Learning English as a Foreign Language as a Deaf Pupil in Sweden: An Investigation of Motivation

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Abstract
Motivation is an important factor when it comes to learning a language, including the Deaf and hard of hearing pupils. The purpose of this investigation is to investigate whether Deaf and hard of hearing pupils in Sweden are motivated to learn a foreign language, i.e. English, and whether the motivation is an intrinsic or extrinsic kind. The aim of this study is to contribute with extended knowledge and an in-depth understanding of motivation to learn a foreign language among Deaf and hard of hearing pupils, since no research of this kind has been conducted in Sweden, so far. The investigation was conducted through semi-structured interviews in Swedish Sign language about the motivation to learn a foreign language, and the findings showed that many of the pupils are motivated to learn English. The factors that affect their motivation are studying or working abroad, communicating with people from other countries and understanding information when travelling around the world. Another significant finding was a wish to learn an international Sign language in the school as a complement to the subject English to be eligible to communicate with Deaf people from other countries.

Keywords
Foreign language learning, Deaf, Motivation, English, Sign language.
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1. Introduction

Nowadays, most of us are surrounded by more languages than just our mother tongue. The world has become small in the wake of globalization, and the result of globalization is visible in the curriculums in most countries as well, including Sweden. In the hearing society, English is the lingua franca in global communication and without proficiency in English, possibilities for global mobility are limited (Dotter, 2008, p. 98). The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) writes in the National Curriculum for the subject of English (Years 7-9) that language proficiency in English may lead to a greater understanding of the world we live in (Skolverket, 2011a p. 1):

To have knowledge of several languages can provide new perspectives on the world, increased opportunities for contacts and better understanding of different ways of living. English language surrounds us in everyday life and is used in areas as diverse as politics, education and the economy. Knowledge of English therefore increases the individual's ability to be a part of different social and cultural context and to participate in international study and work. (My own translation).

The learning of foreign languages at school is also promoted by the European Union, which classifies foreign languages as one of Eight Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (European Parliament, 2006, p. 14). There are therefore good reasons for learning a second or third language in schools today, including the Deaf who are affected by globalization as well. In Sweden, English functions as an L2 or L3 for hearing pupils. For Deaf pupils, on the other hand, English is often their L3 or L4.

It is well known among teachers and researchers that motivation influences development in language learning, in particular in second and foreign languages (Dörnyei, 1998). For pupils with good learning conditions to acquire/learn a new language, long-goal development and proficiency are affected negatively if there is no motivation to learn the language and hence it may lead to low achievement. High motivation in contrast, may lead to higher achievement despite the learning conditions are not good (1998). Gardner and Lambert (cited in Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117) point out that many citizens in a bilingual society, where their L2 is the official language, master the L2 regardless of their learning conditions.

In schools, hearing children learn to read and write in their first language (e.g. Swedish) by matching the sounds of the spoken language with the letters in the written language. Deaf children, in contrast, have Sign Language as an L1, which does not exist in the written form, and learn the written form of a second language (e.g. Swedish) by writing and reading only, due to their visual communication ability. In Sweden for example, Deaf and hard of hearing pupils with Swedish Sign Language as their L1 learn the official language of the country (i.e. Swedish in this essay) in its written form as an L2 and English is therefore a foreign, and a third language. The difficulties with learning to code two different languages (for example Swedish and English) only accessed by the writing procedures are, therefore, not hard to understand (Van Den Bogaerde, 2008, p.193).
So far, Swedish research in the field of Deaf and hard of hearing people has mostly been concerned in Sign Language use and Swedish as an L2 for Deaf and hard of hearing children. Researchers have also investigated to what extent pupils/children have access to Sign Language, and how the presence or absence of a strong L1 (in this case Sign language) affects their L2 development/acquisition (Allard, 2013, p. 43). The situation is similar in international research (Cummins, 2006; Grosjean, 2001) where a large part of the research is devoted to the Deaf people’s bilingualism and the need for Sign language. Moreover, according to Karin Allard (2013), extensive research has been made in the field of plurilingualism and foreign language learning, but within the context of Sign language and its users (mostly with deafness or impaired hearing) the research is very limited. Hence, research on Deaf persons in both motivation field and foreign language field is also very limited – especially in Sweden where no research of this kind has been conducted.

In Hungary, on the other hand, a few investigations have been made on Deaf persons and their motivation to learn foreign languages. Csizér and Kontra (2013) investigated 331 Deaf and hard of hearing people in Hungary to see whether they are motivated to learn a foreign language (English or German), and how the use of Sign language in the schools affected their motivation. The results showed that the participants were motivated to learn a foreign language, yet the motivation was significantly higher in the hard of hearing participants, signalling that the practical benefits of language is higher for them. The investigation also showed how important the use of Sign language as language of instruction is. Another investigation by Kontra, Csizér and Piniel (2015) has investigated foreign language learning and motivation among 31 Deaf and hard of hearing pupils at eight special institutions in Hungary. The results were similar, but in this investigation lower levels of motivation in some pupils were found, yet the pupils were still aware of the importance of mastering a foreign language in the future. The results conclude that there is a claim for the Deaf and hard of hearing people to get equal opportunities in language learning, and that there is a need for the educators of developing the opportunities for language learning of these groups (Kontra, Csizér, 2013, p. 18).

