

**FINNISH UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS'
VIEWS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES: motivation, attitudes
and beliefs**

Master's thesis
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<p>Vieraiden kielten osaamisen merkitys on kasvanut globalisoituneessa maailmassa. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on selvittää lukion opiskelijoiden asenteita, kokemuksia, odotuksia ja uskomuksia eri vieraita kieliä kohtaan. Toinen kotimainen kieli lasketaan vieraiden kielten joukkoon tässä tutkimuksessa. Englannin kieli on korostetussa asemassa sen kansainvälisen tärkeyden takia, ja siihen paneudutaan tutkimuksessa muita kieliä enemmän.</p> <p>Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin kaksiosaisella kyselylomakkeella syksyllä 2011 Jyväskylässä. Kaikki vastaajat (N= 58) olivat lukion toisen vuosikurssin A1-englannin opiskelijoita. Tulokset osoittivat, että vastaajilla oli ylivoimaisesti kaikkein positiivisimmat asenteet ja odotukset englannin kieltä kohtaan. Vapaavalintaisia vieraita kieliä kohtaan asenteet eivät olleet niin positiivisia, poikkeuksena espanjan kieli, josta suuri joukko vastaajia oli hyvin kiinnostunut. Asenteet ruotsin kieltä kohtaan eivät olleet yhtä positiivisia kuin englantia kohtaan, mutteivät kuitenkaan niin negatiivisia kuin yleisiä, vapaaehtoisesti opiskeltavia kieliä saksaa ja ranskaa koskevat. Vaikka vastaajat opiskelivat enemmän kieliä kuin lukiolaiset keskimäärin, he eivät pitäneet kielten pakollisuutta tärkeänä ja ylivoimainen enemmistö oli sitä mieltä, että englannin tulisi olla ainoa pakollinen kieli. Vain vajaa kolmannes haluaisi säilyttää ruotsin pakollisena opiskeltavana kielenä.</p> <p>Tarkastellessa vastaajien motivaatiota oppia englantia kävi ilmeiseksi, että englantia pidetään tärkeänä ja sitä halutaan oppia nimenomaan sen välinearvon vuoksi. Kaikki vastaajat odottivat englannin kielen olevan hyvin tärkeä tulevaisuudessaan, ja haluavat oppia sitä jotta voisivat käyttää sitä erinäisiin pyrkimyksiin, kuten esimerkiksi opiskeluun tai työllistymiseen. Kiinnostus englantia puhuvia kulttuureita kohtaan ja halu osata kieltä sen itsensä vuoksi olivat motivaation lähteinä paljon vähemmän merkittävässä asemassa.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Languages and their use are always tied into social and cultural contexts, which are laden with different values. The question of foreign language teaching in education system is a highly debated topic in Finland. How many different foreign languages should be compulsory, at which point of primary education should their teaching begin, and what languages should be taught in school are some of the most debated questions at the moment.

Currently, every student has to study the other national language of Finland, that is, Swedish, and one foreign language during the basic education consisting of classes from one to nine (from age of seven to age of sixteen, respectively), and they also have the option of studying a maximum of two additional languages, beginning from classes five and seven. According to the 2010 report Ministry of Education, over 90 percent of students studied English as their compulsory foreign language in 2009. Less than 25 percent of students chose to begin studying an additional language during their fifth year of primary education, while in 2005 the amount was over 30 percent. The trend continues into years 7 to 9, as the number of students who chose to begin studying an additional language during those school years has decreased from 42 percent in 1996 to only 14 percent in 2009. The language most often studied as an additional language beginning at year seven of basic education was German, with French second, and Russian slowly growing in popularity. (Kumpulainen 2011)

The issues in current debate concern the status of Swedish as a national language that has to be studied by everyone, the number of different language choices that are to be offered by schools, the number of languages students have to study, and the age at which students should begin to study foreign languages. These issues are hotly debated by political parties, teacher unions, and the Finnish academia. The voice of the students themselves is not often heard, however, and their experiences, thoughts and opinions are not considered by the different parties involved in debate about the decisions to be made about changes to the language teaching in the Finnish education system.

The aim of the present study is to collect information via questionnaires from Finnish students in general upper secondary education about their thoughts, opinions, beliefs,

attitudes and expectations about foreign language learning and teaching in Finland, their usage of different languages, and how they compare, rate, and value the foreign languages they have studied based on different criteria. As for more theoretical concepts, the present study is primarily concerned with the factors of *motivation*, *attitudes*, and *beliefs* in language learning exhibited by Finnish language learners. It is important to note that there is some overlap between the three concepts, for example, many motivation theories include, or at least acknowledge, attitudes and sometimes beliefs as well as parts of the motivation process. Likewise, attitudes and beliefs are closely related to each other, and distinguishing them from each other can at times be challenging.

English as a foreign language has an added emphasis over other foreign languages in the present study, which looks more closely into the motivational issues surrounding learning English as a foreign language. The reason is, simply, that of the foreign languages taught in schools in Finland, English is both the most popular foreign language, and also currently the most globally widely used language, with most importance attached to it as a tool of global communication. As a relatively new *lingua franca*, it has been the subject of much debate, and the attitudes towards it are both varied and strong (Mauranen 2009: 1). As Mauranen notes, the use of English as a language of communication between non-native English speakers of different language background is an increasingly important topic (Mauranen 2009: 1-2).

The present study consists of three main parts. The first main part is the background theory for the study, divided into three chapters covering motivation, attitudes, and beliefs. The second part includes two chapters. The first contains information about various previous empirical studies pertaining to the relevant subjects, and is followed by a chapter describing the present study, which includes the research questions, hypotheses, information concerning the questionnaire used in the present study, and how the data was gathered. The third and final part presents the results, analyzes them, and discusses their validity and avenues of further research.

2 MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

According to Dörnyei (2001a: 1), the term “motivation” is an abstract and hypothetical concept used to explain the thoughts and behavior of people. There is not really a single, easily measured motivation but rather different motives which affect people in various ways. There have been many attempts to form motivation theories to explain *why* people decide to do something, *how much effort* they are going to exert in pursuing it, and *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity (Dörnyei 2001a: 7). In the context of school, motivation is used to measure the degree to which students invest their attention and effort in their pursuits of different goals (Brophy 2010: 3). Motivation is one of the most significant factors that affect language learning success, and it has been discovered that sufficient motivation can compensate for shortcomings in learner aptitude and learning conditions (Dörnyei 2005:65).

Dörnyei (2005: 65-66) broadly summarizes the main phases of L2 motivation research as *the social psychological period* (1959-1990), *the cognitive-situated period* (1990s) and *the process-oriented period* (2000-). It is important to note that the various theories within these periods do not usually supplant or replace previous theories, nor do the periods occur in strict linear progression without any overlap. Instead, they focus on different aspects, or on different perspectives, building on earlier work and approaching the topic from different directions, or study certain processes more closely, taking into account cross-field advances, such as progress in cognitive psychology and sociology. The three main periods are summarized in this chapter, with a number of key theories and models included within each period. The final section following the summaries of the three periods includes some issues, problems and observations about motivation studies in general. How the different motivation theories are included and utilized within the present study is also discussed in this last section.

2.1 The social-psychological period

Among the first to research the role of motivation in L2 learning were Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert. Their work, especially Gardner's (1985) motivation theory set the tone and framework for L2 motivation research for several decades. After studying the social co-existence of English and French-speaking communities throughout the 1960s,

Gardner and Lambert (1972: 4) came to the conclusion that the motivation to learn the language of the other community was an important factor responsible for either improving or hindering intercultural communication and affiliation. According to Gardner (1985: 6), “the student's attitudes towards the specific language group are bound to influence how successful they will be in incorporating aspects of that language”.

Gardner's and Lambert's conclusion was that merely focusing on individuals and their variable aptitude and intelligence was not enough in studying motivation, but that the social context of motivation should also be taken into account. Their social argument was that foreign language learning is not a neutral topic, but is affected by language attitudes, cultural stereotypes and sometimes geopolitical consideration has subsequently been accepted by other researchers all around the world (Dörnyei 2005: 66-67). An familiar example would be the stereotypes Finns have about Swedes, and Swedish-speaking Finns, and also the attitudes towards Russia, and therefore the Russian language.

2.1.1 Socio-educational model

Based on his work on attitudes, orientations and motivations with Lambert, Robert Gardner developed what is referred to as *socio-educational model* of language learning, stressing the role of languages as tools of communication between different communities and people. In conjunction with the model, the *Attitude-Motivation Test Battery* (ATMB) was also developed to measure the different variables influencing language acquisition included in the model. In the socio-educational model, *cultural beliefs* are seen as an important background factor which affects the formation of the other learner factors which influence language learning, and success or the lack of thereof within it. (Gardner 1985: 146-147) Cultural beliefs are seen as affecting the broad construct of *integrative motive*, which includes the concepts and factors of *integrativeness*, and *attitudes toward the learning situation*, both of which in turn affect *motivation*. The *integrative motive* is by no means the only factor cited to influence language learning success in the socio-educational model, and especially the early versions of the model include other individual differences such as aptitude, intelligence, and situational anxiety (Gardner 1985: 146-147), but the most lasting legacy of

Gardner's work has been the role of different motivational factors and orientations in second language acquisition.

Gardner and Masgoret (2003: 126-127) defined integrativeness as openness to at least partially identify with another language community. Integrativeness includes the attitudes towards the target language group, interest in attaining the language for social purposes, and general interest towards learning foreign languages. The concept of *attitudes toward the learning situation* refers to an individual's reaction and evaluation of their immediate language learning context. Individuals evaluate both the teacher, and the language learning course as a whole, including its contents, and different working methods (Gardner and Masgoret 2003: 127). Gardner (1985: 10) referred to motivation in language learning as a “combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards the learning of the language”. According to the socio-educational model, integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation are correlated variables that support and influence the learner motivation, but motivation is ultimately responsible for achievement in the second language, and therefore the effect of integrativeness and attitudes is indirect (Gardner and Masgoret 2003: 124).

Gardner's 1985 AMTB includes two categories of questions grouped under the terms of *integrative orientation* and *instrumental orientation*. The distinction was not original to Gardner, as the classification of learners as either integratively or instrumentally oriented was the subject of studies already conducted in the late 1940s and the 1950s (Gardner 1985:11). *Integrative orientation* in language learning refers to a desire to interact and communicate with the target language community, and to learn about their culture. *Instrumental orientation* refers to a desire to learn foreign language because of pragmatic goals, such as bettering one's prospects in the job market through language skills.

The two terms *integrative/instrumental orientation* are often used interchangeably in L2 motivation studies with the terms *integrative/instrumental motivation*, through strictly speaking orientations are an aspect of motivation. The role of orientations is to arouse motivation and direct it towards certain goals (Dörnyei 2011: 41). In other words, orientation could be thought as goals that an individual pursues, and their motivation

stems from the type of goals they set for themselves. Orientation might not always match with motivation. For example, a learner might profess to instrumental orientation, such as bettering their job prospects, in their language study, but might not be properly motivated to actually exert effort towards learning the language and achieving said goal (Gardner and Masgoret 2003: 129). Motivation therefore reflects the power, or the lack of it, to attain the goals found within the different orientations. In Gardner's socio-educational model, *integrative motivation* is seen as the sum of *integrativeness*, *attitudes toward learning situation* and *motivation* (Gardner and Masgoret 2003: 128). Dörnyei (2005: 70) notes that *instrumental motivation* as main concept was not strictly a part of Gardner's original core theory, but rather has later been derived from the socio-educational model and the AMTB questionnaire by other researchers and studies. However, the popularization of the terms and concepts of integrative orientation/motivation and instrumental orientation/motivation is seen as perhaps the most lasting legacy of the Gardner's theory of L2 motivation.

2.2 The cognitive-situated period

The period from the roughly late 1980s to the late 1990s is labeled by Dörnyei (2005: 74) as *the cognitive-situated period*, and it was on the whole characterized by the effort to incorporate new theories and concepts from the field of cognitive psychology into language learning motivation research. The second characterizing trend of the period was the aim of narrowing down the focus of L2 motivation research from macroperspectives incorporating whole language communities and communal language stereotypes into more detailed studies of actual learning situations and learner thought processes (ie, microperspective). Despite the new avenues of research and new theories, it should be noted that the findings and theories from the social psychological period were not summarily rejected, but rather the focus was shifted into areas that were felt to not have been adequately studied before. (Dörnyei 2005: 74-75, Dörnyei 2011: 46-47).

In order to fully understand motivational features of learning situations, such as language classrooms, the motives linked with the learners' immediate learning situation should be studied. Attitudes towards the target language and its users alongside with issues such as intercultural communication and multiculturalism cannot wholly explain the effect of motivation in day-to-day learning of individuals. Motivation was thus

linked in this approach into contextual factors, for example, learner self-image and self-evaluation, and learners' perception of the quality and appropriateness of work methods used in learning situation. Dörnyei (2005: 75-76) notes that several researchers report findings that positive attitudes towards language can be overridden with situational motivation issues, and that sometimes sufficient instrumental motivation to learn a language can overcome negative disposition towards the language-user community. Two approaches that adopted new cognitive variables and illustrated the intertwining influences in situational L2 motivation from the period are *the self-determination theory* and the analysis of *language attributions* which are summarized next.

2.2.1 Self-determination theory and L2 motivation

The influence of Deci and Ryan's 1985 theory of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation and self-determination in mainstream psychology led to attempts to include some of the elements in a L2-specific model of motivation (Dörnyei 2001b: 58-59). According to Dörnyei (2005: 77) the main objectives of researchers seeking to incorporate elements from self-determination theory were to relate intrinsic and extrinsic reasons from motivational psychology to the orientations/motivations developed in L2 research and to study how various classroom practices affect learner's levels of self-determination.

Generally speaking, it has been determined that constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation mirror the constructs of integrative and instrumental orientation/motivation discussed earlier to some extent. Extrinsic motivation is concerned with the rewards and benefits which follow achieving goals, while intrinsic motivation instead focuses on appreciating creativity, and feelings of achievement and satisfaction that come from successfully completing fulfilling tasks and obtaining new knowledge. It should be noted that it usually cannot be determined whether a given behaviour is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated simply by observing it, but deeper examination and questioning the person is required (Woolfolk 2010: 377-378). Also, often certain behaviour and actions are born from both kinds of motivation, not simply either/or.

As for learner self-determination, several studies have provided evidence that learner autonomy in L2 classroom directly correlates with learner motivation (Dörnyei 2001b: 59). Other factors contributing towards intrinsic motivation are ability and opportunity

to affect the learning environment, and positive social interaction and relationships with others in the learning environment (Brophy 2010: 7). Also, the more students perceived their teachers as overtly controlling, the less intrinsically motivated they were. Interestingly, for those students who displayed mostly extrinsic reasons for studying a language, the directive influence of a teacher in regards to their feelings of autonomy and enjoyment was not felt so keenly (Dörnyei 2005: 77). In effect, students who like and are interested in studying a foreign language experience negative feelings from excessive teacher interference and control, while those who are merely there because they have to, for some reason or another, do not care overmuch either way.

2.2.2 Attribution theory

Attribution theory was the dominant model in student motivation research in the 1980s in the field of psychology. Its main argument and supposition was that causal attributions between past successes and failures have an effect on individuals' efforts and goals in the future (Dörnyei 2001b: 22, Brophy 2010 49-50). Explaining past failures as a result of insufficient effort or outside distractions is more likely to lead one to attempt a given task or goal again than ascribing past failure to particularly low ability or insufficient aptitude (Dörnyei 2005: 79). It should be noted, that while the attribution theory is directly concerned with motivation, learner beliefs play a strong role in it. In short, it concerned about what learners believe to be the reasons for their success or failure, and how these beliefs affect their future actions.

Attributed causes for success or failure can be thought to have three dimensions: 1. *locus* - whether the cause is internal or external to the learner, 2. *stability* - whether it remains the same in different situations at different times, and 3. *controllability* - whether the learner can control or alter the cause through their own efforts (Woolfolk 2010: 388-389). Ema Ushioda (2001), as quoted by Dörnyei (2005: 79-80), found that a positive motivational attitude involved two attributional patterns:

1. attributing positive L2 outcomes to personal ability or internal factors (e.g., effort, perfectionist approach), and
2. attributing negative L2 outcomes or lack of success to temporary (i.e., unstable) shortcomings that might be overcome (e.g., lack of effort, lack of opportunity to spend time in the L2 environment).

Supporting these findings, and adapting them into strategies for generating positive learner motivation, Brophy (2010: 50-51) encouraged teachers to help their students attribute their successes to a combination of their proficiency and effort, and failures to temporary shortcomings that can be surmounted through effort from both the learners and their instructor. Attributions can both lead to, and be product of, learner self-image, either positive or negative.

The range of attributions in school children's perception appears also to be culture-dependent to some degree. Partly these are a result of differing learning conditions, such as classroom environment, but for example learners of certain nationalities never mentioned luck as attributional factor (Dörnyei 2005: 80). Therefore comparative studies focusing on learners of different language backgrounds are needed in order to pursue this venue of research further in L2 motivation research.

2.3 The process-oriented period

One major factor of motivation process that has not been closely studied previously is the *temporal dimension*. Learning a language is a long-term project and a process, and it is understandable that learner's attitudes and motivation towards that stated goal are not constant. According to Dörnyei, adopting a *process-oriented approach* which could account for short-term variations in motivation, is necessary for examining motivation in relationship with specific learner behaviors and processes in the classroom (Dörnyei 2005: 83).

