

PERSONALITY FILTER OF THE ENGLISH STUDENT
AT SOUTH CARELIA POLYTECHNIC

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ABSTRACT

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Personality Filter of the English Language Student at South Carelia Polytechnic
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This study is about English language students at South Carelia Polytechnic in Lappeenranta. It focuses on affective and conative factors of the student, i.e. the personality filter, and sheds light on the self-system mechanisms that promote or limit language learning. The aim of the study is to characterise and analyse the construct of the personality filter held by English students at South Carelia Polytechnic and to compare the student characteristics in the units of Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration, and Technology in terms of personality filter domains. Because the objective was to construct an overall picture of the English language students, a quantitative research method with a questionnaire and psychometric approach to data analysis was selected.

The results of the study showed that the personality filter of the English student was constructed by six domains: motivation to study English, attitudes towards intercultural relations, attitudes towards English instruction, English language self-concept, general anxieties and attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic. The four first mentioned domains formed the core of the filter. About 17% of the English students had a strong personality filter, suggesting that their attitudes, motivation and view of themselves as English learners were negative, while 18% of the students had a weak filter and their attitudes, motivation and view of themselves were positive. The comparison of the three units of the polytechnic indicated that the students in the units differ from each other in all other domains except English language self-concept. Thus it can be generalised that the field of study is significantly correlated to the strength of the personality filter in the English language. The study results suggest that it would be advisable to take the differences of the English students between the units of the polytechnic into careful consideration when teaching and learning processes are planned and developed.

Keywords: personality filter, self, language learning attitude, affection, conation, polytechnic

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Polytechnics are relatively new elements in the Finnish higher education system, which consists of both universities and polytechnics. Due to the recent formation of the polytechnics there are very little previous data on the learner characteristics of polytechnic language students. As a polytechnic teacher of English and Russian, I take an interest in these characteristics and after encountering hundreds of individual students in nine years, a generalized picture that began to appear needed to be subjected to more disciplined scrutiny.

The question that automatically emerged at the very beginning of the study was from what viewpoint the research should be carried out. The purpose of my study is to provide a better understanding of the learner, i.e. the polytechnic students of foreign languages. Taking as the starting point the constructive learning theory, which considers learning as a process affected by the learner himself, the opinions of the student were chosen the basis of the present study. In the constructive view, the learning process is influenced by the student's self-concept, i.e. his view of himself as a learner (e.g., Ruohotie, 1998, 9). The foreign language self-concept, in turn, is the student's fairly stable overall notion of himself as a foreign language learner, together with his views of competence, potency, worthiness, and ideals. In this context defences and inhibitions are the guardians of the self-image construct (Laine, 1988, 17). The mind is regarded as "an active entity seeking to make meaning out of the information in the world around it, and to accommodate and assimilate that information in order to construct knowledge for itself. In this view of knowledge, the mind provides no mere replica of the outside world" (Gage & Berliner, 1998, 252). The mind of the student, in other words, his self-system, is both a structure and a process (Markova, 1987, 65) and comprises an individual's sense of his continuing identity and its relation to the environment. It is the self-system that influences what students will learn. As Gage and Berliner note, the students do not assimilate information as it is, but rather as they view it.

The personality filter, i.e. the self-system mechanism that limits the input of information and creates the individual features of the students, is the focus of the present study. The

foreign language learner's personality filter is defined as a psychological construct consisting of a set of affective and conative factors which make the learner screen incoming target language information either consciously, or unconsciously (Laine, 1988, 13). Conation is the power or act of striving with or without conscious goal.

Initially, in deciding what individual features would be taken under scrutiny, the personality filter stood out as requiring in-depth study. At this stage, it became evident that the current research emphasizes the affective and conative aspects of language learning. These aspects consist of attitude, motivation and personality (Stern, 1983, 383). The attitudinal and motivational factors are believed to be independent of intelligence and aptitude in language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, 54). Emphasising affective and conative aspects in language learning is not intended to relegate cognitive objectives to second place. Instead, individual experiences, goals and attitudes complement the cognitive aspects of learning performance. Affective factors have received much less attention in language learning research than cognitive ones, although they are believed to contribute at least as much as and often more to language learning than the cognitive skills (Stern, 1983, 386, Naimon et al., 1978, 99, Chastain, 1975, 153). According to Cattell and Child (1975, 202) personality and motivational aspects influence academic performance by approximately 50%. The process of involving personality, i.e. affection and conation, in learning is considered to be a crucial strategy of producing enduring and retrievable learning (Rogers et al, 1977, 686). This is especially true in foreign language learning, since the student approaches the learning task with certain affective and conative predispositions (Bloom, 1976, 73), while the actual learning of the language is accompanied by emotional reactions, e.g. anxiety in constructing a new foreign language self-identity and inhibitions to perform in the target language. In addition, the entire learning experience can lead to a fixed constellation of attitudes directed to the target language and to the people speaking the language (Stern, 1983, 310). Thus, learning English actually means not only learning the patterns and structures of the language, but also developing the attitudes to the language, culture, history, and pleasures or ideals of the English-speaking people.

H. Douglas Brown (1981, 113) argues that language learning involves a total commitment from the learner. According to him, unsuccessful language learning can be caused mainly by affective blocks of various kinds. It is important, then, to understand

those affective factors that either facilitate or prevent second language learning. By controlling such factors it may be possible to construct pathways to success. The research reported here on the personality filter of students of English as a foreign language is an attempt to discover if there might be affective and conative blocks which are peculiar to the polytechnic students.

But how are the constructs of the personality filter in the English language investigated? The individual features of the polytechnic students are realized in their attitudes towards the languages and foreign cultures as well as in their attitudes towards instruction. Conation, which is divided into motivation and volition, as well as self-concept and personality characteristics all reflect the self-system of the students. It is widely believed that an individual's self-concept, or his attitudes to, and perceptions of himself are intimately related to how he learns and behaves (Burns, 1982, v).

Since the psychometric approach has often been successfully used in large attitudinal studies (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, Laine 1988, Burstall 1974) this method was chosen as the basis for the current study. In the 1980's, however, some scholars criticized the generalizing methodology used in attitude research, and attitudes were defined in a different, individualistic, way e.g. by Potter and Wetherell (1984, 1987). The reason for selecting the psychometric research method for this study was that I wanted to construct a generalized picture of the English language students' filter at South Carelia Polytechnic. I was not interested in few individual cases like in discursive research.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study is to reveal the composition of the personality filter of the South Carelia Polytechnic English students and compare the realization of the filter in three units of the Polytechnic. The proportion of strong vs. weak filter students is also to be analysed. Strong filter students are individuals who are not very open to new challenges in language learning but rather protect their existing self-system, while weak filter students are individuals who love learning languages per se and the challenges the learning brings. (See Chapter 3 for a more specific definition of the research problems.)

The features of the personality filter in English, e.g. attitudes and self-concept, convey an impression of the student to the future employer. Students with different filters in English are likely to display themselves as different types of employees in working life, which today demands internationally co-operative workers. The polytechnic students' aptitude to work in international operations is likely, to considerable extent, to be explained by the personality filter. Working life seems to require low-filter students, who are "open" to new challenges.

Besides the interest which other researchers might have in the current study, the study has practical implications as well, since it provides background information especially for those language teachers who are working in different fields of study at the polytechnic. Different instructional approaches might be required, if the personality filters of students in different fields differ strongly from each other.

1.3 South Carelia Polytechnic as the Context of the Study

The Finnish polytechnics system was initiated in 1991 and South Carelia Polytechnic started its operation in 1992. The 90s was a hectic period of development in the institutions. At the beginning of the academic year 2000-2001, there are 32 permanent polytechnics in Finland. The formation of polytechnics aims to meet the current Finnish economic and employment needs. One of the noteworthy factors of change in working life is the rapid rate of internationalization in Finland. Internationalization is constantly changing and increasing today (Sinkkonen, 1998, 54). Consequently, sufficient language and communication skills in Finnish, Swedish and at least one or two foreign languages are part of the professional skills of polytechnic graduates (Kieltenopetuksen kehittäminen ammattikorkeakouluissa, Opetusministeriön työryhmien muistioita, 25:1999, Asetus ammattikorkeakouluopinnoista N:o 256/1995, 8 §). At the same time the higher education system in Finland must be on an equal footing with other EU education systems.

South Carelia Polytechnic is a multidisciplinary learning and development centre whose mission is to support the professional growth of enterprising individuals. The polytechnic courses are to reflect the practical needs of working life more directly than the more academic curricula at universities. Thus the polytechnic is expected to

contribute to increased know-how and updating of professional skills within business and industry in Finland. South Carelia Polytechnic is internationally oriented and its special strengths include the wood-processing industry and knowledge of Russia. The polytechnic operates in the cities of Imatra and Lappeenranta and consists of 9 units representing five fields of study: Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration, Technology, Tourism and Hospitality and Fine Arts and Design. The studies last for approximately 3.5 – 4 years. In autumn 1999, there were about 2300 young and adult students and 280 lecturers at the polytechnic. The Department of Continuing Education and Development Services is in charge of adult education programs.

Only the five units operating in Lappeenranta are included in the present study and thus introduced here briefly. First, the Unit of Health Care and Social Welfare offers five degree programs: nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social welfare and emergency care. There were 414 young students in autumn 1999, when the current research was conducted. Second, the Unit of Business Administration in Lappeenranta comprises the degree programs in business administration, logistics, and foreign trade. The number of students was 357. Third, the Unit of Technology in Lappeenranta offers four degree programs for 501 students. The programs are mechanical engineering, logistics (in co-operation with the unit of Business Administration), building construction and information technology. Fourth, in the Lappeenranta Unit of Crafts and Design there were 47 students studying towards the Bachelor's degree and finally, the Unit of Home Economics offers a degree program (69 students). In autumn 1999, altogether 1388 young students were enrolled on the polytechnic programs in Lappeenranta, and 54% of them were female students.

Language Learning at South Carelia Polytechnic

The main objectives of language teaching and learning at South Carelia Polytechnic are as follows: (1) the students should reach such oral and written skills in two domestic and one or two foreign languages as are needed to successfully function and develop

further one's competence in working life; and (2) language and communication skills together with cultural knowledge should be an essential part of the professional competence of polytechnic graduates. The objectives for oral skills are that teaching and learning promote readiness to communicate in various professional and every-day situations and develop the skills required in interaction. Further, the students are trained in various oral presentations according to the field of study. The objectives for written skills are that the students should be familiar with professional language and contexts. They are also trained to use professional terminology appropriately and to be able to use the genres required in their prospective work.

There are 32 language teachers at the polytechnic, eight of whom teach English. All polytechnic language courses, except the elementary ones, are specially adapted to the particular field of study in question, i.e. Language for Special Purposes is taught in all advanced courses.

All polytechnic students complete at least two credits of English and Swedish, except in the Unit of Home Economics where the students can choose Russian instead of English. One credit consists of 20 lessons with a teacher and 20 lessons' equivalent of independent work. The number of credits depends on the field of study and the unit. Traditionally, the Units of Business Administration and Tourism and Hospitality have required more language credits than the other units. As for the English language, which is the focus of this study, the number of credits is the lowest in the Unit of Health Care and Social Welfare. Although English is a compulsory foreign language, there are also optional courses of English offered to the students in some units. Advanced studies in Russian are provided especially for the students who specialize in Russian trade in the Lappeenranta Unit of Business Administration.

In the future, more and more courses where the language of instruction is other than Finnish will be included, for instance, in the programmes of foreign trade and tourism. In addition to this, the English-enhanced training of nurses has been offered since autumn 1997 and the Unit of Technology also offers courses taught in English. Moreover, it has been a standard practice at the Unit of Crafts and Design that foreign guest lecturers teach professional courses. A development program for language

instruction at polytechnics is being implemented at South Carelia Polytechnic, where plans for a "Language Net" to support teachers and students are being made.

Elective and free-choice studies are available in the following languages: Swedish, German, English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Estonian. Vocational language studies are also provided to local businesses and institutions to some extent.

Language learning is an essential part of internationalization. In this regard it is the intention of South Carelia Polytechnic to become a leading provider of specialist knowledge of Russia and Asia and to diversify and enhance the international study programs through increased student and teacher exchanges. In 1998, the Polytechnic had contracts with 50 foreign polytechnics and universities, and the number of Finnish students enrolled on exchange programs for three months or more was 60. At the same time, 90 foreign students studied at South Carelia Polytechnic. In terms of English language learning, exchanges to English-speaking countries offer the students excellent opportunities to enhanced language learning and cultural integration. Similarly, exchange to countries where English is not the native tongue, but is the language medium of learning and communication, promotes the students' language skills at least to some extent. The benefit of exchange programs is that they increase internationalization and thus promote the students competence in working life.

After this brief account of the context of the current study, Chapter 2 provides the theoretical frame of reference associated with the polytechnic English students' personality filter. Next, in Chapter 3, the specific research questions of the study are introduced and the research method is explained in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5 the results are presented and analysed and, finally they are discussed in Chapter 6.

To understand the conceptual framework around the personality filter, we will now turn to an examination of the affective and conative processes of learning.

2 THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

In this theoretical frame of reference the focus narrows down from the overall view to the theoretical core. First, a broad frame of reference i.e. a theory of school learning closely related to affective processes of school work is presented. Second, we concentrate on affective and conative variables in learning. Here the most significant characteristics of language learning, motivation and attitudes together with the self-system, are covered. Finally, the core concept of this research, the personality filter in language learning is discussed.

2.1 Theory of School Learning

Benjamin S. Bloom, famous for his educational taxonomy, his research on the stability and change of human characteristics and his contributions to educational evaluation, was concerned with the affective development of students with the objective of assisting each student to achieve a history of successful and rewarding school learning experiences. He elaborated the theory of school learning in 1976. This theory recognizes the value of the affective aspects of learning and for this reason it was chosen as the starting point of this current study.

Major variables in Bloom's school learning theory are student characteristics, instruction, and learning outcomes as shown in Figure 2.1 (Bloom, 1976, 73). The learning process commences with the student and his or her characteristics. These characteristics are divided into (1) a student's affective entry characteristics that consist of the student's emotions, attitudes, personality traits and motivational factors, and (2) cognitive entry behaviors, which facilitate the student to process, i.e. to perceive, understand, contemplate, rationalize and judge information. The entry characteristics, in turn, affect instruction which comprises learning tasks and instruction. A learning task can be anything from a short drill to a total course. Learning outcomes include the level and type of achievement, rate of learning and affective outcomes. Affective outcomes, in turn, comprise subject-related affect, school-related affect and academic and general self-concept (ibid, p.160). It is the inclusion of affective outcomes that distinguishes this

learning theory from the others and thus provided the fundamental rationale for the application of this factor in my study.

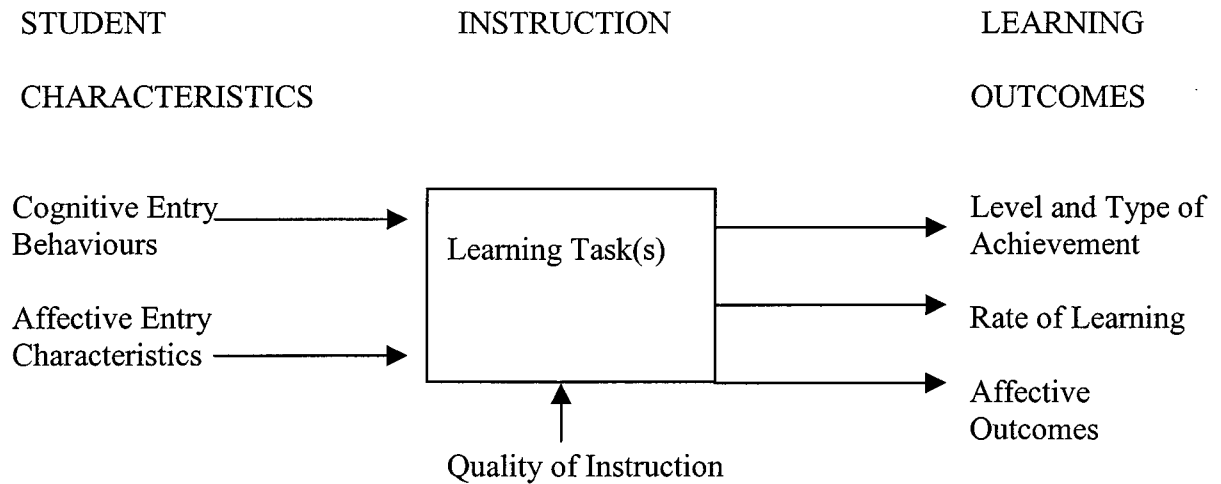


Figure 2.1
Theory of School Learning (Bloom, 1976, 73)

Although all the variables are very closely connected and influence each other, for the purposes of this study, only the affective aspects of the theory are scrutinized in detail.

When students approach a new learning task some are interested and eager to learn, others consider the task as a duty and some confront it with evident discomfort (ibid, p.73). The approach depends, of course, on the task itself, the student's personality, and his or her past learning experiences, since individuals vary in what they are emotionally ready to learn (ibid, p.74). Openness to the new learning task is essential as it motivates the student to become absorbed in the learning task.

Bloom asserts that enthusiastic students learn more rapidly and attain a higher level of achievement than disinterested students (ibid, p.74), and for this reason evaluation of achievement by means of tests involves always the evaluation of affective aspects as well. Each experienced student has a history related to the particular task and it determines the initial affective entry characteristics of the future task. In his research Bloom concluded that successfully accomplished previous activities have a positive

affect on the similar subsequent activities, and in addition, the affect is determined by future goals the student has in mind (ibid, p.78).

Carol S. Dweck (1998, 258, 1999, 13) highlights the importance of goals and divides these goals into performance goals and learning goals. Performance goals are related to validation-seeking individuals whose major concern is to look smart and obtain positive judgments of their ability, and avoid negative ones. In contrast, learning goals are connected with growth-seeking students who constantly seek opportunities to increase their ability. The students' beliefs on the theory of intelligence determines which of these two goals they have. Those students who consider intelligence as a static entity, over which they have no control, favor performance goals, and those who see intelligence as a malleable quality, which can be cultivated and developed with effort, favor learning goals. The difference between the students with the entity theory of intelligence and the incremental theory of intelligence is discovered when their ability to cope with setbacks is studied (ibid, p. 1). The incremental theory leads the students to mastery-oriented patterns of behaviour. These students seek challenges, value effort, persist in the face of obstacles and love learning, while the helpless students, who view intelligence as a fixed trait, try, at all costs, not look dumb. These two motivational patterns are not related to students' real intelligence or achievement at school, but rather demand a psychological explanation (ibid, p. 258). Thus many bright students exhibit the helpless pattern when they are confronted with difficulty, and many weaker students look mastery-oriented.

According to Bloom, the affective entry characteristics are related to positive or negative self-concept, which is a construct of the student's history as well.

Achievement and subject-related affect, i.e. interests in and attitudes about a specific school subject and further learning of the subject (Bloom, 1976, 139), are interrelated and one influences the other in a kind of spiral effect. Thus, "high achievement (or perceived high achievement) increases positive affect, which in turn influences further high achievement, and this, in turn influences further positive affect. Similarly, low achievement decreases positive affect, which in turn depresses further achievement, and this further decreases positive affect" (ibid, p.103). A spiral of pleasant and successful or unpleasant, unsuccessful learning experiences is formed this way. In some school subjects this spiral can sometimes lead to ultimate feelings of superiority or inferiority.

It should be noted here, that Bloom discusses "perceived" achievement, i.e. the way the student himself or herself views his or her own achievement and success. When the student believes in the incremental theory of intelligence and utilizes mastery-oriented methods of learning, even a poor grade can be considered as a success.

This schedule of success and approval or failure and disapproval over the years will lead to the student's generalizing about himself as a student (ibid, p.92). Thus it is the spiral that generates positive or negative self-concept. The student's view of himself is mainly influenced by the judgments made by teachers and peers, but also by parents and siblings.(ibid, p.93). In addition, the student is constantly judging himself against the standards set by the school and community (ibid, p.143). Relative judgements arise because the student is a member of a group. Academic self-concept, the student's view of himself as a learner, has been measured by e.g. surveys reporting how a student views himself in relation to learning, the school, teachers, and other students in his class (ibid, p.93). It can be divided into subject-specific academic self-concept and general academic self-concept. The academic self-concept is an affective entry characteristic which is likely to affect achievement over subsequent learning tasks. According to Bloom, it is the best index of affective entry characteristics for predicting success or failure in learning (ibid, p.97). Bloom estimated that affective entry characteristics account for up to one fourth of the variance on achievement measures (ibid, p.104).

Because Bloom considers the history of the student and relatedness to the particular task very important he prefers not to use the term motivation defined by Carroll in 1963 in terms of perseverance the students has and the effort he is willing to make to accomplish the task (ibid, p.75). But Bloom, discussing affective entry characteristics, is actually, besides affect, also dealing with conation, viewed from an different angle. The affective entry characteristics include interests, attitudes and self-views in Bloom's theory.

Bloom believes that affective consequences develop rather slowly, but once they have developed they are not easily altered (ibid, p.140). Students who perceive themselves as inadequate learners want to reduce the amount of pain by retreating, attacking or minimizing the school's effect on themselves. (ibid, p.152). Naturally these are the students who believe in the entity theory of intelligence.

According to Bloom, changes in academic self-concept can be detected only in the long run. The main factor that influences affect in school is the learner's perception of his competence in school learning (ibid, p. 140). As for the alternation of affect, Bloom points out that there must be means effective enough to strengthen the effort a person is willing to make in order to accomplish a certain new learning task. According to Bloom, it is possible to increase this effort, i.e. volition, by the means of improving the quality of instruction, helping and rewarding the learner, making changes in the curriculum and grading policies, etc. (ibid, p.105). Thus, he assumes that extrinsic, instrumental motivational means might also bring intrinsic motivation. He also suggests that if students perceive the learning tasks as new and different or unrelated to previous learning tasks, they are likely to start with neutral or positive entry characteristics, ignoring the previous history (ibid, p.106). However, if the students believed in malleable intelligence and personality, changes would become natural.

Bloom states that the students must have essential cognitive entry characteristics otherwise they fail although they hold positive affective entry characteristics. At polytechnics this problem of lacking cognitive entry characteristics is relevant with the students who enter the institution from vocational schools or colleges. Their knowledge of languages is in general much lower than that of senior secondary school graduates due to the lower number of language lessons and orientation to other fields of life. Besides this, negative affective entry characteristics together with adequate cognitive entry characteristics contribute to a failure, as well. This was verified by Cattell and Child, who measured the effect that cognitive (IQ), temperamental (personality) and dynamic (motivation) determinants have on academic performance and concluded that they all have a 25% share. Thus, according to them, personality, i.e. affective and conative aspects have a 50% influence on achievement. They assert that adequate performance depends on the degree of interest and the attitudes which together are called motivational condition. Also personality attributes and social variables are significant in performance. (Cattell & Child, 1975, 202).

Because the spiral effect between achievement and affection has been accumulating for approximately 12 years in the minds of polytechnic students, it seems likely that at least two very different student groups could be detected, the achievers and the non-achievers. According to several theorists, the students should have a rather fixed view of

themselves as English language learners when they enter the polytechnic. Will their view be reinforced or can the new start, the beginning of "English for Special Purposes" change their existing self-concept in any way, or could their theory of intelligence be altered?

2.2 Affective and Conative Variables in Learning

All aspects of human mind, cognitive, affective and conative, work together and affect the learning process. As noted earlier, cognitive processes provide the student with the tools to process information, to perceive, understand, contemplate, rationalize, and to judge. The affective entry characteristics discussed above in the Bloomian framework will at this stage be divided into two, to affective and conative constructs according to Snow, Corno and Jackson (1996, 247). The division is made because it helps more explicitly to understand the self-system discussed below.

Snow, Corno and Jackson sought to establish some structure on individual differences of these three mental processes, i.e. cognitive, affective and conative. In this report only affective and conative aspects are discussed. These above mentioned researchers emphasize that relations for affective and conative measures may be curvilinear, not linear in nature, and still moderated by other personality characteristics. Conative and affective constructs can be seen as outcomes of instruction (cf. Bloom) , not merely predispositions. Personality consists of affection and conation, intelligence is not considered as part of personality here. See Figure 2.2. (Snow, Corno and Jackson, 1996, 247).

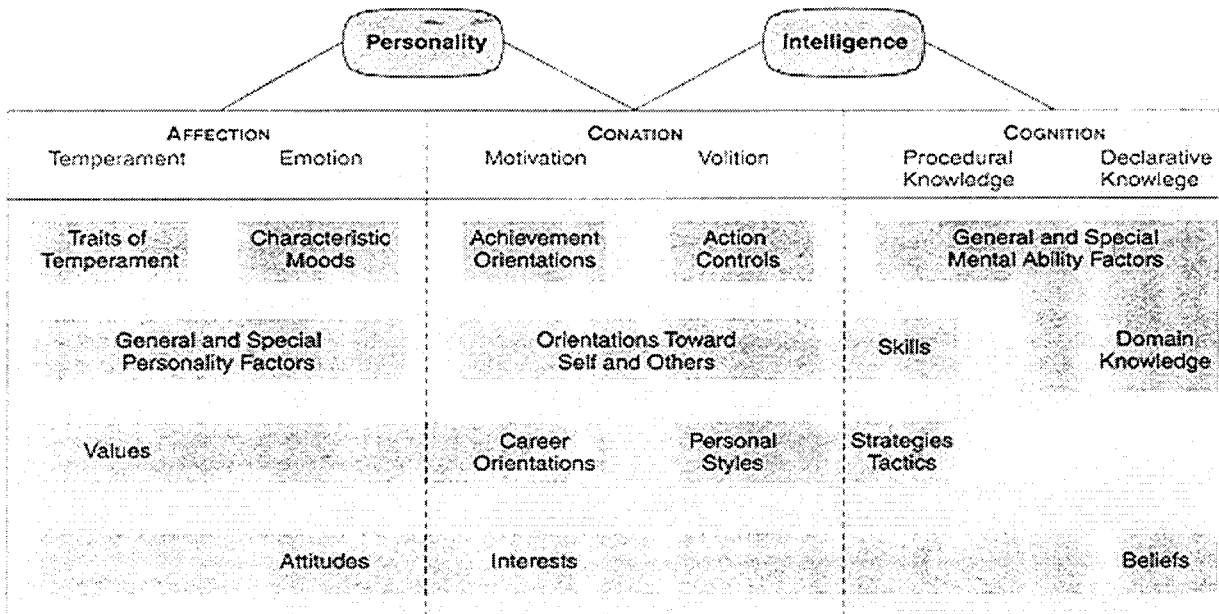


Figure 2.2 A Provisional Taxonomy of Individual Difference Constructs (Snow, Corno and Jackson, 1996, 247)

Affection is a state that comprises temperament and emotion. Temperament, in turn, is viewed as a biologically based characteristic that is heavily situation dependent. In contrast, emotion is an even more directly situation related feeling state (Snow et al., 1996, 247). Personality traits (e.g. sociability and impulsiveness) and values (e.g. patriotism) are associated with temperament, whereas characteristic moods (e.g. negativity and feeling of constraint) and attitudes (e.g. positive or negative attitude to Americans) are argued to be parts of the emotion domain. General and special personality factors (e.g. extroversion and introversion) are in the center of the affection domain.

Conative constructs refer to an intrinsic "unrest" of the organism (Snow et al, 1996, 244), to conscious strivings and efforts to reach for something, and thus they cover the motivational and volitional aspects of behaviour (Ruohotie, 1998, 31). In other words, conation is divided, according to the action-control theory (Heckhausen, 1991,183), into motivation and volition. Motivation is the state that promotes decisions in parallel to evaluations about the previous learning experiences. Volition, in turn, mediates the enactment of decisions and protects them. Interests, wishes, wants, needs and goals are

motivational elements, whereas intention, efforts, actions and self-regulation are volitional aspects (Snow et al., 1996, 248).

Conative constructs of the students will be scrutinized more thoroughly in chapter 2.2.2. However, we will first investigate the role of self-system in academic learning, since it gives valuable insight into the concept of conation as well.

2.2.1 Self-System

Barbara L. McCombs and Jo Sue Whistler discuss the role of affective variables in autonomous learning. With autonomous learning, affective and conative aspects of language learning have become highly more important than at the times when students were seen more as reactive creatures lacking their own control systems.

