Attitudes towards English as a Foreign Language in a Multicultural Context
- A Study Carried out from the Perspectives of Identity, Social Context and Future Use-

Therese Larsson
Joanna Olsson
Abstract

The aim of this essay has been to gain knowledge about pupils’ attitudes towards English as a foreign language and to find out in what ways pupils’ cultural backgrounds affect these attitudes. Pupils’ attitudes have been investigated from the perspectives of identity, social context and thoughts about future use. A final aim has been to find out what pupils think about their own motivation in the English classroom in relation to these attitudes.

The research has been carried out at two different Compulsory schools in year nine, with different degrees of multiculturalism. Questionnaires have been made use of as a preparation for the interviews and in order to discern interesting tendencies. The main focus of our study has, however, been on eight qualitative in-depth interviews.

The results show that pupils no matter of their cultural background and mother tongue have a great input of the English language which they also highly value. What’s more, they have plans for the future which include the English language. In the same way, the English language is highly regarded by people in their social context. From this information we understand that pupils do find that the English language enriches their identity and plays an important role in their lives. Furthermore, we have found that the fact that pupils have another mother tongue than Swedish does not affect their attitudes towards English in a negative way. Instead, the contact with the English language and English-speaking culture seems to be viewed as yet another investment in their cultural capital. The three languages seem to play different roles and have different functions in the pupils’ lives and hence complement each other.

Keywords: English Language, Attitudes, Identity, Cultural background, Motivation, Compulsory School
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Appendix 1

Appendix 2
1 Introduction

As future English teachers who want to set out from our pupils’ reality in order to make teaching relevant and efficient, we consider it most pertinent to find out what attitudes pupils have towards the English language. Furthermore, in a multicultural context, it seems most significant to investigate whether pupils’ attitudes are influenced by the fact that they have access to another L1 (other than Swedish and English) and, consequently other cultural input. It also becomes appropriate to reflect upon how these attitudes might affect pupils’ motivation to learn English since motivation is commonly considered the very key to successful second language learning.

In a relatively small country like Sweden with a language spoken by a rather limited group of people, it seems natural that young people would like to widen their perspectives and expose themselves to input from outside their country borders. Over the past few decades the proficiency in English among Swedish pupils has increased noticeably due to young people’s increasing access and exposure to English input. In our contact with young people we have got the impression that the English language constitutes an important part in their daily life and in the context in which they find themselves. What’s more, young people seem well aware of the fact that the English language is the key to a future with international elements to it. It is not difficult to imagine that to many young people in Sweden today proficiency in the English language is something valuable, and they are therefore likely to be motivated to learn English (although this is not necessarily reflected in their motivation in the English classroom).

However, in Sweden today there is a large group of pupils who do not have a limited language like Swedish as their mother tongue. Thanks to their cultural background they might have an excellent command of a far larger language than Swedish. They are also likely to have a high proficiency in Swedish and might, consequently consider themselves to have two or even three mother tongues. As a result of this double or triple language proficiency these pupils already have access to various cultures and also the possibility to make their way outside the Swedish borders without a proficiency in English.

Not only do we want our pupils to reach the goals set up for English, but in accordance with the curriculum for English we also want them to be equipped with tools and interest enough to continue developing their English skills also after finishing school. In order to reach this aim, we believe that it is important that the pupils feel that the English language somehow enriches their identity and that they find that they have use of English also outside
the English classroom. We have to find ways of stirring an interest for English in our pupils, and what can be more interesting and proper than using our pupils’ attitudes as a starting point.

2 Background

2.1 What Does the Curriculum Say?

In the syllabus formulated by The Swedish National Agency for Education the aim of English as a subject and its role in education are described as follows:

The ability to use English is necessary for studies, travel in other countries and for social and professional international contacts of different kinds. The subject aims at developing an all-round communicative ability and the language skills necessary for international contacts, and an increasingly internationalised labour market, in order to take advantage of the rapid developments taking place, as a result of information and communications technologies, as well as for further studies [...] All pupils need to be prepared so that on their own they can further develop their knowledge after completing schooling. The subject thus also aims at pupils maintaining and developing their desire and ability to learn English (www.skolverket.se).

It is expressed above how the English language is necessary for studies, travelling as well as for social and professional international contacts. The indispensability of the English language to people who want to make their way outside the Swedish country boarders in order to “experience the world” or maybe make an international career seems nonnegotiable. In the same way the English language is presented as a requirement in order to be able to keep up also within the Swedish society which to a great extent is affected by globalisation.

Furthermore, it says above that English as a subject aims at pupils maintaining and developing their ability and desire to learn English. Consequently, it seems vital that pupils during their school years develop a positive attitude towards the English language in order to make this possible. It also becomes essential that the pupils themselves experience that they need to develop their proficiency in English.

In addition, in the description of what goals in English the pupils should have attained by the end of year nine, one of the aims is that pupils should “have a knowledge of everyday life, society and cultural traditions in some countries where English occupies a central position, as well as be able to make comparisons with their own cultural experiences” (www.skolverket.se). Here, it is interesting to consider pupils’ views on the English language in relation to their cultural background. More specifically, how pupils’ cultural background as
well as cultural experiences in combination with their input of English create a picture of the cultures of the English-speaking world.

2.2 Terms and Definitions

One of the key terms in this essay is identity. This is also a very complex notion with many layers to it and about which many things have been said in many different contexts. In two well-regarded English dictionaries, namely Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary and Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, we find slightly simplified but still commonly used definitions of identity, and these are as follows: “the qualities of a person or group which make them different from others” (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary), and “the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from other” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary).

