

SPORTS AS A MOTIVATION TO STUDY ENGLISH

Young athletes and the L2 motivational self system

Master's thesis

Heini Vakkari

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
English
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Tutkimuksen lähtökohtana oli Zoltán Dörnyein uusi motivaatioteoria, joka koostuu oppijoiden tulevaisuuden minäkuvista sekä aiemmista kokemuksista kohdekieleen liittyen. Kyseistä teoriaa ei ole vielä laajalti käytetty tutkimuksessa, ja suomalaiset kieltenoppijat ovat vielä varsin uusi kohderyhmä kyseiselle teorialle.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää nuorten urheilijoiden suhtautumista englantiin ja sen tärkeyteen. Tutkimuksessa tutkittiin urheilijoiden 1) yleisiä asenteita englantia kohtaan, 2) heidän urheiluun ja englantiin liittyviä tulevaisuuden minäkuvia, sekä 3) heidän aiempia urheiluun liittyviä kokemuksia englannin käytöstä. Urheilijat ovat uusi kohderyhmä motivaatiotutkimuksessa, joka käsittelee kielten oppimista. Tämän takia työn tarkoituksena oli selvittää asenteita ja minäkuvia yleisellä tasolla, javertailta vastauksia eri ryhmien välillä. Tämän takia tutkimus toteutettiin määrällisenä tutkimuksena. Yhteensä 107 nuorta urheilijaa kahdesta eri urheilupainotteisesta lukiosta osallistui tutkimukseen. He vastasivat kyselylomakkeeseen, jossa oli heidän urheilutaustoihinsa liittyviä kysymyksiä, monivalintoja, sekä avokysymyksiä. Vastauksia vertailtiin urheilijoiden sukupuolen, lajitaustan sekä kilpailutason välillä.</p> <p>Nuoret urheilijat suhtautuivat englantiin todella positiivisesti, ja he näkivät englannin kielen osana tulevaisuuttaan urheilijana. Vastaajien ideaalit tulevaisuuden minäkuvat olivat positiivisia, mikä oli mahdollisesti seurausta heidän aiemmista positiivisista kokemuksistaan englannin käytöstä urheilutilanteissa. Tuloksissa ei ollut merkittäviä tilastollisia eroja vertailuissa eri ryhmien välillä; ainoastaan yksittäisissä väittämissä oli eroavaisuuksia.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Research on motivation to learn languages has been one of the most widely research areas in the field of language learning and teaching. For several decades the field was dominated by *integrativeness*, a core component in Gardner's socio-educational model. The concept of integrativeness included the learners' willingness to identify with the target language culture and the people who spoke the target language. Integrativeness was at the centre of motivation research for several decades, until the rise of global English. English quickly became an even more international language, and there were no longer specific target language cultures, which were the core idea of integrativeness. The rise of global English meant that for the learners of English as a foreign language, the target culture was more of an international phenomenon. The criticism on the outdated model of integrativeness led to the creation of new ways to research motivation. As the target cultures could no longer be the starting point, the idea of the *self* was brought from the field of mainstream psychology. This meant that motivation could be researched from the perspective of the learner (Csizér and Lukács 2010: 1-2). One theory that focuses on the self is Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system, which has its roots in previous theories that have used the self as a starting point and focused on aspects in the future. The L2 motivational self system is a modern way of researching motivation, and it will also be the framework for the present study.

Research on the L2 motivational self system began in Hungary, and the theory has been used as a framework quite often there. Internationally the theory is still in its infancy, and, for example, only one study has been conducted in the Finnish context. Because the theory is still rather new and has not been used widely in research, each study can reveal something new. The one study conducted in Finland (Toivakka 2010) researched the future self images and general attitudes towards English of high school students. The present study also examined high school students, but from another perspective. The participants of the present study were young athletes, and the L2 motivational self system was given a sports perspective.

The aim of the present study was to examine young athletes' general attitudes towards English, and to discover what kind of future self images and previous experiences they

had related to English and sports. The present study was a quantitative study, and therefore comparisons between participants from different backgrounds were important. The data was collected from two sports-oriented high schools with the help of a questionnaire. The data was then analyzed numerically in order to see whether there were any statistically significant differences. The participants' responses were compared by gender, by the type of sport they did, and by the level they competed on. The findings of the present study can be generalized to young athletes in Finland as a whole, and the findings can help understand young athletes as students of English.

The present study will begin with an overview of the historical development of motivation research. The historical development, chapter 2, is divided into the four major periods suggested by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), and the final period also includes a review of the L2 motivational self system, a new theory that was used as a framework for the present study. Chapter 3 discusses the aims of the present study and explains the methodological choices. Chapter 4 will report the findings. The present study is concluded with chapter 5, which will summarize the main findings and evaluate the present study, as well as give suggestions for future research.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This section presents the background of the present study. It begins with a brief discussion of the term *motivation*, which is followed by the historical development of motivation research. Four major periods, introduced by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), with the main theories from each period will be reviewed in a chronological order. The fourth period, the period of the modern research, also includes the framework of the current study, the L2 Motivational Self System, which will be discussed in more detail. This is followed by summaries of some previous studies that are based on the L2 Motivational Self System or ideas derived from it, as well as studies on athletes because they comprise the participants of the present study.

2.1 Motivation

Motivation is one of the most widely researched areas of foreign language learning and teaching, and therefore it has been defined on many occasions, and the definitions

vary. The term motivation originally comes from the Latin verb *movere*, to move (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 3). Motivation is concerned with why people decide to make a choice to engage in something, how long they are willing to sustain what they are doing, and how hard they are going to invest effort and persist in what they are doing. In other words, it is about the choices people make concerning the goals they want to achieve or avoid, and the degree of effort they want to put in it (Keller 1983: 389). Motivation, in short, could be explained as the combination of effort and desire to reach a goal (Gardner 1985: 10).

Many of the definitions emphasize the multifaceted and complex nature of motivation. Motivation is seen as a dynamic mental process that includes decision-making, action-implementation and action-control (Dörnyei and Ottó 1998: 45-46). The dynamic nature also emphasizes the fact that motivation is not stable, but contains ups and downs, and can change even over a short period of time. Furthermore, motivation has cognitive, affective and behavioral characteristics, and motivated individuals demonstrate all three of these facets (Gardner 2005). Motivation can be defined as “the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out” Dörnyei and Ottó (1998: 65).

One way of looking at motivation is to consider the attributes that motivated individuals display, instead of trying to provide a comprehensive definition that would take into account all the different characteristics of motivation. Motivated individuals, for example, have goals and desires, invest effort to achieve the goal, enjoy striving for the goal, and make use of appropriate strategies that help achieve the goal (Gardner 2001). Furthermore, they show persistence, have expectancies regarding their success or failure, and have reasons for their behavior (Gardner 2005). Moreover, motivated individuals experience reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure (Masgoret and Gardner 2003: 128). In motivation research, however, it would be impossible to study all of these features of motivated individuals.

Another way to look at motivation is a categorization that consists of three different levels that affect motivation (Dörnyei 1994: 279-280). The first level is the *language*

level, which includes aspects such as the target language culture and the usefulness of the target language to the learner. The second level of motivation is the *learner level*, which consists of different individual characteristics. The third level takes into account the context of learning; it is *the learning situation level*. This level includes aspects such as the teacher and the course. This categorization highlights the multidimensional nature of motivation.

Research on motivation to learn languages has developed over time, and other theories have become more prevalent than others during certain periods. The periods, as mentioned above, are suggested by Dörnyei and Ushioda, and they are constructed so that each period has brought a new perspective and has tried to compensate for the possible weaknesses of the previous research trends. The next sections will present the four periods and their most important theories, ending with the modern era and the presentation of the L2 Motivational Self System and its origins.

2.2 The social psychological period

The social psychological period lasted from the late 1950s to the 1990s. The most influential researchers during this period were Gardner and Lambert, whose work dominated the research for several decades. Gardner and Lambert studied motivation to learn languages in the bilingual context of Canada. Gardner's socio-educational model of second language acquisition is the most influential model of the period. It includes the concept of *integrative motivation*, a concept that has been used much in research in the past decades.

The socio-educational model contains three variables: *integrativeness*, attitudes toward the learning situation, and motivation (Gardner 2001). Integrativeness can be defined as a genuine interest in learning a language in order to come psychologically closer to the other language community (Gardner 2001), in other words, an openness to take on characteristics of the target language group (Gardner 2005). The term integrativeness derives from *identification*, a term used by Mowrer in the 1950s to explain the motivation of a child to learn the language of his/her parents. The second variable of the socio-educational model, attitudes toward the learning situation, refers to the learners' attitudes toward any aspect of the learning situation, for example, the teacher

and the materials (Gardner 2001). The third variable, motivation, requires three elements: effort, desire, and positive affect. All of these three are seen as necessary elements when distinguishing whether an individual is motivated or not. The socio-educational model proposes that the first two variables, integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation, are the elements that support motivation, but in the end it is motivation that is responsible for achievement in learning the language, and therefore it is the active variable of the model (Gardner 2001).

The socio-educational model, although it does not include other variables, recognizes that other variables can affect language learning and therefore also language achievement (Gardner 2005). One of these variables is *instrumentality*, which is concerned with purely practical reasons for learning a language, as opposed to wanting to identify with the target language group. These practical reasons can be, for example, passing a test or gaining promotion at work. Gardner (2001) has criticized the oversimplification used in research that claims that integrativeness and instrumentality are polar opposites, when in fact, one can simultaneously have both integrative and instrumental reasons for learning a language. However, studies (for example, Gardner and Lambert 1959) have shown that integrative motivation is more intense than instrumental. This is because integrative motivation involves a desire to learn the language for of a genuine interest for the target language culture, rather than gaining practical advantages. The division between integrative and instrumental motivation has been a notable characteristic of the social psychological period.

A total of 75 different studies conducted by Gardner and his associates were reviewed by Masgoret and Gardner (2003), who drew general conclusions from the previous studies. They investigated five variables used in the majority of studies: attitudes toward the learning situation, integrativeness, motivation, integrative orientation, and instrumental orientation. *Orientation* can be defined as a collection of reasons for an individual to learn a language (Gardner 2001). Integrativeness was found to affect second language acquisition in a positive way. Moreover, motivation was more highly related to achievement in the second language than any of the other four variables, but all of the five were positively related to achievement.

The social psychological period emphasized the social context of learning a language, and whole linguistic communities were the starting point of research for several decades. This macro perspective, however, was not suited for research in classrooms (Dörnyei 2003a: 11), and therefore there was a need to develop alternative approaches. These alternative approaches can be seen as starting the second period of motivation research.

2.3 The cognitive-situated period

The criticism of the social psychological approach and its limited use on motivation research in the classroom, together with a cognitive revolution in psychology, led to the investigation of motivation from the perspective of the individual. This period attempted to include the trends from cognitive psychology in the theories of motivation to learn languages (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 46). Self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) is one of the most influential theories of the cognitive-situated period. The distinction between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivation* is the core of self-determination theory, and the distinction has been used a great deal in research to explain differences in motivation between learners (Williams and Burden 1997: 123). The main principle of self-determination theory is that for an action to be rewarding, the learner has to have a desire to be self-initiating and self-regulating, and this way the motivated action also brings a sense of autonomy (Dörnyei and Ottó 1998: 44).

According to self-determination theory, there are two types of motivation: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. Simply put, extrinsic motivation is concerned with outside pressures (Deci and Ryan 1985: 34) and gain outside the activity, for example a good exam result or a financial reward, whereas intrinsic motivation is concerned with interest and enjoyment in the activity per se (Noels et al. 2000: 62).

Intrinsic motivation can be divided into three categories (Noels et al. 2000: 62). Firstly, *intrinsic motivation knowledge* refers to the motivation for performing an activity for the feelings associated with learning new things. Secondly, *intrinsic motivation accomplishment* is concerned with the feelings related to achieving a goal or mastering something. Thirdly, *intrinsic motivation stimulation* is about motivation that is based on the sensations that are stimulated while doing the activity. All three of these

categories are concerned with positive sensations that arise from performing the activity.

In a similar way, extrinsic motivation can also be divided into subcategories according to the extent to which the motivation is self-determined (Noels et al. 2000: 63). Firstly, *external regulation* concerns the activities that one performs because of an outside demand. Such reason for performing an activity could be, for example, studying to pass an exam. Secondly, *introjected regulation* refers to reasons that come from the individual self even though some external pressure also exists. An example of this type of motivated behavior could be studying a language in order not to feel ashamed because the norm of the society is to be able to speak it. The third category of extrinsic motivation is *identified regulation*, which is the most self-determined form of the three. It refers to the choices individuals make regarding the activity, because they have chosen to perform the activity for personally important reasons, for example, in order to improve their language skills for educational development.

The term *amotivation* was used in self-determination theory to complete the types of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation mentioned above, because sometimes people have neither intrinsic nor extrinsic reasons for performing the activity (Noels et al. 2000: 64). Amotivation refers to a situation of not valuing the activity or the outcome of the activity. In other words, people see no relation between the activity and the outcome, because the situation feels to be out of their control.

The socio-cognitive period moved the focus from the social context of language learning to the individual self, introducing theories that were affected by the trends in mainstream psychology. Even though the theories during this period managed to compensate for the weaknesses of the previous trends in research, there were still new perspectives to consider. The following period, the process-oriented period, added a temporal perspective into motivation research (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 60). This period and its main theory will be reviewed next.

2.4 The process-oriented period

Previous models had not considered motivation to be a dynamically changing phenomenon, and therefore there was a need for a new model that would also include the temporal aspect of motivation (Dörnyei and Ottó 1998: 43). Adding the temporal aspect as an essential component of motivation marked a new milestone in motivation research (Mezei 2008: 80). The dynamic nature of motivation emphasized, for example, that motivation could change even within a single lesson. The new model created by Dörnyei and Ottó, the process model of L2 motivation, could explain the ups and downs of motivation over time (Dörnyei 2003a: 17).

The process model of L2 motivation consists of two dimensions: *action sequence* and *motivational influences* (Dörnyei and Ottó 1998: 47). The action sequence represents the process of having initial wishes, which are transformed into goals, and followed by action and hopefully the accomplishment of the goal, eventually leading to evaluation of the whole process. Motivational influences, on the other hand, contain all the sources of energy and motivation that support the process in the action sequence.

Furthermore, the action sequence consists of three sub phases that divide the process into smaller temporal units. The first phase, *the preactional stage*, consists of selecting a goal and forming an intention to pursue it, in other words, generating the motivation (Dörnyei 2003a: 18-20). The second phase, *the actional stage*, is about maintaining the generated motivation. It includes, for example, controlling the action and assessing the ongoing process. The final phase, *the postactional stage*, starts when the goal is reached; it is the evaluation of the whole process. The evaluation of the process will determine whether students will engage in similar activities in the future.

One major milestone of research on motivation to learn a language was adding the temporal aspect as a crucial part of motivation, but even the main theory of the process-oriented period has its limitations. The process model of L2 motivation, for example, suggests that the action takes place in isolation from other actions, when in reality, individuals constantly engage in several actions simultaneously, and these actions can affect one another (Dörnyei and Ottó 1998: 63-64). Considering the dynamically changing nature of motivation was a big step in motivation research, but

the process model could not adequately take into account the complexity of motivation, which led to the development of more modern approaches, and era of motivation research called the socio-dynamic period.

2.5 The socio-dynamic period

The socio-dynamic period is the most modern research period and it consists of the current research trends. The period emphasizes two things: the role of English as a global language, and the complexity of motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 71-72). The previous theories viewed English simply as a basic educational skill, when now it is seen as a universal basic skill (Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009: 3). Therefore, for example, integrativeness is an outdated concept, as English as a global language has no specific target culture or group for the learner to identify with (Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009: 2). This is why research on motivation to learn English needed a different point of view. In addition to the international perspective, motivation had to be seen as a more complex process than the previous theories had suggested. The so called social turn in motivation research viewed language learning as an internal and social process that was affected by contextual factors (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009: 71). Language and one's identity are seen as inseparable, and learning a foreign language also changes one's identity (Csizér and Kormos 2009: 98). Therefore, the concept of *self* was seen to be a sufficient perspective for motivation research, as it could account for the complexity of motivation better than the previous theories. The major theory of the socio-dynamic period, the L2 motivational self system, emphasizes the internal factors in learning, and its roots are in older theories focusing on the same perspective. Therefore, the following sections will first review the theories preceding the L2 motivational self system before presenting the L2 motivational self system.

