups with each other: the genders in the same grade and the genders through all the grades. I will look at differences in group identity, sources of idols and peeves, and the preferred variants. Therefore, I will lastly propose qualitative generalizations for the sources of the idols and peeves for Finnish youngsters, in terms of areas of media-related sources, closest real-life circles, and also the language variants.

I grouped the participants according to their gender and grade in order to get a clear presentation of each group's profile of idols, peeves, and preferences in terms of English variants, and therefore to be able to gain knowledge for the analysis of group identity and coherence. First of all, I mapped the idols and peeves in each group of participants in terms of each origin category (media, music, movies, politics, and literature) by marking down all the answers and then looking at which were the most and which the least popular. Moreover, I checked the origin of both idols and peeves also inside each category; for example, in the case of role models coming from the media, I checked if they came from sports or from tv-series. The grouping of the participants is as follows:

- 1) 7th grade boys: 7 participants (group A),
- 2) 7th grade girls: 12 participants (group B),
- 3) 8th grade boys: 4 participants (group C),
- 4) 8th grade girls: 9 participants (group D),
- 5) 9th grade boys: 6 participants (group E), and
- 6) 9th grade girls: 11 participants (group F)

In addition, I named each participant by the letter of the group together with a running numbering in order to be able to follow the participants' answers easily and to refer a particular pupil's answers if needed. As a case in point, group A consists of participants A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, and A7.

In order to make the charts as clear and informative as possible, I marked down each idol and peeve only once, even though they would have emerged several times in the same category and in the same group. Consequently, I will discuss the popularity of the characters that emerged the most often in each analysis section.

4.1 Media

Chart 1. Idols and peeves of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in media.

Grades	Idols in media		Peeves in media	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
7 th	The Dudesons Hannah Montana Eva Longoria Tero Pitkämäki Jukka in the Dudesons English in Finnish news Prison Break David Schwimmer	MacGyver The Dudesons Homer Simpson Jukka from the Dudesons Bart Simpson	Homer Simpson Paris Hilton Brooke in the Bold and the Beautiful Kimi Räikkönen	British tv-series "Rally English" Kimi Räikkönen Markus Grönholm Mr. Burns in the Simpsons Robert Kneppen in Prison Break
8 th	Eva Longoria Anthony Bourdain Jamie Oliver America Ferrera Actors in Grey's Anatomy Kirsten Dunst Hugh Laurie Tyra Banks Prison Break CSI	BBC newsreaders Jeremy Clarkson Anthony Bourdain Hank Azaria Don Castalleneca (voice of Homer Simpson) Conan O'Brien	Kimi Räikkönen Little Britain Heart Beat Homer Simpson Jeremy Clarkson in Top Gear Finnish newsreaders Finnish sportsmen and -women Animated characters	Rally- and formula 1 drivers Apu in the Simpsons Homer Simpson Jeremy Clarkson
9 th	Sarah Jessica Parker Tyra Banks Eva Longoria The Desperate Housewives Mischa Barton Grey's Anatomy Wentworth Miller in Prison Break Antero Mertaranta Arnold Schwarzenegger	Harper's Island Steve Irwing The Dudesons Conan O'Brien	Kimi Räikkönen Antti in the Finnish Big Brother 2009 Marianna Alanen (Kana) Conan O'Brien The Simpsons Matti Nykänen	News and some talkshows Kimi Räikkönen Victoria Silvstedt Tommi Mäkinen Gregor Schlierenzauer

Overall, the media category provided a variety of versatile answers. Throughout all the groups, the answers were not very unified, which implies that the group identities in each group are not that cohesive or are rather permissive for many kinds of idols and peeves. However, there is a clear tendency that girls seem to dislike boys' idols on each grade level. For instance, Homer Simpson is an idol in the boy group A, whereas it can be found as a peeve in the same-aged girl group B. Similarly, Jeremy Clarkson, the host of the British tv-series Top Gear, is named as an idol in the male group C and as a peeve in the female group D, as well as the American tv-host Conan O'Brien is being adored by the group E and disliked by the group F.