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

Research has shown that motivation plays a big part in foreign language learning due to among other things that learning a language is a long-goal development process and motivation is hence a key factor for sustaining the development (Dörnyei, 1998). In this essay attention will be directed towards the subject English as a foreign language (EFL) for Deaf and hard of hearing pupils in Sweden with Sign language as their L1 and language of education. The research questions this essay aims to answer are:

- Are Deaf and hard of hearing pupils motivated to learn English in a Swedish context? If yes or no, why? What motivates them?
- Is their motivation intrinsic or extrinsic?
2. Background

2.1 Deaf Education in Sweden

It has been estimated that 8,000 to 10,000 Deaf persons live in Sweden today, whose native language is Swedish Sign Language (Schönström, 2010). The Swedish Sign Language is protected by the Swedish Language Act and has been since 2009. Hence, the Sign language possesses rights equal to other minority languages in Sweden: Yiddisch, Meänkieli, Finnish, Romani Chib and Samish (Language Act, 2009). In accordance with this, Sweden offers five bilingual schools for Deaf children with Swedish Sign Language and Swedish as languages of education: Manillaskolan (Stockholm), Kristinaskolan (Härnösand), Vänerskolan (Vänersborg), Östervångsskolan (Lund), and Birgittaskolan (Örebro) (SDR, 2011).

Distinctive for these schools is a separated syllabus regulated by the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten, henceforth: SPSM) due to the bilingualism with Sign language as a first language and Swedish as a second language (Schönström, 2010). The timetable in the separated syllabus for the Deaf schools regulated by SPSM in Sweden also contains significantly more teaching hours in comparison with the timetable for hearing schools (Skolverket, 2011b). In the Special Needs School for the Deaf, each pupil is guaranteed at least 7965 hours of teaching while pupils in hearing schools are offered 6785 hours of teaching (Skolverket, 2011b, 2011c). This difference in timetables explains the extra school year (i.e. a 10th year of schooling) for the Deaf pupils, which is motivated with regard to the Swedish Sign Language subject as the Deafs’ L1: 725 hours of teaching which in turns corresponds to a full school year (Hendar, 2008, p. 20). In the English subject there is a slight difference between the school forms: 515 hours of teaching in the Special Needs School for Deaf and 480 hours of teaching in the hearing schools (Skolverket, 2011b, 2011c). In Special Needs Schools teaching in English starts sometime in 1-4 grade and 1-3 grade in hearing schools according to the central content in both curriculums for English (Skolverket, 2011b, 2011c).

The Committee directive (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2013), refers to the SOU investigation “With the right to choose - flexible education for the students who belong to the special school’s audience” (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2011) and concludes that Deaf and hard of hearing pupils reach lower grade levels compared to pupils in hearing schools. Consequently, Deaf and hard of hearing pupils in special schools are not qualified to national high school programs to the same extent as hearing pupils and these differences are also found at the university level, thus limiting the Deaf and hard of hearing pupils’ opportunities to assert themselves in society (dir. 2013:29). In Sweden, research in English as a foreign language in schools for the Deaf (Allard, 2013) has identified several problems in the teaching in the schools regulated by SPSM. According to Allard’s investigation, the teaching does not correspond to the goals in the curriculum (2013, p. 240), and moreover none of the pupils has been given the opportunity to develop any of the abilities or proficiencies the curriculum prescribes.
Those skills some of the pupils master in accordance with the achievement goals are in most cases developed outside the teaching context (2013, p. 240).

Allard explains the lack of congruity between the teaching and the curriculum with low expectations from the teachers as a result of SPSM’s definition of this pupil group as primarily a Deaf and hard of hearing group in need of specially designed education with an extra school year instead of describing this group as a bilingual group in need of bilingual education. However, Allard carefully points out that Sign Language is not affecting the low goal achievement in these schools; instead the problems stem from the patterns of interaction which dominate the teaching (Allard, 2013). Furthermore, Allard mentions international Sign languages, such as American Sign language (ASL), British Sign language or other Sign languages with similar statuses as a potential way for Sign language pupils to develop an international language identity (2013, p. 246).

2.2 Motivation in L2 Learning

Henry (2012) describes the motivation field with roots in social psychology, which investigates how an individual is affected and formed by the environment he or she exists within, and how other persons influence us (Allport, 1954, cited in Henry, 2012, p. 13). Motivation is a wide and acknowledged domain in social psychology, and within the domain there are three fields: attitudes and intergroup relations, attribution and selfdetermination, and psychology of the self. In this essay however, focus will only be directed towards the Self-Determination Theory and the L2 Motivation Self System and a deeper description of the other two fields will hence not be given due to the limited amount of space allowed.

2.2.1 Self-Determination Theory of Motivation

One of the most challenging tasks for teachers in compulsory schools in Sweden is to motivate their pupils. To acquire knowledge, one must feel engaged to the process and engagement stems from motivation. Hence, motivation is an important key factor to develop and acquire new knowledge, for example a new language, in particular when learning a language is a long and not always a joyful process (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117). Moreover, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) describe a growing relevance of the social context for learning; before the cognitive revolution in 1970s, the behaviourist theories dominated, where the external environment (extrinsic) was considered to affect the motivation. After the 1970s, however, the cognitive perspective paid more attention to the inner processes (intrinsic). Today, most attention is directed towards the context we exist within which signifies socio-cultural factors such as norms, structures, and intergroup relations (2013). Williams (cited in Dörnyei, 1998, p. 122) describes foreign language learning as a different kind of learning in comparison with other subjects, because of its requirement of a social environment; learning a foreign language, or a language at all, does not only concern skills or grammar, but it also involves the learner’s identification with the culture and members of the language.
Self-determination theory (henceforth: SDT) is one of the most general and well-known theories in the motivation field (Dörnyei, 1998, p.121) and focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; intrinsic motivation is when a particular activity is performed of own interest, curiosity or joy linked to the activity. The second type, in contrast involves efforts to reach a goal (e.g. a good grade), or to avoid punishment (e.g. to fail a grade) (1998, p. 121). So far, research in this field has shown that the outcome and quality of an individual’s performances differ depending on whether the motivation is of intrinsic or extrinsic type. The different types are discussed further below.

2.2.2 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Ryan & Deci (2000) give a description of the classic definitions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and what distinguishes them. One important fact Ryan and Deci write, is how motivation does not only vary in how much/less motivation an individual has, but also in what type of motivation, i.e. attitudes and goals towards the action and why. Moreover, Ryan and Deci stress the importance of understanding the different types of extrinsic motivation for teachers, since learning does not always rely on intrinsic motivation.

