UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS´ MOTIVATION TOWARDS SCHOOL AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Bachelor's thesis
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Upper Secondary School Students´ Motivation towards
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Tämän tutkielman tarkoitus on selvittää, kuinka lukiolaisten oppilaiden motivaatio voi vaihdella eri oppiaineiden kesken. Tutkielmani lähtökohtana olevien hypoteesien mukaan hyvä koulumotivaatio ei takaa korkea motivaatiota englannin kielessä, eikä hyvä motivaatio englannissa takaa korkeaa koulumotivaatiota. Halusin tutkia näitä eroavaisuuksia, ja tarkastella tuloksien suhdetta oppilaan itsearvioidun kielitaidon sekä englannin arvosanan kanssa.

Tutkimusmenetelmäni on kvantitatiivinen, ja aineiston keruu tapahtui kyselyn avulla. Tutkimukseen osallistui yhteensä 33 lukioikäistä oppilasta. Siitä huolimatta, että osa tuloksista osoittautui tilastollisesti merkittäviksi, päätin hyödyntää kvalitatiivista tutkimusmenetelmää kvantitatiivisen menetelmän rinnalla.

Tulokset osoittivat, että koulumotivaatio oli vahvin motivaation osa-alue. Osallistujien yleinen motivaatiotaso oli korkea, joten englannin motivaatio oli vain hieman koulumotivaatiota alhaisempi. Eroja havaittiin myös sukupuolten välillä siten, että pojilla englannin motivaatio oli enemmän sisäisesti orientoitunutta kuin tytöillä. Tytöt puolestaan korostivat sosiaalisten suhteiden merkitystä englannin oppimisessa. Korrelaatioita puolestaan löytyi englannin motivaation, kielitaidon ja onnistumisen kokemusten väliltä.

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1   INTRODUCTION

Research on motivation has long roots and there are several differing theories about the whole concept. Behaviorism influenced views on motivation prominently until social cognitive theories started to emerge and gain ground in the 1970´s and the 1980´s. For decades people have urged to solve the phenominon underlying human existence, activity and knowledge, creating theories that attempt to capture the essence of motivation. Motivation is central to life as it can be considered the ultimate force that moves us forward. It prevails in all areas of human existence and can be traced to be embedded in every single activity. In terms of learning, motivation is naturally in a key role. Second language acquisition has been under the scope of motivational research since the late 1900´s and, as this thesis will demonstrate, the applications of this kind of research are especially important in the context of classrooms. One should also bear in mind that motivation is dynamic, as it can be affected by numerous internal and external factors. So, it is necessary to examine the ways in which motivaiton is both constructed and shaped in different learning situations.

The focus of this thesis is upper secondary school students´ motivation towards school and towards the English language. My intention is to clarify how motivation distributes between different school subjects. I am not only interested to find out how motivation is constructed and shaped in second language acquisition, but I am also intrigued by the general motivational backgrounds of individual students. How does motivation alter from one school subject to another? How intrinsically or extrinsically oriented are students? How do students perceive their previous success or failure in certain assignments? All in all, teachers shoud be able to see their students as individuals, support their growth, enhance their motivation and promote their self-esteem. In this respect, lots of research is needed in the area of student motivation in order to guarantee sufficient understanding of the motivational dimensions that take place in both learning and teaching.

In this thesis I will introduce four theories of motivation that apply a socio-cognitive approach to motivation. However, before delving into motivation as such I will take a look at the concept of *goals*, discussed by Moscowitz and Grant (2009), which prepares us to grasp motivation as a concept. The first motivational theory I am going to present is the social cognitive approach by Bandura (1977) and his theory of *self-efficacy*. Next, I will take a look at *expectancy-value theory*, which has been influential and utilized by a number of psychologists in the area of achievement motivation (Karabenick&Urdan, 2010:35). Thirdly, I will take into consideration Deci&Ryan´s *self-determination theory*, which according to Moskowitz and Grant (2009:79) is perhaps the most

influential approach to the study of the particular phenomenon. Finally, I will include the model of *the L2 motivational self system*, comprising the aspect of language. (Dörnyei 2009b).

2 SOURCES OF MOTIVATION

2.1 GOALS

Motivational guidance

Before trying to understand what motivation is all about, one benefits from examining the idea of goals, which is closely related to motivation. In their book Moskowitz and Grant (2009:58) introduce the concept and give their definition of a goal: a goal is a cognitive representation of a future object that an organism is committed to approach or avoid. In addition to this, the authors provide five additional features to the definition: (1) it is a cognitive representation, (2) it is focused on the future, (3) it is focused on an object, (4) it is a commitment and (5) it entails approach or avoidance. The object of a goal can be an entity, an event, an experience or a characteristic that is the point of focus. Furthermore, objects may be concrete or abstract, physical or psychological, and observable or unobservable. (Moskowitz and Grant, 2009:59)

Moskowitz and Grant (2009:38) note that a goal may be pursued both consciously and unconsciously. People may not even realise that they are acting in a certain way pursuing a goal. In other words, people can be unconscious of the processes that have created the objectives in their minds. However, the outcome does not depend on whether the goal activation is conscious or unconscious. Both ways are equally effective.

Central to Moskowitz and Grant´s model is the fact that goals can be either approached or avoided. Approach goals are associated with desirable future states whereas avoidance goals strive for moving away from future states that are seen as intimidating. Regarding the motivational purpose of goals, Moskowitz and Grant argue that goals provide motivational guidance. More specifically, goals direct the way towards or away from a specific phenomenon. Alone goals cannot count for motivation. (Moskowitz and Grant, 2009:60)

As already noted, goals can be approached or avoided. In addition, goals can vary in desirability and magnitude. In more detail, the desirability of a goal affects the intensity with which an individual strives for the goal. Moreover, there is a possibility that concurrent goals conflict and pull

resources from each other. In cases like this it is likely that individuals choose to strive for the goals of higher desirability and, correspondingly, move away from goals that have lower importance. (Moskowitz and Grant, 2009:40-41)

2.2 SELF-EFFICACY THEORY

Do we think we can do it?

