English and Finnish compared

- attitudes held by future experts and teachers of English

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Elisa Petrow

Department of Languages 2010

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tekijä - Author
Elisa Petrow

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Tiivistelmä - Abstract

Kieliasenteita on tutkittu maailmalla 1960-luvulta lähtien. Tutkimusmetodit koskien kieliasenteita ovat pysyneet suhteellisen samoina siitä lähtien kun Matched guise tekniikka kehittyi. Tästä lähtien tutkimusmetodologia keskittyi erilaisiin asteikkoihin ja ennalta määrättyihin vastausvaihtoehtoihin. Näitä tutkimusmenetelmiä on kritisoitu sekä kaavamaisuudesta että vastaajien huomiotta jättämisestä. Tämän tutkielman on tarkoitus määrittää suomalaisten englannin yliopisto-opiskelijoiden asenteita englannin kieltä kohtaan. Tutkielman toinen päätarkoitus on osoittaa vaihtoehtoisten tutkimusmenetelmien tarpeellisuus kieliasenteiden tutkimuksessa. Lähtökohtana tutkimuksessa on vastaajien todellisten arvioiden selvittäminen avoimella kysymyslomakkeella avulla.

Vastaajat (N=123) olivat tutkimuksen suorittamishetkellä Jyväskylän yliopiston kielten laitoksen kurssilla syksyllä 2005 ja alkukeväästä 2006. Suurin osa vastaajista oli vasta aloittanut englannin opinnot vuonna 2005. Tutkimus kuuluu suurempaan projektiin nimeltä *Noviisista Ekspertiksi.* Vastaajat on tarkoitus testata uudelleen yliopisto-opintojen loppupuolella. Kysymyslomake koostui seitsemästä avoimesta kysymyksestä, joista 4 kohtaa käsitellään tässä tutkimuksessa. Kysymykset koskivat enimmäkseen englannin kieltä, kahdessa kohdassa pyydettiin myös vastauksia liittyen suomen kieleen. Vastauksista haetaan arvioita englannin ja suomen kieltä kohtaan käyttäen apuna taustatutkimuksesta selvinneitä ulottuvuuksia sekä datasta nousseita ulottuvuuksia, esimerkiksi estetiikka ulottuvuutena kauniista rumaan. Tarkoitus on myös selvittää, riittävätkö nykyiset tutkimusmetodit tarkkaan kieliasenteiden tutkimiseen.
Tulokset osoittivat, että vastaajilla oli selvästi positiivisia asenteita englannin kielen eri osa alueita kohtaan. Negatiivisia arvioita koskien englannin kieltä oli huomattavan vähän. Suomen kieltä kohtaan arviot olivat tunnepitoisempia, mutta tässä kohdassa oli tutkimuksessa ainoa esiin noussut ulottuvuus jossa arviot olivat selkeästi negatiivisia, tämä oli kohdan 2 (suomen kieli on minusta…) ulottuvuus koskien ymmärrettävyyttä. Vastaajilla näyttäisi siis olevan enemmän positiivisia asenteita englannin kieltä kohtaan kuin omaa äidinkieltänsä, suomea, kohtaan. Tutkimus osoitti myös, että nykyiset määritelmät ja asenteiden tutkimusmetodit ovat puutteellisia. Kun vastaajille annetaan vapaus vastata haluamallaan tavalla, ovat vastaukset ja niistä saadut tulokset kattavampia kuin valmiita kaavoja käyttämällä.

CONTENTS

1 Introduction

During the last decades the English language has been growing as a world language. Furthermore, the definition of English as a language has changed a great deal. The traditional division between American and British English has grown into all sorts of different varieties. In addition, more and more people speak English as a second or foreign language. English has a steady foothold in, for example, Finland, especially in our businesses and leisure activities, such as computer games. In certain circles a concern of losing our Finnish language is experienced. Almost every person in Finland has an opinion about English, English versus Finnish and the varieties of English. Furthermore, most of these opinions have developed in schools, depending mainly on the awareness and attitudes of teachers.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the attitudes held towards the English language held by future experts and teachers of English. More specifically, the participants did a set of sentence completion tasks, which gave them more freedom to express their true attitudes . The sentence completion tasks are a part of a research project *From Novice to Expert,* and the questionnaire data was gathered during autumn 2005 and early spring 2006. The tasks will be analyzed in the study. Most studies concentrating on attitudes have been done by scales and fixed alternatives. The "chains" of these methods are to be shed in the present study. This is an important field of study as future experts and especially future teachers will be passing on their attitudes to their students. These attitudes will also guide their own work and these attitudes will definitely show in their work and how they do it. It will also be interesting to see whether the students see the English language as a whole or if they understood the varieties as likes or dislikes.

The data will be investigated for adjectives indicating evaluations, these adjectives will then be grouped into dimensions. Furthermore, these dimensions and the need for additional dimensions will be examined. The present study is a call for a change in the restrictive manner in which attitudes have been researched until this day, however, not denying that scales and pre-set dimensions are useful, although somewhat outdated. Furthermore, the purpose of the present study is to investigate attitudes towards two different languages, as the scales and techniques presented in chapter 2 are mostly designed to measure attitudes towards varieties and accents.

The study consists of three main parts: the background for the present study, the description of the present study and its results. Firstly, a general description of previous attitude research is given. Secondly, previous research methods used in attitude research is discussed. A study by Jennifer Jenkins (2007) is introduced more specifically as the ideology behind and methods used have great significance for the present study. After this, the present study is described and discussed in detail. Finally, the results and validity of the present study are examined.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Attitude

The concept of *attitude* has its roots in many fields of research. For instance, researchers in linguistics, education and social psychology all have different views of the issue. *Attitude* has an extensive history throughout the previously mentioned areas and many others. Naturally, other fields of research are more prominent that others and some researchers are viewed as authorities. The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the concept in the light of the present study.

The study of attitudes has roots in the 1960s, when Gardner and Lambert conducted their study of attitudes in Canada. Research on this issue has come a long way since then; Gardner and Lambert represent the traditional view of attitude research. Gardner (1985: 8) states that the issue of **attitude** is very complex. Many factors are included in attitudes: the beliefs of an individual, the emotional reactions and the individual's behaviour towards the attitude object. Gardner (1985: 39) claims attitudes to have two different directions. One is directed towards learning languages and the other towards the target language community. Moreover, social psychologists such as Bouchard Ryan and Giles have shown a great deal of interest in attitudes. According to them (1982: 132), attitudes are said to stem from our experiences and directing our responses to everything related to the object and situations linked with it. On the other hand, a broad and general definition by Sarnoff (1970:279) reads as follows: "a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects". This is the bottom-line of the definitions of attitudes. They are essentially one of the two, favourable or unfavourable reactions. Certainly, the matter is more wide-ranging as it comes to research as there is an indefinite amount of factors and explanations for attitudes and their theories, the concept is widely known and, thus, widely

disputed. However, when one actually gets to the foundation of attitudes, it is Sarnoff's definition that gives the most straightforward summary. Attitudes are also firmly connected to behaviour, as an attitude towards an entity affects the manner in which a person behaves in dealing with the entity in question, although, the connection between behaviour and attitude is highly dependent on the context. For example, a Finnish person's attitude towards the Swedish language could possibly be completely different depending on whether they are faced with it in Finland or in Sweden. When a person is dealing with an object of thought, for example English, the person reacts to it in a way that can always be deemed as positive or negative in its context. In the present study, the participants are given an item to react to and the context in which to react but other restrictions are kept to a minimum.

2.1.1 A brief review of attitude research

Language attitudes have been studied widely for the past 40 years, especially by social psychologists, as Preston reports (1989: 50-51). The research on attitudes has its origins in bilingual settings, the research by Lambert et al. (1960) in Francophone and Anglophone Canada being the most well-known. After the early studies, an interest in dialects increased, again, Lambert being a part of this. These early studies began to demonstrate that non-linguists clearly recognize varieties and hold stereotyped attitudes towards them. Moreover, sociolinguists have been greatly interested in this area of research. They have used similar techniques as social psychologists, for example the work of Labov (1972a), a well-known example of this being the study of the post vocalic [ɹ] in New York. Sociolinguists are mostly concerned with the social prestige of a certain variety.

In the context of applied linguistics, as stated in Giles and Billings (2004: 199), the main focus of research has been on speaker evaluations. There has also been a strong connection among listener-judges about the "stereotypical traits associated with voices". From the 1960s onwards research increased considerably. Mainly this later research provided evidence of the fact that people can have very explicit

and consistent attitudes towards certain styles of speaking. For the most part the research has been based upon the work of Lambert et al. (1960) and consequently the research has been "contained within the so-called speaker evaluation paradigm".

Basically, language attitudes involve the attitudes people have either towards different languages or language varieties of a region or social aspects, or the people who use these languages or varieties (Kalaja 1999: 46). This view is something that is rarely disputed in language attitude research. The definitions of the elements within attitudes, regions or even the people who hold the said attitudes are called into question. Kalaja gives a comprehensive account on the history of language attitudes until the 2000s, which sheds its own in light of the present study, as it reflects the same notions as the present study.

The mentalist view as reported by Kalaja (1999: 47) describes attitudes as an internal state of a person, caused by some sort of a stimulus. It is also thought that a person's attitudes towards an entity today can predict future behaviour. The stimuli mentioned above are, regarding language attitudes, for example speech or writing. The reactions to stimuli can be either positive or negative. For example, a teacher reacts negatively if he/she reads an essay written in a regional variety, as it is expected to be written in a standard language. Attitudes can also be seen as situational as the teacher might have another attitude towards the regional variety in his/her private life. Thus, attitudes are always social and in connection to other people and situations.

Attitudes can be divided into three components (Kalaja 1999: 47, Einarsson 2004: 204). The first component is the cognitive. This involves the stances (true and untrue) a person has towards the entity the attitude concerns. It is based on past experiences or authorities. It can also be based on exact and detailed information or on incomplete information, in other words, stereotypes. The evaluative/affective components are the emotional expressions of the stances in the cognitive components. This affects the actions in relation to the entity the attitude concerns. The conative component refers to the intentions and choices of

an individual based on the cognitive and evaluative/affective components. This definition is based on indirectly studying people's external behaviour (e.g. attitude indicators).

Sociologists look at attitudes from the perspective of communities (Kalaja 1999: 48). For example, they observe the positions of users of different languages in larger communities, such as Puerto Ricans in New York. Furthermore, they study what makes a good standard language, for example, the syntax and/or pronunciation of a language. Sociologists use content analysis as a means of research, when studying for example, newspaper articles, etc. Furthermore, participation/non-participation observations are used in research. In addition, questionnaires for community members are used and the participants' own evaluations. Sociolinguists and social psychologists look at attitudes from the perspective of individuals or groups who speak different languages; this is done by measuring language attitudes. Direct and indirect methods are used to describe the attitudes individuals/groups have towards regional/social varieties, dialects or languages.

2.2 Previous research methods concerning attitudes

Attitudes have been studied in many fields of research. As stated above, attitudes are considered to have their foundation in social contexts. Therefore, attitudes have been researched mainly by sociologists, social psychologists and sociolinguists. These fields also have an impact on the present study. The research methods of the fields mentioned above will be introduced in this chapter.

