"I THINK I WOULD HAVE LEARNED MUCH MORE THAN I NOW DID" – FACTORS AFFECTING FOSTER CHILDREN'S MOTIVATION TO STUDY ENGLISH

Bachelor's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Motivaatiota vieraiden kielten opiskelussa on tutkittu laajalti kielitieteen kentällä vuosikymmeniä. Motivaatio itsessään on melko abstrakti käsite, ja sen määrittely onkin ollut tutkijoille haastavaa. Motivaation tutkimuksen peruskysymyksillä yritetään löytää vastausta siihen, mikä saa ihmisen tekemään tiettyjä asioita, ja mikä saa hänet jatkamaan tekemistä niiden parissa. Vaikka motivaatiota vieraiden kielten opiskelussa on tutkittu laajalti eri kielissä ja eri kohderyhmillä, sijaishuollossa olevien lasten kielten opiskelua, saati heidän motivaatiotaan kielten opiskeluun, ei ole tutkittu. Sijaishuollossa olevien lasten ja nuorten koulunkäyntiin ja akateemiseen suoriutumiseen liittyvä tutkimus on pitkälti keskittynyt erinäisiin haasteisiin ja ongelmiin, joita he usein kohtaavat kouluaikanaan. Jotta opettajat voisivat kehittää opetustaan ja käytettäviä oppimateriaaleja, tutkimuksessa on tärkeää ottaa huomioon myös motivaation näkökulma.

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää sijaishuollossa olevien nuorten motivaatioon myönteisesti ja kielteisesti vaikuttavia tekijöitä englannin opiskelussa. Tutkimus toteutettiin teemahaastatteluina lastensuojelulaitoksessa Itä-Suomessa elokuussa 2019. Tutkimukseen osallistui 2 laitokseen sijoitettua yläkoululaista nuorta. Tutkimushaastattelut rajattiin kahteen teemaan: englannin opiskelu koulussa, sekä kontakti englannin kieleen vapaa-ajalla. Aineiston analysoinnissa käytettiin laadullista sisällönanalyysia.

Tutkimuksesta ilmenee, että koulussa erityisesti opettajan opetustyyli tai käytetyt opetuskeinot vaikuttavat nuorten motivaatioon. Vastauksien näyttäminen koettiin motivaatiota heikentävänä keinona opetuksessa, kun taas kannustaminen ja avun tarjoaminen koettiin motivaatiota lisäävänä. Lisäksi tulokset osoittavat, että nuorten oma kokemusmaailma ja henkilökohtaiset mielenkiinnon kohteet vaikuttavat siihen, miten he ovat mieluiten tekemisissä englannin kielen kanssa vapaa-ajallaan. Tärkeimpänä tutkimus kuitenkin osoitti, etteivät nuorten antamat vastaukset motivaatiosta merkittävästi eroa aiemmista tutkimuksista. Sijaishuollossa oleville nuorille kannustavat opettajat ja relevantit oppimateriaalit ovat motivaation syntymisen ja ylläpitämisen kannalta yhtä tärkeitä kuin kaikille muillekin oppilaille.

Asiasanat – Keywords
motivation, demotivation, second language learning, foster children

Säilytyspaikka – Depository
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

L2 learning motivation has been widely studied in linguistic research for decades. The issue has been studied across the world in many different countries with different languages and target groups. Various theories have been presented of motivation itself but as a concept it is very complex, and there seems not to be one correct definition of it that all researchers would agree on. Since the word motivation derives from the Latin verb movere *'to move'*, movement naturally lies in the heart of motivation research (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 3). Motivation research attempts to uncover questions such as what moves an individual person to make choices and to sustain the action.

Although language learning motivation has been in the interest of researchers for a considerable amount of time, research regarding foster children's language learning has not yet been done. For this reason, foster children drew my attention as a potential target group for the study. Children who are placed in the care system often face negative stereotypes in the school world, and therefore it is especially interesting to examine the factors affecting their motivation in school, and more precisely in this case motivation to study English. Research has indicated that foster children do not succeed academically as well as children who live at home with their parents, and that they usually have more different kinds of problems in school due to various reasons (Iversen *et al.* 2010; Tilbury *et al.* 2014).

In order for language teachers to be able to support and motivate the children in the care system the best way possible, this area needs to be studied. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the different factors in the school world and during free time that affect foster children's motivation either positively or negatively to study or learn English. In the next chapter I will present the background of my study, beginning with discussion of some of the most well-known definitions in motivation research. After that I will move on to explain the distinction of demotivation and amotivation, and finally, the research conducted considering the educational difficulties foster children have, and different factors that can affect their learning motivation.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Motivation in L2 learning: definitions and theories

Motivation has been a widely studied area in psychological research for a long time, however, defining the term *motivation* is not simple. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 4) depict that the only thing most researchers of motivation agree on in defining the term, concerns the nature of human behaviour in terms of direction and magnitude that appear as *choice, persistence*, and *effort*. More generally explained, motivation is related to aspects such as an individual's decision to do something, their willingness to sustain the activity, and their effort in pursuing it. Since motivation consists of these different factors, it has naturally been in the centre of linguistic research focusing on second language learning. The approaches to researching L2 learning motivation have evolved considerably over the years. Dörnyei (2005: 66-67) divides these approaches into three distinct phases: the socio-psychological period, the cognitive-situated period, and the current phase known as the process-oriented period.