The majority of the girls' (groups B, D, and F) choices for idols include characters from American tv-series, with the much less frequent additions of a couple of tv-chefs, Finnish newsreaders, a Finnish sports commentator, and one Finnish sportsman. The peeves for girls again include characters from American tv-series, also a relatively large number of Finnish sportsmen, Kimi Räikkönen being the least in favor among them.

On the other hand, idols for boys at all grade levels (groups A, C, and E) include mostly characters from a few favourite hit tv-series, the Finnish series *the Dudesons* and the American series *the Simpsons*. Furthermore, similarly to the girls, they looked up to chef Anthony Bourdain's English, as well as that of BBC newsreaders. Interestingly, exactly as the girls' groups, the boys' groups also disliked the English of sportsmen the most, Kimi Räikkönen again scoring the highest. However, the boys also mentioned newsreaders and some single characters in their favourite tv-series (such as Apu in the Simpsons) as their peeves. Finnish and British characters seemed to be much less in favour of the boys than American ones.

The pupils' reasonings for their idols dealt with pronunciation and accent, clarity, correctedness, manner of speaking, speaking voice, humour, and tone of voice. For example, popular idols for the girls came from the American hit series *Desperate Housewives*, and reasons were, for example, as follows:

- (1) F5: "English spoken in the Desperate Housewives. Listening is easy and one can make sense easily"
(Täydellisten naisten puhuma englanti. Kuunteleminen on helppoa ja saa hyvin selvää)
- (2) D1: "Maybe Eva Longoria, because she has a soft voice..."
(Ehkä Eva Longoria, sillä hänellä on pehmeä ääni...)

Rather similarly, peeves were reasoned on the basis of accent and pronunciation, manner of speaking, correctedness, clarity, and vocabulary. Moreover, some characters were judged due to their role in the series they played, for example:

- (3) B5: "Bruuke [sic], the Bold and the Beautiful, she is not a good person and she does not speak clearly"
(Bruuke [sic], Kauniit ja rohkeat, hän ei ole hyvä ihminen ja hän ei puhu selkeästi)

Moreover, the single one most disliked character in the media throughout all the groups was the Finnish rally driver, former F1 driver, Kimi Räikkönen. His manner of speaking, pronunciation, and tone of voice was remarked in 17 out of all 49 answers (35%), for example by:

- (4) E2: “Squeeking and neither can pronounce”
(Kimitystä ja ei myöskään osaa ääntää)

4.2 Music

Chart 2. Idols and peeves of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in music.

Grade	Idols in music		Peeves in music	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
7th	Britney Spears Maria Mena André Linman in Sturm un Drang Anna Abreu Lady Gaga Kat Deluna Muse Metallica	Deestylistics Mikael Åkerfeld in Opeth Matt Willis Lordi	Anette Olzen in Nightwish Tokio Hotel Britney Spears Nelly Furtado Korpiklaani Alexander Stubb Finnish people singing in English	Lady Gaga Korpiklaani Anna Abreu
8th	Lily Allen The Baseballs Avril Lavigne Pink Kelly Clarkson Lauri in the Rasmus Vanessa Hudgens Aaron Lewis in Staind Samu Haber	American rap artists Vocalist in Volbeat James Hetfield in Metallica Dimmu Borgir	Korpiklaani Till Lindemann in Rammstein Bruce Dickinson in Iron Maiden 69Eyes “old music that has been sung in English”	Some Finnish bands Korpiklaani Ian Gillan Neil Armstrong
9th	Vocalist in Muse David Guetta Linkin Park Ville Valo Anna Abreu James Hetfield in Metallica Marko Hietala Vocalist in Metrostation Alexi Laiho in Children of Bodom Madonna Britney Spears	Doom Unit Freddie Mercury in Queen Matthew Ballamy in Muse James Hetfield in Metallica	Samu Haber Korpiklaani Theo in Lovex Ozzy Osbourne Kelly Osbourne Chris Angel Britney Spears 50cent	Korpiklaani

