

ENGLISH AS A TOOL IN SPORT COACHING
Finnish volleyball coaches' views, attitudes and
feelings

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Eeva Puukka

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Englannin kielen asema on muuttunut merkittävästi yhteiskunnassamme viime vuosikymmenien aikana. Tänä päivänä suomalaisten työpaikat sekä vapaa-ajan aktiviteetit ovat yhä kansainvälisempiä, joten monet suomalaiset ovat osa monikulttuurista sekä -kielistä ympäristöä. Englannin kielen osaamisesta on tullut perusedellytys sekä ammatilliseen menestykseen että työstä selviytymiseen.</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitettiin, millä tavalla suomalaiset lentopallovalmentajat kokevat englannin kielen roolin työssään. Tarkastelussa olivat valmentajien kokemukset, tunteet ja asenteet englannin käyttöä kohtaan. Tutkimuksen aineisto on 10 kyselylomakevastausta sekä kaksi puolistrukturoitua teemahaastattelua.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittavat, että suomalaisilla lentopallovalmentajilla on melko positiivinen asenne työssään englannin kieltä kohtaan. Englannin kielen käyttö nähtiin myös välttämättömyytenä, jotta kommunikaatio onnistuu valmentajien ja ulkomaalaisten pelaajien välillä. Vieraalla kielellä valmentaminen aiheutti myös ongelmatilanteita; muun muassa spesifi lajisanasto sekä nopeat pelitilanteet aiheuttivat haasteita valmentajille. Tämä tutkielma osoittaa, että myös suomalaiset urheiluvalmentajat voivat joutua käyttämään vierasta kieltä selviytyäkseen jokapäiväisistä työtehtävistään. Tutkimus tuo esiin myös englannin kielellä puhumisen haasteet urheiluvalmennuksessa. Tulosten pohjalta ammattivalmentajille voitaisiin tulevaisuudessa tarjota enemmän koulutuksia englanninkieliseen urheiluvalmennukseen liittyen.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

English is a worldwide language, and the importance of it is irrefutable. It is the main language in the world and used as a lingua franca all over the world. In Finland, English language has become more and more common language in work places and in the media, but also in leisure time activities. In the National survey on the English language in Finland by VARIENG (2009), which studied how Finns use English, it was stated that 52% of the respondents (N=3000) used English in their free time. Moreover, 23% of the respondents told that they use English with friends while 16% reported using English in their hobbies. This indicates that for many Finns, leisure time activities have become more international.

English language is widely used also in world-class sports in Finland. There are many foreign athletes in the Finnish Championship leagues, for instance in football, ice-hockey and volleyball, and the main language that is used in these teams often is English. The sport coaches in Finland usually are common Finnish people who have no specific language training, but still they have to use English during the games and practices in order to communicate with the foreign athletes. Their English language use is very important for the team, and especially for the non-Finnish athletes. Using a common language has many advantages – communication is smoother inside the team when everybody understands at the same time what the coach is saying and no one is left out from the conversations. However, using a foreign language in coaching can also cause problems and misunderstandings. The purpose of this study is to examine Finnish volleyball coaches' feelings and experiences when using the English language in games and practices. The main concern will be on their language attitudes and feelings. Language attitudes have been widely studied before, but in different contexts. In Finland, a few studies have been carried out about the Finns' use of English at their studies or work. Bergroth (2007) studied in her Master's thesis Finnish professionals' language use and language attitudes in their working life. Another

research was carried out by Lehtonen (2004) where she studied Finnish employees' attitudes towards English language and challenging situations in English use. The present study differs from previous studies because the focus is on Finnish volleyball coaches and their language usage.

This study will provide new information about the role of English in a specific field of sports. Moreover, it will give an insight into the language situation inside Finnish volleyball teams – what kind of situations volleyball coaches face and what kind of feelings and attitudes they have when using a foreign language.