During the socio-psychological period (1959-1990), Robert Gardner and his associates in Canada built a foundation for the modern field of L2 motivation research. *Integrative motivation* is perhaps the most well-known and researched aspect in Gardner's motivation theory. Gardner (1985) states that integrative motivation consists of motivational intensity as effort or desire, attitudes toward the learning situation, and integrativeness. Integrativeness in this context implies that motivation subsumes integrative orientation and positive feelings towards the community that speaks the second language (Gardner 1985). While Gardner's motivation theory drew the foundation for L2 motivation research and is still widely used in scholars, it has evidently stayed rather unmodified over the years (Dörnyei 2005: 71). The notion of integrativeness has also received critique over the years, and it has been under a debate whether it is applicable when learning English in the modern globalized world (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 43).

In addition to Gardner's theories, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 12-38) discuss some other well-known theories of motivation in psychological research. Examples of these are Atkinson's achievement theory which combines the need for achievement, expectancy, and value, and Bandura's self-efficacy theory which addresses people's beliefs and judgement of their capabilities to carry out certain activities. According to Atkinson's achievement theory, people are motivated for two reasons: need for achievement or fear of failure. Individuals with high need for achievement are interested in performing the activity for its own sake rather than for the extrinsic reward it could bring, whereas

other people become motivated in an activity when trying to avoid a negative outcome rather than approaching a positive one. Self-efficacy theory illustrates that people with low sense of self-efficacy perceive difficult tasks as personal threats, lose faith easily and are more likely to give up. In comparison, individuals with a strong sense of self-efficacy approach difficult tasks with confidence in their own capabilities, and they are more likely to sustain effort even when facing failure. (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 13-16.)

Theories have also presented different types of motivation. Perhaps the most well-known distinction made in the motivation theories is the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation can be defined as behaviour performed to experience pleasure and satisfaction, whereas extrinsic motivation implies performing behaviour for an extrinsic reward (e.g. good grades) or to avoid punishment (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 23). A hierarchical model developed by Vallerand (1997) suggests that there are three subtypes of intrinsic motivation: motivation to know, motivation towards accomplishments and motivation to experience stimulation. Intrinsic motivation to know is related to the engaging in an activity for the joy of exploring or learning something new. Motivation towards accomplishments can be defined as engaging in the activity for the satisfaction of surpassing oneself. Finally, motivation to experience stimulation relates to experience of pleasant sensations. (Vallerand 1997: 280.)

A study conducted by Ruokolainen (2012) sheds light on both extrinsic and intrinsic factors affecting language learning motivation. The aim of the study was to gather information about Finnish upper secondary school students' experiences and perceptions regarding studying foreign languages in Finnish schools. However, the focus was mainly on learning English. The results indicated that majority of the students expected English to be very important to their future regarding for example education and career, and it was thus concluded that most of the respondents were extrinsically motivated to study English.

Based on the various theories and definitions of motivation in second language learning, one can conclude that motivation is something that we all as humans have when performing certain activities, and that multiple factors can affect one's motivation to learn. As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) explain, research of motivation has evolved considerably over the years, proceeding from the focus on unconscious motivational drives to conscious cognitive processes. Gardner and his associates' (1985) perspective on L2 learning motivation was largely based on an individual's desire for a sense of belonging in the group that speaks the target language. While this conception is still applicable to

some extent, research has suggested many other factors that can affect motivation, such as goals, expectations, and self-efficacy beliefs.

2.2 Demotivation and amotivation

In the light of previous research and the considerable amount of different definitions of motivation, it could be concluded that motivation is a process that drives learners towards their goals. Nevertheless, teachers often struggle with having students who are not motivated in the subject. Hence, many researchers have been interested in finding the factors behind the lack of motivation. Being familiar with the terms *demotivation* and *amotivation* is crucial in order to be able to understand the lack of motivation in second language learning, and the complex nature of motivation itself.

Kikuchi (2015: 1) defines *demotivation* as an opposite to motivation by describing it as a process where the learners are pulled back. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 139) explain that demotivation concerns the external forces that reduce or even diminish the existing motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action. Therefore, demotivation is something that makes students lose their motivation to learn. Kikuchi (2015: 3) adds that not all demotivating factors are external, and that some internal factors, such as student's reduced self-confidence and negative attitude towards a foreign language can also affect demotivation.

A study conducted by Muhonen (2004) examined demotivating factors among 91 ninth graders in Finland, who were learning English as a second language. The study indicated that teachers and learning materials have a considerable role as demotivating factors. The demotivating aspects of the teachers were related to teaching methods, lack of competence, and personality, whereas demotivating aspects of the learning materials were related to textbooks and exercise books. One out of five pupils found the learning materials demotivating, and many expressed that the books were boring and filled with exercises that were either too easy or too difficult.

In contrast to demotivation, *amotivation* refers to a total absence of motivation. As first defined by Deci and Ryan (1985), amotivation differs from demotivation in a matter of not being caused by the individual's lack of interest but the experience of feeling incompetence and helplessness when performing the activity. Researchers have been interested in discovering the different reasons that can explain being amotivated in a subject. Vallerand (1997: 282) discusses four different reasons for amotivation: capacity-ability beliefs (one's thought of not being able to perform the activity), strategy beliefs (used strategies are not seen effective enough), capacity-effort beliefs (belief of the required

effort being too excessive) and helplessness-beliefs (one's perception that their efforts are inconsequential considering the immensity of the task).