Researchers use direct and indirect methods, depending on the purpose of their study and different fields also prefer one or the other. A comprehensive account on these methods is given by Kalaja (1999: 49-51). Direct methods include questionnaires and interviews. These methods usually depict participants' attitudes either on two or more languages/code changes in a particular situation. Furthermore, the regional differences of a language can be described. The

questions in questionnaires and interviews can be either open or closed. Open questions are such where participants can answer as he or she chooses. For example, in an open question participants may be asked to evaluate a person's speech sample and describe how they feel about the speaker. The more controlled ways of doing this are statements, Likert-scales, semantic differential scales and other scales. In the latter, the questions are pre-determined. Indirect methods include, for example, methods such as *The Matched-Guise* (MGT), which will be explained in detail later on. Alford and Strother (as quoted by Kalaja 1999:51) have studied the reactions of non-native speakers, and they have claimed that non-native speakers of a language have the ability to differentiate between accents and thus, evaluate them.

Preston (1989: 49-52) gives the following account on some of these methods. As mentioned above, the foremost researchers concerning language attitudes are Lambert and Gardner. Lambert studied attitudes towards French and English and their variation held by Francophone and Anglophone Canadians. Strictly structured questionnaires were deemed "inappropriate" as the respondents were not likely to reveal prejudices in direct questioning. Therefore techniques such as MGT were developed. In MGT the participant hears the same speaker speaking in different accents, his/her own, and then others. After hearing the sample the subject has to evaluate the speaker or the accent he or she had used. The participants rarely realise that the speaker is in fact the same. Methods such as semantic differential scales and Likert scales have been commonly used in collecting reactions from participants, generally in association with MGT. Likert scales have been used a great deal. Subjects have to choose an alternative from a scale ranging from "completely disagree" to "completely agree", concerning a statement. Semantic differential scales range from "good" to "bad" (1 2 3 4 5). These kinds of scales are quite restrictive, depending on the researcher a great deal and as methods are strictly instrumental. Concerning these methods, the researcher has complete control over the dimensions and words/adjectives used in them, thus having control over the answers the participants give.

Language attitudes have also been studied in the light of different contexts (Kalaja 1999: 54-55). These include, for example, job interviews, schools and court rooms. The methods are often similar to laboratory experiments. The setup of the study, a test group that is compared to a control group, has one dependable phenomenon/variable that is measured (for example evaluating success in school) and language attitudes as the independent variable. Usually, MGT or a variation of it is used in these kinds of studies.

2.2.1 The Matched-Guise Technique (MGT)

MGT by Lambert is by far the most well-known technique used to extract attitudes and evaluations. Giles and Billings (2004: 200-202) give a modern account on the main issues of MGT. According to them, the technique is "built upon the assumption that speech style triggers certain social categorisations that will lead to a set of group-related trait-inferences" (Giles & Billings: 2004: 189). This leads the listener-judge to believe that the speaker has a specific array of personality characteristics. Furthermore, one of the most important factors in MGT is that the listener-judge without a doubt perceives the "guises" as authentic, when in fact; they are not (as described above). Giles and Billings (2004: 200) give accurate examples of the features that factor into the authenticity of the guise. Among other aspects voice pitch, voice quality and speech rate must be kept as constant as possible.

According to Giles and Billings (2004: 189-191), the main results of the initial MGT research (described above) by Lambert et al. are the following. The English-Canadian listener-judges favoured their own ethnic group over the French-Canadian group on half of the 14 traits. While the French-Canadian listener-judges not only concurred with the same evaluation direction, but also favoured the "outgroup" over their own on 10 out of 14 traits. These results were important

on many levels. Accordingly, the individuals have negative/unfavourable attitudes towards members of their own group. Also, language is extremely important in impression formation. Furthermore, according to Giles and Billings (2004: 190) "the study laid the foundation for an interface between sociolinguistics and sociopsychological analyses of language ... (the study is) an important factor in establishing the cross-disciplinary field of language attitudes". A large amount of studies followed and, in addition, more research that did not only concentrate on the English language but on other languages. It also provided the research area with judgement clusters, such as status vs. solidarity traits and dynamism traits. Additionally, new varieties were introduced, such as age, gender and race. These aspects have been exceedingly important and central in the research concerning attitudes to this day, although, the research is quite one-dimensional in its core. It is quite unfeasible to extract all of the details which might distort the results, additionally, the pre-determined answer-patterns might not be sufficient.

The main problems seen in MGT are the following, as stated in Garret (2010: 57-59). The authenticity of the samples is one of the issues that have been challenged. The samples can often be over exaggerated in contrast to how the varieties are spoken in the real environment, moreover, there have been found inaccuracies when mimicking accents. Furthermore, there can be a discrepancy in the way the researcher and the respondent identify the specific variety. There has also been quandary in the neutrality of the samples. As people, we always have "pre-existing social schemata" (Garret 2010: 59) concerning texts. There is no vacuum in which a text exists. Age is one aspect in this issue that has been researched; a text is interpreted differently according to the age of a respondent. The present study attempts to go around these issues.

2.2.2 Research following MGT

Giles and Billings (2004: 191-195) give an account of the subsequent empirical research that followed the research by Lambert et al. This chapter will review a few central studies which originated from MGT. These studies are concerned with the continuums and factors derived from MGT.

Edwards (as quoted by Ryan and Giles 1982:20-33) studied speech style judgements and their main patterns. These may firstly reflect intrinsic linguistic superiorities/inferiorities, secondly intrinsic aesthetic differences or thirdly, social conventions and preferences. The manners in which these are assessed are often continuums. Concerning intrinsic linguistic superiorities/inferiorities the continuum is often better-worse and correct-incorrect. Involving aesthetic differences the assessments often concern beauty, for example, beautiful-ugly. Social conventions and preferences are concerned with status and prestige. This study focused on the English language, in which the standard varieties, for example, Received Pronunciation, are often seen as "better", especially concerning the status of the variety.

Ryan, Giles and Sebastian (1982) have divided two primary sociostructural factors into two crossing dimensions. Firstly, there is the division between standard vs. non-standard varieties. This involves the power of the language variety. Secondly, one can assess the increasing vitality vs. decreasing vitality of a language. This is concerned with whether people actually speak the variety. Received Pronunciation (RP) is one variety which is a good example considering these dimensions. RP is a standard variety and it is assessed favourably when power is taken into account. However, according to recent studies, the vitality of the variety is decreasing. Attitudes, therefore, are not static conditions. Attitudes are dependent on public consensus and they can be easily altered in time to best fit the main stream society.

Giles and Billings (2004: 200) claim that there is a demand for "a more discursive perspective on the MGT paradigm", and thus, discuss some of the drawbacks of MGT. Firstly, it is stated that the social meaning should be inferred from more constructive and interpretive processes, claiming that MGT is a very static input-output mechanism. Furthermore, Edwards states (as quoted by Ryan and Giles 1982) that most studies about attitudes, especially MGT, would be more accurately termed studies of attitudes towards the speakers of particular language varieties. It is also argued by Giles and Billings (2004: 200) that the texts used in MGT cannot be neutral. The texts are claimed to have an effect on a person, even when speaking about a car, for example. Furthermore, concerning of behaviour prediction, they state that "the prediction of behaviour is based on an intra-individual comparison of behavioural alternatives, and each person's attitude toward speaking a variety of language might have to be measured (for a variety of situations) in order to predict accurately".

The results of the contextual studies are as follows (as summarized in Kalaja 1999: 55-58). In schools students may have reservations about a teacher's abilities if he/she speaks in a foreign accent. Furthermore, language attitudes seem to affect learning. Language attitudes have also been studied in court rooms. It has been observed in research that a person's accent has significance in court rooms. For example, if a person has a British accent, he/she is likely to be viewed as having committed fraud. In addition, language attitudes have been studied in doctor's offices. Doctors seem to have more difficulties in communicating with patients of lower social classes and doctors also tend to explain the diagnosis less to the lower social classes. In job interviews an employer prefers people who speak the standard variety, especially when filling in more demanding positions.

The research tradition that was predominant in the turn of the millennium has also received criticism (as summarized in Kalaja 1999: 60-62). The research has been based on positivistic thinking. The goal of the studies has been to depict and not explain attitudes. Furthermore, the purpose has been to show cause-relationships between attitudes and other factors. The studies have also been experimental and very controlled and done in laboratory circumstances. Attitude scales have been criticized for a number of reasons. Firstly, the scales often lack in their theory

base. The dimensions and the operationalisations are controlled by the researchers themselves. They are often considered as "straitjackets". The participant cannot give explanations or differing opinions on his/her answers. It is also argued that the researcher is not able to state that they have actually gotten into the bottom of the participants thoughts. As it is suggested, the research should be moving towards social constructivist thinking, away from the pure static input-ouput-mechanism. Attitudes should be seen as everyday practice and also context-dependant. Furthermore, most scales and methods use the same adjectives and this "circularity" creates problems (Garret 2010:56). The same adjectives and dimensions are used in research and thus will be considered as prevalent. It is misleading that a small and solid array of dimensions can be accurate in all cultures and situations. Moreover, it may direct researchers away from something that might prove to be at least equally interesting.

There is certainly a demand for a shift in the research of language attitudes. Folk beliefs and our understanding of them play an important part in modern attitude research and the primal starting points of language attitudes (Preston 2002: 40). The problem seems to lie in that the traditional data gathering methods, such as questionnaires and scales, give the possibility for the respondent to disguise their true feelings/attitudes and trying to answer in a way the respondent feels the interviewer wants him/her to (Preston 2002: 41). Some important questions for future research are for example finding out the beliefs, presuppositions and stereotypes which are behind language attitudes and what are the distinct regions associated with these attitudes (Preston 2002: 51). Two main dimensions, pleasantness and correctness, are also referred to in the general folk theory by Preston (2002: 62). These are, among others, the main influences of the present study.

2.2.3 Attitude evaluation and measurement

Ryan and Giles (1982) give a comprehensive review of attitude evaluation and measurement. According to them, many researchers limit attitude to an evaluative or affective response, some have also included the components of belief ("cognitive basis for the evaluation") and behaviour ("observable reflection of the evaluation"). Three assessment techniques are illustrated more specifically involving content analysis. Firstly, societal treatment is the way in which a language variety is treated, for example, in the mass media, education and official language policies. Social status and group solidarity are also very important evaluative dimensions, more specifically the standardness of a variety. Secondly, there is direct measurement. This includes direct questions/interviews to groups or individuals. The questions can concern evaluation or preference (for example situational). In addition, behavioural aspects have been studied. Indirect measurement concerns the evaluation of speakers of varieties of language (MGT). Here it is important to make a distinction between the listeners' affective responses and the beliefs they hold about the speaker.

Edwards (1982: 20-33) describes the results of particular studies on language attitudes which have implications for the evaluation and assessment of varieties. A study by Giles in 1970 suggested and supported the claim that in Britain, Received Pronunciation is the most favoured variety, regional varieties are situated in the middle and urban accents are the least favoured. Furthermore, the results on integrity and attractiveness give some preference for regional accents, and additionally concerning status RP is preferred. The implication is that accent evaluations are everything but uni-dimensional. Moreover, in a study by Edwards Irish children judged (among others) the Dublin guise lowest on competence but highest on attractiveness.

According to Edwards (1982), the issues which have an effect on the assessments and evaluations of a person are the following. As mentioned above, the evaluations of language varieties may reflect intrinsic linguistic inferiorities/superiorities, intrinsic aesthetic differences or social conventions and

preferences. The first two are unlikely among language varieties, although between languages they are more frequent. Judgements on prestige and quality are dependent on the knowledge of the social connotations. Standard varieties are preferred because historical chance gave them that particular position; there rarely is anything linguistically or aesthetically superior about these varieties. The overall studies concerning speech samples may reflect different views of social groups. Moreover, the degree of accentedness may affect the evaluation, according to a study by Ryan and Carranza (as quoted by Edwards 1982) on evaluations of English and Spanish-accented English. Furthermore, the closer the variety/accent is to the standard the higher its prestige, although, in social terms (for example, attractiveness) other varieties are often evaluated higher. Favourable varieties may also result from similarity; participants may favour the variety they themselves use. This could be accurate when second language learners evaluate their target language. The participants would thus evaluate the variety/accent they themselves wish to achieve higher.