Self-efficacy theory was developed by psychologist Albert Bandura and is part of Bandura´s social cognitive theory. The theory is built on an idea of belief. According to the view, our beliefs about ourselves are central in making distinction between success and failure in life. Actual skills and knowledge merely provide the tools to success and cannot act alone. Bandura explains that without possessing a belief that one can perform an action successfully, people would have low desire to act towards different assignments. An efficacy belief is an individual´s belief about him or herself that he or she is able to manage a task or an activity. Accordingly, the higher efficacy beliefs we hold about ourselves, the more likely we are to perform actions successfully. (Bandura 1997:2-3)

According to the model, there are different factors that shape our self-efficacy: *mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion* and *physiological and affective states.* According to Bandura (1997:80-81) *mastery experiences* are associated with positive or negative experiences in different tasks. Being competent at a task and having a positive mastery experience will affect self-efficacy positively, whereas experiencing failure will have the opposite effect.

Vicarious experiences are observed in other people and affect self-efficacy positively or negatively. According to Bandura (1997:86-87), *vicarious experiences* comprise, for instance, comparison between peers. Representatives of the same age group and gender are very sensitive to observing the behaviour of others, and making comparisons between themselves and the others. *Verbal persuasion* is described by Bandura (1997:101) as the encouragement of significant others to perform certain assignments. The ones who have been verbally persuaded enjoy a higher level of self-efficacy, are more likely to endure difficulties, and more likely to perform actions successfully. Finally, Bandura (1997:106-107) takes into account *physiological and affective states.* This comprises for example stress, anxiety or tiredness, or any other factor that might have more or less temporary impact on the evaluation of one´s self-efficacy.

Bandura (1997:13-14) also discusses *effectance motivation*, which includes the notion that people

tend to engage in activities in which they feel competent and the kind of activities that promote their ideas of self-worth. Bandura (1997:13) explains that it is naturally satisfying for humans to act effectively with the environment, and therefore "behaviour is pursued for the feelings of efficacy derived from it" (Bandura 1997:14). Bandura also considers the social aspect of effectance motivation, and notes that without any external coercion people would actually avoid situations they perceive they cannot manage and situations that lie out of their area of comfort.

As a whole, Bandura´s theory "marks human functioning as the product of a dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences" (Karabenick and Urdan 2010:3). It is a theory trying to clarify the complex system underlying human motivation. Self efficacy theory focuses on perceived competences and attained performances. High efficacy beliefs lead to successful actions. However, not even the most successful high-level activities will guarantee enjoyment or happiness, unless internal personal standards are met by the individual him or herself. (Bandura 1997:14)

2.3   EXPECTANCY-VALUE THEORY

How well do we think we can do?
Similarly to many achievement motivation theories, expectancy-value theory is based on ability-related beliefs. Karabenick and Urdan (2010:36) introduce a model by Eccles et al (1983), according to which expectancies and values affect achievement and performance. Expectancies and values, themselves, are influenced by for instance perceptions of competence, the perceived difficulty of tasks and personal life goals. Then, individuals´ beliefs are shaped further by affective memories. Affective memories are influenced by other people´s attitudes and expectations for individuals, as well as the perceived outcomes of previous achievement-related events. (Karabenick and Urdan, 2010:36-38)

Within the model expectancies are defined as beliefs about how well one will do on an upcoming event. Central to the model is that these beliefs should be compared to others, for example fellow students. Expectancies could, therefore, be described as beliefs about how well one will do on an upcoming event *in relation to others*. This is the aspect that most prominently distinguishes expectancy-value theory from self-efficacy theory discussed in the previous chapter. Values, then, are seen to have different qualities which influence one´s desire to perform a task. Values are also described to be subjective in that they are individuals´ subjective beliefs about an activity. (Karabenick and Urdan, 2010:38-39)

Karabenick and Urdan (2010:39-40) name four achievement task values that are included in the expectancy-value model: *attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value and cost.* The first one is associated with identity issues, which means that tasks gain importance when they are central to one´s self-image, and when they express important aspects of self. *Intrinsic value* covers the enjoyment caused by a pleasant task and is closely attached to intrinsic motivation as a larger phenomenon. *Utility value*, then, would represent extrinsic motivation as it signifies the usefulness of the task. One might engage in an activity (e.g taking a maths class) simply because it supports one´s future plans (e.g getting a degree). Finally, every task has a *cost*, which means that one might have to choose between two or more tasks that occur simultaneously. Choosing one (majoring in maths) might exclude another possibility of value (majoring in music). The cost aspect of expectancy-value theory bears resemblance to Moskowitz and Grant´s notion of goal conflict, in which goal overlap takes its toll, and in which individuals are forced to choose the goal that they regar of higher importance. (Moskowitz and Grant, 2009:40-41)

2.4   SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Goals and self-regulation
In addition to goals Moskowitz and Grant (2009:79-80) discuss one of the most influential theories in the field of goal study: self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic life goals, autonomous and controlled self-regulatory processes, and makes a fundamental notion concerning three basic psychological needs: *relatedness, competence and autonomy*. Self-determination theory underscores the fact that in terms of motivation, it is crucial to examine both the goal content and the self-regulatory processes involved in goal pursuit. According to the model, other goals and other self-regulatory processes are better suited to meeting basic psychological needs and, therefore, these factors are significant in determining the level of need satisfaction and well-being.

Moskowitz and Grant (2009:80) go on to explain the way in which goal content can affect well-being. They clarify that intrinsic goals usually associate with affiliation, personal growth and community contribution, and that these goals are able to satisfy the psychological needs of *relatedness, competence and autonomy*. Extrinsic goals, instead, relate to more external approval including, for instance, aspects of wealth and fame. Accordingly, extrinsic goals are less likely to promote need satisfaction and great well-being.

The other aspect attached to SDT, self-regulation, follows similar guidelines. According to Moskowitz and Grant (2009:79-80), autonomous processes (e.g genuine interest in the topic) predict better outcomes because of the greater intrinsic motivation involved in the process. Controlled processes, alternatively, are based on extrinsic motivation and will more likely lead to poorer well-being (e.g being pressured by peers).