**Intrinsic motivation**

Intrinsic motivation is favoured by a sense of competence and autonomy, which is selfdetermined (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 58). When an individual is intrinsically motivated, the individual does something of genuine interest or curiosity to the activity. Intrinsic motivation is also considered as the most powerful type of motivation and results in high-quality learning (2000). Distinctive for intrinsic motivation is that threats, deadlines, directives, competition and rewards may diminish intrinsic motivation. Conversely, what might enhances intrinsic motivation is less controlling teachers (i.e. autonomy-supporting teachers) who open up for curiosity and encourage the pupils to challenges (2000). Home environments have also shown to affect pupils’ intrinsic motivation, where controlling parents are more likely to diminish their children’s intrinsic motivation rather than enhance it (2000). To enhance intrinsic motivation people need to experience autonomy by making their own choices and opportunities (2000 p. 59). Normally, the intrinsic type of motivation decreases with age when tasks are mostly not self-selected and especially in schools the intrinsic motivation is replaced by the extrinsic kind.

**Extrinsic motivation**

SDT, according to Ryan and Deci, proposes that the extrinsic motivation can be both active and impoverished depending on what is motivating the individual. In contrast with intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation exists in different types. Next to amotivation is the least autonomous kind of extrinsic motivation, external regulation, which emerges when for example a demand appears. Typically, persons with this motivation experience the demands as controlling. Introjected motivation is close to the previous type, yet persons with this type also perform out of egoistical reasons, for
example to enhance a feeling of worth or to maintain self-esteem (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The third form of extrinsic motivation is *identified regulation*, which is a more self-determined form where the person identifies herself with the importance of the activity, for example memorizing vocabulary lists in order to develop their writing skills which in turn are important for this person. The last and most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is *integrated regulation*, which is close to the intrinsic type. An integrated form of motivation occurs when a person assimilates the regulations to the self, i.e. forms them to one’s own values and needs and thus they become self-determined (2000).

2.2.3 The L2 Motivational Self System

In 2005, Dörnyei outlined a new approach and theory for the construct of L2 motivation, the L2 Motivational Self System. This theory involves “possible selves” (2009, p. 11) and represents the individual’s notions of what they may become and want to become, but also what they are afraid of becoming. Hence, a “possible self” acts as a “future self-guide” (2009) since it refers to the future self and not to the current self (Carver, 1994, cited in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 11). Within this field of possible selves, Higgins (cited in Dörnyei, 2009) describes two components: “ought self” and “ideal self”. The ought self refers to notions of the future self posed by someone else, or with small duplications to one self’s wishes (2009, p. 13). The ideal self, on the other hand, refers to attributives such as hopes and wishes. The ideal self resembles to some extent to the different stages of extrinsic motivation in Self-Determination Theory of Motivation, in particular with “identified regulation” (learning the language because it is necessary for the interests of the individual) and “integrated regulation” (learning the language to be a part of its culture the individual identifies with). The ought self, on the other hand, resembles to the first and second type of extrinsic motivation, i.e. “external regulation” and “introjected regulation” since the activity is mostly not performed for one’s own sake, but for somebody else’s expectations.

Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) state that due to the different reference groups or social identity groups each person belongs to, it is unclear whether a person’s self represents one’s genuine wishes and dreams or the norms of the reference group. Parents, friends, teachers or other authorities one wishes to be loved or respected by are sources to the ideal self or ought self. Consequently, the reference groups or social identity groups we belong to affect our values, and this create a distinction between the ought self and ideal self and this distinction leads to different degrees of regulation. Furthermore, Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) state that the ideal self affects the motivational functions when the ideal self is established within the individual, and will lead to a deeper self-satisfaction when the behaviour is consistent with one’s values. This means that the motivation for a particular aim strengthens in parallel with the ideal self, and the more powerful ideal self one has, the stronger the regulation become. As mentioned in 2.2, motivation is an acknowledged domain in social psychology, which investigates how the environment affects us. Reference groups and social identity groups are parts of the environment, and as mentioned in 2.2.1, Williams (cited in Dörnyei, 1998 p. 122) argues that foreign language learning involves the learner’s identification with the culture and members of
the language. Cultures and members of a particular language function as reference groups or social identity groups and hence they will have influence on the self.

However, as Dörnyei stresses (1998, p. 131), motivation is a multifaceted factor and involves several dimensions and factors and due to its complexity, variables researchers find in their investigations may not represent the motivational construction to its full extent. Hence, what will be investigated and discussed in this essay does not represent the theories used in this essay to their full extent, nor is it representative for each Deaf or hard of hearing pupil in Sweden. Nevertheless, the results can be seen as indications and one perspective of many in what motivation can looks like. In this essay I will investigate the motivational factors among Deaf pupils with the aim of reaching each pupil’s individual perspective and experience of EFL in school, in accordance with the research questions.

3. Method

The method chosen for this study is qualitative, since the aim of this study is to get the pupils’ perspective on what motivates them to learn English. This qualitative approach does not aim to achieve generalizations, but to get in-depth information on the motivation to learn a foreign language. To find out what motivates the pupils, eight pupils from three different Deaf schools in Sweden were interviewed.

3.1 Participants

This research project intends to explore Deaf pupils’ motivation to learn English in an Upper Secondary School for the Deaf in Sweden, grades 7-10. The participants of the research project are Deaf and hard of hearing pupils with Sign Language as an L1 and language of instruction in an Upper Secondary School in Sweden. The reason why there is no separation between Deaf and hard of hearing pupils in this investigation is because Sign language is the language of instruction according to the curriculum for the schools in this essay. Another reason is that these pupils identify themselves as Deaf, regardless of their hearing levels. Participants were recruited with the help of the schools they go to, and Swedish advocacy organisations for Deaf Youth. I also advertised for participants in Internet forums for Deaf and those who were interested were free to contact me for more specific information. The participant group consisted of 8 participants: 6 girls and 2 boys. They were between 13 and 16 years old and in 7-10th grade in three different Special Needs schools for the Deaf in Sweden. Since the Deaf community in Sweden is very small, a detailed description of the participants or schools will not be given because of the risk of participants being identified.