The paper will begin by discussing the role of English in Finland in general, defining some key terms and then examining previous studies. After that the present study will be explained more thoroughly by presenting the research questions, methodology and data. Next, the findings of the data will be analyzed and finally, in the conclusion part, the results will be discussed and summarized.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 English in Finland

The status of the English language has changed radically in Finland during the past decades. The urbanization of the country, internationalization, changes in the business life, effective language education, migration and new media devices and domains have all contributed to the current status of English in the Finnish society (Leppänen and Nikula 2008: 16). The Finnish working life and leisure time activities have become more international and consequently, many Finns are part of different multicultural and multilingual environments (Virkkula, 2008).

Speaking English has become a prerequisite for professional success, since the role of English is so significant worldwide. Today, even employees at grass roots level have to be in contact with foreign people without the help of any language experts (Virkkula, 2008). As Virkkula (2008) points out, in many fields, a command of

English is now a basic necessity not only in succeeding in one's work, but also qualifying at work. This aspect is one of the main interests in the current study, where I examine the volleyball coaches' feelings and experiences when they are using English.

The Centre of Excellence for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English (VARIENG) studied the use of English in Finland in different domains (<https://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/kielet/tutkimus/hankkeet/paattyneet-hankkeet/varieng/en>). The study emphasizes the fact that the Finns' life has become more international and that they need English language skills especially at work and leisure time. According to the survey, Finns seem to have a fairly neutral and pragmatic attitude towards English. The role of English was seen as important, since a majority thought that, excluding elderly people, everyone should know English.

English language has gained a firm foothold especially in the Finnish business world. There are many international corporations in Finland and therefore the use of English language has increased. Finns also seem to have a positive attitude towards internationality in Finnish companies since 61.6% of the VARIENG respondents had a fairly or very positive attitude towards English as the international language in Finnish companies. Bergroth (2007) and Lehtonen (2004) also studied Finnish employees' attitudes towards English in their working environment using semi-structured interviews. Overall, in both studies, the attitudes towards English language were positive; it was seen as a natural and obvious part of the job. However, in both cases difficulties also were experienced, especially in oral communication and this was because of the lack of practice and routine in speaking English. It is interesting to see in the present study, whether Finnish sport coaches have the same kind of attitudes towards English language use.

2.2 Attitudes

The term *attitude* is not easy to define, since there are several different definitions to it and the concept has its roots in many research fields. In general, attitude is some kind of an affective feeling towards an object. As Bergroth (2007) points out in her thesis, we use the term attitude quite freely in our everyday speech referring to opinions, ideas and beliefs. Attitudes are not innate, but learned and often affected by our personal experiences. According to Garrett (2010), two main sources for attitudes are our own experiences and social environment, such as school system or media. He also states that attitudes can be both input into and output from social action. This means that for instance, positive attitudes may lead to success, but also the other way around, success can lead to more positive attitudes.

The structure of attitudes has also been seen fairly complex. Garrett (2010) notes that attitudes have been talked about in terms of three components: cognition, affect and behavior. According to him, attitudes are cognitive since they contain beliefs about the world and affective because they measure favorability and unfavorability. In addition, Garrett (2010) mentions that the behavioral component covers the predisposition to act in certain ways. In order to clarify these terms, an example of a student's attitudes towards learning Spanish is presented in Garrett's book; a cognitive component would be the student believing that Spanish skills will help her to understand Spanish culture more, affective component would be her enthusiasm about being able to read Spanish literature and a behavioral component would be her saving money for a Spanish course. This study will focus on the affective component of attitudes, in other words, what kind of feelings and emotions the use of English language evokes among the participants.

2.2.1 Attitudes to language

Language attitudes are attitudes which are related to language. They often are attitudes that people have towards different languages or speakers of a language, as Kalaja (1999) reports in her article. Several studies about language attitudes have been carried out from different perspectives, for example attitudes towards language variation and dialect, attitudes towards language groups or attitudes towards minorities or communities (Baker 1992). For the purpose of the present study, language attitudes are primarily viewed as individuals' personal feelings and reactions towards English language use.