2.5.1 Possible selves

Possible selves is a theory proposed in the field of mainstream psychology in the 1980s, and since then it has been applied to different educational contexts (Dörnyei 2009: 11). In psychology the notion of the *self* has been one of the most widely used concepts. In motivation research possible selves provide a link between the individual's self concept and motivation by linking together the present and the future;

they explain how individuals can change from how they are now to how they would like to be in the future (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954, 961). A certain possible self is usually associated with beliefs about how the future state could be reached or avoided (Erikson 2006: 4). The theory of possible selves provides a direct link between motivation and our understanding of the world around us by using the self as a mediating link between the two (Erikson 2006: 3). Our social and cultural context provides the examples for the possible scenarios for the future selves (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954). In other words, the theory of possible selves brings together three issues: the concept of the self, motivation, and the social and cultural meaning we use to interpret the world around us. The traditional self-concepts were related to how the individuals view themselves at present and how their past affected their self-concept, and the theory of possible selves widened this view by bringing the future aspect in it (Dörnyei 2009: 11). Possible selves, in short, is a theory explaining how individuals think about their future and their potential (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954).

Possible selves are divided into three parts (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954). Firstly, *the expected self* is a future state that can realistically be achieved. This view of the future self can be either positive or negative. Secondly, *the hoped-for self* is the individual's desired view of himself or herself in the future. Thirdly, *the feared self* represents a future self state that the individual is afraid of becoming, and therefore wants to avoid that future. More detailed possible self representations come under each of these categories, for example, the successful self, the rich self, the unemployed self, the ideal self, the ought selves. Possible selves, therefore, are a collection of the individual's self-concept and all of the different self-images together, and only the individual self can really determine what is possible for him or her (Markus and Nurius 1986: 957, 963).

Possible selves have two important functions (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954-955). Firstly, they function as incentives for future behavior by explaining past behavior and therefore creating patterns for future behavior, considering what is possible for the individual. Secondly, possible selves provide a context for interpreting the views of the self and therefore also the individual's current behavior. Interpretation of the behavior depends on the individual and the context of possibility; people have different desires

and fears, and these individual differences explain different behavior even in similar situations.

Moreover, the motivation to achieve a certain possible self depends on a variety of factors (Norman and Aron 2002: 501). Firstly, the *availability* of the possible self refers to the ease with which the particular view of the self in the future can be generated. The more concrete the possible self is, the more motivated the individual tends to be. Secondly, the *accessibility* refers to how easily stored knowledge can be activated in the individual's mind. The more easily the possible self can be brought into awareness, the more it will influence the individual's behavior. Thirdly, the *perceived control* can be defined as "the degree to which individuals believe their behaviors can influence the attainment or avoidance of a possible self" (Norman and Aron 2002: 501). If the individuals feel they are in control of attaining or avoiding a possible self, they are more motivated to act towards making it happen. Possible selves are only effective as motivators if the individual perceives them as possible (Dörnyei 2009: 19). Perceived control has been proven to be the strongest predictor of motivated behavior towards achieving or avoiding a possible self (Norman and Aron 2002: 505). It is assumed that each individual possesses possible selves and that these selves can be easily reflected on, but the importance of the possible selves to the individual and their motivational effect varies depending on the individual (Markus and Nurius 1986: 958).

The theory of possible selves has also been connected to athletes, and as athletes comprise the participants of the present study, it is worth reviewing this aspect of possible selves. Role models have been mentioned as a source of possible selves, and the cultural context of the individual plays a role in providing these role models (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954). The role of the media in providing examples of what could be achieved is important; "what others are now, I could become" (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954). The Olympic games, for example, have been mentioned as creating very powerful possible selves for young athletes who strive for one day being as successful as their role models.

2.5.2 Self-discrepancy theory

Another theory that has been a model for the L2 motivational self system is the self-discrepancy theory, and similarly to the theory of possible selves, it was also introduced in the 1980s, one year before the theory of possible selves. The theory postulates that individuals are motivated to reach a condition where their self-concept matches their ideas of themselves in the future (Higgins 1987: 319). Motivation, according to the theory, involves the desire to reduce the discrepancies between the actual self and these future self-states. The different discrepancies between the actual self and the future self states are associated with different kinds of negative discomfort. The motivational function in this theory is the primeval assumption that people want to approach pleasure and avoid pain (Higgins 1997: 1280). Furthermore, the self-discrepancy theory only includes negative emotions, and cannot predict positive emotions (Higgins 1987: 336).

The self-discrepancy theory includes three distinct domains for the self. The *actual self* contains the individual's own representation of the attributes that the individual self or someone else believes he or she currently possesses (Higgins 1987: 320-321). The other two domains are future-oriented self guides. The *ideal self* represents the attributes that the individual self or someone else would like the individual ideally to possess. The *ought self*, on the other hand, is a representation of the attributes that the individual should possess. All of these domains contain two perspectives: one's own perspective and the perspective of others (Higgins 1987: 321). However, both perspectives are personal; they are the individual's internal self-guides that are associated with private self-consciousness (Higgins 1987: 333).

Combining each domain with both perspectives creates six distinct self-state representations: actual/own, actual/other, ideal/own, ideal/other, ought/own, and ought/other (Higgins 1987: 321-323). The individual's self concept consists of the actual domain and both perspectives. The other four self-state representations constitute the individual's self guides, the future representations of the self. Combining one representation with another may cause discrepancies; the attribute from one self-state representation is compared with the attribute from the other self-state representation, and this comparison is coded as a match or a mismatch (Higgins 1987:

323). The greater the discrepancy, the more intense the feeling of discomfort. Individuals may possess more than one discrepancy, but not all of them are equally active in affecting their motivated behavior.

Furthermore, the two different future self guides of the discrepancy theory, the ideal self guides and the ought self, have different motivational functions (Higgins 1987: 319). The ideal self guides have a *promotion* focus; they are concerned with hopes, aspirations, advancement and accomplishments. The ought self guides, by contrast, have a *prevention* focus. A prevention focus is associated with regulation of negative outcomes that are due to failing to live up to the expectations created for the individual.

Both of the theories presented above have been important for the development of the L2 motivational self system, which is the main theory of the socio-dynamic period. The L2 motivational self system is a modern way of researching motivation as a complex process. The theory of possible selves and the self-discrepancy theory both used the self as a starting point, which allowed researching motivation as an internal individual process. The L2 motivational self system has used features from both of these theories. The development of the L2 motivational self system and the main components of the theory will be reviewed next.

2.5.3 L2 Motivational self system

The L2 motivational self system was proposed in order to compensate for the weaknesses of the previous theories, the widely researched concept of integrativeness in particular. The theory offers a broader perspective to research on motivation to learn languages by looking at motivation from the perspective of the self (Csizér and Lukács 2010: 1-2). The strength of the theory is claimed to be its focus on the learner (MacIntyre et al. 2009a: 58). The L2 motivational self system is concerned with how the language learning process is affected by the students' images of themselves related to learning the target language.

Dörnyei's main motive for proposing the L2 motivational self system was the growing dissatisfaction with integrativeness, a concept that had been the focus of research for

several decades (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 84-85). The original idea of integrativeness was the identification with the target language culture, but with the role of English becoming more and more international, it was no longer possible to determine specific target groups for the learner to identify with (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009: 2-3). English nowadays is seen as a basic universal skill with a global community as the reference group. Moreover, it is claimed that the global community of English might be more of an “imagined” reference group to most learners, as their actual contact with other learners might be limited (Lamb 2009: 230). This is the situation at schools, in particular, as English is taught as a school subject and there might be no direct contact with its speakers (Dörnyei 2009: 24). Therefore, the weakness of integrativeness is that it can be applied only in specific sociocultural contexts, like the Canadian bilingual community where it was originally used.

The motive for the L2 motivational self system was a large-scale motivation study in Hungary. The results of the study emphasized the role of what was originally defined as integrativeness in determining the learners’ motivated behavior (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 85-86). However, Dörnyei thought that integrativeness could be better explained as an internal process, and by drawing on the previous theories of possible selves and the self-discrepancy theory, he created a link between motivation to learn languages and future self guides (Dörnyei and Csizér 2002: 453; Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 85-86). The traditional concept of integrativeness was equated with the self-directed future view of the self, the *ideal L2 self*, and this was the central theme of the new theory of L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei 2009: 27). The L2 motivational self system, even though it grew out of the dissatisfaction with the concept of integrativeness, does not contradict the traditional theories and concepts, but rather presents a broader perspective for research on motivation to learn languages by including the traditional concepts in this theory (Csizér and Lukács 2010: 2). The strength of the L2 motivational self system is that it can be used to explain the motivation in a variety of contexts, even if there is little or no contact with L2 speakers.

The L2 motivational self system consists of three components, in other words, three different sources of motivation to learn the target language. These three components are reviewed next.

2.5.3.1 Ideal L2 self

Firstly, the *ideal L2 self* represents the learner's own vision of himself or herself as an effective L2 speaker (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 86). An ideal L2 self, in other words, is the L2 related image of one's ideal future (Dörnyei 2005: 105). It represents the hopes and dreams that the individual has concerning the L2. This component relates to the self-discrepancy theory in that the ideal L2 self includes a desire to reduce the discrepancy between the actual and the ideal selves (Dörnyei 2009: 29). Learning a foreign language, in this view, implies becoming something different from the actual self by trying to achieve the image of the ideal self (Yashima 2009: 144). Therefore the ideal L2 self is a very powerful motivator. Furthermore, the component of the ideal L2 self is related to the traditional concepts of integrativeness and internalized instrumental motives. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the ideal self is considered to have a promotion focus, a notion that was originally introduced by the self-discrepancy theory. This means that it is connected with the pursuit for the wanted outcome. The internalized type of instrumental motivation that belongs to this component of the L2 motivational self system has been named *instrumentality-promotion* (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 87). This includes instrumental motives with a promotion focus (compared to instrumental motives with a prevention focus presented below), an example of which could be studying for career advancement.

2.5.3.2 Ought-to L2 self

Secondly, the *ought-to L2 self* contains the social pressures coming from the learner's environment (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 86). The ought-to L2 self, therefore, might have no connection to the learner's own wishes and desires, and it might even contradict with the ideal L2 self (Csizér and Lukács 2010: 3). The social pressure includes the attributes that the learner believes he or she ought to possess in order to meet the expectations of the significant others (Dörnyei 2009: 29). The ought-to L2 self also contains avoidance of possible negative outcomes if one fails to meet these expectations that others have for him or her (Csizér and Lukács 2010: 3). The ought-to L2 is connected to the traditional concept of extrinsic types of instrumental motivation (Dörnyei 2009: 29). Furthermore, as the self-discrepancy suggests, the ought-to L2 self

has a prevention focus, which means the avoidance of unwanted outcomes (MacIntyre et al. 2009b: 195). The extrinsic types of instrumental motivation include this prevention focus, and therefore the concept belonging to the ought-to L2 self has been named *instrumentality-prevention* (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 87). An example of this type of motivation is studying in order not to fail an exam.

2.5.3.3. L2 learning experience

Thirdly, the *L2 learning experience* was included in the L2 motivational self system because for some learners “the motivation to learn a language does not come from internally or externally generated self images, but rather from successful engagement with the actual language learning process” (Dörnyei 2009: 29). For this reason, the situated factors, including, for example, the teacher, the curriculum, the positive experiences of using the language, were included in the model. The focus of the L2 learning experience lays in the past as it reflects on past success and experiences (MacIntyre et al. 2009b: 195). The L2 learning experience component also contains the attitudes towards the learning process, which is an important part of motivation in Gardner’s socio-educational model as well.

2.5.4 Previous research on the L2 motivational self system

The previous sections summarized the main ideas and main theories of past research on motivation to learn languages. Gardner and his socio-educational model dominated the research for several decades, and the most modern theory, the L2 motivational self system, is therefore a fairly new concept that has not been used as a framework for that many studies yet. This section will briefly summarize some previous research that have based on the L2 motivational self system. The previous studies will be presented so that two studies that were conducted in the much used context of Hungary will be presented first. The second study compared different age groups, and therefore it is followed by a summary of a similar study conducted in a different context. The fourth study deals with the relation between integrativeness and the L2 motivational self system. It is followed by two studies that have emphasized the role of imagination in language learning. The last study was conducted in Finland, and therefore it might give insights into the present study that was also conducted in the Finnish context.

Csizér and Lukács (2010) compared the motivational dispositions of students who learnt both English and German in Hungary. The data consisted of a total of 237 teenagers aged at 16 and 17. The main idea of the study was to compare the motivational dispositions of students who learned English as a second language (L2) and German as a third language (L3) with students who learned German as L2 and German as L3. The study used the L2 motivational self system and its variables as a framework, but also other variables such as language learning anxiety, cultural interest, direct contact, and parental encouragement were added to the research. The participants answered a questionnaire consisting of both Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions. The main finding of the study was that the participants' ideal selves were proven to be the most significant variable in predicting motivated behavior. It was the same for both English and German regardless of the status of the language (L2 or L3). In general, however, the attitudinal and motivational dispositions were significantly higher for English; the participants had more vivid ideal selves concerning English, their motivated behavior was stronger for English, and they had more positive learning experiences regarding English.

Another study that was also conducted in Hungary investigated the variables of the L2 motivational self system among three different groups of learners: secondary school, college, and university students (Csizér and Kormos 2009). The study had a total of 432 participants. The results reinforce the results of the study reviewed above; also in this study the ideal L2 self was found to contribute to motivated learning behavior significantly in all of the different learner groups. Furthermore, also the role of L2 learning experiences affected the motivated behavior in a positive way. The ought-to L2 self, on the other hand, was found to have a more limited role in predicting motivated behavior in all of the three groups.

In a very recent study, Papi and Teimouri (2012) compared the motivational dispositions regarding the L2 motivational self system between learners from different age groups: secondary school, high school and university students. This study was conducted in Iran and it included 1,041 Iranian learners of English. The participants' ideal selves and their learning experiences were found to be powerful motivators in all of the different age groups. However, the roles of the ideal L2 self and the learning

experience variables in affecting motivation improved until the participants entered university, when the rates for these variables dramatically dropped. On the other hand, the motivational effects of the ought-to L2 selves declined with age, which could be explained by the increased independence. All in all, in this study high school learners were found to be the most motivated age group among the Iranian learners of English, and in this age group the motivational role of ideal L2 selves developed rapidly, and the role of the ought-to L2 selves in affecting the motivated behavior was still strong.

Ryan (2009) studied the concept of ideal L2 self in relation to the traditional concept of integrativeness. This study was conducted in Japan, and it had 2,397 participants that studied English as their L2. The data was collected with a questionnaire including a total of 18 different motivational variables (for example, ideal L2 self, self-confidence, travel orientation). The results showed that the concept of integrativeness was equivalent to the ideal L2 self, and therefore it could be included in a larger entity that views the motivation from the perspective of the self. In this study, the ideal L2 self represented a better predictor of motivated behavior than the traditionally defined concept of integrativeness. Furthermore, this study indicated no gender bias in the results, and therefore it is claimed that by using the concept of ideal L2 selves in research instead of integrativeness might remove the common perception that foreign languages are feminine subjects, a result that has been reported by several previous studies.

Al Shehri (2009) investigated the relationship between imagery, ideal selves and motivation. The quantitative study was conducted in Saudi Arabia in two phases, and it included 200 participants. Al Shehri (2009: 164) hypothesized that “learners with a marked visual learning style preference are likely to exhibit a strong capacity for visual imagery and imagination, and [...] therefore such learners are likely to develop a more potent ideal language self”. This hypothesis was found to be correct, as strong correlations between visual learning style and ideal L2 self were found in the study. The ideal L2 self was found to be a major motivating factor also in this study, and the learners who were able to develop vivid ideal selves were proven to be the most motivated.