Each participant is required to read English as a foreign language somewhere between second to fourth grades in accordance with the National Curriculum in Sweden. Participation was anonymous and not obligatory. Nonetheless, since none of the participants are over 18 years old, a consent sheet had to be signed by the parents of those participants who were interested to participate in the study. The consent form can
be found in Appendix A. The results in this essay only represent these 8 participants and cannot be generalized to each pupil in a Special school for Deaf in Sweden.

3.2 Interviews

For this essay a semi-structured interview method was chosen. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), a semi-structured interview differs from a structured one in the amount of in-depth information the interviewer can get from the interviewees, because the interviewer can ask follow-up questions and let the interviewee forms her answers from what she thinks is important or interesting to tell. This is a limited investigation in participants and hence it is of outmost importance that this essay includes a wide, fair and open explanation of how these participants experience their learning of a foreign language. Since one of the intentions of this essay is to contribute with extended knowledge from a pupil’s perspective it is my consideration that a semi-structured interview is a method which can provide us with full and objective information of these participants’ thoughts and own opinions.

The interviews were performed through Swedish Sign Language, some of them face-to-face and others via Skype, because of long distance or difficulties finding a common time and place for the meeting. In the interview, the participants were asked questions about their motivation to learn English, and how parents, teachers, exercises, own wishes etc. affect the motivation. The list of interview questions is attached in Appendix B. The choice of questions was modelled on Kontra and Csizér’s questionnaire in their Hungarian study on the motivation to learn a foreign language among Deaf and hard of hearing people (Kontra & Csizér, 2013, p. 9). Each informant was asked the same questions, but follow-up questions were asked in order to receive more in-depth explanations from the participants. Due to the visual modality of communication the interviews were recorded with a video camera, and later translated and transcribed to written Swedish. The transcriptions do not include each utterance, but orderly summarise what has been said. Because of the spatial and temporal organization (Svartholm, 1997) in the Sign Language, it is difficult to make a full translation from Sign Language to written Swedish. Both video films and transcriptions were anonymized and labelled with an anonymous code. Before the analysis of the interviews, the participants were permitted to read my transcription of their interview, and were free to comment if my translation did not correspond to what they had said.

Because of my connection to Deaf schools and the Deaf community (having Sign Language as an L2 and being a teacher candidate with experience of Deaf schools), I had to keep distance from both the participants and the social practise I aimed to explore. This was because of the risk of being blind to what in my perspective could be normative notions, which instead could be explored more. On the basis of my prior knowledge in this field, there was a risk of strongly noting those answers or descriptions I expected to get. However, as a member of the Deaf community and its language the interviewees probably felt more comfortable with being interviewed by a person who knows their mother tongue. Hence, they may have given more information when they did not have to explain or adjust their reasoning how they think or experience things as a Deaf person, for example, things which for a hearing person with limited knowledge
about being a Deaf can seem unfamiliar and incomprehensible.

### 3.3 Analysis

To answer the research questions, all of the transcribed interviews have been read carefully and collected, organized and coded according to themes. The themes emerged both from the interview questions and after the analysis of the data, and were chosen with aim to answer the research questions. Hence only the pertinent material that helped find answers to the questions posited in the research have been presented in the results.

### 4. Results

The main themes for the results are: The use of English, Reasons for learning English, and Factors affecting the motivation to learn. The results are presented in theme order with excerpts from the transcriptions. The quotes used in this section are translated from Swedish to English, and a list with the quotes in Swedish can be found in Appendix C. Following abbreviations are used in this section: IS (International Sign), BSL (British Sign language), ASL (American Sign language), EUDY (European Union of Deaf Youth) and NUL (Nordic Youth Camp, in Swedish: Nordiskt ungdomsläger).

#### 4.1 The Use of English

Several pupils reported that they use English outside of the school context. Five of the participants reported that they use English a lot in different contexts outside the school, for example to communicate with international friends. One participant uses English almost every day to communicate with family members and relatives and four of the participants reported that they use English several times per week when chatting with friends they know from international youth camps for the Deaf or when playing computer games online.

(1) In grade 8, I began to participate in various camps abroad, like EUDY where the participants come from different countries and therefore used English as the language of communication there. And the friends I got there, I continued to keep in touch with after the camp’s end via SMS in English. This made me develop, and I felt it too. I started to watch English films with English subtitles, and just recently I started reading English books. – 001

Some pupils do not use English outside the school context, or use it in a limited extent when they chat with friends from their home country and cannot express themselves in the home language. The remaining three participants reported that they do not use English outside the school context, or only sometimes with friends from their home country when their language skills in the particular language are not enough.

(2) Not much, sometimes I use English when I chat with my friends in Hungary if I cannot express myself in Hungarian. – 006
Some of the participants think that they learn a lot of English by themselves, because they have participated in international camps where they met friends from other countries.

(3) I feel that I mostly learn English on my own, actually. Due to the camps (EUDY and NUL), I have also learned IS. - 001

The results in this section have shown that a part of the pupils use English a lot outside the school context, for example when talking with friends or family members who do not know Swedish or Swedish sign language support the use of English outside the school context, and probably contribute to a development of the English skills. To have friends from other countries is hence a useful way to use English more than just in the school. In addition, international camps seems to have a positive influence on the pupils’ language development, and maintain the motivation to learn English both in the school and by themselves.

4.2 Reasons for Learning English

The reasons for learning English are in order to being able to communicate with people in other countries when travelling around the world or to study or work abroad.