In the music section, there was much variety in all the answers. Interestingly, however, a common idol for both the girls and the boys was James Hetfield in the heavy metal band *Metallica*, as 6 of all the 49 pupils (12%) named him as an idol. Otherwise the musical idols

were very scattered, and imply that the group identities in all groups were very permissive in terms of musical taste. However, an extremely interesting case in peeves in music was the Finnish metal band *Korpiklaani*, which collected the hating votes from altogether 21 pupils (of 49 pupils, 43%). There was not a single group in the study, in which no one would not have mentioned it as a peeve, and in group E it was the only peeve in music that each of the participants mentioned. Therefore, *Korpiklaani* clearly provides an example of a rather tight and cohesive group identity, particularly in group E, but also in the school in question. Disliking *Korpiklaani* was justified for instance as follows:

- (5) F10: “*Korpiklaani* was the worst I’ve ever heard. The meaning of the words alters when the vocalist pronounces them in a wrong way.”
 (Korpiklaani oli hirveintä mitä olen ikinä kuullut. Sanojen merkitys muuttuu, kun laulaja ääntää ne väärin.)

The choices for idols and peeves were reasoned due to accent and pronunciation, manner of singing, singing voice, and clarity. In addition, the pupils gave credit to Finnish artists who sing well in English. For example, they complemented the pop singer Anna Abreu, the vocalist-guitarist Alexi Laiho in *Children of Bodom*, and the vocalist in the band *Doom Unit* on this aspect.

4.3 Movies

Chart 3. Idols and peeves of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in movies.

Grade	Idols in movies		Peeves in movies	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
7 th	Robert Pattinson Lord of the Rings Johnny Depp Jim Carrey Apu in the Simpsons Sharpay in High School Musical Twilight Westerns	Saving Private Ryan Donald Duck Roger Moore Yodah in Star Wars Will Smith	The Simpsons The Dudesons Penelope Cruz Gabriela in High School Musical Some old films	Bad guys from the Soviet Union in James Bond movies Alan Rickman in Harry Potter movies Sylvester Stallone Robert Kneppen in Prison Break
8 th	Emma Watson in Harry Potter Johnny Depp in the Pirates of the Caribbean Eva Longoria Twilight Taylor Lautner Johnny Depp Kristen Stewart in Twilight	Russian actors Simon Pegg Wesley Snipes Kurt Russell	British movies Robert Pattinson Ian McKellen Johnny Depp in Edward the Scissorhand Old films Amaury Nolasco in Prison Break	Arnold Schwarzenegger Eddie Murphy

	Robert Pattinson Edi Gathegi Leonardo DiCaprio			
9th	Emma Watson, Rupert Grint and Daniel Radcliffe in Harry Potter Robert Pattinson Johnny Depp Teachers in Harry Potter movies Bam Margera Meryl Streep	Rowan Atkinson Arnold Schwarzenegger Nicholas Cage Adam Campbell Samuel L. Jackson	Lord of the Rings The Dudesons All British movies Victoria Silvstedt Robert Pattinson Mr. Beans Philip Goodwin in Pink Panther Leonardo in the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Don Vito in The Godfather Anton Yelchin Star Trek 2009

In the movies section, there was again much variety in all the answers, particularly the girls named several idols and peeves each, whereas the boys were considerably less wordy in the case of movie characters and actors. In the girls' choices for idols, the recent hit saga *Twilight* with its blockbuster movie series was evident in their answers, as nine of all 32 girls (28%) mentioned either the movies or actors and actresses in them. The saga was named an idol by four of all nine participants in group D, which is why it can be seen as strengthening the group dynamics in the group in question. Not a single male participant named characters of the saga neither as their idols nor peeves. Other popular idols chosen by the girls were the characters of *Harry Potter* movies (chosen by three of 32 girls; 9%), and the American actor Johnny Depp (chosen by six of 32 girls; 19%). For the boys' groups, movie idols were much less commonly chosen, the most frequently mentioned being the American actors Roger Moore and Arnold Schwarzenegger, both with only two of all 18 male participants (11%) mentioning them.