By investigating attitudes we gain information about people's thoughts and beliefs (Baker 1992). As Gardner (1982) points out, when we know an individual's attitude towards some object, we have a better chance of understanding his/her behavior towards it. Baker (1992) also explains that the status and the importance of language are most often measured by attitudes to that language. Language attitude studies are important in finding out people's attitudes towards the languages they use. In this study, it is interesting to explore what kind of attitudes volleyball coaches have towards the English language. The use of English is a necessity for them, thus different people may have different feelings about it - some may be confident and comfortable while others can feel that the use of English is challenging or uncomfortable. Speaking especially in a foreign language may cause *language anxiety*, which consists of fear, tension and disorganization in front of an audience (Buss 1980). It will be interesting to examine, what kind of feelings Finnish volleyball coaches have faced.

2.2.2 Previous studies on language attitudes in Finland

This chapter presents a selection of studies about language attitudes carried out in Finland. The list of examples is not exhaustive, but it provides information about the type of work that has been done about the topic and places the present study into a larger context.

Dufva et al. (1996) studied ten heterogeneous Finns' attitudes, assumptions and beliefs about *everyday knowledge of language* using questionnaires, group discussions and interviews. The results were diverse; some of the interviewees found language to be an important and essential factor, whereas there were also examples when language was seen to cause repulsiveness or fear.

In addition to Bergroth's (2007) and Lehtonen's (2004) Master's theses, also Ruokolainen (2012) studied in his thesis attitudes towards English. His main interests were Finnish upper secondary school students' feelings and experiences regarding studying foreign languages in Finnish schools. His data was gathered by using a questionnaire. The result of his study was that the students had positive attitudes towards English language. The knowledge of English was seen as an important tool for their future, mainly concerning studying and employment.

Petrow (2010) studied university students' attitudes towards English. The method she used was a questionnaire containing seven open-ended questions, five relating to English and two relating to Finnish. The results indicated that the respondents had clearly positive attitudes towards English language. The amount of negative assessment concerning English was significantly small.

These studies were included in order to provide information about the kind of research that has been done in Finland. They all give an impression that Finns' have a fairly positive attitude towards English. The present study, which is

presented in the next chapter in more detail, will survey whether Finnish sport coaches have similar views about the English language.

3. THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 The research questions

The aim of the present study is to examine how sport coaches feel using the English language. In order to find this out, two research questions were formed.

- 1) How do Finnish volleyball coaches feel about using English language in games and practices?
- 2) What kind of experiences have they had when using English in games and practices?

The answers to the first question will provide information about the participants' feelings and attitudes towards English language. The answers will also offer background information to the second research question, which will specify the experiences the participants have had in more detail.

3.2 The selection of methodology and data

Since the intention in this study is to gain personal information and participants' real life experiences, a qualitative approach was chosen. The data was gathered by using two kinds of methods; sending an online questionnaire to Finnish sport coaches (N=15) and also using face-to-face interviews. I chose to carry out both the questionnaire and interviews in Finnish since it is the first language of the participants. Speaking with native language allows the participants to express themselves easily and naturally.

Because questionnaires are often constructed quite strictly to certain themes and the answering possibilities are often limited, I decided to use a lot of open-ended questions. I wanted to avoid multiple choice and *yes-no* answers so that the participants would have the freedom to use their own words. With online questionnaires there is a risk that the participants' answers are brief or negligent or they do not answer at all, so in order to ensure that I would get enough data, I decided also to interview personally two coaches. Moreover, interviews give a deeper and more personal view to the subject. As Hirsjärvi et al. (1997) state, the face-to-face interview allows the interviewees to express themselves freely and the interviewer can also add further questions and clarify possible misunderstandings. In addition, in the interview, the speech can be placed into a larger context, so the interviewer is able to see for example the interviewees' gestures and facial expressions (Hirsjärvi et al, 1997).

The questionnaire was carried out in January 2013. Before sending the actual questionnaire, a pilot questionnaire was tested with four co-students in order to see if there were any problems with it. When the target group had been chosen, the participants were sent an e-mail where the aims and purposes of this study were explained. The participants were told that the aim of this study is to find out Finnish volleyball coaches' feelings and experiences about using English in coaching. Overall, the questionnaire was sent to 15 people and 10 of them replied. For the interview section, a semi-structured interview was chosen, which means that the interviewer has a set of open-ended questions but also an opportunity to explore particular themes or responses further. The interview questions were partly adopted from a Master's Thesis by Lehtonen (2004), who studied Finnish employees' attitudes towards English language. Some of the questions were modified in order to suit this study. A full list of the questionnaire and interview questions can be found in appendix 1 and 2.

