

**“Someone took our game and tossed it into a
Veg-o-Matic”**

*Media representations of Finnish baseball in
foreign news articles*

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Urheilun harrastaminen ja sen seuraaminen on suosittu tapa viettää aikaa ympäri maailmaa. Yksilö- ja joukkueurheilulajit ovat suuressa asemassa monien maiden kulttuureissa, joten niiden vaikutusta kieleen ja sitä kautta maailmaan ei kannata väheksyä. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, millaisia mediarepresentaatioita Suomen kansallislajista eli pesäpallosta on havaittavissa ulkomaisissa uutisartikkeleissa. Tutkimus suoritettiin analysoimalla kuusi lehtiartikkelia, joista kolme oli Yhdysvalloista, yksi Ruotsista, yksi Australiasta ja yksi Espanjasta. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin lehtien verkkosivuja ja niiden arkistoja hyväksikäyttäen. Artikkelit analysoitiin diskurssianalyysiä hyödyntäen ja analyysin tuloksia verrattiin aikaisempiin tutkimuksiin, jotka ovat relevantteja tämän tutkimuksen aihepiirille, jotta tämän tutkimuksen tuloksia olisi mahdollista oikeuttaa ja perustella. Positiiviset representaatiot ulkomaisissa lehtiartikkeleissa pesäpallosta olivat tämän tutkimuksen oleellisin löydös, joten on todettavissa, että lajin representaatioita esitetään maailmalla siten, että lajin tunnettavuus ja rooli osana maailman urheilulajien kirjoa kasvaisi. Tämä tutkimus ei kuitenkaan julista olevansa absoluuttinen fakta, vaan kuten usein diskurssianalyseissä, tutkijan oma käsitys asioista ja maailmasta vaikuttaa vahvasti tutkimuksen tekoon ja sen tuloksiin. Tulevaisuudessa olisikin hyödyllistä tehdä jatkotutkimuksia samaan aihepiiriin liittyen, mahdollisesti jopa isommalla aineistolla, jotta tämän tutkimuksen validiteetti voitaisiin vahvistaa vielä laajemmalla otannalla.</p>	
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INTRODUCTION

Watching sports is a popular way to spend time. People around the world gather to enjoy different kinds of sports, including team and individual sports. As a result, it can be said that sports are an important part of culture, especially in the United States, where American football is the most popular sport to follow (Norman 2018). In this study, the focus is on a more minor sport on a global scale: Finnish baseball or pesäpallo, the national sport of Finland.

In 2015, Finnish baseball gained fair amount of recognition in the United States after a New York Yankees scout Troy Williams and Wall Street Journal reporter Brian Costa visited Finland during the Finnish equivalent of the All-Star weekend; Itä-Länsi. Costa wrote an article to Wall Street Journal, based on the observations Williams made during the weekend. They both were surprised and amazed about the sport and its athletes, Williams stating “This is, to me, the hotbed of talent in Europe” (Costa 2015). This created a chain reaction which resulted in Finnish baseball gathering more media coverage around the world, in countries such as Australia, Sweden and Spain, to such an extent that official Finnish baseball games have been held in the two latter countries. Also, Australia hosted the 2012 Pesäpallo World Cup, an official tournament for amateur-level players.

There are not many, if any, studies about the representations of Finnish baseball in other countries. This study will present insights based on six news articles about Finnish baseball: three American articles, in addition to articles from Sweden, Australia and Spain. The articles will be analysed with discourse analysis to understand the representations they present. In a globalising world, cultures are getting exposed to each other more regularly, so it is important to understand the significance of Finnish baseball in a global context, as it is a major part of Finnish culture and it can be seen as a way to advertise Finland in foreign countries.

First, some theoretical background is introduced so the tools of the study become clearer. Second, the aim and the data of the study is presented. Third, the results of the analysis are shown and finally, the results are discussed in reflection with the background theories.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter will present the background information which will support the theories applied to the present study. A closer look is taken to discourse and discourse analysis methods. Also, some previous studies are presented which are related to the point of view of the present study. The previous studies are not explicitly done in same way as the present study but are relevant because of the theoretical framework utilised, as media representations and discourses are researched in them.