SDT suggests that both the goal content and the regulatory processes involved in goal pursuit contribute to the phenomenon. According to the model, the two dimensions also interact. This implies that different combinations of goal content and regulatory processes predict different outcomes. To provide an illustration, combining an intrinsic goal with an autonomous self-regulatory process would be optimal, as the particular combination would predict great outcomes in need satisfaction and well-being. (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci and Kasser 2004, as quoted by Moskowitz and Grant 2009:80)

2.5   THE L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM

The actual and the ideal
In order to get even closer to the aspect of motivation in language learning, I will discuss Dörnyei´s vision on motivation in second language acquisition. According to Dörnyei´s model (2009:212), the L2 motivational self system (L2=second language) comprises three concepts: *ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self* and *L2 learning experience.* The system reflects on Higgins´ (1987) *self-discrepancy theory,* in which two sets of selves are differentiated: *the actual self* and *the ideal self.* The idea in Higgins´ theory is to lessen the gap, or the discrepancy, between these two selves. According to the self-discrepancy theory, motivation arises from one´s need to resolve any kind of mismatch between the actual self and the ideal self.

The first component presented in the L2 motivational self system is the *ideal L2 self.* According to Dörnyei (2009b:217), this takes into account different views on L2 speakers. In other words, if we would like to become the person who speaks an L2, the *ideal L2 self* component works as a powerful motivator. Identifying with the native speakers is central in determining the motivation to learn a foreign language. In addition, *ideal L2 self* is usually associated with integrative motives and intrinsic motivation.

The second part of the model is the *ought-to L2 self* (Dörnyei 2009b:218), which ties in with one´s

beliefs about the qualities one thinks one should possess, in order to meet other peoples expectations and in order to avoid negative outcomes. This part of the model is conventionally attached to extrinsic motivation and instrumental motives. Dörnyei´s model is completed by *L2 learning experience,* which concerns the immediate learning environment and the actual language learning experience. Factors such as the teacher, the curriculum, peers and experiences of success are included in this component. To provide an illustration, a student´s perception of his or her English teacher can easily affect the student´s attitude towards that particular school subject.

2.6 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY, EXPECTANCY-VALUE AND SELF-DETERMINATION THEORIES AND THE L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM

It can be observed that there are clear combining aspects in each of the theories presented. The most prominent aspect that has been applied and utilised to a great extent in motivation research, is the distinction between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivation*. Firstly, the distinction is reflected in expectancy-value theory so that the achievement values included in the theory, *intrinsic value* and *extrinsic value,* tie in with the underlying idea of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Secondly, self-determination theory differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic life goals, which shows clear connection to the general distinction. Finally, Dörnyei´s ideas about internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) orientation are embedded in the concepts *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* in his model of the L2 motivational self system.

Self-efficacy theory and expectancy-value theory are both very much built on the notion of perceived competence or ability, and the theories are therefore rather closely attached. To recap, if we carry ability-related beliefs, we are more likely to perform actions successfully. The other two theories discussed, SDT and the L2 motivational self-system, might not be based on the same notion but, still, show glimpses of similar kind of thinking. SDT highlights three basic psychological needs: *relatedness, competence and autonomy.* Competence is, in fact, regarded as a desirable psychological state within this theory. The L2 motivational self system, again, lists L2 learning environment as an important component in terms of second language learning. This component includes a notion of *experiences of success*. Connecting to ability-relatedness, positive experiences of success promote individuals sense of competence and their motivation towards, for instance, language learning.

2.7   PREVIOUS STUDIES ON MOTIVATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Kormos and Csizer (2008) studied motivation in second language learning, and focused on differences between three different Hungarian age groups: secondary school pupils, university students, and adult language learners. Kormos and Csizer´s findings focused on the notion of the ideal L2 self, which proved to be a prominent part of the motivational basis in each of the age groups. Their study provided partial proof for the L2 motivational self-system model (Dörnyei 2009b), but pointed out that in our globalized world where English is used widely and interculturally, it is not always the native speakers of English that language learners mirror themselves with. Instead, the researchers used a notion of *international posture* to describe learners´ interest in foreign or international affairs, which they regarded as a significant promoting factor in terms of L2 learning.

Muhonen (2004) delves into the darker side of L2 motivation and discusses factors that discourage students from learning a second language (English). Muhonen argues that demotivation is an ignored area of study in spite of the fact that the phenomenon can have direct educational implications, as for example a teacher can influence the motivation of a student quite comprehensively. The results of her study reveal that it is, in fact, the teacher who has the greatest demotivating influence on student motivation. Another demotivating factor was found to be the learning material. In addition, Muhonen considered factors such as learner characteristics, school environment and the learner´s attitude towards the English language.

Both of the studies discuss and intent to clarify different motivational factors. Kormos and Csizer focus on the positive trying to identify the most important factors that promote learning, whereas Muhonen tries to pin down the factors that discourage pupils from learning a second language. The present study, again, looks at motivation from a wider angle. I am interested in how motivated pupils are to learn a second language, but I am also keen on studying general study motivation and the connection between L2 learning and other school subjects. Languages are often considered as school subjects just like biology or history even though there are fundamental differences in the nature of these subjects. L2 motivation is affected by a range of social and cultural factors, entailing a number of identity issues. Therefore, it is important that for example teachers are aware of the multidimensional structures that underlie student motivation.

2.8   THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

I am aiming to find out how motivation distributes between school subjects. I want to know how motivated pupils are to learn the English language and how motivated they are to learn in general. I am expecting to find instances, where pupils do not care for school in general but are keen on studying English, because they understand the importance of the language in the modern world or because they just happen to succeed in it. On the other hand, some might not care for English but like school otherwise. Not everybody is linguistically oriented and finds it that easy to grasp foreign language structures. Then, I might find instances where a pupil is not keen on taking part in English lessons because they already feel competent enough in the language due to for example informal learning, computer games or the Internet. On the other hand, being competent in English might just as well work as a motivator towards the school subject. As previously discussed, people tend to engage in activities in which they feel competent. (Bandura 1997:13-14) Of course the trend might also turn out to be that whatever school subject is in question, there are not substantial differences in the motivation. In addition, I will consider the role of the English grade as well as the students´ own sense of competence in the overall motivation in order to be able to analyse the data comprehensively.