The interviews were carried out in January and February 2013. Before the interviews, two candidates were contacted personally and asked if they were willing to take part in the study. Again, the aims of the study were explained. Both of the candidates agreed to be interviewed. The interview format was piloted with two students before carrying it out. Both interviews were recorded and transcribed afterwards.

3.3 The method of analysis

The transcribed interviews and questionnaire responses were the basis for analysis in this study. Overall, I managed to get extensive responses from the questionnaires but, in addition, interviews offered freedom and flexibility that were needed in order to get deeper information about the participants' feelings and experiences.

Since the study is qualitative, the emphasis is on the stated experiences of the participants and on the stated meanings they attach to themselves and to other people. In the analysis, the aim is to compare the answers from the collected data, find differences or similarities and then draw conclusions.

The questionnaire and interviews were divided into four themes and these themes will be the main outline in the following chapter. First, the situations where the sport coaches need English language are described. Secondly, challenging situations which the participants have experienced when using English are presented in detail. Thirdly, English language situations which were considered as a routine are illustrated and finally, the participants' feelings and attitudes towards English language are described.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Sport coaches' English use

All the participants in this study reported using English on a daily basis. The most common situations where English was used were practices, game meetings and private conversations with foreign players. One of the participants also mentioned using English with players' agents and in international coaching seminars. A common finding with the participants was that if there was a non-Finnish player in the team, the main language that was used was English.

Example 1

“Koska joukkueessani on kolme yhdysvaltalaisista pelaajaa ja suomalaiset ymmärtävät englantia hyvin, pääasiallinen harjoituskielemme on englanti. Toki henkilökohtaiset asiat suomalaisille käyn läpi suomeksi. Palaverit ja yhteiset sähköpostit ovat englanniksi.”

“Because there are three American players in my team and Finnish players understand English well, the main language in our practices is English. Of course personal things for Finnish people are in Finnish. Meetings and collective e-mails are in English.”

(Questionnaire)

Because coaching requires a lot of oral communication - giving instructions, feedback and team leading, speaking was considered to be the most common medium. In addition to speaking, also writing was used and considered to be important. It was pointed out by the participants that coaching requires also the use of written English, such as e-mails, training and gym programs and game strategies.

Example 2

"No kyllä mä sanoisin että se puhuminen (..) puhuminen on. Toisiks eniten on ehkä sit kirjoittaminen (..) ohjelmat ja tommoset."

"Well I would say that speaking (..) speaking it is. The second most is probably then writing (..) programs and stuff like that."

(Interview 1)

Small talk was also seen as a useful factor. One of the interviewees said that it is easier if one can also talk something else than just things related to practices or games. When the interviewee was asked in what kind of situations a coach needs small talk, he responded:

Example 3

"No esimerkiksi peleissä se on joskus hyvä et jos täytyy käskyttää tai sit rentouttaa tunnelmaa niinku et pystyy vähä englanniksi jotain vitsintynkää heittämään."

"Well for example in games it is sometimes good if you have to command or relax the atmosphere so that you can tell a little bit jokes in English also."

(Interview 2)

As it is pointed out in the extracts, the participants use English in everyday coaching situations when there are foreign athletes involved. The English language was seen as a natural part of the coaches' work since a great part of their communication was in English with non-Finnish athletes.

4.2 Challenging situations in English use

Different situations which involved oral communication were considered the most challenging situations for the participants. One factor that made oral

communication challenging, was the specific sport vocabulary which was not familiar to the coaches.

Example 4

"No lentopallossa en oo varsinaisesti saanu mitää lajienglantikoulutusta eli se on enemmän ollu sellasta itseoppimista et mikä tarkoittaa mitäkin (..) vaikka suorituksessa tai muussa."

"Well in volleyball I haven't really had any sport English education so it has been more kind of self-education what means what (..) like in performance or in something like that."