2.1 What is discourse?

To be able to analyse discourses, it is necessary to understand the term *discourse* and what it means. Discourse and discourses can be interpreted many ways but, in this study, the definition by Johnstone (2007) is used. Johnstone (2007: 2) defines the term *discourse* as instances of communication within language and recognises it as a mass noun, rather than countable. She emphasises the knowledge people have about the language they choose to use, thus participating in discourse and creating meaning when using the chosen language. Although, the point of countable *discourses* is also recognised, the term concerning patterns of language which create ideologies and establish power in society. Both terms are significantly connected, so there is no need for a substantial separation between the two. (Johnstone 2007: 2-3)

2.2 Media discourse and representations

After getting a grasp on discourse, it is possible to utilise this knowledge when discussing media from a discourse perspective. Matheson (2005) states that analysing media with discourse analysis makes it possible to describe shared meanings in greater detail. He also points out the role of media as a conveyor of media texts between people and the world. Furthermore, he states that discourse analysis is a beneficial way to analyse how different media texts convey meanings differently, pointing out also that the diversity of approaches to discourse makes it challenging to name one correct way of analysis. (Matheson 2005: 1-13)

Through discourse, especially media discourse, it is effortless to transmit presentations of previously occurred events, matters and people. These presentations are known as *representations*. Pietikäinen and Mäntynen (2009) state that language represents the world.

Therefore, representation elucidates the social and influential character of creating meanings. With representation, it is possible to examine how, and from what perspectives, reality is portrayed. Thus, representations have a crucial role in creating meanings through language and, as a result, are an important part of discourse and discourse analysis. (Pitkänen and Mäntynen 2009)

2.3 Discourse analysis methods (tools)

To do an analysis on written text and to understand its functions better, discourse analysis is a useful way to accomplish these goals. In response for the need of practical guide on discourse analysis, as Matheson (2005) expressed, Gee (2014) introduces 28 different tools to convey discourse analysis on texts, written or spoken. However, in this study, not all of Gee's tools are utilised because of the source material being news articles about sports. Instead, three tools which are assumed to be relevant to the articles are chosen to convey the analysis. To avoid confusion in the following sections, the terms speaker and listener are used, even though the matter would concern written language.

2.3.1 The Significance Building Tool

First out of three “building tools” used in this study is the Significance Building Tool. Language is used to build significance or to make things insignificant. Also, more than one word or grammatical device is usually a part of increasing or decreasing significance (Gee 2014: 98). Gee also points out that the key grammatical device for significance building is the main clause: what is included in a main clause is foregrounded information, which is treated as the most significant information. The tool focuses on the words within a text, and how they build or lessen significance. (Gee 2014: 98)

2.3.2 The Identities Building Tool

As language increases or decreases significance, it also builds different identities. People build different identities, for themselves and others, when they speak or act, thus “proving” to be a part of that said identity or social group. Furthermore, Gee (2014: 112-113) articulates that people can adapt multiple identities at once, pointing out the “everyday person” identity which

he calls “the life world identity.” This identity is not connected to any specialist or expert contexts, for example doctors or lawyers, instead it characterises the identity of someone who speaks and acts like “everyone,” reflecting on common sense and general knowledge. The tool is used to recognise different identities the speaker tries to enact or to get the listener to recognize. It also concentrates on how the speaker treats these identities. (Gee 2014: 112-116)

2.3.3 The Connections Building Tool

Another suitable way of conveying discourse analysis on the data is the Connections Building Tool. Gee (2014: 132) states that language is used to make connections between things and create relevancy between them and vice versa. Other things are more connected in the world and other things are less connected. This makes it possible for the speaker to manipulate the listener into thinking and making the desired connections by specific word selections. Thus, the tool is utilised to analyse the words in the text and especially, how they create communication which connects or disconnects things. (Gee 2014: 132)

2.4 Previous relevant studies

In this section, two previous studies are introduced, which are relevant for the present study. They are relevant in a sense that they have conducted similar research to some extent (Dann 2011), or they have conducted a discourse analysis on texts concerning sports (Simon-Maeda 2013). As mentioned, the studies are not conducted specifically in the same manner as the present study has conducted discourse analysis, they do not explicitly mention using such analysis method or critical discourse analysis has been conducted. Yet, they still have relevancy considering this present study. For example, Dann (2011) conducts research on representations, much like this study does. Furthermore, the previous relevant studies can be, and should be seen, as means of argumentation for the conducting of the present study.