Another definition of identity, which is given in a context of language learning, is found in Thomas Ricento’s article “Consideration of Identity in L2 Learning” in Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning, edited by Eli Hinkel in 2005, where Ricento claims that the term can be used to reference “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (898). This is also the definition which we find most useful in the writing of this essay. However, we will return to the notion of identity in our theory chapter where we will look closer at it and further discuss it from different points of view.

When investigating whether or not the pupils experience that there is a connection between their social context and the English language, we have chosen to focus on social contexts outside the classroom, such as family and groups of peers. Although we will further discuss the role of social context in language learning in our theory chapter, especially dealing with identity, we have hence chosen not to define the very notion from a theoretical point of view, but rather limit it to, in this essay, refer to family and groups of peers.

Culture is undoubtedly a multifaceted notion used in many varied contexts. In this essay we have chosen to apply a broad anthropologic approach to culture, that is, we have chosen to view culture as various expressions of human life. Lately, within anthropology, culture is also viewed as a process rather than a static condition. However, in the context of this essay, it seems appropriate to also acknowledge some of the distinctions within this notion, since we will make use of it in different ways. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary makes six
different distinctions of the term culture of which the three first are useful in the context of this essay. The first two distinctions are found under the title way of life; the first one being: “the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group” and the second referring to culture as “a country, group, etc. with its own beliefs, etc”. These two definitions become useful when talking about pupils’ cultural background but also when dealing with the term multiculturalism which refers to a pattern of different cultures (as described above) within the same context. The third definition: “art, music, literature, etc., thought of as a group” becomes useful when referring to pupils’ cultural input but also to conceptions such as youth culture.

Finally, it seems appropriate to take a further look at the term motivation. It has been said that motivation can be considered “a construct made up of certain attitudes” (Brown 181). Furthermore it is common to make a difference between instrumental and integrative motivation, the instrumental motivation being that motivation which is connected to instrumental goals, such as facilitating a career, being able to understand various technical materials, etc (Brown 162), whereas the integrative side to motivation is connected to a personal wish to integrate into the culture which speaks the target language and to be able to have an interchange with that group (Brown 162). The integrative motivation is commonly seen as the kind of motivation with most impact in second language learning situations. However, the aspect of motivation in language learning is more complex than that, and we will therefore return to this matter in our theory chapter where it will be further discussed.

3 Aim and Research Questions
The aim of this essay is to investigate what attitudes pupils in the Swedish Compulsory School year nine have towards English as a foreign language and how these attitudes are related to and affected by the pupils’ cultural background and mother tongue. We want to look into the aspect of attitudes from the perspectives of identity, social context and present and future use of English. The questions we want to find answers to through this essay are the following:

1. What are the pupils’ views on the English language in relation to their sense of identity and social context?
2. What are the pupils’ views on their future use of English?
3 In what way are these views connected/related to the pupils’ cultural background and mother tongue?

4 In what way are these views connected/related to the pupils’ estimates of their own motivation in the English classroom?

**4 Theory and Previous Research**

**4.1 Key Literature**

Our essay deals with pupils’ attitudes towards the English language and how these attitudes affect their motivation in second language learning. However, it should be mentioned that this essay does not bring up earlier made research on pupils’ attitudes towards second language learning.

We have chosen to use for this essay the kind of literature which focuses on second language learning and teaching, culture/multiculturalism, identity, sociology and motivation. More specifically, we have chosen Ulrika Tornberg’s *Språkdidaktik*, 2005, which brings up aspects such as the importance of creating meaning between school and life outside school when teaching in order to motivate pupils (Tornberg 41). She also deals with the aspects of cultural understanding in language teaching. According to Tornberg language is an expression of a cultural community, and one of the aims of language teaching is to convey cultural understanding. Furthermore, Tornberg brings up the fact that language teaching for a long period of time, when speaking of “culture”, has associated the aspect of culture with nationality. This means that when students have studied a second language, they have also studied the culture of the country/countries where this language is spoken (Tornberg 48-49). This view leads on to our research on pupils’ attitudes towards English as a foreign language, since those are likely to be affected by their attitudes towards the English-speaking culture. In this context it is important to remember that English is a widespread language which is represented by a wide range of cultures and their various expressions.

Another work we are making use of is *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (fourth edition) by H. Douglas Brown, 2000. Here we focus especially on chapter 6 and 7 which deal with personality factors such as efficiency and motivation, as well as sociocultural factors such as attitudes and second culture acquisition. All of these subjects can in one way or another be connected to our earlier mentioned keywords and therefore these chapters are of great significance to our research.
A third book we believe is useful when writing this essay is *Handbook of Research in Language Teaching and Learning* which is a collection of a number of articles. The article we look closer at is Considerations of Identity in L2 Learning by Thomas Ricento.

Finally we have chosen to use two Swedish books. The reason for making use of these Swedish books is two-folded. The first reason is that they both deal with social contexts and multiculturalism, and the second one is that our research is based on Swedish pupils who live in the Swedish society and it therefore seems appropriate to make use of books based on research carried out within a Swedish context. *Zlatan, Caligula och ordningen i skolan – En interaktionistisk analys* by Jonas Aspelin, brings up the role of social interplays and social contexts in general, and more specifically in a school context. The other book, *Multikultiungdom – kön, etnicitet och identitet*, which is written by Aleksandra Ålund, focuses on cultural and social living conditions in our modern multicultural society and on the necessity of feeling rooted in the very same society. It should be mentioned that henceforth any quotes taken from these two Swedish sources have been translated into English by the authors of this essay.