Reflecting the theoretical background of my thesis I will apply the most distinctive ideas on motivation to my analysis. These ideas include the underlying notion of belief embedded in self-efficacy theory and expectancy-value theory as well as the distinction between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation as discussed in section 2.6. Moreover, the notion of the *ideal L2 self* will be discussed as well as the topics of *verbal persuasion* (self-efficacy theory) and *attainment* and *utility values* (expectancy-value theory). Partly overlap may occur in the analysis as for instance the *ideal L2 self* can be connected to intrinsic motivation and so on. However, it is not my intention to confuse anyone but to give an illustration as comprehensive and diverse as possible of the motivational phenomenon I am about to study.

3   DATA AND METHODS

3.1   DATA GATHERING

This study was carried out in the form of a questionnaire since the purpose was to capture some of the links and correlations that were hypothesized to exist among students (e.g competence in the

English language and its effect on motivation). I chose to use a questionnaire because I wanted to examine motivation from a rather wide angle, and because I wanted to find out how student motivaiton differs within categories. Questionnaires are also efficient considering time and effort, because using questionnaires it is possible to gather reasonable amounts of data in rather short periods of time, compared to for example interviews. In addition, questionnaires are recognized to be particularly suited to quantitative research. (Dörnyei 2009a:6,9)

The questionnaire had been planned and piloted before the actual survey in February and March 2013. The data was gathered in a medium-sized upper secondary school in central Finland. The participants of the study were aged between 16 and 18 and, accordingly, underage participants had taken a permission to participate home to be signed by a guardian before taking part in the survey. I had contacted the personnel of the school in advance and finally got to examine three groups of students. The sheets were handed out to the participants in the beginning of their English class and the students filled in the forms then and there. Having gathered all the permission documents and the questionnaire forms, the number of usable samples added up to 33 including 15 girls and 18 boys.

The questionnaire focused on three main areas: motivation towards school, motivation towards English, and language skills. All of the questions applied alternatives 1-5 ranging from "completely disagree" to "completely agree". The *Likert scale* was chosen because it is the most commonly used scaling technique and accordning to Dörnyei (2009a:27) both simple and reliable. The additional questions included in the questionnaire were sex and the grade of the student.

3.2   METHODS OF ANALYSIS

This thesis and the questionnaire were set up to find out statistically relevant information. I succeeded in this to the extent that quite a few samples seemed to depict statistically relevant differences according to IBM SPSS Statistics. The general reliability of my study was calculated to be good as the Cronbach´s Alpha coefficient (measuring the reliability of the study) varied between 0.85 and 0.94 within the three areas of school motivation (0.85), English motivation (0.90) and perceived competence (0.94). Generally, reliability can be perceived as good if the coefficient is higher than 0.70. (http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/faq/alpha.html) Overall, the results did not reveal any severe tendency for the motivation to focus on either the English subject or the rest of the school subjects. Therefore, I think it is useful not to rely only on quantitative analysis but also to

take a closer look at the answers of individual students, differentiate between the genders and analyse the results qualitatively. This way the data will provide the most extensive, reliable and comprehensive knowledge.

4 STUDENT MOTIVATION

4.1 SCHOOL VS. ENGLISH, PERCEIVED COMPETENCE AND THE GRADE
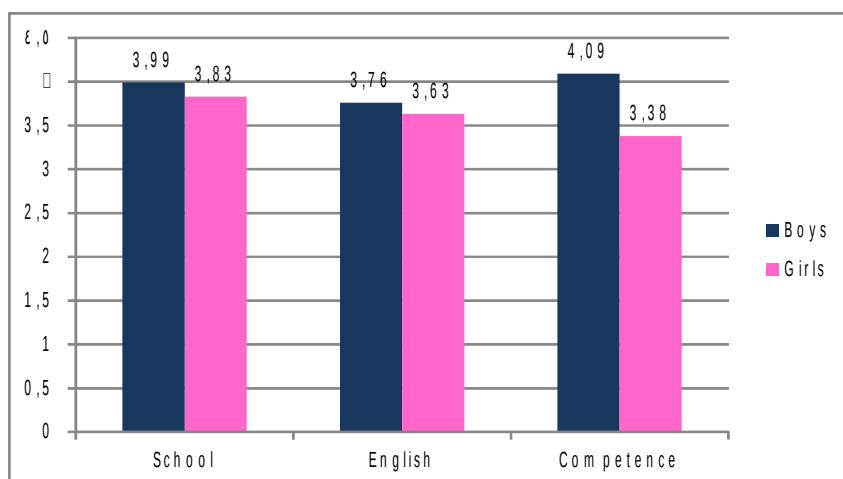
4.1.1 An overview

Table 1. Students´motivation towards school, their motivation towards English and their perceived competence in the English language

Table 1 depicts the motivational differences that were found to exist among students in relation to the general idea of learning in contrast with the specific school subject of English. In addition, the table shows the students´ perceived sense of competence in the English language. In other words, the first two sets of columns depict the motivation to school and English, whereas the latter columns capture the perceptions that students applied to themselves as learners of English. Reflecting the main focus of my study, it can be observed that the motivation towards the English language taught at school was lower among both boys and girls compared to the general study motivation. Moreover, we can see that boys´ motivation rised above the one of girls in both categories (school motivation and English motivation). To summarize, boys enjoyed a higher level of motivation overall, while students altogether found general learning more stimulating in comparison to the subject of English.