2.4.1 Representations of British sports in elite Irish school publications

In his study, Dann (2011) examines the representation of British sports in publications of selected elite Irish schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In addition to discussing the ways how the representations of British sports differed from the representations

of Irish sports, Dann also argues that the positive representations of such sports were a part of a broader perception of the world among upper and middle classes in Ireland, affecting the development of Irish national identity (Dann 2011: 143).

Although the focus of the research is not explicitly mentioned to be in the discourse of the publications, it does give out some analysis on the texts such as word choices regarding the presentations of certain masculine attributes. Therefore, it is relevant for a discourse analysis research, as it conducts in a qualitative research studying the meanings of language. Also, the framework of the research article is very similar to this study, examining the representations of foreign sports in “news articles” which in this case are school publications. Thus, comparisons between the studies are justified.

2.4.2 The Americanization of Daisuke Matsuzaka: a textual analysis of sports media discourse

Approaching sports discourse with the ways of critical discourse analysis, Simon-Maeda (2013) also points out the role of sports in creating and shaping national identities. The study inspects the media representations of Daisuke Matsuzaka, a Japanese baseball player acquired by the Boston Red Sox in 2007. With the findings of the study, Simon-Maeda (2013: 928) argues that media utilises texts and illustrations to impact and strengthen the attitudes of fans and sport spectators alike towards the famous athlete. From the positive intercultural discourses during the first steps of his MLB career to the discriminative discourses used during the later times of his supposedly failed baseball excursion, the media acted as the spokesperson for the sports world, affecting the opinion of the public regarding the pitcher.

As the study focuses on the language used in diverse media publications, such as newspaper articles and televised sport shows, it is safe to say that it is appropriate to draw comparisons towards the present study. Both the present study and this research article utilise discourse analysis as the method of analysing data and sports being the main topic further justifies the relevancy between the studies. Therefore, this scientific article, in addition to the one conducted by Dann (2011), functions as a way to argue the analysis of the present study, presented in the section 4.2 Analysis.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

In this section, the aim of the study, research questions, data for analysis, research methods and research ethics are presented. This will clarify the study for the next sections which address the analysis and the results of the study. To be able to understand the results and means of analysis, it is important to understand the aims and means first.

3.1 The aim of the study and research questions

The aim of the study is to find out what kind of representations there are about Finnish baseball in foreign news articles about the sport. The research questions are:

1) What kind of representations is possible to identify from the selected articles?

News media is an excellent outlet for conveying representations. Even when a journalist attempts to be as unbiased as possible, it is possible to identify different representations from the texts they produce. Therefore, in the context of the tools, this study attempts to find representations about the significance of Finnish baseball, the identity of the sport and its role in building Finnish identity and the connections it has with a more familiar sport, baseball. It is good to remember though that when conveying discourse analysis, people tend to see and percept things differently, so this study does not imply being the absolute truth when it comes to the analysis results. Instead, this study points out a research niche in this field of study and presents an example of such research.

2) How these representations differ between American articles and the *other* articles?

This study, in addition to identifying the representations from the news articles, attempts to also clarify the differences between the representations in American news articles and *other* articles, meaning the articles published in Australia, Spain and Sweden. The discourse analysis tools are the prominent source for discovering different representations from the articles. Mainly, the word choices and grammatical decisions are analysed. Thus, the texts are analysed from the point of view of the selected tools, excluding additional aspects of the articles, for example visual aspects. Therefore, in the future studies, it is possible to expand beyond the selected tools and analyse even further.

3.2 Data

The data consists of news articles from New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Boston Globe, also including news articles from Courier-Mail, SUR in English and Your Living City, an online lifestyle magazine. From the data, the texts of the articles were examined. The non-American news articles were not all published in an actual newspaper but, in the scale of this research, this is not an excluding factor because they are also part of the media discourse and can be analysed as such.

The amount of data for analysis is very limited because Finnish baseball is not an international sport, thus the media coverage is primarily limited to Finland. The reason for choosing these American newspapers for the study is simply because they were the only major newspapers which had covered Finnish baseball in an article. As a result, the additional data was chosen to expand the research point of view beyond just American news articles. Thus, analysing articles from other countries as well reflects a broader perspective on the sport and comparisons can then be done between the results gathered from the articles of different nations.