4.2 Identity, Social Context and Second Language Learning

We have already in our chapter *Terms and Definitions* referred to identity as a term which can be used to reference “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (Ricento 898). However, it seems proper to look further into this complex notion, its origin and relation to the social context in which a person finds himself/herself and, finally, its role in second language learning.

Aspelin states in his book *Zlatan, Caligula och ordningen i skolan*, that the base of one’s identity is founded during the so called primary socialisation phase, which takes place during childhood and within the family setting (52). Moreover, it is, according to Aspelin, possible to look at the social self as constituting the base of one’s identity. Furthermore, this social self can be divided into a two-folded view on identity. This categorisation of social self and identity springs from research carried out by George H. Mead, and the first aspect of identity is that which deals with the so called “subjective I”, taking into account what makes one unique as a person. This aspect of identity is called the personal identity, whereas the social identity, constituted by the so called “objective me”, deals with those characteristics which a person has in common with the people belonging to the same social group (Aspelin 54).
Within the framework of this essay it seems particularly interesting to look closer at the social identity and “objective me”, since we have chosen to focus on the aspect of identity which deals with a person’s understanding of his/her relationship to the world. According to Mead, what makes a human being exceptional is the fact that she can view herself as an object to herself, that is, with the eyes of others. Hence, “the framework of the self” is, according to Mead, constituted by the response one receives from society or the group to which one belongs (Aspelin 53). Following that, Mead claims that the “objective me” is “the organised compilation of others’ attitudes which one takes onboard” (Aspelin 54). The word “organisation” is used in this context since Mead views the “objective me” as “a social structure, something which has been built up in the consciousness of an individual through all the experiences the individual has made and still makes throughout life” (Aspelin 54). Consequently, we can see that there is a close connection between identity and social context, and that this view on identity goes well with Ricento’s definition of identity as something which is constructed “across time and space” (Ricento 898).

From Brown’s book Principles on Language Learning and Teaching, we can discern a close connection between attitudes and identity. When it comes to attitudes, Brown writes about these as, not surprisingly, being closely connected to our values. He writes that “[v]aluing takes on the characteristics of beliefs or attitudes as values are internalized” (Brown 144). Further on, he writes that “…individuals become characterized by and understand themselves in terms of their value system” (Brown 144). Following that, he develops the notion of attitudes in connection with identity and social context as he establishes the fact that attitudes are developed early in childhood and “… are the result of parents’ and peers’ attitudes, of contact with people who are ‘different’ in any number of ways, and of interacting affective factors in the human experience” (Brown 180). Brown continues by claiming that these attitudes “…form a part of one’s perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living” (Brown 180).

Departing from Brown’s and Aspelin’s summaries of Mead’s theories about identity, people’s attitudes seem to play an important role in this context, attitudes being the internalisation of our values. In addition we understand that identity is something which is constructed across time and space. This is also confirmed in the introduction to Ricento’s article in Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning, where it says that “social identity can be understood in terms of how people see themselves and their social roles in relation to others, as well as the ways in which they understand their past, present, and future” (891) and further on that “an individual identity is not fixed but is transformed by
Just like Aspelin, Ricento focuses on the sociocultural rather than the psychological aspects of identity. He also claims that language can play an important role in the very process of identity founding and transformation (Ricento 895).

Ricento gives a historical background to the relation between second language acquisition and identity, departing from Tajfel’s theories on how social identity was based on a person’s membership of a group where he/she gets his emotional needs met. Drawing on this theory other researcher’s, namely Giles and Johnson, viewed language as a “prominent marker of group membership and social identity” (Ricento 896). As a consequence, change of group membership could involve some kind of linguistic adaptation. Another concept commonly used in SLA research was established by John Schumann, and is that of social distance, which refers to “the degree of similarity between two cultures” (Ricento 897). According to this theory, the degree of similarity would indicate with what difficulty a person would acquire a foreign language, depending on his/her own cultural background and the target language culture. Ricento sums up this theory by saying that “[i]n other words, the degree to which the learner identifies with another culture, the more motivated he or she will be to acquire that culture’s language” (Ricento 897).

Gardner and Lambert’s theories on motivation (which will be further dealt with in the following chapter) also suggested a connection between language learning and identity where learners are thought to be more likely to acquire the target language if they also identify with the target language culture (Ricento 897). Ricento brings up the complication of this theory since it partly suggests an abandonment of one’s own culture, and since it also becomes even more problematic in a multicultural context. According to Ricento, this is also the general problem with early research on the relation between second language learning and identity; that it does not cater for “an individual’s multiple memberships based on gender, class, race, linguistic repertoire […]” (Ricento 898). Furthermore, it does not cater for the multicultural society which is a reality in many countries today.

More recent research, represented among many others by Bonny Norton, shows how second language learning in relation to identity can be seen as an investment: “if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (Ricento 899). Here we see that language learning does not have to involve an abandonment of one’s own culture or identity which is likely to be fairly complex, but it can instead contribute to an expansion of and investment in the very same. At this point it seems accurate to return to Mead’s and Brown’s theories on the connection between identity
and values. According to Ricento, the value learners attach to a language will come across in the learner’s identity, in the way he/she views himself/herself in relation to the target language and culture (Ricento 903). Ricento ends his article by pointing out that an interesting area in the study of second language learning and identity, which is given increasing attention recently, is “the transnational character of many immigrant cultures” (Ricento 906).