Dörnyei (2001b: 82-83 and 2005: 83) lists a number of other researchers who have focused on the temporal dimension in their L2 motivation studies, such as Williams and Burden (1997, as quoted by Dörnyei 2005: 83), who separated motivational process into three stages consisting of (1) reason for doing something, (2) deciding to do something, and (3) sustaining the effort. The first two stages in this model are concerned with *initiating* motivation whilst the third involves *sustaining* motivation. Ema Ushioda (1998: 81-83) noted that motivation appears to be an evolving process, in which it may take time for a more instrumental motivation to come to a fore, whilst personal experiences such as positive L2-learning experiences and positive self-image as a

learner of L2 have more importance earlier in the language learning process. For example, a learner's initial motivation to study a language might simply be that he likes studying it in school. In time, the motivation might change to also include the expectation that the language will be useful in future.

2.3.1 Dörnyei and Ottó's process model of L2 motivation

In 1998 Dörnyei and Ottó developed a L2 motivation theory in response to the issue of describing motivational processes over time. The theory was further elaborated in Dörnyei's 2001 *Teaching and Researching Motivation* (2001b: 85-100). Presented below is a summarized version of the model.

In Dörnyei and Ottó's process model the motivational process is broken down into several separate temporal sections, organized by the progression that describes how initial *wishes* and *desires* are transformed into *goals* and then into planned *intentions*, and how these intentions are acted upon, leading to the successful accomplishment of the goal and concluded by the final *evaluation* of the whole process. This motivated behaviour process in this model is divided into three main phases or stages:

1. *Preactional phase*: First, motivation needs to be *generated*. The generated motivation then leads to the selection of the *goal* the learner will pursue, or the task that he will attempt. What follows is the *action plan*, what has to be done, and approximately how long it will take. The planned action is then launched. The motivational dimension related to this phase can be described as *choice motivation*.
2. *Actional phase*: Second, the generated motivation needs to be actively *maintained* and *protected* during the action process. This motivational dimension is referred to as *executive motivation* by Dörnyei. Maintaining motivation is especially important in sustained activities, such as L2 studying, especially in an environment, classrooms for example, where there are other distractions. The learner also generates various *subtasks* based on the action plan, and *implements* them, while continuously *evaluating* both the progress one has made and the environmental stimuli which occur during the process.
3. *Postactional phase*: After the goal has been achieved or the action terminated, or

alternatively, canceled for a longer period (for example, a holiday), it is time for a *motivational retrospection*, which concerns the *retrospective evaluation* of the whole process and the results. Initial plans and expectations are compared to how they turned out and why. This critical retrospection influences what tasks the learner attempts in the future, and how he views himself as a language learner. The postactional stage, and its results are therefore connected to the theory of learner attributions mentioned earlier in this chapter.

A key feature of the model is that these three phases are associated with largely different motives. For example, the factors which influence an individual considering an action or a goal are different from the motives that influence him while implementing the action and sustaining the motivation to successfully complete it. Also, when evaluating past action and results, different motivational components will become relevant. Another important feature of this perspective is that different motivational systems espoused by different researchers do not necessarily exclude each other, but can be valid if they affect different temporal phases of motivational process. As an example, Dörnyei (2005: 86) believes that the social-psychological construct is valid for explaining variance in choice motivation during the preactional phase.

According to Dörnyei (2001a: 22) among the main motivational influences of the preactional phase and choice motivation are learner attitudes towards the L2, learner beliefs and strategies, different properties of the set goal, environmental factors (support, for example) and learner expectancy of success in the task. Motivational influences which assist in maintaining motivation in the actional phase are, for example, sense of autonomy, which was discussed in self-determination theory, alongside quality of the learning experience, teacher's and parents' influence (in the form of feedback and positive reinforcement), the influence of the learner group, and the various self-regulatory strategies learners can use. In the motivational retrospection, which occurs in postactional phase, received feedback continues to be an important motivational influence, as are learners' beliefs about their self-concept, such as self-confidence and feelings of self-worth. Different attributional factors, such as tendencies or biases in attributing success or failure to different factors also play a role.

Dörnyei (2005: 86-87) lists two shortcomings of the process model. First, the actional

process is not as well-definable with clear-cut boundaries that the model implies. Determining when exactly an action starts in educational context is problematic. The second problem is that the actional process does not occur in isolation, without any interferences or influences from other activities the learner is currently engaged in. This is especially relevant for classroom contexts where learners are engaged in parallel action processes, some of which are not directly relevant to L2 learning. Also, students have plenty of other interests and goals besides academic achievement in their disposition about attending school. Most of these interests tend to be social in nature.

2.4 Common issues with motivation studies and new socio-dynamic perspectives

Dörnyei (2011: 197-198) lists three particularly problematic issues of motivation research: First, motivation is *abstract*, and it cannot be directly measured or even observed. Second, motivation is a *multidimensional construct*, and it cannot be therefore represented by simple measures. Third, as detailed in process-oriented period of motivation research and theory, motivation is *inconstant*. This presents a problem of reliability of the different measures for gauging motivational dimensions of individuals, as the data upon which conclusions are based is subject to changes in different circumstances. Motivation is also such a broad concept that it is difficult to fully investigate all of its aspects within a single study. Therefore, L2 motivation needs to be explicitly conceptualized in each and every study, in order to limit the topic to a manageable extent, and to make sure that when making comparisons to other studies, it is clear that the same aspects are being compared (Dörnyei 2011: 198-199).

New approaches to the study of motivation acknowledge that it is very difficult to effectively define when exactly learning process begins and ends, and that learning does not happen in a vacuum, but rather in a varying social environments, which can affect the process in ways that are hard to identify and measure (Dörnyei 2011: 69-71). Also, the actional process detailed in the process model of motivation does not necessarily happen in a strictly linear progression, but rather there is great deal of variance in the process (Dörnyei 2011: 75-76). The main idea of new theories is that learners and their various processes have been treated as too abstract and disconnected from actual real-life events. Therefore, the most recent direction of motivation research is referred to a *socio-dynamic*, and it seeks to study the complex interaction between learners and their

surroundings. The new venues of analysis are intended to be more grounded in the dynamic and interlocked social contexts that affect, and are affected by, learners of foreign language (Dörnyei 2011: 69-72).

According to Dörnyei (2001a: 189-190), there are no universally applicable, standardized L2 motivation test batteries. A number of them are very widely used, such as Gardner's 1985 ATMB, but all test batteries focus on certain specific aspects of L2 motivation. Therefore, researchers conducting their studies through questionnaires often have to design their own questionnaire, and assessment tools as well, especially if they are focusing on different aspects of L2 motivation, or their research is closely connected to specific contexts, such as studying specific language attitudes within a specific country or a community.

The present study does not limit itself into the bounds of any single theory of motivation, partly because the various theories all have their merits in different contexts. The first part of the questionnaire used for data gathering in the present study owes much of its structure and classification of its items to the socio-educational model. However the questionnaire's second part seeks to gather information about beliefs and attitudes about foreign languages in general. The concept of motivation within the present study is seen as a complex matter which does not exist alone, but is interconnected with other issues, both cognitive and social. The present study seeks to study motivation in conjunction with other factors, such as attitudes towards languages, beliefs about the different qualities of various languages, learner self-image, and expectations about future applicability of languages. Elements of the attribution theory are at times applied to the results when attempting to study the cause and effect of different views of languages. As the study is not longitudinal in nature, studying the temporal dimension of the respondents' motivation is not possible. However, the possibility of motivation changing in time because of learners' subjective experiences is acknowledged when discussing the sometimes greatly different views the respondents hold about different languages.

3 THE ROLE OF ATTITUDES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

3.1 Attitudes: general theory

Attitudes have been studied from the 1910s onwards, beginning in the field of social psychology (Albarracín, Johnson, and Zanna 2005: vii). The concept of *attitude* is also present in several other scientific fields, such as sociology, linguistics and education studies. As a consequence, there are several different definitions to the term *attitude*. Eagly and Chaiken (1993: 1, as quoted by Albarracín et al.: 2005: 4) defined attitude as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor”. In 1931, Thurstone, (as quoted by Garrett 2010: 19), defined an attitude as “affect for or against a psychological object”. Garrett also cites Allport (1954) to provide a definition of attitude as “a learned disposition to think, feel and behave towards a person (or object) in a particular way” (Garrett 2010: 19). Gardner (1985: 9) when researching the role of attitudes and motivation in language learning, defined an individual's attitude as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent”.

Garret (2010) lists five important aspects about attitudes, especially relevant to language attitudes, but also applicable to attitudes in general:

1. Much like motivation and beliefs, attitudes are constructs, and cannot be directly measured, but only indirectly gauged through different methods of indirect measurement, such as self-report questionnaires and interviews.
2. Attitudes can be both input into and output from social action. For example, favourable attitudes may lead to success and good results, but good results and success can likewise lead into favourable attitudes.
3. Attitudes are learned, they are not innate. The two main sources for attitudes are personal experiences and social environment, such as the media or education system.
4. Attitudes are structured into three components, *cognition*, *affect* and *behaviour*. Attitudes are *cognitive* because they involve beliefs about the world and relationships between different objects within it, *affective* because they involve

evaluative feelings about said objects, and *behavioural* because they have an effect on how individuals are predisposed to act in situations involving those objects. As an example of the structure and influence of a negative attitude, one might falsely believe that people of certain nationality are untrustworthy and shifty, and therefore feel negatively disposed towards them, until they prove themselves reliable and as a result also act more reserved and distrusting initially while meeting members of that nationality.

5. Attitudes can both change and evolve dynamically, but also achieve stability and be very durable. Attitudes acquired early in the lifespan often tend to be more enduring, while on the spot evaluations of new situations and objects are more likely to change when new information and experiences are acquired. Language attitudes are often acquired from school, as it both occurs early in the lifespan and is also the context where one is first exposed to foreign languages to any greater extent. (Garret 2010: 19-30)

There are a number of other terms that are closely connected to attitudes. They are sometimes used interchangeably, which can at times lead to confusion and misunderstanding. *Habits* are similar to attitudes in that they are learned and that they are stable and enduring, but they are primarily behavioural routines, often unaware ones, while attitudes are not essentially behavioural phenomena, even though they they may have behavioural links. *Values* are more general and all-encompassing than attitudes. For example, consider the value “freedom” or “equality”, and compare them to attitudes towards different political parties. Values can be thought of as high ideals, which individuals aspire towards. The term *opinion* tends to be used as a synonym to attitude in everyday language usage. Opinions are more easily verbalized and expressed, while attitudes might be latent or sub-conscious, and not so easily formulated. Furthermore, opinions are considered to lack the affective component, that is, though they may trigger or be triggered by affective reactions. Articulated opinions do not necessarily match underlying attitudes, though that is a matter of interpretation. (Garrett 2010: 30-32) The concepts of habits, values and opinions are not included and examined within the previous study, and attitudes are examined solely in their form and function as language attitudes. For the purposes of the present study, language attitudes are primarily viewed as individual's evaluative/affective reactions to different languages, their properties, and their use.

Attitudes are closely related to both *motivation* and *beliefs*, especially in language learning studies, appearing often in different models of L2 motivation such as Gardner and Lambert's socio-educational model which was detailed in Chapter 2. While beliefs represent a form of knowledge based on subjective experiences, attitudes, going by several of the definitions provided in the beginning of this chapter, can be considered to be evaluative to certain extent, and to be based on prior knowledge and beliefs. Albarracín et al. (2005: 4-5) also noted that at least some beliefs can be verified or falsified through external, objective criteria, whilst generally the same method cannot be applied for attitudes. Furthermore, beliefs are considered to be mostly cognitive in structure, and not contain affective components, though they can trigger and be triggered by strong affective reactions, just like opinions (Garrett 2010: 31). Therefore, for the purposes of the present study, attitudes are to be distinguished from beliefs by the inclusion of an evaluative/affective factor as a part of an attitude, and, where possible, through the question whether or not they could theoretically be verified through some criteria, as some beliefs could. It should be noted, however, that at times the distinction is difficult to make.

3.2 Attitudes to language

The term *language attitude* can refer to the attitudes individuals or communities have towards different languages, location- or social-based variations of a single language or the speakers of said languages or language variations (Kalaja 1999: 46). The present study is directly concerned only with attitudes learners have towards foreign languages, not varieties of a language, or attitudes towards speakers of the foreign languages. Therefore, the items within the questionnaire are phrased to always refer solely to the languages themselves. However, it must be taken into account, that in their answers some learners might closely relate their evaluative attitude towards a language to the speakers of that language, especially if they have experience of using said language in informal, natural situations, for example while traveling abroad. Larsen-Freeman (2001: 19-20) claims that often the attitudes of influential figures such as parents or teachers also have an effect on learner attitudes towards languages, and they should be examined whenever possible for a more comprehensive picture. The issue of attitudes of others affecting the learners and their attitudes is beyond the scope of the present study, and are

therefore not examined within it.

The research into attitudes as they relate into language learning can be considered to have begun with empirical studies in reactions to different types of voices and accents in the 1930s, according to Giles and Billings (2006: 188). According to Kalaja (1999: 46-47), the study into language attitudes began in earnest in the 1960s, with the work of Lambert and his associates. These early empirical studies used a method known as the *matched guise-technique*. This method involves listening to a recorded tape containing examples of speech in different dialects by different speakers, and then rating the various speakers in various scales, such as “intelligent_ _ _ _ _unintelligent”, or “honest_ _ _ _dishonest”. The method involves a further complication. In every tape, every speaker provides two samples, using different dialects both times, with samples by other speakers in between them to prevent the listeners from recognizing this fact. This stratagem was implemented to ensure that the listeners would actually rate the types of speech, not the voice of the speaker. (Giles and Billings 2006: 188-190, and Kalaja 1999: 49-54)

Other researchers followed suit, and language attitudes have been studied in the field of sociology, social-psychology, socio-linguistics and education studies. Among the most common methods of research for attitude studies are interviews and questionnaires. For example, Gardner and Lambert, using their ATMB-test for data collection, associated attitudes towards languages and language speakers with different types of orientations and motivations. They noted that learners with ethnocentric attitudes and prejudices towards language groups are unlikely to have any kind of integrative motivation towards language learning tasks (Gardner and Lambert 1972: 16). Their findings further suggested that good motivation towards learning a foreign language stemming from distinctive attitudinal basis allowed learners to achieve good results (Gardner and Lambert 1972: 133). However, according to Larsen-Freeman (2001: 19-21) the exact cycle of cause and effect for positive language attitudes and language learning success has not yet been conclusively discovered. Whether positive attitude affects achievement more strongly than good achievements lead into positive attitudes is therefore still unclear. However, positive attitude and achievement tend to go hand in hand according to many studies (Larsen-Freeman 2001: 20).

The matched guise-technique was also developed further, and used in different kinds of studies, such as studying listener reactions to intonation, grammatical structures, and pace of speech for example (Kalaja 1999: 53-54). The matched guise-technique has received criticism as well. The validity of the data it provides has been questioned, with doubts on whether such an indirect method actually provides examples of actual language attitudes. Also, usually the respondents own language background is not considered in analysis. Furthermore, the respondents are passive, and have no opportunity to contribute in their own terms, as the the questions and scales are all pre-constructed, and thus limit their chances to truly describe their own views. Other issues pertain to the artificiality of the method, and its disconnection from actual real life contexts. (Kalaja 1999: 61-62)

Kalaja (1999) has proposed an alternative approach towards studying languages. Much like language learning motivation as explained through the process model, language attitudes appear to be dynamic, and subject at times to variation. She has proposed discourse analysis for a research method for attitude studies. This discursive approach is at times similar to the *contextual approach* for studying learner beliefs, which is examined more closely in the following chapter of the present study. Discourse analysis as proposed as a method can, for example, study different texts, written of certain topics, and with some guidelines but otherwise written freely by those whose language attitudes are being studied. With no per-constructed scales or close questions, the answers and the data are often very different from each other both in their contents and structure. The answers and data leave much room for interpretation, and thus this method yields no generalizations or far-reaching conclusions. This approach is most concerned with language as a form and channel of social interaction, and how language use constructs social meanings. Beliefs, opinions and attitudes are seen as the products of discursive processes within this approach. (Kalaja 1999: 62-69, and Garrett 2010: 160-163) However, discursive analysis is highly work-intensive, and conducting large, quantitative studies with it as the main method is therefore challenging.

4 BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

Many learners have beliefs, some of them false, some not clear-cut, about language learning. For example, a learner might believe that there is a certain age threshold after which learning a new language becomes far more difficult, or that there is a special quality, which they lack, that is necessary for properly mastering language. These are examples of beliefs that language experts can confidently dismiss as false. But what about if a learner believes certain language to be very difficult to learn, and their personal experience seems to support this belief? Do their beliefs stem from their experiences, or could it be the other way around. Can we label a belief as false, if it appears to be true for the learner's subjective experience? This is an issue that should be addressed and acknowledged explicitly by both language teachers, and researchers of the nature and effect of beliefs in foreign language learning.

Learner beliefs are problematic because they are not universally accepted as a proper ID variable, as beliefs are hard to conceive as an enduring, trait-like factor (Dörnyei 2005: 214). However, there is no question that learner beliefs affect behavior, for example when someone believes that a certain method of learning is better than others, and therefore resists other approaches, no matter whether researchers have actually found them more conducive for language learning. Beliefs can also have an effect on motivation, as noted by Gardner (1985), in whose socio-educational model *cultural beliefs* were seen to affect both *attitudes towards learning situations* and desire for *integrativeness*.