In conclusion, demotivation can be understood as the different factors that make students less motivated, whereas amotivation refers to a total absence of motivation in an activity. As explained by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 140), unrealistic outcome expectations are very typical aspects of amotivation. In addition, Kikuchi (2015) illustrates that amotivated students cannot see why they should keep attending classes and are more likely to drop out, whereas demotivated students still keep engaging in activities. Based on the research about demotivation and amotivation, one could say it is important especially for teachers to understand the reasons behind these phenomena in order to be able to design better learning materials and to find more motivating ways of teaching.

2.3 Factors affecting foster children's learning motivation

A recent study (Kääriälä *et al.* 2018) conducted in Finland, Sweden, and Denmark discovered that less than 50% of children who have lived in foster care graduate from higher education. Various studies have documented that foster children's school path can often be more problematic in comparison to their peers who live at home with their parents. In addition, previous research indicates that many children in foster care have problems with behaviour that can show in school as increased absences, being disruptive or withdrawn, and they can also have learning disorders or difficulties with attention, concentration, and participation (Tilbury *et al.* 2014). Due to learning difficulties, foster children also have more contact with special pedagogical or psychological services in school (Iversen *et al.* 2010). Furthermore, studies show that foster children are more often experiencing bullying in school in comparison to their peers (Hedin, Höjer and Brunnberg 2011).

There are multiple reasons for why foster children often have educational difficulties, and as depicted by Tilbury *et al.* (2014), many of these reasons have to do with their background. For example, experiences of abuse and neglect can at least partly explain the educational difficulties foster children often have. Additionally, research indicates that living in an unstable environment where education is not supported can lead to children's underachievement in school. Heino and Oranen (2012) discuss a study conducted in Sweden that demonstrated how after being placed in foster care and receiving individual support, children's performance in school improved. However, factors in the care system can affect these children's educational performance as well. There can be multiple placement and school changes that can lead to loss of friends or supportive teachers, and even cause a lack of continuity in curricula leading to the child falling behind (Hedin, Höjer and Brunnberg 2011; Tilbury

et al. 2014). All these factors regarding the individual aspects and the care system can affect decreasingly to the child's learning motivation.

Considering these different aspects, it is easier to understand why foster children often do not perform as well in school as their peers. Nevertheless, Hedin *et al.* (2011) underline that despite the difficulties, school often plays a significant role in their lives by providing an arena for learning and socialization. Experiences of being praised for achievements and good performance by their teachers or other adults has proven to be crucial for the children's sense of capability (Hedin *et al.* 2011; Heino and Oranen 2012). Therefore, school can be a great source of support for children in care and it provides better opportunities for adulthood.

Research considering foster children has mainly focused on the different problems they have in life. However, it is important to note that having educational difficulties does not apply to all children in care. Former clients of child welfare have also expressed in interviews that negative stereotypes and low expectations function as barriers for educational success for those with high academic competence (Iversen *et al.* 2010). Heino and Oranen (2012) remind that despite the strong attitudes and stereotypes children in welfare have to face, many of them manage school as well as other children. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that every child in welfare is an individual and should be treated without preconceptions. Additionally, it is crucial for teachers to understand that foster children's difficulties in school cannot be explained exclusively through their position as children in welfare. (Heino and Oranen 2012.)

3   PRESENT STUDY

In this chapter I will discuss the aim of this study, present the research questions, and cover the data collection and methods used in analysing the data.

3.1 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to examine different factors affecting foster children's motivation to study English. What I am especially interested in finding out are foster children's opinions and thoughts about their English teachers and their teaching methods, and whether these factors have affected their motivation and how. Additionally, since learning materials have proven to be crucial in

building and maintaining motivation in second language learning (Dörnyei 2001; 29), I feel the importance of studying whether the learning materials used in the English class affect foster children's motivation to study. It is especially important to hear young people's thoughts on what would make them feel more motivated in order for the teachers to be able to develop their teaching and the learning materials. Finally, it is in my interest to find out if there are any aspects beyond the school world, such as attitudes, personal interests, or hobbies that affect foster children's motivation to study English. The research questions of this study are the following:

1. How do learning materials affect foster children's motivation to study English?
2. How do teachers motivate or demotivate children in foster care to study English?
3. Which aspects beyond the school world affect foster children's motivation to learn English?

3.2 DATA AND METHODS

3.2.1 Data

Since it was in my interest to do research on foster children's motivation to study English, the possible target group consisted of children from age 8-18 who were placed in foster care in Finland. From this group I chose children who were at the secondary school level, possible age distribution from 12-18, because I was especially interested in hearing teenagers' perspectives and experiences regarding the topic. Interviewing was chosen as the research method for two reasons. First, motivation is quite an abstract concept, and therefore I felt that with an interview where participants can answer open-ended questions freely, I would receive more in-depth answers of the topic than for example with a questionnaire. Secondly, I was aware that it would be rather challenging to find enough participants of this specific target group for a functional quantitative study.

I wanted to divide the interview into different themes considering factors affecting the children's motivation to learn English, and therefore a semi-structured type of interview was chosen. Semi-structured interviews often follow guides, and therefore information received from different interviews is comparable to each other (Gillham 2005: 70-71). The interviews then have a basic structure that is followed, and the same questions are asked from each participant. However, semi-structured interviews are flexible in a sense that they allow the interviewer for example to add probe questions such as *why?* or *how?* (Gillham 2005: 70-71.)

The interview was divided into two themes: *1. English at school: learning materials, teachers and lessons* and *2. the use of English during free time*. In the first theme, questions regarding learning

materials were separated into a different section from teachers and lessons in order to simplify the structure of the interview. The interview consisted of 20 open-ended questions in total. Additionally, some probe questions were used in order to gain more depth for the answers. Two children participated in the study and they were a 14 and a 16 year-old. Both of the interviews were audio recorded and they took approximately 20 minutes each.