Also a study by Yashima (2009) emphasizes the ability to visualize. This study was conducted in Japan, and it considered the Japanese context where learners are very task and achievement focused. Therefore it was claimed that imagination is needed in order to make the Japanese learners think about their ideal communicating selves. *International posture* was a central concept in this study. It is the general attitude towards the international community rather than some specific target culture. The international posture was found to be a factor that affected ideal L2 selves: those students who show higher levels of international posture are more likely to develop vivid ideal L2 selves.

The L2 motivational self system has also been used in research in the Finnish context. A recent study by Toivakka (2010) considered different future self-state representations of 97 high school learners, and compared the responses between first-year and third-year students, by gender, and by proficiency. The variables that were used in this study were, for example, ideal L2 self, feared L2 self, and ought-to L2 self. There were no major differences in the self-state representations between the grades. A majority of the participants saw themselves as people who knew English in the future, but the ideal L2 selves were stronger among the high proficiency group. Both the low and the high proficiency groups, however, saw English as a necessary skill in the future, and the participants' ought-to L2 selves had no significant differences. When comparing the results between genders, there were both differences and similarities. The girls' ideal L2 selves were stronger, whereas the boys on average were more uncertain about their ideal future scenarios. The responses for the ought-to L2 self varied between the genders; the girls thought that knowing English was a prerequisite for things they want to do in the future, whereas the boys could envision a future where they could do the things they wanted without needing English. However, both girls and boys thought that in general English was a required skill in the future.

As can be seen from the previous studies reviewed above, the role of the ideal L2 self, in particular, has proven to be vital in motivation to learn languages. Even though research using the L2 motivational self system is still rather new, based on the convergent findings of the studies it can be claimed that the ideal L2 self is a major factor affecting motivation. The roles of the other two variables, the ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience, are more limited, but they have also not been studied

as much as the ideal L2 self component. The next section will continue with previous research, but the focus is on athletes.

2.6 Previous research on athletes and education

Imagery has a major role in the L2 motivational self system. It is claimed that individuals with a better imagination can develop more potent images of themselves in the future (Al-Shehri 2009: 168). Furthermore, the more vivid this view is, the more likely it is to affect motivation (Dörnyei 2005: 100). Athletes, the subject group of the present study, are often mentioned when discussing the role of imagery. Imagery training has become more and more important as a part of the whole training plan; an image of stepping onto the top of the podium or making a successful performance are just as important as the coach and the training programme (Dörnyei 2009: 37). A quote by Yashima (2009: 144) combines imagery and athletes well:

“If you were asked to coach a high school baseball team of novices, what is the first thing you would do? Would you give a lecture on the history and rules of the game, or would you take the students to a stadium to watch a championship tournament? If students have an image of would-be great players responding to the cheers and roars of the audience imprinted in their minds, students are less likely to require much of an explanation for why they must undertake a hard daily training routine - e.g. running, muscle building exercise, practice swings, and fielding practice – so long as they see these activities linked to what they want to be in the future, i.e. their ideal selves.”

Imagery, like any other skill, requires practice and effort, which is why mental training has to be a part of a successful training plan (Damarjian and Greenleaf 2002: 70). A successful career in sports, it is claimed, is often motivated by imagery, and the same can be thought about language learning (Dörnyei 2009: 26). Therefore, learning a language can partly be compared to the training of professional athletes. The next paragraphs will review some studies that have combined athletes and education, as I think that this gives insights into athletes as a subject group in this study.

Kellerman et al. (2005) studied professional football players and their language use in foreign clubs. The target group was 38 foreign players playing in the Dutch football leagues on the two highest divisions. Football has traditionally been a sport where there is a great deal of money involved, and therefore also movement between

different countries. The researchers wanted to examine the importance of the host language in the lives of foreign footballers in the Netherlands, and also find out what kind of language learning facilities different clubs offered for foreign players. They sent out questionnaires both in English and in Dutch to players, interviewed club managements via telephone, and also interviewed two coaches and two teachers of Dutch. They discovered that Dutch was used in all the clubs participating in the study, but also other languages such as English were frequently used. The club management and coaches did not see the importance of the players having a thorough command of Dutch, but they thought the players should be able to understand and make themselves understood. Dutch was seen important also for the players' performance in the field; not understanding the instructions takes up energy that the players then lack in the field. The players themselves had varying opinions on the importance of Dutch; some were motivated to learn it and use it, while others thought there was no point when you were only staying in the same club for some years and everyone spoke English anyway. However, all the participants of the study considered good communication to be "an essential component of good football" (p. 207) regardless of the language of communication. Furthermore, many of the clubs offered instruction in Dutch to foreign players, as they considered the host language competence vital for foreign players' successful functioning, and they also saw it as a prerequisite for success in football. However, they also recognized that following a language course was not that high on a list of priorities of a professional athlete.

In another study, Metsä-Tokila (2001) analyzed the possibilities of young athletes in combining top-level sports with education. He compared the systems of eight different countries by analyzing literature, reports, interviews and statistics. The USA, for example, has a very well-known system of combining education and competitive sports in both secondary and higher education, whereas Finland has a workable system in secondary education these days, but training athletes has mostly been the responsibility of clubs with voluntary coaches. Metsä-Tokila noted that sport was the most popular hobby in Finland, but it was a profession for very few people. According to him, Finland has about 600 professional athletes, of which 200 are foreigners. In addition, about 400 Finnish athletes do sports as a profession abroad. Of these 800 professional Finnish athletes only some earn enough in order to be able to provide for themselves after their sports career. Therefore, being able to combine sports and

education is very important according to Metsä-Tokila. He claimed that athletes are often forced to choose between education and sports, or at least they have to prioritize between them, because training and competing on a high level takes a great deal of time. However, according to Metsä-Tokila, athletes in sports-oriented high schools are generally very motivated with their studies, which also shows in their grades. This is partly because of the growing popularity of sports-oriented upper secondary schools. Metsä-Tokila also noted the growing globalization as well as the increased finances in sports. These mean that one can earn one's living by doing sports, and competing and training abroad has become more common also among Finnish athletes these days.

Combining sports and education was also the topic of a recent study by Jokinen (2008). He interviewed eight Finnish top-level athletes about combining sports and studies at a university. He discovered that the athletes had difficulties because they had many absences due to training sessions and competitions. However, there was a difference between summer sports and winter sports, as in summer sports the competition season is during the summer and therefore there are not as many absences because of competitions. Furthermore, he discovered that athletes proceed in their studies more slowly than normal students do. This was partly because of absences, but also because of the conscious choices of putting sports first. This is why the athletes did not have that many courses at once so that they could fully concentrate on training and competing. However, the athletes were found to think that sports and studying also complemented each other well, because all the athletes recognized that sometimes they needed a break from sports. Moreover, it was found that athletes were very efficient at time management, which is one thing that makes them good students. As Suihkonen (2005, as quoted by Jokinen 2008: 30) noted, "top-level athletes are different but good students".

This chapter reviewed the background and history to research of motivation to learn languages, showing that for several decades the research followed similar patterns, and only in the recent years has the focus shifted because of the growing globalization and the role of English as a lingua franca. Dörnyei's new L2 Motivational Self System is a modern way of researching language learning motivation in the global world with the learner self as the starting point. This chapter reviewed the key components of the L2 Motivational Self System, as well as previous research using it as a framework.

Furthermore, the last section of this chapter also summarized some previous studies on athletes and education, giving background to the present study that has young athletes as a subject group. In the next chapter the focus moves to the present study.

3 DATA AND METHODS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This chapter will present the methodological choices of this study. First, the aims of the study will be discussed together with the introduction of the actual research questions. Second, the choices of methodology will be considered in detail, and the principles and advantages of the chosen methods are discussed. Third, the actual research tool, the questionnaire used in this study, will be discussed in detail, and finally, the fourth section will discuss the data collection and processing of this study.

3.1 Aims of the study

This study is based on a modern motivation research framework developed by Dörnyei at the beginning of the 21st century. As mentioned in chapter 2, the framework, the L2 Motivational Self System, consists of three components: the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. These three components are the three variables also in this study, but in addition to these, also the subjects' attitudes toward the target language and its use are examined, as they give insights into the participants' general thoughts about English. Dörnyei's framework was chosen as the basis for this study as it is a modern way to research motivation, and therefore it has not been used so much yet. Many other aspects of language learning motivation have been researched for a long time to a point where I do not think that there is much new to discover, especially for a novice researcher. However, with this modern framework and a new perspective – researching athletes in relation to motivation to learn English – I think I can bring something new to the field of motivation research, even if it is one of the most widely researched areas of language learning. To my knowledge, athletes have not been researched in this area before, and therefore I am extending the research of the L2 Motivational Self System by contributing the research with a specific subject group.

The L2 Motivational Self System focuses on individual learners as a source of motivation, which is another reason for me to choose it as my framework for this study. My original idea was to combine my passion for sports with my future career as a teacher, and Dörnyei's framework provides the best basis for examining young athletes, who are the subject group of this study. The individual starting point is important, as the backgrounds of the subjects vary a great deal, and they may affect the results of the study. Moreover, the L2 Motivational Self System also has a focus in the future, which is an important factor in this study, as the subject group is young athletes who may or may not have future aspirations as professional athletes. One of the aims of this study is to discover how English relates to these future aspirations.

As mentioned above, this study examines young athletes and their motivation to learn English. Sport and athletes is a fresh starting point to language motivation research, as they have not, to my knowledge, been researched in this area previously. The aim of this study is to find out how Dörnyei's framework works with a specific target group. The previous research using the framework have examined learners of English in different contexts, but this study puts more emphasis on the backgrounds of the individual learners, and attempts to examine how they affect the motivation to learn English. The participants will be compared by gender, for example, as it is claimed that "for research conducted within the self-system, gender must be regarded as a fundamental differentiating factor" (Henry 2009: 179). The three components of the L2 Motivational Self System together with attitudes toward English are the four variables examined in this study. The main aims of the study are to discover how being an athlete affects the motivation to learn English, and whether English is viewed as a valuable language by athletes. Also comparisons between different subgroups will be made. This study will seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What kind of attitudes do young athletes have regarding English?
 2. How does sport affect young athletes' future images of themselves related to English?
 - 2a. How is English related to the athletes' ideal future image?

2b. How is English related to the athletes' thoughts about the images of how they should be in the future in the opinion of others?

3. What kind of experiences related to sport do young athletes have with English?

4. How do the backgrounds of young athletes – their gender and the type of sport they play– affect their motivation to learn and attitudes towards English?

These questions will be answered by collecting data with the help of a questionnaire (see Appendix 1). As this study combines motivation to learn languages with sport, the data was collected from young athletes who study English, and therefore students in sports-oriented upper secondary schools (Fin. *urheilulukio*) were the most suitable subject group for this study. The students were asked a series of questions about how English and sport are related in their future and past, and how they see the value of English as athletes. All the students were given the same questionnaire, and therefore the responses are comparable. The data was analyzed in order to help explain the relationship between sport and motivation to learn English. A quantitative method is most suited for this study, as this study aims to explain a larger phenomenon instead of presenting a few individual views. The methodological choices will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.2 Choice of methodology

This study is a quantitative study, and therefore a questionnaire was chosen as a method to collect data. The principles and advantages of quantitative research and the use of a questionnaire and its different question types will be discussed in this section.

This study is greatly about attitudes, and therefore statements on a Likert-scale are a natural method to collect quantitative data; originally the Likert-scale was created to measure attitudes as early as the 1930s, and since then it has been used widely in research (Alanen 2011: 150). The advantage of multiple-choice questions is that they are “simple, versatile, and reliable” (Dörnyei 2003b: 36), and they enable collecting large amounts of data (Valli 2001: 31). However, the weakness of such data collection

is that it is very controlled and therefore the engagement by respondents might be shallow, and it does not offer reasons for the responses (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 204, 241). The method was chosen for this study because multiple-choice questions are easy and quick to respond to, and therefore larger amounts of data can be collected and analyzed in a somewhat short time. This was an important factor for me, as I am interested in young athletes as a group instead of examining a few chosen individuals; comparing different subgroups is a major part of this study. Furthermore, the framework of the L2 Motivational Self System has mainly been measured by using multiple-choice questions, and for the sake of continuity and ease, this method was also chosen for this study; there were questions created by other researchers that could be used as a guide in creating new questions, whereas researching a completely fresh aspect of the relationship between sport and motivation to learn a language in a qualitative way would have been more challenging, as there is no model for such research. However, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between sport and motivation to learn languages, also open-ended questions were used in this study.

The advantages of open-ended questions compensate for the major weakness of Likert-scale statements; open-ended questions offer rich data, new perspectives, and give respondents a chance to use their own voice (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 204; Alanen 2011: 151). This is particularly important in this study, as the subject group has not been examined in relation to motivation to learn languages before, which is why the study contributes to the research of motivation with a new subject group, and therefore I believe that by giving the respondents a chance to explain their ideas will give me a better understanding of the subject at hand. Furthermore, as one variable of the study is previous experiences with using English, I had to give the respondents a chance to tell about these experiences. The weakness of this data collection method is that since answering open-ended questions takes more effort than answering multiple-choice questions, some of the respondents might choose not to answer at all, or the responses might be very brief (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 74). Therefore I made a conscious choice and tried not to make the questionnaire too long in order to motivate the students to answer. This, however, means that I have not followed the recommended pattern of asking the same thing many times in different words, which would affect the validity and reliability of the results (Alanen 2011: 150). However, I hope that the

large number of subjects in the study will compensate for the possible lack or shortness of responses to the open-ended questions.

3.3 Questionnaire

The questions in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) were divided into four categories: general attitudes towards English, the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. The first research question (see research questions in section 3.1) is concerned with the athletes' general attitudes towards English. Research question two represents the sources of motivation. One source is the individuals and whether they think they want to use English in the future (the Ideal L2 Self). Another source is other people and what they think one should be able to do (the Ought-to L2 Self). Research question three focuses on the previous experiences – in this case sport related experiences - of using or learning English (the L2 Learning Experience). The fourth research question is about comparing the athletes from different backgrounds, and seeing if there are significant differences between the responses by gender, by the type of sport they do, and by the level they compete on.

The questionnaire of this study, as mentioned above, consists of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. There are some existing questionnaires (Dörnyei et al. 2006; Ryan 2009; Csizér and Kormos 2009) that have been used for studying the L2 Motivational Self System, and these were used as a model for creating the multiple-choice questions of this study, in order to see what kind of questions can be asked. However, the questions of the previous studies could not be used directly, but they were modified and new questions were created to suit the aims of the study to examine the relationship between sport and motivation to learn languages, because the original questions did not suit the purpose of this study as they did not fit in the context of sport. A model for the questions was necessary, as research in this area is new to me, and I wanted to guarantee that the components of the L2 Motivational Self System would be represented adequately and reliably in the questionnaire. However, since the relationship between sport and motivation to learn languages has not been studied previously, I acknowledge that I am taking a risk in combining the two elements and creating a questionnaire of my own to examine the relationships.

The questionnaire consists of three parts: demographic and background information, multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was in Finnish because answering in one's mother tongue is easier than trying to express an opinion in a written form in a foreign language, and in this way I believe there might be fewer misunderstandings as well. The background section of the questionnaire consists of information about the respondents' English studies (the number of courses completed at school and the average grade of the courses) and their athletic backgrounds (what their sport is, how long they have been doing it, and on what level they have competed in it).

The second part consists of 18 multiple-choice questions. As mentioned before, the study has four themes and the questions are divided accordingly, but it is recommended (Alanen 2011: 152) not to have the questions in a specific order, but mixing them up randomly, which was also done in this questionnaire; so the questions are not arranged by theme, but they are in a random order. I chose to include four response alternatives to the multiple-choice questions which measure the strength of the opinion. The response alternatives are: *completely disagree*, *somewhat disagree*, *somewhat agree*, and *completely agree*. It seems to be a matter of opinion whether there should be a neutral alternative in the middle; Valli (2001: 35), for example, recommends including a neutral response alternative *don't know* in order not to "force" students to respond. However, I chose not to include it for the same reason; I think that many students would choose the neutral alternative too easily, and by not having it, they are indeed forced to express their opinions, which I do not think is so difficult as two out of four alternatives are more careful expressions of opinion, as they include the word *somewhat* (as mentioned above, the original questionnaire was in Finnish, and the alternatives include the word *jokseenkin*).