McCombs and Whistler define learning as "internally mediated, active, generative and constructive process of attending, processing and transforming information into both relatively stable and dynamic knowledge structures" (McCombs & Whisler, 1989, 277). Learning is a subjective experience, determined by the student's ability and motivation, and caused by the basic innate human need for self-development and self-determination. Maslow in his theory of human development outlined the hierarchical construct of the needs and placed the need for self-development on top of all the other needs (Heckhausen, 1991, 59). This need of self-actualization differentiates in individuals, with development and experience, i.e. with positive or negative judgments of competence and control, with respect to various personal goals, values and beliefs that guide the development of self-concepts and future self-images. In school learning, the individual goals of students should be in harmony with the objectives of the school or otherwise deep processing never takes place.

The need for self-efficacy and the protection of self-esteem are considered basic motivators by the recent researchers of this field e.g. Bandura (1982) and Covington (1998). Compared to abilities and other individual differences such as aptitude, the primacy of the self-system needs and goals, and the student's perception of himself as a

learner, leads to their stronger impact on the spiral process of learning (McCombs & Whisler, 1989, 277).

But what is the self-system? Broadly speaking, self is a structure and a process, "an established entity that is still undergoing development" (Markova, 1987, 65). It is the individual's sense of his own continuing identity and his relationship to his environment (Perkins, 1969, 198) that determines what ideas are relevant for him, and influences what he will learn (Perkins, 1969, 217). As seen in Fig. 2.3 (McCombs & Whisler, 1989, 280) the self-entity is an experience of being and functioning in a particular environment and socio-emotional situation. When a student understands what he is like and how he is doing, he has conceptualized his self-entity. McCombs and Whisler shed light on the impact of self-system structures and processes on affect i.e. emotional experience, motivation and self-regulation. Self-system structures are schemas for organizing self-knowledge, beliefs, and values. Self-system processes, in turn, are schemas of self-consciousness and they comprise e.g. self-esteem maintenance and self-evaluation, which are related to personal competence and control. These processes influence the future behavior including learning. The student's perceived achievement affects initial entry characteristics in the subsequent learning task.

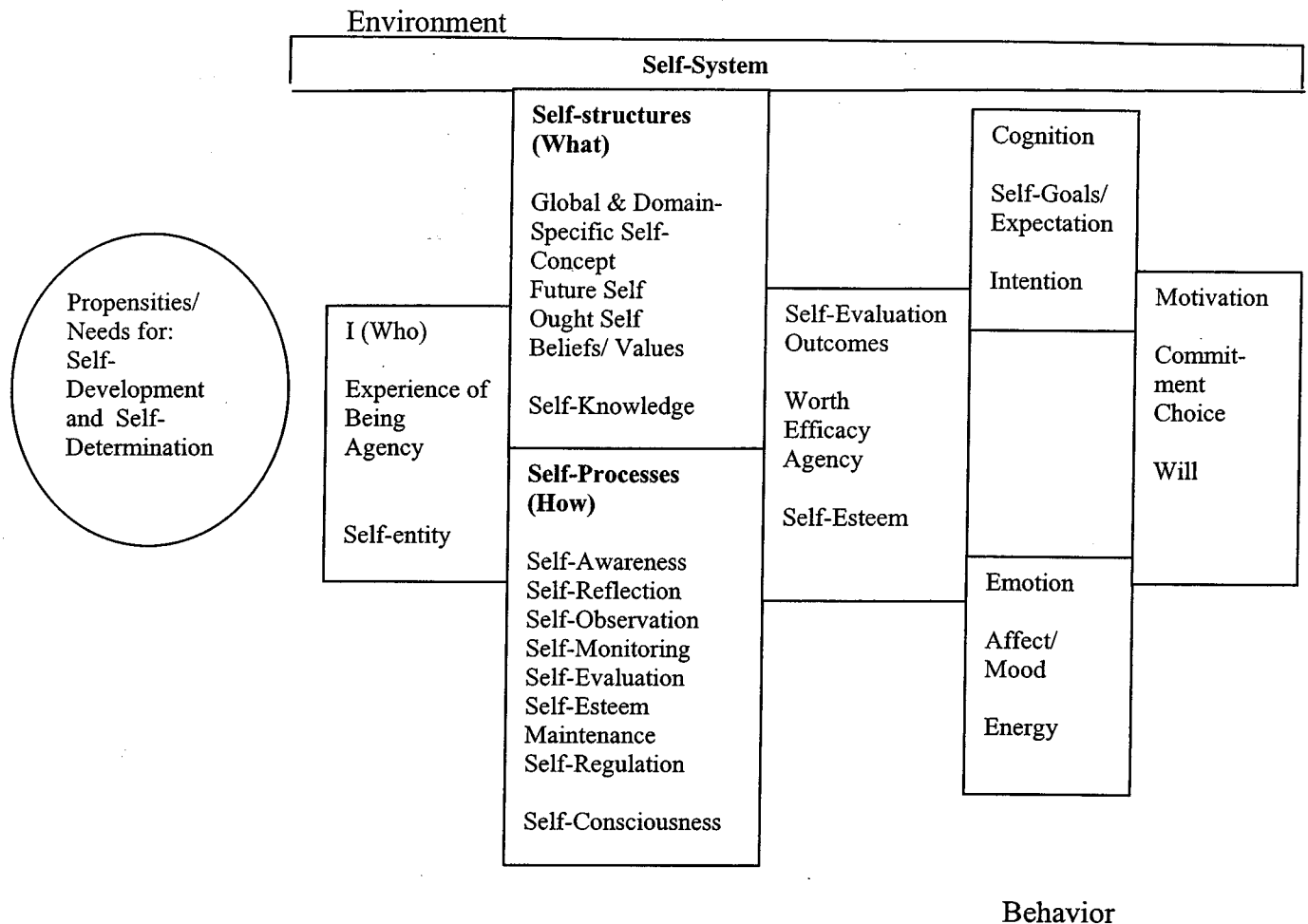


Figure 2.3 The Role of the self-system in behaviour (McCombs & Whisler, 1989, 280)

The development of affection and conation depends on the development of self-system structures and processes.

Self-structures (What)

Self-structures reflect the past, present and future self-concept of the student, together with his values and beliefs. Self-concept is either global (what am I as a person?) or domain-specific (what am I as a student of English?) and it forms the core of personality, it is like an abstract of personality (Lehtovaara, 1986, 41). Self-concept has been described as "a dynamic complex of attitudes" held towards oneself (Burns, 1982, 7). Further, self-concept has been shown to be significantly related to the perceived evaluation of others, the opinion of generalized others, and performance in the academic role, but not to correlate significantly with the I.Q. of the student. (Brookover, Thomas and Paterson, 1964, 271). Although self-concept is considered basically as a structure it

is one which can change and develop. The development of self-concept requires the existence of ideal self (Luopajarvi, 1993, 260), which determines the direction to the development. Beliefs and values are a relatively stable part of self-structures.

A major contribution to the structuralization and definition of self-concept was made by Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton, who argued that all previous research had merely produced a huge accumulation of imprecise definitions and a large number of not always consistent measurement techniques (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976, 411). In broad terms, they define self-concept as a person's perception of himself. The structure of self-concept is organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, and differentiable. The hierarchic organization of self-concept is presented in Figure 2.4. All details of non-academic self-concept have been omitted, since they are beyond the scope of the present study.

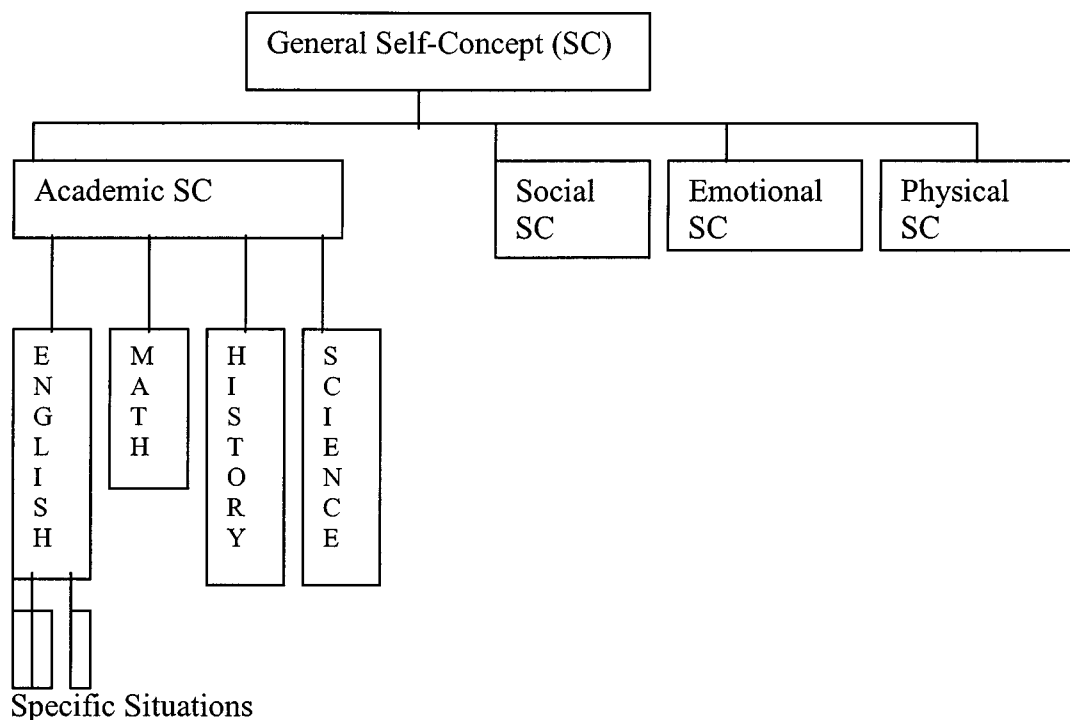


Figure 2.4 Hierarchic Organization of Self-Concept (SC) (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976, 413)

Thus general self-concept is differentiated into academic self-concept and further to various sub-areas such as English self-concept and finally to evaluation of behaviour in specific situations of language learning, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The academic self-concept is defined by the Michigan State Self-Concept of Ability Scale as "behaviour in which one indicates to himself (publicly or privately) his ability to achieve in academic tasks as compared with others engaged in the same task" (Shavelson et al., 1976, 424). Shavelson et al. contend that in order to change general self-concept, many situation-specific changes must take place (ibid, p.414). It is the cumulative experience of the past, i.e. the spiral effect, that causes the evolution of self-concept. It has been argued that students with high self-concept attribute their success to their own abilities and their failure to extrinsic reasons. Conversely, low self-concept students attribute their failure to their own lack of abilities and their success to extrinsic reasons (Aho, 1987, 26).

Also included in the self-concept are ideal self-perceptions that describe the person as he would like to be (Perkins, 1969, 213). Markus and Nurius created the concept of possible selves. Possible selves are one's images, manifestations, of future self. They move the present self to action by warranting the plans and strategies for the future. They could be images of "ideal me", "ought self", but they could also be the manifestations of one's fears and threats. Thus, the self-system is related to motivation by these possible selves, the future images the student has about himself in future situations (Markus & Nurius, 1987, 159). Future plans become objectives and motivate learning. Objectives formed by this process are a cause for intrinsic motivation (Bandura, 1982, 10) discussed later in chapter 2.2.2. Ruvolo and Markus (1985, 15) contended that possible selves produce good or bad feelings, incentives and guiding actions. Thus they have affective and motivational functions.

Global self-worth, which is the outcome of self-evaluation, is predicted by socio-emotional support and discrepancy between one's evaluations of competence and one's interpretation of the importance of competence. Self-worth predicts affection, which in turn influences motivation (Harter, 1987, 171).

Self-structures are closely related to the affective domain of student personality, as they cover both values (e.g. internationalism) and the elements of self-concept (What am I as an English learner?, What should I be like?). Self-structures and affection are the basis for conative self-processes. In other words, affect, i.e. emotional experience, plays a

major role in motivation, and in self-esteem development. (McCombs & Whisler, 1989, 298).

Self-processes (How)

Self-processes are central in all information processing, they control the perceptions, expectations and judgment about self-capabilities and self-worth (how am I doing?). Self-consciousness is constructed e.g. by self-reflection, observation, monitoring, evaluation, regulation and self-esteem maintenance. Self-processes are fundamentally conative processes and there are two major and controversial functions that they perform: first, they satisfy the need for actualization; and second, they maintain the equilibrium of the self-system (Coleman, 1960, 125).

In order to satisfy the need for self-development, self-processes and conation are essential. According to McCombs and Whisler, confronted by a new learning task, students assess their "perceptions of task requirements against their personal needs for competence and control (self-development and self-determination), their personal self-system structures (present and future self-concepts, values, and beliefs), and their evaluative judgments about their competence and control capabilities to perform that particular learning task" (1989, 282). Only tasks that are in harmony with the student's personal needs, goals and expectations are regarded as valuable, challenging and motivating. Other tasks are manipulated by various defence mechanisms i.e. the affective and conative filters.

The specific feature of foreign language learning is the concept of "new identity". The foreign language student should be courageous to venture outside his own identity (Guiora, 1972, 113). To adopt new modes of behavior requires a confident self-concept. Schumann (1978, 166) in his taxonomy of factors involved in the second language learning process asserted that affective factors include language shock, which essentially refers to the inhibitions that adults, but not children, have in language learning situations, since children are capable of playing while adults fear that playing will make them appear ridiculous and comic. Since children are assumed to acquire foreign languages better, it leads us to believe that a successful adult second language learner has a greater self-concept permeability or openness than do unsuccessful adult

language students. Students with less confident self-concepts on the other hand tend to protect their self-system by filtering out new, ambiguous information.

The interplay between self-system and conation is very intriguing. As stated above, the self-system is related to motivation by the perceived images the student has about himself in future situations, by the possible selves. Future plans motivate learning. If a foreign language student views himself as a prospective manager of an international company, he is likely to take the language studies very seriously. On the other hand, if he aims at being a nurse in a local hospital, the purpose of language studies probably must be found somewhere else. The student might begin to work toward a potential, possible self through his new foreign language identity.

In the process of language learning, a conflict between self-development (i.e. learning) and self-maintenance often arises in performance situations, which are one of the main elements in language studies. Performance is here interpreted as anything from a simple utterance in the foreign language to a complete presentation. The student has a tendency to protect his self-worth during the learning process, in this case, during the performance, which would require an open, creative grasp of the situation. In cases like this defence mechanisms inhibit learning. Because the students' interpretations of their own competence and performance are more powerful than the events themselves (Eccless, 1983, 84), they aim at maintaining their present self-evaluations, good or bad.

In order to maintain the equilibrium, the self-structures and self-processes function as filters, i.e. as defence mechanisms, to preserve the current sense of self-esteem (McCombs & Whisler, 1989, 279). These self-evaluation processes may cause affective reactions which could motivate learning in the future just as Bloom anticipated in his spiral effect theory. Ruble (1987, 263) emphasizes this view and contends that once a conclusion about the self is formed (e.g. "incompetent in English"), subsequent information processing is selective and behavioral choices are restricted. Consequently, at the base of self-esteem maintenance a constant filtering process with a strong self-serving bias processes all information. Its only purpose is to establish and maintain a stable self-image and thus only elements consistent with the pattern of self already formed are permitted entry.

In the classroom achievement context self-perceptions of competency are extremely important, and they may be caused primarily by interpersonal settings. Maintaining self-esteem is at stake in language learning. Adult language learners lose their "adult" status in the language learning situation and this always requires tolerance of ambiguity. A student who is detached, self-critical, and has a sense of humour, can cope with this demand of being disorientated better than a rigid or status-conscious individual who lacks self-awareness or humour (Stern, 1983, 382). It is likely that students with positive self-concept and high self-esteem are capable of laughing at themselves. They feel themselves independent and adequate to study and learn a new language. When the relationship between self-esteem and oral performance was examined it was found that they were highly correlated. Further, it has been shown that the more positive a subject's self-concept, the higher his achievement in English as a second language (Krashen, 1981, 14). In contrast, low self-esteem might make the student interpret all blunders and mistakes as evidence of his own incapability as a language learner.

The tendency to achieve success leads to positive affection and conation, which, in turn, leads to success, while in the converse situations, if the evaluation leads to negative self-assessment, with negative affection and conation, the result in the learning task is evidently failure. This is a circle of cause and effect that reinforces the student's sense of either competence and worth or incompetence and worthlessness. Although the circle at its strongest divides the students into two ultimate groups, the achievers and the non-achievers, most of the students are actually working their way through schooling somewhere in the middle between these extremes.

Here the spiral effect is detected again. In Bloom's theory it was the previous achievement that pushed the motivation, attitudes and emotion to a particular track of success or failure, but in McCombs's and Whisler's model it is the personal goal attracting achievement or dooming to failure that pulls the student to conceptualize his or her self-evaluation, conation and affection. Fortunately self-concept is differentiated between school subjects (Gottfried, 1985, 631, Shavelson et al., 1976, 413) and more differentiated for older students. Foreign language self-concept, how the student perceives himself as a foreign language learner, is considered a very prominent factor in language learning motivation (Laine & Pihko, 1991, 73). Laine (1988, 9, and 1978, 88)

argues that the foreign language self-concept is the central personal factor determining the direction and efficiency of language learning motivation.

To sum up, the self-system directs the student to decide if he wants to learn, when he wants to learn, how much energy he exerts to learn and what he wants to learn. The role of affect in this process is "to confirm (or disconfirm), via positive (or negative) feelings that are generated by self-evaluations during the process, whether needs and goals are being met" (McCombs & Whisler, 1989, 296). Am I an adequate student? It is affection that confirms the adequacy. It serves as the basis for motivation to learn and as the source of feedback to be fed in the spiral learning process. Students' perceived self-efficacy, defined as "judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, 391) is the determinant of what, whether and how much students learn (Gage & Berliner, 1998, 313). Students who are unsure of their ability often avoid difficulties or give up more easily when they are encountered. Self-efficacy is an affective outcome of the student's history and experience (cf. Bloom).

Personality Characteristics in Language Learning

Learning a new language demands flexibility and openness to the new norms of social behaviour and language (Stern, 1983, 380). For this reason there are some personality characteristics in our self-entity, i.e. in our experience of being and functioning, that are assumed to be more essential in language learning than other features. The main characteristics included in this study are self-esteem, anxiety, ethnocentrism and empathy. Self-esteem has already been discussed above together with self-esteem maintenance processes.

Anxiety has been proposed to be the most important personality dimension for the research of motivation (Heckhausen, 1991, 189). Anxiety is a very situation-dependent feeling of inadequacy, which may be either destructive or constructive. It can be defined as "a state of undirected arousal, following the perception of threat" (Epstein, 1975, 197). Anxiety is energy, a motive to restore equilibrium, i.e. to maintain self-esteem. It was already in Murray's list of needs by the name "infaivodance", a need to avoid humiliation and to refrain from action because of the fear of failure (Perkins, 1969, 53).

All learning corresponds to personality growth and is related to pleasant or unpleasant arousal depending on the student's own history. Students must risk the experience of anxiety. Otherwise the defence mechanisms that protect the self-esteem tend to block out the assimilation of new information, i.e. learning. Anxiety level may have a very potent influence on the personality filter discussed in chapter 2.3.

Several studies have shown a relationship between low anxiety and effective language acquisition. For example, Gardner, Smythe, Clement, and Glikzman (1976, 202) demonstrated that low classroom anxiety contributes to speech and is more related to oral skills than to grades. Often low and high achievers are distinguished by level of anxiety as well as by the degree of self-confidence. However, according to Krashen low anxiety benefits unconscious acquisition, but a moderate degree of anxiety might be good for conscious learning. All in all, there appears to be a consistent relationship between anxiety and language proficiency (Krashen, 1981, 30).

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one's own community as superior and other groups as inferior. This is diametrically opposed to the notion of integrative motivation, i.e. the willingness to assimilate the target language group and culture. Ethnocentrism has therefore a significant negative influence on the student's opinions regarding the target language and culture, i.e. on the intercultural attitudes.

These qualities of anxiety and ethnocentrism have been found to correlate negatively with the integrative motive and successful language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, 133). In contrast to this, empathy, "the willingness and capacity to identify with others" (Stern, 1983, 381), is a feature which seems to have a positive effect on learning a language, shown in pronunciation and integrative motivation (Guiora, 1972, 111).

Although there is another group of personality factors connected with the communicative and social nature of language, namely introversion and extroversion, and although it has been claimed that outgoing students tend to get higher grades (Chastain, 1975, 160), the relationship between introversion/ extroversion and language proficiency is controversial. A controversy has also been depicted in research on field-dependency vs. field-independency with regard to language learning (Krashen, 1981, 34).

Krashen (ibid, p.38) emphasized that all varieties of students will be helped by a classroom where "intake for acquisition is available in a low anxiety situation".

2.2.2 Motivation and Volition

There is no universal theory of motivation, rather there is a great number of theories, all of which might contain some truth. The final construct, however, is still evasive even after thousands of years of contemplation. Even the word "motivation" is used to denote different concepts. This might be due to the fact that the causes of human behaviour are so multifarious. Different people and cultures and eras have their own motivational constructs, just as they have their own languages. How learning motivation is viewed depends, for example, on the specific learning theory applied in a particular setting. However, without motivation learning rarely takes place. Thus, the basic issue in motivation is what arouses us, directs the activity and maintains our behavior over time (Gage & Berliner, 1998, 312).

In the framework of this study conation is considered as a state caused by motivation which sparks and directs learning and by volition that maintains or quits learning (Heckhausen, 1991, 183, Ruohotie, 1998, 37). Conation is generated not only by needs, values, interests, aspirations and goals, but also by affective learning outcomes (Bloom, 1976, 74). In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the intellectual achievement needs lead to self-actualization and consequently they are very important incentives in learning (Gage & Berliner, 1998, 318). In this respect the intellectual needs of the student can only be met when the physical and social needs at the lower levels of the hierarchy have been satisfied.

Conation is viewed as "an energy change which arouses and directs behavior toward goals" (Perkins, 1969, 205). Referring to the provisional taxonomy of individual difference constructs presented in Fig. 2.2, Snow et al. (1996, 248) propose that motivation is interrelated with achievement, career orientations and interest, in other words, that goals play an important role at the beginning of a learning process. Volition, in turn, involves action controls and personal styles. Action control strategies help promote persistence and maintain focus on intended goals (ibid, p. 273), e.g. reassuring

self-speech or deliberate development of a habitual work style. Personal styles are characteristic modes of attending, perceiving and thinking (ibid, p. 250). Orientation towards self and others combines both motivational and volitional features, and is very closely related to personality factors in the affection domain in Fig. 2.2. However, orientation towards self is a self-process, comprising e.g. self-esteem maintenance and self-evaluation, and thus belongs to the conative domain. In the same way orientation towards others, e.g. empathy is seen fundamentally volitional (ibid, p. 275).

In sum, conation is an all-inclusive dynamic state, in which the student with his filtering self-system is aiming at his goal. According to various researchers conation seems to include:

1. starting point, i.e. motivation (e.g. a favourable attitude towards or interest in English, an aspiration to become an exchange student, a desire to communicate fluently in English or the tendency to avoid blunders in English lessons; and
2. energy, i.e. volition (e.g. time the student is willing to devote to English studies at home or the effort he makes to memorize and elaborate new text).

We will not discuss volition any further, but it should be mentioned that the energy and direction of learning can be reinforced or extinguished by a system of intrinsic or extrinsic feedback (Peltonen & Ruohotie, 1992, 17). Henceforth, we concentrate on motivation.

When the motive, the starting point or source of motivation, is investigated, it is found to derive either from internal factors, such as need for achievement or personal desire, or from external factors such as rewards or social pressure (Gage & Berliner, 1998, 313). Naturally, motivation can also derive from both sources simultaneously and, in general, it would be very desirable if motivation from external sources could be internalized. Thus the "locus of control" in motivation is essential and motivation is found to be intrinsic, extrinsic or both.

Extrinsic motivation, is defined as "actions undertaken in order to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself." (Lepper, 1988, 292).

Motivation of this character can also be designated as instrumental motivation and it is associated with the situation where the student is not interested in the learning task itself, but rather in the grade or prospective reward. Often the student learns just the amount needed to fulfil the practical needs to pass an exam.

However, extrinsic motivation is not simply "bad news". Sometimes, for example in urgent situations where a student must in a short time acquire basic skills to survive, such as English proficiency which also provides opportunities to get social support, instrumental motivation has often been suggested to be a good predictor of overall English proficiency (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, 130). Consequently, in cases of special urgency and with adequate social support instrumental motivation seems to promote high achievement, but not in the long run where a higher, affective filter starts to take effect (Krashen, 1981, 28). It is often instrumental orientation that makes minority language groups replace their language by a prestigious second language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, 130).

The other, fundamentally different form of motivation, intrinsic motivation generates "behaviour undertaken for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes" (Lepper, 1988, 292). McCombs and Whistler assert that, basically, human beings are motivated by the innate needs for self-development and self-determination. Students are motivated to achieve success (Atkinson, 1964, 242), to succeed in at least one of the school subjects, and thus they control their studies and their achievements in order to fulfil the need for feelings of self-efficacy. Personal goals are important, and the decisions of what to study are made on the basis of individual interests, feelings of mastery and self-efficacy, curiosity and the like. It has been often asserted that students who learn solely for the sake of learning, value and utilize inherent rewards (e.g. a sense of personal mastery, control, challenge and curiosity), achieve better and higher quality learning outcomes. It is likely that these students embody autonomous achievement motivation: they compare their performance against their own previous actions using inner criteria for comparison (Gage & Berliner, 1998, 319). It has been claimed that intrinsically motivated students

take risks and select problems that involve a moderate degree of difficulty. This might be caused by their positive general or subject-related self-concept.

An internal locus or source of motivation, i.e. the feeling of personal causality, has been suggested to be a more significant determinant of continued intrinsic motivation than perceptions of competence (Manderlink and Harackiewicz, 1984, 926). Students are intrinsically motivated when they view themselves as the cause of learning (Gage & Berliner, 1998, 334). The degree of personal causality seems to increase with age and experience. Students tend to make attributions about who and what is responsible for their performance. Bernard Weiner's well-known theory of attributions is a theory of responsibility. The attributions are divided into three categories (Takala, 1992, 112):

1. locus of control (intrinsic or extrinsic)
2. stability (stable or unstable)
3. controllability (control or no control)

If the locus of control in motivation is internal the student is attributing his success to his own ability or effort. If the locus is external the blame is all teacher's. The student with an internal locus for success and failure encounters new learning tasks with a positive self-concept (Johnson, 1981, 174). Consequently, the concept of locus is closely related to the student's self-image. Stability, on the other hand, is connected with expectations. The concept of stability pinpoints whether the particular outcome always occurs, because of aptitude and skill, or if it has occurred only due to luck. Controllability is related to responsibility and efficacy. The student has a need to take control and be responsible for his learning. As it leads to the idea that "If I try harder next time, I will succeed" it is a way to generate motivation. If the student has no means to control the learning process, if he is not involved in it with his whole self-system, he is not motivated to learn. Consequently, feelings of efficacy and control are the basis for continuing interest and motivation (McCombs & Whisler, 1989, 285).

The attribution system is self-enhancing. Students usually attribute success to internal factors such as ability and effort, and failure to external factors such as outside authority, luck and task difficulty (Gage & Berliner, 1998, 323). This is very sensible in terms of self-maintaining processes. Failure is outsourced and self-worth saved. But

what if this filter does not work and the student perceives his abilities to be too low? This brings us back to the spiral effect theory of Benjamin Bloom, and the student finds himself in the spiral of low achievement and negative entry characteristics, i.e. motivation, attitudes and emotion. Failure is expected to happen regularly.

Next, we take a closer look at the achievement theory of McClelland and Atkinson. These researchers asserted that motivation comprises two opposing features: the tendencies to achieve success and avoid failure (Atkinson, 1964, 241). Experience determines motivation. Students who mainly avoid failure to protect their self-system select tasks which are far too easy or difficult. The success is now either sure or totally impossible. Students who have the tendency to achieve success choose tasks of medium difficulty, in which success is unsure. The aim in teaching is to enhance self-confidence and thus promote the tendency to succeed. When students experience anxiety about failure, they are motivated not to perform and to avoid the particular high risk tasks. Inhibitions are caused like this. If the inhibited student must do something, "must" is a positive motivation and causes action, but this action is only the use of protective mechanism and aspirations are placed either too high or too low (Atkinson, 1964, 245, Perkins, 1966, 65).