4.3 Target Language Culture versus Multiculturalism in the Language Classroom

When studying literature, such as Ulrika Tornberg’s Språkidaktik and Aleksandra Álund’s Multikultiungdom – Kôn, etnicitet, identitet, it becomes clear how the notion of culture does not only refer to the culture of a country or the culture of a language but also the culture of an individual. In other words, it is necessary to view the notion of culture as highly complex with a number of different meanings. However, this essay will especially focus on culture in the following ways: target language culture, multiculturalism in the language classroom and culture from the perspective of identity.

In Språkidaktik Tornberg does not only stress the complexity of the notion of culture in general, but she also focuses on culture in relation to identity as well as culture in relation to target language didactics in combination with multiculturalism in the language classroom.

According to the syllabus for English as a school subject in Compulsory School, one of the aims of the Swedish school is to convey English culture on the basis of all the English-speaking parts of the world. Tornberg also states that school and teaching in general can be considered a culture producing institution, and, which has already been mentioned in the literature part, how the notion of culture for a long time within language teaching has been connected to nationality, as well as how pupils when they have studied a language, also have studied the “culture” of that language. (Tornberg 48).

Furthermore, Tornberg brings up Cultural Studies and language learning expert Michael Byram who takes the culture meeting to an individual level in the way that he finds himself critical towards the attitude that individuals represent the so called dominating culture. Moreover, one of the aims of Cultural Studies is to challenge the dominating culture which is giving the individual an identity, instead of helping her find an identity that is self defined. Tornberg continues with the statement that “cultural belonging, just like identity, can be diverse as well as changing, which is typical for our time and society where changes in all areas are taking place more and more rapidly” (Tornberg 51).

When discussing the notion of culture and the great complexity that comes with it, Tornberg brings up how the question of “culture” in language teaching becomes a problem,
just like the formulation of aims in the course plans of 2000, which says that the pupils shall, through the studies of cultural differences and by comparing cultures, develop an intercultural competence. Tornberg claims that this can be considered an issue since one must ask the question: “from what criteria shall cultures be compared; based on the assumption of national separated cultures, or based on the multiplicity of cultures which today characterize all western societies?” (Tornberg 52). Moreover, Tornberg also refers to Claire Kramsch who brings up the question how culture in language teaching should be understood. Kramsch claims that it is about searching for “a third place” where a new, third culture can be created through an interaction between the different cultures that the pupils represent, and which can enrich the pupils as well as the cultural expressions that they meet through teaching. On the basis of this perspective cultural understanding then, according to Kramsch, becomes “a question for the individual in his or her meeting with multiplicity and dissimilarity, and not an aim for teaching” (Tornberg 53).

When speaking of multiculturalism in the language classroom it is also interesting to consider culture in relation to identity. *Multikultinjungdom – Kön, etnicitet, identitet* by Aleksandra Ålund focuses especially on culture from the perspective of the immigrated pupil and how belonging to a certain culture becomes a problem when moving to another culture in the way that one’s identity becomes questioned. Throughout the book Ålund brings up different situations and cases where she tells the stories of pupils who have migrated to Sweden or have a cultural background other than Swedish. In the chapter which this essay concentrates on, Ålund tells the story of Theo and Ayse and their struggle to create an identity when finding themselves in between two cultures. Theo, who is 23 years old and born in Sweden with Greek parents, wants nothing but feel Swedish and unique as an individual, and does not want to be associated with the social background and life experiences of his parents. Therefore Theo views culture as something which traps and marks him, and hence he does not want anything to do with it. However, according to Ålund, Theo’s escape from culture appears to have the opposite effect since it rather seems to make him “a prisoner of culture” (Ålund 124). Ayse, on the other hand, who was born in Turkey but moved to Sweden as a child, has a more open and inquiring relationship to the notion of culture. At the same time Ålund believes that her self-perception and ideas about other people are charged with those implications which flourish amongst people around her about young immigrants’ cultural crisis and split identities. Furthermore, Ålund brings up how school has taught Ayse to look at herself through a “culture prism”, through which she burdens herself with all kinds of cultural clashes and conflicts. However, these clashes and conflicts are really not something that Ayse
herself experiences. Instead, she has a healthy contact with her Swedish-Turkish culture and believes that the Swedish and the Turkish melt together in the sense that one culture gets meaning through the other and vice versa.

Ålund finishes with the assertion that Theo and Ayse “move within a richness of cultural worlds, where they through memories and experiences, through themselves and through others are able to relate to a great amount of different life patterns and value structures”, and that these adolescents at the same time as they live within some kind of social alienation, also live within a multicultural fellowship (Ålund 125).

4.4 The Role of Motivation in Second Language Learning

As already mentioned in the background chapter, it is a well-established fact that motivation plays a key-role in second language learning. However, the term itself is not self-explicatory and Brown says that this “catch-all term” is often dealt with without an actual understanding of the term and its subcomponents (Brown 160). There are many aspects and subcomponents to motivation, but in this essay we have found ourselves forced to limit the amount of aspects to bring up. We would also like to remind the reader that the aspect of motivation is closely connected to identity and has therefore partly already been dealt with in the initial theory chapter. Since motivation can be considered “a construct made up of certain attitudes” (Brown 181), we find that there is not only a connection between the four notions value, attitude, identity and motivation, but there also seems to be an interaction or interplay between the four.