(Interview 2)

Fast-tempo game situations, where the message was supposed to be communicated quickly, were said to be the most challenging situations. Occasions where coaches had to react spontaneously to an unexpected event were stated to be challenging or uncomfortable. One of the participants found that it was easier to talk in the practices, because there is no hurry or time limitations, whereas in game situations, the challenge was the limited amount of time when the message had to be communicated.

Talking to the whole team in English was considered to be more challenging than talking to a foreign player personally. One of the participants said that private, face-to-face situations were calmer and one had more time to think about the words and tenses. As Buss (1980) mentions, talking to the whole group in a foreign language may cause language anxiety. According to Buss (1980), the size of the audience is very crucial. For example, teachers can be comfortable in small classes, but may have anxiety when teaching in large classes. Same aspect applies to sport coaches - speaking in a foreign language to bigger audiences can cause more pressure, discomfort or anxiety.

Speaking with different nationalities produced fairly same kinds of opinions between the participants. Some of the coaches said that it is challenging to speak with Americans because words have different meanings and stresses. When one of the interviewees was asked, whether he had had any problems with understanding, he replied:

Example 5

"No (..) joskus jenkkien kanssa ehkä. Niillä on aika vikkelää välillä se puhe."

"Well (..) sometimes with Yanks maybe. Their speech is pretty swift sometimes."

(Interview 1)

Interestingly, nine out of twelve of the participants stated that it is easier to communicate with a non-native speaker. This observation is consistent with the findings of previous studies by Bergroth (2007) and Lehtonen (2004). Bergroth (2007:76) states in her thesis that one of the most difficult situations among Finnish employees is speaking with native speakers of English because of their fast speech, accents or word choices. Bergroth (2007:76) also mentions that the communication situation with a native speaker is unequal - the non-native speaker always feels more nervous or anxious. In addition, Lehtonen (2004:50) finds that non-native English speakers use simple vocabulary and sentence structure and their speech is not so fast. The comments of one of the interviewees also highlight these observations.

Example 6

"Jos otetaan esimerkiks meidän virolainen pelaaja et hänen kanssa on aika helppoa koska hän puhuu kuitenkin aika hyvää ja selkeätä englantia mut se ei oo kuitenka hänen äidinkieli et se on ehkä niin et sillan on se ymmärrys ehkä kaikkein helpointa jopa."

"If we take for example our Estonian player so with her it is quite easy because she speaks nonetheless pretty good and clear English but however it is nor her first language so it is maybe that then the understanding can be even the easiest."

(Interview 1)

One common observation among the participants was the challenge of speaking with people from for example Latin America or East European countries where they do not speak English so much. Many of the participants stated that they had faced misunderstandings or misinterpretations with these players because of their limited English language skills or different accents. Also cultural matters had caused some problems:

Example 7

"On tullut väärinkäsityksiä, mutta ne ovat kulttuurista johtuvia asioita, eli mitä voi sanoa ja mitä ei, mikä on sopivaa ja mitä riviien välissä kuitenkin tarkoitetaan."

"There has been misunderstandings, but they are due to cultural issues, so what can be said and what not, what is appropriate and what is meant between the lines."

(Questionnaire)

If misunderstandings or other communication problems occurred, the participants seemed to have various ways of solving them. Some of the coaches stated that using euphemisms or asking a specific word from a Finnish player often solved the problem. One of the coaches also told that drawing was a convenient way to illustrate what one had meant. When one of the interviewees was asked what he has done if there have been misunderstandings, he replied:

Example 8

"No sit täytyy itekki kysyy rohkeesti et ymmärsitkö mitä tarkotin (..) kyl mä oon yrittäny painottaa et jos ei tajuu jotain ni sanoo heti (..) voin koittaa selittää sen jotenki muuten."

"Well then you have to also ask that have you understood what I meant (..) I have tried to emphasize that if you don't understand something then say it right away (..) I can try to explain it in another way."

(Interview 2)

These observations indicate that the most challenging situations in English use for the participants are situations that involve oral communication. These challenging situations mentioned by the volleyball coaches have also been found in previous studies by Bergroth (2007) and Lehtonen (2004). Next, I will present the situations that were considered to be routine for the participants.