In the context of language learning intrinsic motivation is sometimes associated with integrative motivation, although they represent different perspectives of motivation. Integrative motivation means willingness to co-operate and have contacts with the people of the target language group, and of course it might act like an intrinsic motivator. This integration is connected with social needs, but it also requires courage to stand the ambiguity of new culture and willingness to adopt strange elements of behavior. It has been argued that integrative motivation is a stronger predictor of achievement in language learning than extrinsic or instrumental motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, 14). In addition to this, integrative motivation has been shown to be especially significant for the development of oral communicative skills (Krashen, 1981, 215), to correlate highly with the students' speech and to activate classroom behavior. However, the effect of integrative motivation appears to be weaker where learning opportunities outside the classroom are rare (Krashen, 1981, 28). Oral skills are extremely important in language learning today, especially in helping the students to prepare for the requirements of working life. Furthermore, since intercultural attitudes

are related to integrative motivation and speech, they should be emphasized in language learning. Schumann (1978, 166) pointed out that learning a second language depends on how the groups, that is, the language learners vis a vis the culture or society of the target language, view each other and their respective languages. In this context social dominance is likely to influence the motivation to learn a foreign language (Stern, 1983, 238). Based on this assumption, English might be considered a desirable language to be learnt, whereas Polish might not.

The distinction between these two main kinds of motivation has not always been detected and second language learning is rarely motivated by attitudes which are exclusively instrumental or integrative. Most situations involve a mixture of each type of motivation (Brown, 1981, 124). It might be totally impossible to distinguish, for example, if the motivation of a Finnish polytechnic student to study English is instrumental, integrative, extrinsic or intrinsic, since it is highly likely that all these elements contribute to the overall motivation. Finocchiaro (1981, 60) suggests that teachers should strive to "transform an initial extrinsic motivation into a permanent intrinsic one" and foster both instrumental and integrative motivation.

Covington (1998, 24) feels that motivation is not an inner state or an attractive drive in the human mind, but that it should rather be seen as a tempting achievement towards an attractive goal. He thinks that students are motivated by invalid reasons – they want to avoid failure and do not understand motivational equity. This equity requires students to learn only for themselves, to assert and strive only for their own goals notwithstanding those of other students. In this manner the reasons for learning would become internal. This seems to be the "ideal motivation", closely related to mastery-oriented students who have strong learning goals. The realization of mastery-oriented qualities in polytechnics and schools in general is restricted by the fact that students work in classes where comparison stems from interpersonal relations. All students are not mastery-oriented and thus also performance goals are considered important in class.

Next, we review how language attitudes have been studied earlier, since the investigation of self-concepts and personality filters belong within the realm of attitude study.

2.2.3 Attitudes in Language Learning

McCombs and Whisler did not address attitudes in their self-system. In the present study, however, attitudes are considered as part of self-structures, and close to beliefs and values since they are emotionally formed beliefs directed towards or against something or someone (Burns, 1982, 8).

Most definitions emphasize that an attitude comprises the following variables:

1. a belief which may or may not be valid
2. an emotional and evaluative connotation around the belief and
3. a consequent likelihood of responding or behaving in a particular way (Burns, 1982, 3, Karvonen, 1967, 10). An attitude is a relatively stable, internalized and slowly changeable reaction readiness (Ruohotie, 1998, 41). Attitudes, once formed, tend to be self-perpetuating and they seem to develop at home, since there is a strong relationship between the language attitudes of parents and children (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, 143).

Gardner, Lalonde and Pierson (1983, 11) propose that attitudes are important in second language acquisition because they affect the individual's motivation to learn the language. However, they influence second language achievement only indirectly. Prior achievement (success or failure) and motivation cause proficiency.

Language attitude is an attitude that an individual holds towards either the speakers (or writers) of a particular language or the language or dialect itself. The language can be the mother tongue or a foreign language (Kalaja, 1999, 46). Language attitudes derive from social origins. For example some languages may be valued positively, because the speakers of those languages are respected in the given community.

Krashen argues that language attitude refers to acquirers' orientations toward users of the target language, but also to personality factors. Such factors relate directly to unconscious acquisition and only indirectly to conscious learning. Right attitudinal factors encourage the students and allow them to be "open" to acquisition. Attitudinal factors and motivational factors are more important than aptitude (Krashen, 1981, 35). Since positive attitudes towards the people of the target language group enhance

communicative skills, they should be emphasized at polytechnics where the main objective in teaching is the development of communicational skills.

Language attitudes have been investigated for decades. One of the pioneers in the research of attitudes was Lambert who started the work in the 1950's. The most consistent research over a period of twenty-five years, finished in 1972, was made in Canada by Gardner and Lambert and later by Gardner and his colleagues (Stern, 1983, 375). They studied first French-English bilingual settings in Montreal and later extended their research to e.g. French-American groups in Maine and Louisiana and language groups in the Philippines. In more recent work they have focused on English-speaking high school students learning French in Canada.

Other prominent studies of attitudes to the language learning in schools were undertaken by the research team of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in Britain under Clare Burstall's direction. While Canadians were mainly concerned with the attitudes with which students approach the language class, Burstall and the NFER team, in addition, investigated the attitudes of teachers and headmasters to language learning and the longitudinal development of attitudes over a period of several years of language learning (Burstall, 1974, 11).

According to Stern the methods of these groups have been similar (Stern, 1983, 377).

The attitude tests consist of the following items:

1. statements to be agreed or disagreed e.g. I like learning French
2. open-ended questions e.g. What made you decide to carry on learning French?
3. semantic differentials e.g. interesting-----boring

Both groups investigated the same attitudes, namely attitudes about the community and people who speak the target language, attitudes towards learning the language concerned and attitudes towards languages and language learning in general.

In addition to attitudes principal motives were also investigated. The motives were divided into instrumental: "reflecting the practical advantages of learning a language" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, 132), e.g. I am studying English because I think it will someday be useful in getting a job; and integrative: "reflecting a sincere and personal

interest in the people and culture”, e.g. I think it will better help me to understand French people and their way of life. Further, attitudes to the learning process at hand and the motivation maintained during the course were addressed in this research. Their questionnaire was extremely extensive and involved different kinds of questions from aptitude to attitude. An entire school day was required to complete the test. Eero J. Laine (1988) adapted the questionnaire simplifying it and using only statements and open-ended questions.

Gardner and Lambert (1972, 12) demonstrated that the most important attitude in language learning is the attitude towards the target language group. They found that students who have strong ethnocentric or authoritarian attitudes or who have learned to be prejudiced toward foreign peoples do not approach the language learning task with an integrative motivation. Female students’ attitudes to language learning were more positive than those of male students. Language is a means to an end in the case of integrative motivation. It is learned in the process of becoming a member of a particular group, or the cultural group and their language is used as an instrument of personal satisfaction and benefit (ibid, p.12,15).

Gardner and Lambert were interested in why some students learn and some do not. They concluded that aptitude is not a complete answer, and they even argue that grades are independent of intellectual capacity, but dependent on the student’s motivation and unprejudiced attitude (ibid, p.37). The distinctions between intelligence, aptitude, attitude and motivation were indicated. The results of the Gardner-Lambert and Burstall studies recognize a positive association between learning outcomes and attitudes to the target group and the language. (Stern,1983, 377)

In Finland, Eero J. Laine (1978, 1988, 1991) has been a pioneer in research on language attitudes and motivation. Laine’s comprehensive studies suggest that foreign language self-concept is the primus motor in the language learning process. He also indicated the significance of affective filters.

2.3 Personality Filter

What is the relationship between the student's self-system and environment? Is he capable of maintaining his self-esteem in a world where the flow of information is overwhelming? Is he crushed by the fact that his abilities are insufficient to cope with all information? This is a crucial issue in schools today. The current educational philosophy stresses that in developing towards his educational goals (which should ideally be the same as the objectives of the institution) the student himself should be responsible for constructing the framework of his own learning and acquisition of knowledge. The student must be aware of the necessity to control the interaction between himself and the world. He cannot let everything in, he has to make choices. This fact brings us to the core of the present study, to the personality filter we all have.

As discussed above, personal goals direct motivation, but fundamentally their deeper meaning is to enhance the needs for self-development and self-determination. Goals assist the student to select optional courses, concentrate on useful subjects, aim at deep-processing or even sleep during lessons. The students' decisions are based on personal experience stemming from intrinsic and extrinsic motives. And, sometimes, the only goal a student has is to protect his self-esteem.

One of the basic motives of human beings is to maintain self-identity, the feeling of control and self-esteem, since their destruction would lead to severe mental disorders. For this reason, the self-system functions as an affective and conative filter, through which all information is processed (McCombs & Whisler, 1989) and which gives a subjective, self-serving meaning to all perceptions (Burns, 1982, 14).

Heidi Dulay and Marina Burt described second language learning as "a lawful and creative process" (Stern, 1983, 330). In their attempts to operationalize the aspects of creativity in language learning, they encountered the mediating role of affective and cognitive structures (Dulay & Burt, 1977, 95). They believed that innate mechanisms of the human mind organize input during the language acquisition process (ibid, p. 98). Discrepancies between input and learner output are attributed to affective delimiters and cognitive organizers.

Affective delimiters are defined as conscious or unconscious motives or needs that exert an effect on preferences for certain input models, preferences for certain aspects of

language, and on the decision of when language learning efforts should cease (ibid, p.99). Naturally, this affective delimitation of input occurs at the beginning of the process of language acquisition. Affective delimiters are internal forces that tune in the learner, define his conscious or unconscious reasons for learning and create the aspiration to learn or to quit learning. Dulay and Burt conclude that affective factors "delimit to a significant extent the input data which is made accessible to the cognitive organizers." Cognitive organizers are internal data processing mechanisms that construct the grammar. They are separate from Krashen's "monitor", which is the third source of creative activity, the device that consciously edits the learner's output (ibid, p.99). The monitor is a device that encourages the student, especially the more mature adult student, to improve output accuracy. It is connected to conscious learning, not to unconscious acquisition (Krashen, 1981, 2).

In Dulay's and Burt's framework the learner's personality traits and experiences also contribute to the output. Thus, investigating the lawful innate sequences of language learning they formulated a creative construction hypothesis presented in Figure 2.5 below (Dulay & Burt, 1977, 100).

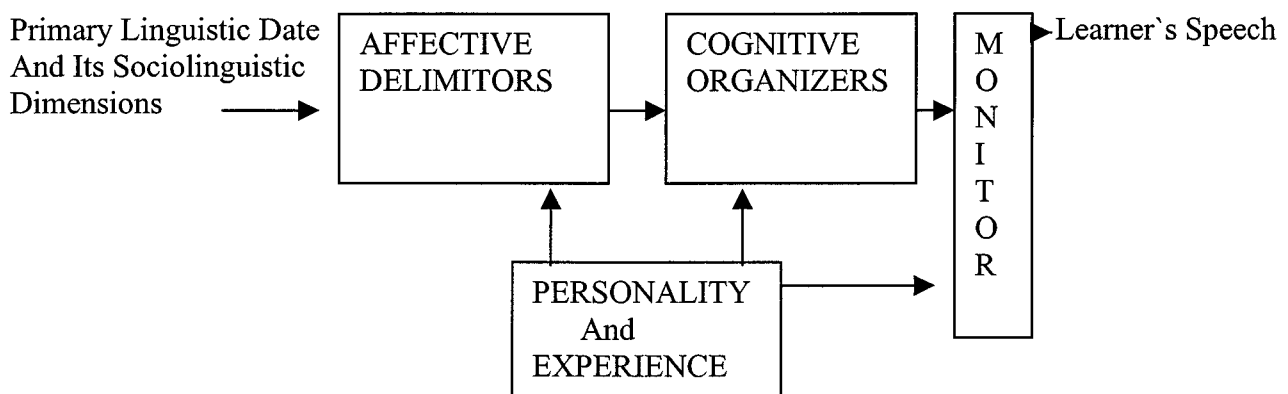


Figure 2.5 Working Model for Some Aspects of Creative Construction in Language Acquisition (Dulay & Burt, 1977, 100)

In particular, Dulay and Burt studied preferences for certain speaker models over others, e.g. preference for peers over teachers and parents, own ethnic group members over non-members, and came to the conclusion that "internal affective forces, such as the need to identify with a social group, delimit the input to the learner in important respects; i.e., affective delimiters narrow down what will be admitted for cognitive processing" (ibid, p.119).

These affective delimiters are called the personality filter in the current study, because the filter includes elements of both affection and conation, called personality by Snow et al. (See Figure 2.2). Next, we discuss how the filter functions and turn again to the self-system.

Burns asserts that if a new experience is consistent with existing self-conceptions, it can be assimilated to the self-concept, but if the experience is in no way consistent with the existing self-perceptions, then "an outer skin of the blob acts like an impermeable screen to prevent an alien body invading the host", as plotted in Figure 2.6. (Burns, 1982,11).

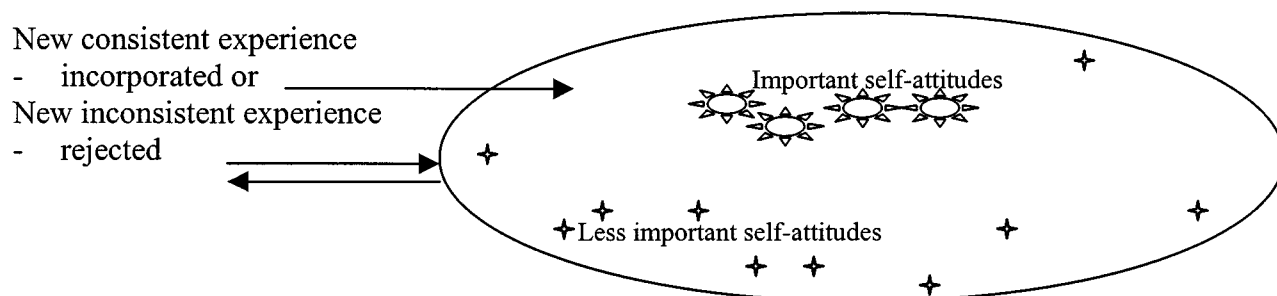


Figure 2.6 Assimilation or Rejection of New Information (Burns, 1982,11)

Burns also maintains that some self-attitudes are more important and thus more protected against change or the influence of new experience than others. Many theorists promote the view that a person strives for consistency in self-concept and that there is a

tendency to reduce inconsistency whenever it arises. The differentiation of self-concepts across situations, for example school subjects, is valuable because it helps to ensure that a negative self-attitude in one domain may not be necessarily generalized to other domains. The wide variety of facets of life and the tendency to make "comfortable" choices pushes the evaluation of self in a positive direction (Burns, 1982,12).

Accordingly, the student always has some field of life or a subject which he masters well, and its effect on the self-concept is more essential than the influence of less important areas of interest. The purpose of this filtering process is to establish and maintain a positive self-concept and thus only elements consistent with the pattern of self already formed or prospective possible self are selected to be let in. Behaviors and self-perceptions that are inconsistent with the image one holds of himself are threatening and accompanied by protective behavior. Due to this, self-concept is very hard to change and behaviour leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy. In addition to the homeostatis of the body, human beings seem to have homeostatis of the mind as well (Perkins, 1969, 51). All conscious behaviour is consistent with the concepts of self or future self. If not, anxiety arises. And this is when defence mechanisms, learnt from experience, such as rationalization, understatement and projection, ascend in order to reduce anxieties.

Guiora et al (1972, 112) argued that in the early stages of development language ego, i.e. self-concept boundaries, are permeable, but later they become fixed and rigid. The fluid ego of children is taken to explain why children adopt a new language more easily than adults. The rigidity of adult ego boundaries is equated with high levels of anxiety associated with negative language learning experiences. Adolescence leads to an increased self-consciousness and feeling of vulnerability and thus to increased filter. Later foreign language pronunciation, for example, is harder to acquire (Krashen,1981, 35). H. Douglas Brown (1981,116) asserted that pre-teenagers and teenagers protect their fragile self-concept with mounting defensive inhibitions. They ward off experiences that threaten the values and beliefs on which the self-esteem is founded. This process continues into adulthood. Those students who have a positive self-concept in a given subject are capable of lowering their defences and letting in more diversified information, but the students with low self-concept need to maintain a strong wall of inhibition to protect their self-system. Covington (1998, 62) stated that males use more

defensive strategies than females, because the societal pressures force them to protect the image of competence.

H. D. Brown (1981,117) believed that these defence mechanisms inhibit learning. When mistakes are viewed as threats to one's self-esteem the student will never venture to speak a sentence until he is sure of its correctness. Learning to communicate is impossible in this way. The student should transcend his ego boundaries to be able to send and receive messages clearly. Brown (1988, 312) pointed out that defensive strategies are a crucial barrier to learning. While a student protects himself against damaging self-concept through expositions of failure, he also avoids occasions of challenge and hence does not commit himself to learning. Seeking a shield is a motivation disposition. Students should be encouraged to regard failures as false starts and errors as information that can be useful later. Mastery-oriented children treat obstacles as a challenge, they slow down, utilize new tactics and analyse the task in detail (Dweck & Bempechat, 1983, 243), whereas helpless children consider themselves too unintelligent to learn anything. These two groups of children have completely different conceptions of intelligence. Intelligence should be seen as a growing competence, not as an existing trait or entity (ibid, p. 240). Deep understanding brings with it intrinsic satisfaction and occurs when students are required to elaborate and explain their ideas.

It follows that students with strong filters will acquire less of the language directed at them, as less input is allowed to enter (Krashen,1981, 22). Strong filters are related to lack of empathy, i.e. refusal to grasp the foreigner's mind and enter into his mode of thought. It is likely that strong filter language students have high inhibitions, low foreign language self-concept, low motivation and negative attitudes towards target language groups and instruction.

Summarizing, it is assumed that students should have weak personality filters to be good language students. As a result of a weak filter the language student is open to experience, and capable of realizing his full potential. His need for self-development and self-efficacy will be fulfilled and it is likely that he will utilize mastery-oriented qualities in learning. This openness might be related also to empathy and integrative

motivation. Weak personality filters are required in today's working life where multilingual communication is often a routine.

Personality Filter of English in Finland

In his extensive research in Finland in the 1980's Eero J. Laine investigated how affective factors, primarily foreign language self-concept and affective filter, influence foreign language learning in school. The research was conducted in Central Finland and North Karelia Provinces, and the 541 subjects were in the 9th grade at comprehensive school. Laine modified Gardner's and Lambert's Likert type questionnaire to suit the Finnish educational system. Laine's questionnaire has been the model, and basis, of my own questionnaire.

Laine defines the affective filter, which was called "affective delimiters" by Dulay and Burt, and "personality filter" in the present study as follows: "The foreign/second language learner's affective filter is a psychological construct consisting of a set of affective factors which make the learner screen incoming target language information either consciously, or unconsciously" (Laine, 1988, 13).

First Laine studied the distinctive features of the affective domain and detected five affective filter levels: motivational, personality trait, target language related attitudes, attitudes related to the learning situation and the foreign language self-concept level. Target language inhibitions were subsumed under the foreign language self-concept. These five levels are shown to be principal factors affecting the filter's permeability (See Figure 2.7).

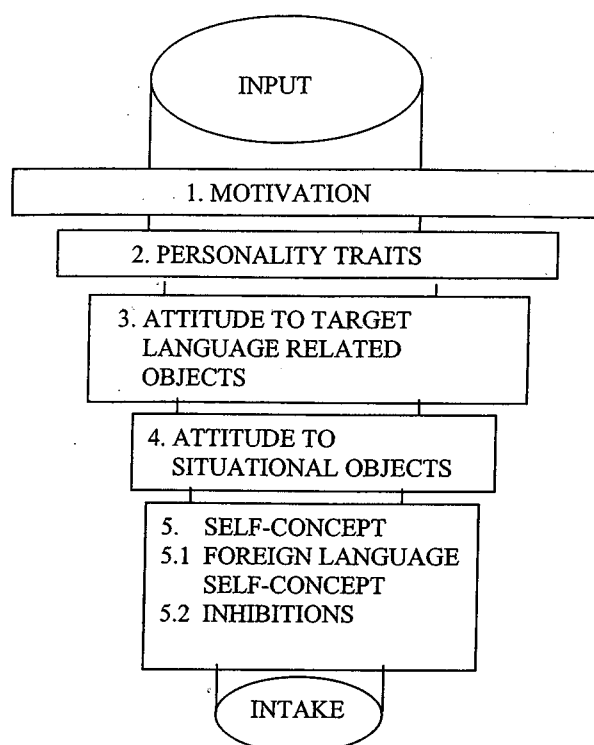


Figure 2.7. Levels of Laine's Affective Filter (Laine, 1988, 13).

Laine asserted that the core of the filter is foreign language self-concept, defined as "a person's fairly stable overall notion of himself as a FL learner, of his notions of competence/potency, worthiness, and ideals, with defences and inhibitions as guardians of the vulnerable construct" (Laine, 1988,17). Guiora called this phenomenon "a foreign language ego". By means of factor analysis Laine extracted three main features of the foreign language self-concept: 1. Foreign language self-concept i.e. self-esteem and self-ratings of his/her own target language skills (the actual self-concept), 2. the ideal self component, which reflects the student's wish to gain a native speakers' skills and, 3. the general and academic self-concept (which correlated with the self-ratings). Target language related inhibitions formed a "reverse side" of the foreign language self-concept (Laine & Pihko,1991,107) and reflected e.g. a strong denial of the value of studying languages or identity problems. Thus, a layer of inhibitions and defences protects the core, foreign language self-concept or ego, from the negative effects of the real world.

Motivational level, according to Laine, is a construct where other levels take effect. They can lower or enhance the strength of motivation as well as change its direction. In other words, personality characteristics, attitudes to the language and culture studied, attitudes to instruction and self-concept are factors augmenting or decreasing motivation. When the motivational variables were examined by the means of factor analysis the outstanding feature was the willingness of the learners to have co-operation

and contacts with many kinds of English-speaking people. As regarding the personality traits, the general feeling of anxiety dominated. In target language related attitudes, the attitudes towards the language and culture were the foremost variables, and in situation related attitudes, attitudes towards the teacher were prominent.

The causal relations of the foreign language self-concept were investigated with a LISREL model. It was concluded that a sound self-concept tends to lower inhibitions and on the other hand, a large number of inhibitions tend to suppress the foreign language self-concept. The loop of influence from achievement to foreign language self-concept was detected. This confirmed Bloom's theory of the spiral effect. In addition to this, target language inhibitions and foreign language self-concept were shown to influence motivation strongly, but inhibitions had only an indirect effect.

Throwing light upon causal relations within the filter area, Laine demonstrated that the central regulator was expressly foreign language self-concept (FL SC), which influenced e.g. personality traits. On the other hand FL SC and inhibitions together influenced attitudes to target language and situations, and these in turn affected motivation, which influenced achievement (Laine, 1988, 48). Investigation of foreign language development demonstrated that parental support enhanced motivation, target language attitudes and situation-related attitudes; support from friends and classmates strengthened the general self-esteem and foreign language self-concept; democratic teachers promoted a positive class atmosphere; active processing style of the student lowered inhibitions; and lastly, target language contacts outside school enhanced motivation and diminished ethnocentrism.

When Laine examined the learner types with cluster analysis he found that 47% of the comprehensive school students belonged to a group with high achievement and strong foreign language self-concept, 41% to a group with mediocre achievement and some foreign language self-concept problems, and 12 % of the sample to a group with low achievement and low self-esteem. In the analysis of inhibitions, the largest group (32%) comprised the students of non-filter type with minimum emotional restraints and the second largest group (29%) consisted of the students of low achievements and strong inhibitions. Cluster analysis of the "overall filter" types at the sum variable level revealed that 13% of the subjects belonged to a group in which foreign language self-

concept, motivation and achievement were low and the measures of ethnocentrism and inhibitions were high. In contrast to this, 49% of the subjects formed the "non-filter type" group with no problems in English learning and 38% belonged to the "medium" group. This could be taken to indicate that the Bloom spiral of learning has, over the years, caused separation of students into two distinct groups, those with low foreign language self-concept and those with sound foreign language self-concept. A number of students with some problems in foreign language self-concept are nevertheless able to cope with the problems adequately, and consequently the number of learners in severe affective (and conative) trouble was 12-13%.

Laine and Pihko studied adolescent pupils at comprehensive school level. At this stage the personality filter is likely to be at its strongest and might stay that way throughout adulthood. As for polytechnic students, at the age of 18-22 they have already chosen their field of study, and their communicative competence should already be, or should be developed, in accordance with their target employment.

The present study represents a narrower framework than the universal theory of school learning and concentrates on aspects of the personality filter which limit the input of information in the acquisition and learning of language skills. The purpose is to find out the factors which modify the quantitative and qualitative intake of polytechnic English language students. The delimitor or filter is a defence mechanism, which ideally should always work for the benefit of the student. Sometimes, however, it seems to be too strong for the purposes of communicative language learning and, thereby, to be an indirect limiting factor of efficient functioning in working life.

3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the present study is to characterize and analyse the construct of the personality filter held by students of English at South Carelia Polytechnic. Five research questions are taken to be central to the elucidation of this problem and they are based on the hypothesis that it is possible to differentiate and characterize students of English according to their personality filters.

The research questions are:

1. What factors compose the affective and conative filter of the polytechnic students of English?
2. What is the relationship between the different filter domains?
3. What is the relationship between background information, i.e.
 - a. gender
 - b. educational background
 - c. electing optional languages
 - d. gradesand filter domains?
4. What is the proportion of strong versus weak filter students?
5. What characterizes the students in the units of Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration and Technology in terms of the personality filter domains?

The answers to these questions may help both teachers and students of languages in polytechnics better understand the language learning processes and the defence mechanisms which they involve. In addition they may also serve as indicators of prospective communicative competence and hence potential success in the working life.

4 RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative research method has been applied in the current study. The reason for selecting to use a detailed questionnaire and the psychometric method of data analysis in the present study was the objective of constructing an overall picture of the English language personality filter among the students of South Carelia Polytechnic. For this purpose, a description of a relatively few cases and individual differences, as in discursive research, was not considered adequate.

4.1 Subjects and Sampling Units

The subjects of this research were 228 students of South Carelia Polytechnic in autumn 1999. They studied in five units in Lappeenranta, i.e. in the units of Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration, Technology, Crafts and Design, and Home Economics. The sample was considered extensive enough when all the units of Lappeenranta were included, and for this reason the units located in Imatra were excluded. (See Figure 4.1).

Unit	Subjects		Females		Age 18-22	Senior Secondary School	Optional Language Courses
	Total number	% of the sample	Total number	% of the unit	% of the sample	% of the sample	% of the sample
Health	72	32	64	90	56	87	15
Business	62	27	40	65	68	88	77
Technology	69	30	9	13	67	72	34
Home	15	7	11	73	67	92	33
Crafts	13	6	12	92	54	69	85*
Total	228	100	136	60	61	82	44

*English replaced by Russian

Figure 4.1 Subjects and Sampling Units

The subjects taking part in this research were mostly second-year students of the polytechnic. The common factor, however, was not the length of their studies, but the fact that they all had finished the first English language course, English Communication Skills (ECS), and thus had the same amount (2 credit units) of instruction in English. Since students in the Health Care Unit do not study English more than 2 credits, this

was the obvious cut point for this research. The aim was to have about the same number of students from the three larger units fill in the questionnaire. Consequently, the questionnaire was filled out by 72 students in Health Care and Social Welfare, 62 in Business Administration, and 69 in Technology. Because the units of Crafts and Design and Home Economics are smaller in size, the number of students who had completed the ECS course, and who participated in the research was also comparatively small, 13 and 15 respectively. Thus these two units were also excluded from the comparison of the units (research question 5). In addition to this, there was one questionnaire in the Unit of Crafts and Design that was excluded from the study, because the respondent could not finish the questionnaire in 50 minutes, while two questionnaires in the Unit of Home Economics were excluded as there were several unanswered statements. Thus 25 students from the two small units were included in the current study. Nevertheless, since the objective was to get an overall picture of the Lappeenranta units of the polytechnic, the smaller units are included in most analyses and they contribute their own relative share to the results although they are not compared with the bigger units of Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration and Technology.

Regarding instruction, it should be also noted here that the English studies are differentiated in the various units, in other words English for Special Purposes is taught in each respective unit. The first English course, English Communication Skills (ECS), is also adapted to the particular field of studies, to enhance motivation and give the students better preparation for the working life.

The classes to this study were selected by the English teachers or the head of the particular unit. The selection was based on the amount of English they had studied and the curriculum. The classes available were made known to the researcher, who conducted the data collection.