Edwards (1982) also considers language learning settings and teachers as having a crucial role considering attitudes. He states that a positive attitude towards a language is prone to facilitate the learning of the language. Furthermore, school is the central place where children are exposed to varieties and are taught about them, thus, the teacher's attitude will affect his/her pupils in one way or another. It also seems that linguistic stereotyping begins fairly early in a child's development. Moreover, teachers are very much in control of how their pupils react to different varieties, and hopefully, the way teachers are educated is moving in the direction of tolerance and awareness of different language varieties. Teachers have language attitudes as everyone else and teachers seem to be sensitive in responding to "deviant" speech, according to Trudgill (in Edwards 1982). The pupils' voices also affect the teacher in their judgement/assessment. In summary, it is quite obvious that teachers and learners attitudes are quite important in the context of language learning.

2.2.4 Attitude research in Finland

Attitudes have been studied to some extent in Finland. The studies have mostly used the traditional research methods reported above. Haapea (1999) used MGT in her pro gradu thesis studying attitudes Finnish secondary level students have towards different speakers of English. It was found that the participants had more positive attitudes towards native speakers that towards non-native speakers. Furthermore, they had negative attitudes towards their own English accents. Hyrkstedt (1997) used discourse analysis as a method to study language attitudes. The data consisted of responses to Letters-to-the-Editor, which claimed that English was a threat to Finnish. The study explored expressions to identify interpretative repertoires, from which attitudes were studied. However, this study is clearly different from other studies and is a good example of that.

A study which is most alike the present study is a study by Kansikas (2002). It was a study on attitudes towards foreign languages in Finland. The questionnaire was similar to the one used in the present study, although with fewer questions, which is understandable as several languages were studied. The participants were also a little younger (secondary school students) than in the present study. English was described as *the most accurate (tarkin), the easiest (helpoin)* and *the richest (rikkain)* language compared to other languages. Furthermore, English was also described as *interesting (mielenkiintoinen), familiar (tuttu), easy (helppo)* and *nice (mukava).*

2.3 Attitudes in an ELF setting

As indicated above, studies on language attitudes have been quite static and fixed. There has been a need for more openness in questionnaires. A study by Jenkins (2007) concerns language attitudes in an English as a lingua franca (ELF) setting. Jenkins' study has similarities to the present study as its questionnaire is more

open and flexible. The study is a step away from the traditional attitude research methods and a step towards a more accommodating study, which in contrast to, for example, MGT has no speech samples.

Jenkins (2007: 7-8) gives a few reasons for the domination of native and standard varieties of English. It seems that English professionals, for example, teachers strive for native-speaker varieties, such as Received Pronunciation (RP). The English language is mostly thought to have originated from native speakers, which could therefore explain their worldwide control of it. Native speakers are also the dominant group of the English language, although non-native speakers by far outnumber them. Native-like accents are still thought of as being "a prerequisite for success" (2007: 68). Findings usually show that standard varieties are typically held higher in the hierarchy, and furthermore, people tend to evaluate varieties hierarchically (2007: 70). Furthermore, one hypothesis about attitudes towards varieties of English is that those who admire British English and American English have more negative attitudes towards non-standard varieties (2007: 71).

The spread of attitudes described above is due to various reasons for spreading like wildfire, as newspapers, films and novels can be, and are, very efficient in strengthening attitudes and images of accents, also in very specific ways, like in describing an accent as guttural, grating or flat, also specific phonemes can be "intrinsically unpleasant" (Jenkins 2007: 80). There seems to be a great desire in us who speak English as a foreign language to sound more and more like native-speakers. India is a good example of this, it is said that "the best place to hear an RP accent nowadays is India" (Jenkins 2007: 81). Various accents can also cause difficulties in various aspects of life. It has been documented that immigrants from Asian and Pacific countries have had trouble in getting a job in Britain because a supposed problems in understanding due to a foreign accent, although, West European and Scandinavian speakers of English as a second/foreign language do not seem to create such a problem (Jenkins 2007: 81-82). One of the reasons for this is that a lack of intelligibility, although perceived, usually causes these negative attitudes. Moreover, non-natives seem to be embarrassed by their compatriots and people tend to be stricter towards their own first language group,

although they may not have negative attitudes towards other non-native speakers (Jenkins 2007: 89). There are also examples (in China) of the notion that teachers who have a standard American or RP accent are rated higher in all respects (Jenkins 2007: 93).

2.3.1 A study on attitudes in an ELF setting

Jenkins (2007: 150-189) studied language attitudes in an ELF setting in a study that is quite similar to the present one. Jenkins states that the educational context is a very important field of study concerning attitudes. Teachers convey their own attitudes to students who are at a very perceptible age for adapting these attitudes. Many people remember clearly the remarks made of language varieties by their teachers.

The questionnaire was designed to shed light on how teachers perceived ELF accents in relation to native speaker (NS) accents. The questionnaire specified six expanding circle countries to give a range of areas such as Europe, East Asia and Latin America. The specific countries in the questionnaire were Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, Spain and Sweden. Three inner circle accents were also specified, they were UK English, American English and Australian English. These were used as broad examples, as there are numerous varieties within these accents. Furthermore, one outer circle accent, Indian English, was also identified. This was done in order to give further insight into the issue.

The participants were asked to comment on the selected accents. They were also asked to rank accents and give the five best ones according to their own preferences. After this came the evaluative part. The participants were asked to rate the previously mentioned ten accents on correctness, acceptability for international communication, pleasantness and familiarity. A six-point scale was used for this part. Finally, the participants were asked whether they had any other comments. It was pointed out that they could discuss anything they wished to and that their comments would be greatly appreciated, which was thought to lower the

threshold of giving comments in this part. Moreover, a map was included as a part of the questionnaire as an aid.

The participants were teachers from 12 countries across the expanding circle, more specifically, from Austria, Brazil, China, Finland, Germany, Greece, Japan, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Taiwan. The participants from the countries mentioned in the questionnaire were selected to find out whether they had positive or negative judgements of their own language group. Some NS teachers from the UK and Canada were also included as participants.

The results of Jenkins' study. Jenkins (2007: 150-189) found some definite patterns in her study. The main findings of the ranking task were as follows. The UK and US accents were by far ranked better than any other accents. After these accents came other NS accents. Following the NS accents were closely related non-native-speaker (NNS) accents. The distantly related NNS accents were at the bottom of the ranking. Within the NS, the UK accent was rated first 167 times and American English was rated first 100 times. There was a large drop to Australian English, Canadian English and Irish English, which were next. The majority of the expanding circle respondents did not perceive their accents to be the best when considering NNS accents. The most popular NNS accents were those that are perceived to be the closest to NS accents, more specifically, Dutch, Swedish and German accents.

The results of the task where the accents were rated were quite similar. The top three countries on all dimensions were UK English, American English and Australian English, with Australian English being the third on all. UK English was perceived to be the first on correctness and pleasantness. Moreover, American English was perceived to be the first in acceptability and familiarity. The results considering American English could be due to its exposure, for example, because of films and the media. The best of the NNS accents were again Swedish and German accents. By contrast, Indian and Japanese accents were rated the poorest of the NNS accents.

The map-labelling task in Jenkins' (2007) study is in its core the closest to the data of the present study. Jenkins (2007: 167) describes the basis of this kind of research well: "in order to find out what their beliefs about and attitudes towards these accents actually are, it is important to examine what the respondents say in their own words". Furthermore, at a deeper level the respondent's attitudes were displayed in "...some of the more abstract, pejorative and at times emotional words and expressions they used...". The main dimensions along which the respondents described the accents were as follows. General aesthetic descriptors such as *good* and *bad* were used. Also the perceived correctness of an accent was commented upon. Furthermore, the intelligibility or clarity of an accent was evaluated. Other aspects that were commented upon were: the speed, rhythm, fluency and volume of an accent, which are more or less aesthetic features of an accent.

Some of the descriptions below will illustrate the accents in more detail, especially concerning American English, UK English and Australian English. The main finding related to these accents was that for the most part those who complimented American English had opposite opinions about UK English and vice versa. The feature that was the most commented upon was intelligibility as a positive feature. American English was perceived to be easy to understand. American English was also perceived to have a casual and relaxed quality about it, although those who preferred UK English perceived American English to be sloppy. Furthermore, American English is not perceived to be incorrect in any way. UK English was recognized as authentic and traditional. It was also evaluated positively along the intelligibility dimension. Moreover, the correctness of UK English was highly emphasized and it is perceived as standard and proper. In the aesthetic dimension UK English was also evaluated positively as beautiful and elegant. Those who preferred American English over UK English mentioned that UK English is harsh and artificial. Australian English, on the other hand, was perceived to be quite ambivalent. It was recognized as the middle ground between American English and UK English. It was also commented upon on its aesthetic qualities a great deal.

One of the main conclusions was that American English and UK English were overwhelmingly preferred over others. They were complimented especially on correctness and intelligibility, but not quite as much in aesthetics. The dimensions that usually arise from studies concerning language attitudes were confirmed, including authenticity, intelligibility, correctness, pleasantness and aesthetics. Whether or not the same themes and dimensions arise from the data of the present study leads to the research questions of the present study.

3 PRESENT STUDY

3.1 The aim of the present study

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the attitudes held towards the English language by future experts and teachers of English. More specifically, the participants (N=123) did a sentence completion task, completing the sentences (among three others), "In my opinion, the English language is..." ("Englannin kieli on minusta..."), "In my opinion, the Finnish language is..." ("Suomen kieli on minusta..."), "The English language sounds like…" ("Englanti kuulostaa…") and "Compared with the Finnish language, English is to me…" ("Verrattuna suomen kieleen, englanti on minusta…"). The sentence completion task is a part of a research project *From Novice to Expert,* and the questionnaire data was gathered during autumn 2005- spring 2006. The task will be analyzed in the study. Most studies concentrating on attitudes have used other kinds of methods in mapping them out.   In the present study, the participant had the opportunity to use their imagination and create his or her own completion to the sentence as there were no pre-determined alternatives. This gives a larger amount of variety, enabling a more real picture of the phenomenon but also creating some problems concerning data analysis as particular language items are always multifunctional (Cameron et al. 2003: 43). This is an important field of study as future experts and especially future teachers might be passing on their attitudes to their students. These attitudes will also guide their own work and these attitudes will definitely show in their work and how they do it. It will also be interesting to see whether the students see the English language as a whole or whether they they different varieties as favourites or dislikes.

The study is aimed to be in contrast to previous studies. For the most part the previous research has been highly prearranged and constrained. As it has been shown before, the previous research has given the alternatives for answers and has "put words in the respondent's mouths" so to speak. The present study aims to move away from this development and offer a new non-constrictive approach to

attitude research. The present study also undertakes the challenges of grouping the adjectives, as they can be whatever the participants wished to use. Furthermore, the study is an alternative to develop the current research methods which do not give the participants the freedom to express their *genuine* attitudes with the variety they wish to convey. Words have different meanings, therefore, if the researcher pre-determines the e.g. adjectives that are used in the research, it robs the participant the choice to truly express themselves. Furthermore the present study is not fixed on adjectives but will be examining also some verbs and noun phrases.