While in the above example concerning learning methods, beliefs might appear similar to language learning attitudes, Dörnyei (2005: 214) claims that the difference is that attitudes have usually stronger factual support, while beliefs are more deeply ingrained within our minds and can be traced back into formative, personal experiences. However, the validity of the claim can be disputed, for example through questioning whether negative attitudes towards certain ethnographic groups, such as immigrants in Finland are actually born from factual information and not prejudices. For the purposes of this study, based on theory of attitudes included within Chapter 3, the main difference between beliefs and attitudes is based on the definitions of attitude including an evaluative element, whereas beliefs necessarily do not include such an element. If a

learner thinks that English is the easiest language to learn, he is expressing a belief, but if he claims to like studying English more than other languages, the present study labels the sentiment as an attitude. If a student claims to be better at Swedish than English, she is expressing a subjective belief, based on her self-image as a learner, thought it should be noted that language learning achievement, measured for example through grades could provide very strong evidence to the belief.

Despite the issue whether beliefs are in fact an ID variable, language learner beliefs have been recognized as characteristics which count when explaining learning outcomes. A second, larger and more fundamental issue is that there is no clear consensus on terminology and meanings related to the study of what learners believe and think about learning foreign languages. The two most widely-used terms are *metacognitive knowledge* and *learner beliefs*, both of whom have had several alternate definitions at different times by different researchers. Wenden (as quoted by Barcelos 2003a: 9) defined *learner beliefs* as *opinions* based on experience, which influence how students act, while she defined *metacognitive knowledge* as knowledge, possibly incorrect, about language learning, and its processes. She later claimed that *beliefs* are value-related and are held more tenaciously, whereas *metacognitive knowledge* is not (Wenden 2001: 47). Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between *metacognitive knowledge* and *metacognitive strategies*, which refer to general skills for managing, directing, regulating and guiding the learning process (Wenden 1999: 436). Sometimes the terms have been used interchangeably, and some researchers do not divide beliefs from knowledge in their definitions. For the purposes of clarity, the term *beliefs* is used in the present study, as *metacognitive knowledge* is a broader term, containing more different parts and aspects within it.

This chapter focuses on beliefs as they pertain to language learning, as it is the context most relevant for the present study. Three different approaches to the study of beliefs are presented as well. It should be noted that much like in the different periods of motivation research, there is certain amount of overlap and interplay between the different approaches and their modes of research, as they do not follow a strictly linear chronological progression where a new approach replaces old ones, but are different possible ways to collect and interpret information about beliefs. It is also important to note that the present study does not fit completely within any one of the approaches,

though it features aspects from several of them.

4.1 The role of beliefs in language classroom

There is no question that learner beliefs have an influence in the language classroom. Horvitz (1987: 119) notes that many of these beliefs are born from past experiences, and can sometimes be problematic, for example if a student has come to believe that learning a foreign language requires certain special abilities, which they feel themselves to lack. Teachers can encounter student resistance in motivating them to attempt to learn nevertheless, and sometimes there is resistance to the instructional activities the teacher engages in. Learners often have preconceived notions of what language classes should contain, and if their expectations differ from the teacher's instructional style, dissatisfaction, loss of confidence, and, ultimately, limited success in the language learning process may follow (Horvitz 1987: 119-120). These expectations are often born from the learner beliefs about what is effective language learning. Often the mismatch between students' and teachers' beliefs about good language learning procedures is cultural in nature. It is thought that effective learning and learning arise from similarity between teachers' and students' beliefs (Barcelos 2003b: 171).

Some of the main points which learners and teachers might have beliefs about, which should be addressed, are given by Dörnyei (2001a: 68) :

- How difficult language learning is in general and how difficult is the specific L2 they are studying.
- How quickly learners can expect to progress in language learning.
- What is required from the learner to successfully learn the L2, especially regarding their own effort.
- How, in general, are languages best learned.

Mori (1999) found that language learning beliefs could be reduced to three main dimensions: (1) perception of the difficulty of language learning, (2) the effectiveness of approaches to or strategies for language learning and (3) the source of linguistic knowledge.

According to Barcelos (2003b: 171), the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs has not yet been comprehensively explored. One particular issue is that the research has focused on teachers' beliefs, and their influence on the students, and the beliefs they have, but the influence of the students' beliefs on the beliefs and actions of the teachers have not been studied to a significant degree. Also, most studies have neglected to study the beliefs together with actions stemming from them, leaving the studies somewhat disconnected from real contexts.

4.2 Approaches to the study of beliefs

While some researchers, such as the aforementioned Horvitz and Wenden studied beliefs in the late 1980s, it was during the 1990s that beliefs as factors involving language learning were studied more closely (Larsen-Freeman 2001: 22). Within the past decade, the number of studies and different methods focusing beliefs has expanded. Examples of some empirical studies are found in Chapter 5, and different approaches and methods to the study of beliefs are presented below. While there have been many studies on beliefs in the past few years, there are few works aimed to present a comprehensive overview of the topic, so much of information below comes from *Beliefs about SLA*, edited by Kalaja and Barcelos.

Barcelos (2003a: 11) recognizes three approaches to the study of beliefs about SLA: (1) *the normative approach*, (2) *the metacognitive approach*, and (3) *the contextual approach*. This is by no means the sole categorization, as for example Kalaja (1995, 2003) has, at times, recognized two categories: *the mainstream approach*, in which beliefs are seen as cognitive entities inside the language learners' minds and *the alternative approach*, later labelled as discursive, in which beliefs are studied within the context of communication as socially constructed concept that are not constant, but subject to changes. It is also important to note that while Barcelos (2003a: 11-25) bases the categories at least partly on the methodology used in studies, the actual divide is not always clear cut, as different researchers use and experiment with different methods of data gathering and analysis.

The present study contains elements from both normative and contextual approach, but does not fully fit within either. Learner beliefs within the context of the present study

are seen as strongly based on learner experiences, and they are examined in connection with other factors affecting learning, namely learner motivation, and attitudes. Attitudes and beliefs in particular have complex interactions with each other, and distinguishing between the two is at times difficult, which can be seen when analyzing the results. However, the data is gathered with closed-end questionnaire, which is traditionally a method of the normative approach and tends to provide information of more limited kind, and leaves no room for the respondents own voices. This is due the broader nature of the present study, which seeks to gather information about three different concepts and compare them. As a necessity, the information gained about each measured concept is more superficial in nature than would be the case if the study would focus on only one of them.

4.2.1 The normative approach

Studies within the normative approach see beliefs about second language acquisition as *indicators of future language learning behaviour*. The studies have focused on discovering and classifying the different beliefs learners have, and also hypothesizing cause and effect connections between different beliefs and actions. Often within this approach there is the implicit assumption the productive and “correct” beliefs will lead into successful learning strategies and behavior, but beliefs that are not productive will lead into unsuccessful learning strategies (Barcelos 2003a: 15).

In normative approach, it is assumed that learners have beliefs about second language acquisition and language learning, and these beliefs affect their subsequent actions and learning strategies (Mori 1999: 378). However, there is often the undertone that as those beliefs often differ from the conceptions of language learning scholars, the beliefs of the learners are often false, while the scholars are right and know what are the beliefs that will lead into usage of good learning strategies. For example, Horvitz (1987: 119), who was one of the early pioneers into the study of second language learning beliefs and their effect, noted that learners hold a wide variety of beliefs that vary greatly in their validity and accuracy. She went on to note that the term “myth” would therefore be sometimes more accurate characterization. This implicit assumption that “wrong” learner beliefs will lead into ineffective learning strategies and conduct is criticized by Barcelos (2003a), among others, who notes that there is not enough evidence to be certain of

nature of this causal effect. Several other factors, such as previous learning experiences, teacher's approach to teaching, and motivation also affect the relationship between beliefs and action.

The most common method of gathering data in studies within the normative approach is the use of questionnaires, most of them using Likert-scales. The data is then subjected to statistical analysis, which allows easy comparisons and search for correlations. The most widely used questionnaire is the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), developed by Horvitz in 1985. Others have modified the BALLI, in order to adapt it into specific contexts, or have used it as a basis for developing their questionnaires intended to gather data about both teacher and learner beliefs. In 1999 Horvitz conducted a review of different studies that made use of BALLI. The results suggested that language learning beliefs vary based on learner age, level of proficiency and learning circumstances. However, no clear cut differences in beliefs based on cultural groups were evident. (Horvitz 1999: 574-576)

However, more recent studies have also made use of more free-form questionnaires, where the learners have opportunity to also describe their beliefs in their own words. Also, some researchers have also used several different methods of data gathering within the same study, using, for example, interviews to supplement information gathered from questionnaires (Barcelos 2003a: 13).

These new methods are welcome, as Barcelos (2003a: 15-16) notes the reliance on questionnaires is one of the main issues within normative approach. While questionnaires are an easy and quick way to gather and analyze vast amounts of data, they do have severe limitations. First, the students may interpret the questions differently from what the researcher intended. Second, questionnaires limit the respondents possible answers to the questions to a degree based on pre-established set of statements and questions. Third, the information gathered about the students beliefs is out of context. While information is gathered about what learners believe, the questions of *why* they have those beliefs, and how they act upon those beliefs are not answered. (Barcelos 2003a: 15.)

4.2.2 The metacognitive approach

Metacognitive knowledge was defined by Wenden (1987: 163) as “the stable, storable although sometimes incorrect knowledge that learners have acquired about language, learning and the language learning process; also referred to as knowledge or concepts about language learning, or learner beliefs; there are three kinds: person, task and strategic knowledge”. Others have used the term before several times, mostly in the field of psychology, but Wenden was the first to apply it specifically towards language learning, instead of general knowledge about knowledge and learning. Though she included beliefs as a sub-set of metacognitive knowledge in the above definition, and noted that the terms beliefs and metacognitive knowledge seemed to be used interchangeably, she also argued that beliefs are in fact distinct from metacognitive knowledge (Wenden 1999: 436). This distinction between belief and knowledge is not explicitly present in the normative approach to the study of beliefs. She also acknowledged that metacognitive knowledge can change over time (Wenden 1999: 435-436).

The main difference between normative approach and metacognitive approach is that most studies within metacognitive approach attach great importance to metacognitive knowledge in the pursuit of learner *autonomy* (Barcelos 2003a: 16-17). The function of metacognitive knowledge is thought to be connected to self-directed language learning and learning strategies. According to Wenden (1999: 437) learner's metacognitive knowledge strongly influences two phases in self-regulation: task analysis, concerned with planning their engagement in learning tasks, and monitoring, the skill used for overseeing the learning process and evaluating progress. Despite using different theoretical framework than normative approach, the relationship between beliefs and actions is still seen as cause and effect in the metacognitive approach.

Data in metacognitive approach is gathered mostly through semi-structured interviews or self-reports (Barcelos 2003a: 16). The data is then subjected to content analysis. Questionnaires are sometimes used, but the BALLI questionnaire most commonly used in studies within normative approach is not used in the metacognitive approach. Instead, researchers develop their own questionnaires for their specific purposes. According to Barcelos' (2003a) critical review of the field of language learning beliefs study, there are

far fewer empirical studies within the metacognitive approach, and instead most of the studies are theoretical in nature.

Barcelos (2003a: 19) notes that the advantage of metacognitive approach is that the use of interviews and self-reports allows learners to elaborate, reflect and evaluate their beliefs based on their own experience, unlike in questionnaires used in normative approach. Also, a great amount of information about metacognitive knowledge in relation to self-oriented learning is also gained from these studies. For shortcomings, the situational context and its effect on beliefs are not considered within this approach. Also, unlike in the contextual approach, beliefs are only inferred from statements and intentions not actual actions. Lastly, beliefs are only defined as metacognitive knowledge or a facet of it, thus providing a somewhat limited perspective.

4.2.3 The contextual approach

Recently, there has been a growing number of studies which do not belong to either of above approaches. While studies in this group use various theoretical frameworks and different methods of data gathering and analysis, they share some common assumptions about beliefs. They do not attempt to create a general framework of belief theory, but instead aim to better their understanding about beliefs in specific circumstances. They see beliefs as embedded in student's various contexts. (Barcelos 2003a: 19.)

The studies within contextual approach characterize beliefs as contextual, dynamic, and social (Barcelos 2003a: 20). Social interaction is important for the formulation of beliefs, and modifying the contexts in which they occur. Beliefs are recognized even more as a part of student's experiences than in the metacognitive approach (Barcelos 2003a: 21). Unlike the other approaches, contextual approach assumes the perception that knowledge is situated, so in order to study and understand learner beliefs, and the actions that stem from them, the learning situations must be investigated (Barcelos 2003a: 25). Commonly this is done through classroom observation, where the actions of students and teachers are studied together with the beliefs they report to have.

The studies within the contextual approach do not share any common methodology. Barcelos (2003a: 21-23) lists a number of different methodologies used within this

approach: ethnographic classroom observation and case studies, metaphor analysis, diaries and discourse analysis, for example. While the various studies are a heterogeneous group, which makes direct comparison between them problematic, they do share common assumptions, which provide a varied picture of beliefs as very closely linked to situational social contexts and as a dynamic concept. Perhaps the biggest issue with this approach is that the various methodologies used within it tend to be very time-consuming, and lack the ease of data compiling and comparison which comes from using quantitative methods (Barcelos 2003a: 25). As a result, the number of studies within contextual approach is not as large as among the others, though it is growing nevertheless. Two such studies are included in the next chapter.

5 PREVIOUS STUDIES ABOUT MOTIVATION, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

Presented below are selection of studies that focus on motivation, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to foreign language learning. The list of examples is by no means exhaustive, containing only few studies, in order to provide some larger context for the present study, and to give an impression about the type of work that has been done about the topics. First, a number of published studies from within the last decade are summarized, to provide examples of more recent studies, and at what kind of results they have arrived. The studies presented here were chosen because they are all recent, and they are all rather different from each other, giving an impression about possible ways of researching variable learner qualities. Two of the studies are very large, and draw conclusions about the effect of different factors based on comparing large amounts of data. Two of the studies are small case studies, but their potential implications are also very interesting for researchers of beliefs and complex interplay with L2 learning. Secondly, a few Finnish studies concerned mostly on how learners view languages are presented. The studies are included to provide an impression about the kind of work that has been done in Finland. Following them, three Master's Thesis studies about attitudes and beliefs conducted in Jyväskylä University are presented, for the purpose of comparisons and contrast to the present study.

Generally speaking, motivation is the topic that has been studied and examined the most within the field of language learning. Attitudes are often covered interchangeably with motivation, though they have been the focus of studies of their own quite often. The two motivation studies summarized below included attitudes as a factor affecting motivation. Language learning beliefs is a more recent topic of interest, with the number of studies focusing on it growing within the last decade.

5.1 A selection of previous studies on motivation, attitudes and beliefs

In 2003, Gardner and Masgoret conducted an meta-analysis, studying a number of different studies which had used the socio-educational model of language learning, and made use of the ATMB. They were interested in the connections between different variables of the model and actual achievement in language learning, seeking to conclusively prove the connection between motivation and success, or the lack of

thereof, in language learning. The results were supportive of their hypothesis (Gardner and Masgoret 2003: 140–154). There was a clear, positive correlation between *integrative motive* (consisting of integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, and motivation), integrative and instrumental orientation and achievement in language learning. Their findings also suggested that motivation, defined in this situation as consisting of motivational intensity (effort expended), attitudes towards the target language, and the desire to learn the the target language (Gardner and Masgoret 2003: 125, 128) was the most significant factor, triumphing over integrativeness, orientations, and attitudes towards the learning situation. According to their findings, age of the respondents was not a factor (Gardner and Masgoret 2003: 123–124).

Kormos and Csizér (2008) studied the different factors affecting Hungarian EFL students' language learning motivation. Their results varied greatly with different age groups, and as a result they were skeptical of the possibility of an universally applicable motivation theory (Kormos and Csizér 2008: 349). Though their results varied, it appeared that the most significant factors affecting motivation were attitudes towards English and learner self-image, how they see themselves as learners of English (Kormos and Csizér 2008: 349-351). Both of these factors are significant for the present study, as even though learner self-image is not on one of the key concepts, the questionnaire used for the present study involves questions about learner beliefs regarding their own abilities.

Both of the above studies are very much quantitative, studying large numbers of learners through the use questionnaires. However, as language learning processes, and the various factors related to it are very complex, the qualitative method has its place when attempting to study more than superficial impressions of learner qualities. Two recent qualitative studies about beliefs are summarized below, to provide an example of the new research venues of language learning belief studies. One of the studies explicitly labels itself as contextual in nature, while the other (Peng 2011) uses the term *ecological approach* in describing itself. However, the principles underlying the approach have so much in common with contextual approach as described here that it can safely be considered contextual in nature.

Navarro and Thornton used contextual approach to beliefs while studying Japanese

university students. They sought to study the links between beliefs and actions, and how they influenced self-directed learning (Navarre & Thornton 2011: 292). They studied two students during an elective English course which aimed to promote learner autonomy and improve self-study skills (Navarre & Thornton 2011: 292-293). In addition to studying learning journals written during the course, the researchers also administered a questionnaire about the learners' beliefs, and proceeded to examine and compare both (Navarre & Thornton 2011: 293-294). Their conclusions were that learners' beliefs about their skills, and how could they improve them affected their courses of action, and the results of their actions further modified and refined existing beliefs, while interaction with instructors both reinforced existing beliefs and also led to formation of new beliefs (Navarre & Thornton 2011: 298-299).

The issue of beliefs evolving and changing was investigated by Peng (2011) in an experimental empirical study, where she observed one Chinese student's beliefs about her English classes after transitioning from secondary to tertiary education for the period of seven months. The data was gathered through interviews, study journals, and observations about classroom activities (Peng 2011: 316-317). The results strongly suggested that language learning beliefs are very context-dependent in the short term, undergoing variance based on transpiring events within the classroom, and the subsequent learner emotions. Peng's findings suggested that language learning beliefs can change subtly yet comprehensively when moving into a new sphere of instruction and orientation that is different in both content, methodology and level of challenge (Peng 2011: 321-322). However, she notes that the study only examined one student very extensively, and as such, too far reaching conclusions should not be drawn, though the study serves as a possible precursor for larger studies aimed to investigate and confirm the findings.