3.3 Research methods

The method for gathering the data was accessing the selected news articles via the Internet. Initially, the study intended to focus only on American news articles about Finnish baseball which resulted in examining many major American newspapers. However, as stated earlier, the amount of data from American newspapers was not enough for this study, so articles from other countries were examined also.

As presented in the previous section 2 Theoretical background, the main research methods for this study are the selected discourse analysis tools by Gee (2014). This indicates that the research is qualitative rather than quantitative, as textual analysis is typical for qualitative research. However, some aspects of quantitative research influenced the presentation of the results. Much like Johnstone (2007: 22) suggests that qualitative claims can be done from the basis of qualitative data, in regards of discourse analysis. The tools are utilised to analyse textual aspects of the articles, thus conducting a discourse analysis. Visual analysis aspect of language research was originally a part of this study but considering the extent of a thesis, the visual aspect was left out to fully concentrate on the textual analysis.

Regarding the tools, this present study demonstrates an example on how to use them within scientific research. Also, it is important to remember the limitation of this study, as it is a thesis and not a major, extensive research. Thus, some of the tools are used in specific parts of the texts to fully fulfil their means of analysis. For example, The Significance Building Tool which was introduced in section 2.3.1, is used only in the main clauses, which include the most significant information according to Gee (2014: 98). Therefore, the most significant information is analysed, regarding significance building in the articles.

3.4 Research ethics

When conducting scientific research, it is important to consider the ethical aspects of research. According to Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012: 30), the research must follow the guidelines of responsible conduct of research. These guidelines draw on the integrity, thoroughness and correctness aspects of research, whether considering gathering data, analysing the data or presenting the results of the research.

In terms of this study, the ethical aspects of research were not addressed in too much detail, as the present study is more on the qualitative side of research and the research is conducted on public information of news articles. Thus, for example, ethics considering research permits and agreements were not treated as crucial as the more general aspects of ethical research for the present study.

4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In the following chapter, the news articles are presented and analysed by utilising the discourse analysis tools by Gee (2014). Firstly, the basic information is presented about the article and where it was published. Secondly, the results of the discourse analysis are briefly presented, in reflection with the tools presented in section 2.3 Discourse analysis methods (tools). The discourse analysis was conducted in the way presented in section 3.3 Research methods. Thirdly and finally, the results are analysed more in depth, in reflection with the background theories and previous relevant studies.

4.1 Results

In this section, the results of the discourse analysis are presented, in a way influenced by characteristics of quantitative research. Based on the amount of data, these results cannot be seen as the absolute truth about representations of Finnish baseball in foreign news articles. Instead, this study should be observed as an introduction for future research on the matter.

4.1.1 “What Finland Can Teach America About Baseball” The Wall Street Journal

This news article was published in *The Wall Street Journal* in July 9, 2015, written in the basis of the experiences of an MLB scout visiting in Finland, as presented in the Introduction. According to AgilityPR (2018), *The Wall Street Journal* is ranked as the fifth most popular newspaper in the United States, based on circulation. It was originally known for business related topics, but it has expanded the coverage on many categories of news (AgilityPR 2018).

From the point of view of Significance Building Tool, it was possible to identify 13 main clauses which tried to make Finnish baseball more significant by making mentions of its history, its attributes as a sport and its role as a national sport in Finland. No main clauses tried to make Finnish baseball insignificant.

The article develops a representation of Finnish identity, citing characteristics of a stereotypical Finn. When discussing the sport itself, its identity as a minor sport on a global scale is brought up when comparing it with baseball, a more major sport.

The most productive tool, in terms of the amount of results, was the Connections Building Tool. The majority of the article is written in a way that draws connections between baseball and the Finnish version of the sport. If the Significance Building Tool found only a handful of main clauses which built significance, the Connections Building Tool was far more prolific: out of 28 paragraphs, only 10 paragraphs did not attempt to build a connection between the two sports. From the rules and tactics of the sports, to the differences of the playing grounds, the article is filled with connections and comparisons.

4.1.2 “Buy Me Some Peanuts and Wiener Nougat” The New York Times

This article was published in *The New York Times* in September 26, 2016. According to AgilityPR (2018), *The New York Times* is the largest daily US newspaper, in terms of circulation. It also states that for more than 150 years, the readers of the paper have expected to get the most in-depth and uncompromised coverage of news. Also, the global media organization behind the paper has won multiple Pulitzer prizes. (AgilityPR 2018)

In this rather brief article about Finnish baseball, the Significance Building Tool was able to identify four main clauses which built significance for the sport. No main clauses were identified as trying to make Finnish baseball insignificant.