About 60% of the respondents were women, and most of them studied in the unit of Health Care and Social Welfare in which there were 64 female (90%) and 7 male participants. As for the Unit of Business Administration 40 females (65%) and 21 males participated in the study, and the Unit of Technology contributed with 9 females (13%) and 60 males. In the units of Crafts and Design and Home Economics out of 25 respondents there were only two male subjects. The gender proportions of the

respondents is about parallel to the overall proportion of female and male students in the different units of South Carelia Polytechnic. Technology has traditionally been the field of men and health care that of women and little has changed in the recent years. The majority of the subjects were between 18 and 27 years of age with 61% being 18 to 22 years old and 30% belonging to the age group 23-27. All the subjects, except two, had Finnish as their mother tongue and 94% had started English as their first foreign language at the age of 9.

As can be seen in Fig. 4.2, most subjects (82%) had completed senior secondary school. The rest of the participants had graduated either from a vocational college (5%) - mostly business college, or had come to the polytechnic through another institute (12%), mainly a vocational school for technicians or nurses.

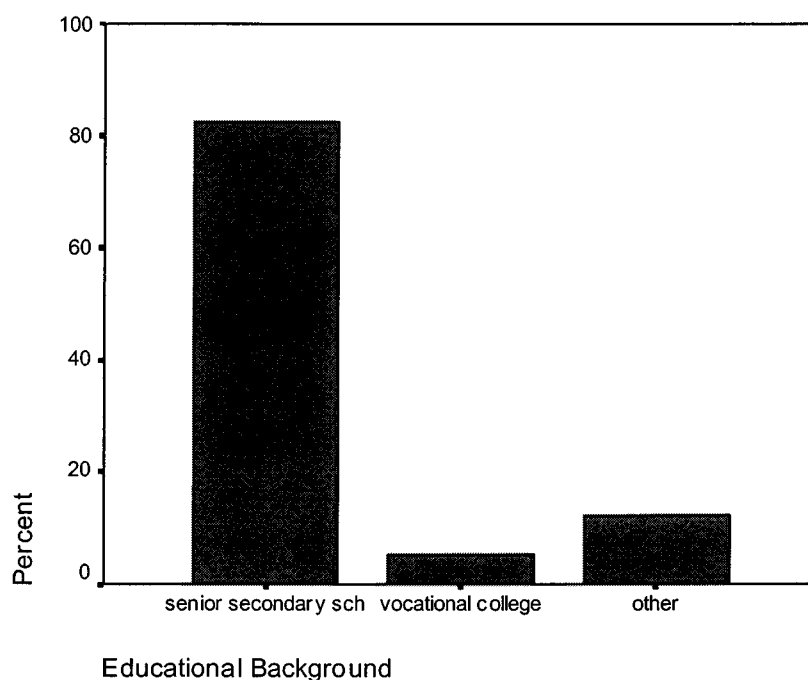


Fig. 4.2 Educational Background of Subjects

Since most of the students had taken the matriculation examination, their English grade performance is also presented, to give the reader some indication of the level of English knowledge and skills that the polytechnic students have on entry (Fig. 4.3).

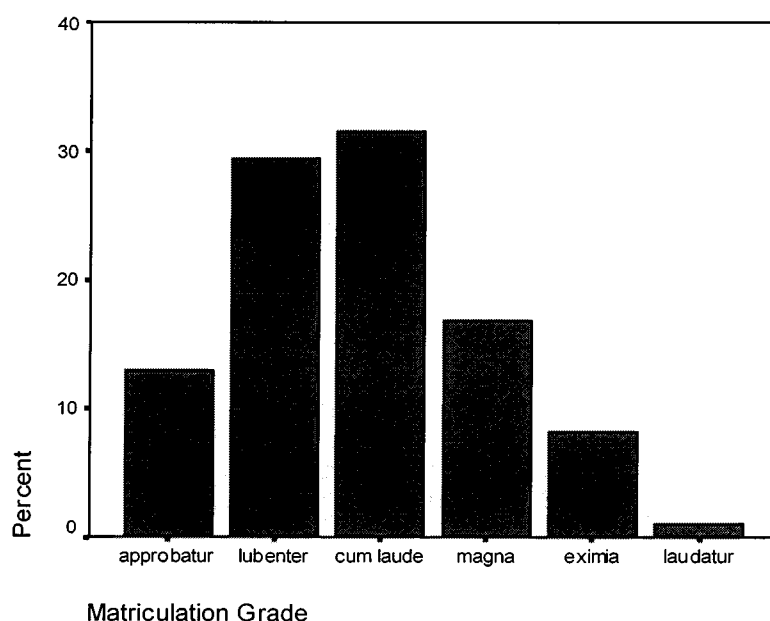


Fig. 4.3 English Grade in Matriculation Examination

As can be seen in Fig. 4.3 the majority of the subjects who took the matriculation examination had English grades of "cum laude" or "lubenter", implying that the students at the polytechnic were average English learners, and relatively few of them reach the level of excellence. They probably had not considered the language as their main interest, and had not utilised their English skills actively but rather only when the need arose. If the student had completed a vocational college, his/her latest English grade was in most cases 4, in other words he/she was a good English student at college. The English grade of the students coming from other school forms was 3 (the highest) in most cases.

Overall, eight per cent of all the students had the highest possible grade when they entered the polytechnic. In contrast to this, about 12% of the students entering the polytechnic had the lowest possible English grade from the previous institution or the matriculation examination. This figure corresponds with the percentage Laine (1988, 67-69) got when he studied students of comprehensive school who had the lowest foreign language self-concept. In Laine's study the percentage of high filter types was also very close to this figure - 13%.

In addition to English and Swedish, 44% of the subjects also studied optional German, Russian, French or Spanish. The majority of those who had chosen to study optional languages were from the unit of Business and Economics where 77% of the students had chosen an optional language. It is noteworthy that only 15% of the students of Health Care and Social Welfare study optional German, Russian, French or Spanish. All in all, in the entire population, there were 15 (6%) former exchange students or persons who had worked abroad for more than 3 months, 14% had taken part in a language course abroad, 25% had foreign chat or pen pals and 32% had used a considerable amount of English abroad or at work in Finland. 70% of the students reported that their parents had encouraged them to study English.

To sum up the background information, it can be stated that the sample seems to represent fairly well an average South Carelia Polytechnic student of English. The argument is based on the researcher's cumulative in-depth acquaintance with approximately 900 students of English at the polytechnic through nine years of cumulative teaching experience.

4.2 Measuring Instrument and Data Collection

The Likert-type questionnaire was modified from the one which Laine utilized to study 9th graders at comprehensive schools. Laine's questionnaire, in turn, was based e.g. on the Gardner-Lambert studies in Canada and the Philippines. Professor Sauli Takala guided the researchers in the adaptation undertaking. The inner consistency and the reliability of the Laine questionnaire are high (Laine & Pihko, 1991, 135, Laine, 1988, 29). The changes made to the questionnaire concerned the difference between 9th graders and adults, and the fact that internationalism has accelerated in the 14 years since Laine did his pilot test in 1986. As regards the present study, the questionnaire was piloted with three polytechnic students before it was finalised. They commented on the statements, questions and lay-out of the questionnaire while working on it. Relevant changes were made.

The questionnaire was in Finnish and consisted of instructions, 166 statements and 17 multiple choice and three open-ended questions regarding background information

(Appendix 1, questionnaire). The open-ended questions were excluded from the study later to limit the scope of the research. The 166 statements were divided into 15 groups in the following way:

1. My English studies in general (11 statements)
2. Reasons for studying English (16)
3. My opinions on intercultural communication (8)
4. How I feel in general (12)
5. The polytechnic in general (6)
6. My opinions on the British and Americans (6)
7. The English language and the English-speaking world (12)
8. Instruction, courses and teachers (17)
9. My opinions on myself (8)
10. Myself as a polytechnic student (11)
11. Myself as an English student (14)
12. Problems in life and polytechnic (13)
13. Problems in languages (8)
14. Problems in English studies (12)
15. Problems in different English exercises (12)

As for the statements, subjects were asked to indicate on a five-point ordinal scale, i.e. the Likert scale, their feelings, opinions and attitudes with regard to a particular statement, e.g. "The Finns have the same right to their accent as the Australians to theirs". Number "1" indicated that the subject totally disagreed with the idea and number 5 that he totally agreed with it. In an ordinal scale the order of the concepts is known, but the distance is not (Yli-luoma, 1997, 9, Heikkilä, 1999, 51). The five-point scale was selected, because fewer than five alternatives might lower the reliability (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991, 57). The scale included a neutral, "difficult to say" alternative "3", since some of the statements were very difficult in terms of psychology, and it might have been impossible for the students to indicate the direction or intensity of their thoughts and reactions.

The statements were allocated in rather random order in the questionnaire and some statements were expressed in a positive, and others in a negative way. Thus in the analysis 45 statements had to be reversed.

The 17 multiple choice questions comprise background information on

1. gender
2. age
3. mother tongue
4. educational background
4. time of beginning English studies
5. English grade in the matriculation examination or in the college certificate
6. grade point average in the senior secondary school, college or other school
7. grade of the latest English course (ECS) at the polytechnic
8. grade of the latest Swedish course at the polytechnic
9. optional languages studied
10. English activities outside the polytechnic
11. being an exchange student or working abroad
12. language courses abroad
13. amount of English spoken
14. Pen/chat pals
15. Encouragement from parents
16. Working during studies.

In these questions the number of alternatives varied from 2 to 6, and mainly nominal, but also ordinal, scales were used in the analysis.

The subjects completed the questionnaire during a 45 minute class session under the supervision of the researcher. The lesson was either an English lesson or any other subject lesson in their curriculum. Of course some students may have been missing from the class, but in general all those whose answers were planned to be included in the research were present. The instructions were always the same, although once a teacher, just before leaving and handing over the class, briefed the class with the words: "Remember to give a favourable picture of our teachers and teaching". In spite of this, there was no remarkable difference between the response of this class and the other classes of the unit in question. Few questions concerning the statements were asked during the work but some spurts of laughter and exhausted sighs were heard. The data collection started on 9 September and was finished on 29 November 1999.

4.3 Data Analysis Methods

To answer the research questions presented in chapter 3, a number of data processing techniques was used. First the data was keyed into SPSS 9.0 for Windows, a program for calculating statistics. This was undertaken during the last two months of 1999. The information on the data processing program and techniques presented in the following description are derived primarily from the course materials of the author's statistical training and two mathematicians.

First the construct of the personality filter was investigated by factor analysis (Research question 1). Thus the large number of variables was reduced into a few basic concepts, "underlying ideas". Only the statements were included here. Statements about motivation and intercultural relations were first analysed separately and after that all the other statements together. The method of principal components was used together with varimax rotation, because it is very stable and worked better than oblimin rotation. Some statements were omitted because of their lower reliability and loading. Different numbers of factors on each domain were tested during the analysis, but finally a one-factor solution was chosen since it proved to be the most appropriate for the present purpose. The unidimensionality of the scale was investigated with the scree test and the method proposed by Piedmont and Hyland, which is based on the analysis of the mean of inter-item correlations (Piedmont & Hyland 1993, 369). The reliability analysis of the measuring instrument was also conducted and the reliability indices for each sub-scale are reported afterwards.

Second, the relationship between different filter domains was studied by correlation analysis. (Research question 2). The non-parametric Spearman test was used to detect the relations, because not all domains were distributed normally. Because the Likert scale is often interpreted as interval scales in social sciences (Cramer, 1998, 34), the means of the domains were used to analyze the data of this present study.

Third, the relationship between background information (data from 17 multiple choice questions) and filter domains (statement group data) was determined by non-parametric Mann-Whitney or Kruskal-Wallis tests (Research question 3).

Fourth, in analyzing the proportion of strong and permeable versus weak and impermeable filter students according to their domain group tendencies (Research question 4) cluster analysis was first conducted unsuccessfully. After that the total sample data was allocated to five groups per each variable separately, based on the mean values for each of the respective domains such that 20% of the sample belongs to each group. Next, by cross-tabulation, minimum and maximum for each of the five groups were calculated and thus the students' membership in the groups established.

Fifth, the means of the filter domains were compared between the units of Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration and Technology (Research question 5) by the Kruskal-Wallis test. This test was used because it is independent of the frequency distribution of the means, which were normal only in two of the filter domains. Further, in this test the units are compared all together, not in pairs as would be done in the method of confidence intervals.

5 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In this chapter the personality filter domains that appeared when the factor analysis was conducted is first described. The proportion of opinions in some basic variables is also reported. Second, connections between filter domains are shown. After that the proportion of strong, i.e. impermeable, and weak, i.e. permeable, filter students is dealt with and, finally, the student characteristics of the three larger units of the South Carelia Polytechnic are compared.

5.1 Construction of Filter

The first research question focused on the composition of the personality filter. The factor analysis indicated that the personality filter of the polytechnic English language students comprises the following six affective and conative domains:

1. Motivation to study English
2. Attitudes towards intercultural relations
3. Attitudes towards instruction
4. English language self-concept and anxieties
5. General anxieties and
6. Attitudes towards studies at South Carelia Polytechnic.

The construction of the filter appeared to be slightly different at the polytechnic level than at the comprehensive school level (cf. p. 41, Laine, 1988, 13-14), but the basic elements i.e. motivation and foreign language self-concept with language anxieties were central also in this present study. It seems that foreign language self-concept does not exist without its darker side, anxieties about language learning. Laine's personality trait level and the level of attitudes to target language related objects together comprise much the same elements as the domain of attitudes regarding intercultural relations in this current study. Attitudes to instruction appeared in both studies. The difference is found in the domains of general anxieties and attitudes to studies at the polytechnic. In the present study, general anxieties appear as an independent domain, whereas in Laine's study they were part of personality traits. Thus general anxieties are more emphasized in this study of young adults. Laine did not discover a level of general attitudes towards school and studies there, but in the present study these formed a distinct domain of their own. They reflect the academic self-concept of the students. All six of the identified

domains either decrease or increase the permeability of the student's personality filter. They may function all together in a particular situation or only some of them might be active. However, it seems most unlikely that only one of the domains would cause changes in behavior by itself.

Motivation is the domain which gives energy and direction to English learning. It is shown later that it correlates highly with all the other filter domains, except anxieties, and the desire to learn seems to dominate and filter all other affective domains in the process of language learning.

As noted earlier these six filter domains are studied here as single scales, they are not submitted to more detailed factor analysis as there is no point in doing that given the study design.

5.1.1 Motivation to Study English

The reliability analysis of the initial pool of 166 statements lead to construction of a Motivation scale consisting of 27 statements (R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R11, R13, R17, O3, O4, O10, O12, O14, O15, O16, O18 – O29) (Appendix 2). The letter "R" before the number of the statement in the questionnaire means that it was reversed in the scale, while the letter "O" means that the original statement was used.

The Motivation scale, constructed in this way, has a very high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha =.91) which suggests that the scale is very homogeneous (Appendix 2). Factor analysis confirms this. As can be seen from the scree plot in Fig. 5.1, there is only one dominant factor, which explains 32% of the variance.

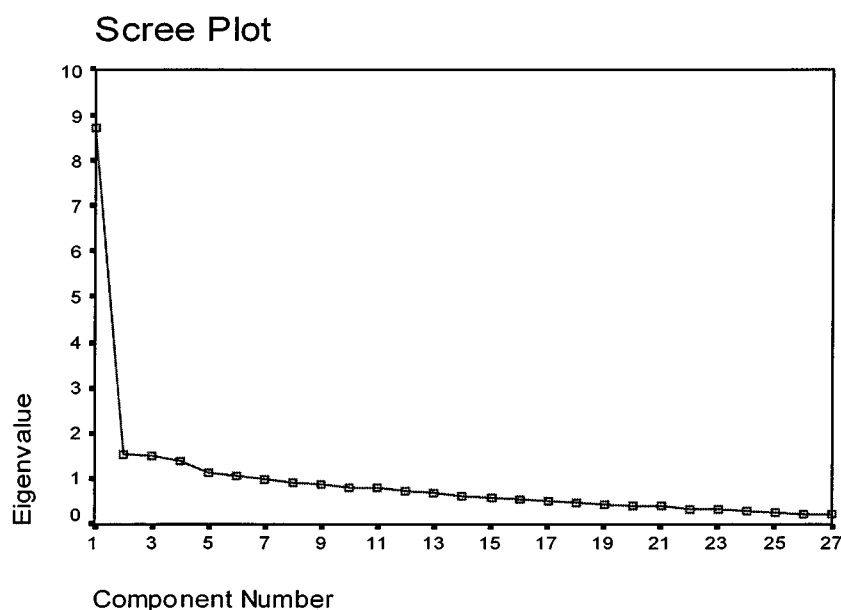


Fig.5.1 Scree Plot of Motivation

The average of the students' replies was 3.9, which suggests that the motivation of the students to study English was good. Within the motivation factor, the filter variables that received the highest loadings in the factor analysis are connected with integrative and intrinsic, but also instrumental motivation vis a vis English language (Appendix 2, Motivation Component Matrix). The one clearly dominant item was statement 016, "Studying English is important to me, since it will enable me to work with English-speaking people in the future", which shows integrative orientation to the international world and its connection to the students' professional prospects. Motivation to English learning is obviously crystallized in this statement. Polytechnic students see their possible selves working in an international environment where English is the means of communication. This view is accurate and realistic today. There is also an element of instrumental motivation in the statement. English skills are viewed as a beneficial to future work. This suggests that motivation for studying English at the polytechnic level in Finland today comprises not only intrinsic and integrative reasons but also extrinsic and instrumental ones. The second and third items i.e., "If I could choose I wouldn't study English"(reversed) and "I would study English even if it were not compulsory", emphasize intrinsic reasons for learning, voluntariness and willingness to acquire English language skills, as well as cognitive orientation. The other important intrinsic and integrative items defining motivation are "Learning English is a pleasant

experience” and ”Learning English is important to me, as it enables me to contact different people”.

Instrumental orientation - ”Studying English is significant to me, as it may be of help in my future work” and ”Some day English is going to help me to get a good job” - was not as powerful as the integrative and intrinsic orientation in motivation.

From the point of view of English as a means of co-operation at work it can be seen in Fig. 5.2 below that almost 60% of the students totally agreed and more than 30% of them slightly agreed with the statement O16, ”Studying English is important to me, since it will enable me to work with English-speaking people in the future” ,which received the highest loading on the motivation scale.

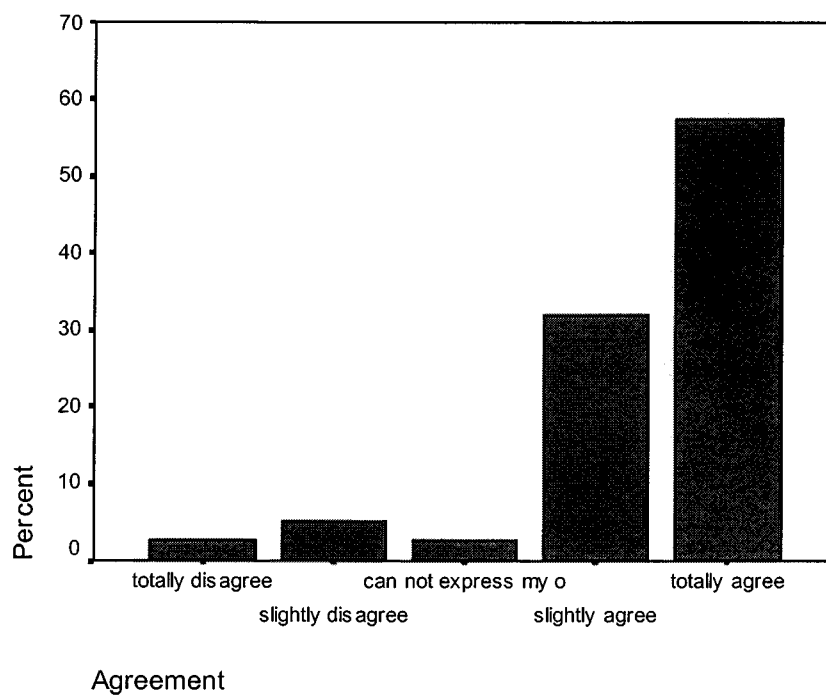


Fig.5.2 The Proportion of Opinions regarding English as Means of Cooperation at work

5.1.2 Attitudes towards Intercultural Relations

Attitudes towards intercultural relations are closely connected with integrative motivation. Nevertheless, the variables chosen to this intercultural domain are characterised not by the reasons why respondents study English, but rather by the attitudes they hold towards the target language and culture. In other words, here the self-structure and affective domain is under investigation, not the self-processes and conative domain as in the previous section.

Again the scree plot (Fig. 5.3, Intercultural Attitudes Scree Plot) shows that there is one dominant component in the intercultural domain which explains 29% of the total variance. The reliability of the intercultural scale is high (Cronbach's alpha = 0,87) (Appendix 2).

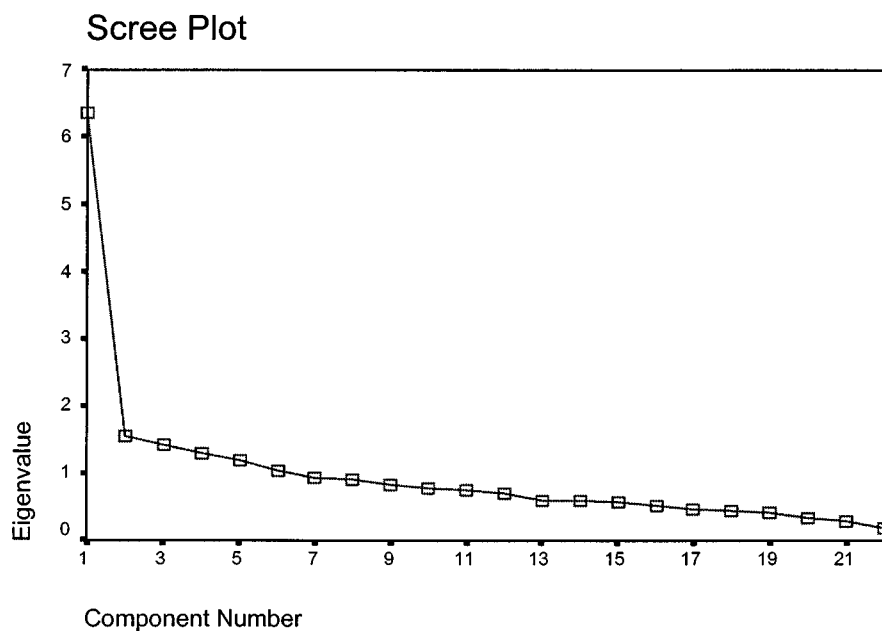


Fig. 5.3 Intercultural Attitudes Scree Plot

The average of all variables is 3.8, showing a positive attitude towards intercultural relations and English language. The 22 intercultural filter variables (R30-35,R37,R65, O56-59,O61-64,O66-71) (Appendix 3) characterize a scale composed of two aspects: the attitudes to English-speaking communities; and the English language itself. The

conspicuous fact here is that these two aspects are very strongly related with each other. Thus it is likely that the student's attitude towards English is basically determined by the attitude he or she possesses towards the English-speaking world. The data of the factor analysis show that there is a conflicting relationship between ethnocentrism "It is only natural that everyone regards his or her own family and nation as the best" (R37), "In my opinion, the Finns who marry foreigners are traitors" (R31) and "I mind my own business and let the others mind theirs" (R34), and the attitude to internationalisation and also the English language. This confirms the several previous studies on the relationship between ethnocentrism, interculturalism and language acquisition.

In the factor analysis the prominent personality filter variables that determine this domain are "I would like to get better acquainted with the Brits" (O56) and "I would like to have more contacts with the international, English-speaking world" (O62) (Appendix 3, Intercultural Attitudes Component Matrix). In addition to this, the subjects would like to get acquainted with Americans, although the British seem to be of more interest to them, and they consider it important to know how people live in different countries.

As for the linguistic aspects, the filter variables that suggested the importance of understanding how English works as a language, the thrill in the tone of English and willingness to get into the language got high loadings in the analysis. The English language is part of the English-speaking cultures, and it is difficult to learn any language or communication without knowing the customs of the people. In sum, the polytechnic students associate language with people and culture.

The proportion of opinions regarding statement O66 "Some day I could move to an English-speaking country" is worth looking at more closely, since it represents a favourable attitude towards ultimate integration with a foreign culture. As seen in Fig. 5.4, about 80% of the students could consider moving to an English-speaking country, since they either totally or slightly agreed with the statement. In contrast, about 13% would not consider moving, as they totally or slightly disagreed with the statement.

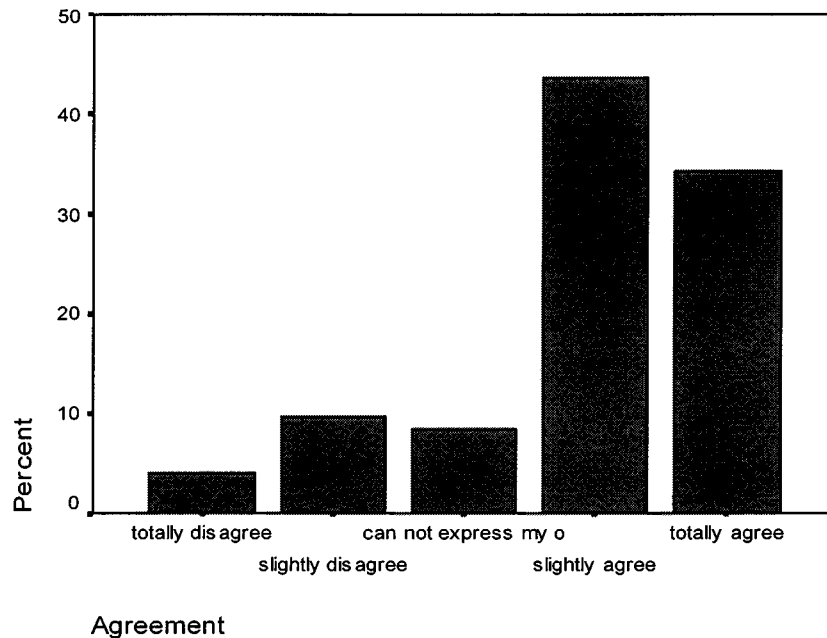


Fig. 5.4 Proportion of Opinions regarding Moving to an English-speaking Country

5.1.3 Attitudes to English Instruction

Regarding the subjects' attitudes to English instruction again a single scale was derived from 17 items (R74, R78, R83, R84, R85, R87, R89, R90, O75-77, O79-82, O86, O88). Alpha is here ,88 (Appendix 4). The filter variables refer to attitudes to instruction in English Communication Skills (a course of 2 credits), attitudes to English teachers at South Carelia Polytechnic, attitudes to previous English teachers and attitudes to the amount of English language studied at South Carelia Polytechnic.

In this case the scree test (Fig. 5.5 Instruction Scree Plot) indicates that there is only one dominant factor and the one-factor solution accounts for 38% of the total variance. As the component matrix (Appendix 4, Instruction Component Matrix) is examined the variables that are the most powerful focus on the instruction of English at the polytechnic e.g. O81 "I liked English Communication Skills course", O86 "I find English teaching at the polytechnic interesting" and O80 "If I could choose I would attend the same kind of English course as English Communication Skills again".

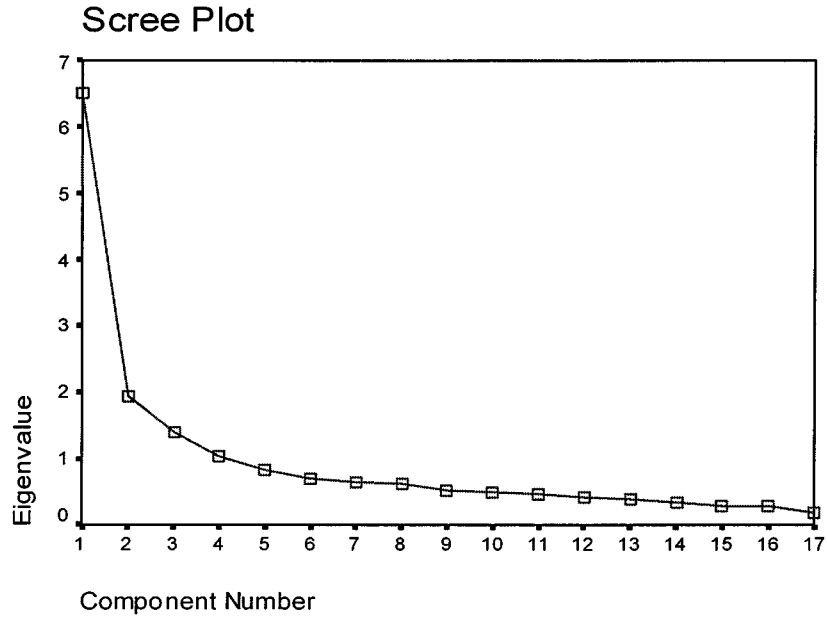


Fig. 5.5 Instruction Scree Plot

Thus the composite scale mainly reflects the views the students have on polytechnic courses and instruction. The average of all the variables in this domain was 3.3. In Fig 5.6 the proportion of the opinions on the usefulness of the English Communication Skills, R90 "I didn't learn anything useful on ECS course", is indicated.