3.2.2 Data collection

The data collection was carried out in a child welfare institution in Eastern Finland in August 2019. Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, a letter of permission for data collection was sent to the municipal authorities of the children placed in the institution, the head of the institution, the potential children participating in the study, and their lawful guardians. In the letter sent to the potential participants, they were informed about the purpose of the study and asked to consider some simple questions about the topic before the actual interview. In addition, the participants were asked to bring their English text and exercise books with them to be discussed in the interview.

Three children in total received the letter, and they all agreed to participate in the study. Permits from the guardians and the institution were received without any challenges. However, the procedure of receiving the permits from the children's municipal authorities was rather complex and took more time and effort than expected. Luckily, the permits were granted from the municipalities as well. When doing research with such a vulnerable target group that foster children are, it is important to carefully study the policies of the possible collaborating municipal authorities. These authorities can require many different kinds of forms to be filled and sent to them and processing the permit applications can take several weeks.

One of the participants cancelled two days before the interviews and finding a new interviewee for replacement would have been rather difficult with such limited time. Thus, the study was conducted with only two interviewees. Before beginning the interview, the participants were given a recapitulation regarding the purpose of the study, the data collection procedure and the reporting of the results of the study. For background information the participants were asked about their age, gender, and what school year they were taking. It was emphasized that their anonymity was going to be taken care of during the whole research process, and that they could not be identified from any information in the reported results of the study.

3.2.3 Methods of analysis

Since the data was gathered with interviews, qualitative content analysis was used as a method when analysing the data. The collected data depicts the phenomenon that is being researched, and the purpose of qualitative analysis is to create a verbal and concise description of it (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 89). The audio recorded interviews were first transcribed, and the transcriptions were read through multiple times. Since there were separated themes in the interview, the collected data provided a rather clear frame for the analysis. The data was then divided into the three different sections (learning materials, teachers and lessons, and the use of English during free time), and each section was further analysed by means of the patterns and themes recurring or differing in the children's answers.

4   RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will discuss the results of my study. Since the interview consisted of two different themes that were divided into three sections altogether, I will follow the same structure in this chapter when analysing the results. First, in 4.1, I will begin with analysing the results regarding the features of the instructional context (learning materials). After that, I will cover the results regarding social and cultural influence on learning motivation. In 4.2 I will analyse the results regarding learning English at school, as of how the teacher and the methods used in the lessons can affect one's motivation. Finally, in the last section (4.3) I will discuss the results of the participants' general opinions about English, their use of English during free time, and how that can affect their motivation to learn the language.

In the present chapter I will provide examples of the answers from the participants, who were both given a code number, #L01 and #L02 (L=learner). #L01 was 14 years old and on eighth grade, and #L02 was 16 years old and on ninth grade. In the original plan I was also interested in comparing the answers between genders and see whether there were major differences. Thus, the gender of the participants was asked before the interviews, alongside age and the school year they were taking. However, since finally only two children agreed to participate in the study, analysing the differences between genders became irrelevant and I decided to leave that information out of the analysis.

The conclusion of the results will be summarized in chapter 5.

4.1 Learning materials

While social and cultural influences usually affect students' motivation over a sustained period of time, features of the instructional context, such as task and material design can affect motivation more in the short-term (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 26). Thus, hearing the interviewees' opinions about the learning materials was important, and it was chosen as the first topic of the interview. This first topic, however, turned out to be quite difficult for the participants to cover. #L02 was on 9th grade but had already completed the English syllabus the previous year, and therefore needed some time pre-interview to revise the text and exercise books in order to be able to discuss them with me. Additionally, it seemed this topic was the least interesting for both of the interviewees, and that could explain why the answers were not very broad or detailed. To break the ice a little bit in the first interview, I first asked #L01 to show me what they were reading from the textbook at the moment, and what exercises they had been doing from the exercise book. The first main question of the interview was whether the interviewees found the topics in the text- and exercise books interesting.

> *Example 1*: Öö, on ne silleen kyl ihan mielenkiintosia. Haluun oppii tätä enkkuu.
> (Um, yeah, they are somewhat interesting. I want to learn English.) #L01
> *Example 2:* No, ihan mielenkiintosii. Ei ne kauheemmin mua hirveesti kiinnosta mut ainaki oppii uutta.
> (Well, somewhat interesting. They don't really interest me that much but at least you learn something new.) #L02

Neither of the participants showed great interest towards the questions of the first topic and the answers were rather neutral. However, the reasoning the participants give in Examples 1 and 2 above sheds light on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Both of the participants said the topics in the learning materials were *'somewhat'* interesting. When comparing the answers, #L01 seems more intrinsically motivated when explaining that they *want* to learn English as reason for thinking the materials are interesting. #L02, however, continued explaining that the materials do not interest them on a personal level but at least with the materials one can learn something new. This could be interpreted as #L02 thinks reading the textbook and doing the exercises is obligatory for example in order to receive better grades or to avoid bad ones. These answers do not yet indicate which subtypes of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation are dealt with in each case.

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 26) point out that research of instructional context in relation to task and material design focuses on identifying the features that stimulate interest and offer optimal or moderate level of challenge for the learner. Although both of the interviewees in my study found the topics in the text and exercise books somewhat interesting, it seemed neither of them liked the textbook considerably. When asked to describe the textbook, both interviewees said the texts are too long. #L02 continued that the texts should be shorter and easier, and also described the exercise book

as difficult. As Muhonen (2004) also discovered, many students found the text and exercise books either too easy or too difficult and experienced that as a demotivating factor when learning English.