To communicate with others, and understand information on for example medicine packaging when abroad are reasons to learn English for this participant:

(4) It is important to know English when travelling to other countries and to communicate with those who do not know Swedish. I also greatly benefit from knowing English in everyday life, sometimes when I’m in my homeland. I do not always understand what is on medicine packaging or other packaging, and then it is good that I can read the English text on the packages. – 005

Two of the participants considered knowledge in English as an important factor to be qualified for future work, for example working with political questions or video productions in other countries.

(5) Because I think it is important to be able to communicate with other people, but also because I want to work abroad when I get older for example UN and human rights or other political organizations. - 003

Being able to study abroad was another reason for learning English. For example, the following participant feels that the majority of educational programs in Sweden for the Deaf have closed down or are in risk of being shut down. She would hence like to learn as good English as possible in order to get into an education program in the US.

(6) I have a desire to go to an American school, for example Maryland High School or Gallaudet University, and so it is important that I already know English before I start there. There seems to be more programs there than in Sweden, especially considering that some programs have been abandoned here. This motivates me to develop my English. - 002
For one of the participants this dream (to study abroad in the US) has come true when he recently found out that he will get to be an exchange student this year and his motivation has further increased now. Another participant reported that English is an important language to her, even though this student is not sure if she will travel around as she gets older, she is still aware of the importance of knowing English because of the advantages with mastering a lingua franca in the future.

In this section, the results have shown that the reasons for learning English are many. The reasons depend on what the person wants to do in the future (e.g. to travel around, study or work abroad), and to be eligible to fulfil the wishes they need to learn English. Three of the participants mentioned studying abroad as an exchange student at Gallaudet (A university for the Deaf in the United States) or any High School for the Deaf in the United States as a wish and goal, and to be eligible to these schools, skills in English are necessary. The United States, for example offers wider opportunities for the Deaf, both in studies and workplaces in comparison with Sweden and these factors motivates some of the pupils to learn English.

4.3 Factors Affecting the Motivation to Learn

Factors affecting the motivation in this investigation are lesson content, future goals and wishes, parents, teachers and friends. Some of the excerpts above can even be used for this theme (4, 5, 6), since future wishes such as studying abroad or be able to travel without communicative troubles are factors that motivate the participants to develop their English.

The lesson content affects the motivation in both positive and negative ways; the first pupil describes how the teacher affects the motivation positively. The second pupil explains why he is negatively motivated to learn English because of the teacher, and gives a suggestion of what may enhance the motivation.

(7) Now this last year I have a good English teacher, this teacher has no fixed plan for what to do. The teacher has shown us what we will master, but what we do in class varies greatly. We write, read, practice words and grammar. The teacher also asked us students to make suggestions, and based on all the suggestions the teacher has chosen those they believe we need to develop. – 001

(8) The teacher is very boring and gives us the same, same, same tasks all the time, which affects my motivation negatively. If the teacher instead would give us more varied tasks and assignments where we could interact with each other, the lessons would be much more fun. -008

This pupil believes that her parents’ attitude towards English strongly affects her motivation. The parents do not prioritize English and nor does the pupil. For this pupil’s parents, ASL is, however, an important language to master since they are Deaf and socialising with other Deaf people in the world (i.e. the norms of this reference group affect the motivation).
My parents focus more on the Swedish and Sign language, as well as some other topics as SO [Social science subjects] and NO [Natural science subjects]. They see English as a bonus, basically they think it is more important that I get good grades in the other subjects than focusing too much on English. They do not think English is so important, and they are Deaf so they use ASL instead, which they have mastered fluently.

Low expectations affect the motivation negatively, for example low engagement, easy tasks, limited amount of exercises, and focusing mainly on gap-filling exercises as well as workbooks instead of reading books, watching movies with English subtitles, writing book reviews or their own stories. In addition, workbooks modelled for lower grades is interpreted as low expectations from teachers.

The following participant explains why he reads books in English in his spare time:

(10) Because I want to develop myself. The information I receive in school is too easy, I am in year 9, yet I am working on a book adapted for two grades below me. I'm worried about the national tests that come in grade 10, because I do not understand everything I read. I think it is wrong that I should have this book, so therefore, I want to develop myself. We have English twice a week, and I do not think it is enough.

When I asked the participants to suggest what may enhance their motivation, seven of the participants wanted to learn International Sign or American Sign language. Only one participant felt no need to master an international Sign language. Three participants would like to learn IS or ASL, but prioritize the written English.

(11) If I cannot express myself in ASL when I meet Deaf people from other countries I can always write in English instead. For me it is important to be able to write in English, because it's something everyone can do. I will not be able to, for example, use my skills in ASL when I will communicate with hearing people since most of them do not know ASL.

The first participant below explained it time consuming to communicate only by writing and that Sign language is a natural and faster way of direct communication, a modality equivalent with speaking to other people.

(12) I can communicate with the hearing in writing but I socialise with Deaf people so communicating with other Deaf people is important to me. It becomes amusing if I, as a Deaf person, can communicate in English with the hearing, but not with the Deaf through sign language.

This pupil thinks that her learning of English will be supported if the possibility to use ASL in the schools existed. To learn a language requires socialisation with the environment, as Williams (cited in: Dörnyei, 1998) pointed out. Because Deaf people’s first language is a signed and a visual language, it is probably easier to learn and code another signed language since the principles are similar. When a language fills a useful function (i.e. to communicate with other Deaf persons), the motivation for learning probably enhances.

(13) If there was an opportunity to learn ASL / IS in school, I would take that opportunity. The English language is strengthened when using ASL, I think, it will be easier to think
and the words get stuck easily. Knowing ASL affects the learning of English in some way I think. You see the words on the lips, to some extent, and you think in English when you read the lips and use the signs. If you learn a new sign of ASL as you will automatically get the English word for it. – 002

In this section, the results have shown that there are many factors which contribute to a motivation to learn English. When asked whether the teachers and parents affected their motivation, the answers were unanimous. Three participants mentioned a supporting teacher as important; one student explained that the difficulties of reading depend on her low reading experiences. This may be because she had previously been working a lot with gap-filling exercises without using the language in a communicative context, and this affected her motivation negatively.