However, considering peeves in movies, a similar pattern of that of peeves in media, seemed to take place, being that the choices for peeves were interchangeable between the boys and the girls to some extent. The boys named some of the girls' favourites as their peeves, and vice versa, the girls named some of the boys' idols as their peeves. For instance, the girls disliked *the Dudesons* and *the Simpsons* in the movie section, whereas the boys had chosen characters of these series as their idols in the media section. Moreover, the boys chose some *Harry Potter* characters as their peeves, even though they were clear idols for the girls' groups.

Idols and peeves in movies were chosen due to aspects of accent and pronunciation, manner of speaking, tone of voice, clarity, speed of speaking, and even humour in the role the actor

plays. For example, the American comedy actor Jim Carrey and his movie *Bruce Almighty* were reasoned as follows:

- (6) B4: “Jim Cary [sic]. Is very good because he is a humour guy and speaks English well and he has done several works the best one is Jim Cary [sic] *Almighty!*”
 (Jim Cary [sic]. On tosi hyvä koska se on huumorimies ja puhuu hyvin englantia ja se o tehny monta teosta paras on Jim Cary [sic] ja *Taivaan lahja!*)

Furthermore, the good acting skills of relatively young actors and actresses were praised, for example:

- (7) D4: “Taylor Lautner. He speaks well and is young.”
 (Taylor Lautner. Se puhuu hyvin ja on nuori.)

4.4 Politics

Chart 4. Idols and peeves of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in politics.

Grade	Idols in politics		Peeves in politics	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
7 th	Barack Obama Sauli Niinistö Alexander Stubb	Russian politicians George Bush Hillary Clinton Barack Obama	Tarja Halonen	Alexander Stubb Barack Obama Matti Vanhanen
8 th	Barack Obama	Barack Obama Alexander Stubb Arnold Schwarzenegger	Tarja Halonen Matti Vanhanen	Arnold Schwarzenegger Tarja Halonen
9 th	Alexander Stubb Barack Obama	Barack Obama	Tarja Halonen Most Finnish Politicians Jutta Urpilainen	Almost all politicians Urho Kekkonen Jutta Urpilainen Tarja Halonen Some Finnish politicians

In politics, there were fewer answers and the gender differences were the least obvious. Both the girls and the boys at all grade levels name the American President Barack Obama (16 out of all 49 answers) and the Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb (seven out of all 49 answers) as their idols. Moreover, the boys also mention American politicians Hillary Clinton, George Bush, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Russian politicians. As peeves, both male and female participants name mostly Finnish politicians, the Finnish President Tarja Halonen scoring the highest, and Matti Vanhanen, Jutta Urpilainen, and Urho Kekkonen also having been mentioned. Surprisingly, also the favourites in politics for boys, Barack Obama, Alexander Stubb, and Arnold Schwarzenegger were all named as peeves as well in the answers of male groups A and C.

The reasons for idols in politics included aspects of manner of speaking, tone of voice, clarity, correctness, pronunciation and accent, and even formality of language, whereas choices for peeves were justified by clarity, correctness, pronunciation and accent, and manner of speaking. A case in point concerning idols is the following answer:

- (8) B12: “Barac [sic] Obama, because he influences by his language.”
(Barac [sic] Obama, koska vaikuttaa kielellään.)

On the other hand, peeves were reasoned, for instance, as follows:

- (9) A6: “Well of course Alexander Stubb himself He just speaks what he can and then he says even that poorly”
(No tottakai itse Alexander Stubb Hän vain puhuu minkä osaa ja sitten senkin sanoo huonosti)

4.5 Literature

Chart 5. Idols and peeves of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in literature.

Grade	Idols in literature		Peeves in literature	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
7 th	Harry Potter	Harry Potter	-	-
8 th	J. K. Rowling J. R. R. Tolkien Stephenie Meyer	J. K. Rowling J. R. R. Tolkien	-	J. R. R. Tolkien Stephenie Meyer Thomas Harris
9 th	J. K. Rowling Stephenie Meyer Donald Duck	-	Tom and Jerry	-

The literature section of the questionnaire clearly provided the least data and the most empty answers in the study, which therefore can be read directly as 7th, 8th, and 9th -graders not reading much in English, and therefore not finding idols and peeves in English literature. Nevertheless, the answers show that both girls and boys are familiar with and fond of the hit sagas *Harry Potter* by J. K. Rowling, *Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, and *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer. However, at the same time, group C names them as their peeves. The reasonings for this section were rather inadequate, but the few mentioned concerned the clarity of language, and liking of the actual book or the book series. Participant F8 even praises J. K. Rowling for speaking fluent English in her interviews.