The final section of the questionnaire includes seven open-ended questions. As mentioned before, these open-ended questions aim to gather more detailed and personal information on the subject at hand, because the multiple-choice questions can be quite shallow. The structure of the questionnaire follows the recommended pattern of starting with background information and easier questions, and putting the open-ended questions last (Alanen 2011: 152). At the end of the questionnaire the

respondents are given a chance to comment on the study or the questionnaire, or write any other comments.

Moreover, the questionnaire begins with a cover letter explaining the study, giving brief instructions, and reminding that all the information the respondents give is completely confidential and will only be used by me.

3.4 Data collection and processing

As mentioned previously, the data for this study was collected with the help of a questionnaire consisting of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The target group of this study consists of young athletes, and therefore sports-oriented upper secondary schools were chosen as the most convenient places to collect data. The athletes participating in this study were second-year students. As there are only 12 upper secondary schools classified officially as sports-oriented upper secondary schools in Finland (Opetushallitus 2012), the schools participating in this study are not identified in order to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

English teachers of six schools were contacted by email during the spring and autumn semester in 2012. The two teachers who volunteered to participate in the study were mailed the needed amount of copies of the questionnaire, and they returned them by mail in a return envelope. Mail was chosen as the most convenient method of collecting data because of long distances. A factor worth noting is that the athletes study together with “regular” students, which made the data collection a little challenging, and therefore the teachers could choose a method that best suited their plans. One teacher had students fill in the questionnaire at the end of a class or an exam, while the other gave them as homework, and I must give credit to that teacher for not giving these students any other homework on the day they were given the questionnaire to fill in at home!

According to Dörnyei (2007: 115), the minimum number of respondents for a quantitative study is 100, and the total number of questionnaires I received was 107, which according to Dörnyei, is an adequate number. First, all the responses from the multiple-choice questions were coded into numeric form with the help of Microsoft

Excel. This was done by using the response alternatives from one to four. Second, these numeric forms of the questions were used in order to make calculations with the SPSS software. The responses from the open-ended questions were coded by theme and also put into numeric form according to the number of times they were mentioned. As can be seen, numbers are vital in the analysis of this study.

As mentioned above, the SPSS program was used as a tool to make calculations. Frequencies and mean values were first calculated. Moreover, Pearson Chi Squares were calculated for each statement, and they were used when comparing the groups in order to see how similar or dissimilar the responses are between the groups. Pearson Chi Squares were used to report statistically significant differences, and the closer the value was to 1, the more similar the responses were, which means that there was no statistically significant difference between the responses of the groups. On the other hand, there was statistically almost significant difference between the responses of the groups when the value of Pearson Chi Square was <0.05 , statistically significant difference when the value was <0.01 , and statistically very significant difference when the value was <0.001 . Furthermore, this study includes four major themes which are called instruments (general attitudes towards English, the Ideal L2 self, the Ought to L2 self, and the L2 Learning Experience), and Cronbach's alphas were calculated for each instrument in order to ensure the reliability of the instruments. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alphas were counted for the individuals statements belonging to each instrument. Values that were >0.700 were considered as reliable, and values between 0.500 and 0.700 were usable but not the most reliable (Dörnyei, 2003b: 112-113). Finally, comparisons between the responses of different groups were made by using the instruments, and this was done by using mean values and Pearson Chi Squares.

This section presented the methodological choices of the present study: the aims, the methodological choices, the questionnaire, and the actual collection and processing of data. The next section will introduce the participants of the present study. Moreover, their athletic backgrounds will also be discussed, as comparing the responses by athletes from different backgrounds is one of the research questions.

3.5 Participants

All the participants in this study were second-year students at sports-oriented upper secondary schools in Finland. The total number of the participants was 107, of which 61 were girls and 46 were boys. One respondent had to be eliminated from the study, as he had not replied to even half of the questions in the questionnaire.

The participants were first asked about the number of English courses they had completed (see Table 1).

Table 1. English courses completed
(N=107)

Number of courses	Number of respondents	%
1 course	0	0
2 courses	26	24
3 courses	21	20
4 courses	16	15
5 courses	25	23
6 courses	14	13
7 courses	3	3
8 courses	2	2

The distribution of completed courses varied a great deal, which could be due to several reasons. Firstly, the questionnaires were sent to two schools and there are differences between the schedules of schools, and there are even differences between the schedules of different classes within a school. Moreover, the questionnaires were sent at two separate times, during spring 2012 and autumn 2012, which meant that the students were at different phases of their studies; some had only just started their second year at upper secondary school, while others had almost completed it. Furthermore, another explanation could be that Finnish upper secondary schools are classless, which means that students can complete it at their own pace. This might be particularly relevant with athletes, who might have more absences due to trainings and competitions, and might therefore choose to complete upper secondary school over a longer period of time, and this could be why many of the participants had completed only two or three courses. According to the National Core Curriculum for Upper

Secondary Schools (NCC) (2003), there are six compulsory English courses at the A level (which is the level of English for the majority of Finnish students studying English), and with a normal studying pace the compulsory English courses are usually completed by the end of the second year, as students usually graduate from upper secondary school in three years. However, only 14 of the participants reported having completed all six courses, which could also reinforce the theory of athletes studying a longer time, or at least having compulsory courses also in the third year of studies. Only a total of five students reported on having completed also specialization courses in English (the elective courses are called specialization courses in the NCC, 2003).

The participants were also asked about the average grades of their completed English courses in upper secondary school (see Table 2).

Table 2. Completed English courses: grade averages
(N=105)

Average grade of courses	Number of respondents	%
10	2	2
9	22	21
8	27	26
7	30	28
6	14	13
5	9	9
4	1	1

The averages were rounded to the closest even number. As the Finnish grades are marked as *good* from grade eight onwards (8= good, 9= very good, 10=excellent), almost half of the participants (a total of 51) had good or better averages in their English courses. As Metsä-Tokila (2001: 242) pointed out in his study, athletes in sports-oriented upper secondary schools usually have good grades, which is also because of the growing competition of the places in such education. A grade seven is also considered an alright grade, and only a total of 24 students in this study had average grades below that. Two students had not responded to this question, and therefore there are only 105 respondents.

In addition to basic background information, the participants were also asked about their athletic backgrounds. First, the participants were asked to identify the type of sport they did, which meant choosing between a team sport and an individual sport, and second, they were asked to name the sport (see Table 3).

Table 3. Sports the participants did
(N=107)

Sport	Number of respondents	%
INDIVIDUAL	44	41
athletics	27	
wrestling	5	
swimming	4	
bowling	3	
tennis	2	
cycling	1	
table tennis	1	
shooting	1	
triathlon	1	
orienteeing	1	
taekwondo	1	
TEAM	63	59
ice hockey	31	
volleyball	24	
football	5	
floorball	2	
aesthetic group gymnastics	2	
basketball	1	
Finnish baseball	1	
dancing	1	

Team sports were somewhat more popular among the participants, and moreover, there was a clear top three in the responses: ice hockey, athletics and volleyball were by far the most popular sports among the participants. A total of 82 participants did one of these three sports; in other words, 77% of all the participants did either ice hockey, athletics or volleyball. This explains the popularity of team sports in Table 3, as two of the top three sports are team sports. Worth noting is that many respondents who did athletics had mentioned which event within athletics they did (for example javelin, shot put, triple jump), but because not everyone had done this, and also because athletics is seen as one sport with a collection of different events, all the responses were simply marked under athletics. At the other end of Table 3 there were many

sports which had been mentioned by only one participant. Some of the participants mentioned more than one sport, and there was a total of 114 mentions of different sports. The percentages for each sport have not been counted as the number of sports mentioned is higher than the number of respondents.

Furthermore, the participants were also asked about their experience within their sport, in other words, the level they competed or had competed on (see Table 4).

Table 4. Levels the participants compete on
(N=106)

Level of competition	Number of respondents	%
national	45	42
international	52	49
local	9	8

Most participants, 52 (49%) of them, had responded that they had competed on an international level. This means that the participants were successful at the sports they did, and because of their international experience, they have proven to be a very good subject group for this study. A national level in sports is also considered to be good in Finland, and this is particularly noteworthy in the most popular sports where there is a great deal of competition. One participant had not responded to this question, and therefore the total number of respondents for this particular question is 106.

Third, the participants were also asked for the number of years they had been doing their sport (see Table 5). The participants had responded with exact years, but for the ease of marking, I have combined three years together.

Table 5. The number of years the participants had been doing their sport
(N=107)

Number of years	Number of respondents	%
0-3 years	4	4
4-6 years	18	17
7-9 years	31	29

10-12 years	45	42
13-15 years	9	8

The most common answer was 10-12 years. This means that the participants had in fact been doing their sport for more than half of their life, as the second year students of upper secondary schools are usually around 17-18 years of age. Also, the great majority of the participants were quite experienced in the sports they did, because many had been training for several years. Only a few respondents could be classified as beginners in their sport.

This section introduced the participants and their backgrounds. The background information is important, as comparisons between different groups is one of the research questions, and therefore a great part of this study. The next chapter reports the findings.

4 FINDINGS

In this chapter the participants' responses to the questions of the questionnaire will be discussed according to the themes of the research questions. The first research question is concerned with the young athletes' general attitude towards English, and the responses to the questions in the attitude instrument of the questionnaire will be viewed first. Attitude is a variable that does not belong to the L2 motivational self system, but it is discussed first because it gives insights into the participants' general thoughts about English and English related to sports. The second research question is concerned with the types of future images the young athletes have regarding English. The ideal images and the ought-to images will be discussed separately. The third research question is concerned with the participants' previous experiences regarding the use of English in the context of sports. The final research question is concerned with whether there are differences between participants from different backgrounds. However, this research question will not be discussed in isolation, but for clarity the comparisons will be introduced with the themes from the other research questions. A great deal of tables will be used in order to help explain and visualize the findings.

4.1 General attitude towards English

Attitudes have traditionally been an important part of research on motivation to learn languages (see, for example, section 2.2 for Gardner's socio-educational model), and therefore they were also addressed in this study. The first research question is concerned with the young athletes' general attitude towards English. The questionnaire contained five multiple-choice questions (see Table 6) and two open-ended questions related to these attitudes, and the participants' responses to these questions will be discussed next. The statements that belong to the attitude instrument (and other instruments) appeared in a random order in the questionnaire, but they were given new numbers so that the statements in each instrument would be in a numerical order. The numbers in bold on the left are the numbers given to the statements for the analysis, and the other numbers are the original numbers that were used in the questionnaire. The numbers in the numerical order are the ones that will be used when referring to the statements.

Table 6. General attitude towards English.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				n	Mean value	Cronbach's Alpha
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
1 /1. I think athletes should have good English skills.	1 (0.9)	5 (4.7)	41 (38.3)	60 (56.1)	107	3.50	.579
2 /2. I think Finnish athletes have good English skills in general.	0 (0.0)	22 (20.6)	67 (62.6)	18 (16.8)	107	2.96	.697
3 /4. I like studying English.	7 (6.5)	25 (23.4)	51 (47.7)	24 (22.4)	107	2.86	.583
4 /5. Speaking English is not an important skill for an athlete.	70 (65.4)	30 (28.0)	2 (1.9)	5 (4.7)	107	1.46	.542*
5 /6. I study English only for the matriculation exam.	65 (60.7)	34 (31.8)	6 (5.6)	2 (1.9)	107	1.49	.495*
Total Cronbach's Alpha							.640

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

*The original statements were converted from negative to positive in order to be able to count the Cronbach's Alpha for the instrument as a whole.

Firstly, the participants were unanimous over statement 1 (*I think athletes should have good English skills*) (see the original statements in Finnish in Appendix 1). A remarkable number of the students thought that athletes should have good English skills: a total of 94.4% of all the participants either completely agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement, and more than half of them (56.1%) completely agreed. The mean value of 3.50 also reinforces the students' positive views to this statement. Only six students out of 107 thought that athletes did not necessarily need good English skills. The participants were not asked to give reasons for their opinions, but an open-ended question asked later in the questionnaire might give insights into this (see Table 10).

Secondly, the majority of the participants (79.4%) either somewhat agreed or completely agreed with statement 2 (*I think Finnish athletes have good English skills in general*). However, it is worth noting that one out of five participants disagreed with the statement. Therefore, 20.6% of the participants thought that Finnish athletes did not have good English skills in general. Again, the students were not asked to give reasons for their opinions, but in an open-ended question the participants were asked to give examples of Finnish athletes who they thought had good and poor English skills. Moreover, they were asked to justify their opinions. The examples will be discussed later in this section.

Thirdly, the responses for statement 3 (*I like studying English*) were also somewhat positive, which can also be seen in the mean value of 2.86. The mean value can be rounded to 3, which stands for *somewhat agree*. A total of 70.1% of all the participants had in fact agreed with this statement. However, it is also worth noting that the number of participants who thought they had not liked studying English was reasonably high, as almost one in three (29.9%) of all the participants disagreed with the statement.

Fourthly, the participants were again unanimous over statement 4 (*Speaking English is not an important skill for an athlete*). Almost all of the participants (93.4%) thought that this was not true, and the same can be seen from the low mean value of 1.46. Only seven students out of 107 had in fact thought that English was not an important skill for athletes.

Statement 5 (*I study English only for the matriculation exam*), the last multiple-choice question concerned with attitudes, also received very unanimous responses from the participants. The majority of the participants (60.7%) completely disagreed with the statement, and when that number was combined with the number of students who somewhat disagreed, the total amount of participants who disagreed with the statement was 92.5%. Moreover, the low mean value of 1.49 also reveals that the students mainly disagreed with the statement, meaning that they had other motives for studying English.

In addition to percentages and mean values, Cronbach's Alphas were counted for each statement separately, and also for the whole attitude instrument as a whole. The total Cronbach's Alpha for the attitude instrument was 0.640, which means that the results from the instrument as a whole are usable, but not the most reliable. Cronbach's Alphas for the individual statements also gave usable results, other than for statement 6, for which the value was 0.495, very close to the limit of usable results. Statement 2 gave the most reliable values out of all the individual statements within the attitude instrument, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.697, which is very close to the limit of reliable results.

General attitude towards English – Comparisons by gender.

One of the research questions is concerned with whether there were differences in the responses between participants from different backgrounds. In this study the participants' responses will be compared by gender, by individual and team sports, and by the level the participants compete on. The responses were first compared by gender (see Table 7).

Table 7. General attitude towards English – Comparisons by gender.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				Gender	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
1/1. I think athletes should have good English skills.	1 (1.6)	2 (3.3)	26 (42.6)	32 (52.5)	Girls	61	.501
	0 (0.0)	3 (6.5)	15 (32.6)	28 (60.9)	Boys	46	
2/2. I think Finnish athletes have good English skills in general.	0 (0.0)	12 (19.7)	42 (68.9)	7 (11.5)	Girls	61	.188
	0 (0.0)	10 (21.7)	25 (54.3)	11 (16.8)	Boys	46	

3/4. I like studying English.	2 (3.3)	13 (21.3)	27 (44.3)	19 (31.1)	Girls	61	.052
	5 (10.9)	12 (26.1)	24 (52.2)	5 (10.9)	Boys	46	
4/5. Speaking English is not an important skill for an athlete.	38 (62.3)	19 (31.1)	1 (1.6)	3 (4.9)	Girls	61	.859
	32 (69.6)	11 (23.9)	1 (2.2)	2 (4.3)	Boys	46	
5/6. I study English only for the matriculation exam.	41 (67.2)	18 (29.5)	1 (1.6)	1 (1.6)	Girls	61	.156
	24 (52.2)	16 (34.8)	5 (10.9)	1 (2.2)	Boys	46	

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

As can be seen from the table, the answers between the girls and the boys were quite similar. The majority of both groups had selected the same response alternative for each of the statements in the attitude instrument. The values of Pearson's Chi Square also show that there were no statistically significant differences between the responses by the two groups. However, for statement 3 (*I like studying English*), the value of Pearson's Chi Square was 0.052, which is very close to the limit of statistically almost significant differences (<0.05). All in all, the boys and the girls shared similar opinions, and both groups in general had a very positive attitude towards English.