5.2 Previous studies in Finland

In 1996 Dufva et al. (1996: 37-90) conducted an in-depth study, where they used questionnaires, group discussions, and single-person interviews to gather information about what they referred to as *everyday knowledge of language* (1996: 43-44). They studied the informal assumptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of ten very different Finns about language learning and teaching in Finland. Though their sample was small,

their method of data gathering was very thorough, and they analyzed every piece of data carefully. The results were varied and at times the research subjects disagreed with each others' views. For example, some interviewees considered difficulty of a language to be an objective quality of a language, while some gave subjective reasons for a person experiencing learning a certain language as difficult (Dufva et al. 1996: 60-61). The origins of the *everyday knowledge of language* was attributed to three main sources: personal experience (for example, trips abroad), shared general assumptions within the society (for example, “you need to be good at languages to do well in the business world”) and institutionalized views, such as what teachers think about language learning and usage, and thus impart on their students.

Their main conclusion was that learners' everyday knowledge of language is a valuable hidden resource that has not yet been taken advantage enough in language learning and teaching. Explicitly acknowledging and discovering learners' everyday knowledge of language, for example their beliefs about the features of target language or how they feel it is best learned, could both empower learners and provide them with more tangible knowledge about the learning process. Dufva and her fellow researchers recommended that different social and psychological factors which affect learners and their everyday knowledge should be acknowledged and exploited in formal teaching. (Dufva, et al. 1996: 82-85) To compare, what the present study seeks to achieve is to gather information about certain issues pertaining to language learning and teaching in Finland from a narrowly specified target group (upper secondary school students) through a less exhaustive method (questionnaires). However, the sample size is larger, and the results can provide a counterpoint to Dufva's study. Also, the information the present study seeks to gather can be considered to be included in what was defined as everyday knowledge of language.

Building on and contrasting with Dufva's study, Aro (2003: 284-286) interviewed 19 children in school, in order to study their conceptions of language, and from where they originated. While she avoided in drawing generalizations, her conclusions were that children do not necessarily think about languages and their usage at all, unlike adult learners, until explicitly questioned. Even then, they tend to fall back on what other people have told them (Aro 2003: 286) and answer according to what they have been told. Aro (2003: 290-292) hypothesized that with time the answers became more

personalized, based more on their own views as children age and mature, and eventually the children do not consider the origins of their views closely, but rather simply think them as their own, based on prior experience. This could be considered the difference between a “child” or adolescent learner and an “adult”, mature learner.

Aro also conducted a longitudinal case study, where she attempted to research both what beliefs students hold about English and how these beliefs change with time. It appeared that some beliefs, especially those about how languages are best learned became more similar as result of exposure to authoritative input from teachers, whereas some beliefs, mostly about themselves as learners of English, became more varying and personalized as a result of different personal experiences over time. (Aro 2009: 154-155) The 2003 hypothesis about beliefs becoming more personalized with growing maturity were therefore partially correct.

Kalaja and Huhta (Kalaja 2003: 94–106) studied the beliefs of 12 Finnish upper secondary school students as they embarked on the Matriculation Examination on spring 2000. Their respondents made audio-diaries of their thoughts, feelings and experiences, with certain prompted topics by the researchers. They were interested in how the respondents explained success, or the lack thereof, in the English test as a part of the Matriculation Exam. Their results were highly varying, and respondents' explanations were different at different times. The four most common explanation categories were based on learner's hard work and effort, learner skill in English, general quality as a test taker, and luck. Different students gave explanations fitting into different categories at different times (Kalaja 2003: 101). The study illustrated how difficult it is to draw generalizations, and also highlighted that factors such as learner attributions or self-image are viable to change dynamically, based on the recent events and issues.

There have been several master's thesis studies of English concerning attitudes, motivation and beliefs. Kansikas (2002) studied the attitudes towards different European languages held by Finnish upper secondary school students. The respondents had to choose a language best matching a given criteria (for example, most beautiful, easiest, etc.) and then complete sentences concerning 8 European languages according to their opinions. The sentences were “I think <insert foreign language> sounds like...”

and “<insert foreign language> is suited well for.....”. According to the answers, English was the most precise, easiest and the richest language, and Russian the most difficult and ugliest. German was thought as the most correct and serious language, French the most beautiful, and Estonian the funniest. Finally, Swedish was thought as the poorest language, and Spanish was the language greatest amount of respondents would like to learn. Based on the rest of the questionnaire used, Swedish language received the most negative attitudes in general, and unsurprisingly those with low grades in Swedish also thought it as a difficult language, whereas in English, even those with low grades thought that English was an easy language. (Kansikas 2002: 109-110)

Petrow, in her 2010 master's thesis studied the attitudes towards English language of university students studying English. Her method was a questionnaire containing seven open-ended questions, five relating to English and two relating to Finnish. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the attitudes of the respondents towards the English language were mostly very positive, especially towards the aspects of aesthetics and intelligibility of the English language. However, she reported that the respondents, who were thought as future experts of English in the study displayed some negative attitudes towards the Finnish language concerning intelligibility. (Petrow 2010: 58-60)

In a study concerning beliefs Finnish upper secondary students have about themselves as users of Finnish, Swedish and English, Oksanen (2005) used metaphor analysis to gather her data. Her conclusions were that the students had most positive images of themselves as speakers and writers of Finnish, and the most negative self-images concerning the use of Swedish. English fell in between the two, but the students felt more confident as writers of English than speakers, whereas the reverse was true for Finnish and Swedish. Female students were slightly more confident as users of Finnish and Swedish, but as users of English, male students had significantly more self-confidence. (Oksanen 2005: 65–67)

These three studies were included to provide an impression about the kind of research that has been done at the level of master's thesis studies in Finland. The present study is detailed in the next chapter.

6 PRESENT STUDY

6.1 Aim of the present study

The aim of the present study is to gather information from Finnish upper secondary school students about their experiences, feelings, and perceptions regarding studying foreign languages in Finnish schools, and about different foreign languages in general. English has an emphasized importance in the present study, partly because of its importance as a global language, and partly because the present study is conducted within the English programme of the Department of Languages. The theoretical framework for the present study is quite broad, and the key concepts of motivation, attitudes and beliefs are closely connected. Therefore, the study does not seek to rigidly divide its data into wholly separate sections concerning solely one concept at a time, without overlap or interplay, but rather pursues a larger, more general picture.

The present study has two main research questions, both of which are quite broad in scope. The first research question corresponds to the first part of the questionnaire, while the second question is connected to the second part. However, while the second part of the questionnaire is not EFL specific, English will be among the languages students provide answers for, and therefore the second part of the questionnaire may also provide information for purposes of answering the first research question. The main research questions, and their secondary questions, are:

1. What motivates Finnish upper secondary school students in learning English as a foreign language?
 - How do the results from the present study compare to other studies done before?
 - Do the answers from the first part of the questionnaire match those given in the second part?
 - Are there any differences between males and females?

2. What do Finnish upper secondary school students think and believe about their foreign language learning?
 - How do they evaluate, rate and compare the different foreign languages they

have studied? Why?

- What kind of opinions, expectations and attitudes do they hold about them?
- Are there any differences between males and females?

One goal of the analysis is searching for correlations between different answers. For example, if a majority of the answers state that the students feels Swedish is the language they possess the least amount of skill in, it will be interesting to see how many of those respondents also reported Swedish as the foreign language they like the least. It is also interesting to discover what languages students find difficult, and whether finding a language difficult and disliking it are connected to any significant degree..

It is possible to draw some preliminary hypotheses about the results the questionnaire yields. As stated in the Introduction to this study, English is studied as a foreign language at school by over 90 percent of Finns. As English is also the global language of choice of entertainment and media, it is very likely that many respondents will report it as the language they use most outside of school. Because it is also the *lingua franca* of the business world, a large number of respondents will doubtlessly consider it as the most important language for future studies or career. As noted by Mauranen (2009: 1-2), English is also very often used as the language of communication between speakers who do not speak each others languages. Therefore, it is quite commonly used in the area of tourism, and students travelling during a vacation are likely to use it to communicate with non-native English speakers in resorts, for example.

Swedish is not actually a foreign language in Finland, but the other official language. However, it is included as a foreign language for purposes of this study, because everyone has to study it in school, and very few Finns outside of the west coast speak it as their first language, or are bilingual. Furthermore, the respondents of the present study are all living in Central Finland, an environment where Swedish language is very rarely encountered outside of school. Also, Swedish as a mandatory language provokes strong reactions in Finland. Other studies that have studied attitudes and beliefs towards foreign languages have reported that learners feel more negatively towards Swedish than English (see for example, Kansikas 2002: 109-110, and Oksanen 2005: 47-53). Therefore, it is likely that there will be strong contrasts between Swedish and English is several issues.

6.2 Questionnaire as the method of data gathering

The method of data gathering chosen for the present study is a self-administered pencil-and-paper questionnaire in Finnish. Dörnyei (2003b: 8-9) classified the different type of data a questionnaire can yield as *factual* (for example, language learning history), *behavioural* (for example, language usage) and *attitudinal* (attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests and values). The questionnaire used in the present study seeks to gather data of all these types. The use of questionnaire was chosen as a method because of its efficiency. Large amounts of data can be gathered quickly and with minimal researcher effort, and questionnaires are also fast and easy for the for research subjects to answer. Data processing is also fast and easy when using questionnaires. (Dörnyei 2003b: 9-10). Questionnaires are particularly suited for quantitative research and statistical analysis. Open ended questionnaires are certainly possible as well. However, even the best constructed open-ended questionnaires always suffer from the problem of superficiality. The questions by nature have to be somewhat restrictive, and the answers tend to be too brief for detailed qualitative interpretation. Also, sometimes the answers are more difficult to categorize. (Dörneyi 2003b: 14-15, 47)

There are a number of other potential issues with questionnaires that should be considered when constructing one. The questions have to be phrased simply and straightforwardly enough so that everyone can understand them correctly. If there are any misunderstandings, or errors made while filling the questionnaire, the researcher is unable to correct them or provide help to the respondents. Other potential major problem is that respondents might be unmotivated to answer the questionnaire, or not take care while doing so. This can lead to insufficient amount of filled questionnaires or a large number of mistakes made while answering it. The questionnaire should not take too much effort to complete either. If a questionnaire is too long or monotonous, respondents may begin to answer inaccurately, or, in the case of open questionnaires, with too brief answers nearer the end of the questionnaire. (Dörneyi 2003b: 10-14)

Other type of issues relates to the reliability of the data gathered from the answers. Respondents might provide information that is if actually incorrect because they are deceiving themselves in regarding some issues (Dörnyei 2003b: 13). For example a

respondent might falsely report that English is their best language, when in fact they are more proficient in Swedish. For this reason, the questions in the questionnaire developed for the present are phrased to ask what they believe about themselves as users and learners of foreign language, instead of seeking to accurately measure proficiency. Other reliability issues with questionnaires are the tendency of people to agree with statements when they are unsure and the tendency to overgeneralize (Dörnyei 2003b:13). For this reason, the questions within the questionnaire used in the present study are intended to be explicit and involving, without simple yes or no answers.

6.3 Constructing the questionnaire

The questionnaire used in the present study was constructed using the guidelines and check-list as set by Dörnyei (2003b: 17-62, 132-134). The questionnaire is original in nature, constructed for the purposes of the present study. However, several previous questionnaires served as an inspiration and source material for the present questionnaire. The most important ones are the motivation questionnaire used by Dörnyei et al. in 2006 (reprinted in Dörnyei 2011: 272-274), the Attitude-Motivation Battery developed by Gardner in 1985, and The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) (Horvitz 1987: 119-129). The questionnaire went through several incarnations, receiving slight alterations after each draft. The time it takes to complete the questionnaire was tested with two anonymous participants, who also served as testers for the intelligibility of the instructions included in the questionnaire. These two participants are not included in the study proper, as they were outside the target group of the study.

The questionnaire is in Finnish, in order to avoid misunderstandings among the respondents, who are native Finnish speakers. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part contains 16 closed questionnaire items, which use statements rated with Likert-scales to evaluate the motivational and attitudinal factors regarding studying and using the English language. The second part contains 13 questions concerning the attitudes, beliefs and motivations of the respondents towards all different foreign languages they have studied, not merely English. In second part respondents answer questions by choosing the language, or languages that best fit to their experiences about language learning and use.

The 16 questions in the first part are be divided into four different categories. The questions are purposefully not grouped together by categories in the questionnaire, but instead follow a sequence where a question from the first category is followed by a question from the second, and then third, and then fourth, repeating the sequence four times.

The four categories are:

- 1) The questions concerning affective responses towards English language, and its usage (questions 1, 5, 9, and 13).
- 2) The questions which concern instrumental orientation or motivation (questions 2, 6, 10, and 14).
- 3) The questions which concern integrative orientation or motivation (questions 3, 7, 11, and 15).
- 4) The questions which relate to the self-evaluation of effort, achievement and progress respondents have about their study of English (questions 4, 8, 12, and 16).

It is important to note that some of the closed questionnaire items are constructed so that the respondents might give an answer that is very similar in the second part of the questionnaire. For example, there is the statement “I like studying English better than other foreign languages” and the question “Which foreign language do you like the most?”. This is intentional, and for the purposes of testing the reliability of the respondents' answers, and seeing if there are any contradictions to be found. Also, two of the questions in the fourth category were purposefully phrased negatively, while two were phrased positively, in order to stimulate respondents to think about their answers.

Of the 13 questions in the second part, 10 are paired questions (questions from 3 to 12), designed to allow the respondents to make personal value judgements about different foreign languages by contrasting languages with each other. Some of the questions gather factual information about learner experiences with language usage and learning (1, 11 and 12), while some relate to different motivational aspects (questions 3 and 4), and others to attitudes towards foreign languages (questions 2, 5 and 6). Others involve

respondent beliefs about language learning and themselves as a language learner (questions 7, 8, 9, and 10). The final question (13) is concerned with what languages the respondents think should be compulsory for everyone to study at school.

6.4 Participants and gathering the data

The data was gathered in autumn 2011. All of the respondents for the present study came from the same upper secondary school in Central Finland, so there are no differences in what kind of courses in what different foreign languages were offered to the respondents. Also, Central Finland can be considered neutral in regards to foreign languages, whereas coastal Finland, especially in the west, has a greater proportion of people whose first language is Swedish, and Finnish the second. Also, cities and schools close to the eastern border of Finland focus more on the Russian language, and a proportionally greater number of students study it than in the rest of Finland. All of the respondents were second-year students taking the same English course (A1-English, that is, English that has been studied since the third grade of comprehensive school) albeit with different teachers. The respondents were given the questionnaire during their lessons, but they answered it on their own time and were given a chance to return it at the beginning of their following two English lessons. The instructions for filling and returning the questionnaire were provided at time when they were handed out.

Approximately one hundred questionnaires were handed out, and 58 were returned. Of the respondents who returned the questionnaire, 32 were female, 18 were male, and 8 neglected to fill in their sex. Based on personal experience while distributing and collecting the questionnaires, it can be estimated that the majority of those who forgot to mark their sex were male, but as the respondents' sex cannot be deducted from their answers, those questionnaires without sex marked are handled as they are, and removed from calculations when looking into results from either sex separately.

7 LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF FINNISH UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The results from the questionnaire are presented below in tables. The results from the second part of the questionnaire are presented first because they provide more general information about the thoughts, experiences and expectations about language learning and use of different languages of Finnish upper secondary school students. The English-specific answers from the first part of the questionnaire are then presented. Comparisons and connections between the results from the two parts are mainly included in the next chapter.

The results are provided first from the whole body of respondents, and then divided by sex of the respondents. It is important to note that there might appear some discrepancies in the results divided by sex because a high number of respondents, 8 in all, almost 14 percent of the total, neglected to fill in their sex in the questionnaire sheet. While these 8 are included when looking at the results from all respondents, they are left out when looking at the results as divided by sex. The number of female respondents, 32, is significantly higher than the number of male respondents, 18, which means that some caution should be exercised when drawing potentially far-reaching conclusions about the differences between sexes.

There is an important factor to note about how the results are presented. The tables detail how many respondents answered in a certain way, and what percentage that was of the total number of respondents. However, some of the respondents have studied a different number of the different languages, which does affect the actual statistics in a not immediately obvious, yet in a significant manner. For example, 15 students out of the total 58, that is 25.9%, answered that Swedish was the most difficult language to learn in their opinion, while 17 (29.3%) answered that German was the most difficult. However, whereas all of the respondents had studied Swedish and English, only 21 had studied German. Therefore, of the actual students that had studied German, close to 81% thought that it was more difficult than any other language they had studied.

Furthermore, some respondents had misunderstood the expected way of answering to some of the items in the second part of the questionnaire. Some of the items have the

option of marking several languages as their answer indicated by the use of plural noun “languages” (for example, when asked what languages they have studied) but in most of them, the respondents are expected to mark one language, indicated by singular noun, best suited in their opinion. However, several respondents have at some items evidently been unable to decide which language best fits their experiences, and have thus marked two. Both choices are treated as equally valid and are both included. This is not a large problem, but one should be aware of it, for reasons of statistical accuracy, as it does increase the the number of responses in some items, and therefore also slightly alters the statistical information (the distribution of percentages of respondents, for example). The total amount of languages marked as answers is included in all of the tables in this chapter, but the percentage of language chosen as answer always refers to the number of students (58) who answered the questionnaire, not how many languages were actually marked by the respondents for the particular item.