According to Brown there are several historical perspectives on motivation (which will not be dwelled on in this essay) which all somehow are connected to the “needs” concept. When we see a possibility of our needs to be fulfilled, this tends to motivate us. And in the same way when we see no fulfilment of needs in sight, our motivation tends to fail us. Brown says that this “needs” concept is often interpreted in a social context and he gives an example of how the lack of being able to see how needs are being met might affect language learning. He says that “you may be unmotivated to learn a foreign language because you fail to see the rewards, connect the learning only to superficial needs (e.g. fulfilling a requirement), and see no possibility of a social context in which this skill is useful” (Brown 161).

As has been mentioned in the background chapter it is common to make a difference between instrumental and integrative motivation and integrative motivation is commonly seen as the most “efficient” motivation in a second language learning context. However, it is important to point out that some learners might benefit from an integrative motivation
whereas other might find the instrumental motivation to have more impact on their language learning. The efficiency of a certain kind of motivation might also depend on the context in which it is manifested. It should also be mentioned that most language learning situations involve a combination of the two different kinds of motivation (Brown 163). In the context of our essay it also seems interesting to take a look at the different degrees of integrative motivation. Brown writes that “some integrative orientations may be simply a moderate desire to socialize with or find out about speakers of the target language, while deeper assimilative orientations may describe a more profound need to identify almost exclusively with the target language culture, possibly over a long-term period” (Brown 164).

5 Method
5.1 Selection
In our research we have chosen to use questionnaires as well as in-depth qualitative interviews. The questionnaires and the interviews were completed by pupils at two different Compulsory Schools in year nine. The reason why we chose to focus on pupils in year nine is principally because we believe these pupils are able to give more elaborated answers than the pupils in year seven and eight, but also due to the fact that we, as future English teachers, with focus on Secondary School and Compulsory School are interested in how pupils at this certain age think of the English language. When it comes to the schools, one is a so called multicultural school (henceforth referred to as “the multicultural school”) with almost exclusively pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish in the sense that either the pupils themselves, both their parents or one of their parents were not born in Sweden (henceforth referred to as “pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish”); and one is a so called integrated school (henceforth referred to as “the integrated school”) where approximately half of the students have a cultural background other than Swedish and the rest have a Swedish background in the sense that both their parents as well as they themselves were born in Sweden (henceforth referred to as “pupils with a Swedish cultural background). We chose to carry out our research at these particular schools due to two aspects. The integrated school was partly chosen because it is a school known for its mixture of pupils when it comes to having a Swedish cultural background as well as having a cultural background other than Swedish. Also, we have a close relation to this school in particular since one of us did our teaching practise here, which made it easy for us to get in contact with teachers and get started with our research. The other school, which is multicultural, was
chosen because it was the only school that we contacted in a multicultural area that showed an enthusiasm for and interest in our research.

The interviews were carried out in the same classes where the questionnaires were filled out. In that way the pupils were somewhat prepared for the interviews, and the matters which the interviews were to deal with did not come as a surprise to them. Four interviews were carried out at each above mentioned school and two boys and two girls were interviewed at each school. The majority of the pupils volunteered to take part in the interviews. Three of them did not volunteer but were asked if they wanted to take part, which they seemed happy enough to do. Each interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes, which was the time recommended by the English teacher at the multicultural school and which we found reasonable.

5.2 Collection of Data

Except for literature studies, our research is based on questionnaires as well as interviews. According to our literature, such as the article written by Thomas Ricento and Brown’s Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, it is appropriate to not only use questionnaires when investigating matters such as social identity and affective factors since they do not allow for the dynamics which are associated with these matters. The same thing goes for Bo Johansson and Per Olov Svedner who in Examensarbetet i lärarutbildningen claim that questionnaires are not a good method when wanting to find out about pupils’ attitudes and views on certain matters. The above mentioned authors agree that interviews, and especially in-depth qualitative interviews, constitute the most appropriate method when investigating these kinds of questions (Johansson och Svedner 26). Hence, we have chosen to combine these two research methods and believe that they can complement each other as they serve different purposes in our research. However, our main focus will be on the interviews and they will constitute the most important foundation of our analyses.

Still, we believe the questionnaires function as a preparation to the interviews for us, the interviewers, as well as for the pupils, the interviewees. It has also been our idea to let the pupils, through the questionnaires, give the matters some thought before the interviews. We also got the impression that to some pupils the questionnaire had the role of an eye-opener which made them realise how much contact they actually have with the English language. We also believe the questionnaires to hint at interesting tendencies although the results cannot be considered generally applicable from a scientific point of view, nor will the results be presented or dealt with in such a way. Instead we have just chosen to pinpoint some
interesting tendencies which we have discerned. The questionnaires are also the only method which can identify any differences between pupils who have a cultural background other than Swedish in the sense that either they themselves, or one or both of their parents were born abroad and they also speak another language than Swedish at home (often in combination with Swedish), and pupils whose parents and they themselves were born in Sweden and consequently only speak Swedish at home. The interviews, on the other hand, aim at following up the tendencies we can discern from those questionnaires and obtain a deeper and more personalised understanding of the same.

We planned to hand out questionnaires to a class of approximately 25 pupils at each school, that is, totally 50 questionnaires. Following the questionnaires we intended to interview four pupils from each class, of which two girls and two boys. In all four girls and four boys in year nine were interviewed.

At the multicultural school the questionnaires were filled out by 21 pupils of whom three were born outside of Sweden and the rest were born in Sweden. All of them spoke another language than Swedish at home (henceforth referred to as “mother tongue”), although some of them spoke both Swedish and their mother tongue at home. The languages that were represented in the class that filled out the questionnaires were the following (number of pupils in brackets): Arabic (8), Albanian (6), Turkish (2), Polish (1), Spanish (1), Persian (1), Punjabi (1) and Rumanian (1).