The research questions were formed from the type of data gathered and the project *From Novice to Expert*. Considering that, the data is quite different to previous studies, the questions need also to be developed differently. Furthermore, the motive in forming the questions was the call for a change concerning research methods emerging from the background research.

> 1 What are the dimensions of judgement, or evaluations the participants have towards English, and Finnish compared with English?
>
> 2 What are the objects of thought (constructions) the future experts and teachers have towards the English language and the Finnish language?

Study design. The completion task is a part of a large longitudinal research project *From Novice to Expert.* In addition, the project contains tasks such as drawing tasks, etc. The project consists of three stages. The data collected in stage one will be re-administered in stage 3. The study gave a minimal context, the bulk of the responses completely established by the participants. They were not given any examples of responses or any other directions on how to answer. Essentially, they were completely in control of their answers, whether they used adjectives, verbs, noun phrases or none of the above. These words, mostly adjectives, are then examined and divided into dimensions and further into new dimensions if they do not fit into the predetermined dimensions.

3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were students in the University of Jyväskylä. Most of them were first-year students of English in the language department in the year 2005-2006 when the data was gathered. The participants are going to be either teachers or experts of the English language. The students have applied into either one of those fields at the same time they applied for university, although it is also possible to change the track later. Jyväskylä is located in the centre of Finland and the students come from all parts of the country. Most of the participants are in their early twenties. The gender division gives majority to women, although there are a number of males in the group. At the time of the data gathering, the participants were attending a basic course on Learning to Learn Foreign Languages offered by the language department of the university.

3.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of seven open-ended questions, four of which are dealt with in the present study. The participants have had the opportunity to fill in the questions in the manner which they themselves had seen appropriate. The questionnaire was given in the Finnish language and the participants also filled in their answers in Finnish. The questions all involved either the English language or the Finnish language. The four questions which were dealt with in the present study are (see Appendix 1): "In my opinion, the English language is..." ("Englannin kieli on minusta..."), "In my opinion, the Finnish language is..." ("Suomen kieli on minusta..."), "In my opinion, the English language sounds like…" ("Englanti kuulostaa…") and "Compared with the Finnish language, to me English is…" ("Verrattuna suomen kieleen, englanti on minusta…"). The others, which are not dealt with in the present study, were: "In my opinion,

learning English feels…" (Englannin oppiminen tuntuu minusta…"), "When I speak English, I feel…" ("Kun puhun englantia, tunnen itseni…"), "When I write in English, I feel…" ("Kun kirjoitan englantia, tunnen itseni…").

As mentioned earlier, the questionnaire allows the participants to answer as they prefer. Thus, the answers consist of a wide range of verbs, adjectives and noun phrases. While the traditional research methods and questionnaires have for the most part had predetermined answers of adjectives, although, verbs used can also convey important information on the participant's attitudes. For example, whether the participant uses the verb *like* or *love,* carries significant importance on their attitudes towards an object. The questionnaire was given to the participants in a lecture where they were given sufficient time to complete it. The answers can range from one-word answers to many sentences, which are a challenge in analysing the data, although, it is exactly the value of the present study.

The adjectives, verbs and noun phrases that were found in the data will be divided into and recorded manually in Excel files, from which dimensions can then be determined. The words are translated into English and given in both languages in the data analysis section. The aim is to explore the preliminary entities which arise from the data. Furthermore, the purpose is not to give specific amounts or percentages of words, but to discover tendencies arising from the data. In the data analysis section of the present study, the words are first given in English and then in Finnish in brackets, both in italics.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

The following sections will explore the adjectives, verbs and noun phrases which appear in the data. The occurrences have been counted for validity purposes, but giving numerical data is not the main purpose of the present study, although some numbers are given for emphasis. The words were placed hierarchically by frequency and the semantic strength of the word, for example *beautiful* would be a stronger expression than *pretty* in the data analysis. The most essential words and phrases are documented in the following sections.

The adjectives were divided into the dimensions arising from the background research to see whether the said dimensions apply. These dimensions are aesthetics, intelligibility and pleasantness. Dimensions such as authenticity and correctness are not that applicable when studying different languages, as they are in studying accents and dialects. They will be termed pre-conceived or predetermined dimensions henceforth, as they are the dimensions which were found in the background literature (see section 2). These dimensions were necessary for the data processing so that the adjectives could be separated into those dimensions to find out which adjectives were left over. Furthermore, as importantly the adjectives which did not fit directly under the said dimensions are analyzed to observe whether they have a common thread. These adjectives are then grouped and reported to see whether definite dimensions could be found. The noun phrases and verbs which are considered to have implications for attitudes towards the English or the Finnish language will also be investigated in each item.

The data was processed with the help of Excel files; the adjectives found in each item were counted and divided into the pre-determined dimensions ranging from positive adjectives to negative ones. This confirmed that there were a large number of adjectives which could not be placed into the said dimensions, depending on the item almost a half of the adjectives were left without a dimension. These adjectives were the grouped into new dimensions according to the meaning of the words. The following sections will report the findings of the

data analysis. For clarity purposes in each item, the new dimensions will be illustrated first, then the pre-determined dimensions in the following order: aesthetics, intelligibility and pleasantness. Finally, the noun phrases and verbs will be depicted.

4.1 Item 1: In my opinion English is...

4.1.1 Adjectives and dimensions

There were a large number of adjectives which did not fit into any of the pre-conceived dimensions. However, some the adjectives can be placed along a dimension of **practicality**. The adjectives found are concerned with the usefulness of English as a language. Furthermore, the attitude towards a language can be affected by whether the language is of use in any way. If the language is useful, it creates a positive attitude towards the said language. This dimension was the most productive one of all. It consisted of adjectives such as, *useful/practical (hyödyllinen/käytännöllinen/tarpeellinen)*, which together had a total of 43 appearances. The word *important (tärkeä)* was mentioned often. The words *versatile, international* and *universal (monipuolinen, kansainvälinen* and *yleismaailmallinen)* were brought up often. There were no words on the negative end of this dimension.

There were also words which could be grouped along another dimension. These words were concerned with the **appeal/attraction** of a language, although, it could be argued whether the words create a proper dimension or not. The most frequent positive word was *interesting (mielenkiintoinen).* Words such as *challenging (haastava)* and *innovative (innovatiivinen)* were mentioned. The negative end of this spectrum included adjectives such as *overused (puhkikulutettu), redundant (itsestäänselvä)* and *over appreciated (yliarvostettu).* The most adjectives reflecting a negative attitude were found in this group of words. One word was found in the data which could not be put into any category,

although it had several appearances and as a word reflects interesting attitudes, this word was *dominant (dominoiva)*. It had a negative feel to it in the data.

The most productive dimension of the pre-determined dimensions in item 1 was **aesthetics**. The overall conclusion in aesthetics was that the adjectives in general were clearly more on the positive end of the spectrum. There were only three words used in a negative manner, all of them only once. These words were *too common (liian yleinen), mundane (arkinen)* and *clinical* (kliininen). The word *beautiful (kaunis)* was used most frequently in this dimension. Other words on the positive end included *wonderful (ihana), great (hieno), fascinating (kiehtova) and rich (rikas).* This dimension had wide a range in the words used, over a dozen different expressions were used in the positive end of the spectrum.

There were many answers which fell into the dimension of **intelligibility**. The dimension was again weighted on the positive end. Only one word denoted a negative attitude and it was *difficult (vaikea)*, which was used only four times. At the other end, the word *easy (helppo)* was used 29 times. Other words in the positive side were *flexible (joustava), clear (selkeä)* and *consistent (johdonmukainen).* The range of words was more limited in this dimension than in aesthetics, still there were nearly as many participants who used words that fell into this category as there were in the other dimension.

There were also some words used which fit into the dimension of **pleasantness**. There were none in the negative end. The range went from positive to neutral. The word *nice (mukava/kiva)* was used most frequently. In the neutral area were *familiar (tuttu)* and *ok (ok/jees).* Also words such as *natural (luonnollinen), fun (hauska)* and *pleasant (mieluisa)* were used. Overall, there were only a few words and they were not used frequently.

4.1.2 Noun phrases and verbs

The noun phrases found in the data reflected attitudes towards English being practical and necessary. Furthermore, it seems to be part of the respondents' identities. Many participants experienced English to be some sort of a key or gateway to the world. They used expressions such as *a lingua franca, a gate to the world* and *a key to the world*. They also used noun phrases such as *a must-have skill, an instrument of communication/work* and *a language of science.* This adds to the notion that Finns experience English to be practical and necessary for them. The participants also expressed that English is a considerable part of their lives and identities; they used phrases such as, *a second language* and *a part of my identity*.

The verbs arising from the data also reflect the practicality of English for Finns as did the noun phrases. Most of the verbs used were fairly neutral, although some of them were more noticeable. The most general verbs were *like* and *love.* Furthermore, the words which increased the perception of practicality were *to know, to learn* and *to master.* These words were often paired with adjectives such as *important* and *useful.*

4.2 Item 2: In my opinion, the Finnish language is...

The adjectives were divided into the dimensions arising from the background literature. These dimensions are aesthetics, intelligibility and pleasantness. In this item, there were also some adjectives which fit into the dimension of authenticity. Furthermore, the adjectives which do not fit directly under the said dimensions are analyzed to observe whether they have a common thread.

4.2.1 Adjectives and dimensions

Once again, there were many adjectives that did not fit into the pre-determined dimensions. Two groups could be found with semantically similar adjectives, although, at this stage they are named as dimensions. Firstly, there are words which express an emotionally positive attitude towards the Finnish language, the dimension of **emotionality**. These words included *important (tärkeä), irreplaceable (korvaamaton), valuable (arvokas)* and *dear (rakas)*. Secondly, there were words which convey the notion that Finnish is different from other languages in a positive manner, the dimension of **difference**. These words included such as *traditional (perinteikäs), different (erikoinen/erilainen), exotic (eksoottinen)* and *rare/endangered (harvinainen/uhanalainen)*. On the negative end of the spectrum of these words which have no specific dimension were such as, *obvious (itsestäänselvä), small (pieni)* and *constricted (suppea)*.

Overall in the predetermined dimension of **aesthetics**, there were fewer adjectives compared to the previous item. Furthermore, there were more adjectives in the negative end of the spectrum. The most frequently used words included *beautiful (kaunis)* and *great (hieno)*, both on the positive end of the spectrum. There were also words expressing the strength and vividness of the Finnish language. These words were for example, *the best (paras), powerful (voimakas), colourful (värikäs), rich (rikas)* and *vibrant (vivahteikas)*. As stated above, there were many more words reflecting negative attitudes in this dimension than in the previous item. Several participants referred to the Finnish language as *weird (outo)*. The Finnish language was also referred to as *unattractive (ruma), stiff (kankea/jäykkä), harsh (kova/töksähtelevä)* and *boring (tylsä)*.

The second dimension that is explored is **intelligibility**. Some of the respondents also used adjectives such as *easy (helppo)* and *direct (suoraviivainen)*. These words were used not as frequently as the negative ones. On the other hand, most of the participants used words which were placed in the negative end of the spectrum in this dimension. Most of the respondents concerning this dimension

(35) thought that Finnish is *hard/complicated (vaikea/monimutkainen)*. It was also described as *confusing (sekava)* and *illogical (epälooginen)*. This dimension had clearly more responses on the negative end of the spectrum.