When examining the competence of students in Table 1 it becomes evident that boys considered

themselves more competent than girls. Having noted that boys also enjoyed a higher level of motivation in the English subject, it could be hypothesized that the boys´ motivation derived from their perceived competence in the language, as it is suggested by Bandura that competence and positive mastery experiences affect self-efficafy positively leading to high motivation and engagement within specific areas (Bandura 1997:13-14, 80-81). Considering the grades of the students, boys outperformed girls to an extent as it can be detected in Table 2. The higher grades of the boys, again, reflect the fact that they possess strong motivation and competence in the English language.
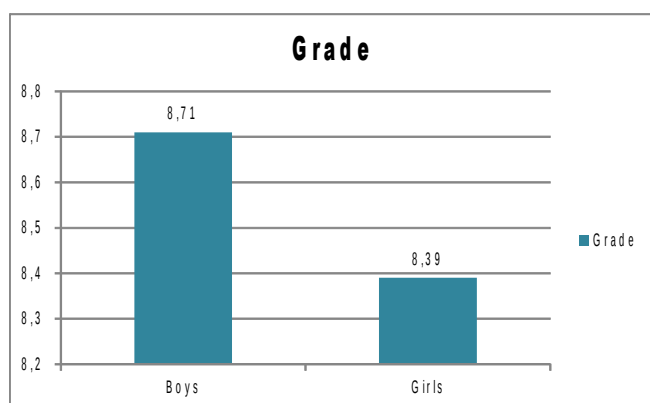
Table 2. The English grade of the student

4.1.2   Correlations

		Mastery	kmoti	englmoti	kielitaito
Mastery	**Pearson Correlation**	*1*	*,289*	*,810****	*,849****
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*,102*	*,000*	*,000*
	N	*33*	*33*	*33*	*33*
kmoti	**Pearson Correlation**	*,289*	*1*	*,563****	*,269*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*,102*		*,001*	*,130*
	N	*33*	*33*	*33*	*33*
englmoti	**Pearson Correlation**	*,810****	*,563****	*1*	*,757****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*,000*	*,001*		*,000*
	N	*33*	*33*	*33*	*33*
kielitaito	**Pearson Correlation**	*,849****	*,269*	*,757****	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*,000*	*,130*	*,000*	
	N	*33*	*33*	*33*	*33*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Correlations between students´ mastery experiences (Mastery), motivation to school (kmoti), motivation to English (enlgmoti) and their perceived competence in the English language (kielitaito).

Table 3 illustrates the correlations between mastery experiences in English, motivation to both

school and English and students´ perceived competence in English that can be perceived as statistically significant in the data. In revision, mastery experiences are positive or negative experiences of competence in different tasks, which shape our self-efficacy and our perceptions of our capabilities (Bandura, 1997:80-81). Firstly, student´s mastery experiences seemed to correlate with both the motivation towards the language and the actual competence that the students perceived of themselves. To clarify, the students who experienced positive mastery (success) in English developed strong motivation to English and also thought of themselves as competent users of the English language. Secondly, motivation to school correlated with motivation to English, so in other words, students who were highly motivated learners applied the same kind of motivation towards the subject of English. Thirdly, motivation to English correlated with all of the categories listed in this analysis. High motivation in English appeared together with strong motivation to school, high perceived competence in the English language and prominent positive mastery experiences in the subject of English.

4.1.3   Individual cases

In order to get a more profound view of the data, I will for a moment ignore the figures that depict the average values within the data and focus on individual students´ answers and their correlations. Table 4 illustrates the answers of ten individual participants, comprising three boys and seven girls. The participants whose answers I have included in the table for detailed analysis represent the most extreme cases of grades (7-10). For this reason, there is not a clear balance between the genders in the sampling because boys seemed to be somewhat more consistent with each other in terms of the grade, most of them having earned grades 8 or 9. As mentioned in section 3.1 the questionnaire included alternatives 1-5, so the figures in the table can be read in proportion to that scale. The grades of the students, instead, were measured according to the Finnish school system´s conventions on a scale 4-10.

	Number	School vs. English	Mastery experiences	Perceived competence	Grade
Boys	1	English	5	5	9
	2	English	4,75	5	10
	3	School	2,75	2	7
Girls	4	English	5	5	10
	5	English	4	5	10
	6	School	2,25	1,6	7
	7	School	3	2,6	7
	8	School	3,75	3,2	7
	9	School	3,75	3,8	10
	10	School	4,25	3,8	10

Table 4. Individual students´ motivational preference to school or English, their positive mastery experiences (English), their perceived competence (English) and their grade in the English language.

The purpose of Table 4 is to illustrate the correlations between motivational preferences, mastery experiences, perceived competences and grades. The main focus of my study was to find out whether it is school or the English subject that motivates students the most, and this rough division of students into two categories is depicted in the coulumn "School vs. English". In addition, I have included the category of mastery experiences in this analysis in order to find out how positive and negative mastery experiences (success/failure) contribute to the overall learning of the student. The last two columns consist of perceived competences and grades. These factors will also be taken into consideration in the analysis of this table.

Overall, the chart is rather simple. Lines 1-7 show clear and consistent correlations, whereas lines 8-10 entail more intricacies. Examining the chart it becomes obvious that students who considered English as the source of primary motivation (lines 1,2,4 and 5) had also experienced positive mastery in the particular school subject as the figures ranged between 4-5 in that category. Moreover, these students had a strong sense of competence in the English language because every participant gave their competence the highest score. The grades of these students varied between 9 and 10.

Again, a clear consistency can be detected observing lines 3,6 and 7. These lines illustrate the students with the lowest grades. As opposed to the previous examples where both the mastery and competence figures ranged between 4-5, these students had significantly lower figures in these

areas: three or below three, even 1,6. Here, the participants also listed school as the primary source of motivation instead of English.

This categorisation supports the theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) presented in the theoretical background of this study. People engage in and become motivated towards activities in which they have previously succeeded. According to Bandura (1997:14), it is naturally satisfying to act effectively with the environment, as discussed in section 2.2. Table 4 illusrates the two very rough directions which language learning can take: people whether succeed and become motivated or fail and become unmotivated.

Left to analyse are lines 8,9 and 10. Line 8 remains an exception, since the participant indicated good or moderate mastery experiences in learning English as well as moderate perceived competence in the language. The grade of the participant, however, was the lowest grade detected in the group. Lines 9 and 10, again, depict instances where students applied stronger motivation to school as opposed to the subject of English but still succeeded in the foreign language. The mastery and competence figures of these girls ranged between 3,75 and 4,25, which could be perceived as good or moderate. Nevertheless, both girls had grades ten, which suggests that the skills of these participants were slightly underestimated by the girls themselves.