4.3 Routine situations in English use

It can be noticed from the participants' comments that the everyday use of English becomes a routine for them. Simple commands and instructions were seen as the easiest or considered as a routine.

Example 9

"No semmoset ihan peruskäskyt mitkä pystyy ihan yhdellä tai kahdella sanalla antamaan. Raja kiinni raja auki ja tällisiä (..) semmosia pikkujuttuja."

"Well just those basic commands that you can say with one or two words. Line closed or line open and things like that (..) those kind of small things."

(Interview 1)

Although the specific sport vocabulary was seen as a challenging factor, some of the participants stated that it also becomes a routine in time. Once the basic sport vocabulary is learned, coaches can refer to those and use them over and over again. One coach mentioned that English language becomes easy when one has practiced a bit and the specific vocabulary grows bigger every day.

One coach stated that the use of English feels sometimes even easier than using Finnish. With some coaching areas English language seemed to work better.

Example 10

"Mä toivon et käytettäis englannin kieltä enemmän. Se on mulle helpompi ku suomen kieli. Tai vähän riippuu et joissakin jutuissa suomen kieli toimii paremmin mut aika monessa jutussa esim. tuolla henkisen puolen valmennuksessa englanti toimii paremmin."

"I wish that English language would be used more. It is easier for me than Finnish. Or it depends that in some cases Finnish works better but in quite many situations, for example in mental coaching English works better."

(Interview 2)

Naturally, it can be seen from the coaches' statements that the more they are exposed to the English language, the easier it becomes for them to use it. A common finding was that the use of English language first seemed to cause nervousness or anxiety, but over the time, it has become more routine-like.

Example 11

"Alussa oli jännittävää ja mietti, kuinka pärjää. Mutta nyt on useamman vuoden kokemus asiasta, ei niin jännittävää, huomannut, että pääasia tulla ymmärretyksi kuin se, mikä aikamuoto tai prepositio."

"At first it was exciting and I thought how I would manage. But now there are a couple years of experience, so it is not so exciting and I've noticed that the main thing is to be understood rather than which tense or preposition."

(Questionnaire)

4.4 Sport coaches' feelings and attitudes towards English use

The participants were asked for their feelings and opinions about using English in coaching and they expressed fairly similar kinds of views. Eight coaches stated that the use of English in their coaching feels normal, natural or easy. Three of the participants mentioned that at first the use of English felt a bit uncomfortable, but with experience it has become more natural.

Example 12

"Aluksi olin hieman poissa mukavuusalueelta, mutta nykyään se tuntuu luonnolliselta."

"At first I was a bit away from my comfort zone, but nowadays it feels natural."

(Questionnaire)

Although most of the participants felt that the use of English language is natural for them, one coach found the use of English uncomfortable and challenging. The coach felt that the lack of English language knowledge makes the feedback or instructions slow and imprecise.

English as a collective language in practices and games was mostly seen as a positive issue. All the participants agreed that a mutual language in games and practices makes the cooperation smoother. One common positive factor was that all the players understand what the coach is saying and no one is “left out” from the conversations.

Example 13

”Käytän itse aina, mikäli yksikin pelaaja on englanninkielinen. On helppo kuvitella kuinka yksinäistä on olla harjoituksissa, missä puhutaan itselle vierasta kieltä.”

”I use it (English) always if there is one player who speaks English. It is easy to imagine how lonely it is to be in a practice where people speak a foreign language.”

(Questionnaire)

It was mentioned by some of the coaches that using English could be an opportunity to develop one’s skills and qualities. Especially Finnish players were seen to learn more English when most of the communication was in English. One coach also stated that even diffident Finns have started to use English more.

Example 14

”Kielitaito on aina hyvä asia mut mun mielestä meillä on mein joukkueessa sellasia pelaajia jotka ei oo paljoo englantii lukenu tai käyttäny mut on rohkeemmin alkanu ehkä puhumaanki.”

"Knowledge of language is always a good thing but I think we have in our team players who haven't studied or used English a lot but have started maybe to talk more bravely."

(Interview 1)

Many of the participants stated that English is a convenient way to give instructions at once and that way they can save time during practices. However, among some of the coaches, using English was seen as a time-consuming factor. Mixing two languages and making sure whether everyone has understood the instructions were considered to take more time and effort.