The second question was if there were any particular topics the participants would like to read about in English. Although #L01 seems quite content with the topics in the materials, they added that it could be interesting if there were texts related to cars, a topic that later turned out to be rather important to them in their personal life. #L02 seemed to be more interested in reading books or stories with a clear plot rather than the traditional textbook chapters. The replies are presented in Examples 3 and 4 below.

> *Example 3*: Ei oo silleen mitään tiettyä. Varmaan jotain autoihin liittyvää.
> (There's nothing in particular. Probably something related to cars.) #L01
> *Example 4*: Vähän semmosia kirjan tyyppisiä, et mis tapahtuis kunnolla jotain.
> (Something that's kind of like a book, where there really happens something.) #L02

Both interviewees were used to doing crossword puzzles and other common types of exercises, such as 'fill in the blank', and 'choose the correct answer'. In both cases the exercises were almost always done during lessons, not as homework. #L01 expressed that they liked doing the exercises the teacher gave them, and that help was provided by the teacher when needed. #L02 simply stated the exercises were difficult. Both replies are presented below in Examples 5 and 6.

> *Example 5:* Kyl, kyl mä teen, ihan mukavia. Lyhkäsiä ja ei vaikeita ja apua tulee, ku tarttee.
> (Yeah, I do, they are quite nice. Short and not that difficult and I get help when I need it.) #L01
> *Example 6:* Ne oli aika haastavia mulle.
> (They were pretty difficult for me.) #L02

When asked what type of exercises the interviewees would like to do the most, #L01 said they have always liked crossword puzzles. In turn, #L02 did not come up with any particular type of exercise but said they would have liked doing shorter exercises. By looking at #L02's answers in this first part of the interview, it seems to some extent that they found the learning materials uninteresting and even demotivating, whereas #L01 could name some positive things to say about the text and exercise books.

4.2 Teachers and lessons

The second topic of the first theme in the interview covered the interviewees' experiences and opinions about English at school more concretely. They were asked to describe what their English lessons were normally like, what type of activities they liked the most and the least, whether there were any motivating or demotivating factors they could think of about the teacher or the lessons, and

if they found studying English difficult or easy. The same English teacher has taught both interviewees, and in both of the interviewees' answers, especially the teacher or teaching methods seemed to bother them in some way. As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 28-29) depict, teachers can affect the motivational process in multiple ways, both positively and negatively. Research has indicated that motivational effectiveness could be determined as an interplay between many different factors related for example to the teacher's personality, enthusiasm, attitudes, professional competence, and classroom management methods. These factors can form multiple combinations and be equally effective on students' motivation. (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011.)

In comparison to the first part of the interview, the answers in this part are broader, nevertheless some questions turned out to be quite difficult for the interviewees to answer. When asked what the interviewees usually did in their English lessons, #L01 mentioned doing exercises online and from the exercise book, listening songs, and watching videos about different topics. #L02 stated that they usually did a lot of exercises and additionally practiced oral skills in pairs or small groups. The next question was what the interviewees liked or disliked in their lessons. #L01's reply is presented below in Example 7.

> *Example 7:* No pidän siitä et on yksinkertaset tehtävät ja saa apuu. Ja sit en oikee pidä tosta…toi opetustyyli on vähän erilainen kaikilla.
> (Well I like that the exercises are simple, and I get help. And I don't really like that…everyone has a little different style of teaching.)
> I: No osaat sä sanoa miksi et pidä siitä?
> (Can you tell me why you don't like it?)
> #L01: En mä oikeen osaa sillee sanoo. Mut niitä on vaan niin erilaisia niitä englannin opettajii, kaikilla on vähän oma tyyli opettaa.
> (I can't really say. But the teachers are just so different, everyone has their own style of teaching.)
> #L01

#L01 seemed not to like different teaching styles teachers have but could not really explain why, neither could they later come up with an answer when asked what kind of a teaching style their current teacher had. From the quote above one can conclude that #L01 has experience of various English teachers. It is possible they dislike some aspect of the current teacher's teaching style compared to their previous teachers but for some reason they did not want to or did not know how to explain it. However, when asked if there were any aspects of the teacher or the lessons that made them feel demotivated, #L01 replied there were no such aspects, and altogether seemed more content with the lessons and the teacher than #L02. #L02 expressed they liked discussions and watching videos in their lessons but disliked doing written exercises because they were difficult, and that they often felt frustrated when they did not understand some things even when the teacher tried to explain.

Additionally, #L02 mentioned a demotivating aspect of the teacher, who according to the interviewee sometimes shows answers to exercises. #L02's reply is presented below in Example 8.