4.2   SELF-EFFICACY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

As already apparent in this thesis, I have examined the mastery experiences of students in the English language. Mastery experiences reflect Bandura´s theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997:80-81), in which it is explained that students experiences of success shape their motivation to and engagement in different tasks. In this section, I will be observing the average values of both boys and girls considering their mastery experiences.
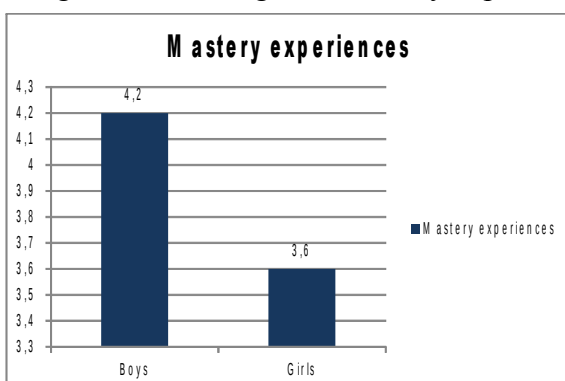

Table 5. Mastery experiences in learning English.

As Table 5 indicates, boys enjoyed a higher level of self-efficacy based on their mastery experiences in the English language. This went hand in hand with boys´ perceived competence (discussed earlier), which was also higher compared to girls, and these two categories supported each other evidently. However, the questions that measured mastery experiences were specifically formulated to examine how people perceive their success or failure affects their attitude to learning (for more detail see appendix 1 questions 11, 13 and 14). A conclusion can be drawn from this table that, overall, boys experienced more success in learning the English language, and being aware of the success they developed stronger motivation towards English.

4.3   INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN L2 LEARNING
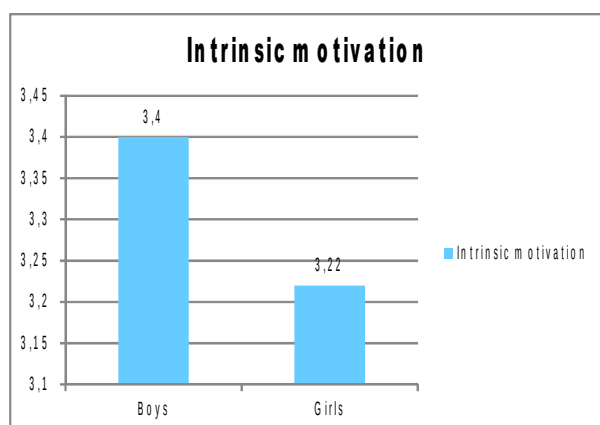
Table 6. Intrinsic motivation in learning English   Table 7. Extrinsic motivation in learning English.
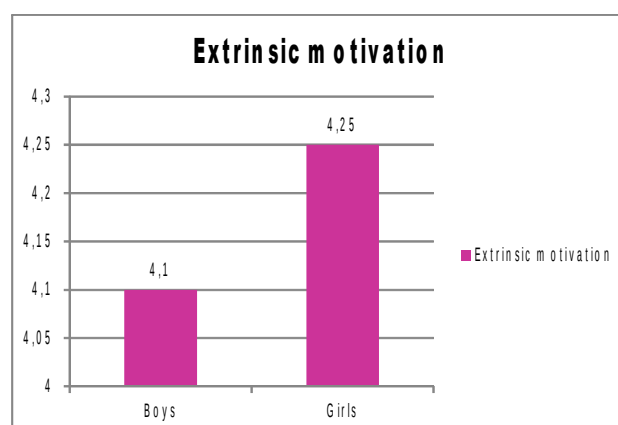
To interpret the data in terms of intrinsic motivation I used questions that measured students´ general interest in the English language, their interest in the grammar of English, their experiences in learning the language (pleasure), as well as their interest in the English-speaking culture. Table 6 illustrates that the overall intrinsic motivation of the participants rised slightly above three on a scale from one to five. Therefore, students´ intrinsic motivation could be perceived as moderate. In addition, boys enjoyed higher intrinsic motivation compared to girls.

The extrinsic side of motivation was studied examining social pressure and students´ ideas on the usefullness of English. Table 7 indicates that the values of extrinsic motivation rised above four, which is a notch higher than the values of intrinsic motivation. In addition, girls showed a slight tendency to prefer extrinsic motivation in their learning, whereas boys remained less prominent in this area of motivation.

It becomes obvious that tables 6 and 7 support each other. It can be concluded that boys developed stronger intrinsic motivation in their learning and were less likely to apply external factors as sources of motivation, whereas the girls´ results indicated the opposite. However, extrinsic motivation was found to be the dominant source of motivation within the whole group, so all in all students tended to be more externally oriented.

4.4   IDEAL L2 SELF, VERBAL PERSUASION, ATTAINMENT AND UTILITY VALUES

Ideal L2 self (Dörnyei 2009b:217) covers the participants´ perceptions of different English-speaking cultures and of the people representing those cultures. The underlying hypothesis behind this theory is that if students admire the speakers of an L2, they will develop stronger motivation towards that specific language. The results reveal that girls were more inclined to regard the ideal L2 self as a motivating factor as it is illustrated in Table 8. In order to understand this distincion, it might be suggested that girls are usually more inclined to engaging socially, making social comparisons and also reflecting their identities with other people´s personas.