The coaches seemed to have an instrumental attitude towards the English language. According to them, the most important aspect in using English was that message is communicated and understood. Perfect grammar or pronunciation was not considered that important.

Example 15

"No kyl tärkein on se et saa niinku et saa oman sanomansa kaikille ymmärretyksi. Eli (..) kansallisuudesta riippumatta jos toinenki osaa englantia ni pystyy ilmasemaan itteään et ei siinä välttämättä tarvi mitään tunnin puheita pitää mut sillai et sä saat ilmastuu ittees et harjotukset sujuu ja pelitaktikat tulee selväs."

"Well the most important thing is that you get your own message understood for everybody. So (..) despite the nationality if the other can speak English so you can express yourself so you don't necessarily have to have any one-hour speeches but in a way that you can express yourself so that practices and game tactics are clear."

(Interview 1)

Lehtonen's (2004) findings also support these observations. In her thesis, she states that for the Finnish employees, the most important function in the English language use was that the job gets done (Lehtonen, 2004:90).

This chapter presented Finnish sport coaches' experiences, feelings and attitudes towards the use of English language. Two main themes arose among the

participants; English language is a positive matter and it is also a necessity. As it was mentioned by the participants, a team needs a collective language in order to make the collaboration easier with coaches and players. Only some of the coaches stated that the use of English could be time-consuming or cause extra work, but it was also seen as an opportunity to develop one's skills and qualities. In the following chapter, the findings of this study are summarized and discussed.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine Finnish volleyball coaches' feelings, attitudes and experiences when they are using English in coaching. On a broader level, the aim was to study the role of English in a special field of sports. The data material consisted of ten questionnaire responses and two face-to-face interviews.

The coaches reported using English on a daily basis. The most common situations where English was used were practices, game meetings and private conversations with foreign players. Speaking was the most common medium, but writing was also used, for example for e-mails or training programs.

Challenging situations occurred especially in oral communication. These situations included especially fast-tempo situations or events when the coach had to speak to the whole team. Speaking to different nationalities raised same kind of opinions. As Lehtonen (2004), and Bergroth (2007) also point out, talking to a non-native speaker was considered easier than talking to a native speaker. At first the use of English seemed to cause nervousness or anxiety, but in time, it was said to become more natural and routine-like.

Finnish volleyball coaches' attitudes towards the use of English are consistent with the previous studies by Lehtonen (2004) and Bergroth (2007) - the participants in the present study also seemed to have a positive view of English as a collective language. Using one common language was seen mostly as a positive issue and also as a necessity. Coaches' attitudes towards the English language use are also similar to the results by VARIENG; overall Finns have positive attitudes towards English.

It should be pointed out that the present study is small in scale; the number of participants is only 12. Thus, the results cannot be generalized. However, this leaves room for further research on the topic. It could be interesting to investigate a larger group of sport coaches from different nationalities and possibly compare the results to Finnish sport coaches' experiences.

The results of this study are important because they provide current information about Finnish volleyball coaches' feelings and attitudes towards the use of English language. The results also bring out the possible challenges one can face when using a foreign language in sports or in any working situations. The fact that today sport coaches need also a foreign language in order to qualify in their work should be taken into consideration in different sport federations. As coaches pointed out, the sport related vocabulary has mostly been learned through the job. Thus, it could be beneficial to provide some sport related English courses for professional coaches.

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Appendix 1: The questionnaire

1. Ikä

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69

2. Kerro lyhyesti minkä verran olet opiskellut englantia

3. Millaisissa urheiluvalmennukseen liittyvissä tilanteissa käytät englantia?

4. Mitkä asiat tai tilanteet koet helppoina valmennuksessa englannin kielen käytön kannalta? Entä mitkä asiat tai tilanteet ovat haastavia? Miksi?

5. Miten koet englannin kielellä viestinnän eri kansallisuuksien kanssa? Onko eroja? Esim. Onko joidenkin kansallisuuksien kanssa helpompi/ hankalampi kommunikoida kuin joidenkin toisten? Miksi?