Some responses also fit into the dimensions of **authenticity**, although fewer than in the previous item. Positive attitudes were expressed with words which fit into the authenticity dimension. The adjectives pointed out the uniqueness of the Finnish language. They were the following: *unique (ainutlaatuinen), original (alkuperäinen)* and *honest (rehellinen)*.

Some answers also fell into the dimension of **pleasantness**. On the positive end were words such as *familiar (tuttu), natural (luonnollinen)* and *safe (turvallinen)*. On the negative side were words such as *monotonous (monotoninen)* and *boring (tylsä)*.

4.2.2 Noun phrases and verbs

There was only one word which could fit into noun phrases conveying attitudes that should be mentioned in this section. The only words which came out of the data were *my own.* These two words were used together and separately. They were used as pre-determiners for nouns such as *language* or *thing*. No verbs were found which should be mentioned here. This was the general tendency with this item. The item was not as productive as the previous item. The words used were not as numerous in either amount or frequency. On the other hand, they were not as generic compared with the previous item. The words, in a sense, conveyed more intimate emotions.

4.3 Item 3: In my opinion, the English language sounds like...

The structure of the sections will be similar to the previous items. This time, the answers will not be divided into attitudes and adjectives about specific varieties and accents. In other words, the English language will be examined here as a whole, although specific varieties may have been mentioned. The separation between dialects and accents will be dealt with later in section 4.4.

4.3.1 Adjectives and dimensions

The adjectives which do not directly fit into any predetermined dimensions were even more scattered than in the previous items. The two main dimensions which could be found in the data expressed certain uniqueness in the language and a global nature of the language, both of which are viewed in a positive light; these are referred to as dimensions. The words which fell into the dimension of **uniqueness** were *exotic (eksoottinen), versatile (monipuolinen), different/varying (erilainen/vaihteleva)* and *special (persoonallinen)*. There were also words which communicate the negative end of this dimension, such as *mundane (arkipäiväinen)* and *impersonal (persoonaton)*. The words which convey a positive global nature were *universal (universaali/kansainvälinen), unlimited (rajoittamaton)* and *free (vapaa)*.

The dimension of **aesthetics** was very productive compared with the previous items. There were many adjectives and they were not all predictable. There was also distribution between the positive and the negative adjectives. The most frequently mentioned adjective was again *beautiful (kaunis),* which was mentioned 40 times. Many mentioned simply that English sounds *good (hyvä).* The next most often mentioned adjectives were *wonderful (ihana), musical*

(soinnikas) and *great (hieno)*. Moreover, other words mentioned on the positive end of the spectrum were such as *powerful (voimakas), bold (rohkea), floating (leijuva)* and *enchanting (kiehtova)*. There were also more adjectives on the negative end, compared with item 1, although most of these words were directed towards a specific dialect or accent. These adjectives included *annoying (ärsyttävä), poor (köyhä)* and *awful (kammottava/kauhea)*.

The next dimension to be studied is **intelligibility**. There were not many words mentioned frequently which fit into this dimension. The most frequent adjectives were *fluent (sujuva), easy (helppo), understandable (ymmärrettävä), clear (selkeä)*and *effortless (vaivaton)*. There was only one word which fell on the negative end of this dimension, *difficult/complicated (vaikeaselkoinen)*.

There were also words which could be put along the dimension of **correctness**. These words were as follows *sophisticated (sivistynyt), official (virallinen)* and *expert (asiantunteva)*. There was also one negative word mentioned, and this was *foolish (hölmö)*.

The dimension of **pleasantness** was very productive. Many different words were used and many of them frequently. There were also several words mentioned quite frequently which were placed in between the two ends. On the positive end of the spectrum the most frequently mentioned words included *familiar (tuttu), nice (mukava/kiva), fun (hauska)* and *relaxed (rento/leppoisa)*. The neutral words in between the two ends were *normal (tavallinen/normaali), neutral (neutraali)* and *okay (sopiva)*. A few words were placed in the negative end: *snobbish (snobi), uptight (takakireä)* and *arrogant (röyhkeä/pöyhkeilevä)*.

4.3.2 Noun phrases and verbs

The variety in noun phrases and verbs used was the most productive of the items, there were many words conveying attitudes in this category. These words expressed positive attitudes towards the English language. About half of the noun

phrases were about English being something personal. The participants referred to English as *music, my own language, a second language* and *something to strive for*. On the other hand, they also expressed notions of English being something universal. For this they used expressions such as *almost different languages, a language of many opportunities* and *a language for everyone*.

The verbs conveyed quite personal notions of the English language. The participants used, for example, the following verbs which stood out: *become contented, grow into, depend on* and *gratify*. The verb *gratify* was used in the following manner: *I become gratified when I hear English.*

The noun phrases and verbs convey quite a personal attitude which is definitely positive. There were not many of these in the data, although they were very powerful as they stood out in the texts. The answer was usually a long one, which showed deliberation, the respondent expressing an overall positive attitude towards English.

4.4 English as a whole or a myriad of varieties

Most of the data is concerned with native accents of English or English as a whole. The participants are only beginning with their university studies of English and might not therefore be aware of the fact that English has many sides to it. Thus, many of the participants refer to English as one language, although, fortunately the education of English in the Finnish school system is gradually moving towards the outlook that the English language consists of more than two varieties, British and American English. This is something that should change during their university studies of English.

Almost a half of the participants, 50 out of a 123, acknowledged different varieties existing in the English language. British English was the most frequently mentioned variety, American English and Australian English in general. Only a few mentioned regional varieties. Furthermore, a few mentioned English spoken

by a second-language speaker. Thus, the view of the English language the participants have is quite limited. The only item where these other varieties were mentioned was item 3: ...the English language sounds like... . The varieties of the English language are mostly differentiated by the manner of speech, although, other differences can certainly be found. The next section will give a more comprehensive view of the varieties found in the data. Firstly, British English is studied, secondly, American English and finally, other varieties which arise from the data. Again, no numerical data will be given as such, only for emphasis.

Firstly, the evaluations of British English varieties are examined. Many of the participants who acknowledged variation in the English language mentioned British English varieties. Furthermore, only a few expressed negative attitudes towards British English in general or towards a specific accent. Only two participants commented on specific accents. Irish English was commented upon both in a negative and a positive manner. Moreover, Scottish English was mentioned positively. Standard British English was also given one positive evaluation. One participant also mentioned age and class being traits which affect her evaluations on British English. British English was also compared to American English and was mostly mentioned as the better variety of the two. In the positive end of the spectrum, British English was considered to be *beautiful (kaunis)* and *noble (ylevä)*. Negative evaluations included adjectives such as *snobbish (snobi), arrogant (pöyhkeilevä)* and *exaggerated (liioiteltu)*.

Secondly, the evaluations of American English are considered. American English was mentioned slightly less frequently than British English. Furthermore, almost a half of the participants who mentioned American English gave negative evaluations of it. The only specific variety mentioned concerning American English was the variety spoken in Texas. The two respondents mentioning American English spoken in Texas gave the evaluation of it being too *broad (leveää)*. The positive evaluations of American English in general were that it was *nice (mukava), easier to listen to (helpompi kuunnella)* and *beautiful (kaunis)*. The negative evaluations entailed the previously mentioned expressions of English spoken in Texas, and also adjectives such as *impersonal (persoonaton)* and *bad (paha)*.

The only other variety mentioned by the participants was Australian English. Furthermore, it was only mentioned by one participant. The participant felt that British and American Englishes were beautiful but Australian English sounded ugly. Moreover, English in general was compared to German and Swedish, receiving more positive evaluations than those languages. English spoken by a Finn was also mentioned and evaluated negatively, saying that Finns who cannot pronounce the language properly sound *ugly* when speaking. Almost a half of the participants who acknowledged English being versatile, did not mention any specific varieties or accents. They frequently mentioned that English was beautiful with all its different accents and varieties. On the other hand, some stated that some varieties and accents made English difficult to understand.

4.5 Item 4: Finnish and English compared

The responses on item 4 (Compared to the Finnish language, the English language is in my opinion...) were categorized into the previously mentioned dimensions, according to the syntax of the open-ended question, more specifically on adjectives where English is the better or worse one of the languages, using comparatives.

The adjectives which did not fit into any of the predetermined dimensions were similar to the words found in the other items. Firstly, there were words which fit the dimension named **practicality**. The adjectives were also if not exactly the same, but very much alike. The word mentioned most frequently was *more international (kansainvälisempi)*. The other words in this group were such as *more useful (hyödyllisempi), more versatile (monipuolisempi), more necessary (tarpeellisempi)* and *more significant (merkittävä)*. The only word which fit into the negative side of this spectrum is *more scattered (hajanaisempi)*. The remaining adjectives could be grouped under a dimension of words illustrating the inspiring and interesting aspect of English, the dimension of **appeal**. The relevant adjectives mentioned most frequently were *more diverse (erilaisempi)* and *more*

interesting (kiinnostavampi). The other words that raised interest in this category were *more fascinating (kiehtovampi), trendier (trendikkäämpi), more challenging (haastavampi)* and *more inspiring (innostavampi/vaikuttavampi).* The adjectives on the negative end of the continuum were *more class restrictive (luokkasidonnaisempi), more passionless (intohimottomampi)* and *more restricted (typistetympi).*

The dimension of **aesthetics** was the most productive one in this item concerning the amount of different words. There was also more width in the dimension than in the previous items. There were a larger amount of adjectives on the positive end of the scale than on the negative. The adjective which was mentioned the most frequently was *more beautiful (kauniiimpi).* Other adjectives mentioned the most in the positive end were *richer (rikkaampi), better (parempi)* and *more flowing (sulavampi/soljuvampi).* Furthermore, the adjectives were concerned with the artful aspect of the English language. These were for example, *more singing (laulavampi), more poetic (runollisempi)* and *more musical (soinnukkaampi).* On the negative end of the spectrum three adjectives were used *poorer (köyhempi), more mundane (arkisempi)* and *more boring (tylsempi).*

The dimension of **intelligibility** was not rich in the amount of words, although the amount of mentions by the participants was considerable. This dimension was also heavily slanted towards the positive end of the spectrum. Overwhelmingly the adjective mentioned most frequently was *easier (helpompi)*, with 30 occurrences. The adjective *simpler (yksinkertaisempi)* was also mentioned numerous times. The English language was also considered to be *clearer (selkeämpi), more logical (loogisempi)* and *more fluent (sujuvampi).* On the other hand, in the negative end it was viewed as *harder (vaikeampi)* by a dozen of the participants. Adjectives such as *more irregular (epäsäännöllisempi)* and *more complicated* were used.

The dimension of **pleasantness** was also slightly slanted towards the positive side, although the difference between the positive and the negative side was not as considerable as in the other dimensions. Furthermore, the dimension did not have as many words in it as did the others. The adjectives mentioned most frequently in

this dimension were *nicer (mukava/mieluinen), softer (pehmeämpi)* and *more fun (hauskempi/leikkisämpi).* The adjectives which fell into the negative side were *more distant (etäisempi), stranger (vieraampi), colder (kylmempi)* and *stiffer (jäykempi).*

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Dimension and attitudes – English and Finnish

The purpose of the following sections is to examine the results of the data analysis. The items are discussed separately. Specific amounts are provided only for purposes of emphasis; therefore most of the discussion is in general again without specific numbers. The dimensions appearing in each item are discussed. Furthermore, the attitudes which they convey are also investigated. The English and the Finnish language are discussed side by side, not necessarily separating them into different chapters unless needed. The first sections examine the four items as stated above. The three final sections give a summary of the discussion, then, discuss the relevance of the present study and finally the reliability and validity of the present study.