4.6 School and home environments

In this section, the questions in the questionnaire were open. Therefore, the pupils chose to answer the idols and peeves freely, without any guidance other than “family, relatives, friends, teachers”. Names of the persons were guided not to be mentioned. I organized the charts according to characters that were the most frequently mentioned. The division was similar in both idols and peeves.

Chart 6. Idols of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in school and home environments.

Grade	Gender	Teacher (-s)	Friend (-s)	Mother	Father	Sister (-s)	Brother (-s)	Aunt/uncle (-s)	Cousin (-s)
7 th	Girls (12)	4	3	3	-	2	1	-	-
	Boys (7)	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8 th	Girls (9)	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
	Boys (4)	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
9 th	Girls (11)	3	1	1	-	2	2	1	4
	Boys (6)	1	1	-	2	1	-	-	-
total	49	14	10	7	4	6	4	3	6

Firstly, idols in the closest real-life circles seem to include mostly people from the school environment, as teachers and friends (or peers, as they could be called here) score the highest as individual idol groups, teacher(-s) 14 out of 49 (29%) and friend(-s) 10 out of 49 (20%). This finding makes sense when thinking that pupils consider school environment an authority in their language learning, as they should. On the other hand, idols from the home environment are rather evenly distributed, which implies that pupils do not look up to a certain family member or relative as English users. Instead, idols can be found among both close and more distant relatives.

Choices for idols had been reasoned by aspects of correctness of language, accent and pronunciation, speed and clarity of speaking, the manner of speaking, and the range of

vocabulary. Moreover, a person who helps the pupil when he or she needs help in studying English is titled as an idol. Here is an example of a choice for an idol:

- (10) D1: "... mother because she has a Texas accent because she was there as an exchange student..."
 (... äiti koska sillä on Teksas-aksentti koska se oli siellä vaihto-oppilaana...)

Chart 7. Peeves of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in school and home environments.

Grade	Gender	Teacher (-s)	Friend (-s)	Mother	Father	Sister (-s)	Brother (-s)	Aunt/uncle (-s)	Cousin (-s)
7th	Girls (12)	1	2	2	4	-	1	1	1
	Boys (7)	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	-
8th	Girls (9)	-	2	-	4	-	2	1	1
	Boys (4)	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
9th	Girls (11)	2	2	2	5	-	1	-	-
	Boys (6)	3	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
total	49	6	9	7	17	2	6	2	2

Secondly, peeves seemed to clearly emerge from home environment more than they did from school environment, as teachers and peers altogether comprised 17 out of 49 (35%) answers. Interestingly enough, visibly the most hated English user is father, scoring alone the same 17 out of 49 (35%) answers. The reasonings for peeves were the same as for idols: correctedness of language, accent and pronunciation, speed and clarity of speaking, the manner of speaking, and the range of vocabulary.

- (11) B4: "Little brother. He is six years old and tries to speak [English] all the time even though he can't."
 (Pikkuveljen. Se on 6 v ja yrittää kokoajan vaan puhua vaikka ei osaa.)

4.7 English variants

Chart 8. Preferred variants of the English language of 7th, 8th, and 9th graders.

Grade	Gender	Am. E.	Br. E.	Some other native variant	Non-native variants	Cannot say
7th	Girls (12)	4	2	3	-	3
	Boys (7)	5	-	-	2	-
8th	Girls (9)	5	2	-	1	1
	Boys (4)	3	-	-	1	-
9th	Girls (11)	6	3	-	-	2
	Boys (6)	3	1	1	1	-
total	49	26	8	4	5	6

As seen in the chart, American English is clearly the most popular variant of English throughout all the groups, as 26 out of 49 (53%) pupils chose it. As second comes British English, with eight out of 49 (16%) answers. Rather surprisingly, the gap between the major variants of English is as large as it is. On the other hand, these results verify the hypothesis of the present study, which was that the variant most preferred would indeed be American English. I take this phenomenon to be due to great influence of tv-series and music, which often are of American origin these days.