General attitude towards English – Comparisons by the type of sport the participants do.

The second comparisons were made between athletes who did individual sports and athletes who did team sports (see Table 8). The comparison by type of sports was added in order to find out whether the athletic backgrounds of the young athletes created differences in the responses.

Table 8. General attitude towards English - Comparisons by the type of sport the participants do.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				Individual/team	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
1/1. I think athletes should have good English skills.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (40.9)	26 (59.1)	Individual	44	.217
	1 (1.6)	5 (7.9)	23 (36.5)	34 (54.0)	Team	63	
2/2. I think Finnish athletes have good	0 (0.0)	7 (15.9)	29 (65.9)	8 (18.2)	Individual	44	.607

English skills in general.	0 (0.0)	15 (23.8)	38 (60.3)	10 (15.9)	Team	63	
3/4. I like studying English.	2 (4.5)	13 (29.5)	17 (38.6)	12 (27.3)	Individual	44	.291
	5 (7.9)	12 (19.0)	34 (54.0)	12 (19.0)	Team	63	
4/5. Speaking English is not an important skill for an athlete.	31 (70.5)	11 (25.0)	1 (2.3)	1 (2.3)	Individual	44	.677
	39 (61.9)	19 (30.2)	1 (1.6)	4 (6.3)	Team	63	
5/6. I study English only for the matriculation exam.	23 (52.3)	20 (45.5)	1 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	Individual	44	.043
	42 (66.7)	14 (22.2)	5 (7.9)	2 (3.2)	Team	63	

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

The comparisons by the sport the participants did created no statistically significant differences in the first four statements; the majority of the participants from both groups had again selected the same response alternatives for these statements. However, statement 5 (*I study English only for the matriculation exam*) created some differences between the athletes who did individual sports and the athletes who did team sports. The majority of both groups disagreed with the statement, but 11.1% of the athletes who did team sports also agreed with it, whereas the percentage of the athletes who did individual sports was only 2.3. Pearson's Chi Square of 0.043 shows that there are statistically almost significant differences between the responses, as the value of the Pearson's Chi Square was smaller than 0.05, which is the limit for statistically almost significant differences. All in all, only one of the statements created slight differences in the responses between the athletes who did individual sports and the athletes who did team sports.

General attitude towards English – Comparisons by the level the athletes compete on.

In addition to comparisons by individual and team sports, the comparisons by different athletic backgrounds also included comparing the responses by the level the athletes competed on (see Table 9). When making the calculations with the SPSS, the response alternatives had to be combined so that the options were *disagree* and *agree*. This was because the statistical differences would not have been as reliable if there had been three variables (national, international, local) and four response alternatives. Many alternatives could have received single responses, which could have affected the reliability of the comparisons. Therefore, the original response alternatives of

completely disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, and completely agree were simply combined as *disagree* and *agree*. The same was made for the rest of the instruments (Ideal L2 self, Ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience) as well.

Table 9. General attitude towards English – Comparisons by the level the athletes compete on.

(N=106)

Statement	Response alternatives		National/ International/ Local	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)			
1/1. I think athletes should have good English skills.	1 (2.2)	44 (97.8)	National	45	.387
	4 (7.7)	48 (92.3)	International	52	
	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	Local	9	
2/2. I think Finnish athletes have good English skills in general.	8 (17.8)	37 (82.2)	National	45	.559
	10 (19.2)	42 (80.8)	International	52	
	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)	Local	9	
3/4. I like studying English.	11 (24.4)	34 (75.6)	National	45	.373
	19 (36.5)	33 (63.5)	International	52	
	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	Local	9	
4/5. Speaking English is not an important skill for an athlete.	43 (95.6)	2 (4.4)	National	45	.138
	49 (94.2)	3 (5.8)	International	52	
	7 (77.8)	2 (22.2)	Local	9	
5/6. I study English only for the matriculation exam.	43 (95.6)	2 (4.4)	National	45	.009
	49 (94.2)	3 (5.8)	International	52	
	6 (66.7)	3 (33.3)	Local	9	

Again, the first four statements created no significant differences between the participants who did sports on these three different levels. The majority from each group had chosen the same response alternative for these statements. However, the percentages might seem high compared to the other two comparisons discussed before, but this is because the response alternatives had to be combined as two. Statement 5 (*I study English only for the matriculation exam*) caused some differences in the

responses between the groups, as it did also when the responses were compared by the type of sport the participants did. Almost all of the athletes who had competed on the national and international level disagreed with the statement, whereas one out of three of the ones who had competed on a local level agreed. Pearson's Chi Square of 0.009 shows that there are, in fact, statistically significant differences between the responses of the groups. However, this might be due to the low number of participants who competed on the local level, which makes the percentages higher than what they might be if the group had been bigger. All in all, only the last statement created some differences between the athletes who competed on a different level, but in general they had very similar opinions.

Open-ended questions.

As mentioned above, also two open-ended questions were concerned with the students' general attitude towards English. In the first open-ended question (question 3 in section III of the questionnaire) the students were asked why athletes in particular would benefit from good English skills. The responses were organized by theme, and the most frequent responses (mentioned by at least five participants) are shown in Table 10. The percentages for the responses were not counted, as many participants gave more than one reason.

Table 10. "Why is English a useful skill for athletes in particular?"

Reason	Number of responses
Giving interviews	25
Getting to know foreign athletes	21
Communication	18
Easier to go abroad to do sports	18
Communicating with a foreign coach	15
Surviving abroad at competitions/during training camps	13
Communicating with foreign teammates/training companions	12
Building international relations	8
Understanding	7
Training/competing abroad often	7
Giving a positive image of oneself	6

There were some general reasons that could be given by any person when asked why it was important to know English. These general reasons included *communication*, *understanding*, and *giving a positive image of oneself*. The rest of the answers included a feature directly related to sports, for example, *giving interviews*, *communicating with a foreign coach*, *surviving abroad at competitions/during training camps*. It is clear that the participants saw English as a vital part of the international sports culture, and furthermore, English was seen as an important skill for successful athletes in particular. One participant had in fact written that the role of English skills become more important when one competes at an international level. The role of English in the media was the most frequent answer. One participant had written that if one was a top-level athlete, English would be needed with the media. Moreover, another participant had responded that an athlete must be able to handle press conferences and give interviews. Communication was one important theme in the responses, and it could be claimed that all of the responses listed above were related to a communication aspect. To conclude, one participant wrote what most of them probably thought; “English is an important skill because it can be used everywhere”.

In the second open-ended question concerned with attitudes (question 7 in section III of the questionnaire) the students were asked to give examples of Finnish athletes who they thought had a) good English skills, and b) poor English skills. Furthermore, the students were asked to give reasons for their opinions. The responses varied a great deal, and there were many athletes mentioned by only one participant, which is why there are no tables for this question. However, there was a clear number one response for the good English skills: Teemu Selänne was mentioned by a total of 33 participants, when Kimi Räikkönen on the second place was mentioned only five times. The reasons for Selänne’s good skills also varied. Many participants mentioned that he had been living in the USA for a long time, and that is why he had become so good at the language too. Furthermore, Selänne was complimented on his clear way of speaking, and also for his extensive vocabulary. It was also mentioned that he had given a great deal of interviews in English. As mentioned already, Kimi Räikkönen was the second most popular Finnish athlete who was claimed to have good English skills. The reasons for his good English skills were that he had to use English a great deal because of his international career, and that he also had an extensive vocabulary. Other NHL players, for example, the Koivu brothers, were also mentioned as Finnish

athletes who had good English skills. The general reason for their choice was that they had lived and worked in English-speaking environments and had had to use English every day. Other athletes were mentioned by only one or two participants. Here are some examples and the justifications these athletes were given¹; Tero Pitkämäki (“is able to use long sentences in interviews”), Mikael Forssell (“went abroad when he was young”), Aino-Kaisa Saarinen (“fluent”), Heli Koivula-Kruger (“spends a lot of time abroad, married with a foreigner”), Mika Koivuniemi (“plays in the USA often, has lived in the USA for several years, trains with foreigners”). All in all, a total of 23 different athletes were mentioned in responding to this question, and the NHL players as a group were mentioned a few times. Moreover, one participant had responded that all of the athletes that he had seen in interviews had good enough English skills. Interviews were perhaps the most common source for these opinions.

The students were also asked to give an example of a Finnish athlete who had not so good English skills in their opinion. Again, the responses varied, but there was a clear number one. Some students viewed this athlete’s English skills as good, whereas others thought he had poor skills. However, the reasons given for this answer were different from the ones given to the previous question. Kimi Räikkönen, the number two favorite for a Finnish athlete who had good English skills, was mentioned as an example of a Finnish athlete who had poor English skills by a total of 24 participants. The main reason for his poor English skills was his unclear way of speaking, “mumbling”, as was mentioned by some participants. Also his pronunciation was criticized, as well as his “stammer” in interviews. One participant claimed that Räikkönen “doesn’t articulate well, and the language isn’t fluent or versatile”. The other athletes that were mentioned by more than one student included many Finnish athletic legends. Raimo Helminen was mentioned by six participants because of his poor pronunciation and non-coherent way of speaking. Seppo Rätty was mentioned by five participants, and the participants claimed that he had not been asked anything in English, because he could not speak it. Matti Nykänen received four votes, and he was claimed always to have his own interpreter with him. A total of 16 different athletes were mentioned in responding to this question. One strange answer was “Mikael” Schumacher, and the reason for mentioning him was his “horrible pronunciation, which shows he is Finnish”. It was surprising how many retired athletes were

¹ The answers were quite short and they were often in the form of a list, and therefore the original responses in Finnish were not included in a separate appendix.

mentioned by these young athletes in responding to this question, but perhaps the Finnish athletes' language skills have gotten better over the years, and the participants could not think of better examples. Furthermore, there have probably been several examples of these retired athletes speaking English on TV and YouTube, for example. Moreover, it is worth noting that several students had not responded to this question at all.

To sum up, the attitude instrument contained a total of seven questions (five multiple-choice statements and two open-ended questions), and the responses to these were reported above. The responses to the multiple-choice questions were also compared by gender, by individual and team sports, and by the level the athletes competed on. In general, the participants thought very positively about English and the importance of English skills for athletes. Moreover, there were no major differences in the opinions between the participants from different backgrounds. The only statement that caused slight differences between the different groups was the one that was concerned with studying English only for the matriculation exam.

In the next section the role of English related to the athletes' different future images is discussed. The responses to the ideal L2 self instrument will be discussed first, together with the comparisons between the different backgrounds. Secondly, the participants' responses to the ought-to L2 self instrument and the comparisons will be introduced.

4.2 Future images related to English

The previous section reported the results concerning the extra variable, attitudes. The next sections will discuss the findings concerning the actual variables of the L2 motivational self system; the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experiences. In this section the results concerning two variables of the L2 motivational self system will be discussed. This section reports the results to the second research question, which is concerned with the young athletes' English related future images. The first part of the second research question is about the athletes' ideal images of themselves related to English, and the second part is concerned with the athletes'

images of what others think they ought to be like in the future. The responses to the questions regarding the athletes' ideal L2 selves will be discussed first.

4.2.1 Ideal L2 self

The questionnaire contained a total of six questions (five multiple-choice statements and one open-ended question) that were concerned with the ideal L2 self. As mentioned above, the questions that belong to the ideal L2 self instrument appeared in a random order in the questionnaire, and for clarity, they were given new numbers in a numerical order that are used when discussing the results. Moreover, the same three comparisons will also be made for the ideal L2 self instrument; the responses will be compared by gender, by the type of sport the participants do, and by the level the participants compete on. However, the participants' responses to the five statements will be discussed in general first (see Table 11).

Table 11. Ideal L2 self.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				n	Mean value	Cronbach's Alpha
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
6/8. I can imagine myself being in a sports related situation where I need English.	2 (1.9)	4 (3.7)	34 (31.8)	67 (62.6)	107	3.55	.741
7/11. I would like to have teammates or a coach with whom I could use English.	5 (4.7)	25 (23.4)	40 (37.4)	37 (34.6)	107	3.02	.766
8/13. I would like to compete at my sport abroad, and that's why I need English.	3 (2.8)	5 (4.7)	29 (27.1)	70 (65.4)	107	3.55	.718
9/14. In the future I would like spend longer periods of time being instructed by foreign coaches, and that's why I need English.	5 (4.7)	18 (16.8)	49 (45.8)	35 (32.7)	107	3.07	.720
10/17. When I imagine my future as an athlete, I picture myself knowing English.	1 (0.9)	14 (13.1)	41 (38.3)	51 (47.7)	107	3.33	.770
Total Cronbach's Alpha							.784

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

Firstly, the majority of the participants agreed with statement 6 (*I can imagine myself being in a sports related situation where I need English*), as a total of 94.4% had selected either *somewhat agree* or *completely agree*. The amount of the participants who completely agreed with the statement was 62.2%. Only a total of six participants out of 107 could not imagine themselves needing English in a sports related situation in the future. Also the mean value of 3.55 shows that the participants had generally responded very positively to this statement. The very high percentage of participants who could imagine needing English in sports related situations in the future could be explained by the previous experiences that the participants had already had with English in the context of sports (see section 4.3).

Secondly, the responses to statement 7 (*I would like to have teammates or a coach with whom I could use English*) were more distributed among the four response alternatives, and for this statement there was no clear most popular response. When the agree alternatives were combined, they were selected by a total of 72.2% of all the participants. However, the percentages for these alternatives were almost the same, as 37.4% had responded with *somewhat agree* and 34.6% had selected *completely agree*. Furthermore, almost one out of five (23.4%) had responded with *somewhat disagree*. Only the *completely disagree* alternative was not a frequent response among the participants. For this statement, the participants were not as unanimous. However, the mean value of 3.02 can be rounded to 3, which stands for *somewhat agree*, and this shows that the participants generally were more on the positive side regarding this statement.

Thirdly, for statement 8 (*I would like to compete at my sport abroad, and that's why I need English*) there was again a clear number one most popular response. A total of 65.4% of all the participants had completely agreed with the statement, and when that percentage was combined with the amount of the rest of the participants who had agreed, the total amount was 92.5%. The mean value for this statement (3.55) was also very high, which reinforces the participants' positive responses in general. Only eight participants out of 107 thought that English skills were not needed because of possible competitions abroad in the future. Again, the very high percentage of the participants

who responded positively to this statement could be explained by the great number of participants who had already competed abroad (see sections 3.5 and 4.3).

Moreover, the participants responded very positively to statement 9 (*In the future I would like spend longer periods of time being instructed by foreign coaches, and that's why I need English*), for which the mean value of 3.07 could again be rounded to 3 (*somewhat agree*). The majority of the participants (45.8%) responded with *somewhat agree*, but also a great amount of them (32.7%) completely agreed with the statement. The amount of disagreeing participants was only 21.5%, which was still more than one out of five participants.

For statement 10 (*When I imagine my future as an athlete, I picture myself knowing English*) the majority of the participants again agreed, which can also be seen in the somewhat high mean value of 3.33. A combined percentage of 86.0 of the participants either somewhat agreed or completely agreed with the statement, and almost half of them (47.7%) completely agreed. Only 14.0% of the participants did not see English as a part of their future image as an athlete.

Cronbach's Alphas were also counted for the whole ideal L2 self instrument, and for the individual statements within the instrument. The total Cronbach's Alpha for this instrument was 0.784, which means that the results from this instrument are reliable. Moreover, the Cronbach's Alphas for the individual statements were also all above the limit of reliable, as they were all higher than 0.700.

Ideal L2 self – Comparisons by gender.

The responses to the statements that belong to the attitude instrument were also compared between the participants from different backgrounds. The comparisons by gender (see Table 12) will be discussed first.