The dimensions found in the data were aesthetics, intelligibility, pleasantness and authenticity (only in a small section). As the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions, it could be expected that not all the words could possibly fit into the pre-determined dimensions. Thus, these words were grouped into words expressing similar lines of thinking, these groups and categories which have a clear common thread will also be labelled dimensions. The implications of these grouping are discussed later in the coming sections. The adjectives, noun phrases and verbs are not given in Finnish in the discussion part, as they were given above.

5.1.1 Item 1 discussed

Item 1 was *In my opinion, the English language is...* . The adjectives which could not be placed into the predetermined dimensions did have clear common threads. The strongest dimension was practicality. A large number of the participants

mentioned adjectives which fit into this category. Furthermore, an adjective *useful/practical,* which clearly fits in here was mentioned 43 times. Moreover, words such as *international, important* and *versatile* were referred to numerous times. None of the participants brought up words which could be viewed as negative in this sense. This implies that Finns view the English language as extremely practical, thus, creating a positive attitude towards the language and learning it. Furthermore, it seems that this is also quite important for Finns, concerning languages. Seeing that Finnish is a small language and not that useful abroad, they look for those qualities in foreign languages.

The remaining adjective could also be grouped, as they conveyed the idea of the language being of interest. In this group there were adjectives expressing positive and negative attitudes towards the English language. The words expressing positive attitudes were *challenging, interesting* and *innovative*. Seeing that the participants are English students, it is evident that they view English as interesting as it is the object of their studies. These sort of positive attitudes are important for their studies and future careers. There were also words which convey negative notions of the English language. These words were *overused, redundant* and *over appreciated*. English is a language which is prominent in Finland. It is seen and heard in the media, used at work and in schools; it is quite hard to avoid it. This could create negative attitudes in that it devours Finnish more and more or becomes uninteresting because of its "invasion" into our lives. The findings here are that English is mostly interesting and thus creating motivation and positive attitudes.

In the aesthetic dimension in item 1 the positive end of the spectrum had a large number of words and many of the words were used often. Only three words had a negative connotation. This implies that the participants have mostly positive attitudes towards the English language. The adjectives used in a positive sense were quite predictable, *beautiful* is an adjective often used to describe aesthetic aspects of objects, although the participants were not specifically asked to describe an aspect, it seems to be one of the most frequent words used in this setting. Furthermore, another adjective used, *rich*, is also logical, as English is a much sizeable language than Finnish. Thus, English seems superior in range. On

the other hand, the negative words (*too common/mundane)* conveyed the notion of the English language being large and thus, being in a sense over-used. The words conveying a negative attitude also seem rational when considering the manner in which English is present in Finland, in school, spare-time and the media; it is unavoidable that such evaluations arise.

The intelligence dimension in item 1 seems slightly conflicting. There was only one word on the negative side, which was *difficult*. Considering that English is a foreign language for the participants and a large number still feels that English is very *easy* and *logical.* Although, this could result from the feelings the participants have towards other languages, for example, Swedish. The range of words was quite minimal in this dimension, although there were almost as much responses as in the aesthetics dimension. The reason for this could simply be that there are many more adjectives describing aesthetics than there are those describing intelligibility. Concerning intelligibility, the spectrum extends simply from *easy* to *difficult* and there are not as many different ways to articulate it.

The pleasantness dimension was quite minimal in item 1. Furthermore, the range of the adjectives was quite nominal. There were a few neutral adjectives, such as *familiar* and *alright/ok.* Although, the previously mentioned adjectives could be seen as positive also, at least they are on the positive side of neutral. The adjectives on the positive end of the spectrum were *fun, pleasant* and the one mentioned most was *nice.* Moreover, none of the participants mentioned the English language to be unpleasant. This implicates that considering the pleasantness, the participants have only positive attitudes towards English in this regard.

The noun phrases and verbs found in the data reflect similar attitudes that were depicted above. The participants referred to the English language as *a key, a gate* and *an instrument*. This implies again that Finns view English as something they need in their lives and futures. Thus, these notions create motivation and positive attitudes towards the language. The mention of the expression *lingua franca* also adds to this implication. Furthermore, the verbs used in the answers also give the impression that English is important in their studies and futures, as many reported

just that, saying that *...it is important for me to <u>master</u> the English language*. Many of the participants also referred to English as a *part of their identities* and *second language*. This also conveys positive attitudes, as English is a crucial part of them. The verbs and nouns reported here confirm the implication of English being vital in Finland and for Finns, creating mostly positive attitudes towards it concerning practicality and identities. On the other hand, the position of English in Finland at the moment can also cause negative attitudes towards it can be seen as overpowering.

The overall conclusion from item 1 was that the participants in general had positive attitudes towards the English language. There were negative evaluations which could imply negative attitudes, although they were quite marginal. In the aesthetics dimension the evaluations were predominantly positive, thus implying positive attitudes concerning aesthetics. Concerning the intelligence dimension, the adjectives on each end of the dimension were complete polar opposites (*easy – difficult)*. Moreover, the negative side consisted of only one word with a few occurrences. The evaluations of the participants were overwhelmingly positive concerning intelligence. This seems to suggest that they feel that English is an easy language in general. The implications of these results are that the participants have positive attitudes towards English in this regard. The results concerning the pleasantness dimension implied that the participants have mostly, if not only, positive attitudes towards English, although not very intense or extensive. One of the groups of words which emerged from the data was practicality. The data shows that the participants value English as a practical and international language, thus implying positive attitudes towards English. Almost a half of the participants gave positive evaluations fitting into this group of words. The other group arising from the data was the group labelled interest. The adjectives falling into this group had both a positive and negative end of the continuum, although the words were mostly positive in connotation, therefore implicating positive attitudes towards English concerning the matter of interest. This being almost a given as the participants are students of English and are inclined to have positive attitudes towards the language in this regard. The noun phrases and verbs found in this item expressed attitudes which could have a connection to practicality mentioned above. Some of the participants viewed English as an instrument or kea to the

world and a lingua franca, thus expressing that English is an important part of internationality and their futures.

5.1.2 Item 2 discussed

Item 2 was somewhat different to the first one, *In my opinion, the Finnish language is... .* As in the previous item, in this item there were also words which could not be placed under the pre-conceived dimensions. The results showed that these words could be grouped into a dimension which entails adjectives expressing the emotional meaning of a language. This group of adjectives contains words which are semantically quite strong, and thus, could be said to express a powerful positive attitude. The said words included for example *dear, irreplaceable* and *valuable*. These words convey a bond between a person and his/her mother tongue, these words did not appear in any other stage of the present study, none of the participants referred to the Finnish language in a negative manner in reference to this category. There was also another potential category, which contained words expressing the fact that Finnish is very different and unique in comparison to other languages. These words were such as *traditional, rare/endangered, traditional* and *exotic*. This further implies that Finnish is something quite special for the participants, and thus creating positive attitudes towards it. On the other hand, there were also a few negative evaluations concerning this group of words, which were *obvious, small* and *constricted*. This implies that Finns feel a strong personal connection with Finnish, creating positive attitudes towards it.

The most prevalent adjectives in the aesthetics dimension were *beautiful* and *great,* in the same way as in the previous item. As mentioned above the adjectives in this item and the aesthetics dimension expressed the vividness and strength of the Finnish language. Examples of this are the adjectives used: *the best, powerful, vibrant* and *rich.* Although Finnish is a relatively small language, the participants have positive attitudes in relation to power and vitality. Compared to the previous item, the adjectives mentioned are quite similar. The fact that is remarkable in

regards to these two first items, this one concerning the participants' mother tongue has more words in the negative end of the spectrum. More specifically, these words were such as *weird, unattractive, stiff* and *harsh*. This implies that the participants have more negative attitudes towards their own mother tongue, the Finnish language. Furthermore, the intensity of the implicated positive attitudes seems to be similar in strength, which is also interesting, as Finnish is the participants' mother tongue and English is a foreign language.

The intelligibility dimension reveals also interesting results. The adjective mentioned most frequently in relation to this dimension was *hard or complicated*. The Finnish language was also described as *illogical* and *confusing*. There were also a few words *(easy* and *direct)* on the positive side of the spectrum, although, the responses were heavily slanted towards the negative end. There were clearly fewer mentions of the positive words than negative. This suggests that Finns have more positive attitudes towards English concerning intelligibility. They themselves consider the Finnish language to be harder and more difficult than English, which seems surprising. One would generally suppose that a person would consider their own mother tongue easier to learn than a foreign language, as it is their native language which they have been learning throughout their lives.

This was the only item where authenticity appeared, although in a slightly different sense than when speaking of accents. It is quite natural that a native speaker feels that his/her own language is authentic. The words used to express this were *unique, original* and *honest*. This implies an innate positive attitude towards one's mother tongue and cultural inheritance. On the other hand, the pleasantness dimension was not especially productive and definitely not as productive as in item 1 concerning the pleasantness of the English language. Furthermore, the words in the positive end of this dimension were not particularly strong. These words were *familiar, safe* and *natural*. This could, on the other hand, imply that the Finnish language is inherently pleasant for the participants and does not need to be mentioned separately. In the negative side were adjectives such as *boring* and *monotonous*. The results concerning these two dimensions were not very rewarding as to examining attitudes towards the Finnish language, being quite limited and predictable.

There were not as many noun phrases or verbs conveying meaning or attitudes. The pre-determiner in noun phrases *my own* was mentioned often, followed by the noun *language* or the general expression *thing*. This re-enforces the perception formed in the previous chapters that Finnish is something extremely important and crucial to Finns and their identities. As mentioned in section 4.2.2 this item was not as fruitful in the amount of words or the frequency of occurrences. This does not necessarily signify a lesser strength in attitudes or notions towards the Finnish language, but a different more intimate connection with Finnish. The words found in this item were more distinct and loaded with emotion.

The overall implication of item 2 is that the participants expressed more positive evaluations than negative ones. Thus, it can be said that in addition to having positive attitudes towards the English language, the participants also have positive attitudes towards their mother tongue Finnish. The general findings in this item concerning aesthetics show that the participants have mostly positive attitudes towards the Finnish language. Interestingly enough, the participants gave more negative evaluations in this dimension than in the previous item concerning English. This seems to imply that the participants have more negative attitudes towards the aesthetic qualities of Finnish than English. The results concerning intelligibility were surprising. The participants gave more negative evaluations concerning the intelligibility of Finnish. The participants expressed that the Finnish language is hard and complicated, whether it be in regards to themselves or foreigners learning Finnish. This would seem to show more negative attitudes towards Finnish in this regard. Some adjectives could also be seen to correlate with authenticity, which seems natural as Finnish is evidently authentic to the participants. The pleasantness dimension was not very productive as to the purpose of the present study. The words which did not fit into the predetermined dimension were interesting. The participants expressed strong, positive and emotional evaluations of the Finnish language, which can be thought to carry positive attitudes as well. A group of words also emphasized the uniqueness of the Finnish language in a positive manner. This item showed that the participants have somewhat mixed/confusing attitudes towards Finnish, in regards to the

results concerning intelligibility, although having also very emotional and strong feelings involving the Finnish language.