Five of the participants expressed clearly that a variation in tasks and exercises, and teachers who listen are important for an enjoyable learning, and believed that unvaried lesson content affects the motivation negatively. In addition to this, some of the participants reported that they want to work more with communicative tasks which implicates that socialising with each other enhance the motivation and hence the learning. To learn an international Sign language would probably enhance the motivation more, according to most of the participants. Four of the five participants with a strong wish for IS or ASL as a subject are children of Deaf parents who grew up in the Deaf community. Arguments for a lingua franca for the Deaf were several, for example the ability to communicate with others like them, i.e. Deaf people when visiting other countries. To use ASL, for example, in the teaching creates an opportunity to identify oneself with the members of the particular language because most of the members of, for example the American sign language live in the United States and use written English in their daily lives.

5. Discussion

5.1 Are Deaf and hard of hearing pupils motivated to learn English?

The results of the interviews show that a major part of the students are motivated to learn a foreign language, to be eligible to communicate with others in the world when travelling, studying abroad or working in international environments such as movie production or international politics. The results in this essay also correspond to Kontra and Csizér’s (2013, 2015) investigations in Deaf and hard of hearing people in Hungary. The motivation of the participants in this essay is both affected by the norms of the reference groups (e.g. parents, friends and teachers) they belong to or identify themselves with and the benefits of knowing the language for the future. The teaching content, as well, affects the motivation. Almost all of the participants described instrumental tasks, for example gap-filling exercises and unvaried teaching, i.e. working with similar tasks (workbooks, translations of texts, gap-filling exercises) for a longer time, as affecting the joy of learning English. The pupils want to work more with English, such as communicative tasks and more difficult exercises to develop
themselves more. Some pupils wish for more interactive teaching where they can use their knowledge instead of working with the books all the time. However, despite the uninspiring exercises the participants still believed their motivation as strong, and actually the participants believed that they would learn the subject even if it was not compulsory due to its status as lingua franca. The results suggest that students' motivation to learn English is maintained because of the language's status as a world language, the lingua franca, and the benefits that skills in English give to those individuals. A major part of the pupils state that they are aware of the importance of knowing a foreign language such as English and the advantages of mastering English as an L3 or L4.

The interpersonal factors which affect the motivation are the expectations teachers and parents have on the children, but they are also motivated for a communicative purpose: they want to be able to communicate with others in the world, and some of them also want to study abroad and get to know other Deaf persons in the world. To be eligible to study abroad and meet other Deaf persons and learning for example ASL or BSL, English is a key factor. If the lesson content is uninspiring, the desire to learn is affected negatively temporarily but the long-term motivation is maintained. This, I argue on the basis that many of the participants in the study say they use English in many other contexts outside the school context and that it is these contexts that maintain students' motivation to continue to develop. These findings may to some extent resemble those findings in Allard’s investigation (2013): the skills the pupils master in accordance with the learning aims are probably developed outside the school context. However, this investigation has not clearly investigated the underlying reasons for the language development. Nonetheless, because a major part of the pupils state that their friends and future self/goals motivate them and stimulate their language learning more than the teaching does, the socializing part of the language (which is missing in the teaching, according to some pupils) may be a developing factor.

5.2 Is the motivation intrinsic or extrinsic?

Generally, intrinsic motivation is a natural, unaffected interest or curiosity for a particular subject or activity. However, as Ryan and Deci (2000) state, intrinsic motivation is rare in schools due to its compulsory status. When an activity is not carried out of curiosity or own interest, the motivation is not intrinsic. Instead, we may discuss different degrees of extrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) describes the third grade of motivation, identified regulation as a more self-determined form where the person identifies herself with the importance the activity may have for the person’s future. A major part of the participants believe that knowing English is important, and hence this motivates them to learn it. Whether they want to travel, study abroad or work in international environments, English is a key factor as mentioned above. The fourth type of extrinsic motivation, integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), can be attributed to the participants who indicated that they want to study or work abroad. For these participants the wishes of future studies or workplaces are a strong driving force that motivates them to learn English.
The reason why it is difficult to determine the type of motivation depends to some extent on the distinction between the ought self and the ideal self (Boyatzis and Akrivou 2006). While the ideal self is formed from the person’s genuine dreams and wishes, the ought self is formed from the social identity groups the person belongs to. The results in this essay show that the environment strongly affects the motivation, i.e. parents, teachers and friends. For those participants with one or two Deaf parents, the results clearly showed a greater awareness in the need of an international Sign language for communicative and motivational purposes, as well of evident reasons that they want to communicate with others in their own language modality. This is also consistent with Allard’s point that an international Sign language could be a potential way for the Deaf people to develop an international identity (2013).

A question we can ask ourselves is: why do we learn a world language? Some suggestions have been made in the Results section, but in short, the purpose is to be able to socialize with people in other countries in accordance with the increasing globalization we are parts of. The curriculum of the subject of English states that knowledge of English increases the individual's ability to take part of different social and cultural contexts, such as study and work (Skolverket, 2011a). For those who are hearing it is natural to develop a new language within the language modality they are familiar with; i.e. the spoken language and its written language. The wish and curiosity to meet other people and to get a better understanding of the world around us are equal for the Deaf, especially because the numbers of Deaf persons in a country are low and because the Deaf community is a “world-community” and are not limited to the country. It is apparent that the Deaf people want to meet people who are like them and have similar experiences of being a Deaf person in a hearing community.