Table 12. Ideal L2 self – Comparisons by gender.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				Gender	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
6/8. I can imagine myself being in a sports related	1 (1.6)	4 (6.6)	17 (27.9)	39 (63.9)	Girls	61	.287
	1	0	17	28	Boys	46	

situation where I need English.	(2.2)	(0.0)	(37.0)	(60.9)			
7/11. I would like to have teammates or a coach with whom I could use English.	1 (1.6)	12 (19.7)	18 (29.5)	30 (49.2)	Girls	61	.002
	4 (8.7)	13 (28.3)	22 (47.8)	7 (15.2)	Boys	46	
8/13. I would like to compete at my sport abroad, and that's why I need English.	1 (1.6)	2 (3.3)	13 (21.3)	45 (73.8)	Girls	61	.208
	2 (4.3)	3 (6.5)	16 (34.8)	25 (54.3)	Boys	46	
9/14. In the future I would like spend longer periods of time being instructed by foreign coaches, and that's why I need English.	1 (1.6)	7 (11.5)	25 (41.0)	28 (45.9)	Girls	61	.004
	4 (8.7)	11 (23.9)	24 (52.2)	7 (15.2)	Boys	46	
10/17. When I imagine my future as an athlete, I picture myself knowing English.	1 (1.6)	7 (11.5)	24 (39.3)	29 (47.5)	Girls	61	.783
	0 (0.0)	7 (15.2)	17 (37.0)	22 (47.8)	Boys	46	

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

There were three statements (statements 6, 8 and 10) for which the values of Pearson Chi Squares were higher than the limits of statistically significant differences. However, there were also two statements that created statistically significant differences between the girls and the boys. Firstly, for statement 7 (*I would like to have teammates or a coach with whom I could use English*) the value of Pearson Chi Square was 0.002. The majority of the girls (49.2%) completely agreed with the statement, whereas the majority of the boys (47.8%) only somewhat agreed. Furthermore, the second most popular response alternatives were also different. The second most popular response among the girls (29.5%) was *somewhat agree*, whereas for the boys (28.3%) it was *somewhat disagree*. Secondly, statement 9 (*In the future I would like spend longer periods of time being instructed by foreign coaches, and that's why I need English*) created statistically significant differences between the genders, as the value of Pearson Chi Square for this statement was 0.004. The majority of the girls (45.9%) had again chosen *completely agree*, whereas the majority of the boys (52.2%) responded with *somewhat agree*. Furthermore, the second most popular choices were *somewhat agree* for 41.0% of the girls, and *somewhat disagree* for 23.9% of the boys.

All in all, two of the statement created statistically significant differences between the responses by the girls and the boys.

Ideal L2 self – Comparisons by the type of sport the participants do.

The responses to the five statements were also compared by the type of sport the participants did in order to see whether this background variable created any differences in the responses (see Table 13).

Table 13. Ideal L2 self – Comparisons by the type of sport the participants do. (N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				Individual /team	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
6/8. I can imagine myself being in a sports related situation where I need English.	0 (0.0)	8 (18.2)	20 (45.5)	16 (36.4)	Individual	44	.146
	2 (3.2)	4 (6.3)	36 (57.1)	21 (33.3)	Team	63	
7/11. I would like to have teammates or a coach with whom I could use English.	1 (2.3)	10 (22.7)	16 (36.4)	17 (38.6)	Individual	44	.727
	4 (6.3)	15 (23.8)	24 (38.1)	20 (31.7)	Team	63	
8/13. I would like to compete at my sport abroad, and that's why I need English.	0 (0.0)	2 (4.5)	11 (25.0)	31 (70.5)	Individual	44	.474
	3 (4.8)	3 (4.8)	18 (28.6)	39 (61.9)	Team	63	
9/14. In the future I would like spend longer periods of time being instructed by foreign coaches, and that's why I need English.	1 (2.3)	5 (11.4)	17 (38.6)	21 (47.7)	Individual	44	.041
	4 (6.3)	13 (20.6)	32 (50.8)	14 (22.2)	Team	63	
10/17. When I imagine my future as an athlete, I picture myself knowing English.	0 (0.0)	9 (20.5)	17 (38.6)	18 (40.9)	Individual	44	.211
	1 (1.6)	5 (7.9)	24 (38.1)	33 (52.4)	Team	63	

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

The type of sport the participants did was not a major differentiating variable. The responses to four of the statements were similar between the participants who did individual sports and the participants who did team sports, as the values of Pearson Chi Squares exceeded the limits of statistically significant differences. However, there was

one statement, statement 9 (*In the future I would like spend longer periods of time being instructed by foreign coaches, and that's why I need English*) for which the value of Pearson Chi Square (0.041) fell below the limit of statistically almost significant differences (<0.05). The majority of the participants who did individual sports (47.7%) completely agreed with this statement, whereas the majority of the participants who did team sports (50.8%) somewhat agreed. Furthermore, the most popular response among the participants who did individual sports was *somewhat agree*, which was selected by 38.6%. For the participants who did team sports, by contrast, the second most popular response was decided with a difference of only one participant; 13 participants (20.6%) responded with *somewhat disagree*, and 14 participants (22.2%) selected *completely agree*. The differences could be explained by the participants' previous experiences regarding foreign coaches; many of them had experiences of being coached in English before. However, the responses could be affected by the nature of the experiences, in other words, whether they have been positive and negative, and this was an issue that was not a part of this study.

Ideal L2 self – Comparisons by the level the athletes compete on.

In addition to the responses being compared by the type of sport the participants did, the responses to the ideal L2 self instrument were also compared by the level the athletes competed on (see Table 14). As mentioned before, the four response alternatives were combined as two for this comparison.

Table 14. Ideal L2 self – Comparisons by the level the athletes compete on. (N=106)

Statement	Response alternatives		National/ International/ Local	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)			
6/8. I can imagine myself being in a sports related situation where I need English.	3 (6.7)	42 (93.3)	National	45	.636
	2 (3.8)	50 (96.2)	International	52	
	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	Local	9	
7/11. I would like to have teammates or a coach with whom I could use English.	13 (28.9)	32 (71.1)	National	45	.486
	13 (25.0)	39 (75.0)	International	52	
	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)	Local	9	
8/13. I would like to compete at my sport abroad, and that's why I need English.	3 (6.7)	42 (93.3)	National	45	.216
	3 (5.8)	49 (94.2)	International	52	

	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	Local	9	
9/14. In the future I would like spend longer periods of time being instructed by foreign coaches, and that's why I need English.	4 (8.9)	41 (91.1)	National	45	.004
	14 (26.9)	38 (73.1)	International	52	
	5 (55.6)	4 (44.4)	Local	9	
10/17. When I imagine my future as an athlete, I picture myself knowing English.	5 (11.1)	40 (88.9)	National	45	.641
	8 (15.4)	44 (84.6)	International	52	
	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	Local	9	

There was only one statement out of the five in the ideal L2 self instrument that created any significant differences between the different levels the participants competed on. Again, this statement was statement 9 (*In the future I would like spend longer periods of time being instructed by foreign coaches, and that's why I need English*). Pearson Chi Square for this statement was 0.004, which means that there were statistically significant differences between the responses of the different groups. Of the participants who competed on the national level 91.1% agreed with the statement, and respectively for the participants who competed on the international level the amount was only 73.1%, so there is quite a significant difference between these two groups. Moreover, for the athletes who competed on a local level the amount of participants who agreed with the statement was even lower, 44.4%, which means that less than half of these participants agreed with the statement. The low percentage could be explained by two reasons. Firstly, the total number of participants who competed on a local level was only nine, and the percentages could have been different had the group been bigger. Secondly, an athlete is less likely to be instructed by a foreign coach when he/she competes on a local level. There are, of course, exceptions, but generally the athletes who compete on lower levels do not have the recourses required for having a foreign coach.

Future sports related situations that require English.

The questionnaire included also an open-ended question (question 2 in part III of the questionnaire) that was concerned with the participants' ideal images of themselves in the future related to English (see Table 15). The percentages for each theme were not included, as many of the participants had listed more than one situation. Only the situations that were mentioned by at least five participants were included in the

analysis, as there were many themes in the responses that were mentioned by one or very few participants.

Table 15. “In what kind of sports related situations do you think you will use English in the future?”

Situation	Number of responses
International competitions/games/tournaments	45
Foreign coach	25
Giving interviews	24
Foreign teammates/training companions	15
A career in sports abroad	14
Communicating with foreign athletes at competitions	13
Training camps abroad	12
Studying abroad	6
Surviving abroad at competitions/during training camps	6
Communicating with the referee	5
Don't know	5

The most frequent future situation that was mentioned by the participants was *competing abroad*, which was mentioned by a total of 45 participants. The popularity of this situation could be explained by the high number of participants who had already competed abroad (see sections 3.5 and 4.3). Having a *foreign coach* and *giving interviews* were also very frequent responses, as both of them were mentioned by almost one out of five participants. *Foreign teammates/training companions* were another popular response, and many of the participants had in fact already experienced this (see section 4.3). As can be seen, some of the possible future situations were in fact situations that the participants had already been in, and perhaps therefore they would likely experience them also in the future.

However, there were also situations that were more future-oriented. *Giving interviews* was perhaps a situation that not that many participants had experienced previously, but it was seen as a part of their future. Moreover, *a career in sports abroad* and also *studying abroad* were mentioned by many participants. Studying abroad meant studying at an American university and training and playing simultaneously. Especially the girls who played ice hockey had dreams of attending an American university and playing ice-hockey in the university league:

“My dream is to go play and study at a university in the USA, and all the communication would happen in English there. I hope I also get to use English in different major international competitions [*fin. arvokisa*].”

Dreaming of studying and playing at American universities was not common among the boys who played ice hockey, by contrast, but more often for them the future image involved a career abroad. Furthermore, the modest nature of the Finnish people in general could be seen in the responses. Only a few participants used expressions such as “I want to”, “when I” or “I will”, but more often the word choices were uncertain, such as “if I get to play” and “if I play”. It seems that many participants had thought about their ideal future regarding sports, but they wanted to be careful with how they expressed it to others.

Most of the situations that were mentioned by the participants were quite general and broad, but also very specific situations were given by some individual participants. These involved, for example, *registering for competitions, handling sponsor related issues, nightlife, doping tests* and *dealing with international sports equipment retailers*. A total of 24 different situations were mentioned by the participants.

To sum up, the participants had quite positive thoughts regarding the statements in the ideal L2 self instrument. English was seen as a part of their future as athletes in many different ways. The positive attitude towards English as a part of their athletic future could perhaps be explained by the previous experiences of the participants; many participants had needed English in a sports related context before. There were also some significant differences between the responses of the participants from different backgrounds. One frequent difference was the participants’ stance to whether they thought they would like to be instructed by a foreign coach in the future.

This section was about the participants’ own views regarding the ideal future situations. The next section is concerned with what the participants thought that others thought they should be like in the future. The next section, in other words, discusses the participants’ ought-to future images related to English and sports.

4.2.2 Ought-to L2 self

The ought-to L2 self is the second variable from the L2 motivational self system. The second part of the second research question is concerned with the participants' thoughts of how they thought they should be like in the future in the opinion of others. The questionnaire contained four multiple-choice statements that were related to the ought-to L2 self. The results to the statements will be reported generally first (see Table 16), and after that they will also be compared by gender, by the type of sport the participants did, and by the level the participants competed on.

Table 16. Ought-to L2 self.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				n	Mean value	Cronbach's Alpha
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
11/9. Others (e.g. parents, friends, coach) think it is important that I know English.	2 (1.9)	12 (11.2)	40 (37.4)	53 (49.5)	107	3.35	.131
12/12. I think knowing English is important because other people think that athletes should be able to speak good English.	7 (6.5)	19 (17.8)	57 (53.3)	24 (22.4)	107	2.92	.472
13/15. I feel that I won't be appreciated as an athlete if I don't know English.	55 (51.4)	41 (38.3)	10 (9.3)	1 (0.9)	107	1.60	*
14/16. The importance of English is emphasized at school.	3 (2.8)	16 (15.0)	62 (57.9)	26 (24.3)	107	3.04	.245
Total Cronbach's							.378
Alpha							

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

*Cronbach's Alpha for statement 15 was not included because of the low correlation with the other statements in the instrument.

Firstly, the majority of the participants agreed with statement 11 (*Others (e.g. parents, friends, coach) think it is important that I know English*); almost half of them (49.5%) selected *completely agree*, and 37.4% responded with *somewhat agree*. Only some participants disagreed with the statement, which can also be seen in the relatively high mean value of 3.35.

Secondly, the participants were also somewhat unanimous over statement 12 (*I think knowing English is important because other people think that athletes should be able to speak good English*). More than half of the participants (53.3%) had selected the same response alternative (*somewhat agree*), and the second most popular response alternative (22.4%) was *completely agree*. However, almost one in four participants (24.4%) disagreed with the statement, and this can be seen in a lower mean value of 2.92.

Thirdly, the participants were again unanimous over statement 13 (*I feel that I won't be appreciated as an athlete if I don't know English*), for which more than half of the participants (51.4%) had responded with *completely disagree*. The second most popular response alternative (38.3%) was *somewhat disagree*, which means that only 10.2% of the participants agreed with the statement. The unanimous responses can also be seen in the low mean value of 1.60.

Finally, more than half of the participants (57.9%) had selected the same response alternative (*somewhat agree*) for statement 14 (*The importance of English is emphasized at school*). Furthermore, almost one in four participants (24.3%) completely agreed with the statement. As the majority of the participants agreed with statement 14, the mean value for this statement was also somewhat high (3.04).

The values of Cronbach's Alphas were low for the individual statements and also for the ought-to L2 self instrument as a whole. It could be because the results are in fact unreliable, but there is also another possible explanation: the individual statements might measure slightly different issues. This could be true, since the ought-to L2 self instrument is concerned with the opinions of people in general, the opinions of the parents and the coaches, and also the opinions of the teachers at school. Even though the values of Cronbach's Alphas are low, the results to these statements will be discussed anyway, but they have to be considered with caution.

Ought-to L2 self – Comparisons by gender.

The participants' responses to the statements in the ought-to L2 self instrument were first compared by gender (see Table 17) in order to see whether there were any differences between the answers by the girls and the boys.

Table 17. Ought-to L2 self – Comparisons by gender.
(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				Gender	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
11/9. Others (e.g. parents, friends, coach) think it is important that I know English.	1 (1.6)	3 (4.9)	22 (36.1)	35 (57.4)	Girls	61	.076
	1 (2.2)	9 (19.6)	18 (39.1)	18 (39.1)	Boys	46	
12/12. I think knowing English is important because other people think that athletes should be able to speak good English.	4 (6.6)	12 (19.7)	31 (50.8)	14 (23.0)	Girls	61	.925
	3 (6.5)	7 (15.2)	26 (56.5)	10 (21.7)	Boys	46	
13/15. I feel that I won't be appreciated as an athlete if I don't know English.	28 (45.9)	28 (45.9)	5 (8.2)	0 (0.0)	Girls	61	.213
	27 (58.7)	13 (28.3)	5 (10.9)	1 (2.2)	Boys	46	
14/16. The importance of English is emphasized at school.	12 (19.7)	9 (14.8)	9 (14.8)	31 (50.8)	Girls	61	.187
	14 (30.4)	3 (6.5)	11 (23.9)	18 (39.1)	Boys	46	

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

None of the statements created statistically significant differences between the answers by the girls and the boys, as the values of Pearson Chi Squares were all higher than 0.05. By contrast, for statement 12 (*I think knowing English is important because other people think that athletes should be able to speak good English*) the value of Pearson Chi Square (0.925) was very close to 1, which means that the answers by the girls and the boys were very similar.

Ought-to L2 self – Comparisons by the type of sport the participants do.

In addition to comparisons by gender, the responses to the statements concerned with the ought-to L2 self were also compared by different athletic background variables.

Firstly, the responses were compared by the type of sport the participants did (see Table 18).