Furthermore, an interesting finding was that in two groups of the boys (groups A and C) no one chose British English as their most preferred variant, and even in the third group of the boys (group E), only one chose British English. Therefore, it can be observed that both the girls and the boys clearly preferred American English, but those preferring British English were girls, except for one boy.

The alternative “Some other native variant” included a open question space for “Which variant?”, and the answers included only Australian English (E2). In the “Non-native variants”, Russians (E1) and Germans (E1) were mentioned.

When compiling the questionnaire, I hesitated in forming the title in this question section as the “English variants”, wondering whether pupils this young would recognize the linguistic term. Nevertheless, the number of pupils answering “Cannot say” (6 out of 49, 12%) is so low that I expect the question having been well understood throughout the groups. However,

interestingly, those choosing the alternative “Cannot say” are all girls, from all grades, which implies that the boys obviously were more sure of both the term “variant” and their preference of variants.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the findings

In general, the aim of the present study was to find out who Finnish youngsters look up to or look down on as users of the English language. In other words, I sought to find out what kind of idols and peeves the youth has in English, and moreover, where these role models, both positive and negative, come from. On one hand, media, music, movies, politics and literature were considered as origins of role models, school and home environments on the other. Moreover, the English variants preferred by the youngsters were also studied. Finally, the present study aimed at finding out how idols and peeves shape group dynamics and group identity among the groups of participants, divided firstly, according to grade levels, and secondly, according to gender. It was presumed that the results, on the one hand, show the link between pupils learning motivation and role models, and on the other hand, provide ideas on how to motivate pupils in practise.

With regard to the idols found in the categories of media, music, and movies, most of them seemed to emerge from arenas of current popular culture, such as hit tv-series, or recent blockbuster movies. This kind of trend was expected also in the hypotheses of the present study. The most popular role models were of American origins in the categories of media, music and movies, which also showed in the preferred English variants, of which American English gained the votes of altogether 26 pupils of all 49 (53%), leaving British English in second place with eight out of 49 (16%) answers. The currently popular American tv-series *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Desperate Housewives*, *the Simpsons* and *Prison Break* were very popular among the youth, as well as the Finnish hit series *the Dudesons*. In movies, the hit sagas of *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* appeared popular among the girls, whereas idols for the boys were much more scattered and did not present any certain trend. However, there was an interesting tendency of the girls disliking the boys’ idols such as the *Dudesons* or the *Simpsons*, as well as the boys disliking the girls’ idols, such as characters in the series *Prison Break*.

Furthermore, in music, girls named the American pop singer *Lady Gaga* as their idol, whereas boys chose her as their peeve. Both the girls and the boys found their peeves often in Finnish sports, the most common of them being Kimi Räikkönen.

The categories of politics and literature were clearly much less fertile sources for both idols and peeves, which proves these categories to be less familiar to pupils at upper levels of comprehensive school. Therefore, the most dominant sources for youngsters to find rolemodels in English are media, music and movies. However, clear idols in politics were the American President Barack Obama, and the Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, whereas a common peeve in all the groups was the Finnish President Tarja Halonen. In literature, the popular sagas *Harry Potter* by J. K. Rowling, *Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, and *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyers were named as idols particularly among the girls.

Considering school and home environments, most idols seemed to emerge from school environment, as most often teachers and peers were regarded as idols. On the other hand, the most common peeves were fathers, but rather surprisingly, also peers.

Regarding idols and peeves from the perspective of shaping group identity, one obvious tendency was that differences emerged when comparing the genders, rather than comparing the grade levels. Respectively, the female participants chose similar idols and peeves to a large extent, as did the male participants among themselves. This finding of the genders having concise group identities among themselves is further evidenced by the fact that the gender groups resented each others' idols. However, the study indicates also tight group identities among the groups separated by both gender and grade level, as for example, the whole group E named Korpiklaani as their peeve in music, and the *Twilight* saga was strikingly popular among group D.