As a result, while the tables provide the statistics of the answers, they have to be interpreted to arrive at the actual, genuine results. The results of each item from the second part of the questionnaire are discussed after every table in Chapter 7.1. While the results are presented item by item in Chapter 7.1, for the purposes of achieving a clearer picture of the different languages as a whole Chapter 7.2 contains the results organized language by language, with accompanying discussion and comparisons. The results from the first part of the questionnaire are organized together according to their different categories, as detailed in Chapter 6.3, unlike in the actually administered questionnaire where they were spread out, in order to prevent the respondents from forming presuppositions about how they were supposed to answer, and what the questionnaire implicitly measured. These results are found in tables together with discussion in 7.3.

7.1 Students and foreign languages: results from the second part of the questionnaire

7.1.1 Respondents and their foreign languages

For purposes of clarity, the information about different language combinations found within the respondents and the number of languages studied, is provided in Tables 1 and 2. After these two tables, the results from the items from the second part of the

questionnaire are presented and examined. The items are organized into two categories, the perceived usefulness and importance of different languages, and the views about different language based more on personal experiences, such as perceived difficulty of language. The items are therefore not in the same order as they were in the questionnaire. As mentioned in Chapter 6, most of the items of the second part of the questionnaire were developed to be paired together in order to better examine certain issues. Therefore, the analysis of the issue in question is done after both tables corresponding to the issue, with occasional references to results from previous tables in the interests of comparison and contrast. The paired questions are 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 7 and 8, 9 and 10, and 11 and 12.

Table 1. Different language combinations studied by the respondents

Foreign languages studied	<i>n</i>	%
English and Swedish	13	22.4%
English, Swedish, and German	15	25.9%
English, Swedish and French	13	22.4%
English, Swedish, and Russian	2	3.4%
English, Swedish and Spanish	2	3.4%
English, Swedish and Italian	1	1.7%
English, Swedish and Latin	2	3.4%
English, Swedish, German and French	2	3.4%
English, Swedish, German and Italian	1	1.7%
English, Swedish, German and Spanish	2	3.4%
English, Swedish, French and Spanish	1	1.7%
English, Swedish, Russian and Japanese	1	1.7%
English, Swedish, Spanish, and Italian	1	1.7%
English, Swedish, German, Russian and Spanish	1	1.7%
English, Swedish, French, Russian and Spanish	1	1.7%

As can be seen from Table 1, there was a large number of different combinations, the overwhelmingly most common being English, Swedish and one other language, for a total of three. The most common third languages were French and German, unsurprisingly, since they are the most commonly studied foreign languages besides English and Swedish, both within the present study and nationwide as well (Kumpulainen 2011: 55-58, 88-89). It is interesting to note that many students

answering the questionnaire have chosen quite surprising combinations of additional different foreign languages, such as Russian and Japanese, or Spanish and Italian. These choices speak of both interest in different foreign languages than the most immediately relevant ones because of geography and geopolitics, and the opportunities offered by the Finnish education system for students to broaden their language arsenal according to personal interests and preferences.

Table 2. Number of different languages studied by the respondents

Number of foreign languages studied	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
Two languages	13	22.4%	7	21.9%	3	16.7%
Three languages	35	60.3%	16	50%	15	83.3%
Four languages	8	13.8%	7	21.9%	0	0%
Five languages	2	3.4%	2	6.2%	0	0%

According to the report from Ministry of Education, in 2009 the number of foreign languages studied by upper secondary school students was divided as follows: 46.3% studied only two foreign languages, 40.1% studied three, 11% studied four, 2% studied five, and finally at least six foreign languages were studied by 0.4% (Kumpulainen 2011: 88). Compared to the nationwide statistics, the number of foreign languages studied by the respondents, included in Table 2, was proportionally noticeably higher, though none of the respondents in the present study studied as many languages as six. The most significant difference appears to be that the proportion of students studying three languages was much higher than national average, and the number of those studying only two was correspondingly lower.

It is important to note that while students' own interest in foreign languages (and their parents as well, in some cases) is an important factor, the situation is that some schools do not offer all foreign languages. Larger schools in larger cities have the advantage over smaller schools here, both with larger number of students, and thus teachers, and the option of having students from several students from nearby schools form shared groups for learning a language which does not have so many students interested in learning it that having classes in every school, or any of them in some cases, would be possible.

Table 3. Item 1: What foreign languages do you study, or have studied before?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	58	100%	32	100%	18	100%
Swedish	58	100%	32	100%	18	100%
German	21	36.2%	11	34.4%	9	50%
French	17	29.3%	10	31.3%	4	22.2%
Russian	5	8.6%	4	12.5%	0	0%
Spanish	8	13.8%	7	21.9%	1	5.6%
Italian	3	5.2%	3	9.4%	0	0%
Japanese	1	1.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Latin	2	3.4%	1	3.1%	1	5.6%

As can be seen in Table 3, the most common non-compulsory languages were German and French, with 21 respondents studying German, and 17 studying French. Spanish was studied by 8 respondents and Russian by 5 respondents. Italian, Latin and Japanese had 3, 2, and 1 respondents studying them, respectively. Interestingly, the order of languages by how many students study them remains the same both nationwide and in the present study, with German and French being most common and Italian and Latin being the rarest, with Spanish and Russian in the middle. Japanese was not listed in the official report. (Kumpulainen 2011: 89)

Table 4. Item 2: What foreign language, that you have not studied, would you like to know?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Swedish	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
German	7	12.1%	5	15.6%	0	0%
French	11	19%	10	31.3%	0	0%
Russian	12	20.7%	10	31.3%	2	11.1%
Spanish	30	51.7%	17	53.1%	8	44.4%
Italian	3	19.3%	3	9.4%	0	0%
Japanese	2	3.4%	1	3.1%	1	5.6%
Ancient Greek	1	1.7%	0	0%	1	5.6%
Estonian	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Latin	2	3.4%	2	6.3%	0	0%
Arabic	2	3.4%	0	0%	2	11.1%
Nothing	8	13.8%	1	3.1%	4	22.2%
Everything	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Total	80	100%	51	100%	18	100%

Table 4 contains information about the foreign languages respondents would like to learn. Spanish is the most popular among the respondents of the present study by a wide margin. Of 58 students, 30 would like to learn it. The number of students wishing to learn Spanish is therefore greater than the combined amount of students wishing to learn the two next most popular languages, French (11) and Russian (12). However, one should also take into account the results from item 1, as students who already know a language would not mark it for item 2. However, when looking into the combined amounts of students who know a language already and those wishing to learn it, Spanish is still the most popular at 38 students total, with German and French in a shared second place with 28 students both. 8 students did not wish to learn any more languages, two of them having studied only English and Swedish, while the other six already studied additional language. Besides Spanish, Russian, French and German, there did not emerge any great interest in other languages, with only from one to three students per language interested Italian, Japanese, ancient Greek, Latin, and Estonian.

When it comes to differences between sexes, female students are generally more

interested in learning new languages, with only one marking down “nothing”, or rather, failing to mark anything at all, nothing not being an included option in the questionnaire, and one writing on the margins of the questionnaire proclaiming her desire to learn every possible language. As for males, 4 students were uninterested in any language, marking nothing. Though the respondents were originally supposed to mark only one language, many marked several. After adding up the total number of languages marked, 32 females chose total of 50 languages, while 18 males marked only 14, giving a clear impression that, issues of proper questionnaire procedure aside, females were more interested in learning new languages.

However, interesting individual differences can be seen from the results. While males were in general less interested in more “common” languages such as German and French, they did have some students interested in very uncommon languages, namely ancient Greek and Arabic. Female students did not share this interest, but they did mark down Estonian and Latin, therefore sharing in highly individual interest in languages not usually studied in Finland, with only Estonian being even remotely represented in Finland in any mainstream fashion due the geographical proximity of Estonia.

7.1.2 Usefulness and importance of foreign languages

Table 5. Item 3: Which foreign language, that you have studied, do you believe to be the most useful for you in the future?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	58	100%	32	100%	18	100%
Swedish	7	12.1%	6	18.8%	1	5.6%
German	1	1.7%	0	0%	1	5.6%
French	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Russian	2	3.4%	2	6.3%	0	0%
Spanish	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Latin	1	1.7%	0	0%	1	5.6%
Total	70	100%	41	100%	21	100%

The item detailed in Table 5 was the one that apparently provoked most confusion among the respondents. The instructions were to mark only one language, but as can be

seen, twelve respondents marked an additional language with English. It is clear that English is seen as the most useful language by every student. This result is not surprising, and it is quite likely true for vast majority of the respondents. As can be seen from Table 5, several students marked other languages together with English. However, in this case more information can be inferred from these additional answers. Among the other languages marked Swedish scored 7 nominations out of the total 12. Interestingly enough, 6 of those who marked Swedish as the second most useful language for them in the future were female. Also, in total 9 out of 12 students marking additional languages were female.

Table 6. Item 4: Which foreign language, that you have studied, do you believe to be the least useful for you in the future?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Swedish	33	56.9%	16	50%	12	66.7%
German	6	10.3%	3	9.4%	3	16.7%
French	13	22.4%	7	21.9%	3	16.7%
Russian	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Spanish	3	5.2%	3	9.4%	0	0%
Italian	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Japanese	1	1.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Latin	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Total	59	100%	32	100%	18	100%

Swedish is seen as the least useful language by a very large group, with 33 students finding it the least useful. When comparing Table 6 to Table 3 earlier in the chapter, it also appears that of those respondents who have studied other languages besides English and Swedish, a significant portion do not see them as very useful to them. Of the 17 students who know French, 13 think it will be the least useful language for them in the future, while German was nominated by 6 respondents as the least useful. 3 out of 8 Spanish learners chose Spanish as the least useful. Russian, Italian, Japanese and Latin all received one nomination apiece. However, as the number of those studying the more uncommon languages is so small, too far-reaching conclusions should not be drawn. As Table 5 demonstrated, very few students marked languages other than English as the most useful, so it appears that future applicability is likely not a significant factor for

Finnish students when it comes to deciding whether to study additional foreign languages.

Table 7. Item 11: Which foreign language, that you have studied, you have used the most outside of school?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	56	96.6%	31	96.9%	17	94.4%
Swedish	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
German	1	1.7%	0	0%	1	5.6%
French	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
Russian	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Spanish	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Total	59	100%	33	100%	18	100%

Like predicted, English is overwhelmingly the most widely used language among the respondents, with only three individuals marking any other language as the one they have used most outside of school, as seen in Table 7. It is surprising that Spanish is alongside German and Russian in this matter, since one would expect opportunities of using it to be very rare in Finland. What languages respondents considered the least-used outside of school offered more variation and differences, as can be seen next, in Table 8.

Table 8. Item 12: Which foreign language, that you have studied, you have used the least outside of school?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Swedish	35	60.3%	17	53.1%	13	72.2%
German	6	10.3%	4	12.5%	2	11.1%
French	12	20.7%	7	21.9%	2	11.1%
Russian	3	5.2%	2	6.3%	0	0%
Spanish	4	6.9%	3	9.4%	1	5.6%
Italian	2	3.4%	2	6.3%	0	0%
Total	62	100%	35	100%	18	100%

As can be seen from Table 8, no-one marked English as the language they have used

least, while Swedish emerges as the least used language going by the number of nominations. What is interesting is that, as noted in Table 1, only 13 respondents study only English and Swedish, but 35 reported using Swedish the least. Therefore, among those studying other languages almost half, 22 out of 45, have had less use for the other national language of Finland than any other language they study. However, considering the number of respondents studying them, greater proportion of French-learners, 12 out of 17 (70.6%), than Swedish-learners considered the language in question least used. Italian also has a greater proportion of nominations than Swedish, with two thirds, but as there are only three respondents studying it, the percentage amounts are prone to large variations. 4 respondents, half of those studying it, marked Spanish as the least used language. German received surprisingly few nominations, with 6 out of 21, (28.6%) choosing it. The Latin and Japanese languages received no nominations, which is interesting, since both Latin learners studied no other languages besides English and Swedish. Therefore, two respondents had less use for Swedish than a language considered dead, mainly known only by scholars.

Table 9. Item 13: What foreign languages you think should be compulsory for everyone to learn at school?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	53	91.4%	30	93.8%	15	83.3%
English + one freely chosen	3	5.2%	2	6.3%	1	5.6%
Swedish	21	36.2%	14	43.8%	3	16.7%
German	2	3.4%	2	6.3%	0	0%
French	2	3.4%	2	6.3%	0	0%
Russian	2	3.4%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Spanish	2	3.4%	0	0%	2	11.1%
None	2	3.4%	0	0%	2	11.1%
Total	87	100%	51	100%	23	100%

As can be seen from Table 9, English maintains its perceived importance, with only two respondents neglecting to mark it as a language that everyone should study. Incidentally those two also thought that no language should be compulsory to study. Slightly over the third of respondents, 21, also marked Swedish, giving an impression that the respondents are not very keen on the other national language of Finland. German,

French, Russian and Spanish scored two marks each, while three respondents were of the opinion that everyone should study one freely chose additional language besides English. No respondents opined that everyone should study one additional language besides English and Swedish.

The number of different foreign languages to be studied as marked by the respondents is found in Table 10 on the next page. When it comes to the number of languages everyone should study, the majority of the respondents, 30 in all, were of the opinion that one language is enough. All of those in favour of only one language chose English. 23 respondents thought everyone should learn two languages, and three, four, and five compulsory languages scored one mark each. Like mentioned before, two respondents thought that no language should be compulsory. More female respondents were in favour of more compulsory languages, with one and two compulsory languages both receiving 15 marks, and four and five languages both one. As for males, both of the respondents wanting no compulsory languages were male, and total two thirds, 12 out of 18, of male respondents only marked one language that they thought should be compulsory, with two compulsory languages marked by only three, and three languages marked by only one male respondent.

It should be noted that how many languages should be studied according to the respondents has been extrapolated from their answers regarding what languages should be compulsory for everyone. The respondents were not explicitly asked how many languages everyone should study, and it is likely that the answers might very well be different for that question. The questionnaire in the present study did not include option entitled “freely chosen additional language/s”, but “other language, what”, and it should not be expected to have occurred for everyone to mark their opinion regarding additional freely chosen languages there.

Table 10. Number of foreign languages that should be studied, based on the amount listed by respondents

Number of foreign languages to be studied	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
Zero languages	2	3.4%	0	0%	2	11.1%
One language	30	51.7%	15	46.9%	12	66.7%
Two languages	23	39.7%	15	46.9%	3	16.7%
Three languages	1	1.7%	0	0%	1	5.6%
Four languages	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Five languages	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%

7.1.3 Opinions, attitudes, and beliefs about foreign languages

Table 11. Item 5: Which foreign language, that you have studied, do you like the most?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	43	74.1%	23	71.9%	16	88.9%
Swedish	11	19%	8	25%	0	0%
German	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
French	3	5.2%	3	9.4%	0	0%
Russian	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
Spanish	3	5.2%	2	6.3%	1	5.6%
Latin	1	1.7%	0	0	1	5.6%
Undecided	1	1.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	63	100%	37	100%	18	100%

Continuing in a predictable fashion in Table 11, English was considered as the most well-liked by a overwhelming majority of the respondents, with 43 students preferring it. Swedish was preferred by only 11 students, though it, like English, was studied by every respondent. Very few students preferred languages other than English and Swedish, with notably zero students preferring Russian, though Spanish again shows signs of popularity, with 3 students out of the 8 who have studied it preferring it to other languages. As to the two most commonly studied additional languages, French was liked better than German, with 3 respondents liking it compared to the only one respondent preferring German. More interesting results about the respondents

preferences were obtained from the paired question of item 6, as presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Item 6: Which foreign language, that you have studied, you like the least?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	6	10.3%	4	12.5%	0	0%
Swedish	25	43.1%	11	34.4%	12	66.7%
German	14	24.1%	8	25%	5	27.8%
French	6	10.3%	5	15.6%	1	5.6%
Russian	4	10.3%	3	9.4%	0	0%
Spanish	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Undecided	3	5.2 %	1	3.1%	0	0%
Total	58	100%	32	100%	18	100%

When examining the total number of respondents choosing a least-liked language as presented in Table 12, Swedish is the first, with 25 respondents out of 58 (43.1%), with German the second with 14, and English and French in the shared third place with 6 respondents. Russian was liked least by 4 students, with one respondent marking nothing as their least-liked language. However, when examined what proportion of respondents studying a language reported it as the language they like the least, Swedish is eclipsed by German and Russian both, with 14 out of 21 (66.7%) and 4 out of 5 (80%) liking the language least, respectively, though the sample size for Russian learners is too small to be entirely reliable in comparisons. French also approaches Swedish-levels of dislike, with 6 out of 17 (35.3%) marking it as the language they like the least. 3 students did not choose a least-liked language, with one writing a note about how she likes all languages, and two merely leaving the item blank. Interestingly, one of the blank answers belonged to the person who also did not mark any language for item 5, suggesting ambivalence and lack of interest about language studying in general.

Table 13. Item 7: Of the foreign languages that you have studied, which do you believe yourself to be best at?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	54	93.1%	30	93.8%	16	88.9%
Swedish	3	5.2%	2	6.3%	1	5.6%
German	1	1.7%	0	0%	1	5.6%
French	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Russian	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Spanish	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	59	-	33	-	18	100%

As can be seen from Table 13 above, nearly every respondent (54 out of 58) chose English as their best language, which is unsurprising since every respondent has been studying it from the third grade of comprehensive school. Swedish was chosen by 3, and German by only one, as was Russian. There do not appear to be significant differences between sexes in this issue, with English being so overwhelmingly dominant, and other languages represented only on individual basis.