Example 8: No se et se kertoo välil vastauksia, jos ei osaa. Se laittaa semmoset paperilaput siihen eteen ja sit et "kirjota sit tosta ne".
(Well, the fact that they sometimes tell me the answers, if I can't do the exercise. They put these paper notes in front of me and say: "copy from here".)
I: Okei, eli vastaukset tulee valmiina opettajalta?
(Okay, so you get completed answers from the teacher?)
#L02: Nii. Ja seki voi olla syy, tai niinku olla osasyy siihen, ettei oo oppinu kunnolla.
(Yeah. And that can be the reason, or at least partly explain why I haven't learned properly.) #L02

In the light of previous research, it is not surprising that aspects related to the teacher or teaching methods occurred in the interviewees answers as demotivating factors. As Muhonen (2004) concludes, the factors of the teacher that students experienced as demotivating were related to teaching methods, personality, and lack of competence. It seems both #L01 and #L02 dislike some aspects of the teaching methods, and especially with #L02, the teacher's actions seem to have a demotivating effect. #L02 directly stated that they felt they had not learned everything properly as a result of the teacher showing them answers to exercises. Additionally, when asked if it could have made them more motivated if something was done differently in their lessons, #L02 replied the following:

Example 9: Oisin mä varmaan oppinu paljon enemmän asioita, kun mitä nyt sit oppi.
(I think I would have learned much more than I now did.)
I: Minkälaisia ne asiat ois sitten voinu olla?
(What do you think those things could have been?)
#L02: No just sitä, niitä kielioppi ja niitä asioita. Ku niit jos ei ymmärtäny, niin välil tuli se vastaus siihen naaman eteen. Ja sitten jos ois oikeesti siellä opettamalla opettanu niin sit se ois ehkä jäänykki päähän.
(Well, especially grammar and things like that. When I didn't understand those things, I would sometimes get the answer right in front of my face. If the teacher really would have taught me then, then maybe I would have learned it.) #L02

Although my purpose in this study is to examine especially the children's perceptions and factors affecting their motivation, I think the concept of teacher motivation should also be acknowledged. As noted before, the teacher-related characteristics can affect student's motivational process either positively or negatively. Furthermore, researchers have become interested in the relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation. According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 185), there is a small but growing body of evidence showing that teacher motivation has a direct impact on student motivation. Teacher motivation can as well be affected positively and negatively by many factors, such as workload, atmosphere, and amount of support. #L02's experience of the teacher showing them answers could be seen as an example of a situation, where the teacher lacks motivation. Showing answers to a student without letting them actually put effort into the exercise is one example of

negative expectancy-driven teacher behaviour, where a teacher for example gives up easily on low-expectation students (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 186-187.)

Throughout the interview it seems #L02 finds English more difficult than #L01. When asked whether they experienced studying English easy or difficult, #L02 simply stated it felt difficult. #L01 expressed that sometimes translating text was a little difficult but did not have major problems with that. #L02 explained that especially learning grammar had been difficult but basic vocabulary was relatively easy to learn for them. In the light of #L02's answers, it seems that when they found something difficult to learn and the teacher gave up on them and showed answers, it led them feel demotivated. Following Kikuchi's (2015: 3) definition of demotivation, #L02's answers indicate that they have become demotivated as a result of external factors: the learning materials and the teacher. However, it is possible that both, the teacher-related external factors, and #L02's own attitude or reduced self-confidence have affected their motivation. #L02 found studying English difficult, and their answers so far could also be interpreted as they would, to some extent, blame either the teacher's actions or the learning materials (e.g. too long and difficult texts or difficult exercises) for it. When looking the answers from this point of view, one possible interpretation is that #L02 has a negative attitude or lacks self-confidence and thus, is internally demotivated to study English.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that both of the interviewees mentioned aspects of the teacher or teaching methods as something they disliked, it is important to note that they both also replied always receiving help during lessons if they felt the need for it. #L01, in fact, mentioned multiple times receiving help from the teacher as a positive aspect about learning English at school. In addition, #L02 commented that the teacher tries to be encouraging even when it seems to be very difficult to understand something, and they felt that by doing so the teacher tries to keep on the students' motivation. In conclusion, both interviewees were unhappy about certain things related to the teacher or the teaching methods but altogether seemed somewhat content with the teaching as it was.

4.3 The use of English during free time

This last section covers the results regarding social and cultural influences on motivation outside the school world. The interviewees were asked how they enjoyed the most and the least being in contact with English during their free time, whether they thought being able to speak English was useful and why, and where they think they could need the English language in the future. Both interviewees expressed they thought it was important to be able to speak English when travelling to other countries.

Examples 10 and 11 below present the interviewees' replies to the question whether they thought being able to speak English was useful.

> *Example 10*: No ite koen ainaki sen, että sillä pärjäis vähän pidemmälle sitte. Et ei ihan suomeekaan joka maassa puhuta.
> (Well, I personally see that with English you could make it a little further. Finnish is not spoken in every country.) #L01
> *Example 11*: No on, et jos lähtee ulkomaille, niin siellä on hyvä osaa puhuu enkkuu. Et se auttas sit vähän paremmin kuiteskii.
> (Well, yeah, if you travel to other countries, it's good to be able to speak English there. Like it would help you a little.) #L02

It was predictable that holidays or travelling in general would come up in the answers when discussing the usefulness of English. As found out from a large-scale national survey (Leppänen *et al.* 2009: 65) about Finns' uses of, attitudes, and perceptions of English, majority (69%) of the respondents thought Finnish people who travel to other countries must speak English. Furthermore, as Ruokolainen (2012) concludes, most of the upper-secondary school students who participated in the study thought English would be very important for them in the future considering education or career. I was expecting similar results from this interview, when asking in what situations the interviewees thought speaking English could be useful for them in the future. However, neither of the interviewees mentioned these aspects, as Examples 12 and 13 depict below. #L01 said again that they would most likely need English when travelling. #L02 explained that they would probably need English if they met a man, who does not speak Finnish.