Verbal persuasion is one of the elements attached to self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997). This theoretical aspect was examined in question 15, and the results reveal that girls tended to be more easily *persuaded* into learning English. The distinction is depicted in Table 9 where the boys´ figure reads 3,03 and the girls´ 3,47. As already discussed, girls are more likely to engage socially. Apparently, they also share their feelings, discuss and weigh different alternatives, and seriously consider other peoples suggestions since verbal persuasion prooved to have this much effect on their motivaiton.
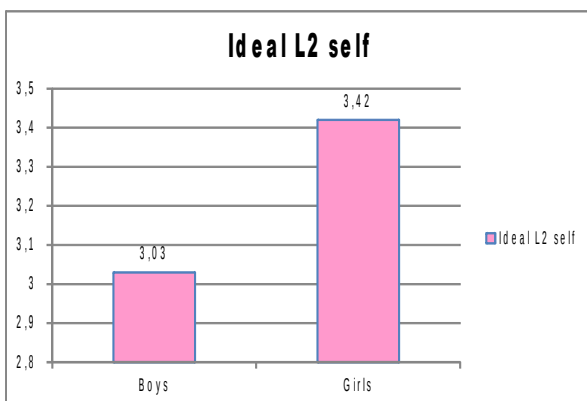

Table 8. The effect of the ideal
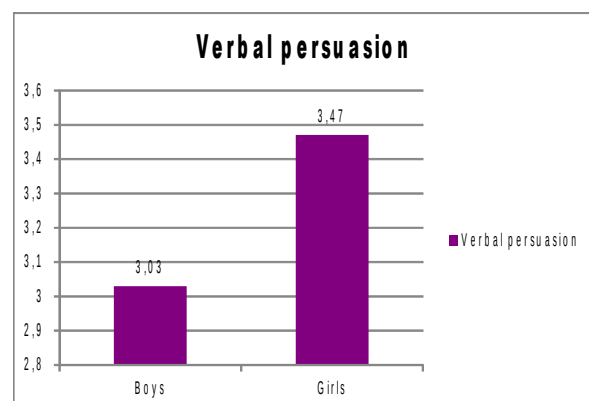L2 self in learning English

Table 9. The effect of verbal persuasion
in learning English.

Attainment value belongs to the four achievement task values that are included in the expectancy-value model discussed in section 2.3. It portrays individuals´ identity issues and is associated with the importance of different tasks. According to Karabenick and Urdan (2010:39-40) tasks gain importance when they are central to one´s self-image, and when they express important aspects of self. The results concerning this area of motivation indicate that attainment value was considered a significant motivating factor in the English language among both boys and girls (Table 10). In conclusion, the figures indicate that students highly regard the English language, and desire to gain competence in the language because it is important to their self image.

Utility is another achievement task value included in expectancy-value theory. The results concerning utility value are depicted in Table 11, which illustrates the more or less equally balanced figures of both boys and girls. In general, students found English a useful language, and they felt that competence in the language is needed in the future. What surely lies in the background is the current position of English as a global language. Students perceive English as useful and, accordingly, they become motivated to learn the language. Moreover, an individual´s self image is affected by his or her competence in English, as discussed in the preceeding paragrahp, and therefore not only utility value is affected by the global position of English but also the value of attainment, students´ self image and their perception of themselves as individuals in the modern world.
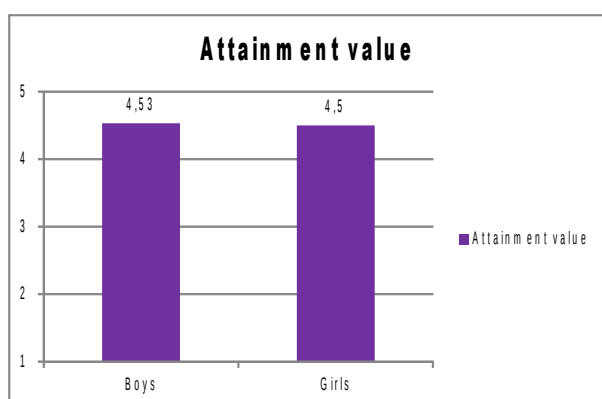

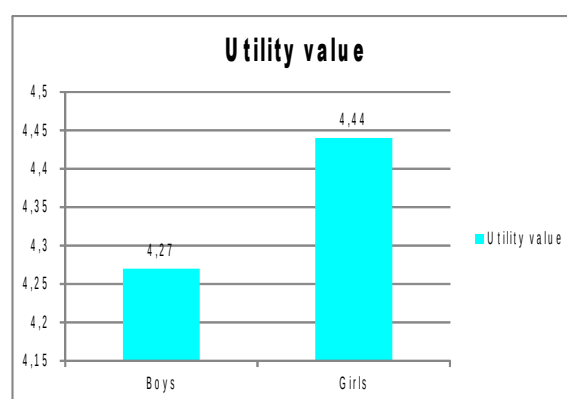
Table 10. Attainment value in learning English

Table 11. Utility value in learning English

4.4 SUMMARY

According to the data, it seemed to be characteristic of both boys and girls to apply general extrinsic motivation to learning English. However, boys were not as inclined to extrinsic motivation as girls, and this can be interpreted to the advantage of the boys who applied slightly *healthier* motivation to

learning. It was also characteristic of the boys to base their motivation on previous successful events as illustrated by their figures of mastery experience. Girls, on the other hand, appeared more socially engaged according to the data. Girls seemed to regard admiration (ideal L2 self) and verbal persuasion as stronger sources of motivation than the boys. Both boys and girls considered English a useful language and wanted to learn it in order to improve their image of themselves.

Overall, clear correlations were detected between the different categories related to motivational phenomina. Firstly, there was a strong connection between motivation towards English, students´ perceived competence and students´ mastery experiences depicted in Table 3 in section 4.1.2. This statistical interpretation was a result of IBM SPSS Statistics, whereas in section 4.1.3 I used a qualitative approached handpicking certain answers for closer examination. The results of the qualitative analysis, in fact, pinned down to a similar tendency. Students who showed preference to the English language as a primary source of motivation also perceived themselves competent and had enjoyed positive mastery experiences in the past. All of this comes down to Bandura´s (1997) ideas on motivation, which I have been discussing throughout my study. People engage in and become motivated towards activities in which they feel competent.

5 CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have looked at student motivation from a mostly quantitative viewpoint and examined how motivation manifests itself in different areas in the schoolworld. I started by introducing some of the most well-known motivation theories, trying to pin down the most prominent qualities in each model. These aspects of theory (self-efficacy beliefs, intrinsic and exrinsic motivaiton) were reflected in my study, from the questionnaire to the analysis of the data. The methods of analysis included both quantitative and qualitative features, as I interpreted the most significant correlations between mastery experience, motivation and perceived competence. Finally, less prominent theoretical views (ideal L2 self, verbal persuasion, utility and attainment values) were discussed, and distinctions were drawn between the genders.