Table 14. Item 8: Of the foreign languages that you have studied, which do you believe yourself to be weakest at?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	2	3.4%	1	3.1%	1	5.6%
Swedish	19	32.8%	11	34.4%	5	27.8%
German	16	27.6%	7	21.9%	8	44.4%
French	14	24.1%	8	25%	3	16.7%
Russian	2	3.4%	2	6.3%	0	0%
Spanish	3	5.2%	2	6.3%	1	5.6%
Italian	2	3.4%	2	6.3%	0	0%
Japanese	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Latin	1	1.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	60	-	34	-	18	100%

The respondents self-evaluation of their worst language provides more interesting information in Table 14 above. Confirming the strength of English as demonstrated in Table 13, only 2 respondents listed it as their weakest language. Though it initially

appears that Swedish is the weakest language in respondents' experiences, both German and French leave it behind when considering the number of students knowing the languages. 14 out of 17, over 80% French learners consider it as their weakest language, while 17 out of 21, over 75% feel the same about German. Unsurprisingly, when it comes to the Russian, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Latin languages, they have so few learners that the proportion of respondents choosing them as their worst language is disproportionately large.

Table 15. Item 9: Which foreign language, that you have studied, you believe to be the easiest one to learn?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	41	70.7%	20	62.5%	14	77.8%
Swedish	15	25.9%	12	37.5%	2	11.1%
German	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
French	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Russian	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Spanish	1	1.7%	0	0%	1	5.6%
Undecided	0	0%	0	0	1	5.6%
Total	59	-	34	-	18	100%

As presented in Table 15, English is clearly seen as the easiest language, with almost three times as many respondents marking it than the next most often chosen language, Swedish. Greater proportion of male learners found English easy than female, whereas larger proportion of female respondents found Swedish easier than male. German, French and surprisingly, Spanish as well had each one respondent choosing them as the easiest language. One respondent neglected to choose a language for this question, but he did write in the margins about not finding any language easy.

Table 16. Item 10: Which foreign language, that you have studied, you believe to be the most difficult one to learn?

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
English	7	12.1%	4	12.5%	2	11.1%
Swedish	15	25.9%	7	21.9%	6	33.3%
German	17	29.3%	9	28.1%	7	38.9%
French	14	24.1%	8	25%	3	16.7%
Russian	4	6.9%	3	9.4%	0	0%
Spanish	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Italian	1	1.7%	1	3.1%	0	0%
Latin	2	3.4%	1	3.1%	1	5.6%
Total	60	100%	33	100%	19	100%

Table 16 contains respondents answers regarding what language they experience as the most difficult one. 7 respondents considered English to be the most difficult language to learn. Only one of them had studied any other languages besides English or Swedish. The same number of respondents found Swedish the most difficult language than those who found it easiest, 15. German was considered the most difficult language by the largest number of students 17, which is proportionally even more significant since only 21 students have studied it. French likewise was proportionally well-represented, with 14 out of 17 students finding it the most difficult. 80% of all Russian learners, 4, found it the most difficult, one of the three of Italian learners felt it was the most difficult, while both respondents who knew Latin thought it the most difficult. While a great many languages have been studied by many respondents, the respondents' self-evaluation ranks their proficiency in them behind their skills in the most widely studied languages, Swedish and particularly English.

7.2 Respondents' views of individual languages: summaries

For purposes of clarity and ease of analysis, information about respondents' thoughts, experiences, attitudes and beliefs is collected in tables and summaries organized by different languages below. English and Swedish are presented first, as they are have greatest amount of respondents studying them, and as English is also the sole focus of the first part of the questionnaire, as detailed and analyzed in 7.3. German and French,

as the next most studied languages are next. Spanish, the language which most respondents wished they could learn is discussed next. Russian is examined briefly last. The languages with only few respondents studying them are not summarized in separate tables, because with maximum of three respondents studying them, there really is no basis to examine them statistically. Note that the percentile scores in the tables below refer to the number of respondents studying each language in question, unlike in the tables above, where it referred to the total number of the respondents in present study. The exception is the item “respondents wishing to study the language, where the percentile scores refer to the number of students wishing to study it out of the total number of respondents minus the ones already studying it. This item is not included in Tables 17 and 18, because every respondent already studies English and Swedish.

English

Table 17. Respondents' views of English

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
Respondents studying the language	58	100%	32	100%	18	100%
Most useful in the future	58	100%	32	100%	18	100%
Least useful in the future	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Most liked	43	74.1%	23	71.9%	16	88.9%
Most disliked	6	10.2%	4	12.5%	0	0%
Best at	54	93.1%	30	93.8%	16	88.9%
Weakest at	2	3.4%	1	3.1%	1	5.6%
Easiest to learn	41	70.7%	20	62.5%	14	77.8%
Hardest to learn	7	12.1%	4	12.5%	2	11.1%
Most used	56	96.6%	31	96.9%	17	94.4%
Least used	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

English, the most widely studied language in Finland, and the current global *lingua franca* was, unsurprisingly, very highly rated and evaluated by the respondents. Everyone agreed on it being the most useful language for their future, and almost every respondent already used it more than any other language outside of school. No respondents thought that English would be least useful for their future. While almost

every respondent considered it their best language, fewer (41) respondents thought it was the easiest, and likewise fewer respondents (43) liked it better than other languages. This is particularly evident with female respondents, where there are larger differences between the number of respondents considering English their best language (30), and the number considering it easiest (20) and liking it best (23). For their part, greater proportion of male respondents found English easier (14) and liked it more (16), while a smaller proportion of them considered themselves best at English (16) than female respondents. Preliminary conclusions suggest that it is possible that female learners are more aware of the role of their own conscious effort, while male learners have slightly more positive evaluative attitudes reinforcing their study of English, leading to success, which more respondents attribute to finding the language “easy”. Interestingly enough, less respondents considered English as their worst language than those who thought it was the most difficult, suggesting respondents are capable of recognizing their own contributions to language learning exceeding the importance of factors outside of their control, ie. perceived difficulty of language. It also speaks well of learner self-image, that they feel that despite the difficulty of language learning they have persevered and succeeded.

Swedish

Table 18. Respondents' views of Swedish

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
Respondents studying the language	58	100%	32	100%	18	100%
Most useful in the future	7	12.1%	6	18.8%	1	55.6%
Least useful in the future	33	56.9%	16	50%	12	66.7%
Most liked	11	19%	8	25%	0	0%
Most disliked	25	43.1%	11	34.4%	12	66.7%
Best at	3	5.2%	2	6.3%	1	5.6%
Weakest at	19	32.8%	11	34.4%	5	27.8%
Easiest to learn	15	25.9%	12	37.5%	2	11.1%
Hardest to learn	15	25.9%	7	21.9%	6	33.3%
Most used	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Least used	35	60.3%	17	53.1%	13	72.2%

Only 7 respondents considered Swedish as the most useful language for their future, but it is still the largest number of any language besides English, and therefore, not as insignificant amount as might first appear. Additionally, greater proportion of respondents (12.1%) studying it considered to be most useful in future than any other language besides English, with the exception of Russian, where the very small size of the sample, and the distinct possibility mentioned earlier that at least some of the Russian speaking respondents might speak at it at home makes it possible to discount it for this occasion. As a counterpoint however, 33 respondents, over half the respondents thought that Swedish would be the least useful language for their future, and like mentioned before, in Table 15, only 21 respondents thought that Swedish, the other official language of Finland, should be compulsory to study in school. Furthermore, no respondents marked Swedish as their most used language outside of school, while 35 marked it as the least used. This is notable, as only 13 of the 58 respondents studied only English and Swedish, leaving 22 respondents who had less use for Swedish than any other language they might have studied.

It is interesting to note that the number of respondents, 15, who considered Swedish as the easiest language they have studied is much greater than the number who thought it was their best language (3), suggesting self-awareness about the role motivation and directed effort play in mastering a language. In contrast to English, more students (19) reported Swedish as their worst language than those who thought it the most difficult language they have studied (15). When closely examining the results, 12 of 15 who thought Swedish was the most difficult also ranked it as their worst language. So 12 of the 19 who thought Swedish was their weakest language also thought that Swedish was the most difficult language to learn. Taken all together, these facts suggest that the a number of respondents simultaneously could recognize that effort and motivation are more important in language learning success, than any perceived “easiness of language”, but not an insignificant number of those who experience difficulties in learning language do attribute their lack of success to some factor outside of their control, in this case, perceived difficulty. To summarize, success is more likely to be seen as the results of learner's own actions, while lack of it is more likely to be seen not as such. According to the attribution theory summarized in Chapter 2, attributing lack of success to factors irrelevant of learners' own effort is not likely to lead to positive

motivational attitudes.

25 respondents, 43.1% of the whole, and more than those who thought Swedish was hardest to learn (15), and their worst language (19), but less than those who considered it to be least useful in future (33), disliked Swedish the most. The absolute number of respondents disliking Swedish the most is greater than any other language within the present study, but measured proportionally, larger percentage of respondents studying them disliked Russian (80%) and German (66.7%) more than Swedish. It is clear that affective and evaluative learner attitudes towards different languages are not strictly in accord with notions of languages future usefulness, perceived difficulty of language or even learners' own evaluation of their success as a student of the language. This was to be expected, as attitudes, particularly their formation are a very complex matter, and like mentioned earlier, constructs such as attitude or motivation can only be measured indirectly. It is however interesting to note that quite many respondent have negative feelings towards Swedish quite likely born from issues beyond learning the language. This corresponds quite neatly to the larger debate about the role of Swedish as the second official language of Finland, and the only language that is compulsory, besides Finnish, for every student to learn.

German

Table 19. Respondents' views of German

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
Respondents studying the language	21	100%	11	100%	9	100%
Respondents wishing to study the language	7 (/37)	18.9%	5 (/32)	23.8%	0	0
Most useful in the future	1	4.8%	0	0%	1	11.1%
Least useful in the future	6	28.6%	3	27.3%	3	33.3%
Most liked	1	4.8%	1	9.1%	0	0%
Most disliked	14	66.7%	8	72.7%	5	55.6%
Best at	1	4.8%	0	0%	1	11.1%
Weakest at	16	76.2%	7	63.6%	8	88.9%
Easiest to learn	1	4.8%	1	9.1%	0	0%
Hardest to learn	17	81%	9	81.8%	7	77.8%
Most used	1	4.8%	0	0%	1	11.1%
Least used	6	28.6%	4	36.4%	2	22.2%

German was language with most respondents studying it, besides English and Swedish, with 21 respondents studying it, and further 7 wishing to study it. Interestingly, only one respondent thought that it would be the most useful language in their future, only one respondent liked it best, only one respondent thought she was best at it, only one respondent thought it the easiest language to learn and only one respondent had used it the most. In contrast 14 respondents, two thirds of the respondents studying German, disliked it the most, 16 respondents, three quarters of them all, thought it was their worst language, and 17, four fifths of the respondents, thought it was the hardest language they had studied. Considering these negative views of German, it is somewhat surprising that only 6, about a quarter of the respondents studying German, considered it to be least useful for their future, and likewise 6 respondents reported having used German outside of school the least.

German appears therefore be a not very well regarded language, being considered hard, students admitting having problems with it, and disliking it. However, at the same time, the respondents have had use for the language outside of school, and while they do not

believe it to be the most useful language for them in the future, not many think it will be the least useful, faring better than Swedish or Spanish, and much better than French, the other traditional additional language studied by Finns. German is therefore an interesting case. There is a connection between respondents finding it hard and viewing themselves as not good at it, but which is the cause and which the effect remains a mystery. Whether the dislike for German stems from its perceived difficulty, or frustration about seeing themselves as bad at it, or both, is another interesting issue to be researched in the future. In an interesting contrast to Swedish, more students found German the hardest language to learn than who disliked it the most, unlike Swedish, where it was the opposite. Perhaps German is seen by the respondents as a difficult language, but the difficulty is acceptable because it is always an optional language. Furthermore, as it fared quite well in the items measuring usefulness, it is possible that the respondents see it as a language which can be used for concrete and utilitarian purposes such as travelling, future studies, or career, as Germany is a significant economic and political player in Europe, and German is widely spoken in Central Europe.

French

Table 20. Respondents' views of French

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
Respondents studying the language	17	100%	10	100%	4	100%
Respondents wishing to study the language	11 (/41)	26.8%	10 (/22)	45.5%	0	0%
Most useful in the future	1	5.9%	1	10%	0	0%
Least useful in the future	13	76.5%	7	70%	3	75%
Most liked	3	17.6%	3	30%	0	0%
Most disliked	6	35.3%	5	50%	1	25%
Best at	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Weakest at	14	82.4%	8	80%	3	75%
Easiest to learn	1	5.9%	1	10%	0	0%
Hardest to learn	14	82.4%	8	80%	3	75%
Most used	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Least used	12	70.6%	7	70%	2	50%

As can be seen from Table 20, French had less respondents studying it, 17, than German, but more respondents, 11, wished they knew French than German. Just like with German, only one respondent thought that French would be the most useful language in their future, but more respondents, 13, thought that French would be the least useful language for their future. This is more than three quarters of the respondents studying French, a greater proportion than with any other language. Three respondents liked French best, while 6 liked it the least, a better result than with German. No respondent considered themselves best at French. However, 14 respondents, over four fifths of the French-learners, thought French was their worst language, a number exceeded only by German and Swedish, though due less respondents overall studying French, the proportion of French-learners who think it is their worst language is greater than with any other language. Only one student thought French was the easiest language to learn, while 14 thought it was for them the hardest language. Again, though more respondents in total marked German and Swedish, the proportion of respondents, 82.4%, finding French most difficult is slightly greater than with German and much greater than with Swedish. No respondents marked French as their most used language

outside school, and 12 marked it as the least used language. Only Swedish was nominated by more students, and proportionally measured, by far the greatest amount of French-learners, 70.6% of the total, marked it as the least used outside of school.

When comparing French and German, French emerges the one liked better, even though respondents have worse image of its perceived difficulty and their own abilities with it. French is also the language seen as least useful for respondents' future, and apparently sees little use beyond classroom. This is interesting, as French or German are the “traditional” additional languages studied by greatest number of Finns in school (Kumpulainen 2011). Apparently studying French is more pleasant than German, but despite its perceived difficulty, German is the language that is seen as more relevant for respondents, for reasons mentioned earlier when discussing the results pertaining to German. What is interesting is that French fares worse than Swedish in every measure except in the amount of respondents most disliking it, and zero respondents finding either language their most used outside of school.

Spanish

Table 21. Respondents' views of Spanish

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
Respondents studying the language	8	100%	7	100%	1	100%
Respondents wishing to study the language	30 (/50)	60%	17 (/25)	68%	8 (/18)	44.4%
Most useful in the future	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Least useful in the future	3	37.5%	3	42.9%	0	0%
Most liked	3	37.5%	2	28.6%	1	100%
Most disliked	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Best at	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Weakest at	3	37.5%	2	28.6%	1	100%
Easiest to learn	1	12.5%	0	0%	1	100%
Hardest to learn	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Most used	1	12.5%	1	14.3%	0	0%
Least used	4	50%	3	42.9%	1	100%

The results contained in Table 21 give an impression that Spanish appears to be a somewhat fashionable language at the moment. It had 8 respondents studying it and 30 respondents, 60% of the remaining respondents, who would like to know it. Spanish was also the language greatest amount of respondents would like to learn in Kansikas' 2002 study (Kansikas 2002: 63-64). Female respondents were more interested in Spanish, with 7 studying it as compared to only one male, and larger number and proportion wishing to study it. It is no surprise that no respondents marked it as the most useful for their future, but only 3 of 8 respondents thought it would be the least useful, which is a better result than with Swedish or French. Three respondents liked Spanish best, and no respondent liked it the least. Judging by these results, German, French, Russian and Swedish all trail behind Spanish when examining how many respondents reported them as the most and least liked respectively. No respondents thought Spanish was their best language, and 3 thought it was their worst language. German and French both had far more respondents marking them as their worst languages, though Swedish fared slightly better than Spanish. Only one respondent marked Spanish as easiest language to learn, but curiously, no-one marked Spanish as the most difficult. Surprisingly, one respondent marked Spanish as the language she uses most outside of school. Four, half of the respondents studying Spanish, marked it as the least used, which is larger proportion than with English and German, but smaller than with French, Russian, and Swedish.

It should be noted that only eight respondent studied Spanish, so that the statistical results are prone to wild variance, as even one respondent swings the results by 12.5%, compared to 1.7% as is the case with the total sample. However, it is clear that surprisingly many respondents are interested in Spanish, and those studying it apparently are well-motivated, judging by how no-one disliked it the most, or thought that it was hard to learn. Apparently, these respondents have also found some use for the language. This is somewhat puzzling because Finland and Spain have next to nothing in common culturally, economically, historically or socially. They are both in the European Union, but that is the only easily observed similarity. However, Spanish is also spoken widely in Southern and Central America. One possible explanation is that Spanish has come to fashion as result of increasing globalization and growing interest in foreign cultures and travel, both independently as “backpackers” or tourists. Spanish is not the focus of the present study, and as the reasons cannot be deciphered from the

questionnaire used, such speculation as to how the results came to be is best left elsewhere.

Russian

Table 22. Respondents' views of Russian

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i> = female	% female	<i>n</i> = male	% male
Respondents studying the language	5	100%	4	100%	0	0%
Respondents wishing to study the language	12 (/53)	22.6%	10 (/28)	35.7%	2 (/58)	3.4%
Most useful in the future	2	40%	2	50%	0	0%
Least useful in the future	1	20%	1	25%	0	0%
Most liked	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Most disliked	4	80%	3	75%	0	0%
Best at	1	20%	1	25%	0	0%
Weakest at	2	40%	2	50%	0	0%
Easiest to learn	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Hardest to learn	4	80%	3	75%	0	0%
Most used	1	20%	1	25%	0	0%
Least used	3	60%	2	50%	0	0%

As only 5 respondents studied Russian, the results found in Table 22 should not be used to draw far-reaching conclusions, as the sample is simply too small to reliably support hypotheses. Comparisons to other languages are also liable to suffer the reliability problem. Five respondents studied Russian, four female, and one who failed to mark his or her sex. Twelve more respondents were interested in learning Russian, more respondents than with any other language than Spanish. Of the five already studying it, 2 thought it would be the most useful for their future, and one thought it would be the least useful. Nobody liked it best, and 4 liked it the least. One respondent thought it was their best language, while two thought it was their worst. Nobody thought it was the easiest to learn, and 4 respondents again thought it was hardest to learn. One respondent had used it the most outside of school, and three had used it the least.