Table 18. Ought-to L2 self – Comparisons by the type of sport the participants do.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				Individual /team	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
11/9. Others (e.g. parents, friends, coach) think it is important that I know English.	0 (0.0)	5 (11.4)	18 (40.9)	21 (47.7)	Individual	44	.638
	2 (3.2)	7 (11.1)	22 (34.9)	32 (50.8)	Team	63	
12/12. I think knowing English is important because other people think that athletes should be able to speak good English.	1 (2.3)	6 (13.6)	26 (59.1)	11 (25.0)	Individual	44	.322
	6 (9.5)	13 (20.6)	31 (49.2)	13 (20.6)	Team	63	
13/15. I feel that I won't be appreciated as an athlete if I don't know English.	21 (47.7)	17 (38.6)	5 (11.4)	1 (2.3)	Individual	44	.582
	34 (54.0)	24 (38.1)	5 (7.9)	0 (0.0)	Team	63	
14/16. The importance of English is emphasized at school.	0 (0.0)	6 (13.6)	25 (56.8)	13 (29.5)	Individual	44	.385
	3 (4.8)	10 (15.9)	37 (58.7)	13 (20.6)	Team	63	

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

There were also no statistically significant differences when the responses were compared by the type of sport the participants did. None of the values of Pearson Chi Squares were even close to the limit of statistically significant differences. It shows that the athletes who did individual sports and the athletes who did team sports thought very similarly about the statements in the ought-to L2 self instrument.

Ought-to L2 self – Comparisons by the level the athletes compete on.

The last comparisons were also related to the athletic backgrounds of the participants; the comparisons were made by the level the athletes competed on (see Table 19). Again, there were also two answer options (*disagree* and *agree*) used for these comparisons.

Table 19. Ought-to L2 self – Comparisons by the level the athletes compete on. (N=106)

Statement	Response alternatives		National/ International/ Local	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)			
11/9. Others (e.g. parents, friends, coach) think it is important that I know English.	6 (13.3)	39 (86.7)	National	45	.011
	4 (7.7)	48 (92.3)	International	52	
	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)	Local	9	
12/12. I think knowing English is important because other people think that athletes should be able to speak good English.	9 (20.0)	36 (80.0)	National	45	.592
	15 (28.8)	37 (71.2)	International	52	
	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	Local	9	
13/15. I feel that I won't be appreciated as an athlete if I don't know English.	40 (88.9)	5 (11.1)	National	45	.409
	48 (92.3)	4 (7.7)	International	52	
	7 (77.8)	2 (22.2)	Local	9	
14/16. The importance of English is emphasized at school.	10 (22.2)	35 (77.8)	National	45	.177
	6 (11.5)	46 (88.5)	International	52	
	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)	Local	9	

There was one statement, statement 11 (*Others [e.g. parents, friends, coach] think it is important that I know English*) that created somewhat significant differences in the responses. Pearson Chi Square for this statement was 0.011, which means that there were statistically almost significant differences between the responses of the different groups. The majority of both the participants who competed on the national level (86.7%) and the participants who competed on the international level (92.3%) agreed with the statement, whereas only about half of the participants who competed on a local level (55.6%) agreed with it. However, as noted before, the distribution of the percentages within the local level could be due to the small number of participants who belonged to this group. None of the other three statements created statistically significant differences.

All in all, the participants were unanimous over the statements in the ought-to L2 self instrument. Only one statement created somewhat significant differences in the three different comparisons. The results from this instrument, however, might not be reliable

according to the values of Cronbach's Alphas. The ought-to L2 self was the second variable out of three that belonged to the L2 motivational self system, and in the final sections the results regarding the last variable, L2 learning experiences, will be discussed.

4.3 L2 learning experiences

L2 learning experiences is the third variable that belongs to the L2 motivational self system. The third research question is concerned with the participants' previous experiences regarding sports and English. As discussed before, the previous experiences might be a factor that has affected the responses to some of the other questions (see section 4.2.1). In the questionnaire there were four multiple-choice statements and two open-ended questions related to the previous experiences. The responses to the multiple-choice statements will be discussed first, first generally (see Table 20) and then compared by different background variables, and the responses to the open-ended questions will be reported at the end of this section.

Table 20. L2 learning experience.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				n	mean value	Cronbach's Alpha
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
15/3. I follow materials (e.g. magazines, games etc.) related to my sport in English.	18 (16.8)	29 (27.1)	43 (40.2)	17 (15.9)	107	2.55	.545
16/7. I have good experiences of using English outside the classroom.	2 (1.9)	12 (11.2)	56 (52.3)	37 (34.6)	107	3.20	.384
17/10. I have or have had teammates or coaches with whom I have used English.	26 (24.3)	12 (11.2)	20 (18.7)	49 (45.8)	107	2.86	.602
18/18. I have good experiences of studying English.	4 (3.7)	18 (16.8)	55 (51.4)	30 (28.0)	107	3.04	.490
Total Cronbach's							.572
Alpha							

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

Firstly, the responses to statement 15 (*I follow materials (e.g. magazines, games etc.) related to my sport in English*) were somewhat distributed among the four response alternatives. The two most popular responses were *somewhat agree* (40.2%) and *somewhat disagree* (27.1%). However, also the other two response alternatives were selected by several participants; 16.8% responded with *completely disagree*, and 15.9% selected *completely agree*. The distribution of the responses between the four alternatives can also be seen in the mean value, which for this statement was 2.55.

Secondly, the participants were more unanimous over statement 16 (*I have good experiences of using English outside the classroom*), for which the most popular response was *somewhat agree* that was selected by more than half of the participants (52.3%). The second most frequently chosen response alternative was *completely agree*, and it was selected by every third participant (34.6%). The disagreeing alternatives were not popular among the participants, which shows that the majority of the participants had positive experiences of using English. This can also be seen in the somewhat high mean value of 3.20.

Thirdly, for statement 17 (*I have or have had teammates or coaches with whom I have used English*) the two most popular response alternatives were the extreme ends: *completely agree* (45.8%) and *completely disagree* (24.3%). However, the nature of the statement in fact requires exact responses, as one either has or has not had teammates or coaches with whom he or she has used English. Therefore, the mean value of 2.86 does not tell the whole truth about the responses to this statement, but it shows that the responses were mainly on the positive side.

Fourthly, the majority of the participants agreed with statement 18 (*I have good experiences of studying English*); 51.4% selected *somewhat agree*, and 28.0% responded with *completely agree*. However, one out of five participants (20.5%) had disagreed with the statement, which is why the mean value is only 3.04.

The values of Cronbach's Alphas for most of the statements gave usable results. None of the values exceeded the limit of reliable results, though. For the L2 learning experiences instrument as a whole, the values of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.572, which means that the results from the instrument as a whole are reliable. For two of the

statements, statements 16 (*I have good experiences of using English outside the classroom*) and 18 (*I have good experiences of studying English*) the values of Cronbach's Alphas were under the limit of usable results. However, the results to these statements will be discussed anyway.

L2 learning experiences – Comparisons by gender.

The responses to the four statements in the L2 learning experiences instrument were first compared by gender (see Table 21) in order to see whether the gender of the participants created differences between the responses.

Table 21. L2 learning experiences – Comparisons by gender.
(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				Gender	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
15/3. I follow materials (e.g. magazines, games etc.) related to my sport in English.	11 (18.0)	21 (34.4)	24 (39.3)	5 (8.2)	Girls	61	.041
	7 (15.2)	8 (17.4)	19 (41.3)	12 (26.1)	Boys	46	
16/7. I have good experiences of using English outside the classroom.	1 (1.6)	7 (11.5)	29 (47.5)	24 (39.3)	Girls	61	.659
	1 (2.2)	5 (10.9)	27 (58.7)	13 (28.3)	Boys	46	
17/10. I have or have had teammates or coaches with whom I have used English.	12 (19.7)	9 (14.8)	9 (14.8)	31 (50.8)	Girls	61	.187
	14 (30.4)	3 (6.5)	11 (23.9)	18 (39.1)	Boys	46	
18/18. I have good experiences of studying English.	2 (3.3)	8 (13.1)	34 (55.7)	17 (27.9)	Girls	61	.624
	2 (4.3)	10 (21.7)	21 (45.7)	13 (28.3)	Boys	46	

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

Out of the four statements only statement 15 (*I follow materials (e.g. magazines, games etc.) related to my sport in English*) created differences between the responses by the girls and the boys. The boys agreed with the statement more frequently (a total of 67.4%), whereas the majority of the girls (52.4%) disagreed with the statement. Pearson Chi Square for this statement was 0.041, which means that the differences in the responses by gender were statistically almost significant. Pearson Chi Squares for the other three statements exceeded the limit of statistically significant differences.

L2 learning experiences – Comparisons by the type of sport the participants do.

The participants' responses to the four statements in the L2 learning experiences instrument were also compared by the type of sport the participants did (see Table 22) in order to see whether there were differences in the answers between the participants who did individual sports and the participants who did team sports.

Table 22. L2 learning experiences – Comparisons by the type of sport the participants do.

(N=107)

Statement	Response alternatives				Individual /team	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)			
15/3. I follow materials (e.g. magazines, games etc.) related to my sport in English.	10 (22.7)	14 (31.8)	16 (36.4)	4 (9.1)	Individual	44	.203
	8 (12.7)	15 (23.8)	27 (42.9)	13 (20.6)	Team	63	
16/7. I have good experiences of using English outside the classroom.	0 (0.0)	8 (18.2)	20 (45.5)	16 (36.4)	Individual	44	.146
	2 (3.2)	4 (6.3)	36 (57.1)	21 (33.3)	Team	63	
17/10. I have or have had teammates or coaches with whom I have used English.	10 (22.7)	7 (15.9)	11 (25.0)	16 (36.4)	Individual	44	.205
	16 (25.4)	5 (7.9)	9 (14.3)	33 (52.4)	Team	63	
18/18. I have good experiences of studying English.	3 (6.8)	9 (20.5)	20 (45.5)	12 (27.3)	Individual	44	.390
	1 (1.6)	9 (14.3)	35 (55.6)	18 (28.6)	Team	63	

Response alternatives: 1= completely disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree, 4= completely agree

The type of sport the participants did was not a differentiation factor in the responses. The responses of the participants who did individual sports were very similar to the responses of the participants who did team sports, and therefore there were no statistically significant differences to report. The values of Pearson Chi Squares were higher than the limit of statistically significant differences (0.05) for all of the four statements.

L2 learning experiences - Comparisons by the level the athletes compete on.

In addition to the type of sport the participants did their responses were also compared by the level they competed on (see Table 23). As mentioned above, there were only two response alternatives for these comparisons because of the calculations.

Table 23. L2 Experiences – Comparisons between the level the athletes compete on.
(N=106)

Statement	Response alternatives		National/ International/ Local	n	Pearson Chi-Square
	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)			
15/3. I follow materials (e.g. magazines, games etc.) related to my sport in English.	20 (44.4)	25 (55.6)	National	45	.284
	20 (38.5)	32 (61.5)	International	52	
	6 (66.7)	3 (33.3)	Local	9	
16/7. I have good experiences of using English outside the classroom.	5 (11.1)	40 (88.9)	National	45	.666
	7 (13.5)	45 (86.5)	International	52	
	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	Local	9	
17/10. I have or have had teammates or coaches with whom I have used English	22 (48.9)	23 (51.1)	National	45	.004
	10 (19.2)	42 (80.8)	International	52	
	5 (55.6)	4 (44.4)	Local	9	
18/18. I have good experiences of studying English.	7 (15.6)	38 (84.4)	National	45	.412
	12 (23.1)	40 (76.9)	International	52	
	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)	Local	9	

Three statements out of four created no significant differences in the responses between the three groups. Statement 17 (*I have or have had teammates or coaches with whom I have used English*), on the contrary, created statistically significant differences with a Pearson Chi Square of 0.004. Of the participants who competed at the international level 80.0% agreed with the statement, whereas the percentage for the participants who competed on the national level was only 51.1, and for the participants who competed on a local level the percentage was even lower at 44.4. The percentages make sense because, for example, foreign coaches are more frequent among successful athletes who have the resources for the top-level coaching. Moreover, it is less likely to encounter foreign athletes at local clubs.

Open-ended questions.

The questionnaire included also two open-ended questions that were related to the participants' past experiences regarding sports related situations where they used English. The first open-ended question (question 1 in part III of the questionnaire) was concerned with the previous sports related situations where the participants had used English during the past five years (see Table 24). As there were many situations that were mentioned by only few participants, only the ones that were mentioned by at least five were included in the analysis. The percentages were not counted, as many participants mentioned several different experiences.

Table 24. "In what kind of sports related situations have you needed English during the last five years?"

Situation	Number of responses
International competitions (abroad/in Finland)	37
Foreign coach	31
Training camp abroad	23
Communicating with foreign athletes at competitions	21
Foreign teammates/training companions	15
Haven't needed at all	10
Communicating with the referee	7
Giving interviews	7
Surviving abroad at competitions/during training camps	7

The most popular response was *international competitions*, which were mentioned by a total of 37 participants. The participants had competed at international competitions both in Finland and abroad. Furthermore, many of these competitions were, for example, European or World Championships. Secondly, 31 of the participants had experiences with a *foreign coach*. One respondent who played ice hockey, for example, commented that she had had a coach from the USA. One of the participants mentioned that the coach of the national team was foreign, and therefore she had to use English with him at the national team training camps. The third most frequent response was *training camps abroad*. A total of 23 participants had had training camps abroad. A response related to the training camps was *surviving abroad at competitions/during training camps* (mentioned by seven participants). One participant wrote that the

athletes were often required to travel from the airport to the competition or training place on their own and ask for help from the locals. A very frequent response was also *communicating with foreign athletes at competitions* (mentioned by 21 participants). It is notable that 10 of the participants had not needed English in sports related situations. One of these 10 who had not had experiences with using English wrote that he would have wanted to, but had never been in such a situation. All in all, the majority of the participants had had some kind of experiences of using English in a sports related situation.

The second open-ended question (question 4 in part III of the questionnaire) was concerned with the purposes for which the participants used English in their free time (see Table 25). Again, only the responses that were mentioned by at least five participants were included. The percentages were not counted, as many participants mentioned several different purposes.

Table 25. "For what kind of purposes do you use English in your free time?"

Purpose	Number of responses
Websites in English	37
Communicating with foreign friends online	31
TV shows	20
Movies	16
Travelling	11
Games	9
Don't use English	9
Magazines in English	8
Reading	7
Music	7
Computer	5
Looking for information online	5

The responses to this question could be given by any teenager. The top three responses were not surprising; *websites* (37 responses), *communicating with foreign friends online* (31 responses), and *TV shows* (20 responses) are perhaps the top three of most Finnish teenagers. Most of the participants did not specify sports related purposes, but it could be expected, for example, that some of the *websites* could be sports related. Travelling is possibly also related to sports, as so many of the participants had

competed and trained abroad. The majority of the respondents reported that they used English in their free time, but nine of the participants had responded that they did not use English at all. All in all, the fact that the participants were athletes could not be seen in the responses to this question.

To sum up, English was an important part of the participants' lives. The majority of them used English in their free time, and many also had several experiences of needing English in sports related situations. When the participants' responses were compared by gender, by the type of sport they did, and the level they competed on, there were only two statements that created statistically significant differences in the L2 learning experiences instrument. The type of sport the participants did was not a differentiating variable; one statement created differences in the responses by the girls and the boys, and the other created differences between the three different levels. All in all, the participants thought quite similarly about the statements.

This chapter reported the findings of the present study. The extra variable, the participants' general attitude towards English was discussed first. In general, the participants thought very positively about English and English related to athletes. Secondly, the participants' future images related to English and sports were discussed. The future images included both the ideal and the ought-to images of the participants' futures. Thirdly, the participants' previous sports related experiences regarding English were discussed, and it was discovered that many of them had experiences from using English in sports contexts. The final research question is concerned with comparisons between the participants from different backgrounds, and the participants' responses to each theme (general attitudes toward English, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experiences) were compared by gender, by the type of sport the participants did, and by the level the participants competed on. The next section concludes the present study, and it begins with a brief summary of the findings.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to discover what kind of attitudes, future images and past experiences young athletes have regarding English in sports related contexts. The framework for the present study was the L2 motivational self system, which is a rather

new theory in the field of motivation research, and one challenge for the present study was so discover how the framework works with an unconventional target group. Because the target group was new in the field of motivation research, the present study was a quantitative study. This allowed the collection of a larger amount of data and meant that the findings could be generalized to young athletes in Finland as a whole. The present study contained four research questions, and the responses to these questions will be reviewed next.