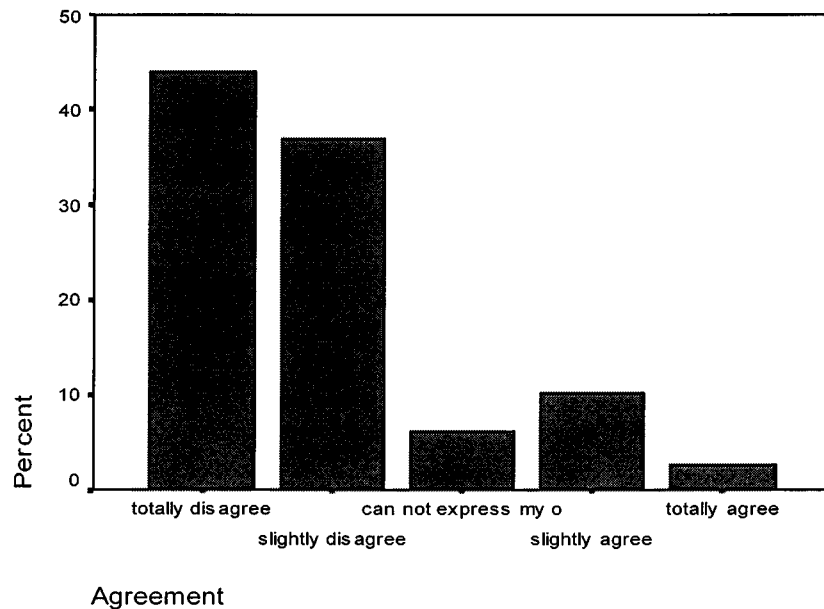


Fig. 5.6 Proportion of Opinions regarding the Unusefulness of ECS

In Fig. 5.6 about 80% of the students totally or slightly disagree with the statement "I didn't learn anything useful on ECS" and 13% agree for different reasons with the statement.

5.1.4 English Language Self-Concept

In this domain I focus on the problems that the students have with their language self-concept in order to find the Achilles' heel and see if any prospective solutions suggest themselves. The component statements of the scale are R113, R116, R117, R121, R167, O120, O123, O137-166, O168, and their number is 38 (Appendix 5).

This domain comprises items connected with the polytechnic student's evaluation of his or her English language skills and the attitude that the student has regarding himself or herself as an English learner. In addition to this, the students' anxieties about themselves as learners of English were also included in this domain. That language inhibitions cannot be separated from foreign language self-concept was also demonstrated by Laine (1988,1991). As noted earlier, foreign language self-concept is rather firmly established at the stage of early adulthood (Guiora et al 1971, Bloom 1976, Krashen 1981, Brown 1981). The spiral effect described by Bloom has been functioning for years and at the same time it has been generating the English language self-concept which the student has at this point of his or her development. Consequently, influencing the language self-concept and changing it from poor to good is difficult, if not impossible, at the polytechnic level. But if it were possible, however, it could have dramatic changes in the student's life as an active participant in the international world.

The English language self-concept scale has a very high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .95), and the scale is thus very homogeneous (Appendix 5). The one-factor solution accounts for 36% of the total variance and again the scree plot illuminates that there is one particularly dominant factor (Fig. 5.7). The component matrix (Appendix 5, English Language Self-Concept Component Matrix) shows the loading values which the filter variables of this domain received.

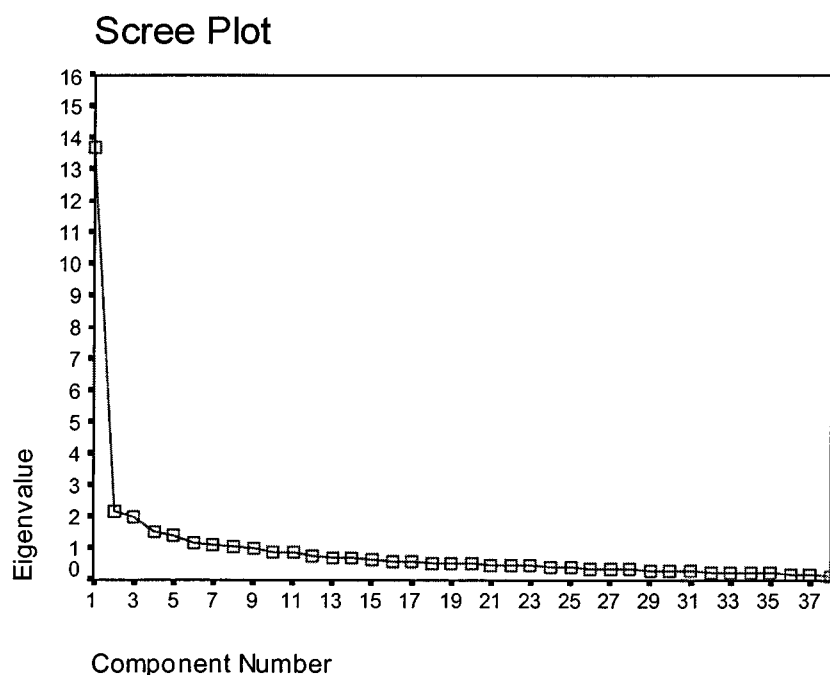


Fig. 5.7 English Language Self-Concept Scree Plot

The prominent feature of this scale is related to the feeling of inadequacy "In language lessons I often feel myself really helpless" (O144) and especially to the feeling of inadequacy in oral skills, because the following statements "Conversation exercises are not nice, because I feel myself helpless in them"(O158), "Speaking English irritates me"(O160), " When I use a foreign language I always feel like a clown"(O143) and "In English class I answer only if I am sure I make no mistakes"(O155) received very high loadings. Inhibitions and anxieties in performance seem to be crucial issues in language self-concept development. English students with strong personality filters are likely to be either very critical or totally uncritical of their performance, since the feelings of acceptance, competence and worth, common to all people (Burns 1982, Covington 1998), must be protected almost at any cost. Language, and language acquisition, is always a social phenomenon, language is learned within a group, and relative judgment is not easily avoided. Compared with other safer and more passive learning situations where a student can mostly listen, take notes and respond occasionally, the students with low language self-concept might feel very vulnerable in a language lesson situation, since in language learning they should take an active part in the situation and respond to the teacher and fellow students. Their poor language self-concept created during the school years might be further reinforced at the polytechnic where oral skills and

communication are emphasized more than in the senior secondary school. Again the students coming from other institutions tend to have a large gap in their knowledge of grammar although their communication readiness is sometimes good, if not better than that of some senior secondary school graduates.

If a student has a lot of anxieties and inhibitions in language lessons and a low foreign language self-concept, he or she raises the filter and starts using different defence mechanisms to cope with the hostile situation (Kantelinen, 1995, 128). The commonly used denial of the importance of the language, however, enhances neither acquisition nor internationalization.

Judged by the mean value of responses (2.2), the students all in all seemed to have a moderate English language self-concept. As seen in Fig. 5.8 below about 75% of the subjects slightly or totally disagreed with the idea of helplessness in language lessons (O144), which was the dominant feature of this domain. The proportion of students who find themselves totally or slightly helpless was, however, rather high, about 20%.

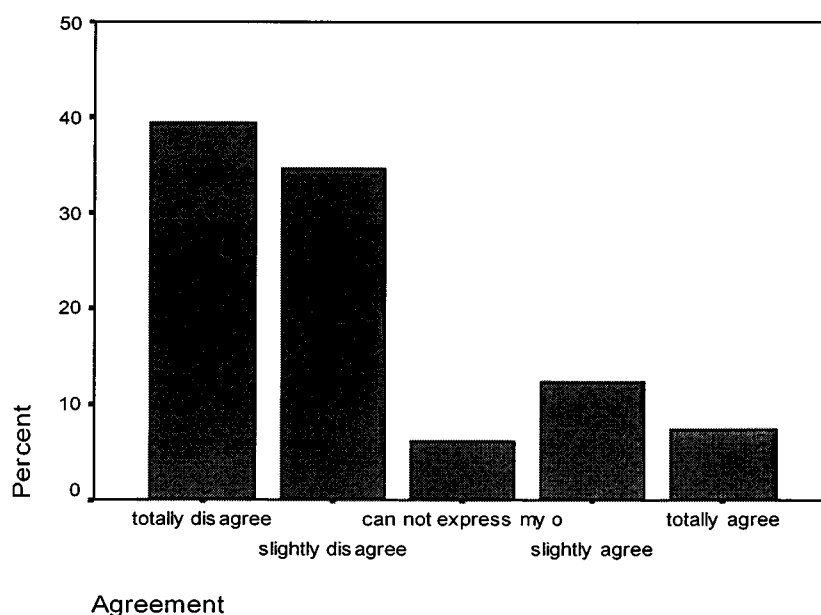


Fig. 5.8 Proportion of Opinions regarding Helplessness in Language Lessons

5.1.5 General Anxieties

Also general anxieties are part of the personality filter which the students maintain. The domain of anxieties consists of 33 variables (R38, R41, R42, R93, R96, R97, R99, O39, O40, O43-49, O91, O92, O94, O95, O98, O101, O104, O124, O125, O129-136) (Appendix 6). Reliability is high. (α .88; Appendix 6). The filter items here are connected with general feeling of inadequacy in life and polytechnic, opinions of other students, general self-concept and ideal self. The average of the variables in this domain was 2.4, which suggests that the students' level of stress and anxieties is rather low.

In the factor analysis the one-factor solution (Fig. 5.9 Anxieties Scree Plot) accounted for 24% of the total variance. The component matrix (Appendix 6, General Anxieties Component Matrix) shows the variables of this domain.

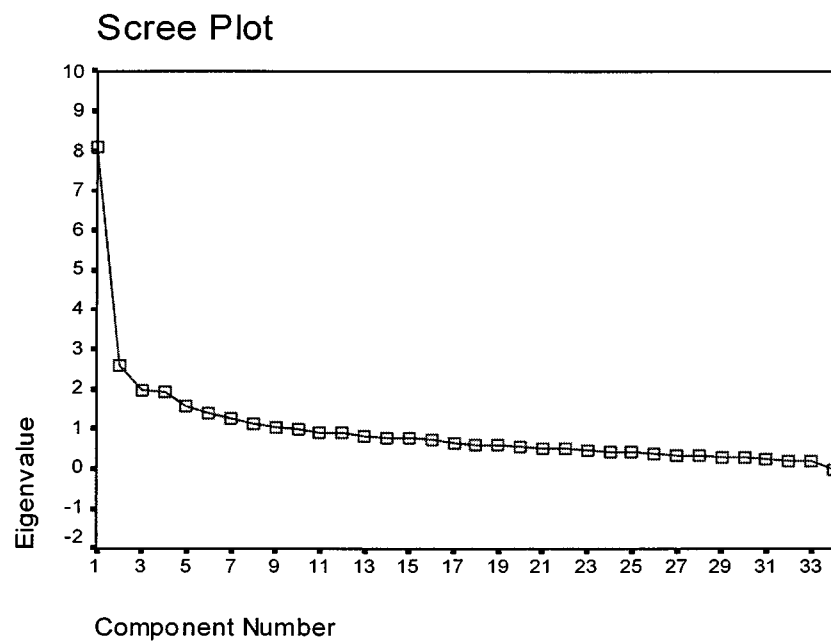


Fig. 5.9 General Anxieties Scree Plot

The core of the domain of general anxieties comprises the feelings of uncertainty, especially in decision making "When I have problems I often really don't know what to do" (O134), and in performance situations "I wouldn't like to perform anything in lessons since others might laugh at me" (O133), as well as depression and alienation. These are features related to low general self-concept, because the student would like to be someone else and feels alienated from his or her present environment. Also the fear

of laughter suggests a strong filter to protect the self-esteem. It is likely that lack of self-confidence, uncertainty, and high expectations, even perfectionism, are the main causes of students' stress and anxiety. If the student's ideal self differs considerably from the actual self, the discrepancy is indicated by depression or alienation in severe cases, or inhibitions and anxiety in milder cases.

Fig. 5.10 below shows the proportion of opinions on the fear of blunders in lessons (O125). Twenty per cent of the subjects were afraid of blunders to some extent and 80% were not. This would appear to indicate that 80% of the students have a sound self-concept and that they are capable of dealing with threats of some order of magnitude to their self-system.

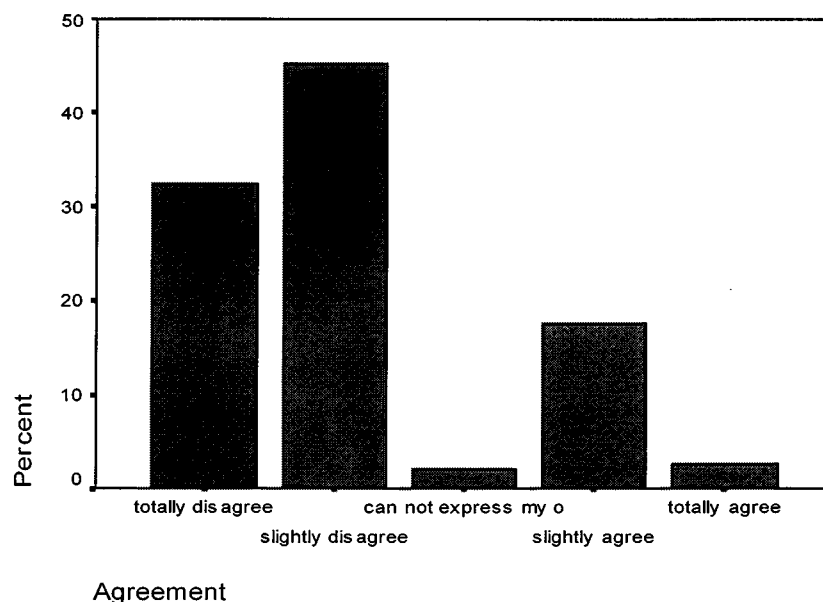


Fig. 5.10 Proportion of Opinions regarding Blunders

As can be seen later in section 5.1.7 in the present study, general anxieties - somewhat unexpectedly - did not stand in a very close relationship with the English language self-concept, even though the language self-concept included elements of anxiety and inhibitions. This might suggest that English language self-concept is considerably differentiated from the general self-concept by the early adulthood.

5.1.6 Attitudes towards Studies at the Polytechnic

The domain of attitudes towards studies at South Carelia Polytechnic includes the following 11 filter variables: R51, R52, O53, O54, O55, O105, O108, R127, R128, R130, R136 (Appendix 7). Alpha reliability is here .85. Two aspects, attitudes towards studies in general and attitudes to South Carelia Polytechnic, are found in this domain. The average of all variables of this domain was 4.0. Hence the view that the respondents hold on the studies is positive.

Forty-two per cent of the total variance is explained by this one-factor solution (Fig. 5.11, Studies Scree Plot) and the dominant items composing this domain reflect the satisfaction the students feel at the polytechnic "I don't enjoy studying at polytechnic" (R130), and the perceived value of their studies "Studying is significant to me" (O54), (Appendix 7, Studies at Polytechnic Component Matrix).

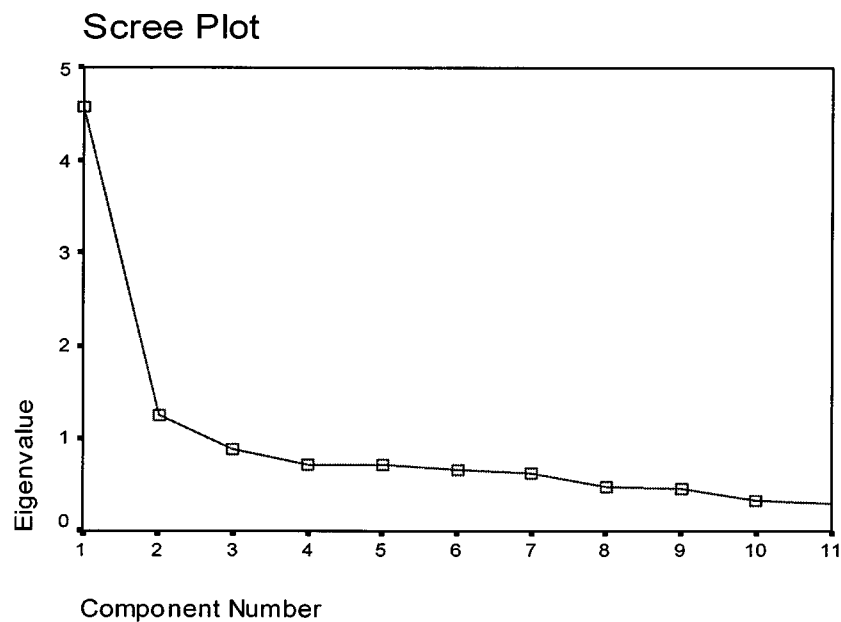


Fig. 5.11 Studies at the Polytechnic Scree Plot

This domain is related to the student's general academic self-concept, because it reflects the student's attitudes towards himself as a learner in general. About 14% of the students think that they are not successful students (O108) and more than 80% view themselves doing well in studies (Fig. 5.12).

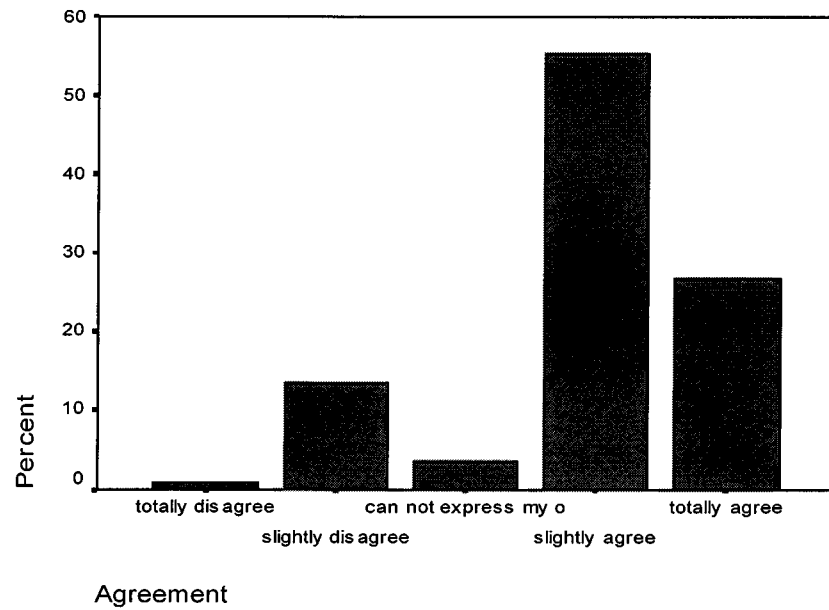


Fig. 5.12 Proportion of Opinions on Success

5.2 Relationship between Filter Domains

The preceding sections have dealt with the six domains separately. Now the second research question is considered, and the interrelationships of the domains will be addressed by means of correlations. Since English language self-concept and general anxieties scales were the only ones with normal frequency distribution of the means the nonparametric Spearman test was utilized to analyze the relations. Table 5.1 below shows the relations between the six domains:

Correlations

			MOTIVATION	INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS	INSTRUCTION	EL SC	ANXIETIES	STUDIES
Spearman's rho	MOTIVATION	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,738**	,436**	-,622**	-,028	,250**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,	,000	,000	,000	,674	,000
		N	228	228	228	228	228	228
	INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS	Correlation Coefficient	,738**	1,000	,354**	-,518**	-,140*	,221**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,	,000	,000	,035	,001
		N	228	228	228	228	228	228
	INSTRUCTION	Correlation Coefficient	,436**	,354**	1,000	-,358**	-,079	,159*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,	,000	,236	,016
		N	228	228	228	228	228	228
	EL SC	Correlation Coefficient	-,622**	-,518**	-,358**	1,000	,358**	-,263**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,	,000	,000
		N	228	228	228	228	228	228
	ANXIETIES	Correlation Coefficient	-,028	-,140*	-,079	,358**	1,000	-,497**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,674	,035	,236	,000	,	,000
		N	228	228	228	228	228	228
	STUDIES	Correlation Coefficient	,250**	,221**	,159*	-,263**	-,497**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,001	,016	,000	,000	,
		N	228	228	228	228	228	228

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5.1 Relations between Domains

The data indicates that motivational aspects have a very strong positive correlation with intercultural relations. Thus it is apparent that students who appreciate English-speaking cultures and the language are also motivated to study English and vice versa. In light of this, it seems that teachers who emphasize cultural aspects also enhance motivation to learn the language. Furthermore, a significant negative relation was found between motivation and the problems the students have with their English language self-concept i.e. English language anxieties. This suggests that the respondents who are not very motivated have problems in studying English, whereas the students with high motivation are the ones with less inhibitions and anxieties concerning English language skills and acquisition. There is also a significant, though not a very strong correlation, between attitudes to instruction and motivation. This might suggest that the subjects

who think highly of the teaching and teachers are more motivated to learn English. Motivation and general anxieties showed no significant relation ($p=0,674$). In other words, willingness to study English and, with the acquired language skills, willingness to integrate to the international world override the student's general anxieties, and the possible low general self-concept. This could also be taken to indicate that students with certain emotional problems and some level of uncertainty, (i.e. with some level of anxiety) are willing to study English. The relationship between volition of language learning and anxieties has not been sufficiently studied.

The data concerning attitudes to intercultural relations and the English language demonstrates that this domain is statistically significantly related with all other parts of the personality filter. The highest correlation is with motivation, primarily because integrative orientation and internationalization are very close to each other. The second strongest connection is with English language self-concept. The correlation is negative, thus implying that positive intercultural attitudes go together with the lack of problems in language self-concept, i.e. the students who have positive English language self-concept also hold positive views towards internationalization. The correlation with the attitudes towards instruction was moderate (0,35) and with the attitude towards the studies at the polytechnic rather low (0,22). There was a statistically significant ($p=0,03$) negative relationship between intercultural relations and anxieties, but it is very weak (-0,14). Nevertheless it could be asserted, since the correlation is negative, that respondents with a positive view to the world are not prone to suffer from many inhibitions or stress. It is likely that self-confident people are heading towards the international affairs.

The third domain, attitudes to English instruction, is principally dependent upon motivation. In addition to the desire to learn the language there must be willingness and perseverance to take part in the classroom exercises in order to acquire and learn the target language. Attitudes to instruction are also highly related to intercultural attitudes and English language self-concept. Based on these results, the students with positive attitudes towards instruction seem also to think highly of themselves as language learners and to regard internationalization favorably. A very weak connection was found between the attitudes towards studies in general and English instruction, and no statistically significant relationship was found between anxieties and English

instruction. The low negative relationship here and the lack of significance suggest that the attitudes the subjects have towards English teaching have nothing to do with the general anxieties they have in their lives.

As for English language self-concept, the prominent characteristic is that it is significantly related to all other domains. The highest correlation (-0,62) appeared between the EL SC domain and motivation. The negative nature of the correlation reflects the concept that critical view of oneself as an English language student leads to deficiency of motivation and vice versa. The second strongest correlation (-0,52) was found between English language self-concept and attitudes towards intercultural relations. The respondents with hardly any dilemmas in learning English thus seem to be those whose attitudes to intercultural relations and language are the most positive. As regards the attitudes to English instruction, English language self-concept had a statistically significant correlation to it as well. The relationship is moderately negative (-0,36) and suggests that the absence of difficulties in language self-concept tends to foster positive attitudes towards English instruction. English language self-concept is related to anxieties with the same positive magnitude as it was, negatively, to instruction. Anxieties are personality characteristics and for that reason are also reflected in language self-concept. The connection between English language self-concept and attitudes to studies at the polytechnic was the weakest in this domain (-0,26), but the correlation is nonetheless significant, implying that attitudes to oneself as a language learner depend, at least to some extent, on attitudes to studies at the polytechnic in general.

The fifth domain, anxieties, is less closely correlated with the other domains than are any of the other elements of the personality filter. Anxieties seem to function rather independently and not to fit the total composition of the filter as well as the other components. As a result of this, it is likely that general anxieties are not an essential component of the filter for adult students of English. Anxieties had significant relationships with only three domains, i.e. with attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic (-0,50), English language self-concept (0,36), and with attitudes towards intercultural relations (-0,14). Consequently, students with general anxieties in their lives tend to have problems at the polytechnic, too. In addition, they have some dilemmas with their language self-concept and some attitudinal difficulties concerning

foreign cultures and their languages. The negative attitudes regarding internationalization may be caused by feelings of alienation and uncertainty in general.

The last domain, attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic, correlates significantly with all the other areas of the filter, although the strongest connection was between it and anxieties (-0,50). It is quite natural that the student's general attitude towards life is reflected also in the attitude towards his or her studies. The correlations of attitudes towards studies with motivation (0,25), intercultural relations (0,22) and English language self-concept (-0,26) were all of about the same magnitude, which is not very high.

To conclude, judged by the observed correlation coefficients, the core of the personality filter in English appears to be formed by English language self-concept and English motivation. Furthermore, attitudes towards intercultural relations and towards instruction of English both contribute significantly to the construction of the filter.

Motivation is very closely connected with attitudes to intercultural relation and the English language. Attitudes towards instruction are again primarily dependent on motivation. The anxieties which students have with English language self-concept are in turn relatively evenly related to all domains of the filter, as was also the case with general anxieties and attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic. None of these, however, appears to be particularly crucial to the filter.

5.3 Effects of Background Factors on Filter Domains

The connections between the six filter domains and the nominal-level background information variables, i.e. gender, other language studies (except English and Swedish), the use of English magazines and books, the Internet, foreign friends, additional English courses outside the polytechnic and abroad, being an exchange student, support of parents and working after school, were examined by the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test for two independent samples and by confidence intervals.

The data indicates that there are statistically significant differences between male and female respondents in the domains of motivation ($p=0,02$), intercultural relations ($p=0,00$) and attitudes to instruction ($p=0,01$).

According to the results shown in Fig. 5.13 below, males, in general, tend to have a lower motivation to study English than females, but the difference is not significant. This contradiction between the results of Mann-Whitney and the confidence intervals of the means is due to the fact that Fig. 5.13 presents the 95% confidence intervals for the mean for females and males while Mann-Whitney test is based on the ranks.

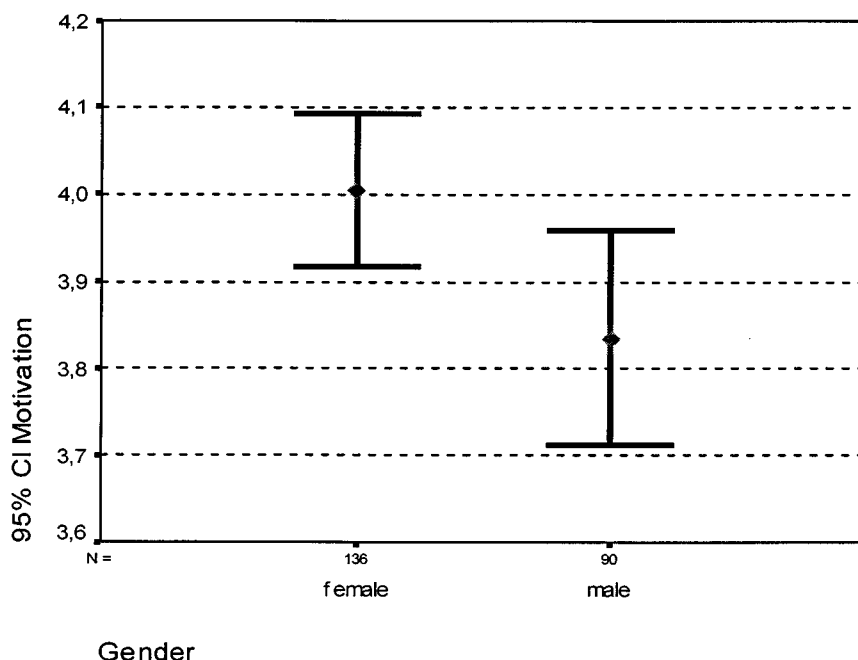


Fig 5.13 Gender Difference in Motivation

Figure 5.13 illustrates it to be more characteristic of women to have a high level of motivation (mean 4), but there are also men whose motivation is very close to the mean of women. It is noteworthy that even the lowest measures of motivation for both groups are reasonably high.