Though the sample is too small to support strong conclusions, it appears that Russian is

not well liked by those who study it, being difficult to learn, with not much practical use outside of school. Still, 12 respondents wished they knew it, which suggests that due the proximity and importance of Russia, some respondents feel that knowing the language could be quite useful in the future.

7.3 Students and motivation for learning English: results from the first part of the questionnaire

Though the second part of questionnaire collected information about all of the languages the respondents study, the first part containing 20 statements measured with Likert-scales appropriately focused solely in English, as the present study falls within the purview of English-language studies. More general information about respondents answers regarding English presented previously in this chapter provide comparison to the more specific and focused information sought via the statements from the questionnaire. Like mentioned earlier, the different items are organized based on their categories, not on the order they appeared on the questionnaire. Every category has two tables with the first one presenting the mean scores of each item, and the second one reporting the number of different answers for each item: “strongly agree” and “agree” together, “undecided” by itself, and “disagree” and “strongly disagree” together.

The items from the second part of the questionnaire were for the most part not closely linked to specific theoretical concepts. All of them could be considered to concern attitudes, beliefs, and motivation in a loose fashion, leaving more room for individual interpretation. The items in the part presented and analyzed below are directly linked to motivational factors, though it should be noted again like earlier in the present study that separating motivation from attitudes and beliefs is at times problematic and counterproductive, as motivational factors, like all learner individual differences do not exist in a vacuum but are interconnected.

Affective Responses

As can be seen from Tables 23 and 24 below, the respondents appear highly aware of the the importance of English, with very high scores (4.81) assigned to desire learning English even if it was not compulsory. However, it appears that reasons for this are not

decisively affective in nature, as the rest of the actual affective items have received far lower scores, with the item concerning actually liking studying English receiving the lowest mean score of the lot (3.22) while liking studying English better than other languages slightly better with mean score of 3.76. Around a fifth of the respondents disagreed with the statement about learning English at school. However, it should be remembered that not liking something is not exactly same as actively disliking or detesting something. The number of students agreeing with the statement of liking English better than other languages (36) is actually smaller than number who marked it as their favourite language in the second part of the questionnaire (43) as can be seen from tables and previously on this chapter. The item about liking using English outside of school received slightly higher mean score still, 3.98, though it should be noted that this item could very well be considered an instrumental item, if focusing on the “using English”-part instead of the “outside of formal, compulsory language classroom”-aspect of it. The only at all notable difference between sexes in these items is that male respondents appear to like studying English better than other languages more than female respondents.

When examining the items concerning instrumental motivation from Table 25 later, it can be seen that they received higher ratings than the affective items from Table 23. Therefore, it appears that the high agreement with the statement about wanting to learn English is due recognizing the importance of English in modern world, not so much due any particular affection towards it. This conclusion is reinforced by the results from the second part of the questionnaire, as can be seen earlier in this chapter, from Table 17, for example.

Table 23. Items concerning affective responses towards English – mean scores

Question	Mean	Mean (Female)	Mean (Male)
I would like to study English, even if it wasn't compulsory for me to study it at school.	4.81	4.91	4.67
I like studying English better than other foreign languages.	3.76	3.63	4.22
I like studying English at school.	3.22	3.55	3.44
I like using English outside of school (for example, speaking and writing).	3.98	3.94	4.06

Table 24. Respondents' agreement/disagreement with affective items

Question	“Agree”- answers	“Undecided” - answers	“Disagree”- answers
I would like to study English, even if it wasn't compulsory for me to study it at school.	56 / 96.6%	1 / 1.7%	1 / 1.7%
I like studying English better than other foreign languages.	36 / 62.1%	9 / 15.5%	13 / 22.4%
I like studying English at school.	34 / 58.6%	13 / 22.4%	11 / 19%
I like using English outside of school (for example, speaking and writing).	45 / 77.6%	5 / 8.6%	8 / 13.8%

Instrumental Motivation

The items concerning the use of English as an instrument for other purposes, be it labeled either as extrinsic motivation, instrumental orientation, or set goals for temporally categorized motivational process, received, uniformly high scores from both sexes, as detailed in Table 25 below. Whether it was for studies, employment or entertainment purposes, all of the mean scores were in them 4.20 – 4.30 range. The item proclaiming English's role as the most important international language received even higher mean score of 4.64. Combined with the findings earlier in this chapter, it is highly apparent that respondents are very aware of the role and importance of languages, especially English, beyond their most immediate school classroom context. No real differences between sexes were found in regards there items, though males received slightly smaller mean scores in the first three items, these differences are small enough to ignored, considering the very small number of male respondents, and the size of the sample in general.

The common problem with standard Likert-scales, namely that it is possible for large numbers of respondents to mark “undecided” for everything, is a factor that should be considered during the analysis. Not only it is significant when calculating the mean scores and assigning analysis and evaluation for them, but the number of respondents being undecided on specific items or statements can also provide a view point to those issues. For example, as can be seen from Table 26, more respondents, 9, were undecided about the importance for their future prospects in the form of employment or

further education than about having use for English for purposes of personal entertainment or the earlier mentioned, universally agreed upon global importance of English. However, 9 out of 58 respondents is not a very large proportion, and, as we can see, over 80% of the respondents did agree about the role English will presumably play in their future, suggesting that they have some idea about their future after they complete their secondary education, and also further reinforcing the main conclusion that the respondents are very aware of the importance of foreign languages in future, English in particular.

Table 25. Items concerning instrumental motivation towards English – mean scores

Question	Mean	Mean (Female)	Mean (Male)
Knowing English is important for me because of future studies.	4.22	4.38	4.17
Knowing English is important for me because of future employment prospects or career.	4.29	4.34	4.28
Knowing English is important to me for enjoying English-language entertainment (movies, music, literature, games).	4.22	4.19	4.17
English is the most important international language.	4.64	4.56	4.72

Table 26. Respondents' agreement/disagreement with instrumental items

Question	“Agree”- answers	“Undecided” - answers	“Disagree”- answers
Knowing English is important for me because of future studies.	48 / 82.8%	9 / 15.5%	1 / 1.7%
Knowing English is important for me because of future employment prospects or career.	47 / 81%	9 / 15.5%	2 / 3.4%
Knowing English is important to me for enjoying English-language entertainment (movies, music, literature, games).	50 / 86.2%	4 / 6.9%	4 / 6.9%
English is the most important international language.	55 / 94.8%	3 / 5.2%	0 / 0%

Integrative Motivation

The items traditionally seen as concerning integrative orientation/motivation offered

interesting divide, as can clearly be observed from Table 27 below. The first items concerning speaking English well in order to use it in communication with foreigners and using it for communication while traveling, received high scores, with total mean scores of 4.71 and 4.47 respectively, with female respondents having notably higher scores in both (4.91 and 4.72) than male respondents (4.39 and 4.06). However, the next items, about knowing English for the sake of knowing as many languages as possible, and using English as a tool for learning more about different countries and cultures received far lower mean scores, only 3.19 and 3.22, with male respondents again having lower mean scores, especially in regards to learning about cultures, with only 2.83 compared to female respondents' 3.56. Though the first items were categorized as integrative in earlier studies and test batteries, it can be argued that they can also be interpreted as instrumental, learning English for a specific purposes, in this case communication and interaction with users of English. For the present study, the items which concern using language for specific purposes examined earlier have all received high scores, just like the first items from this section of the questionnaire. Likewise, items concerning affective, evaluative responses towards English language itself have received lower scores throughout the questionnaire, though not so low as to be interpreted as signs of negative attitudes, by any means. This again lends weight to the conclusion that the respondents' attitudes and motivations towards English have more to do with the overwhelming importance on English in the world than positive feelings and experiences about learning and using the language.

Table 27. Items concerning integrative motivation towards English – mean scores

Question	Mean	Mean (Female)	Mean (Male)
I would like to speak English well, so that I could use it to communicate with foreigners.	4.71	4.91	4.39
I would like to speak English well, so that I could travel a lot, and use it while traveling.	4.47	4.72	4.06
I would like to know English well, because I would like to know as many languages as possible.	3.19	3.28	3.11
I would like to speak English well, so that I could learn more about different English-speaking countries and their culture.	3.22	3.56	2.83

Table 28. Respondents' agreement/disagreement with integrative items

Question	“Agree”- answers	“Undecided” - answers	“Disagree”- answers
I would like to speak English well, so that I could use it to communicate with foreigners.	56 / 96.6%	1 / 1.7%	1 / 1.7%
I would like to speak English well, so that I could travel a lot, and use it while traveling.	50 / 86.2%	6 / 10.3%	2 / 3.4%
I would like to know English well, because I would like to know as many languages as possible.	23 / 39.7%	16 / 27.6%	19 / 32.2%
I would like to speak English well, so that I could learn more about different English-speaking countries and their culture.	25 / 43.1%	16 / 27.6%	17 / 29.3%

Learner self-image and self-evaluation

The single item that respondents' disagreed with most in the whole questionnaire was the statement about not working hard enough to learn English, with a mean score of only 2.59, as can be seen from Table 29 below. It appears that female respondents were more likely to feel so, or admit it at least, with their mean score being 2.72 compared to male respondents' 2.22. When questioned about not always feeling motivated, more students (31) agreed than were undecided (8) or disagreed (19), though they most often marked “agree” instead of “strongly agree”, leading to relatively low mean score of 3.22 in total. So in general, majority of students feel that they work hard enough to learn English, but occasionally have trouble motivating themselves, which ties quite believably to both attribution theory in that temporary setbacks are seen as the result of temporary and repairable personal shortcomings, and the process-model theory, when considering the previous answers, which show that the respondents clearly see English as means to an end, and have in that way set goals for themselves.

The respondents feel satisfied with their learning process in school, with mean score of 3.98 and only 5 respondents, less than tenth of group, stating that they have not learned English well at school. Whether or not they have learner more English outside of school proved to be more difficult question. As Table 30 shows, 20 students were undecided on the issue, the largest number of respondents being undecided on any item from the

questionnaire, with slightly more, 24, agreeing with the statement and 14 disagreeing. If we consider the fact that the respondents in general agreed about learning English well in school from the previous item, we can infer, that rather than thinking that more English is learned from outside of school, the respondents have trouble separating and identifying the sources of their proficiency in English. As was noted earlier in this chapter, English was overwhelmingly the most used language outside of school. Aside from the basic skills, expertise in language, and the confidence to use it, is born from actually using the language in non-artificial, genuinely interesting context.

Table 29. Items concerning learner self-image and evaluation regarding learning English – mean scores

Question	Mean	Mean (Female)	Mean (Male)
I do not work hard enough in order to learn English.	2.59	2.72	2.22
I do not always feel motivated to study English.	3.22	3.28	3
I think that I have learned English well at school.	3.98	3.97	3.89
I learn more English outside of school than during classes at school.	3.26	3.25	3.22

Table 30. Respondents' agreement/disagreement with items concerning learner self-image and evaluation

Question	“Agree”- answers	“Undecided” - answers	“Disagree”- answers
I do not work hard enough in order to learn English.	16 / 27.6%	8 / 13.8%	34 / 58.6%
I do not always feel motivated to study English.	31 / 53.4%	8 / 13.8%	19 / 32.8%
I think that I have learned English well at school.	45 / 77.6%	8 / 13.8%	5 / 8.6%
I learn more English outside of school than during classes at school.	24 / 41.4%	20 / 34.5%	14 / 24.1%

8 DISCUSSION

As the present study aims to provide a broad picture of the respondents' views of foreign languages, the methods and the theoretical background do not neatly fit into any single model presented earlier in the study. The results and their implications are discussed here from various perspectives, and attempts have been made to draw connections between the results and various elements of theories presented in previous chapters.

8.1 Motivation to learn English

While the second half of the questionnaire showed that English was better liked than other languages, the first half suggested that while the general image of English was a positive one, it was not overwhelmingly so, with affective statements about English gaining less agreement than other statements. Also, the actual question about whether the respondents liked English more than other languages did not receive as wide agreement as could be inferred from the amount of respondents who marked English as the language they liked best in the second part. However, English was the language most respondents marked as the one they liked best overall.

The general picture gleaned from the first part of the questionnaire is that the respondents attach far greater importance to knowing English for specific, utilitarian purposes. The respondents primarily see the English language as means to an end. Both halves of the questionnaire made it very clear that the respondents both expect English to be very important to their future and they already had used it for various purposes. The respondents were less enthusiastic about knowing English simply for the sake of knowing a foreign language, or as a means of learning more about different English-speaking cultures than knowing English for traveling and communicating with foreigners. It is quite clear that instrumental motivation trumps integrative motivation for learning English for the respondents in general.

The questionnaire used is not suitable for properly measuring intrinsic motivation, that is, motivation stemming from the feelings of accomplishment and enjoyment of creativity one gains from completing meaningful tasks, as it only cursorily queried the respondents about whether they like studying or using English. Extrinsic motivation

however, concerned with future benefits and rewards, maps more closely to instrumental motivation as it was measured and examined within the present study. The results of the study strongly suggest that the respondents are very aware of the role and importance of English as a tool of global communication, and they expect it to play a large role in their various career or educational pursuits in the future. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents' main source of motivation for learning English is instrumental or extrinsic in nature.

If observed from the perspective of the temporal approach, some conclusions and hypotheses can be drawn. The respondents clearly expect that English will be very important for their future, be it for education, employment, or other purposes. This leads to the birth of the goal of learning English in order to use it to successfully pursue those future endeavors. This fits into the preactional phase of the process model of motivation.

Based on the questionnaire, about half of the respondents reported that they have experienced some motivational trouble, but the majority of them have apparently managed to overcome these temporary problems based on the fact that over 90% of the respondents thought that English was their best language, and only a small minority, 7 respondents (about 12%) believed it was the hardest language for them to learn, and even then three of them marked it as their best language, despite believing it to be hard language to learn. Four of those who thought English was the hardest language also marked English as the language they disliked the most, though only one thought English was their weakest language. Additionally, the number of respondents who thought that they didn't always work hard enough was only about half of those who claimed to have had motivational problems, and their agreement was not very strong, further suggesting that the respondents have managed, as a whole, to protect and maintain their motivation to learn English.

Further supporting this conclusion is that almost every respondent claimed that they would like to know English even if it was not compulsory for them to study at school. Strictly speaking, English is not compulsory language in general, but every respondent in the present study was studying it as their chosen compulsory foreign language. Strong goals, even if they are not yet very specific, but rather general in nature, mean

that maintaining motivation is relatively easy. The strong presence English has in the everyday life because of its global importance means that the rewards and benefits of knowing English well are never far from the respondents' minds.

Because the process of learning English is still ongoing, the present study cannot really evaluate or analyze the respondents postactional processes. However, based on the strong agreement about having learned English well at school, and the number of respondents thought English was their best language suggest that the respondents are, in fact, conducting positive self-evaluation and formulation of future goals and plans in light of their current successes as learners of English while the actional phase is still in progress. The process model does note that the boundaries of actional phase are not clearly defined, as language learning does not happen in isolation, but rather there are several processes running simultaneously, interacting with each other in different ways.

8.2 Attitudes towards foreign languages

The present study focused most on English, with the first part of questionnaire concerning it exclusively. Also, most of the information gained from the second part of the questionnaire is in the form of paired opposite items, for example, most useful-least useful, easiest-hardest. Therefore, for every issue, presented in the questionnaire in the form of these paired questions, only two languages are reported, but no information on how the other languages falling between them are ranked in relation to each other. The amount of respondents studying each language was also different from each other, making it more problematic to directly compare them. For these reasons, the following conclusions drawn from the results presented in the previous chapter should be considered hypothetical, and effort has been made to refrain from drawing too far-reaching conclusions.

8.2.1 Attitudes towards English

Like mentioned previously, all of the respondents expected English to be the most useful language for them in the future. Despite the conflicting impressions gained from the two parts of the questionnaire, at least 60% and possibly as much as three quarters of the respondents liked English best of the languages they have studied, while only 6

respondents (about 10%) disliked it the most. Almost every respondent (56 out of 58) also reported having used English more than any other language. Same number also claimed that they would like to study English even if it would have to be an voluntary, additional language for them. Appropriately, almost every respondent was of the opinion that English should be a compulsory language in school.

When it came to liking using the language outside of school, only 8 respondents (13.8%) disagreed with the statement, and not very strongly either. Slightly more respondents, 13 in all (19%), disagreed to some extent about liking studying English in school. It therefore appears that even in the minority of cases where English is not viewed wholly positively, the respondents nevertheless recognize how significant the language is for their future. Furthermore, after combining these findings with conclusions drawn in the previous section, it seems likely that whatever negative attitudes towards English the minority of the respondents may possess, they do not seem to have affected the effort expended and success experienced in learning English much. English seems to be in a position where expectations about future applicability are a very significant factor contributing towards motivation, effort expended and success achieved.

On the whole, attitudes towards English were very positive, which corresponds with the results from previous studies conducted in Finland. Kansikas also (2002: 109-110) reported that the attitudes of upper secondary school students towards English were mostly very positive. These positive attitudes were likely another significant factor contributing towards the respondents' strong motivation to learn English, besides the instrumental or extrinsic motivation mentioned earlier in this chapter, as Komos and Csizer's study suggested that positive attitudes were one the most significant factors affecting motivation in learning English (Komos and Csizer 2008: 350-351).