5.1.3 Item 3 discussed

Item 3 is *In my opinion, the English language sounds like...* . This item was overall the most fruitful of the items investigated. Comparable to the previous item, this also had words which did not fit in the predetermined dimensions. These adjectives did not have as obvious common threads as in the previous items. These two groups of words have similar overtones in them. The first dimension is similar to the categories in the previous items, but is not as clear-cut as in the others. They expressed the unique aspect of the language. Adjectives on the positive side were such as *exotic, versatile* and *different/varying* were found in the data. Negative evaluations in this regard were *mundane* and *impersonal* were mentioned. The other dimension focused on the global nature of the English language. The adjectives could also be considered to relate to practicality, but having a slightly different connotation. These adjectives were the following: *unlimited, free* and *universal*. The implications of these groups of adjectives could be that while Finns feel that English is a global language, some find that it has special features while others feel it has become overly banal. The attitudes these evaluations convey are as two-sided as are the responses of the participants.

The adjective with the most occurrences (40) in the aesthetic dimension was *beautiful*. This adjective has come up in every item and has been the one of the most frequently used ones across all the items. Furthermore, many of the adjectives used in the positive end of this dimension were similar to the ones used in the previous items. Some of these adjectives reflected the strength of the English language, for example, *powerful* and *bold*. There were also words which depicted the attractiveness of English, such as *enchanting, musical* and *wonderful*. These adjectives clearly express positive attitudes towards the way English sounds like to the participants. On the other hand, there were also many negative evaluations of the English language. These often involved specific accents or

varieties, not many gave direct negative evaluations concerning the English language as a whole. The adjectives which conveyed negative attitude were *annoying, poor* and *awful*. The implications of this dimension are again that Finns have mostly positive attitudes, although negative evaluations are also evident. These negative evaluations are often directed towards a specific group of speakers, according to country, region, age or class.

In this item there were adjectives which clearly fitted in the intelligibility dimension. Similar to the previous items there were not many or frequently mentioned adjectives, although the adjectives which did appear were quite clear in meaning. This dimension had both a positive end and a negative end, although the negative end only consisted of one word, *complicated*. This could result from the multitude of accents and varieties of spoken English. In the positive end of the spectrum were similar words as in the previous items, for example *easy, understandable* and *effortless*. This implies that in general Finns feel that English is a fairly easy language to listen to and thus understand. This possibly results in positive attitudes towards the English language. One pre-conceived dimension having a connection to intelligibility, which has not appeared in the previous items, is correctness (as with authenticity, it has a slightly different meaning here, as the present study concentrated on languages not accents). There were a few words found here which have relevance. These adjectives are on the positive side *sophisticated, official* and *expert*. The only negative evaluation in relation to this was *foolish*. The overall impression Finns seem to have about English in this regard is that it sounds quite proper and appropriate. This might result into positive attitudes, but proper/correct language does not at all times invoke positive notions. For example, Received Pronunciation could often be seen as to have the opposite effect on people.

In this item, the pleasantness dimensions consisted of many adjectives, which were also mentioned often. The words were also divided along the continuum, as it had positive, neutral and negative adjectives. Among the positive adjectives were *fun, relaxed* and *nice*. This implies that the participants associate good feelings with hearing English. Furthermore, this often results into positive attitudes towards the language. The neutral words were *okay, neutral* and *normal*.

These evaluations could result from the previously mentioned fact that the English language is quite visible and noticeable in the Finnish society, thus, making it feel a normal part of our lives. The words in the negative end of the spectrum were *snobbish, arrogant* and *uptight*. These evaluations were also associated with accents of English, especially British accents. The implications here are that, considering pleasantness, the evaluations are more distributed along the dimension, thus revealing variation in attitudes concerning pleasantness.

There were various noun phrases which had relevance and conveyed attitudes found in this item. According to these noun phrases the participants clearly have strong positive attitudes towards the English language. Some of the participants also seem to feel that English is a crucial part of their identity, almost as much so as Finnish. English was compared to listening to music; moreover, many participants used words related to music. Some participants also pointed out that English and sounding as native as possible is something *to strive for*. Considering the participants' identities they referred to English as *a second language* and *my own language*. The notion of English being something universal, which rose from the data early on, was also enforced in the noun phrases found in this item. The participants used expressions such as *a language for anyone*. Furthermore, a reference which adds into this and the notion of practicality is that English is *a language of many opportunities*. Moreover, an expression which illustrates the many sides of English could also be found in the data of this item, a participant wrote that *[English sounds] almost like different languages*. These noun phrases convey a positive attitude towards the English language. Moreover, it conveys an insightful personal connection to English, which without a doubt is an indication of positive attitudes. The verbs which arose from the data continued on the same lines. Verbs such as *become contented* and *become gratified [while hearing English]* obviously carry positive connotations towards the English language, one participant also stated that they had *grown into English*, which again reinforces the view of English being something emotional and important for the participant.

The overall impression left from this item was that the participants have positive attitudes towards the way the English language sounds like. Again the adjective *beautiful* had the most occurrences (40) in the aesthetics dimension. The results

concerning this dimension overwhelmingly show that the participants gave mostly positive evaluations of the way English sounds like. This further implies that the participants clearly have positive attitudes towards the way English sounds. There were also negative evaluations, although most of them were directed towards specific accents or varieties, not towards the language as a whole. In these negative evaluations some of the participants mentioned different countries, regions, age-groups and social classes. The evaluations regarding the intelligence dimension were mostly positive, also implying positive attitudes held by the participants. Some results also fit into the area of correctness, and they implied that the participants perceive that English sounds quite proper and sophisticated. The pleasantness dimension had a large number of adjectives and occurrences for those. The spectrum had good width as it consisted of positive, neutral and negative adjectives. The findings implied that the participants had positive attitudes towards English. Furthermore, the neutral adjectives illustrated the fact that the English language has quite a large influence in our lives through school, work and the media. The negative evaluations were again given mostly of specific accents of English. British English accents were evaluated negatively, as some participants noted, they sound *snobbish* and *arrogant*. The pleasantness dimension revealed variation in evaluations and thus, the attitudes they convey. The remaining words could again be grouped into similar categories as in the previous items. Once more, they involved practicality and the appeal/uniqueness of the language. The evaluations were yet again positive, thus implying positive attitudes. The negative evaluations were again concerned with the notion of banality English seems to partly have for the participants. This item contained the largest number of significant noun phrases and verbs. They enforced the impression formed in the previous items that English is something very important for the participants. Furthermore, some of the participants referred to English as a part of their identity. They also see English as an important language for their futures and *something to strive for*. Some also referred to hearing the differences in English as almost separate languages and appreciate it. The implications here are as well that the participants have strong positive attitudes towards the way the English language sounds like.

5.1.4 The perceptions of English as a whole or myriad of varieties

Most of the data mentioned in this section were gathered from item 3, although a small amount was found in other items as well. Less than a half of the participants acknowledged the varieties and accents of English, although this does not mean that the majority of the participants did not understand that the varieties/accents existed, only that they decided not to mention them. The participants were also only at the beginning of their studies and thus, may not have had enough knowledge of and insight into the English language. The Finnish educational system (concerning teaching English) is very focused firstly on British English and secondly on American English. At the present time both teachers and English books are beginning to introduce other speakers of English also. These are facts which have certainly had an effect on the answers the participants gave. The participants mentioned only three varieties of English: British English, American English and Australian English. Only a few regional varieties of the previously mentioned were named specifically and only by a few participants. Moreover, they referred to accents, dialects and varieties in general. The varieties were all mentioned in item 3, which seems the natural place in which to address the issue. A few participants also gave evaluations concerning second language speakers of English. In this section, British English will be examined first and then, American English and finally other interesting entities found in the data.

British English in general was viewed mostly in a positive manner. Furthermore, British English was the one of which the most varieties were mentioned. This implies that British English is the most familiar (to Finns) of the three and/or it raises more thoughts than American English or even Australian English. Scottish English was mentioned only positively, therefore suggesting more positive attitudes towards it. Regarding Irish English, both positive and negative evaluations were given, although, the prevalent were the positive ones. The age and class of the speaker also seemed to have an effect on the evaluations, as one perceptive participant mentioned and older lady speaking in a snobbish manner and a young soccer fan sounding arrogant. The adjectives used to describe British English concerned the same perceived aspect of the language, this being the

nobility and upper-class air that the variety was claimed to have. The adjectives illustrating this both in the negative and in the positive side were *noble, snobbish* and *arrogant.* Mostly, the data implied that the participants have more positive attitudes towards British English than towards American English.

American English was not mentioned as often as British English. This could contribute to the implication that British English is more familiar than American English or raises more thoughts. The division of negative and positive evaluations was quite equal; there were a few more positive evaluations than negative ones. This could also be seen as to add to the notion that the participants view British English more positively than American English. The only variety of American English mentioned was the variety spoken in Texas. Furthermore, the evaluations of this variety were only negative. This variety was thought of as being *broad*, in a negative manner. The adjectives mentioned by the participants were more general and somewhat weaker than the ones used to describe British English. The positive adjectives used included *nice, easier (to listen to)* and *beautiful*. On the negative end were adjectives such as *impersonal* and *bad*. This further implies that the attitudes the participants have towards American English, whether positive or negative are not as intense or as varied as the attitudes towards British English.

The remaining varieties mentioned by the participants were Australian English and English spoken in a foreign accent. The participant who mentioned Australian English felt that the standard varieties of British English and American English were acceptable, but Australian English was on the other hand *ugly*. This could imply that the participant has not been exposed to the myriad of English varieties and thus might have quite a constrained view of English and negative attitudes towards variation. The participants who only mentioned accents/varieties in general (not naming any specifically) mostly expressed positive attitudes towards the diversity of the English language. On the other hand, a few mentioned that some varieties of English were quite difficult to understand, thus, implying negative attitudes towards some accents/varieties. Another group that received negative evaluations were Finns who speak English poorly or cannot pronounce it properly. Furthermore, some participants compared the whole English language to other languages, for example Swedish and German, and giving English positive

evaluations over other languages. Mainly, the participants seemed to have more positive attitudes towards English spoken by natives and positive attitudes towards English over the other languages.

The participants mentioned only a few varieties and accents of English. The only varieties mentioned were firstly, British English, more specifically Irish English and Scottish English. Secondly, American English was mentioned and more specifically the variety spoken in Texas. Thirdly, Australian English was mentioned by a few participants. The variety mentioned the most was British English and it was also viewed the most positively. This could be a result of the fact that until recently British English was considered to be the only "right" variety to be taught in Finnish schools. The evaluations of American English were only slightly slanted towards the positive. The way in which people speak in Texas was viewed only negatively. This implies that the participants seem to have more positive attitudes towards British English than towards American English. Australian English was mentioned only a few times, the evaluations being negative. These results could imply that the manner in which English is taught in Finnish schools is somewhat inadequate, as the participants did not mention any more specific varieties, and the more unfamiliar the accent/variety the more negative the evaluation. The manner in which English is taught in Finland and the books used in English classes have been changing recently towards a more diverse direction, at least according to government curriculums and new editions of English school book series. Additionally, the participants were not extremely tolerant of foreign accents of English, especially Finns speaking English incorrectly. The participants also expressed positive attitudes towards English over other languages, for example, Swedish and German.

5.1.5 Item 4 discussed

The findings in item 4 were mostly comparatives and were reported as such, the English language being the one which Finnish was compared to. The dimensions which have been used throughout the data analysis and discussion were also the

ones used as the basis for the discussion of item 4, although the adjectives are in different form than in the other items. The dimensions are also arranged in the same manner as in the previous items, moving from aesthetics to intelligibility to pleasantness finally to groups of words arising from the remaining adjectives.