> *Example 12*: No jossain vaikka...vaikka jonkun ulkomaalaisen kaupan kassalla vaikka.
> (Well somewhere for example…for example in another country at a cashier in a store.) #L01
> *Example 13:* Jos mä löydän jonkun ihanan miehen, joka ei ookkaan suomalainen. Ni sithän siin tarviis sitä enkkuu kummiskin.
> (If I find a lovely man, who isn't Finnish. I guess then I would need English.) #L02

Of course, it is important to note that the interviewees are rather young, and it is possible they have not thought about their future that much in means of education or career. In addition, the learning materials at this stage often include a lot of content about travelling in the English-speaking countries. That could partly explain why learners of this age would connect the usefulness of English mostly just with travelling to other countries. The interviewees' responses do, however, indicate that they share the idea of English as a useful tool when communicating with people they do not speak the same language with. Similarly, the results of the national survey (Leppänen *et al.* 2009: 70) imply that majority (90.1%) of the participants thought the ability to speak English increases mutual understanding between different nations.

Following the analysis of the interviewees opinions about the usefulness of English, I will now focus on the questions that were related to their own personal interests, and how they were in contact with

English during their free time. When asked how they liked the least being in contact with English during free time, #L01 stated that there were no such situations because English is needed almost on an every-day basis. In turn, #L02 replied they disliked doing homework, and that they sometimes did not do the given homework at all. These responses, again, support the impression of #L01 being more positive towards studying English than #L02. It is possible this is the case only with English, or that #L01 is generally more positively orientated with other subjects in school as well.

What I found especially interesting in this last part of the interview was that both of the interviewees shared information about how they use English with their fathers during free time. #L01 told that they spent time fixing cars with their father, and that together they search information online, which usually is in English. In turn, #L02 told that their father has taken English courses for a long time and also taught them since they were little. Example 14 below shows what #L01 replied, when asked how they most liked being in contact with English during their free time.

> *Example 14:* No mä niinku haen sit englanniks netistä tietoa, jos tartten niin noihin autoihin.
> (Well if I need to, I search information online in English about cars.)
> I: Okei, korjaat sä autoja tai onks sulla jotain tämmöstä niinku-
> (Okay, do you fix cars, or do you have some kind of a-)
> #L01: No korjaan niinku isän kaa. Ja ku ei isäkään oikein ymmärrä niistä nii etitään tietoa netistä.
> (Well, I fix them with my dad. And dad doesn't really understand much of them either, so we search information online.) #L01

#L01 seemed to be very interested in cars and motorcycles, and that came up during the interview multiple times. In addition to fixing cars with their father, #L01 told that their favourite TV series that was in English was Sons of Anarchy, because the characters in the show ride motorcycles, and he was interested in that. The next question was whether they felt they had learned English through reading car-related guides online or watching the series.

> *Example 15*: Kyl mä luulen, et kun löytää jotain uusia sanoja niin ne jää tonne koppaan, ja ne sit löytyy sieltä joskus myöhemmin.
> (Yeah, I think that when I find new words they stay in my head, and then I remember them at some point later on.) #L01

Looking at #L01's answers in Examples 14 and 15 above, it seems they feel comfortable being in contact with English during their free time when the content is somehow related to their own personal interests. They also expressed that they learn new vocabulary this way. This could be seen as an opportunity for the teachers to take advantage of their students' interests and use those topics when choosing or designing tasks. One of the components in Dörnyei's (2001: 29) framework for motivational teaching in the second language classroom is making the teaching materials relevant for the learners. As also Kikuchi (2015: 114) points out, along with age, teacher preference and curriculum, language teachers should consider the students' own interests when choosing materials.

In comparison to #L01, #L02 did not seem to have very specific personal interests or hobbies that were related to being in contact with English. #L02 noted that they listen to music in English, and often see memes on social media that are in English as well. I then asked them, too, whether they felt they had learned English this way. #L02's reply is presented in Example 16 below.

> *Example 16:* Toisaalt joo niittenkin kautta, mut sit enemmän ehkä iskän kautta.
> (Well partly through them (music and memes etc.) as well, but I think I've learned more from my dad.)
> I: Okei, mites sä iskän kautta-
> (Okay, how have you learned from your dad-)
> #L02: Se on pienest pitäen mulle puhunu kun se käy ite semmosil kurssijutuilla, se on puhunu mulle tosi paljon englantia nii sit mä opin jo pienenä puhumaan niinku englantia siin samassa. Mitä nyt jotain IC sanoja ja tällasii.
> (He takes these English courses and has spoken English to me since I was little, so I've learned to speak English like that. Like IC vocabulary and things like that.) #L02

It is interesting how throughout the interview, #L02 seemed rather uninterested and demotivated when it comes to studying English at school, and then suddenly they shared this detail from their personal life about how they have learned English from their father. They also added that their father has always helped them with homework, because he also studies English. It is likely that both of the interviewees mentioning their father in this situation was a pure coincidence. However, it seemed quite important for both of them to tell me these details of what they did with their fathers when they were home from the institution where they are placed in. I was expecting the interviewees to reply that they have learned English by listening to music, playing videogames, watching YouTube videos or TV series, and thus, I found it very interesting that they both wanted to highlight how they have used English with their fathers, and how they have learned from that. Especially #L02 underlined that they have learned more from using English with their father than they have learned from social media or listening to music. Regarding the use of English during free time, music and TV series did not seem as important to them, as the experiences shared with a close family member.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to gather information about different factors affecting foster children's motivation to study English. The first two research questions were set to examine the motivating and demotivating aspects of two factors in the school world; learning materials and teachers. The third research question was set to survey the possible factors beyond the school world, such as personal interests or hobbies affecting foster children's motivation in learning English.