At the integrated school the questionnaires were filled out by a total of 27 pupils, of which 14 pupils had a Swedish cultural background. Among the other 13 pupils the following languages were represented: Arabic (5), Russian (1), Spanish (1), and Albanian (1). The reason why so few languages were represented is that several pupils with a different cultural background mentioned that they only speak Swedish at home. Three of these pupils were born in Sweden with only one parent born abroad; one girl had parents who were both born in Eritrea whereas she herself was born in Sweden; and finally, one boy was born in Russia just like both his parents.

The interviews that we carried out are as already mentioned in-depth qualitative interviews. Hence, we have not aspired to obtain any generally applicable results, but instead we have decided to look further into a few “cases” in order to get an idea of those specific

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We are well aware of the fact that this is a rather complex term and that the use of it may not be appropriate in all cases, especially since many pupils view themselves as more proficient in Swedish than in their so called mother tongue, and would maybe therefore choose to consider Swedish their mother tongue instead. However, in this essay we have chosen to use the term “mother tongue” to refer to the language which the pupils, thanks to their cultural background, exclusively or partly speak at home and which is not Swedish.
pupils’ attitudes/views, what they are based on, etc. The interviews which we carried out are not so called structured interviews, nor completely associative, but rather something in between. According to Svedberg and Johansson it is important when carrying out qualitative interviews not to ask the interviewees the actual research questions but rather fairly open and concrete questions (Johansson och Svedner 27). It is important that the questions make it possible for the interviewee to speak at length, associate, etc. It is therefore also important that the questions are concrete, and that they are not leading nor involve any explicit form of valuing. From the answers one gets from such interview questions it will then be possible to make an analysis and find answers to the very research questions.

Since the subject of our essay is fairly abstract we struggled to find suitable questions that would make the pupils feel comfortable to speak at length and associate, and that still would give us answers to our original questions. However, we finally came up with questions that we thought would be concrete enough, open, not too leading and hopefully interesting and inspiring to the pupils, (see appendix 2).

In order to find answers to our first research question, which deals with pupils views on the English language from the perspectives of identity and social context, we therefore started off by asking the pupils to tell us about their contact with the English language. We had also planned for various concrete follow-up-questions as suggested by Svedberg and Johansson, such as, when, how, how often, can you give an example, etc (Johansson och Svedner 29). We also asked them what contact they found important and what contact they did not find important. Following that we asked what they knew and thought about their friends’ and family’s contact with the English language. Finally we asked them what countries they associated with the English language and what picture they had of those countries.

When it comes to the pupils’ views on their future use of the English language, we decided to simply ask the pupils to, if they wanted, tell us about their future plans, and from there, we continued by asking them what role they thought that the English language would play in those future plans.

In order to see if there is any connection between the pupils’ views on the English language and their mother tongue and cultural background, we decided to ask questions similar to the ones we asked in order to get answers to our first questions. More specifically we asked them to tell us about their contact with their mother tongue. Also here, we tried to follow up the question in different ways and when possible we asked the pupils to make some kind of comparison between their contact with the English language and their mother tongue.
When writing our result chapter, we have decided to present the result divided into subtitles according to the above groups of questions, without giving room to any kind of analysis. The analysis chapter, on the other hand, will be divided into subchapters according to our research questions.

5.3 Procedure and Ethical Guidelines

Before we handed out the questionnaires and carried out the interviews we wrote a letter to the pupils’ parents in order to get their permission to involve their children in our research. We did this according to scientific ethical recommendations. However, when it comes to the integrated school we got the message that this letter was not necessary, since the pupils’ parents in the beginning of the term signed a paper where they allowed their children to participate in different kinds of surveys. At the multicultural school, an individual practice had been established which meant that individual teachers took responsibility for decisions of the like. As a consequence, the teacher in accordance with the practice of the school took full responsibility for the procedure and insisted that we did not hand out the letters.

When we handed out the questionnaires as well as carried out the interviews, we visited the schools in question. When it comes to the questionnaires we went to the schools and introduced ourselves, as well as explained the purpose of our work before we handed out the material to the pupils.

The interviews were carried out with one pupil at a time, but we as interviewers were both present. The reason for this was that one of us asked the questions, whereas the other one took notes and filled in if something was missing. The reason why we chose to carry out the interviews in this way was mainly due to the fact that we thought it would be easier for the informant to focus on only one person instead of two, but also in order for us as interviewers to stay focused and structured. This we also explained to the pupils before we started the interviews. Before we started the interviews we also, just like Johansson and Svedner suggest, explained to the interviewees that the interview would be recorded and that nobody else would listen to the tape since it would be destroyed after being studied and analysed.

All interviews took place in a school environment, more specifically in some kind of classroom. This might be considered a rather stiff and unsocial environment for carrying out interviews, but it actually turned out well and we managed to create a quite relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. The reason why we succeeded in this might partly have been due to an opened and relaxed way of meeting the pupils, but also due to the pupils own very open and
enthusiastic way of responding to our work, which resulted in a good communication between the two of us.

6 Results
The result chapter has been divided into three different chapters with various subchapters. The first chapter deals with the tendencies which can be discerned from the questionnaires. As already explained in our method chapter, these tendencies are presented in a fairly general way. They have been divided into thematic subchapters. Following that, comes a presentation of the informants whom we have interviewed and, finally follows the results which constitute the main focus of our analyses, that is, the results from the interviews. These results have also been divided into thematic subchapters which have been created with the four research questions in mind. We have hence, compiled the answers to questions which we find deal with the different research questions under the same subtitle.