The results provide clear evidence of the motivational aspects of linguistic role models. Firstly, the variety of idols and peeves the pupils mentioned definitely show that, even though varying in number from a category to another, the pupils have realised the instrumental value of studying English in all the areas of the media. For instance, the pupils may not follow politics actively or read English literature that much, but they have paid attention to people influencing these categories and are able to name them. Assumably, the pupils thus have noticed that by knowing English they are able to follow the media from recent pop culture to

the news rather effectively and inclusively, in Finland but also internationally. In other words, the pupils have rather obviously observed the usefulness of English in practise, which surely has motivated their learning so far, and most probably will also in the future.

Secondly, as the study directly reveals both some positive and negative role models of the youngsters in English, the teachers are able to pick them to their teaching, for example, as an ingredient in the teaching material. For example, language text books, as well as exercise books and other exercise material can be composed to include young people's idols to motivate their learning. Furthermore, comparing the positive role models with the negative ones, or bringing up the negative role models only could heat up very fertile discussions in the exercises of spoken English in classes.

5.2 Evaluation of the findings and methodology

Even though the present study aimed at gaining valid data and analysing it in the most reliable way possible by avoiding problems often associated with research on language attitudes, some of them still arose. Firstly, I used some pictures and names of characters appearing in current popular culture in the questionnaire to encourage pupils in their answers and to give them an idea of what I was looking at in the study. However, there is a chance that these hints led the participants to choose these characters in question in their answers. For instance, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Tarja Halonen were given as examples of possible answers in the guidelines, and they did appear rather frequently also in the actual answers. On the other hand, Barack Obama appeared in a picture as an example and was frequently chosen as an idol, but he also has been present in the media extremely often. Moreover, the choices for idols and peeves, even if they appeared in the examples, were also usually very well reasoned, instead of being merely named.

Secondly, another problem in the present study was the question of how much the idols and peeves named by the youngsters represent their linguistic idols, or whether these characters are actually their idols and peeves in general, representing their taste, for example, in music or movies. Nevertheless, the study was titled as "*Linguistic idols and peeves*" (*Kielelliset idolit ja inhokit*) and the linguistic aims of the study were discussed and highlighted both in the cover letter for the pupils and in the guidelines, and therefore the questions should have been

understood accordingly. However, it is unquestionably left to hang whether the pupils forgot these aims during answering the questions, at least at some points.

In addition, one problem in the study was whether the pupils at the stage of upper comprehensive school really know the variants of the English language, which obviously depends much on the teaching in the school. The question about the variants in the questionnaire sheet was a multiple choice question, and therefore it did not require much explanation or further thinking by the pupils. In a way, the variants were being explained in the question itself, as the variants were named in it. Finally, the fifteen minutes' time limit originally planned for the participants for filling in the questionnaire proved to be way too short, as the school announced that it was completely inadequate.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

One of the most salient features of the present study is that it is very much up-to-date and tied to the current phenomena, which is a positive thing in gaining reliable research findings of the current situation as was aimed in the study in the first place. However, the results will rather soon be dated, as the idols and peeves of this kind will change along with the trends in popular culture. Therefore, further study is needed to provide further up-to-date data on the issues. For example, an identical study could be carried out in the future, or only parts of it could be used. One way of researching the issues could be altering also the categories of assumed sources for idols and peeves, as for one thing, the present study did not include for example the Internet.

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APPENDIX 1

Hyvä X koulun oppilas,

Olen englannin kielen pääaineopiskelija Jyväskylän yliopistosta, ja olen parhaillaan kokoamassa materiaalia tutkielmaani varten. Tutkielmassani selvitän peruskoulun 7., 8. ja 9. -luokkalaisten kielellisiä idoleita ja inhokkeja **englannin kielessä**. Tähän liittyen, toivoisin Sinun täyttävän tämän kyselylomakkeen omien näkemyksiesi ja mielipiteidesi mukaisesti. Vastaathan huolellisesti, sillä vastauksesi ovat tärkeitä tutkielman onnistumisen kannalta.