First, the results regarding the learning materials indicated that both of the participants were somewhat content with the material used in the English class but also expressed that there was room for development. However, both of them had very separate preferences of what type of texts or exercises they would like to read or do. What kind of materials teachers should use, and how they could be developed, cannot be concluded by making generalisations of these replies. Nevertheless, these replies highlight the importance of considering the individual differences of learners when choosing learning materials that are relevant for the learners in order to increase their motivation (see Dörnyei 2001: 29; Kikuchi 2015: 114).

The second research question examined whether aspects of the teachers and the teaching methods were experienced motivating or demotivating by the participants. The results imply that teachers had somehow affected the participants' motivation negatively. Showing answers to exercises and different teaching styles were mentioned as demotivating factors of the teachers. In turn, encouraging and helping were experienced as motivating teacher behaviour. Teachers' positive attitude and behaviour toward the children is extremely important in building the children's sense of capability (Hedin et al. 2011). This applies to all children in and outside the welfare system. The results of this study, however, suggest the teacher gave up easily on their students, which could be explained by having low expectations for their performance. In this light, the results of this study depict the still rather common problem of foster children having to confront negative attitudes and stereotypes in the educational system.

Other than having slight challenges with motivation or general school orientedness, the results of this study do not indicate that the interviewees would have any typical challenges foster children can have (as depicted in 2.3). Although it is possible that this, in fact is the case, it should also be noted that the data I gathered for the study consisted of the children's own personal opinions and thoughts about studying English, and questions specifically related to being placed in foster care were not asked. If this topic was to be studied further, more information about the children's background, such as the amount of placement changes, a record of their previous grades in English, and possible learning

disorders or difficulties should be gathered. However, gathering this type of data for a small-scale study that this is, would have been very challenging.

Furthermore, the results regarding the third research question, the factors beyond the school world affecting the children's motivation, imply that both, the interviewee's own personal interests and close family members play a considerable role. Both of the interviewees were in contact with English through their hobbies or with their family member and had learned English that way. Especially the experiences of using English with a close family member seemed very important to them. In addition, English was considered as a useful tool for the future, mostly for international contexts, such as travelling.

The main results of this study highlight the importance of two factors; tying student's own life to studying English by finding relevant material that interests them, and the importance of having supportive teachers who believe in their student's capabilities. Most importantly, this study showed that foster children as a group are not different from any other group of children learning English. The participants' descriptions regarding the learning materials, teachers and their teaching methods, and whether these factors were experienced motivating or demotivating do not differ from what previous research on second language motivation has discussed. However, despite the sensitive nature of the topic, further research with more detailed descriptions could help with drawing a broader image of foster children's attitudes towards studying English, and the reasons behind them.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW FRAME

Teema 1. Englannin opiskelu koulussa:

<u>Oppimateriaalit:</u>

1. Kerro missä kohdassa kirjaa menette tällä hetkellä? *tässä kohtaa tarkoitus yhdessä katsella oppikirjoja
2. Ovatko englannin oppikirjoissa käsiteltävät aiheet mielestäsi kiinnostavia?
3. Mistä aiheista mieluiten lukisit ja tekisit tehtäviä englanniksi?
4. Millaisia kotitehtäviä opettaja antaa?
    o Mitä teille on viime kerralla tullut kotitehtäväksi?
5. Teetkö mielelläsi annetut kotitehtävät?
    o Miksi pidät sellaisista tehtävistä TAI millaisia tehtäviä tekisit mieluummin?
6. Kuvaile englannin tekstikirjaa kolmella sanalla?
7. Kuvaile englannin työkirjaa kolmella sanalla?

<u>Opettaja ja oppitunnit:</u>

8. Millaisia teidän englannin oppitunnit koulussa ovat?
    o Mitä siellä yleensä tehdään?
9. Mistä pidät tai et pidä englannin oppitunneilla? (Miksi?)
10. Tuntuuko englannin opiskelu helpolta tai vaikealta? (Miksi?)
    o jos vaikealta, koetko saavasi tarpeeksi tukea ja kannustusta englannin opiskelussa opettajalta tai joltain muulta aikuiselta?
11. Innostaako englannin opettaja sinua oppimaan englantia? (Miten?)
12. Vähentääkö jokin asia englannin tunneilla tai opettajassa innostustasi? (Miksi/miten?)
13. Jos jokin asia oppitunneilla tehtäisiin toisin, lisäisikö se intoasi englannin opiskeluun?
14. Miten harjoittelisit englantia kaikista mieluiten koulussa?
    o Entä kaikista vähiten?

Teema 2: Kontakti englannin kieleen vapaa-ajalla ja muut mielipiteet

15. Miten olet mieluiten tekemisissä englannin kanssa vapaa-ajalla?
16. Kuunteletko esimerkiksi englanninkielistä musiikkia, pelaatko videopelejä, tai katseletko jotain tiettyjä englanninkielisiä tv-sarjoja tai elokuvia?
    o Miksi juuri tietty artisti, peli tai sarja?
17. Koetko oppineesi englantia tällä tavalla (eli seuraamalla sarjoja/kuuntelemalla musiikkia tms.)?
18. Miten olet vähiten mieluiten tekemisissä englannin kanssa vapaa-ajalla?
19. Onko englannin osaaminen mielestäsi hyödyllistä? (Miksi?)
20. Missä tilanteissa voisit tarvita englannin osaamista tulevaisuudessa?

Apukysymyksiä:

Tuleeko sinulle jotain muuta mieleen? Voisitko tarkentaa vastaustasi? Voitko antaa jonkin esimerkin?