The article did not represent the Finnish identity in a distinct matter but rather represented the identity of the sport. The ways the article represented the identity of the sport were possible to identify using the Connections Building Tool. Much like the article in *The Wall Street Journal*, Finnish baseball was described in contrast with the American sport. Out of nine paragraphs, seven draw comparisons and connections between the two sports, thus presenting the identity of Finnish baseball through these descriptions.

4.1.3 “Taking a look at Finland’s national sport: pesapallo” The Boston Globe

The Boston Globe, where this article was published in October 15, 2016, is the 11th largest newspaper in terms of circulation in the US, according to AgilityPR (2018). It covers mainly sports, lifestyle features, arts and entertainment news, in addition to the more standard news (AgilityPR 2018).

Much like the article in *The New York Times*, this article is not a major one in terms of length, but it includes a lot of information to analyse with discourse analysis. 15 main clauses were possible to identify as trying to build significance for Finnish baseball. Furthermore, two main clauses tried to make Finnish baseball insignificant. Mentioning the quickness of the sport and its prestige as the national sport of Finland multiple times, are just some of the examples about the ways the discourse participated in building significance. On the contrary, mentioning Finnish baseball in a negative way when compared to other sports, built insignificance.

When building connections between baseball and the Finnish version of the sport, the article also briefly built a representation of Finnish identity by mentioning ice hockey and eating reindeer. In addition, 12 paragraphs out of around 20 built connections between the sports, in

similar way as the previous articles did. What makes this article special, in contrast to the other articles, is that this has a fair amount of writing about ice hockey, mainly because it involves an interview with Tuukka Rask, a Finnish NHL goalie, who has also played Finnish baseball as a child back home in Finland.

4.1.4 “Ten weird world sports you’ve probably never heard of” The Courier-Mail

Shifting from American newspapers to more diverse media platforms, *The Courier-Mail* is an Australian newspaper hailing from Brisbane. According to their website (Couriermail.com.au 2019), they are the most influential source for news, sports and analysis on the issues concerning the state of Queensland. Their monthly audience is more than three million viewers, based on the successful merge of online and print operations in 2008 (Couriermail.com.au 2019). The news article in question was published as an online article in June 30, 2014.

The article is a listing of “*Ten weird world sports you’ve probably never heard of*” and Finnish baseball is listed as one of them, so the portion of representation of Finnish baseball is very brief, in the scale of the article. Four main clauses were analysed to be participating in significance building. On the contrary, only one main clause made Finnish baseball seem insignificant, although the inclusion of the sport in an article describing “weird sports” can be seen as making the sport insignificant and not serious at all.

Being mostly a describing piece of news article, without representation of Finnish identity, building connections between baseball and Finnish baseball was the main resource for discourse analysis in this article. All three paragraphs made connections to baseball, mentioning the differences of the pitching methods and the basic resemblances of the two sports, including hitting and running bases.

4.1.5 “Fuengirola tournament to put Finland’s national sport in the limelight” SUR in English

This news article was published in April 21, 2017, in the English version of the Spanish newspaper SUR, called *SUR in English*. The newspaper mainly discusses topics and news concerning southern Spain, in addition to the international news. Haynes (2017) states that SUR in English was first published in 1984 and it expanded online in 1996, even before its Spanish counterpart. The print version of the newspaper has a weekly circulation of over 50 000 and it

is concerned as the main source for news in English regarding the province of Malaga and all around Spain. (Haynes 2017)

The article mainly increased the significance of Finnish baseball, with 14 main clauses describing the aspects of being a national sport in Finland, having a major part in the history of Finland, its popularity and the presentation as an Olympic sport during the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki. None of the main clauses affiliated insignificance with Finnish baseball, but some spelling errors, for example *pesapallo*, can be affiliated with insignificance of the sport.

From the amount of main clauses representing significant aspects of the sport, it was analysed that Finnish identity was promoted a great deal in the article with significance building. Although, representing the identity from the perspective of the sport and its role in the Finnish history and identity. Connections building was in a minor role in the discourse analysis, out of 14 paragraphs, only two made connections between baseball and Finnish baseball. So, a clear difference is possible to point out between this article and the previous articles.