Therefore, to value signed world languages like BSL or ASL as equally or stronger in connection with written English is not really strange. How would the world and our interaction look like if all people were denied the opportunity to speak in favour of written communication? Such is the reality for many Deaf people who do not have access to more signed languages than their own. The results have shown that the pupils who have participated in youth camps for the Deaf, have received a foundation to a signed international language, but those pupils who have not had the opportunity to participate in international youth camps for various reasons, lose an opportunity to develop an international Deaf/Sign language identity since there is no international Sign language given as a subject in the schools. Hearing students are given the opportunity to create both a Swedish and an international language identity in elementary school, while the identity development for Deaf pupils is limited when there is no international Sign language subject in the schools for the Deaf.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this research project has been to investigate the motivation to learn English as a foreign language among Deaf and hard of hearing pupils in Deaf schools in
Sweden. Due to the limited amount of participants who were from three schools out of five in Sweden, the results do not reflect or represent each pupil or each school in Sweden, nor do the results represent the motivational construction to its full extent as mentioned in 2.2.3, because motivation is a multifaceted and complex factor with several dimensions (Dörnyei, 1998). However, the results can be seen as an indication of what language learning motivation among Deaf pupils in Sweden looks like, especially when this topic has not been investigated in Sweden earlier.

The results have shown that a major part of the pupils are extrinsically motivated to learn English, yet some of them experience that the lesson content, the difficulty levels and some of the teachers expectations do affect their motivation negatively. However, almost all of the participants reported their motivation as relatively high due to the status of English as lingua franca in the world and skills in English are hence necessary for the future opportunities. They also mentioned a wish for ASL or IS as a school subject to be able to communicate with other Deaf persons in the world, or to be qualified for studying or work abroad. To study abroad as a Deaf person it requires proficiency in both written English and in an international Sign language in order to acquire the literature, writing essays and, moreover, to participate in the teaching with Deaf teachers or with interpreters signing an international Sign language at lectures or in discussions with classmates. Knowledge in a signed international language is hence necessary besides knowledge in written English, and the opportunity to learn a signed international language would enhance the motivation according to some of the participants. The results have also shown that the teaching for the Deaf and those hard of hearing with Sign language as language of instruction does not fully correspond to the communication criteria in the curriculum. Both the content of the curriculum and the lack of an international Sign language subject in the schools, which can functions as a lingua franca for the Deaf, lead to that Deaf and hard of hearing persons with Sign language as language of communication do not get equal opportunities as hearing persons get to be able to communicate with others in a free and independent way.

For teachers working with Deaf and hard of hearing pupils, the results in this investigation have clearly shown that the pupils appreciate teachers who listen to their wishes and suggestions of activities, for example working with communicative tasks or books adapted for their levels. As Ryan and Deci (2000) have pointed out, it is important that teachers are aware of the different kinds of extrinsic motivation since the intrinsic kind is rare in schools, especially in the later years as 7-9 grades. Although a signed international language as a school subject in the curriculum is missing and hence what is missing is also a useful way to socialize with help of the language, communicative tasks and varying lesson content are much appreciated. In addition, the educators and policy makers in Sweden should also consider the possibility to formulate a curriculum content that corresponds to the communicative ways for the Deaf. Especially when it is the Swedish schools’ responsibility to provide the pupils with an equivalent education and provide them with tools for the future, in accordance with the curriculum (2011a).
7. Acknowledgments

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References


Appendix A

Till vårdnadshavare med barn på xxx - skolan

Information om deltagande i intervju om elevers motivation till ämnet engelska, vårterminen 2015


För att kunna genomföra dessa intervjuer behöver jag tillstånd från vårdnadshavare eftersom att intervjuerna kommer att spelas in på video.Dock kommer materialet att raderas när allt är översatt till skriven text, och elevernas namn samt skolans namn anonymiseras med hjälp av siffror.

Deltagande: Att delta i studien är frivilligt och innebär att man tillåter att jag genomför intervjuer som spelas in med eleverna.

Sekretess: Studien följer noga de etiska föreskrifter som gäller för god forskningssed. Allt insamlat material behandlas med största aktsamhet och förvaras på ett säkert sätt. Samtliga medverkande elever och lärare, samt skola, kommer att vara anonyma i efterföljande publikationer och presentationer. Eleverna avidentifieras innan analys påbörjas, vilket innebär att deras namn ersätts med en kod. Uppsatsen kommer att publiceras på DiVA; i det fall den betygssättes med ett A eller B publiceras texten i fulltext. I det fall betyget blir C, D eller E publiceras enbart sammanfattningen på DiVA.

Om du har frågor eller önskar mer information är du välkommen att kontakta mig på mejl: sofiaryden@hotmail.com Handledare: Spela Mezek.
Medgivande: Genom att kryssa för ”Ja” och skriva under detta dokument ger vårdnadshavare och elev sina medgivanden till att delta i undersökningen enligt ovanstående beskrivning. Ett ”Nej” innebär att eleven inte deltar i studien

Ja, jag tillåter att mitt barn deltar i en intervju om dennes motivation till skolämnet engelska  □
Nej, jag tillåter inte att mitt barn deltar i en intervju om dennes motivation till skolämnet engelska  □