6.1 Tendencies Discerned from the Questionnaires

6.1.1 Contact with the English Language in Spare Time
Several interesting tendencies can be discerned from the questionnaires, the first one dealing with the pupils’ contact with the English language in their spare time. The questionnaires show clearly that most pupils have very much contact with the English language in their spare time. The three kinds of input which stand out are TV, music and films in English. Most pupils are exposed to this input several times every week. There are a few exemptions of pupils who do not have as much input, and these few belong to the group of pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish. Half of the pupils chat in English very often, others rarely. In this case there is no difference when it comes to pupils’ cultural backgrounds. However those seven pupils who never chat in English all belong to the group of pupils with different cultural background. When it comes to the Internet and computer games this input seems to be moderate and there are no differences to discern based on pupils’ cultural backgrounds. Other interesting tendencies regarding pupils’ input is that pupils from the multicultural school are overrepresented in the group of pupils who often read novels in English, but also in the group of pupils who never read novels in English. Finally, the questionnaires show that pupils with a Swedish background more often find themselves in other situations where English is being used. However, this information should not be given
too much importance since we realised after having handed out the questionnaires that “other situations” easily could be interpreted in various different ways.

The questionnaires show that almost all pupils find their contact with TV, music and films very important. More than half of the pupils find their contact with Internet and travelling important. Approximately half of the pupils find chatting and reading books in English important, whereas less than half of the pupils view computer games and magazines as important contacts. There are no essential differences based on cultural background to be discerned when it comes to pupils’ ways of valuing their contact with the English language.

When being asked for what kinds of TV-programs and music it is important to know English some clear differences based on cultural background showed. Pupils generally thought it was most important to know English when watching different kinds of series. Also cartoons and news were rather highly rated. However, pupils at the multicultural school seemed to find it more important to know English for watching the news than pupils with other cultural backgrounds at the integrated school. An interesting tendency is also that music preference partly seems to depend on cultural background. Noticeably few pupils with other cultural background than Swedish found it important to know English when listening to rock and pop. R’nB was clearly favoured and Rap and Hip-hop were also fairly highly rated genres.

Most pupils think that they become more motivated to study English at school due to their contact with the English language in their spare time. However, 10 out of 11 pupils who do not think that their contact with the English language in their spare time makes any difference to their motivation in the English classroom belong to the group of pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish.

6.1.2 Thoughts on Future Use of English

All pupils except for one (at the multicultural school) believe that they will have use of the English language after graduating from Upper Secondary School. More than half of the pupils at both schools thought that they would have use of the English language when studying at university and when travelling. What is interesting is that more pupils at the integrated school than at the multicultural school believe that they will have use of the English language when working abroad or at an international company in Sweden and when taking part of information and TV, music and literature in English. However, regarding these uses of the English language there is no difference to talk about between the pupils with other cultural backgrounds than Swedish at the integrated school and the pupils with Swedish cultural
background at the very same school. Only three pupils do not think that their views on their future use of English have any effect on their motivation in the English classroom. These three all belong to the group of pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish.

6.1.3 Thoughts on the English Language in Various Contexts

When it comes to pupils’ thoughts about the English language in their social context it seems that it is more common amongst pupils with another cultural background at the multicultural school to regard their siblings instead of their parents as proficient in English. Nevertheless, according to the pupils, almost all parents at both schools consider it important to be proficient in English.

When asking the pupils where they believe that they best learn English, it turns out that the majority of the pupils at the integrated school believe that they best learn English outside of school whereas the majority of the pupils at the multicultural school believe that they best learn English in the English classroom.

Further on, when the pupils are to tick the statements about the English language which they agree with, it turns out that the statements which most pupils agree with are that the English language is important in order to be able to enjoy the English-speaking youth culture, for example music, film and TV-programs and in order to be able to communicate with people from other cultures. Many pupils also believe that the English language creates possibilities for the future and that you miss out on a lot of entertainment and information without proficiency in the English language. Few, but still some, pupils think that the English-speaking youth culture is better than the Swedish one. Only five pupils think that classes in their mother tongue are more important than English classes. Slightly more than half of the pupils at both schools consider English a so called “world language”. Only pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish, think that there are other cultures that are more important and interesting than the English-speaking one. More specifically nine pupils think so. It is also pupils from the group with a cultural background other than Swedish who believe that proficiency in English brings status amongst friends. Only two pupils with a Swedish cultural background are of that opinion, compared to nine from the other group.

6.1.4 Thoughts on the Importance of English

Finally, the final and only open question showed that all pupils who filled out the questionnaire, apart from one, find the English language important to them. The reason why the one pupil does not find the English language important to him is, according to him, that he
is not good at English. He says that his vocabulary as well as his pronunciation is bad. Still this boy has quite a lot of contact with the English language which he also seems to value. He also believes that the fact that he after graduating from Upper Secondary School wants to travel and work abroad, affects his motivation in a positive way.

What most of the other pupils have in common is that they find the English language important since they believe that they will have use of it in the future, when travelling, working abroad, studying, etc. They seem to see the English language as something which opens up possibilities for the future, not only some kind of a bonus but something necessary. Not many pupils mention that they find the English language important since they have use of it now. Still, there are a few pupils who do so, and among other things they mention the importance of being able to understand music and films but also the possibility of being able to communicate with people already here and now. One pupil simply says that he/she likes to communicate in English.