It turned out that boys seemed to be more intrinsically oriented than girls, despite the fact that both genders preferred extrinsic sources of motivation generally. However, this slight distinction suggests that boys apply a healthy approach to learning, whereas girls appear more pedantic. It is natural for boys to be slightly more straightforward and relaxed in their activities and attemps to succeed. Girls, on the other hand, are socially oriented and perhaps feel a need to impress and

outperform fellow students and employees. These characteristics of boys and girls would be of great importance for further study. It would be interesting to see what kinds of implications these personal characteristics have on individual students in the future course of their lives.

Bandura´s self-efficacy theory was under a scope of weighty attention in this thesis. The reason for this is the fact that my initial hypotheses for this study included notions such as *a student is motivated to study English because he or she is good at it* and *a student is unmotivated to study English because he or she finds it difficult*. This cyclical tendency for students to develop their motivation according to previous events is included in Bandura´s theory, and my results appeared in accordance with Bandura´s ideas. Students´ mastery experiences are defined by previous successful or unsuccessful events, and these experiences shape students´ beliefs of their own capabilities (self-efficacy). Beliefs, again, lie at the center of making distinction between motivated and unmotivated behaviour. In terms of further study, motivational research could be streched to extend other areas of life, other than learning. What kind of motivational forces lie behind for example decision making and relationships? Of course, one might argue that life, itself, is nothing but learning in the first place.

The most central focus of my study was to examine how motivation distributes between two different categories: school and the English language. Major differences were not found, since the students in the particular upper secondary school proved to be quite highly motivated regardless of the gategories. A slight distinction, nevertheless, was detected, one that revealed school to be the primary source of motivation for the participants. Surprisingly, English did not surface more prominently than this, considering its popular image as a world language in today´s society. Accordingly, it would be relevant to replicate a study like this in a different kind of school environment.

Research on motivation has certainly not come to an end. As long as there is learning, teaching and classroom interaction between teachers and students, motivational variation and other motivational phenomina deserve both teachers´and researchers´ attention. Teachers have to keep updating their pedagogical ideologies in order to guarantee optimal support for the motivational growth of individual students.

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Appendix 1

MOTIVAATIOKYSELY

Hyvä lukiolainen,

Teen tutkimusta Jyväskylän yliopiston Kielten laitoksella. Tutkimus koskee oppimismotivaatiota koulussa sekä erityisesti englannin kielessä. Lue kysymykset huolellisesti. Kyselylomake täytetään nimettömänä ja käsitellään luottamuksellisesti niin, ettei koulua tai yksittäistä oppilasta voida tunnistaa.

Ystävällisesti,

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Vastaa **koulumotivaatiota** koskeviin kysymyksiin asteikolla 1-5 ympyröimällä oikea vaihtoehto. (1=täysin eri mieltä, 2=eri mieltä, 3=ei samaa eikä eri mieltä, 4=samaa mieltä, 5=täysin samaa mieltä)

en osaa sanoa

1. Koulunkäynti on mukavaa.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
2. Viihdyn koulussa.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
3. Teen kotitehtäväni tunnollisesti.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
4. Olen tunnollinen opiskelija.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
5. Haluan menestyä koulussa.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
6. Koulunkäynti on hyödyllistä.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
7. Olen kiinnostunut useista eri oppiaineista.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
8. Haluan oppia jatkuvasti uutta.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
9. Minulla on pitkäjänteisyyttä opetella hankaliakin asioita.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
10. Koulussa kannattaa käydä.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐

Vastaa **englannin opiskelua** koskeviin kysymyksiin.

1. Minusta on mukavaa opiskella englantia.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
2. Englannin tunnille on kiva mennä.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
3. Englannin opiskelu on mielenkiintoista.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
4. Teen englannin kotitehtävät tunnollisesti.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
5. Jaksan tehdä hankaliakin englannin harjoituksia   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
6. Englannin kielioppi on mielenkiintoista.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
7. Minusta on mukavaa kuulla englanninkielistä puhetta.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
8. Englannin kieli on mielenkiintoinen.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
9. Haluan oppia ymmärtämään englanninkielistä puhetta/tekstiä.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
10. Haluan oppia puhumaan englantia sujuvasti.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
11. Englantia on mukava opiskella, sillä koen olevani hyvä siinä   1   2   3   4   5   ☐
12. Parasta englannin opiskelussa on onnistumisen elämykset.   1   2   3   4   5   ☐

13.	En usko oppivani englantia, sillä olen epäonnistunut monesti.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
14.	Englannin opiskelu on ikävää, sillä en osaa riittävästi.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
15.	Opiskelen englantia, sillä lähipiirini rohkaisee minua siihen.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
16.	Opettajani/vanhempani toivovat, että menestyn englannin opiskelussa.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
17.	Minusta olisi hienoa osata englantia hyvin.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
18.	Nautin englannin opiskelusta ja tehtävien tekemisestä.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
19.	Englannin opiskelu on minulle tarpeellista tulevaisuuden kannalta.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
20.	Ihailen englanninkielisiä ihmisiä.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
21.	Englanninkielinen kulttuuri ja ihmiset kiinnostavat minua.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
22.	Opettaja/kaverit/kouluympäristö kannustavat minua oppimaan englantia.	1	2	3	4	5	☐

Vastaa **kielitaitoa** koskeviin kysymyksiin.

1.	Osaan mielestäni hyvin englantia.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
2.	Englannin kotitehtävät eivät tuota minulle hankaluuksia.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
3.	Ymmärrän lukemaani englanninkielistä tekstiä hyvin.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
4.	Pystyn käymään sujuvaa keskustelua englanniksi.	1	2	3	4	5	☐
5.	Pystyn seuraamaan englanninkielisiä ohjelmia sujuvasti ilman tekstitystä.	1	2	3	4	5	☐

MIKÄ ON VIIMEISIN ENGLANNIN ARVOSANASI?
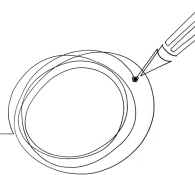
SUKUPUOLI: tyttö   poika

Kiitos vastauksistasi!