Fig. 5.14 below indicates the difference between gender in attitudes to intercultural relations and the language. Here the difference is larger and statistically significant. According to the mean (3,6), male students also possess a slightly positive attitude to intercultural relations and the English language, although their attitudes differ significantly from the interest women show in foreign cultures and co-operation with foreign people. Based on this, it seems that male polytechnic students tend to be more ethnocentric than female students. These notions support also the findings of Gardner and Lambert (1972).

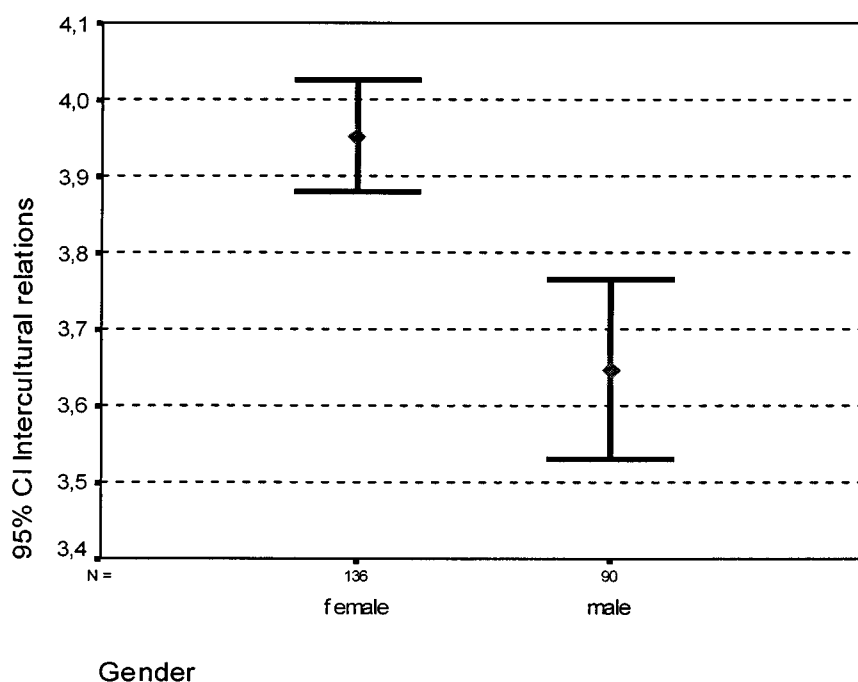


Fig. 5.14 Gender Difference in Attitudes to Intercultural Relations

It can be seen in figure 5.15 below that the male respondents' attitude to instruction is slightly more positive than that of the females (means 3,5 and 3,2, respectively). This is rather surprising considering the high level of motivation and the positive attitude of female respondents towards internationalization. This might be related to the differences between the polytechnic units discussed later in section 5.4 or with the female gender of the instructor. It can also be observed that the means of responses reflecting attitudes

concerning the domain of instruction are lower than those of the other two domains considered, particularly so in the case of the female students.

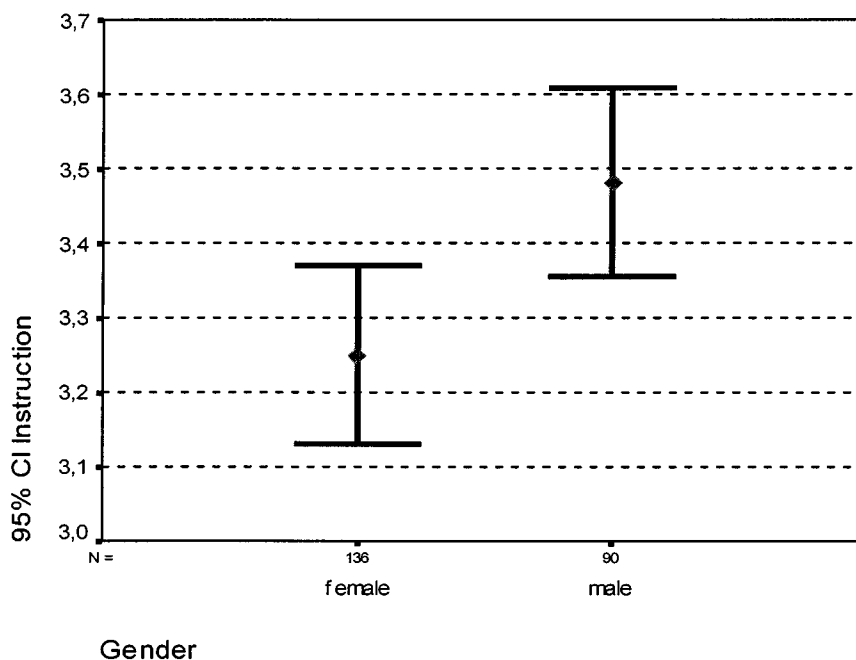


Fig. 5.15 Gender Difference in Attitudes towards Instruction

The educational background differences appeared to influence significantly only the student's English language self-concept, EL SC (Fig. 5.16), and it did not have very much effect on any of the other domains. When the effect of the educational background is discussed, however, the small sample size for two of the sub-samples, i.e. "vocational college" and "other" should also be taken into consideration. Due to the smallness of the sample size, the confidence intervals for the second and third sub-samples are relatively large, and as a result they overlap with each other as well as with that of the first one. Therefore, additional research with appropriate sample sizes is required to analyse more definitely the effect of the educational background on the filter variables.

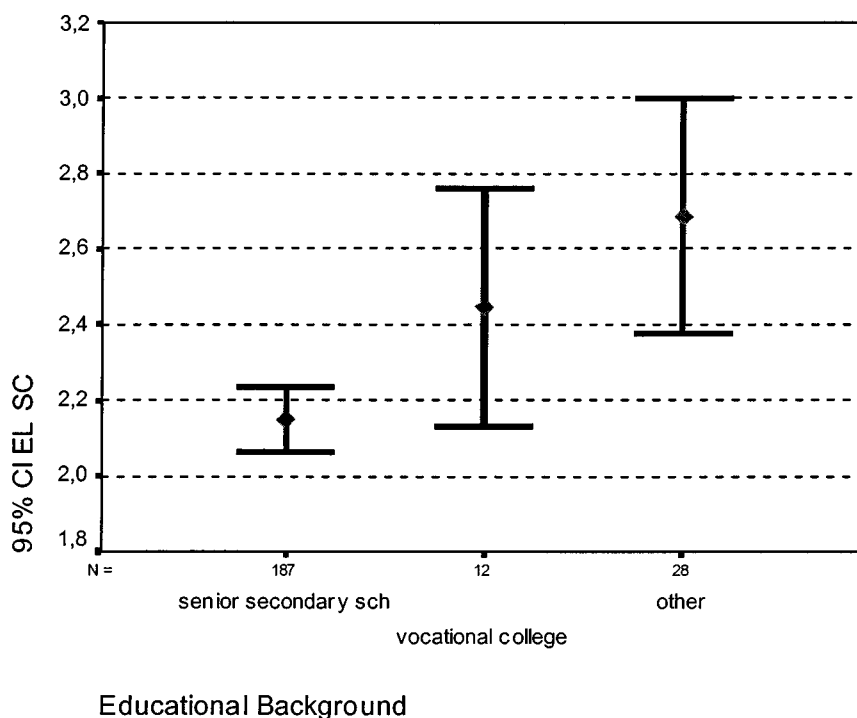


Fig. 5.16 Effect of Educational Background on EL SC

As shown in Fig. 5.16, the students coming from senior secondary school seem to have remarkably less problems with their English language self-concept. These students mainly consider themselves good language learners, whereas the former students of vocational colleges or other schools acknowledge their problems more often. Especially students from vocational schools regard themselves as not very successful English students.

If the student is interested in languages in general and has voluntarily chosen to study any language other than English and Swedish, it seems to have a positive relationship with his or her English motivation, the attitude towards intercultural relations and English instruction and also on the English language self-concept. In these domains the differences between students who study an optional language and those who do not were all statistically significant ($p < 0,05$).

Among the students who study an optional language, the mean of motivation was almost 4,1 and the mean of attitudes to intercultural relations was 3,9, in contrast to the students who do not study optional languages and have motivation at the level of 3,8 and the mean of attitudes to intercultural relations at the level of 3,7. Thus it is likely

that the respondents who are motivated to study any language or are interested in any foreign culture, are motivated and interested in other cultures and languages, too.

Students with optional languages have a more positive attitude to English instruction, the mean being 3,5. In comparison, the mean of the students not interested in several foreign languages, was 3,2. Perhaps the students who are willing to acquire several languages have also more experience in the methods used in language learning. Students choosing a voluntary language have less dilemma in the image of themselves as English learners. The mean indicating the amount of problems was 2,1 compared with 2,3 for the other group of students. It might be assumed that the students who are interested in languages in general can easily adopt new identities. They are similarly capable of picturing themselves as French or German speakers working in French or German environments as they are of viewing themselves as English speakers working with people from the English-speaking world. Their language filter might be more flexible and permeable than that of the students who study only the compulsory languages.

Next follows a discussion of the grades and their influence on the filter. The assessment of the matriculation examination, the grade of a last course of English in a vocational or other school, and the grades of the latest English (English Communication Skills) and Swedish courses are compared here with the domains of the personality filter of the English language. First, it was shown that the grade of the matriculation examination, measured by the Kruskal Wallis test, had a statistically significant correlation with motivation, attitudes towards intercultural relations and with English language self-concept. The grade "magna" appears to have the most advantageous influence on all three of these domains. Secondly, the grade of the last English course in a vocational college was significantly related to only the attitudes to intercultural relations and English language self-concept. The level of motivation does not depend on the grades. Thirdly, the English grade of other institutes seems to have no significant effect on any of the domains, except, perhaps, the relatively low correlation it has with anxieties.

Fourthly, when the grade of the English course at the polytechnic (ECS) was examined, the data showed a significant correlation between it and English language self-concept, as well as between it and both motivation and intercultural relations. The English grade had the highest correlation with language self-concept (-0,46). The negative relation

shows that the subjects who have high grades have no or few anxieties in their English language self-concept. Thus the student's positive view of himself as an English student is related and maybe partly caused by the grade he or she got. But it can also be the other way round, with the grade being affected by the self-confidence of the English student. Based on this same evidence, the unsuccessful students suffer from anxieties and inhibitions connected with English learning. Their negative view of their English skills, and their English learning history, might be causal regarding subsequent low grades.

The second strongest relation was observed between the English grade and motivation (0,34) and the third strongest correlation was between the grade and intercultural relations (0,31). The data suggest that integrative motivation enhances proficiency and achievement. Finally, the Swedish grade is connected with the same elements as the English grade, i.e. with motivation, intercultural relations and English language self-concept. Swedish grades are related to English grades, which might reveal the existence of particular linguistic aptitude and skills common to various languages.

The other features of background information which may have some influence on the filter domains are not examined here in detail. It should be noted, though, that reading magazines and books and using the Internet do have significant effects on all six affective domains. Listening to English music, socializing with foreign friends, language courses abroad and pen and chat pals influence the domains of motivation, attitude towards intercultural relations, and English language self-concept. Parents' encouragement to study English in the school years was related, in addition to the above factors, also to the domains of general anxieties and attitudes to studies at the polytechnic. In the present sample, age had no influence on the domains.

5.4 Proportion of Strong versus Weak Filter Students

Research question 4 dealt with the proportion of students with a strong and weak filter. When the total sample of the English polytechnic subjects was cross-tabulated it was seen that 38 students (16,6%) belonged to the strong, i.e. less permeable filter group. They had a membership only in the groups where the means of the domains were

between 1 and 3. In other words, almost 17% of the polytechnic English students viewed themselves as poor English learners, their motivation to study English was low, and their attitudes to intercultural relations, English instruction and studies in general were negative. In addition, their level of general anxiety was relatively high.

In contrast to this, 41 students (18%) were only members of groups where all the means were between 3 and 5. It is apparent that they were highly motivated to study English, their attitudes were positive and they had only a few or no anxieties. They regarded themselves as good English learners. All this indicates a weak, i.e. relatively permeable personality filter in English and corresponding ease in absorbing the language.

When a correlation analysis of the personality filter types and all grades, which of course indicate mainly general achievement, was conducted, no statistically significant correlations were discovered. But there was, however, a clear tendency for weak-filter English students, i.e. with relatively permeable personalities, to be more successful in their studies than strong-filter students. Also a clear tendency was discovered between English achievement in the matriculation examination and the filter type. Nevertheless, a statistically significant relation was found between the permeability levels of English students' personality filters and their grades in the polytechnic English course (ECS). This finding suggests that English language learning achievement is related to the personality filter type.

Up till now, we have been examining the whole data base. In other words, the responses of students in all five of the Lappeenranta units of the polytechnic have been included in the analysis. From now on we concentrate only on the three larger units.

5.5 Comparison of Polytechnic Units

Three units of South Carelia Polytechnic, Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration, and Technology are included in the comparative analysis of the faculties. The reason for this is that the number of students in the Crafts and Design unit and in the unit of Home Economics is markedly lower than in the three larger faculties. The differences and similarities between the three units are studied mainly by comparing the six filter domains.

5.5.1 Motivation to study English

When the means of the units regarding motivational aspects (Table 5.2) are examined, it is found that the mean of all three units taken together was 3,9.

		Report					
UNIT		MOTIVATION	INTERCULTURAL	INSTRUCTION	EL SC	ANXIETIES	STUDIES
HEALTH	Mean	3,8832	3,8706	2,9510	2,2306	2,2753	1,9217
	N	72	72	72	72	72	72
	Std. Deviation	,5351	,4869	,6404	,6280	,4638	,6243
BUSINESS	Mean	4,1099	3,9726	3,7119	2,1672	2,5541	2,1701
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62
	Std. Deviation	,4160	,4676	,5253	,6595	,5619	,6961
TECHNOLOGY	Mean	3,7622	3,6047	3,4525	2,3250	2,3396	1,9750
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69
	Std. Deviation	,6560	,5740	,5592	,6497	,4103	,5355
Total	Mean	3,9113	3,8114	3,3539	2,2433	2,3823	2,0157
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203
	Std. Deviation	,5637	,5330	,6582	,6451	,4913	,6252
Cronbach's Alpha		,9082	,8701	,8829	,9455	,8866	,8467

Table 5.2 Means of Domains in Units

Thus, the overall drive of the students to study and learn English is very good. The individual unit means indicate that the students in Business have the highest motivation (4,1); the students in Health Care having a mean of 3,9 and the students in Technology, the mean of 3,8. The standard deviation was widest in the unit of Technology, implying that the students' motivation is more varied there. The Kruskal-Wallis test confirms that there were significant differences between the units ($p=0,00$).

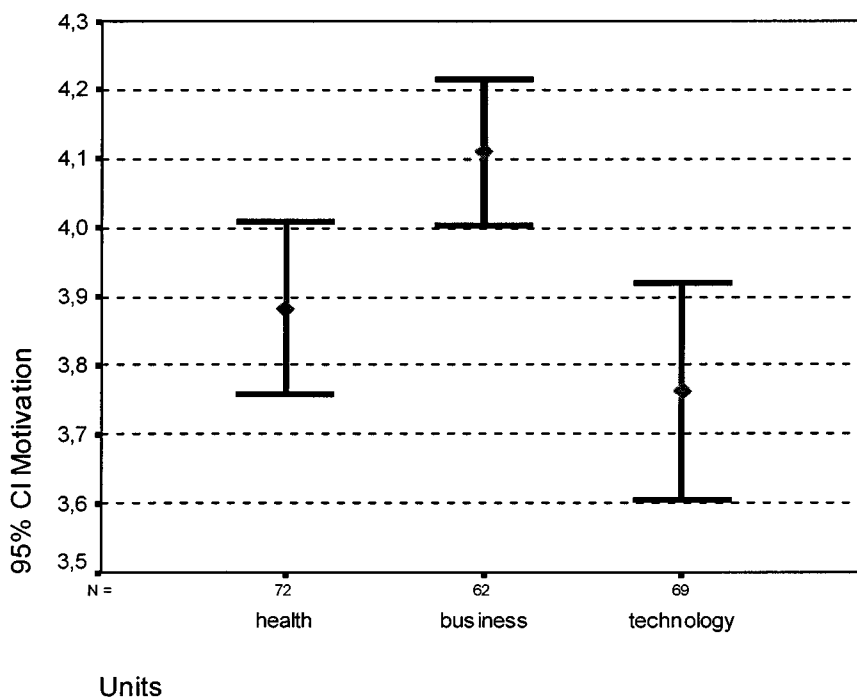


Fig. 5.17 Differences in Student Motivation between Polytechnic Units

As seen in Fig. 5.17, the units of Health Care and Social Welfare and Technology seem to have more in common with each other regarding motivation (the difference between these units is not statistically significant since the lines in Fig. 5.17 are overlapping) than they do with the Business Administration unit where the students apparently consider the English language and maybe all communication skills very valuable in their future work. The integrative orientation to the world and the instrumental value of the English language there are more powerful in the unit of Business Administration. This could be interpreted to indicate that health care and technology students are slightly more inclined to employment in Finland. However, it must be remembered that, on the whole, the polytechnic students in all units seem to be fairly highly motivated to acquire English language skills.

5.5.2 Attitudes to Intercultural relations

In Table 5.2 above, it can be seen that the overall mean value of the attitudes to intercultural relationships and the English language (3,8), indicates that the students are rather willing to integrate to the international world. Again the Business unit showed

the highest mean 4,0, but in this domain Health Care students came very close with the mean of 3,9 while Technology students scored the lowest 3,6, which was significantly different from the other two means.

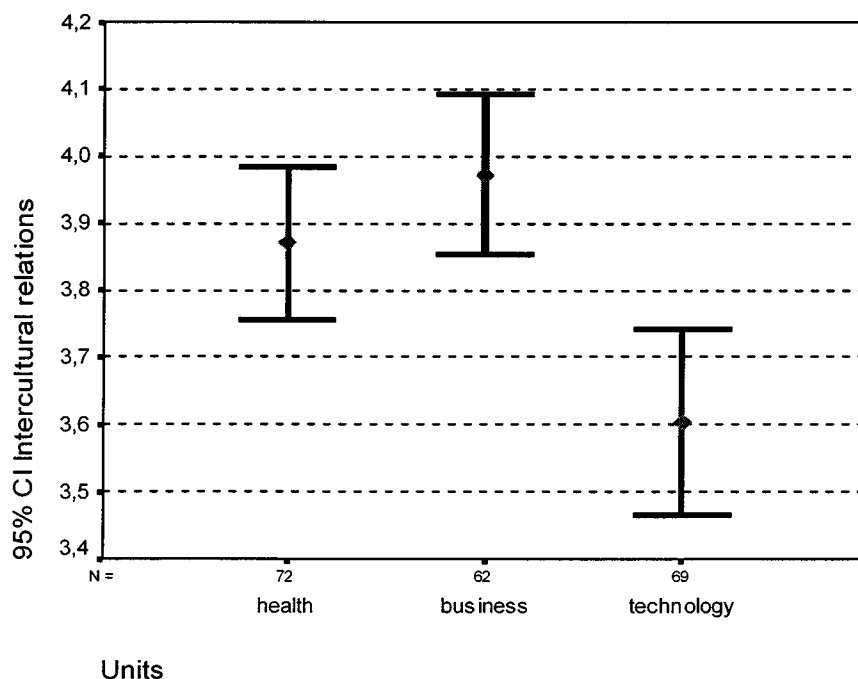


Fig. 5.18 Differences in Attitudes towards Intercultural Relations between Units

The outstanding feature here is the notable difference regarding attitudes towards international relations between the technology students and those of the other two units. Although the mean value for students in the Technology unit is not particularly low, it does demonstrate, however, that the students are not as interested in the intercultural relations or the English language as are the students in Health Care and Business. In order to throw some light on the reasons causing this difference, the English grades of the subjects were compared and they suggest that the students of Technology had received lower grades in the matriculation examination, mostly "lubenter" (25%) or "cum laude" (26%), and also lower grades from other institutes (mean 1,8). The English grades from the vocational colleges (mean 3,3) were below the Health Care students' grades (mean 4,0) but above those of the Business students' (mean 3,2). Similarly the Technology students' English grades at the polytechnic (mean 3,2) were slightly lower than those in the other units, in Health Care 3,7 and in Business 3,4. The

lower grade history could be thus related to lower intercultural attitudes as part of the holistic spiral phenomenon.

Although the previous English grades seem to be related to the attitudes to intercultural relations and the English language, they do not explain the whole issue, since the students of Health Care had had a slightly lower English grades in the matriculation examination than the students of Technology. The students of Business completed the matriculation examination with highest grades (lubenter 21%, cum laude 18% and magna 21%), but their English grades at the polytechnic are not as high as the grades in Health Care. This, of course, suggests the possibility of different grading standards among English teachers or qualitative or quantitative differences in other, non-language related study demands on students in the different units.

There are naturally also other reasons for the differences in attitudes to intercultural relations and the language. Characteristically the students of technology have concentrated on, or have had heavier competing demands from areas other than languages and they might not be that enthusiastic about communication skills. Gender may also explains some of the differences. As suggested in Fig. 5.14, male students at the polytechnic, in general, are less interested in foreign cultures and languages than female students. Their attitude to integration and international communication is not as positive as the attitude of females. Since 88% of the second-year students in the unit of Technology were males, gender is probably one of the reasons why the mean of intercultural attitudes in the Unit of Technology was lower than the means in other units. The similarity in this regard of the units of Health Care and Social Welfare and Business Administration might as well be caused by gender. Although interesting, the reasons for the male-female differences are beyond the scope of this study.

5.5.3 Attitudes to English Instruction

The student attitudes to English instruction differed significantly between the units ($p=0,00$). The mean of all three units was 3,3 and the unit which was below this average is the unit of Health Care (mean 2,9) (Table 5.2). In the unit of Technology the mean

was 3,4 and in the unit of Business Administration the mean reached the level of 3,7 (Fig. 5.19).

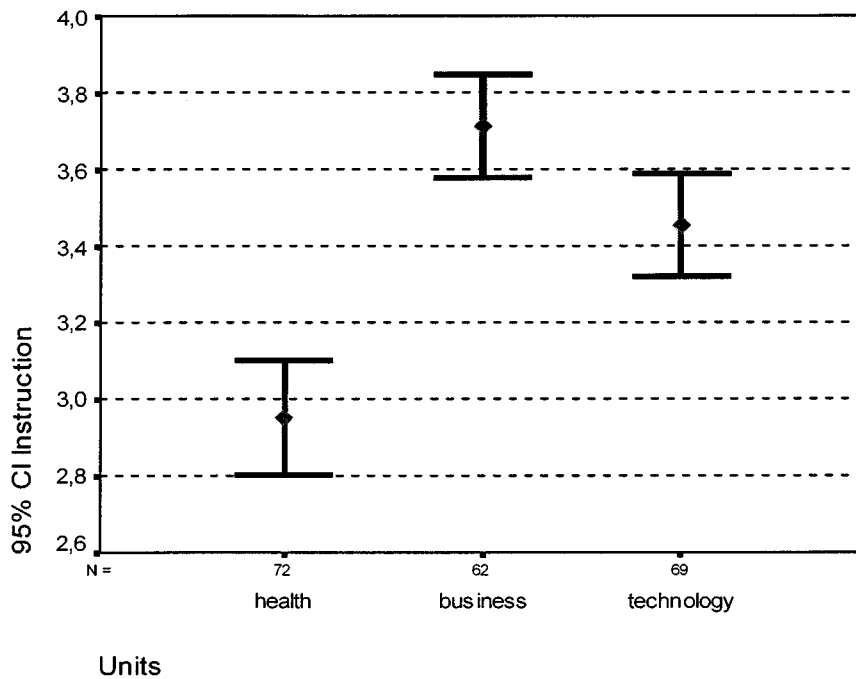


Fig. 5.19 Differences in Attitudes towards English Instruction between Units

The lower mean value in the unit of Health Care suggests that the students were more critical of the ECS course and teaching. The open-ended questions, which were excluded from this study in order to limit the scope of the study, indicated strong criticism of the teacher attitudes. At the same time the students' individual differences in language skills were very marked. In addition to this, the respondents were not satisfied with the structure of the ECS course, while teachers were not capable of fitting everything considered necessary into the two credit unit course. The students' attitudes to instruction in the unit of Technology were much closer to those in Business Administration than to those in Health Care and Social Welfare. When the relationship between gender and the attitudes towards instruction in Fig. 5.15 is studied, it can be seen that, on the whole, the attitudes of male students towards English instruction are more positive. The dissatisfaction in the unit of Health Care and Social Welfare, where 87% of the second-year students were females, might cause this difference between gender.

5.5.4 English Language Self-Concept

English language self-concept is the only domain of the filter in which there were more similarities than differences between the units (Table 5.2). There is no statistically significant difference ($p=0,47$). Thus the students in all units of the polytechnic have rather similar views of themselves as language learners. The number of dilemmas in language learning is about the same. Figure 5.20 below indicates the amount of anxiety and inhibitions the students have regarding their English language acquisition skills.

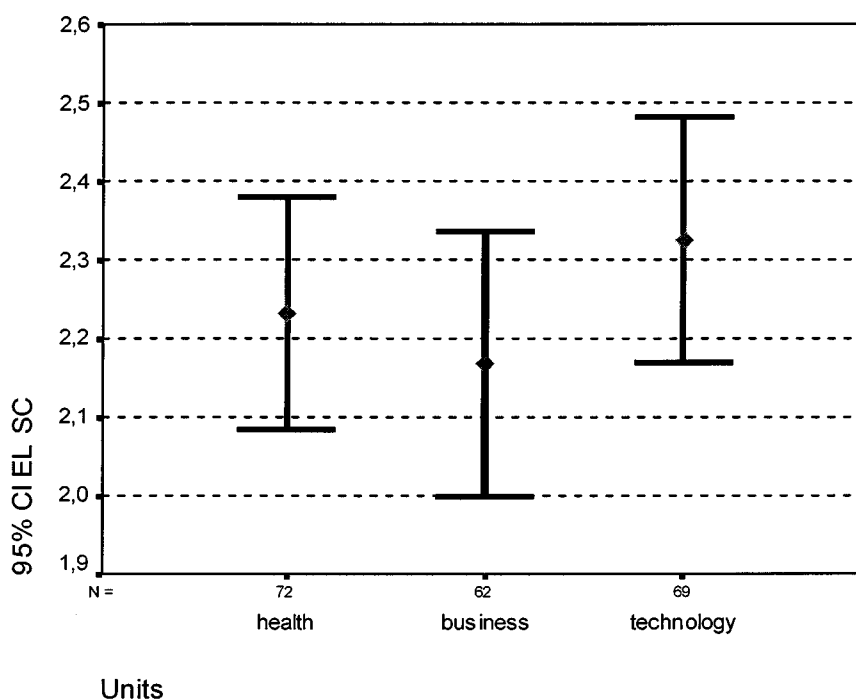


Fig. 5.20 Differences in Anxieties of English Language Self-Concept between Units

The respondents in the Technology unit seem to have a slight tendency towards lower English language self-concept, i.e. a higher level of anxieties and inhibitions regarding themselves as English students (mean 2,3) than the members of the other two units (means 2,2), but, as mentioned above, the similarities are noteworthy here, not the differences. The level of anxiety in EL SC was, in general, low. Mostly the students seem to have the feeling that they are adequate English learners and they trust their skills to study further. The English language self-concept values at the polytechnic are relatively low, indicating fairly high or at least mediocre self-concept. The worst problems concern helplessness in the language classroom and especially in conversation exercises.

5.5.5 General Anxieties

According to the analysis, it is evident that the students of Business have more general anxieties than the others. The mean values are low and thus indicate the number of dilemmas to be small. Although spread over a relatively narrow range, the means do demonstrate a statistically significant difference between the units ($p=0,00$). The average of means for all three units was 2,4. The highest mean, in the Business unit, reached the figure of 2,5 (Table 5.2). The second highest mean 2,34 was in the unit of Technology and the lowest 2,27 in the unit of Health Care and Social Welfare.