4.1.6 “Finnish baseball in Stockholm” Your Living City

Your Living City is an online lifestyle magazine, concentrating in providing its readers with everything current about Stockholm. The website has over 30 contributors from different backgrounds to provide diverse stories about the news, lifestyle, culture, sporting events and essentials of Stockholm (Yourlivingcity.com 2019). Although this article, published in 23 April 2017, is slightly more informal than the previous ones with emphasis on pictures taken from the actual Finnish baseball matches played in Stockholm, the correspondent media and sports discourses are also present in this article. Thus, the article qualifies as a source for discourse analysis, benefitting the present study.

Six main clauses included building significance for Finnish baseball and no main clause was identified as building insignificance for the sport. Thus, the two other tools were far more successful than the Significance Building Tool.

The article made connections between baseball and Finnish baseball in two paragraphs out of six paragraphs. Much like the ways presented about the previous articles, the connections were built around the descriptions of the rules of Finnish baseball and comparing them with the rules and characteristics of baseball.

From the perspective of Finnish identity representation, the article mentioned the 100 years of independence celebration Finland had in 2017. Also, pointing out that the fans of the teams travelled from Finland to watch the matches and the Finnish community was *out in force*, were interpreted as identity representations through the discourse analysis.

4.2 Analysis

The most successful discourse analysis method was the Connections Building Tool, considering that every article had comparisons between the American sport and the Finnish version. The usual recurring theme, especially in the American news articles, was to connect the pitching methods of the sports, thus building connection between the sports and their characteristics.

(1) Instead of trying to overpower hitters, pitchers must mix heights and locations to keep them off balance, with the only requirement being that they throw the ball at least one meter above their head. (Costa 2015, The Wall Street Journal)

(2) The pitcher is standing right next to the batter, and throwing the ball straight up in the air. For one thing, it's a lot easier to hit a vertical pitch... So the duel between the pitcher and the batter, so crucial in baseball, is de-emphasized in pesapallo. (Mather 2016, The New York Times)

(3) The ball is far easier to hit, mainly because the pitcher stands barely more than an arm's length from the batter, and tosses the ball up in the air, a minimum 3 feet above the pitcher's head. The batter waits for the ball to drop toward home base (a circle, 24 inches in diameter) and unloads on it. (Dupont 2016, The Boston Globe)

All the excerpts above portray the way the articles participate in building connections between baseball and Finnish baseball, explaining the functions of both sports, while describing Finnish baseball. Also, the articles are conveying the connections from a context familiar with baseball, as seen in word choices *Instead of trying to overpower hitters*, *a lot easier to hit a vertical pitch* and *The ball is far easier to hit*. Furthermore, Finnish baseball is being described to make it more familiar, with making connections to the American version, thus building a representation of the Finnish sport through connections.

Like the article making connections between the sports to produce a representation, Dann (2011) studied the representations of British sports in elite Irish school publications and how connections were identified between participation in them and characteristics of *manliness*, based on the representations in the school publications. For example, one of the articles, titled *What Ought a Boy to Do* and published in the *Castleknock Chronicle* in 1906, argued that the role of sports and games is helpful in building *a healthy frame and a manly character* (Dann

2011: 140-141). Therefore, the argument of creating a representation through building connections between things is relevant from the perspective of the present study.

Regarding the Significance Building Tool, the articles did not explicitly state the participation in significance building. Nevertheless, as usually regarding discourse analysis, it is possible to perceive things differently and from many perspectives. The articles, as mentioned earlier when discussing the Connections Building Tool, mainly wrote about Finnish baseball from a perspective that would make the sport more familiar to the reader. Multiple ways of building significance were identified and analysed, but the recurring ones were describing the history of the sport, its popularity and national sport status in Finland and the fact that it acted as a demonstration sport in the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki.