Summary of the findings.

The first research question was concerned with the participants' general attitude towards English. The participants thought very positively about English and English related to sports in general. The majority of the participants thought that athletes should have good English skills. The participants gave a variety of reasons for this, ranging from giving interviews to communicating with a foreign coach. Furthermore, the participants thought that Finnish athletes in general had good English skills, and Teemu Selänne was mentioned by many participants as an example of such an athlete. Moreover, the majority of the participants reported that they liked studying English, and they also had had other motivators for studying English than the matriculation exam at the end of their studies.

The second research question contained two components of the L2 motivational self system: ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self. The first part of the second research question was concerned with the young athletes' ideal future images related to English. According to the findings, English was an important aspect of the participants' future images. The majority of the participants could envision themselves in sports related situations where they would need English in the future, and when they imagined their future as athletes, English was a part of this image. Furthermore, many participants would like to have foreign teammates or a coach, and they would also want to compete abroad. The participants also gave a variety of future situations where they thought they would use English in the future. Many participants could envision competing abroad, giving interviews, and being coached in English. All in all, English was seen as an important skill.

The second part of the second research question was concerned with the participants' ideas of how other people thought they should be like in the future. The majority of the participants thought that the general opinion was that an athlete should be able to speak English. However, the participants also thought that English skills would not affect their appreciation as athletes. Moreover, the participants thought that their parents, coaches, and teachers also emphasized the importance of English skills.

The third research question was concerned with the third component of the L2 motivational self system, L2 learning experiences. Many participants had needed English in a sports related situation before, for example, while they competed abroad or had a foreign coach or teammates. Furthermore, the majority of the participants had good experiences of both studying English and using English outside the classroom. Moreover, many participants also used English in their free time, and internet, communicating with foreign friends, and TV shows were the most popular free time activities that required English.

The final research question was concerned with the differences in the responses the participants' different backgrounds might cause. The responses to the multiple-choice statements were compared by gender, by the type of sport the participants did, and by the level they competed on. When the responses were compared by gender, there were statistically almost significant or statistically significant differences in the responses to three statements. Firstly, the majority of the boys were active in following materials related to their sport in English, whereas the majority of the girls reported that they did not do so. The differences between the responses by the girls and the boys were statistically almost significant. Secondly, the second statement that caused statistically significant differences when the responses were compared by gender was concerned with wanting to have a foreign coach or teammates in the future. The majority of the girls completely agreed that they would like this to be true, whereas the boys were clearly less enthusiastic. The third statement was also about the ideal L2 self, and it was concerned with wanting to be instructed by a foreign coach for longer periods in the future. Again, the majority of the girls really wanted this to happen, and the boys were again less enthusiastic. The differences in the responses to this statement were statistically significant.

When the responses were compared by the type of sport the participants did, there were two statements that created differences. The majority of both the participants who did individual sports and the participants who did team sports reported that they did not study English only because of the matriculation exam. However, the number of the participants who somewhat disagreed with studying English only for the matriculation exam was significantly different among the participants who did individual sports and the participants who did team sports. Moreover, there were also differences between the responses of the participants who admitted that they had studied English only for the matriculation exam, and the number of these participants was somewhat higher among the participants who did team sports. Secondly, the participants who did individual sports and the participants who did team sports thought differently about whether they wanted to spend longer times being instructed by a foreign coach. The majority of the participants who did individual sports completely agreed that in the future they would want to be instructed by a foreign coach, whereas the participants who did team sports were less enthusiastic and the majority of them only somewhat agreed.

The final comparisons were made by the level the participants competed on. There were four statements that created statistically almost significant or statistically significant differences between the responses. Firstly, the participants thought differently about whether they studied English only for the matriculation exam. Compared with the number of participants who competed on the national level and the number of participants who competed on the international level, the number of participants who competed on a local level who agreed to study English only for the matriculation exam was significantly higher. Secondly, the same pattern was also seen when the participants were asked whether they wanted to spend longer periods being instructed by a foreign coach in the future. Again, the number of participants who disagreed was significantly higher among the participants who competed on a local level. Thirdly, the same pattern could also be seen when the participants were asked whether other people thought it was important that they knew English. Again, the number of participants who competed on a local level was significantly higher than the number of participants in the other two groups. Finally, the majority of the participants who competed on a local level had not had teammates or coaches with whom they had used English, whereas the majority of both the participants who competed on the

national level and the participants who competed on the international level had used English with teammates or coaches. As mentioned before, the statistically significant differences regarding this comparison might be due to the low number of participant who competed on a local level.

Comparison with previous research.

In this study, there were no major differences between genders, but the girls and the boys thought very similarly about most of the statements. Only the three statements discussed above caused statistically significant differences between the responses by the girls and the boys. In a study in the Swedish context (Henry 2009), by contrast, the girls were found to have more positive attitudes towards English, as well as more vivid ideal L2 selves. Moreover, in another study in the Finnish context (Toivakka 2010) there were also significant differences between the girls and the boys. The girls in general had more positive ideal L2 selves, as well as stronger ought-to L2 selves. The participants of this study were also high school students.

Previous studies (see section 2.5.4) have shown the importance of the ideal L2 self in motivating students. Also the results from the present study seem to emphasize this point, as the participants had generally very positive future images. English was seen as an important part of the athletes' future, and as there were many different situations in which they thought they might need English in the future, it can be expected that these future aspirations motivate them to study English.

In the present study the participants' previous experiences of using English in sports related contexts seemed to be a factor that also influenced their future images, and therefore also their motivation. As many participants had had previous positive experiences of using English, they thought they would need English also in the future, and that they could use it successfully. It is, in fact, claimed that direct contact and real experiences of using the target language contribute to motivated learning behavior in a positive way (Csizér and Lukács 2010: 10). However, a previous study (Csizér and Lukács 2010) also found that the L2 learning experience did not significantly affect motivated behavior. This study had a real context for the language use, and perhaps therefore the previous experiences were important. Some imagined future states can be

contextual so that they involve social interaction (Erikson 2006: 5), and the sports context of the present study was indeed such a context.

Young athletes as a target group.

Young athletes were an unconventional target group regarding the research on motivation to learn languages. Therefore, the questionnaire included two general questions that could help explain them as a target group of this study. The majority of the participants thought that the fact they were athletes could not be seen in their English classes. However, many participants also commented on the flexibility of the studies, as athletes often had absences due to competitions and trainings. The thoughts seemed to vary from positive to negative; some participants wrote that athletes had no time for studying and that they had poor skills in English. Other participants, by contrast, thought that athletes were more motivated to study and also had better skills.

The importance of imagery training was discussed before (see section 2.6), and the participants were also asked about their experiences with imagery training. The majority of the participants had tried imagery training or used it on a regular basis. The experiences were mostly positive, and several participants commented that imagery training was an important part of their preparation for a competition. Perhaps the fact that the participants had experiences from imagery training helped them envision these future images better. Imagery training requires practice, and it is claimed that visual learners are more capable of creating vivid future images (Al-Shehri 2009: 168). The vivid future images are then reflected in heightened motivation.

Evaluation of the present study and suggestions for future research.

The present study was a quantitative study examining the role of English in young athletes' futures. It used the L2 motivational self system as a framework. The research on the L2 motivational self system is still rather new, and in the context of Finland there has been only one study that has examined the components of the L2 motivational self system. Therefore, it was challenging to use the framework with an unconventional target group.

All in all, this study was successful. The aims were fulfilled and the research questions were responded. Cooperation with the teachers who volunteered to participate in the

study with their students was important when collecting the data, and they made the data collection process easy. As the distances between the sports-oriented upper secondary schools were long, help from the teachers was required. Furthermore, the participants had been active in responding to the questionnaire, even though the answers were often short. In general they seemed to like the research topic, and some had even commented on the interesting choice of topic. It seemed that the questionnaire was also of good length, as almost each participant had finished it and responded to each question.

The specific target group created challenges for the questionnaire, as questionnaires that had been used previously could not be used for this study as such, but completely new questions had to be created. This caused some problems, which could be seen in the low reliability values for some instruments. However, not adding more questions was a conscious choice; the questionnaire was already quite long because of the open-ended questions that could help further explain the responses to the multiple-choice statements. If there had been more statements in each of the instruments the results may have been different. Furthermore, the participants were not directly asked to imagine any possible future situations, but their responses were more guided. Only the open-ended question related to the participants' ideal L2 selves allowed them to use their imagination more. However, this strategy was also successful, because there were only some participants who had not responded to this question. If they had been asked to create the future images from scratch, it might have been possible that several participants would not have responded at all. Guiding the responses made responding to the questions easier. This was one reason why the quantitative method was chosen.

Another weakness of the present study is that the data was collected only once, and the self-concepts can change quite substantially over time, depending on the individual's affective and motivational state (Henry 2009: 180; Markus and Nurius 1986: 960). A suggestion for future research could be to collect data from the same individuals twice, with some time in between the data collections, and then compare the results. Because the participants responded to the questionnaire only once, the future images reported in this study were representations of their thoughts at that exact point of time.

One factor that created problems in the analysis was that the participants were unevenly distributed. As only nine participants competed on a local level, the low number of participants might have affected the results. Furthermore, the comparisons could not be made with the four response alternatives because the reliability of the results would have suffered. Even though the total number of participants (107) was sufficient for basic quantitative research, a larger number of participants would have been useful for the reliability of the calculations.

It would be interesting to conduct a similar study as a qualitative research, for example, by interviewing young athletes. This could ensure more in depth responses regarding the issues, and the athletes could also more freely generate future images of their own. Furthermore, it would also be useful to conduct another quantitative study with an improved questionnaire and more evenly distributed subgroups.

The results of this study gave an overview of what young Finnish athletes thought about English, and what kind of role English had in their futures. The main findings can be applied to young athletes in general. It can be said that the positive experiences that the athletes have with English in sports related contexts affects their future images positively. Furthermore, in general the athletes like English and see that it is important to know English in the future. The results of this study offer positive feedback to English teachers. Often it is thought that combining studies and sports requires too much from young athletes, and usually it is the athletic career that is the number one priority. The results from this study show that athletes recognize the importance of English skills and are therefore motivated to study it. The experiences in real contexts only reinforce the importance of English also in sports related contexts, and the good experiences have a positive effect on the appreciation of English skills. English is generally seen as a must have skill in the working life, but the results of this study showed that English is also seen as a must have skill in the context of sports — and the athletes are quite happy to invest in it.

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APPENDIX

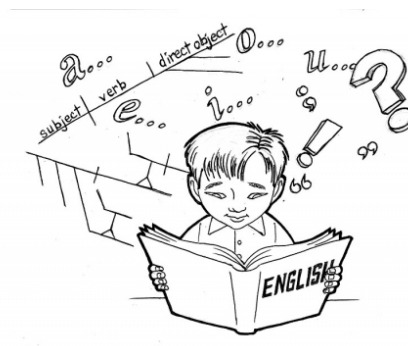
KYSELY NUORTEN URHEILIJOIDEN MOTIVAATIESTA ENGLANNIN
OPISKELUUN

Arvoisa opiskelija,

Teen tutkimusta Jyväskylän yliopiston kielten laitokselle nuorten urheilijoiden motivaatiosta ja asenteista englannin opiskeluun. Vastaathan kysymyksiin mahdollisimman totuudenmukaisesti joko ympyröimällä parhaiten juuri sinun mielipidettäsi vastaavan vaihtoehdon tai kirjoittamalla vastauksesi niille varattuun tilaan. Vastaukset käsitellään täysin luottamuksellisesti ja ne tulevat vain minun käyttööni. Kiitos vaivannäöstäsi!

Heini Vakkari

heini.vakkari@jyu.fi



OSA I:

1. sukupuoli

- a. tyttö
- b. poika

2. Olen suorittanut _____ kpl lukion englannin kursseja ja niiden keskiarvo on noin _____.

3. Lajini on

- a. yksilölaji, mikä? _____
- b. joukkuelaji, mikä? _____

4. Olen kilpaillut

- a. kansallisella tasolla
- b. kansainvälisellä tasolla
- c. paikallisella tasolla

5. Olen harrastanut nykyistä lajiani noin _____ vuotta.

OSA II:

Ympyröi parhaiten mielipidettäsi vastaava vaihtoehto seuraavan asteikon mukaisesti

	1 = täysin eri mieltä	2 = jokseenkin eri mieltä	3 = jokseenkin samaa mieltä	4 = täysin samaa mieltä
1. Mielestäni urheilijalla tulee olla hyvä englannin kielen taito.	1	2	3	4
2. Mielestäni suomalaisilla urheilijoilla on yleisesti ottaen hyvä englannin kielen taito.	1	2	3	4
3. Katson tai luen lajiini liittyvää materiaalia (esim. pelejä, lehtiä jne.) englanniksi.	1	2	3	4
4. Pidän englannin opiskelusta.	1	2	3	4
5. Englannin puhuminen ei ole urheilijalle tärkeä taito.	1	2	3	4
6. Opiskelen englantia ainoastaan ylioppilaskoetta varten.	1	2	3	4
7. Minulla on hyviä kokemuksia englannin käytöstä luokkahuoneen ulkopuolella	1	2	3	4
8. Voin kuvitella joutuvani urheiluun liittyvään tilanteeseen, jossa tarvitsen englantia.	1	2	3	4
9. Muiden (esim. vanhemmat, kaverit, valmentaja) mielestä on tärkeää, että osaan englantia.	1	2	3	4
10. Minulla on tai on ollut joukkuekavereita tai valmentajia, joiden kanssa olen käyttänyt englantia.	1	2	3	4
11. Haluaisin joukkuekavereita tai valmentajia, joiden kanssa voisin käyttää englantia.	1	2	3	4
12. Englannin osaaminen on mielestäni tärkeää, koska muiden mielestä urheilijoiden tulisi osata puhua hyvää englantia.	1	2	3	4
13. Haluaisin kilpailla lajissani ulkomailla, ja siksi tarvitsen englantia.	1	2	3	4
14. Haluaisin tulevaisuudessa viettää pidempiä harjoittelujaksoja ulkomaalaisten valmentajien ohjauksessa, ja siksi tarvitsen englantia.	1	2	3	4
15. Koen, että minua ei arvosteta urheilijana, ellen hallitse englantia.	1	2	3	4
16. Koulussa painotetaan englannin osaamisen tärkeyttä.	1	2	3	4
17. Kun kuvittelen tulevaisuuttani urheilijana, ajattelen osaavani englantia.	1	2	3	4
18. Minulla on hyviä kokemuksia englannin opiskelusta.	1	2	3	4

OSA III:

1. Millaisissa urheiluun liittyvissä tilanteissa olet tarvinnut englantia viimeisen viiden vuoden aikana?

2. Millaisissa urheiluun liittyvissä tilanteissa uskot tulevaisuudessa käyttäväsi englantia?

3. Mitä hyötyä englannin kielen taidosta on mielestäsi nimenomaan urheilijalle?

4. Millaisiin tarkoituksiin käytät englantia vapaa-aikanasi?

5. Miten koulusi englannin opetuksessa näkyy se, että opiskelijat ovat urheilijoita?

6. Millaisia kokemuksia sinulla on mielikuvaharjoittelusta?

7. Anna lopuksi vielä esimerkki **suomalaisesta** urheilijasta, jolla on mielestäsi hyvä/huono englannin kielen taito.

a. urheilija, jolla on **hyvä** englannin kielen taito: _____

Perustelut: _____

b. urheilija, jolla on **huono** englannin kielen taito: _____

Perustelut: _____

OSA IV:

Tähän voit kirjoittaa, jos Sinulla on jotain kysyttävää tai kommentoitavaa tutkimukseeni tai kyselylomakkeeseen liittyen!

Kiitän vastauksistasi ja toivotan menestystä urheilun ja englannin opintojen parissa! ☺