6. Onko sinulla koskaan ollut ymmärtämisvaikeuksia englannin kielen takia? Oletko itse tullut väärinymmärretyksi? Minkälaisissa tilanteissa?

7. Minkälaisia kokemuksia sinulla on englannin kielen käytöstä harjoituksissa ja/ tai pelitilanteissa? Ovatko kokemukset olleet positiivisia vai negatiivisia?

8. Kuvaile, miltä englannin kielen käyttäminen peleissä ja harjoituksissa sinusta tuntuu. (Esim. helppo, vaikea, mukava, epämukava...)

9. Pystytkö mielestäsi tuomaan omat ohjeet, neuvot ja mielipiteet esille englannin kielellä helposti? Perustele myös vastauksesi.

10. Mitä mieltä olet henkilökohtaisesti siitä, että harjoituksissa ja peleissä käytetään englannin kieltä? Mitkä ovat sen edut ja hyvät puolet / ongelmat ja huonot puolet?

Appendix 2: Interview questions

TAUSTA Ikä?

koulutus?

kuinka monta vuotta valmentanut?

KÄYTTÖ

Kuinka paljon tarvitset / usein käytät englantia harjoituksissa/ peleissä? (kaikkea käyttöä,

ei vain puhumista)

- Mihin tarkoituksiin / missä tilanteissa? Kuinka paljon missäkin tilanteessa?
- Missä tilanteissa tai asioissa eniten / vähiten? Miksi?

Mitä kielitaidon osa-alueita tarvitset eniten: englanniksi puhumista, kuuntelemista, kirjoittamista, lukemista?

- Mihin tarkoitukseen kutakin?
- Mikä näistä alueista on mielestäsi tärkeintä hallita?

Tarvitsetko ns. small talkia?

- Millaisissa tilanteissa enimmäkseen?

HAASTEET & RUTIINIT

Mitkä asiat tai tilanteet koet haastavina englannin kielen käytön kannalta?

- Miksi?

Mitkä asiat tai tilanteet ovat rutiinia englannin kielen käytön kannalta?

- Miksi?

Onko sinulla ollut ymmärtämisvaikeuksia?

- Missä tilanteissa tai asioissa?
- Mitä teet tai miten toimit, jos et ole ymmärtänyt jotain?

Oletko kokenut, että joissakin asioissa tai tilanteissa sinua ei ole ymmärretty tai olet tullut väärinymmärretyksi englannin kielen takia?

- Missä tilanteissa? Miksi?

- Mitä teet tai miten toimit, jos koet, että sinua ei ole ymmärretty?

Kuinka usein / paljon käytät englantia eri kansallisuuksiin

kuuluvien ihmisten kanssa? Minkä kansallisuuksien kanssa?

- Miten koet englannin kielellä viestinnän eri kansallisuuksien kanssa?
- Onko eroja? Minkälaisia?
- Onko joidenkin kansallisuuksien kanssa helpompi tai vaikeampi viestiä?
- Miksi? Ovatko jotkut murteet tai aksentit erityisen hankalia ymmärtää?

TUNTEET JA ASENTEET

Mitä mielestäsi tarkoittaa "hyvä englannin kielen taito" työsi kannalta? Mitä se pitää sisällään?

Miten arvioisit omaa kielitaitoasi suhteessa tähän näkemykseesi? Oletko tyytyväinen omaan englannin kielen taitoosi?

Pystytkö mielestäsi ilmaisemaan itseäsi englannin kielellä vaivattomasti?

Koetko oman englannin kielen taitosi työssäsi riittäväksi, siten, että pystyt suoriutumaan työtehtävistäsi niin tehokkaasti ja sujuvasti kuin haluat?

Pystytkö mielestäsi tuomaan omat ohjeet/neuvot, mielipiteet pelipalavereissa esille ja puolustamaan niitä englannin kielellä tehokkaasti?

Mitä mieltä olet henkilökohtaisesti siitä, että harjoituksissa käytetään englannin kieltä?

- Mitkä ovat sen edut ja hyvät puolet / ongelmat ja huonot puolet?

Miten luulet, että englannin kielen käyttäminen vaikuttaa joukkueeseen?