(4) It is considered the national sport... most popular school sport for girls and the second most popular for boys... It was a demonstration sport in the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki. (Costa 2015, The Wall Street Journal)

(5) Pesapallo was invented in 1920, around the time Babe Ruth was revolutionizing American baseball with his home run hitting, and it has since grown in stature to the point where it is often called Finland's national game. (Mather 2016, The New York Times)

(6) Finland's national sport is actually pesapallo, the Scandinavian country's version of baseball ...its origins dating to Babe Ruth's heyday, the 1920s... (Dupont 2016, The Boston Globe)

(7) Also known as 'Finnish baseball', pesäpallo is considered Finland's national sport. (Dinjaski 2014, The Courier-Mail)

(8) Pesäpallo, which means 'nest ball', is the national sport of Finland and it is popular around the country, especially in the Ostrobothnia region. Pesis, as it is affectionately known, was first promoted as an Olympic sport during the Summer Olympics in Helsinki in 1952. (Bryant 2017, SUR in English)

(9) It's called *pesäpallo*, and it's Finland's national sport. It all was started in 1910 by legendary Lauri "Tahko" Pihkala, who had been to the US and learned baseball. (Uddin 2017, Your Living City)

Simon-Maeda (2013) conveyed a critical discourse analysis to study media representations of Daisuke Matsuzaka in American sports media. From significance building perspective, Simon-Maeda (2013) states that the orientalism of Matsuzaka was an advantage in the positive representations of the athlete. For example, mentioning Japanese baseball and utilising a Japanese lexicon *doryoku*: *But it is explained by the concept of doryoku, or unflagging effort, which in Japanese baseball is seen as a prime virtue* (Verducci, *Sports Illustrated* 2007, cited in Simon-Maeda 2013: 919), represented the effort of the media to build significance regarding

the athlete and his Japanese background, in the context of baseball and the acquirement of Matsuzaka (Simon-Maeda 2013: 919). Thus, in similar way, the articles analysed in the present study utilised Finnish word *pesäpallo* or *pesapallo*, in addition to emphasising the role of Finnish baseball as the national sport of Finland, by mentioning the fact.

The articles did not build a great deal of insignificance, as stated in the section 4.1 Results, declaring that all the articles had more main clauses building significance than insignificance. Thus, positive representations of Finnish baseball are more common in the articles than negative representations. Furthermore, it is worth of mentioning that three articles did not have any main clauses building insignificance, thus the statement of representations being mostly positive is justified.

(10) national sport of Finland looks like someone took our game and tossed it into a Veg-o-Matic. (Dupont 2016, The Boston Globe)

(11) ...he soon opted for other sports with more action (Dupont 2016, The Boston Globe)

(12) And they wear silly outfits and helmets. (Dinjaski 2014, The Courier-Mail)

The articles, which built insignificance, did it by decreasing the significance of Finnish baseball as a sport, with making claims that other sports are more significant or that the sport is just an obscure version of the American sport. Also, stating that Finnish baseball players wear *silly outfits and helmets* is a way to make the sport insignificant, belittling the sport in contrast towards other, more famous sports. Simon-Maeda (2013) discusses the same oriental attributes that were an advantage for Matsuzaka, were converted into problems as soon as the performances of the athlete started to plunge: *THE MATSUZAKA MYSTERY WON'T GO AWAY [headline] Perhaps it is the language barrier or cultural norms that make the explanations for his struggles seem inscrutable* (Speier, WEEI 2010, cited in Simon-Maeda 2013: 924). In this case, the mysteriousness and foreign background of Matsuzaka are used to build insignificance, and negative representations, regarding the athlete, a similar way to the analysed articles created negative representations of Finnish baseball by making the sport seem insignificant when comparing with other sports.

Out of the discourse analysis tools, the least successful tool was the Identity Building Tool. As the articles were mostly describing Finnish baseball as a sport, they did not represent the Finnish identity too much. Although, it is possible to interpret identity representations in many ways

but from the perspective of the analysis tool, the results were not monumental. Furthermore, it can be added that the significance building of the sport can be interpreted as identity building, so to some extent, the articles build the identity of Finnish baseball.

(13)...and has been known to elicit uncharacteristic displays of emotion from the famously stoic Finns. Clapping, for instance, and speaking. (Costa 2015, The Wall Street Journal)

(14)...most Americans see of Finnish athletes in the US, would be hockey. The NHL is loaded with Finns, many of them very talented. ...it makes sense. Sort of. At least in Finland, where they eat reindeer. (Dupont 2016, The Boston Globe)

(15) Finland celebrates 100 years of independence this year, so one of the many ways to celebrate the centennial was to start this year's Superpesis season in Stockholm. Fans of the teams had travelled all the way from Finland, and the local Finnish community was out in force. (Uddin 2017, Your Living City)

The most explicit representations of Finnish identity were heavily affiliated with stereotypical views of Finns and Finland as a country. For example, word choices such as *uncharacteristic displays of emotion, famously stoic, they eat reindeer, hockey* and *Finnish community was out in force* are further expanded on this statement, representing Finns as firm-faced individuals, who love ice hockey and eat reindeer, in addition to a strong sense of community. Dann (2011) argues that many word choices in elite Irish school publications promoted manliness with British identity, stating that many characteristics were recognised to be affiliated with British identity in the context of British sports. As stated earlier, citing the article in *Castleknock Chronicle*, words such as *a healthy frame and a manly character* (Dann 2011: 140-141) are relevant examples of identity building.