Once more, the adjectives which did not fit into the previous dimensions were very similar to the adjectives in the previous items. The theme named practicality was also found in this item. The dimension found in this item was quite similar to the dimensions in the previous items. The comparatives found on the positive end were *more international* (mentioned most)*, more significant* and *more necessary*. The positive evaluations are quite understandable as English is definitely more international and more necessary throughout the world than the small Finnish language. On the negative side of practicality was the comparative *more scattered*. This is also a valid point as English is beginning to reach the point in which different varieties and accents are becoming almost incomprehensible to different speakers. However, the participants in general have positive attitudes towards English in this regard. The rest of the remaining words could be grouped under a dimension expressing interest and inspiration of the English language. The comparatives mentioned the most here were *more interesting* and *more diverse* and these results also being understandable as English is a far larger language than Finnish. Moreover, other words mentioned in this regard were slightly different from the previous items, *trendier, more fascinating* and *more challenging*. The words expressing negative evaluations here were *more restricted, more class restrictive* and *more passionless*. Both of these groups were slanted towards the positive ends of the spectrums, thus implicating that the participants have also more positive attitudes towards the English language considering these categorizations. The findings imply that the participants see English as more interesting and inspiring than Finnish could be explained by the fact that the participants are students of English, which means that they are predisposed towards the English language from the beginning.

The aesthetic dimension had wide width concerning adjectives; there were words on both ends of the dimension. The dimension was also clearly slanted towards the positive end of the spectrum. The words used were very similar compared to

the aesthetic dimensions in the previous items. The most popular word here was also *beautiful*. Many of the participants expressed that English is *more beautiful* than Finnish. The other words giving positive evaluations of the English language over the Finnish language were *richer* and *better*. There were also words which emphasized the artistic qualities of English stating that it is *more poetic, more musical* and *more flowing*. Only three comparatives were found expressing negative evaluations, these were *poorer, more mundane* and *more boring*. The implications of this dimension are that the participants have more positive attitudes towards the English language than towards the Finnish language concerning aesthetic aspects, even if they are directly compared together, not separately.

The array of adjectives in the intelligence dimension in this item was quite narrow, although the few adjectives mentioned were mentioned numerous times. Many (30) of the participants experienced English being *easier* than Finnish. English was also deemed *clearer, more logical* and *simpler*. On the other hand, a dozen of the participants felt that English is *harder* than Finnish. Other comparatives which expressed negative evaluations towards English were *more irregular* and *more complicated*. This seems to implicate that the participants consider the English language to be easier than their mother tongue Finnish. Thus, a conclusion could be made that the participants have positive attitudes towards English in this regard.

Across the items and dimensions, the pleasantness dimension in item 4 was by far the most even regarding the negative and positive sides. The adjectives found for this dimension were quite sparse. The adjectives included on the positive end of the spectrum were *nicer, softer* and *more fun*. In the negative end were comparatives such as *more distant, stranger, colder* and *stiffer*. The sparseness of adjectives could result of the fact that the participants feel that Finnish is actually more pleasant and close to them or that they could not give evaluations this matter as it did not occur to the participants. Also it has to be kept in mind that the participants were not asked to give evaluations on specific dimensions, that they had full control in the adjectives that they chose to use.

The adjectives found in this item were very similar to the adjectives found in the previous items. In the aesthetic dimension the results suggest that the participants have more positive attitude towards English, even if compared to Finnish. According to the intelligibility dimension the observations are alike. The participants seem to consider English to be easier and more logical than Finnish. This is surprising as Finnish is their mother tongue. However, the reason for this could also be that the participants thought of Finnish being difficult for foreigners. The evaluations in the pleasantness dimension were quite even, not indicating a clear bias towards either side. The remaining comparatives were once more very similar to the ones reported in other items. They indicated that English was the more interesting, international and useful language as comparing the two. The reasons for these results might be the position English holds as a lingua franca and that the participants are students of English which already suggests an interest towards the language. Furthermore, the results of the categories implicate that the participants have positive attitudes towards the English language, even compared to Finnish, in these regards.

5.2 A summary and implications of the findings

The participants were asked to evaluate the English language in different ways in items 1, 3 and 4. Throughout the data the evaluations of the English language were mostly positive. In all of the items and in the dimensions within the items, the adjectives, noun phrases and verb indicated positive attitudes. The dimensions in which English prevailed most were aesthetics and intelligibility. The words used most throughout the items and dimensions were: beautiful (aesthetics), easy and difficult (intelligibility), nice (pleasantness) and interesting, international, useful and practical (other categories). There were also findings in the evaluations which implied negative attitudes towards the English language. The dimensions which held most of these were found in item 3: aesthetics and pleasantness. It should be mentioned that the dimensions in all items were heavily slanted towards the positive end of the spectrum. The evaluations were also mostly positive in item 4, where the participants were asked to compare English and Finnish

together. The conclusion which can thus be drawn is that the participants have predominantly positive attitudes towards the English language.

The participants were asked to evaluate Finnish in item 2. The implications that emerged from the item were unexpected. The evaluations throughout most of the dimensions were more negative than in the items concerning English. Especially in the aesthetic and intelligibility dimensions there was a great deal of negative evaluations. In the intelligibility dimension there were many more negative adjectives than there were positive ones. This suggests that the participants have negative attitudes towards Finnish concerning intelligibility. However, the evaluations were mostly positive in the other dimensions and categories. Furthermore, the noun phrases found in item 1 demonstrate that the participants have strong positive emotions towards Finnish as their mother tongue.

The remaining words in each item were divided into categories with words having similar connotations. Throughout the items the remaining words were found to be quite similar, and moreover, the groups formed were also very much alike. These groups or categories were practicality, uniqueness, emotionality and global aspects. Throughout these categories the participants seemed to give positive evaluations of English, although the evaluations concerning emotionality were mostly, if not only, found concerning the Finnish language. There were many adjectives describing the positive practical aspects of English as a lingua franca, this is understandable because of the position of English in the world and because the participants are mature enough to realise this fact. This would seem to create positive attitudes towards English. Overall, there were a large number of words which did not fit into the preconceived dimensions although being extremely significant in the present study.

The implications of the data are quite apparent. The participants have mostly positive attitudes towards English. Furthermore, they seem to have somewhat less positive attitudes towards Finnish in certain aspects. Item 4 provided evidence that English received more positive evaluations compared to Finnish. Moreover, the results also implied that there are many adjectives which do not fit into the predetermined dimensions regarding evaluation and judgement. In the present

study the participants were given free hands in choice of words and adjectives. This gives them freedom to use words which they prefer to describe their evaluations and thus attitudes.

6 CONCLUSION

The relevance of the present study to previous research will be discussed in this section. The relevance to Jenkins' (2007) study seems straightforward (see section 2.3) , as in her study the British and American Englishes prevailed over others. Furthermore, only one other variety, Australian English, was mentioned. The attitudes expressed by the participants were also mostly positive towards British English. Attitudes towards American English were more even, the positive attitudes being only slightly more numerous. The dimensions found in Jenkins' study were also mostly confirmed, the authenticity and correctness dimensions not being relevant as the data was in most parts concerned with two different languages, not with accents or varieties. Moreover, the aesthetics, intelligibility and pleasantness dimensions were very clearly observable in the results.

On the other hand, the results also showed a demand for either more dimensions or greater freedom for the participants to express their evaluations and thus, attitudes. The methods reviewed in the background literature seem inadequate in the light of the results of the present study. The participants had the freedom to choose their own approaches for expressing their evaluations, which resulted in more accurate and genuine evaluations. Further research on scales and dimensions concerning research on attitudes should definitely be done, subsequently updating the previous research methods and the scales and thus, resulting in more accurate description of attitudes. The present study also indicates that more qualitative research on attitudes is also needed. Attitudes are personal and formed by a person him/herself, thus the ways of expressing these should also be more dependent of the person, more specifically, giving the person as much freedom to give the kinds of answers he/she pleases, for example, in choosing the words he/se wishes to use.

The results concerning specific adjectives were also similar to those in Jenkins' (2007) study. The participants in Jenkins' study used adjectives ranging from *good* to *bad* in the aesthetics dimension. Both of the adjectives also mentioned in the present study in concerning the positive and negative ends of the aesthetics dimension. The participants of Jenkins' study also commented on the fluency and

rhythm of the language, as did the participants of the present study. On the other hand, the adjectives found in the present study were more numerous in range and frequency, although this results also from the somewhat different natures of the present study and Jenkins' (2007) study (see section 2.3).

In relation to studies done in Finland (see section 2.2.4), the results were also applicable. Haapea (1999) found that Finns have more positive attitudes towards native speakers' accents than towards those of non-native speakers', which was also the case in the present study. Furthermore, it was found that Finns have negative attitudes towards their own accents, which was in part similar to the present study, as it was mentioned in the data that Finns who speak English incorrectly sound *ugly*. The results of the present study were also similar to the results concerning the English language found in Kansikas' (2002) study, the adjectives found in her study were also found in the present study. In both studies the participants used the following adjectives: *easy, rich, nice* and *easy*.

The reliability and limitations of the present study. The present study is a part of a larger project with professors of the language department in the University of Jyväskylä overseeing the project, thus, the questionnaire and the data for the present study being monitored by various proficient authorities. The data was processed in several phases, thus decreasing possible errors. Furthermore, as the purpose of the present study was not to give quantitative results, the data was analyzed manually, not using coding or information technology as aids. Computer programmes fail to detect emotional meanings as accurately as was needed in the present study, as computers are not proficient in detecting emotions or delicate differences in meanings of words. Therefore, it adds to the reliability of the present study that the data was analyzed manually.

The problems of the present study lie in translating the meanings of the Finnish words into the most accurate equivalents in the English language. In diminishing the errors in meaning which this could create, the words are also given in Finnish in the data analysis. The fact that the participants could answer the open-ended questions in the questionnaire completely without restraint can also be seen to create some problems. The analysis of the responses needs to be analyzed

tediously and meticulously so that the marginal for errors in interpretation are minimalized. Categorizing the adjectives which did not fit into the predetermined dimensions However, research of this nature needs to be conducted to give accuracy for attitude assessment where scales and fixed answers are used, to find out whether the words used are applicable.

Suggestions for further research. The present study showed that the participants showed definite positive attitudes towards the English language. Furthermore, they seemed to have less positive attitudes towards their own mother tongue, Finnish. It also demonstrated that the participants were very creative in their responses. Furthermore, the dimensions established in the background literature were on the one hand correct and useful and on the other hand quite inadequate as there was a multitude of evaluations which did not fit into these pre-conceived dimensions. The dimensions, although not designed exactly for the purpose of the present study were not entirely suited for comparing two different languages.

Therefore, further research is called for concerning the issues mentioned above. Research methods allowing participants to convey accurately their evaluations and attitudes should be formulated. Furthermore, if scales are used, they need to be researched more profoundly. Moreover, the dimensions which emerged from this data showed that dimensions used to study evaluations of attitudes need to be further researched, possibly adding more at least in the context of comparing larger varieties of languages, for example, British English and American English, and individual languages.

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Appendix 1

Nimi: _____

Täydennä. Jos vastaustila ei riitä, voit jatkaa sivun toiselle puolelle.

1. *Englannin* kieli on minusta…

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   │
        │   │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘

2. *Suomen* kieli on minusta…

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   │
        │   │
        │   │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘

3. Englannin kieli kuulostaa minusta…

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   │
        │   │
        │   │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘

4. Englannin oppiminen tuntuu minusta…

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   │
        │   │
        │   │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘

5. Kun *puhun* englantia, tunnen itseni…

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   │
        │   │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘

6. Kun *kirjoitan* englanniksi, tunnen itseni…

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   │
        │   │
        │   │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘

7. Verrattuna suomen kieleen, englanti on minusta…

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   │
        │   │
        │   │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