Sinun ei tarvitse ilmoittaa nimeäsi täyttäessäsi kyselylomaketta, vaan kaikkien vastaajien toivotaan pysyvän nimettöminä. Vastauksesi sekä antamasi muut tiedot (esim. luokka-aste) käsitellään täysin luottamuksellisesti eli nimeäsi ei tulla käyttämään kun tutkielman tuloksista raportoidaan.

Suuri kiitos jo etukäteen vaivannäöstäsi!

Parhain terveisin,

Beate Pekkarinen

APPENDIX 2

Beate Pekkarinen
Jyväskylän yliopisto
Kyselytutkimus



VS.



Kielelliset idolit ja inhokit

Vastaajan tiedot:

Luokka-aste: 7

Sukupuoli: nainen

8

mies

9

Tämän kyselyn tarkoitus on selvittää peruskoulun 7., 8. ja 9. -luokkalaisten roolimalleja ja inhokkeja, ”epäroolimalleja” **englannin kielessä**, niin median ja viihdemaailman kuin oman tutun lähipiirinkin osalta. Sinullakin on varmasti joku henkilö tai hahmo, joko viihdemaailmassa tai tosielämässä, jonka englantia ihaillet ja joku, jonka englantia kuulostaa pahalta. Saatat tykätä esimerkiksi Homer Simpsonin, Duudsonien tai Barack Obaman englannista, ja inhota Britney Spearsin, Arnold Schwarzeneggerin tai Tarja Halosen englantia.

Ole hyvä, ja vastaa kysymyksiin. Aikaa vastaamiseen on 15 minuuttia. Edellä mainitut henkilöt ja hahmot sekä kyselyn kuvat sivuilla 1 ja 4 ovat vain esimerkkejä ja tarkoitettu virikkeiksi, eikä sinun tietenkään tarvitse valita suosikkiasi tai inhokkiasi heistä.

1. **Idolit.** Nimeä henkilöitä ja/tai hahmoja. Kenen käyttämää englannin kieltä ihaillet? Kuka mielestäsi puhuu hyvää, hienonkuuloista englantia? Jos saisit valita itsellesi kenen tahansa englannin maailmassa, kenen valitsisit? Keneen haluaisit tulla verratuksi käyttäessäsi englannin kieltä? PERUSTELE VASTAUKSESI LYHYESTI kussakin kohdassa.

Mediassa? (tv-sarjat, Internet, ulkomaiset ja kotimaiset uutiset jne.)

Musiikissa?

Elokuvilla?

Politiikassa? (kotimaiset ja ulkomaiset poliitikot)

Kirjallisuudessa?

2. **Inhokit.** Nimeä henkilöitä ja/tai hahmoja. Kenen käyttämästä englannista **et** pidä? Keneltä et missään nimessä haluaisi kuulostaa käyttäessäsi englantia? Kenen englanti ärsyttää? Kuka mielestäsi käyttää englantia huonosti, rumasti, väärin tai typerästi? PERUSTELE VASTAUKSESI LYHYESTI kussakin kohdassa.

Mediassa? (tv-sarjat, Internet, ulkomaiset ja kotimaiset uutiset jne.)

Musiikissa?

Elokuviissa?

Politiikassa? (kotimaiset ja ulkomaiset poliitikot)

Kirjallisuudessa?

3. Englanti lähipiirissä – älä vastaa nimillä!

- a) Kenen englannin kielen käyttöä ihaillet lähipiirissäsi (perhe, sukulaiset, kaverit, opettajat)?

- b) Entä kenen englannin kielen käytöstä et lainkaan tykkää lähipiirissäsi (perhe, sukulaiset, kaverit, opettajat)?

4. Englannin variantit. Ympyröi sopivin vaihtoehto. Ylipäänsä, ihailenko enemmän

- a. syntyperäisten englanninpuhujien kieltä
- a.1. amerikanenglantia
- a.2. brittienglantia
- a.3. jotain muuta englannin kielen muotoa, mitä? _____
- b. ei-syntyperäisten englanninpuhujien kieltä (esim. suomalaiset)
- c. en osaa sanoa



Kiitos vastauksistasi!