Simon-Maeda (2013) states that sport events offer an opportunity to study group identity development. As two of the articles described or promoted sporting events of Finnish baseball taking place abroad, the articles are participating in promoting Finnish identity representations. Furthermore, speaking about Finnish community and how it was *out in force* and mentioning Finnish independence celebration, argues the aspect of identity building to even more extent.

4.3 Summary and comparison

As stated, the representations of Finnish baseball, which were identified from the foreign news articles, are mainly positive, since the utilising of Significance Building Tool resulted in identifying more main clauses which built significance, rather than insignificance. Thus, the

articles participate in promoting positive representations of Finnish baseball and presented the sport as a significant part of pastimes around the world.

The identity of the sport was heavily promoted by comparing the sport to its American counterpart, thus creating connections between the two sports. In addition, the news articles, which were not American, furthermore participated in presenting the sport and establishing its identity by making it more familiar to the reader by describing the sport and its characteristics.

Finnish identity was not represented in the articles to a great extent, but indications of such identity promotion was identified. When the articles represented the Finnish identity, they utilised stereotypical characteristics of Finnish identity, including mentioning reindeer, hockey and the stoic characteristics of Finns. Thus, a brief instance of Finnish identity promotion was analysed from the articles, based on stereotypical word choices in the articles.

So, this study was able to provide an answer to the first research question, presented in the section 3.1 The aim of the study and research questions: positive representations of Finnish baseball were identified, which drew comparisons between American baseball and Finnish baseball, addressing the former as the major international sport but promoting the latter as the national sport of Finland and mentioning its rich history, thus in no way was Finnish baseball downgraded as a sport.

The second research question was about the differences between the American articles and the articles published in other countries and the study was able to provide an answer for it: the differences are in the ways the representations are presented. The American news articles rely more on connections between baseball and Finnish baseball and the other articles rely more on significance building and identity building of the Finnish sport. As mentioned, all the analysed articles were representing Finnish baseball and Finnish identity in a positive way. Thus, the results of the analysis were similar regarding all the articles, differences were in the ways these representations revealed themselves from the data.

5 CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to meet the research niche of studies about Finnish baseball, especially from a linguistic point of view. Overall, most studies about the sport are conducted from the physical education or physical performance point of view. Thus, studies combining the sport and linguistics are very rare, let alone conducting research in the framework of English language. For this reason, I thought this would be a good topic for a study, to combine the sport and linguistics.

As for the aim of this study, the purpose was to research the representations of a sport in the context of news articles about it in foreign countries, such as the United States and Spain. Furthermore, comparison was done between the American news articles and the news articles in the other countries chosen for this study. Overall, the study was successful in gathering results from the data. The results were slightly different to what I expected, as my initial assumption was that the American articles, not all of them but even one, would represent the sport in a negative way, because the sport is a version of their own popular pastime. To some extent, this assumption was correct but in a very minor scale, since just a handful of clauses were analysed to be participating in presenting the representations in this kind of way.

The key finding of this study was that representations of Finnish baseball are mainly positive in other countries, based on six foreign news articles. The American news articles, understandably, drew a lot of comparisons between baseball and Finnish baseball, whereas the other articles concentrated more in describing the national sport of Finland. Thus, it can be stated that based on this thesis, representations of Finnish baseball in foreign news articles are positive, and that the representations do not differ a lot between the American news articles and the news articles in the other countries. The differences are in the way the representations are presented in the articles.

In future studies about this topic, a more extensive point of view should be applied when conducting research. For instance, the data should be expanded to include more news articles from different countries. Although, as mentioned in the section 3.2 Data, the limitation of the articles is inevitable because Finnish baseball is not a major sport on a global scale. Thus, future studies might not be current in the near future.

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