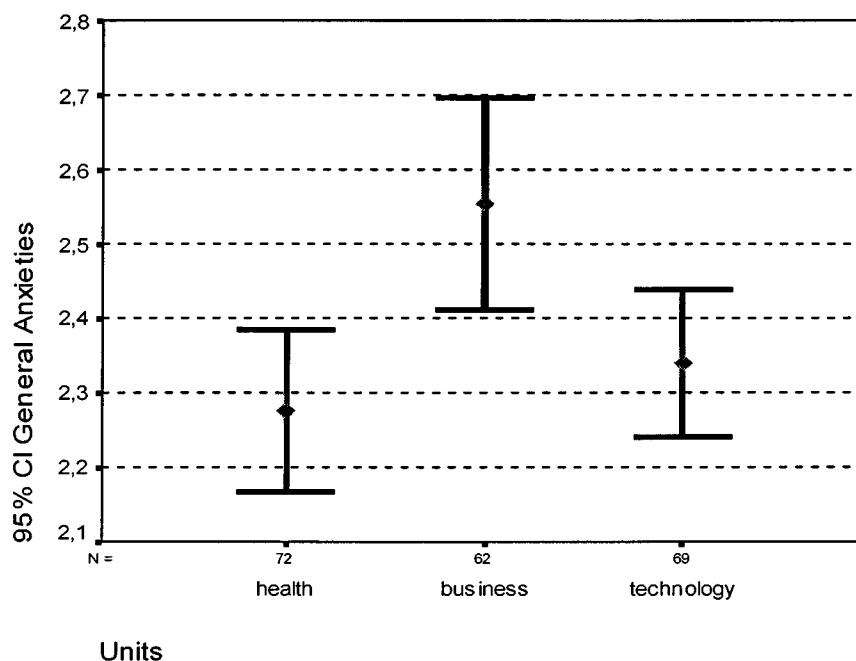


Fig. 5.21 Differences in General Anxieties between Units

The higher amount of general anxieties in the unit of Business Administration (Fig. 5.21) might be caused by the personality characteristics of the students applying for the field or e.g. by their perception of barriers to success in future employment. Thus the Business students seem to suffer more from uncertainty, stress and perfectionism than the students in the other units.

5.5.6 Attitudes to Studies at the Polytechnic

As for attitudes to studies in general at the polytechnic, the mean of all three units was 3,98 (Table 5.2) and basically it can be concluded that students were satisfied with their studies. While there appear to be slight differences between the groups, they are very small ($p=0,48$). The mean in Health Care was 4,1, in Technology 4,0 and in Business 3,8.

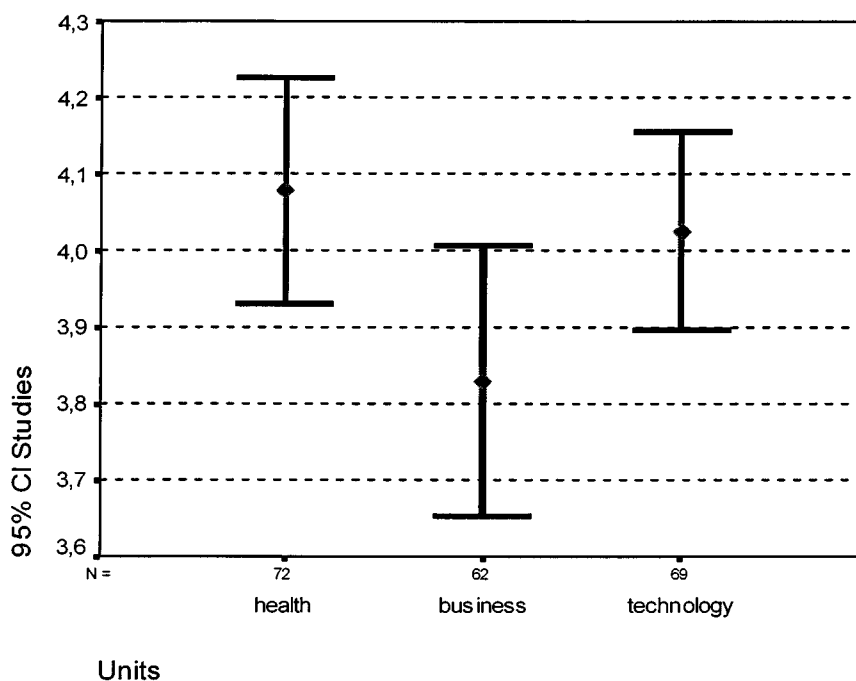


Fig.5.22 Differences in Attitudes towards Studies between Units

Students in the unit of Business Administration tended to be more critical of the studies offered by the polytechnic than were the students in the other units and this attitude might be related to their higher level of general anxieties. It is likely that perfectionism and a strong drive to achieve success, also in the perceived highly competitive future employment, are partial causes for critical attitudes.

To conclude, the differences observed in the filter domains suggest that the personality filters of the students in the units of Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration and Technology differ between units. In only one domain, English language self-concept, are the student about the same.

The students in Health Care and Social Welfare are satisfied with their studies at the polytechnic, but their attitude to English instruction is critical. However, they are motivated to learn English and interested in intercultural relations and the English language. The level of their general anxieties is low.

The students in Business Administration are highly motivated to study English and they value intercultural relations with English language even more than the students in Health Care. Additionally, their attitude to English instruction is the most positive of any of the units. In spite of this, the attitude they have towards studies in general is the most negative and the level of general anxiety is the highest compared with the other units.

As for the students of Technology, they view the studies at the polytechnic almost as positively as the students in Health Care. Nonetheless, their motivation to study English and their interest in intercultural relations or the English language are lower than in the other units. In this respect, although the technology students' attitude towards English instruction is good, their attitudes regarding themselves as English learners is slightly lower than that in other units.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Discussion of the Results

The research question posed in chapter 3 are here reviewed one by one, in order to assess to what extent it has been possible to answer them by the design, data and methodology of the present study.

Research question 1 dealt with the composition of the personality filter of the polytechnic students in English. The personality filter in the English language was composed of six domains all of which are capable of affecting the filter permeability level and thereby either promoting or obstructing the effectiveness of English teaching and learning. The six domains are shown in Fig. 6.1.

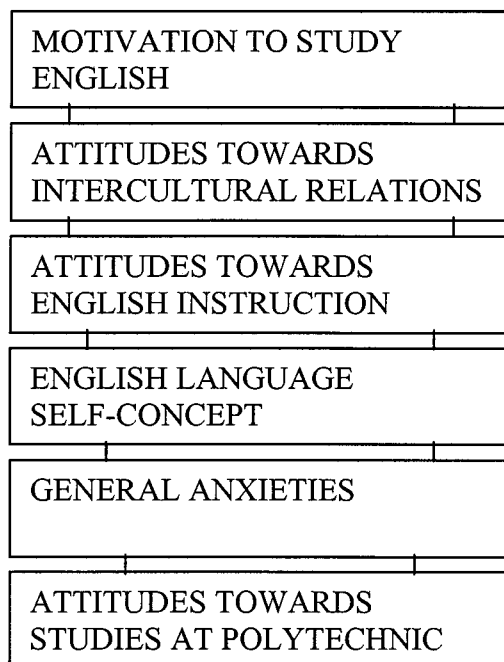


Fig. 6.1 Domains of the Personality Filter in English

The domain of English motivation is characterized by the fact that motivation to study English can, simultaneously, be intrinsic, integrative, extrinsic and instrumental as indicated by the factor analysis in section 5.1.1. Although integrative and intrinsic orientation seemed to be a bit more dominant, also instrumental reasons for English acquisition are significant at the polytechnic level, when the student already has a relatively strong image of him- or herself as a future participant of the working life.

The domain of attitudes towards intercultural relations also comprises attitudes towards the English language. The language is viewed as part of the culture, which implies that polytechnic students who are favourably inclined towards the English speaking people and cultures take also a positive attitude towards the English language and vice versa. The connection suggests that it is impossible to detach the language from the people who speak it.

Attitudes towards instruction reflect mainly the opinions the students have formed about the polytechnic English course (ECS) they had taken, and English teaching at the polytechnic. English language self-concept is a domain characterized by its division into two elements. First, the English language self-concept per se and second, the anxieties the students have in learning English. These two factors are complimentary and reversible. Thus if the English student has a lot of problems in his or her English learning, expressed as a high level of anxiety, the English language self-concept is low, and if he or she has no problems whatsoever, the language self-concept is high. As regards the domain of general anxieties, the most dominant factors in it are the feeling of uncertainty (particularly in decision making and performance situations), depression and alienation. The sixth domain shows the attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic in general. All these domains are parts of the affective and conative construct that influences what and how much the English students learn.

Next we focus on research question 2 and the interrelationships between the six personality filter domains. The most prominent domains, i.e. those which are most strongly correlated to the others, are English language self-concept, motivation to study English, attitudes towards intercultural relations and attitudes towards English instruction. They form the core of the personality filter in English. The correlations suggest that the central domains are English language self-concept and motivation. General anxieties and attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic appear to have a relatively smaller effect on the English studies. The relationships in the core of the personality filter suggest that in English language instruction even more attention should be paid to intercultural relations and internationalization. Attitudes towards intercultural relations, in other words towards foreign people and their language, are closely related to integrative motivation. Integrative orientation, in turn, has been shown to be the most significant factor in foreign language learning (Gardner & Lambert,

1972, 132). Consequently, students are motivated to study English when they have international contacts. It follows that these contacts probably enhance the English language self-concept and thus work to increase the permeability of the personality filter. The integratively orientated students would be "open", encouraged and motivated to language learning.

As for the fundamental parts of the filter, the composition of the personality filter of polytechnic students corresponds well with the previous research by Laine (1988, 71). However, the present results differ regarding the two more weakly correlated domains and thus further suggest that general anxieties and especially attitudes towards studies in general are not central constructs of the filter for students at the polytechnic level.

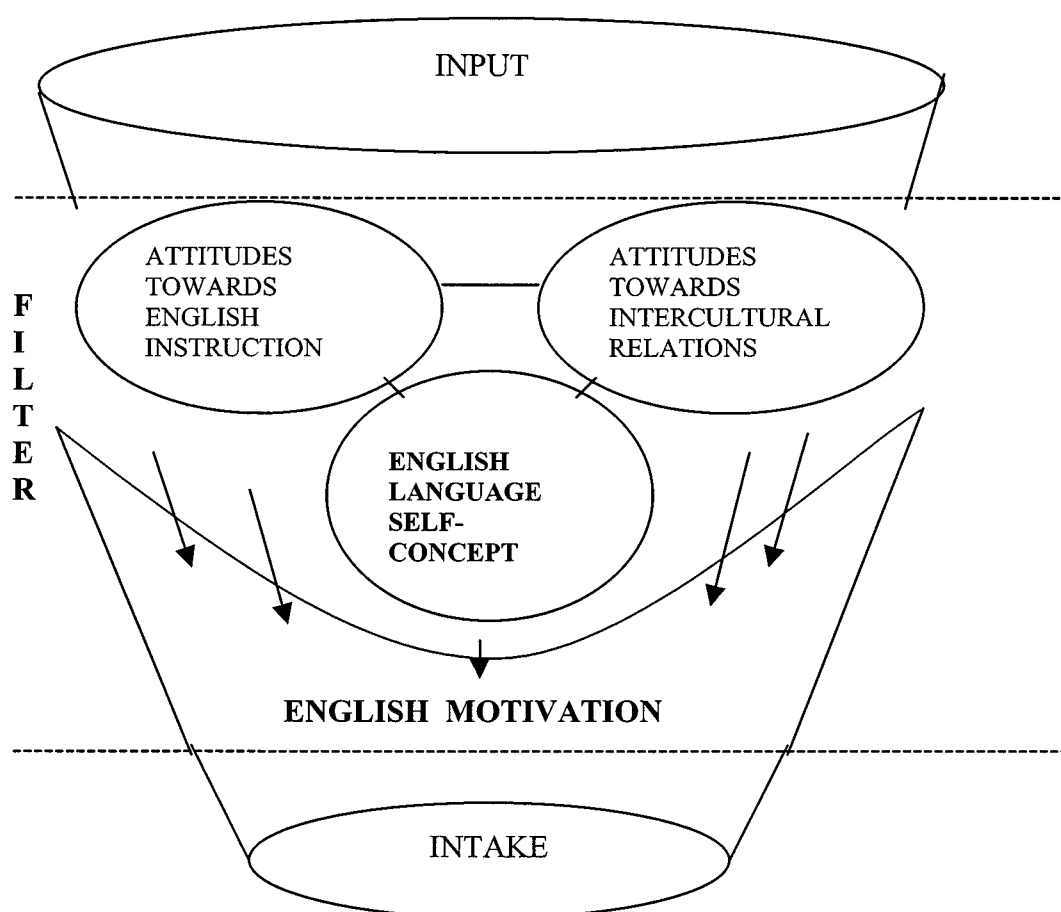


Fig. 6.2 Core Construct of Personality Filter of Polytechnic English Students

The core construct of the personality filter of polytechnic English students is depicted in Fig. 6.2 above. The core includes four elements, i.e. attitudes to English instruction, attitudes to intercultural relations, English language self-concept and motivation. It can be interpreted so that the input of information functions as pressure in the learning, and

filtering, process. Attitudes towards English instruction and intercultural relations together with English language self-concept work as pumps permitting or preventing the entry of inputs. Motivation, in turn, functions as suction, and differs from the other three elements because pumps are deliberate while suction is inborn and related to curiosity.

The personality filter seems to be a delimiter of information within the student's self-system. In other words, it is "the outer skin of the blob" which acts like a permeable screen as Burns (1982, 11) put it. Its main functions are to protect the self-worth of the English language student and to focus the student's attention to issues related to his or her own goals. It may unconsciously change information to better fit with the self-system of the student. For this reason, the "real" information may differ from the perceived information, i.e. that which is permitted through the personality filter, to a considerable extent. It can thus be concluded that English language self-concept together with motivation primarily determine the functioning of the filter which, in turn, maintains the self-identity of the English student.

The development of the filter in the English language takes years. The origin of the filter is the spiral effect Bloom suggested in his school learning theory and the environment of the student. The theory implies that affective entry characteristics in English, i.e. emotions, attitudes, personality traits and motivational factors at least partly build the English language self-concept of the student and, via it, achievement in the subject. It is also likely that the student's theory of intelligence affects the English language self-concept and achievement. The spiral effect relates affective and conative elements of learning to cognitive ones: perceived high achievement in English increases positive affect, and perceived low achievement increases negative affect towards the language. According to the theory, low grades in English suggest negative attitudes to the English language, English-speaking people and instruction as well as low level of motivation. The spiral of affective and conative elements together with achievement and social interaction form the English language self-concept and the personality filter of the polytechnic students. All these elements are parts of the self-system. The personality filter of the polytechnic English student includes not only affective entry characteristics, but also language self-concept. Thus it is capable of protecting the English self-identity of the student by assimilating, changing or rejecting information and directing attention to individual goals.

Research question 3 approached the relationship between background information and filter domains. The data suggests that achievement in the English language, indicated by grades, is related to English language self-concept. This finding further confirms the power of Bloom's spiral. Because achievement in English and English language self-concept go hand in hand, it is apparent that evaluation is a very powerful device in the development of the student's self-confidence. Since grades are also correlated with English motivation and attitudes towards intercultural relations, they have an impact on the direction and energy with which the student is willing to acquire the English language skills, and they even influence the attitudes which students hold towards English-speaking people. It is probable that the grades directly affect English language self-concept and, through it, even the two other domains of general anxieties and attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic. Characteristically students who are assessed with grade 0, will probably not be motivated to study, because they consider themselves bad learners and see no point in struggling. They may also see their intelligence as a fixed trait. At the same time, since they take the view that they are helpless in English their attitude towards the language and the English-speaking people becomes negative. How could they possibly communicate in English if they are so bad at it? Of course this is the ultimate result of the negative spiral, and hopefully happens only seldom. One solution to this problem of low self-concept and low achievement could be to further increase emphasis on, and attention to, intercultural relations. If the students with grade 0 became more interested in international connections their attitude towards English-speaking people might improve and, through it, motivation and English language self-concept would also arise.

Another interesting question is the difference between genders in motivation and especially in intercultural relations. Why are male students less interested in intercultural relations and the English language? This question is of course too large and complicated to be discussed here in detail, but it could be noted that according to Covington (1998) males are more defensive than females, since the pressures of the society motivate them more strongly to maintain the image of competence and self-efficacy. Maybe male students, who seem to feel that languages are not their best subjects, for the above mentioned reason tend to understate the value of the language

and intercultural relations. The strong tendency to avoid failure might cause rejection of the intrinsic values of communication skills.

As for the voluntary studying of several foreign languages and its relation to the filter domains, the data suggests that the choice of optional languages is related to all four of the core filter domains. Thus, interest in one foreign language seems to be a feature that can be generalized to other languages, as well. This finding suggests that the personality filter of the students who choose several languages is more permeable and that the barrier to language studies is lower than that of the students who do not voluntarily want to study languages. The effect of the educational background on the filter domains cannot be discussed here, since additional research would be required.

Problem area 4 focussed on the proportion of strong versus weak filter students. Bloom's spiral effect is demonstrated by this proportion, since the findings suggest that English achievement is related to the filter type. The strong correlation between the polytechnic English grade and the filter type might be caused by the fact that at the polytechnic, the oral skills of the students are included in evaluation, and thus the student assessment is more holistic, whereas in the matriculation examination oral skills are not included. As regards the proportion of strong filter English students (17%), the percentage is higher at the polytechnic level than in previous research conducted at comprehensive school - in Laine's study the percentage was 13% (Laine, 1988, 69). This may be due to differences in calculations, or perhaps the strength of the filter is increased by age or further education. It is likely that the spiral effect causes divergence between strong and weak filter students and that the divergence is further increased by age and experience.

Problem area 5 concerned the comparison of the features that characterise the students in the Units of Health Care and Social Welfare, Business Administration, and Technology in terms of the domains of the personality filter in English. Compared with those in other units, the students in Business Administration have the weakest, most permeable filter in motivation, intercultural relations, instruction and English language self-concept. Thus business students seem to be relatively open to English language studies. In contrast to this, their personality filter is the strongest, least permeable, in the non-core domains of general anxieties and attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic.

Again, judged by the means of the domains in the units, the subjects in the Unit of Technology appear to have the least permeable filter in the domain of motivation to study English, attitudes towards intercultural relations, and English language self-concept. Their openness to English language studies is more restricted by their attitudes, motivation and self-concept than in the other units. Then, the students in the Unit of Health Care and Social Welfare have the strongest filter in their attitudes towards English instruction and the weakest in general anxieties and attitudes towards studies at the polytechnic in general. Their filter in English motivation is at a moderate level and the filter in the attitudes of intercultural relation is almost as high as it is in the Unit of Business Administration. All in all, they appear to be rather open to English studies, although there seem to be dilemmas regarding English instruction.

The data shows that the units differ from each other in all other domains except English language self-concept. Irrespective of the unit, the view the polytechnic students have concerning themselves as English learners is about the same. The proportion of perceived low and high achievement in the units is about the same. There are differences in the direction and strength of motivation, in attitudes towards intercultural relations and the English language, just as there are differences in attitudes towards English instruction and studies at the polytechnic. In addition, the level of general anxiety differs by the unit. It can be generalised that the field of study is significantly correlated to the permeability of the personality filter in the English language. On the basis of this study it could be suggested that the differences of the English students between the units of the polytechnic should be taken into careful consideration when teaching and learning processes are planned and developed.

The analysis of the results, and discussion above, confirm the hypothesis of the present study, i.e. English language students can be differentiated and also characterized by their personality filters of English.

6.2 Evaluation of the Study

The objective of the study was to reveal the composition of the affective and conative elements which may determine English language performance, i.e. to characterize the personality filter of the polytechnic English students and to compare this characterization between three units of South Carelia Polytechnic. Overall it can be said that the explication of the filter construct was successfully completed which, in turn, permitted the comparison of the filter as revealed in the different units.

The research revealed the students' opinions regarding target language related attitudes, motivation and the view they, in general, have about themselves as English learners. The point of view of the present study was purposefully chosen to highlight the value of self-efficacy in language acquisition. The focus of the study was on the affective and conative characteristics of the student, i.e. the matters of heart, versus the harder, less emotional, cognitive ones, in order to throw some light on the significance of the holistic view of student in language learning.

The results brought out new, at least partly generalizable information for the Finnish polytechnics, and especially for South Carelia Polytechnic, which could be considered in the future development of language studies. The pedagogical implications for English teaching practice might, for example, be to emphasize both the integrative and instrumental motivation of the students. Emphasizing intercultural relations and internationalization seems to enhance integrative motivation and, indirectly, language acquisition. "True" English communication in class, possibly with English speaking foreigners, is essential at the polytechnic level. Moreover, emphasizing the importance of self image in potential future employment situations may contribute to instrumental motivation, which in turn increases language learning. In addition to motivation, performance evaluation in English and other languages should also be taken under careful review. The demonstrated effect which evaluation over the years of schooling has had on the language self-concept is significant and demonstrated in Bloom's spiral effect. At the polytechnic level, the educational and language history of the students must be taken into consideration when English courses are planned, and means should be invented to help the students whose personality filters in language learning are very strong and impermeable. The gathered knowledge could also be utilized in constructing

entrance tests for certain lines for specialization, e.g. foreign trade, and in student guidance in general. In addition, the study confirmed the quality of the measuring instrument which can be used in other studies – partially or as a whole.

The present research project was a rich experience of self-development for the author. It was simultaneously captivating, difficult, and challenging. However, conducting a research project and, at the same time, working as a full-time teacher proved to be very problematic. At the outset, another difficulty, albeit interesting, was the intriguing world of statistics. The great amount of time needed to become acquainted with statistical methods in order to ensure adequate accuracy and validity of the research work was surprising.

The problem and disadvantage of the present study is the limitation to only one means of data collection. All data was collected by the questionnaire. The questionnaires in attitude research have been criticized, because nobody knows for certain if the questions asked or statements presented are the right ones and whether or not they cover the whole area of interest. In the case of the current study, minimization of this problem was attempted by the use of large number of statements and some open-ended questions. For this reason, the questionnaire produced a vast amount of data, and other means of collecting information, e.g. interviews of the English students, had to be dropped. However, the open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, where students were free to express their opinions, did serve to reinforce the results of statement analysis. Because of the plethora of information, even the open-ended questions had to be excluded from the final analysis.

Looking forward, the results would now require in-depth investigation and a narrower approach. The present stage could serve as a starting point to a qualitative research of either the whole personality filter in English or one of its core domains. Also portraits of the filter types and their connections to the students' theory of intelligence would be in order. The main issue, how the personality filter can be made more permeable in order to improve the efficacy of English language learning and teaching, should be tackled, too. It would also be extremely interesting to conduct a personality filter analysis of polytechnic students in Russian, since it might bring totally different information in light. As can be seen, there are various prospects for further research, only the tip of the

iceberg was listed here. It is hoped that this study will serve to inspire other researchers in their work.

The personality filter in English appeared to be like a multi-layered curtain, with some layers made of thin, permeable material and some made of thick, relatively impermeable material. The purpose of the curtain is to separate outside from inside. The filter is a result of the experience the English student has accumulated by functioning in his or her social and educational environment, and especially of the spiral effect of achievement and personality, i.e. affection and conation.

Summing up, as intended, the present study yielded sufficiently reliable and valid overall information on the polytechnic English students. The study gives support to previous research on the field but it brings about some new nuances related to the different, more specifically, polytechnic setting and the present-day national and international contexts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Hyvä ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelija,

Tutkin seikkoja, jotka vaikeuttavat tai helpottavat kielten, erityisesti englannin, opiskelua ammattikorkeakoulussamme. Kun tiedämme missä vaikeudet ja voimavarat piilevät voimme muuttaa ja parantaa työskentelyä oikeaan suuntaan. Voit auttaa vastaamalla tarkasti ja rehellisesti tämän monisteen kysymyksiin.

Lomakkeessa esitetään 168 väittämää, joihin pyydän sinun mielipidettäsi. Lue väite ja kirjoita selvästi väitteen vasemmalla puolella oleviin **sulkuihin** sen vaihtoehdon **numero** (1 – 5), joka parhaiten osoittaa mitä mieltä sinä olet. Välitön reaktio on usein paras. Käytä vaihtoehtoa numero 3 = vaikea sanoa, säästeliäästi.

Eri vaihtoehtojen numerointi on seuraavanlainen:

Olen väitteen kanssa

- 1 = täysin eri mieltä
- 2 = hieman eri mieltä
- 3 = vaikea sanoa
- 4 = hieman samaa mieltä
- 5 = täysin samaa mieltä

Esim. () Jos kadulla englanninkielinen matkailija kysyisi neuvoa, opastaisin mielelläni häntä.

Kaikkia vastauksia tullaan käsittelemään ehdottoman luottamuksellisina.

Jos sinulla on epäselvyyttä lomakkeen tai sen tehtävien kanssa pyydä selvitystä kyselyn valvojalta.

Avustasi kiittäen

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EKAMK / Liiketalous

Käytä vastatessasi kaiken aikaa muistin apuna lehteä, johon on merkitty vastausvaihtoehtojen numerot.

001 AMK:n yksikkö: _____
 002 Luokka/ryhmä nyt: _____
 Luokka/ryhmä viime lukuvuonna: _____

Englannin opiskelustani yleensä

- 003 () Jos kadulla englanninkielinen matkailija kysyisi neuvoa, opastaisin mielelläni häntä parhaani mukaan.
- 004 () Jos minulla on ymmärtämisvaikeuksia, kun jotakin uutta opetetaan englannin tunnilla, etsin apua opettajalta tai muilta.
- 005 () Koko kielen opiskelu on pelkkä velvollisuus .
- 006 () Valitsisin mieluummin oppilaitoksen, jossa opiskellaan vähemmän englantia.
- 007 () En koskaan pohdiskele jälkeinpäin, mitä englannin tunnilla opiskeltiin.
- 008 () Kun katson englannin kielistä televisio-ohjelmaa, luen vain suomenkieliset tekstit enkä yritä seurata puhetta.
- 009 () Englannin opiskelussani keskityn siihen mikä on minulle helppoa ja jätän muun vähemmälle.
- 010 () Ammattikorkeakoulun ulkopuolella etsin kaikenlaisia englannin harjoittelumahdollisuuksia.
- 011 () En keskity englannin opiskeluun oppilaitoksessamme, koska voin oppia paremmin muualla.
- 012 () Englannin kotityöt pyrin tekemään niin, että todella osaan ne.
- 013 () Jos voisın valita, en opiskelisi englantia.

Englannin opiskeluni syistä

- 014 () Englannin opiskelu on minulle tärkeää, koska voin siten keskustella kaikkien englantia osaavien ihmisten kanssa.
- 015 () Opiskelisin englantia vaikkei se olisi pakollista.
- 016 () Englannin opiskelu on minulle tärkeää, koska voin sen avulla tulevaisuudessa tehdä töitä englantia puhuvien ihmisten kanssa.
- 017 () Opiskelen englantia siksi, että se on yksi oppiaine muiden joukossa.
- 018 () Englannin opiskelu on minulle tärkeää, jotta voin tuntea oloni luontevaksi englantilaisten ja amerikkalaisten parissa.
- 019 () Haluaisin oppia puhumaan englantia täydellisesti.
- 020 () Englannin opiskelu on minulle tärkeää, koska siitä voi olla apua minun tulevassa ammatissani.
- 021 () Minusta englannin opiskelu avartaa minun henkistä maailmaani.
- 022 () Englannin oppiminen on miellyttävä kokemus.
- 023 () Muut ihmiset arvostavat minua enemmän, kun osaan englantia.
- 024 () Jonakin päivänä englannin kieli auttaa minua saamaan hyvän työpaikan.
- 025 () Minusta englannin opiskelu auttaa minua kehittämään omaa itseäni.
- 026 () Englannin opiskelu on minulle tärkeää, koska voin sillä saada kontaktia monenlaisiin ihmisiin.
- 027 () Englannin opiskelu on minulle tärkeää, koska pystyn sen avulla ymmärtämään englanninkielisiä elokuvia, televisio-ohjelmia, kirjoja ja muuta kulttuuria.
- 028 () Haluaisin todella oppia monia vieraita kieliä.