_______________________________________  ___________________________________
Elevens namn                          Klass

_______________________________________
Elevens underskrift

_______________________________________
Målsmans underskrift

_______________________________________
Målsmans namnförtydligande  Ort och datum

Inlämnas till lärare i engelska.
Appendix B

Vilket språk är ditt modersmål?
Vilka andra språk behärskar du?
Vilka språk läser du i skolan?
Berätta fritt vad du tycker om de språk du läser i skolan Vad tycker du om att lära dig engelska, varför?
Varför lär du dig engelska?
Hur ser din tidigare användning av engelska ut, har du varit i kontakt med det innan du började läsa det, t.ex. på resor?
Hur mycket tid lägger du ner på att träna engelska utanför skoltid? Vad är dina tankar om den mängd ansträngning du lägger på att lära dig engelska?
Vad gör ni på engelskalektionerna? Berätta hur undervisningen ser ut ungefär, vad ni får göra osv
Hur fungerar det att använda teckenspråk för att lära sig engelska, påverkar det din motivation att behöva lära dig ytterligare ett skriftligt språk som du inte kan kommunicera på via teckenspråk?
Är din lärare döv? Om ja/nej, påverkar det kvaliteten på undervisningen tror du?
Vilka saker i undervisningen tycker du är lätt/a svåra/jobbiga/tråkiga/roliga? Varför? Vad skulle du vilja göra mer av? Varför?
Vad kan förbättras?
Hur påverkar din familj och dina vänner din inlärning av engelska? Tycker de att det är viktigt med engelska, och varför/ varför inte? Påverkar deras synsätt på engelska ditt intresse till att lära dig engelska?
Är deras förväntningar på din utveckling i engelska höga eller låga?
Vem inverkar mest på dig, lärarna eller föräldrarna?
För vems skull lär du dig engelska, för din egen, för dina föräldrars eller för att lärarna säger att du måste?
Identifierar du dig med det engelska språket på något vis, vill du tillhöra den engelska språkgruppen?
Hur ser du dig själv i framtiden med dina engelskakunskaper? När kan du ha stor nytta av dem tror du?
Appendix C

(1) I klass 8 började jag delta i olika läger utomlands, t.ex. EUDY där deltagarna kommer från olika länder och därför används engelska som kommunikationsspråk där. Och de vänner jag fick där fortsatte jag att hålla kontakt med efter lägrets slut via sms, som då skrevs på engelska. Detta fick mig att utvecklas, och jag kände det själv också. Jag började titta på engelska filmer med engelsk undertext, och fram tills nyligen började jag läsa engelska böcker. – 001

(2) Rätt lite, ibland använder jag engelska när jag chattar med mina vänner i Ungern ifall jag inte kan uttrycka mig på ungerska. - 006

(3) Jag känner att jag mest lärt mig engelska på egen hand faktiskt. Tack vare lägren (EUDY, NUL) har jag också lärt mig internationellt teckenspråk. - 001

(4) Det är viktigt att kunna engelska inför framtiden när man ska resa till andra länder och kommunicera med de som inte kan svenska. Jag har även stor nytta av att kunna engelska i vardagen, ibland när jag är i Polen så förstår jag inte alltid vad som står på medicinförpackningar eller andra förpackningar och då är det bra att jag kan läsa den engelska texten på paketen. – 005

(5) För att jag tycker att det är viktigt att kunna kommunicera med andra människor, men också för att jag vill arbeta utomlands när jag blir äldre. T.ex. inom FN och mänskliga rättigheter eller andra politiska organisationer. – 003

(6) Jag har en önskan om att gå i en amerikansk skola t.ex. Maryland High School eller Gallaudet University och då är det viktigt att jag redan kan engelska innan jag börjar där. Det verkar finnas fler program att läsa där jämfört med Sverige, särskilt med tanke på att en del program blivit nedlagda här. Detta motiverar mig att utveckla min engelska.- 002

(7) Nu det sista året har jag en bra lärare i engelska, denna lärare har ingen fast planering för vad vi ska göra. Läraren har visat oss kunskapskraven vad vi ska kunna, men vad vi gör på lektionerna varierar stort. Vi skriver, läser, övar ord, grammatik. Läraren har också bett oss elever att komma med förslag, och utifrån alla förslag har läraren valt ut det denne tycker att vi behöver utveckla. – 001

(8) Sedan så är läraren väldigt tråkig också då hen ger oss samma, samma, samma uppgifter hela tiden vilket påverkar min motivation negativt väldigt mycket. Om läraren istället ger oss mer varierande uppgifter samt uppgifter där eleverna får samspela med varandra så skulle lektionerna bli mycket roligare. – 008

(9) Mina föräldrar fokuserar mer på svenska och teckenspråk, samt några andra ämnen som SO [Socialorienterande ämnen] och NO [Naturorienterande ämnen]. I
deras prioritering så hamnar engelska typ på sista plats. De ser engelskan som en bonus kan man säga, då de tycker att det är viktigare att jag får bra betyg i de andra ämnena. De själva tycker inte tycker att engelska är så viktigt och de är döva så de använder ASL istället som de behärskar flytande. – 008

(10) För att jag vill utveckla mig. De uppgifter jag får i skolan är för lättiga, jag går i klass 9 men ändå så arbetar jag med en bok anpassad för två årskurser under mig. Jag är orolig för de nationella proven som kommer i klass 10, eftersom att jag inte förstår allt jag läser. Jag tycker att det är fel att jag ska denna bok så därför vill jag utvecklas själv. Vi har engelska två gånger i veckan, och jag tycker inte att det räcker. – 005

(11) Om jag inte kan uttrycka mig på ASL när jag träffar döva från andra länder så kan jag alltid skriva på engelska istället. För mig är det viktigare att kunna skriva på engelska, för det är något som alla kan. Jag kan t.ex. inte använda mina kunskaper i ASL när jag ska kommunicera med hörande då de flesta inte kan ASL. – 007

(12) Jag kan kommunicera med hörande i skrift men jag umgås ju egentligen med döva så att kunna kommunicera med andra döva är viktigt för mig. Det blir ju lustigt om jag som döv kan kommunicera på engelska med hörande, men inte med döva via teckenspråk. – 003

(13) Fanns det en möjlighet att läsa ASL/IS i skolan så skulle jag ta den möjligheten. Det engelska språket stärks när man använder ASL tror jag, det blir lättare att tänka och orden fastnar lättare. Att kunna ASL påverkar inlärningen av engelska på något sätt tycker jag. Man ser orden på läpparna till viss del, och man tänker på engelska när man avläser och tecknar. Om man lär sig ett nytt tecken på ASL så får man automatiskt det engelska ordet för det. - 002