8.2.2 Attitudes towards other languages

What reasons motivate the respondents to study additional foreign languages is, frankly, a question the present study cannot answer. Like detailed before in Chapter 7, the respondents in general do not appear to particularly like most of the additional foreign languages they have studied, or expect them to be very useful in the future, particularly

Swedish and French. Likewise, they have not used the languages much outside of school. Furthermore, the respondents were strongly against languages being compulsory to study. This is puzzling, when taking into account how many additional foreign languages the respondents studied and wished to study. A possible explanation towards the negative opinions towards compulsory languages is that the respondents value learner autonomy in their choices for language studies. As discussed in Chapter 2, feelings of learner autonomy seem to contribute towards positive motivation in language learning.

Furthermore, a large fraction of the respondents learning additional foreign languages considered them as their weakest language. All of the respondents have studied English from third grade of comprehensive school onwards and Swedish from the seventh grade forwards. Studying an additional language is very often started in comprehensive school, with opportunities to do so at fifth and eighth grades. In addition, students may freely choose to study more languages at upper secondary school, provided that their school offers courses in languages not already studied by them. Because all of the respondents have studied English the longest, it is not surprising that it emerged as the language respondents feel they know best.

It is, however, somewhat surprising that, in proportion to respondents studying them, far more respondents studying German and French than Swedish thought them to be their worst languages. German and French are the languages most often studied as additional languages from the fifth grade onwards, so very likely many of the respondents have studied them longer than Swedish. In spite of having studied German and French longer, the respondents felt less confidence in their skills with German and French than with Swedish. Appropriately, greater proportion of respondents also thought German and French to be the hardest language they have studied than with Swedish. Of the 15 respondents that marked Swedish as the most difficult language they have studied, nine had studied only English and Swedish, while 6 had one additional language besides Swedish and English. Swedish was also better liked than German. The comparison between Swedish and French is not so clear-cut, however, with a greater proportion of respondents marking Swedish as the language they like both the most and the least than with French.

The basics of attitude theory stress that success and good results can lead to positive attitudes, and vice versa. The opposite can also be expected to be generally true. Difficulties in learning a language can lead into a negative image of the language, and attempting to learn a language one views negatively is not a very fruitful enterprise by any measures. However, determining which is the cause and which is the effect is not possible from the data gained in the present study. One would expect that learners would not study additional, voluntary languages, if they have a negative image of them. However, such an image might have developed over time, well after making the choice to study additional languages for reasons more extrinsic or instrumental in nature than simply being interested in a language for its own sake. After all attitudes, alongside with beliefs and motivations are dynamic constructs which can, and will change with time. Likewise, they, particularly motivation, are not constant, but they fluctuate based on learners' feelings, self-evaluation, and current experiences.

8.3 Learner self-image and beliefs about languages

The main questions relating to learner beliefs in the present study are the difficulty of learning a given language and the self-image respondents have of themselves and their skills as the learners of languages. These questions were examined within the four items asking the respondents to mark the languages they think are their best and worst, and to mark the languages they believe to be the most difficult and easiest to learn respectively.

It should also be remembered that language learning beliefs, especially those related to how learners explain success, can fluctuate and change in response to recent events. Peng (2011: 321-322) argued that learner beliefs could evolve and change over time, while Kalaja (2003: 101) reported that learners gave different reasons at different times for their successes and failures at language learning tasks. However, in the present study the respondents were not asked to explain the reasons for their proficiency at languages, nor were there any links drawn in the questionnaire between items concerning learner self-beliefs about their best and worst languages and beliefs about the difficulty of different languages. Therefore, the beliefs expressed by the respondents can be considered to be a valid representation of their more stable and enduring views of themselves and the languages they have studied.

8.3.1 Respondents' self-image and beliefs as learners of English

In general, the respondents felt that they had worked hard enough to learn English, and that they had learned it well at school. Whether the respondents had learned English better outside of school was a more divisive question, but more respondents either thought so (24 respondents, 41% of the total) or were undecided (20 respondents, 34% of the total) than those who felt that they had not learned more English outside of school (14 respondents, 24% of the total). This should be taken into account as language learning is a complex, multifaceted process, which does not solely happen in formal educational surroundings but using the language in authentic contexts has a strong role in developing language skills, particularly speaking and listening comprehension.

Appropriately, over 90% of the respondents thought that English was their best language. 70% (41 respondents) thought that it was the easiest language they have studied, and only about 12% (7 respondents) thought it was the hardest. Unlike with many other languages (mainly German and French), the number of respondents who thought themselves weakest at English (only two respondents) was much smaller than the number that thought the language to be hardest to learn. Also, only one respondent marked English as both their weakest language and the one they believe to be the most difficult, which is in sharp contrast to the situation with other languages. The results seem to match with Kansikas' 2002 study, which also reported that English was viewed as the easiest language, even by those with lower grades (Kansikas 2002: 56).

To summarize, the respondents believe that they have worked hard enough to learn English in school, and that they have learned it outside of it as well. They overwhelmingly feel that they have learned English very well. Based on their personal experiences, they believe English to be the easiest language to learn. The link between learners' estimated proficiency at English and the perceived difficulty to learn it seems to be weaker than with other languages.

8.3.2 Respondents' beliefs as learners of other languages

Among the respondents there is a high correlation between viewing language as difficult and considering the language in question to be their weakest language. Similarly, there

is a high correlation in finding a language difficult and disliking it. In 43 (74% of the total) cases the respondents marked the same language as “most difficult to learn”, and “weakest at”. In 42 (72%) cases they marked the same language as “most difficult to learn”, and “liked the least”. On 31 (53%) occasions, the respondents had marked the same language as the one they like the least, believe to be the most difficult to learn, and consider themselves worst at.

The same language was marked as “easiest to learn” and “best at” 43 times (74%). In 40 cases, the language marked was English, and in the remaining three cases it was Swedish. The same language was marked as both “easiest to learn” and “liked the best” 42 times (72%). The language was English in 35 times, Swedish 6 times, and German once. In 35 occasions (33 English, 2 Swedish, for about 60% of the whole), the same language was marked as “most liked”, “easiest to learn” and “best at”. Languages other than English were marked as “best at” only five times, so not much can be inferred regarding them specifically.

From these findings, it appears very likely that the successes and failures the respondents have experienced have a strong effect on how the respondents view different languages and how they feel about them. A language that the respondents have not had much success with, and have not used much outside of the educational surroundings where they have experienced difficulties in learning and using it, is more likely to be labeled as difficult.

9 CONCLUSION

This final chapter begins with a short summary of the main results. It is followed by a discussion about a number of issues that came up in the process of the conducting the present study. Finally, some possible directions for future research are discussed.

9.1 Summary of findings

The present study used a questionnaire with two parts, the first part focusing on learner motivation in studying and learning English. The second part aimed to gain broader picture of how the respondents view different foreign languages. The main results and findings are summarized here.

While English was very well liked, the main motivations to learn it appear to be goal-oriented in nature. The respondents are highly aware of the global importance of English, and have a strong image of the important role English will play in their future pursuits. The respondents attached great importance to knowing English in order to travel and communicate with foreigners, but were less enthusiastic knowing English simply for the sake of knowing the language, or using it to learn about English-speaking cultures. In general, the respondents are satisfied with their own efforts and successes.

The most often studied additional languages were German and French, and Spanish was the language most respondents would like to learn, if given the opportunity. The respondents have studied more additional languages than the national average, but they did feel that there should not be many compulsory languages in school. About half of the respondents felt that English should be the only compulsory language, and only a third of the respondents felt that Swedish should be compulsory to study.

An important factor to note is that different amounts of respondents studied each language, which makes direct comparisons difficult. However, if examining the answers in relation to the number of respondents studying each language, the following results are gained from the present study: English was liked best by the respondents and reported to be the most used language and also expected to be the most useful language in the future. It was also believed to be the easiest language to learn, and the

respondents felt that it was the language they knew best. French was thought to be hardest language to learn, and the respondents considered it their weakest language. It was also expected to be the least useful language in the future, and the respondents reported having used it the least. Russian was the most disliked language.

In general, the present study suggested that respondents did not seem to like the languages they study very much, with the exception of English, or expect them to be very useful in the future. Swedish fared better in the respondents eyes than German and French, and Spanish seems to be vary fashionable language at the moment, with positive attitudes attached to it. The attitudes towards Russian were somewhat complex, with generally negative image of the language itself, but reasonable expectations of future usefulness and applicability.

9.2 Evaluation of the methodology of the present study

There are two main issues with the present study. The first concerns what kind of data was gathered, and the second how the data was gathered. First, the questionnaire used did not include any questions about when the respondents have begun to study languages. This information would have provided more context to the results, and an another element to consider while analyzing the results. For example, it would have been useful to know when examining the respondents' beliefs about the difficulty of languages and their self-evaluation of their proficiency. It is reasonable to suspect that in many cases the language they marked as their worst language is the one they have studied for the least amount of time, but that is by no means certain for every respondent. As it stands, this element cannot be examined within the present study.

The second issue with the data, is how and in what form, it was collected. The second part of the questionnaire collected data mainly in the form of paired items, for example, “most difficult language”-”easiest language”, and “most liked language”-”most disliked language”. Two problems emerged with this approach. First, in some items English was marked as an answer by so many respondents that not much could be said about other languages in regards to that particular item (“most useful language”, and “the language best at”). A second, related problem is that it is difficult to comprehensively compare different languages to each other based on information purely binary in nature, for

example, how many marked language as the most difficult, and how many the easiest. Both of these problems could be remedied by changing how the questionnaire is structured. Instead of two paired items, where the respondent mark only one language for each item, the questionnaire could include one item in which the respondents score every language they have studied in a 5 point scale according to their personal experiences. An example item could be; “How difficult do you find the languages you have studied?” with 1 being very easy, 2 easy, 3 average, 4 difficult, and 5 very difficult. Based on how some respondents marked more than one language for certain items, or failed to mark any in few cases, these kind of questions would probably provide the respondents a better way to elaborate on their personal opinions about their language learning.

One further issue with the present study was that far more female than male respondents returned the questionnaire, and quite many respondents failed to fill in their sex in the questionnaire. Based on personal experience while collecting the questionnaires, it is likely that most of the respondents who failed to mark their sex were male, but as it cannot be proven with certainty, they were left out when presenting the results divided by sex. This issue led to problems in comparing the sexes, as there was not enough information (ie. not enough male respondents) to reliably draw strong conclusions from the results. Therefore, most of the analysis does not distinguish between the sexes. For the purposes of rectifying this issue, the question about the sex of the respondent should be situated more prominently within the questionnaire, and the respondents should be reminded both while handing out the the questionnaires, and when collecting them, to make sure that they mark their sex.

9.3 Avenues of further research

The aim of the present study was to gain a broad picture of learners' views about different foreign languages. This goal was achieved to a degree. Because English was so dominant in several issues, the information gained about languages other than English was, at points, lacking. The possible solutions are either to alter the method of data gathering to better provide comparable information, as described above, or conduct a study that focuses on languages other than English, perhaps solely on languages that are non-compulsory (German, French, Spanish, Russian and the other languages with only

a few learners) and see how they fare when they are removed from the large shadow cast by the most important language of globalization.

As the study examined so many languages, and several kinds of constructs related to language learning, it did not go into any great depth on any of them. While the present study discovered *what* respondents think and believe about foreign languages in certain issues, it could not not examine or discover *why* they did so. Particularly the cause-and-effect connections between language attitudes and beliefs and the respondents' self-evaluation of their capabilities was one issue that could not be researched with reliability within the present study.

For further research focusing on English, a study that would more examine the connection between learner's stated reasons for learning a language, like the instrumental goals that came up in the present study, and learner actions and efforts to maintain motivation while pursuing those goals is a one possible direction. The present study gained the impression that most of the respondents have experienced some temporary fluctuation in their motivation and efforts to learn English, but the issue needs more research.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Päivämäärä: _____

Sukupuoli: Mies / Nainen

Ympyröi kokemuksiasi parhaiten vastaava vaihtoehto kunkin väittämän kohdalta.

Ehdottomasti eri mieltä = 1
Jokseenkin eri mieltä = 2
En osaa sanoa = 3
Jokseenkin samaa mieltä = 4
Ehdottomasti samaa mieltä = 5

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Vaikka en opiskelisi englantia koulussa, haluaisin silti osata sitä. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Englannin kielen osaaminen on minulle tärkeää tulevaisuudessa opiskelujen takia. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Haluaisin osata englannin kieltä hyvin, jotta voin käyttää sitä ulkomaalaisten kanssa kommunikoimiseen. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. En tee mielestäni tarpeeksi töitä englannin oppimiseni eteen. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Pidän enemmän englannin kielen opiskelusta kuin muiden vieraiden kielten opiskelusta. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Englannin kielen osaaminen on minulle tärkeää tulevaisuudessa työllistymisen ja työelämän takia. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Haluaisin osata englannin kieltä hyvin, jotta voisin matkustella paljon, ja käyttää sitä matkoilla ollessani. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. En aina jaksa innostua englannin kielen opiskelusta. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Englannin kielen opiskelu koulussa on minusta mukavaa. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Englannin kielen osaaminen on minulle tärkeää englanninkielisestä viihteestä (elokuvat, musiikki, kirjat, pelit) nauttimisen takia. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Englannin opiskelu on minulle tärkeää, koska haluaisin osata mahdollisemman montaa vierasta kieltä. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Olen mielestäni oppinut englannin kieltä hyvin koulussa. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Pidän englannin kielen käyttämisestä koulun ulkopuolella (esimerkiksi keskusteleminen tai kirjoittaminen). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Englanti on kansainvälisesti kaikkein tärkein kieli. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Haluaisin osata englannin kieltä hyvin, jotta voisin oppia lisää englanninkielisistä maista ja kulttuureista. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Opin englantia enemmän koulun ulkopuolella kuin koulussa. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Merkitse kokemuksiasi parhaiten vastaava vaihtoehto, tai vaihtoehdot, kunkin kysymyksen kohdalta.

Jos vastauksesi on muu kuin tässä mainittu kieli, voit kirjoittaa sen viimeiseen, tyhjään ruutuun.

	Englanti	Ruotsi	Saksa	Ranska	Venäjä	Espanja	Jokin muu, mikä
1. Mitä vieraita kieliä opiskelet, tai olet aikaisemmin opiskellut?							
2. Mitä vierasta kieltä, jota et ole opiskellut, haluaisit osata?							
3. Mistä opiskelemastasi kielestä uskot olevan eniten hyötyä sinulle tulevaisuudessa?							
4. Mistä opiskelemastasi kielestä uskot olevan vähiten hyötyä sinulle tulevaisuudessa?							
5. Mistä opiskelemastasi vieraasta kielestä pidät eniten?							
6. Mistä opiskelemastasi vieraasta kielestä pidät vähiten?							
7. Mitä opiskelemaasi vierasta kieltä osaat mielestäsi parhaiten?							
8. Mitä opiskelemaasi vierasta kieltä osaat mielestäsi heikoiten?							
9. Mikä on mielestäsi helpoin vieras kieli jota olet opiskellut?							
10. Mikä on mielestäsi vaikein vieras kieli jota olet opiskellut?							
11. Mitä opiskelemaasi vierasta kieltä olet käyttänyt eniten koulun ulkopuolella?							
12. Mitä opiskelemaasi vierasta kieltä olet käyttänyt vähiten koulun ulkopuolella?							
13. Minkä vieraiden kielten pitäisi olla pakollisia peruskoulussa opiskeltavia sinun mielestäsi?							

Kiitos vastauksistasi!

Appendix 2: Translated questionnaire

Date: _____

Sex: Male / Female

Please circle the option best matching your experiences for each statement.

Strongly disagree = 1
Disagree = 2
Undecided = 3
Agree = 4
Strongly agree = 5

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I would like to study English, even if it wasn't compulsory for me to study it at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Knowing English is important for me because of future studies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I would like to speak English well, so that I could use it to communicate with foreigners. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I do not work hard enough in order to learn English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I like studying English better than other foreign languages. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Knowing English is important for me because of future employment prospects or career. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I would like to speak English well, so that I could travel a lot, and use it while traveling. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I do not always feel motivated to study English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I like studying English at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Knowing English is important to me for enjoying English-language entertainment (movies, music, literature, games). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I would like to know English well, because I would like to know as many languages as possible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I think that I have learned English well at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I like using English outside of school (speaking, writing). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. English is the most important international language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I would like to speak English well, so that I could learn more about different English-speaking countries and their culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I learn more English outside of school than during classes at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please mark the language, or languages, best matching your experiences for each item. If your answer is a language other than the ones listed below, you can mark it in the last, empty box.

	English	Swedish	German	French	Russian	Spanish	Other, what
1. What foreign languages do you study, or have studied before?							
2. What foreign language you would like to know?							
3. Which foreign language, that you have studied, do you believe to be the most useful for you in the future?							
4. Which foreign language, that you have studied, do you believe to be the least useful for you in the future?							
5. Which foreign language, that you have studied, do you like the most?							
6. Which foreign language, that you have studied, do you like the least?							
7. Of the foreign languages that you have studied, which do you believe yourself to be best at?							
8. Of the foreign languages that you have studied, which do you believe yourself to be weakest at?							
9. Which foreign language, that you have studied, you believe to be the easiest one to learn?							
10. Which foreign language, that you have studied, you believe to be the most difficult one to learn?							
11. Which foreign language, that you have studied, you have used the most outside of school?							
12. Which foreign language, that you have studied, you have used the least outside of school?							
13. What foreign languages you think should be compulsory for everyone to learn at school?							

Thank you for your answers!