029	()	Englannin opiskelu on minulle tärkeää lähinnä siksi, että englanti on maailmankieli.
-----	-----	--

Käsityksiäni ihmisistä ja maailman menosta

030	()	Viihdyn mieluummin suomalaisten kuin vierasmaalaisten seurassa.
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031	()	Minusta suomalaiset, jotka menevät naimisiin ulkomaalaisen kanssa ovat pettureita.
-----	-----	--

032	()	Minusta meillä on liikaa kansainvälisyyskasvatusta, kun muissa maissa ei useinkaan tiedetä Suomesta mitään.
-----	-----	---

033	()	Minusta meillä opetellaan turhan paljon vieraita kieliä, eiväthän muutkaan opettele suomea.
-----	-----	---

034	()	Hoidan mieluummin vain omat asiani ja annan muiden hoitaa omansa.
-----	-----	---

035	()	Minusta kieltä pitää opettaa pelkkänä kielenä eikä sitoa siihen kyseisen maan kulttuuria ja elämänmenoa.
-----	-----	--

036	()	Mielestäni opettajien tulisi pitää johto jämäkästi käsissään eikä vain kuulostella, mitä opiskelijat tahtovat.
-----	-----	--

037	()	On luonnollista, että jokainen pitää omaa perhettään ja maataan muita parempina.
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Tällaiseksi tunnen oloni yleensä

038	()	Minun on helppo luottaa ihmisiin.
-----	-----	-----------------------------------

039	()	Olen usein masentunut.
-----	-----	------------------------

040	()	Minusta tuntuu usein, etten kuulu mihinkään.
-----	-----	--

041	()	Tulevaisuuden ajattelu ei ahdistaa minua.
-----	-----	---

042	()	Kun tunnen oloni vaikeaksi, tiedän, että voin aina puhua ystävän tai vanhempieni kanssa.
043	()	Usein tuntuu siltä, että vaikeudet kasaantuvat niin, etten pysty suoriutumaan niistä.
044	()	Olen taipuvainen ottamaan asiat liian raskaasti.
045	()	Opettajat eivät ole kovinkaan kiinnostuneita siitä, mitä minun sisälläni tapahtuu.
046	()	On ahdistavaa joutua tekemisiin uusien ihmisten kanssa.
047	()	Kaikkein sisimpiä ajatuksiani ja tunteitani en paljasta edes lähimmille ystäväilleni.
048	()	Luulen, että minulla menisi paremmin, jos hakeutuisin uuteen ympäristöön ja oloihin.
049	()	Ainainen kiire pakahduttaa minua.

<i>Ammattikorkeakoulusta yleensä</i>		
050	()	Minusta opiskeluaikaamme pitäisi lyhentää.
051	()	Jos saisin työpaikan, eroaisin oppilaitoksestani heti.
052	()	Minusta opiskelu ammattikorkeakoulussa on hyödytöntä.
053	()	Minusta opiskelu täällä on miellyttävää.
054	()	Opiskelu on minulle tärkeää.
055	()	Minusta opiskelu on kiinnostavaa.

<i>Tätä mieltä briteistä ja amerikkalaisista</i>		
056	()	Haluaisin oppia tuntemaan englantilaisia ja muita brittejä paremmin.
057	()	Asenteeni brittejä kohtaan on myönteinen.
058	()	Britit ovat kohteliaita ja ystävällisiä.
059	()	Haluaisin oppia tuntemaan amerikkalaisia paremmin.
060	()	Minusta amerikkalaista elämäntapaa ihannoidaan Suomessa liikaa.
061	()	Asenteeni amerikkalaisia kohtaan on myönteinen.

Tätä mieltä englannin kielestä ja sitä käyttävistä maista

- 062 () Haluaisin enemmän kontakteja kansainväliseen, englanninkieliseen maailmaan.
- 063 () Minusta on tärkeää ymmärtää, kuinka englantia kielenä toimii.
- 064 () Englannin kieli on minulle ennen muuta eri kieltä puhuvien kansainvälisen yhteyden kieli.
- 065 () Englantia kielenä tympäisee minua.
- 066 () Voisin vaikka joskus muuttaa johonkin englantia puhuvaan maahan.
- 067 () Minusta englannin kielioppi on mielenkiintoista.
- 068 () Englannin kieli avaa minulle ovet koko maailmaan, ei vain englantia puhuviin maihin.
- 069 () Minusta englannin soinnissa on jotain jännittävää.
- 070 () On tärkeää tunkea eri maiden elämäntapaa.
- 071 () Haluaisin todella päästä sisään englannin kieleen.
- 072 () Englannin kieli on ennen muuta kansainvälinen apukieli, jossa tärkeintä on ymmärrettävyys, ei esim. brittien tai amerikkalaisten normit.
- 073 () Suomalaisilla on samat oikeudet ”murtaa” englantia omalla tavallaan kuin esimerkiksi Australian englantia puhuvilla.

Englannin opetuksesta, kursseista ja opettajista

- 074 () Englannin kurssini ENKV (Englannin kieli ja viestintä 2 ov) oli pitkäväteinen.
- 075 () Minusta tapa, jolla meille amk:ssa opetetaan englantia, on hyvin hyödyllinen.
- 076 () Toimin mielelläni amk:n englannin opinnoissani opettajan ohjeiden mukaan.
- 077 () Olen pitänyt kaikista englannin opettajistani koko kouluajanani.

078	()	Jos voisin valita, en osallistuisi sellaiseen englannin opetukseen, jota meille amk:ssa tarjotaan.
079	()	Englannin opettajani koko kouluajanani ovat olleet mukaansatempaavia.
080	()	Jos saisin valita, menisin toistekin saman tyyppiselle englannin kurssille kuin ENKV.
081	()	Pidin englannin ENKV oppikurssista
082	()	Luotan täysin englannin opettajiini amk:ssa.
083	()	Minulla on ikäviä muistoja englannin opettajasta/opettajista peruskoulussa tai lukiossa.
084	()	Amk:ssa englannin opettaja/opettajat suhtautuvat opiskelijoihinsa aivan väärin.
085	()	Minun mielestäni englannin kurseja saisi lyhentää reilusti.
086	()	Minusta englannin opetus amk:ssa on mielenkiintoista.
087	()	Inhoan tapaa, jolla minulle opetetaan englantia.
088	()	Englannin opettajani amk:ssa ovat ammattitaitoisia.
089	()	Mielestäni englannin tunnilla saisi puhua vähemmän englantia ja enemmän suomea.
090	()	ENKV -kurssilla en oppinut mitään hyödyllistä.

*Juttu ei aivan pääty tähän –
Lepää silti tässä vähän!*

<i>Mielipiteeni omasta itsestäni</i>		
091	()	Antaisin itsestäni mielelläni älykkäämmän vaikutelman.
092	()	Toivoisin ystäväni arvostavan minua enemmän.
093	()	Pärjään suhtkoht mukavasti siinä, mitä yritän.
094	()	Haluaisin olla suosituimpi ystäväni keskuudessa.

- 095 () En haluaisi olla millään tavalla huomiota herättävä.
 096 () Minussa on paljon hyviä ominaisuuksia.
 097 () Minä olen ihmisenä arvokas.
 098 () Yleisesti ottaen en ole mikään välkky.

Minä amk -opiskelijana

- 099 () Opiskelijana olen omasta mielestäni riittävän hyvä.
 100 () Olen tosi vahva kielissä.
 101 () Haluaisin olla todella etevä vieraiden kielten opiskelija.
 102 () Minusta tuntuu usein, että kielenopiskelijana olen ihan nolla.
 103 () Pärjään opinnoissani siinä kuin useimmat muutkin ryhmässäni.
 104 () Usein tuntuu, ettei minusta opiskelijana ole mihinkään.
 105 () Olen täysin omalla alallani amk:ssa.
 106 () Luokkatoverini eivät varmasti pidä minua minään kielinerona.
 107 () Vierasta kieltä käyttäessäni tunnen itseni mukavalla tavalla "uudeksi ihmiseksi".
 108 () Yleisesti ottaen pärjään hyvin opinnoissani.
 109 () Haluaisin olla kaikkien arvostama ja ihailema kielitaituri.

Minä englannin opiskelijana

- 110 () Haluan osata puhua englannin kieltä sujuvasti, mutta minulla on oikeus suomalaisen ääntämistapaani.
 111 () Toivoisin pystyväni hallitsemaan englantia kaikin puolin niin kuin syntyperäinen puhuja.
 112 () Tuntuu, ettei minusta ole englannin kieliopin oppijaksi.
 113 () Osaan kirjoittaa hyvin englanniksi.
 114 () Haluaisin loistaa englannin taidoillani tuttavieni keskuudessa ja ulkomailla.
 115 () Haluaisin pystyä puhumaan englantia niin kuin syntyperäinen puhuja.
 116 () Tulen englannillani hyvin toimeen ulkomailla.
 117 () Opin helposti englantia.
 118 () Englannin puhetaitoni on heikko.
 119 () Joskus tuntuu, että englanti on minulle mahdoton kieli.

- | | | |
|-----|-----|---|
| 120 | () | Minusta tuntuu, että äännän englantia kuin juntti. |
| 121 | () | Osaan hyvin englannin kieliopin. |
| 122 | () | Haluaisin osata ääntää englantia täydellisesti. |
| 123 | () | Toisiin verrattuna en ole mikään taituri englannissa. |

Ongelmista elämässä ja oppilaitoksessa yleensä

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| 124 | () | Minua vaivaa aina jonkinlainen epäonni. |
| 125 | () | Tunneilla pelkään tekeväni kaikenlaisia kömmähdyksiä. |
| 126 | () | Opinnoissa hyvin menestyminen ei ole kovinkaan tärkeää. |
| 127 | () | En jaksakaan paneutua opiskeluun täydellä teholla. |
| 128 | () | Oppilaitokseni ilmapiiri hermostuttaa minua. |
| 129 | () | Minulta vaaditaan elämässä liian paljon. |
| 130 | () | En viihdy ammattikorkeakoulussa. |
| 131 | () | Olen aina hiukan hermostunut, kun minun pitäisi "esiintyä". |
| 132 | () | Usein toivoisin olevani ihan joku muu. |
| 133 | () | En haluaisi esittää mitään luokassa, koska toiset saattavat naureskella minulle. |
| 134 | () | Usein kun minulla on ongelmia, en kerta kaikkiaan tiedä, mitä tekisin. |
| 135 | () | Kaipaani reipasta tuuletusta ja vaihtelua elämääni. |
| 136 | () | Koko opiskelu tuntuu minusta vieraalta. |

Ongelmista kielissä yleensä

- | | | |
|-----|-----|---|
| 137 | () | Kielten tunneilla pelkään kaikenlaisia mokia, jos minun tulee esittää jotakin. |
| 138 | () | Kielten tunneilla minusta usein tuntuu, että siellä pitäisi leikkiä olevansa ulkomaalainen. |
| 139 | () | Kielituntien vieras maailma kiusaa minua. |
| 140 | () | Kielten oppimisen merkityksestä pidetään liian suurta hälyä. |
| 141 | () | En osaa tosissani paneutua vieraan kielen käyttäjäksi. |
| 142 | () | Minusta ilmapiiri kielten tunneilla ei ole koskaan vapautunut. |
| 143 | () | Vierasta kieltä käyttäessäni tunnen itseni aina jotenkin pelleksi. |
| 144 | () | Kielten tunneilla tunnen itseni usein tosi avuttomaksi. |

Ongelmista englannin opiskelussa yleisesti

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| 145 | () | Englannin tunneilla minusta tuntuu, että kaikki muut osaavat englantia paremmin kuin minä. |
| 146 | () | Englannin opettajat suhtautuvat minuun jotenkin karsaasti. |
| 147 | () | Englannin kieli sinänsä ahdistaa minua. |
| 148 | () | En pidä siitä, että englannin tunnilla ikään kuin pitäisi lakata olemasta suomenkielinen. |
| 149 | () | Englannin tunneilla oloni on aina kireä. |
| 150 | () | Minusta tuntuu, että englannin opettaja ei esiinny luontevasti tunneilla. |
| 151 | () | Englannin osaamisen tärkeydestä pidetään aivan liian suurta meteliä. |
| 152 | () | Se englanninkielinen maailma, jota englannin tunneilla käsitellään on minulle hyvin vieras. |
| 153 | () | Englannin tunneilla pidetään aina liian kovaa vauhtia. |
| 154 | () | Muutammat ryhmäläisemme ovat englannin tunnilla "liian hyviä", niin etten minä halua osallistua ollenkaan. |

155	()	Englannin tunneilla esitän jotakin vain jos olen varma, etten tee virheitä.
156	()	Englannin opettajien liian kovat vaatimukset ahdistavat minua.

Ongelmista erilaisissa englannin tehtävissä

157	()	Englannin kirjoitustehtävät ovat mukavampia kuin puhumistehtävät, koska niissä ei joudu "pelleilemään".
158	()	Englannin keskusteluharjoitukset eivät minusta ole mukavia, koska niissä tunnen itseni avuttomaksi.
159	()	Englannin "pane rasti ruutuun" -harjoitukset ovat minusta hyviä, koska ne on helppo tehdä.
160	()	Englannin puhuminen ärsyttää minua.
161	()	Kun minun pitäisi tehdä jokin kieliopin tehtävä, minusta usein tuntuu, ettei siitä yksinkertaisesti tule mitään.
162	()	Englannin puhumisesta tehdään suotta aivan liian suuri numero.
163	()	Englannin kielioppi on mukavaa, koska siinä pärjää ulkoluvulla.
164	()	Tunnen oloni naurettavaksi, jos yritän ääntää jotakin aidon englantilaisesti.
165	()	Englannin tunnilla en halua käyttää englantia.
166	()	Oma ääneni kuulostaa kummalliselta kun puhun englantia.
167	()	Roolileikit jms. englannin tunnilla ovat mielestäni mukavia, koska niissä saa "uuden henkilöllisyyden".
168	()	Tuntuu hassulta opetella erilaisia erikoisesti englantilaisia sanontoja.

Ja viimeinen ponnistus...

YMPYRÖI OIKEAN VAIHTOEHDON NUMERO!

Asiatietoja itsestäni

- 169 Sukupuoli: 1. Nainen
2. Mies
- 170 Ikä: 1. 18 - 22v
2. 23 - 27v
3. 28 - 32v
4. yli 33v
- 171 Äidinkieli: 1. Suomi
2. Muu, mikä? _____
- 172 Opiskelutausta: 1. Lukion käynyt
2. Opistokoulutuksen käynyt
3. Muu, mikä? _____
- 173 Englannin kieli on ollut
1. A-kieleni (ensim. vieras kieli koulussa)
 2. B-kieleni (toinen vieras kieli koulussa)
 3. peruskoulun lopulla/lukiossa alkanut kieli minulle
- 174 Ylioppilaskirjoitusten englannin arvosana:
1. approbatur
 2. lubenter
 3. cum laude
 4. magna
 5. eximia
 6. laudatur
- tai opiston englannin viimeisen kurssin arvosana:
1. 1
 2. 2
 3. 3
 4. 4
 5. 5
 6. 0

tai muun oppilaitoksen viimeisen kurssin arvosana:

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3

175

Lukion tai opiston/muun oppilaitoksen päättötodistuksen keskiarvo:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. | 5,00 - 5,99 tai opistossa 1 | |
| 2. | 6,00 - 6,99 tai | 2 |
| 3. | 7,00 - 7,99 tai | 3 |
| 4. | 8,00 - 8,99 tai | 4 |
| 5. | 9,00 - 10 tai | 5 |

176

Arvosanani edelliseltä englannin kurssiltani amk:ssa:

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. 0

177

Arvosanani edelliseltä ruotsin kurssilta amk:ssa:

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. 0

178

Opiskelen jotakin muutakin vierasta kieltä

1. kyllä
2. en

179

Englannin harrastaminen ammattikorkeakoulun ulkopuolella.
Mitä teet? YMPYRÖI KAIKKI SOPIVAT VAIHTOEHDOT.

1. luen engl. lehtiä/kirjoja/Internettiä

2. katson engl. kielisiä filmejä
3. kuuntelen engl.kielistä musiikkia
4. seurustelen ulkomaalaisten kanssa
5. osallistun lisäkursseille
6. muuta, mitä?_____

180 Oletko asunut englantia puhuvassa maassa vaihto-opiskelijana tai työssä ollessani yli 3 kuukautta?

- | | |
|----|-------|
| 1. | kyllä |
| 2. | en |

181 Oletko käynyt kielikurssilla englantia puhuvassa maassa?

- | | |
|----|-------|
| 1. | kyllä |
| 2. | en |

182 Oletko käyttänyt vierasta kieltä ulkomaanmatkoilla tai Suomessa töissä ollessasi?

1. olen paljonkin
2. olen hiukan
3. en ollenkaan

183 Onko sinulla ulkomaalaisia chat- tai kirjeenvaihtokavereita?

1. kyllä
2. ei

184 Ovatko vanhempasi kannustaneet sinua englannin opiskeluun?

1. kyllä
2. ei

185 Käytkö töissä säännöllisesti opintojesi ohella?

1. kyllä
2. en

Onko muita asioita, jotka sinua englannin opinnoissasi haittaavat, ärsyttävät tai ahdistavat? Mitä?

Miten kehittäisit englannin opiskelua ammattikorkeakoulussa?

Onko sinulla kommentteja tähän kyselyyn liittyen?

KIITOS MIELI TULOKSESI!

Tutkimuksen valmistuttua saat tilaisuuden tutustua tuloksiin.

MUISTIN APU VASTAAJALLE

Vastausvaihtoehtojen numerointi on tämä:

Olen väitteen kanssa

Täysin eri mieltä	= 1
Hieman eri mieltä	= 2
Vaikea sanoa	= 3
Hieman samaa mieltä	= 4
Täysin samaa mieltä	= 5

Tarkista ensin, mitä väitteessä todella sanotaan ja anna sitten vastauksesi rehellistä mielipidettäsi vastaavalla numerolla.

APPENDIX 2

Motivation Component Matrix (27)	Factor Loadings	Item Discrimination Index		
O16 Studying English is important to me, since it will enable me to work with English-speaking people in the future.	,768	,9015		
R13 If I could choose I wouldn't study English.	,763	,9016		
O15 I would study English even if it were not compulsory	,746	,9017		
O22 Learning English is a pleasant experience.	,734	,9017		
O26 Learning English is important to me as it enables me to have contact with lots of different people.	,700	,9023		
O20 Studying English is significant to me, as it may be of help in my future profession.	,686	,9036		
O14 Studying English is important to me, because I am able thus to talk with all English-speaking people.	,684	,9032		
R5 Learning languages is just an obligation.	,673	,9029		
R6 I would rather have chosen an institution at	,652	,9037		

which less English is studied.			
O27 Learning English is important to me, since it enables me to understand English movies, TV programs, books and culture in general.	,637	,9035	
O25 I think English studies will be beneficial to my self-development.	,606	,9036	
R9 In my English studies I concentrate on that which is easy for me and don't pay as much attention to the rest.	,579	,9041	
O18 Studying English is important to me, so that I can feel at ease with the British and Americans.	,553	,9046	
O24 Some day English is going to help me to get a good job.	,543	,9049	
O21 I think studying English widens my mental world.	,535	,9050	
R17 I study English because it is one of the subjects along with the others.	,530	,9057	
O28 I would really like to learn several foreign languages.	,522	,9051	
O4 If I have difficulty in understanding something, when new things are taught in English lessons, I seek help from the teacher or a classmate.	,521	,9052	
R7 I never contemplate afterwards what was studied in English lessons.	,516	,9051	
O3 If an English-speaking traveller should ask for directions in the street I would gladly help him the best I could.	,484	,9060	
O12 I try to do my English homework conscientiously	,439	,9068	
O10 I look for all kinds of opportunities to practice my English outside the polytechnic.	,409	,9073	
R8 When I watch TV programs in English I just read the subtitles and don't try to follow the speech.	,353	,9084	
O23 Other people appreciate me more when I know English.	,350	,9088	
O19 I would like to learn to speak English perfectly.	,294	,9087	
R11 I don't concentrate on English studies at the polytechnic, because I can learn better elsewhere.	,269	,9095	
O29 Learning English is important to me mainly because English is a language of the whole world.	,217	,9102	
		Alpha of the scale ,9082	

APPENDIX 3

Intercultural Attitudes Component Matrix (22)	Factor Loadings	Item Discrimination Index		
O56 I would like to get better acquainted with the Brits.	,755	,8568		
O62 I would like to have more contacts with the international English-speaking world.	,728	,8576		
O59 I would like to get better acquainted with the Americans.	,637	,8611		
O63 I feel it is important to understand how English works as a language.	,636	,8611		
R33 In my opinion, we are taught too many foreign languages, since people in other countries don't study Finnish.	,624	,8618		
O70 It is important to know how people in different countries live.	,624	,8630		
O69 There is something thrilling in the tone of English.	,585	,8621		
R65 English disgusts me.	,572	,8635		
O57 My attitude to the Brits is positive.	,570	,8640		
R30 I feel more at home with Finns than with foreigners.	,562	,8627		
R35 I think a foreign language should be taught only as a language and not be related to a country's culture or the way of life.	,542	,8643		
O66 Some day I could even move to an English-speaking country.	,534	,8640		
R32 I think we in Finland have too much training in internationalization, as people in other countries often know hardly anything about Finland.	,519	,8644		
O71 I would really like to get into English.	,497	,8657		
O58 The Brits are polite and friendly.	,496	,8658		
O67 I find English grammar interesting.	,470	,8662		
O61 My attitude to the Americans is positive.	,430	,8679		
O68 For me the English language opens the gates to the whole world, not just to the English-speaking countries.	,419	,8674		
R31 In my opinion, the Finns who marry foreigners are traitors.	,403	,8676		
R34 I would rather mind my own business and let the others mind theirs.	,397	,8696		
R37 It is only natural that everyone regards his or	,252	,8737		

her own family and nation as the best.			
O64 To me English is basically the common language of people from different countries.	,212	,8720	
		Alpha of the scale ,8701	

APPENDIX 4

English Instruction Component Matrix (27)	Factor Loadings	Item Discrimination Index		
O81 I liked the ECS (English Communication Skills) course.	,847	,8657		
O86 I find English teaching at the polytechnic interesting.	,800	,8683		
O80 If I could choose I would attend the same kind of English course as ECS again.	,779	,8693		
O75 The methods used in English teaching at the polytechnic are very useful in my opinion.	,773	,8704		
O76 I willingly work according to the instructions of the polytechnic English teacher.	,740	,8714		
R78 If I could choose I wouldn't take part in such English teaching as offered by the polytechnic.	,729	,8744		
R74 In my opinion, ECS was boring.	,662	,8744		
O88 My English teachers at the polytechnic are professionally qualified.	,648	,8762		
R84 The polytechnic teachers' attitude towards their students is totally wrong.	,647	,8751		
O82 I totally trust my English teachers at the polytechnic.	,600	,8771		
R87 I hate the way I am taught English at the polytechnic.	,593	,8758		
R90 I didn't learn anything useful in ECS.	,581	,8776		
O77 I have liked all the English teachers I have ever had.	,498	,8778		
O79 All my English teachers ever have been inspiring.	,388	,8811		
R89 I think that in the English lessons we should speak less English and more Finnish.	,275	,8842		
R83 I have unhappy memories about my English teachers in high school.	,208	,8923		
R85 In my opinion, the English courses should be shortened to a great extent.	,169	,8879		
		Alpha of the scale ,8829		

APPENDIX 5

English Language Self-Concept Component Matrix (38)	Factor Loadings	Item Discrimination Index		
O144 In language lessons I often feel myself really helpless.	,807	,9433		
O158 In my opinion, conversation exercises are not nice, because I feel helpless in them.	,760	,9424		
O149 In English lessons I always feel tense.	,753	,9428		
R117 I learn English easily.	,751	,9426		
O145 In English lessons I feel that all the others are better in English than me.	,750	,9427		
O156 My English teachers' demands are too high and depress me.	,739	,9431		
O160 Speaking English irritates me.	,726	,9432		
O143 When using a foreign language I always feel like a clown.	,711	,9431		
O155 In English class I answer only if I am sure I will make no mistakes.	,705	,9430		
O147 English itself makes me anxious.	,698	,9435		
O165 I don't want to use English in class.	,692	,9435		
O139 The strange world of language lessons annoys me.	,690	,9435		
O137 In language lessons I fear all kinds of blunders if I have to present something.	,671	,9434		
O141 I can't really adopt the role of a foreign language user.	,666	,9433		
O154 The other members of our group are too good in English lessons and that's why I don't want to take part at all.	,659	,9435		
O146 English teachers regard me somewhat with disapproval.	,654	,9439		
O166 My voice sounds strange when I speak English.	,642	,9435		
R113 I can write English well.	,637	,9437		
O161 Often when I am supposed to do a grammar exercise I just feel I can't make it.	,621	,9438		
O120 I have a feeling that I pronounce English like a jerk.	,621	,9438		
O123 Compared with others, I am no expert in English.	,614	,9437		
O153 The tempo in English lessons is always too fast.	,610	,9438		
O138 In language lessons I often feel that I should pretend to be a foreigner.	,585	,9442		
O164 I feel ridiculous if I try to pronounce English authentically.	,581	,9440		
R116 I manage well with me English abroad.	,581	,9441		

R121 I know English grammar well.	,547	,9444		
O157 Writing exercises are nicer than spoken ones, because in them you don't have to "play the clown".	,537	,9444		
O152 The English world they talk about in English lessons is very strange to me.	,525	,9445		
O148 I don't like the fact that in English lessons you sort of have to stop being a Finnish speaker.	,511	,9445		
O140 Too much fuss is made of learning languages.	,507	,9445		
O142 The atmosphere in language lessons is never relaxed.	,484	,9449		
O151 It seems to me that too much fuss is made of the importance of English.	,480	,9447		
O168 I feel funny to learn English idioms and sayings.	,374	,9454		
O162 Too much fuss is made of being able to speak English.	,312	,9459		
O159 I think that multiple choice exercises are good since they are easy.	,229	,9470		
R167 Role playing etc. are nice, because you get "a new identity".	,197	,9469		
O150 I feel my English teacher is not acting naturally in class.	,157	,9468		
O163 English grammar is nice, because you can just learn it by heart.	,101	,9469		
		Alpha of the scale ,9455		

APPENDIX 6

General Anxieties Component Matrix (33)	Factor Loadings	Item Discrimination Index		
O134 Often when I have problems, I don't really know what to do.	,739	,8786		
O39 I am often depressed.	,729	,8779		
O132 I often hope to be someone else.	,714	,8784		
O43 I often feel that difficulties accumulate so that I am not able to deal with them any more.	,692	,8789		
O40 I often have a feeling that I belong nowhere.	,668	,8793		
O104 I often feel that I am no good as a student.	,620	,8807		
O133 I wouldn't like to perform anything in lessons since others might laugh at me.	,600	,8803		
O125 During lessons I am afraid of making all kinds of blunders.	,581	,8809		
O124 I always have some kind of bad luck.	,572	,8813		
O129 Too much is required from me in life.	,537	,8821		
O44 I tend to take things too seriously.	,511	,8824		
R96 I have a lot of good qualities.	,491	,8842		
R99 In my own opinion I am good enough as a student.	,486	,8847		
R42 When I feel down, I know I can always talk with a friend or my parents.	,486	,8834		
R41 Thinking about future doesn't distress me.	,479	,8835		
O136 I feel alienated from all my studies.	,465	,8839		
O47 I never reveal my most intimate feelings and opinions even to my closest friends.	,465	,8843		
O92 I wish my friends would appreciate me more.	,431	,8839		
R97 I am valuable as a person.	,426	,8846		
R46 It is stressing when I have to deal with new people.	,414	,8844		
R94 I would like to be more popular among my friends.	,390	,8845		
R38 It is easy for me to trust other people.	,389	,8843		
O98 Generally speaking I am not a genius.	,387	,8850		
O91 I would like to give a more intelligent impression of myself.	,386	,8842		
O130 I don't feel at home at South Carelia Polytechnic.	,386	,8853		
O48 I think I would do better if I left my old life and started up in new surroundings.	,366	,8848		
R93 I manage quite well in whatever I try	,361	,8858		
O131 I am always a little bit nervous when I have to "perform".	,347	,8857		

O49 Constant hurry makes me very anxious.	,344	,8858	
O135 I need fresh ideas and change in my life.	,327	,8857	
O45 Teachers are not at all interested in my feelings and opinions.	,247	,8867	
O95 I would not like to draw attention in any way.	,236	,8875	
O101 I would like to be an excellent foreign language student.		,8895	
		Alpha of the scale ,8866	

APPENDIX 7

Attitudes towards Studies Component Matrix (11)	Factor Loading	Item Discrimination Index		
R130 I don't enjoy studying at the polytechnic.	,762	,8210		
O54 Studying is important to me.	,721	,8295		
R136 I feel alienated from all my studies.	,716	,8273		
O55 I think studying is interesting.	,711	,8302		
O105 I am absolutely in the right field at polytechnic.	,662	,8312		
O53 In my opinion studying here is pleasant.	,655	,8323		
R51 If I got a job, I would quit school immediately.	,633	,8344		
R128 The atmosphere in my unit makes me nervous.	,563	,8407		
R127 I cannot fully concentrate on my studies.	,555	,8437		
R52 Studying at the polytechnic is useless.	,542	,8411		
O108 All in all I get along with my studies quite well.	,523	,8405		
		Alpha of the scale ,8467		