To sum up, the questionnaires show that the majority of the pupils, with a Swedish cultural background as well as with a cultural background other than Swedish, have much contact with the English language in their spare time and believe that they will have even more use of the English language in the future. However, there are a few exception and these pupils all belong to the group of pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish. Still, all pupils, except for one, think that the English language is important to them and the reason for this is most commonly that they have an idea of how they will have use of it in the future.

6.2 Presentation of the Informants

In order to give the reader the possibility to acquire a deeper understanding of the results obtained from the interviews, we will begin this result chapter by giving a short introduction to the eight interviewees, giving information about their age, cultural background, mother tongue, interests and in some cases also about their family circumstances. All names used in this and the following chapters are fictive in accordance with ethical guidelines when carrying out research.

At the multicultural school we started off by interviewing Binosh, who was born in Sweden but speaks the Indian dialect Punjabi at home since his parents were born in India. Binosh is 15 years old, he has got two older siblings and in his spare time he likes to look up different programs for Upper Secondary School and also to learn about cars and mopeds.

Myrvete also goes to the multicultural school. She was born in Kosovo just like her parents, but came to Sweden when she was less than one year old, and speaks Albanian at
home. Myrvete has one younger brother and six sisters of which two are older. In her spare
time Myrvete is very much into music and dancing, however, she is also very fond of school
and says about herself that she is a “school nerd”.

The third pupil to interview at the multicultural school was Hasan whose mother was born
in Syria, and father in Lebanon. Hasan himself was born in Sweden but speaks Arabic at
home. He is 15 years old, has two older and one younger brothers, and his main interest is to
play football which he does very much.

Paula was the last pupil that we interviewed at the multicultural school. Paula’s teacher
suggested we interview her although she still had not been given time to fill out the
questionnaire. Paula’s father was born in Denmark, whereas both Paula and her mother were
born in Sweden. Paula mostly speaks Swedish at home, but sometimes also Danish. Her
interests are to play badminton, be with friends and visit the city centre.

Ali was the first pupil to be interviewed at the integrated school. Ali was born in Sweden,
but his mother was born in Syria and his father in Lebanon and Arabic is consequently the
language which is spoken in Ali’s home. His interests are sport (football and sprinting),
listening to music and drawing.

Ali’s classmate Machmut also speaks Arabic at home. His parents were born in Iraq,
whereas he himself was born in Sweden. In his spare time Machmut likes to be at home and to
be with friends.

The third pupil to be interviewed at the integrated school was Sanije who just like her
parents was born in Iraq, but came to Sweden when she was less than one year old. Sanije
speaks Arabic at home and her main interest used to be athletics but nowadays she mostly
studies and sees her friends in her spare time. She has one older sister and three younger
sisters.

Finally, the last pupil to be interviewed at the integrated school was Miriam. She was born
in Sweden and she usually stays with her mother who was also born in Sweden but whose
father is Bosnian. Consequently Miriam speaks Swedish at her mother’s place but when she
sees her grandfather he speaks Bosnian to her, which she understands, but she answers him in
Swedish. However, when Miriam is at her father’s, who was born in Macedonia, she speaks
both Swedish and Albanian. Miriam has two brothers at her mother’s place, and three sisters
and a younger brother at her father’s place. She used to dance in her spare time, but now she
is usually just with her friends.
6.3 Results Acquired from the Interviews

6.3.1 Contact with the English Language and How it is Valued

In order to find out what the pupils’ contact with the English language looks like and how they value it from the perspectives of identity and social context, we asked them about their own as well as their family’s and peers’ contact with English, especially in their spare time. In the part of our interviews where the pupils told us about their contact with English in their spare time, we found that all of them have a great amount of contact with the English language, especially through music and American TV-programs as well as films. When asked what kind of music they listen to six out of eight pupils answered R’n B, and seven out of eight answered Hip-hop.

Other kinds of contacts the pupils have where they use English, except for music, TV-programs and movies, are the Internet, computer-games, books and magazines. However, these contacts do not seem to be as frequent. One of the girls, Myrvete, uses English Internet sites such as MySpace and High Five where she chats with people, both Swedish and foreigners, in English, which can be seen as the lingua franca on these sites. Two of the boys, Hasan and Machmut, play computer-games such as Counter-Strike and World of WarCraft, where chatting in English is a part of the game. One of the girls, Miriam, and one of the boys, Binoch, read English books in their spare time, and Miriam also reads English magazines, which none of the other pupils do.

When asked if there are any of the contacts the pupils cannot manage without, Miriam, Myrvete and Sanije who have a great amount of contact with the English language answered that they cannot imagine being without any of the activities mentioned above. Sanije expressed herself by saying “Eh, no no, it’s a part of my daily life”. When it comes to the boys, music seems to be the most important contact since only one out of four can manage without it. For Ali who can do without music, movies are more important. One of the boys who also uses the Internet a lot, namely Machmut, says that this is a place where you cannot manage without the English language.

In the part of the interview where we asked the pupils about their families’ and peers’ contact with the English language, we found that everybody’s parents, except for the parents of Myrvete, know English more or less. Furthermore, Myrvete, whose parents cannot speak English, is one of the pupils with most contact with the English language. However, despite the different abilities to speak English, all of the pupils’ parents think that the English language is important to know.
Several of the pupils say their brothers and sisters are good at English. Two of them, Miriam and Binoch, also communicate with their relatives in English. When it comes to peers and their contact with English, Sanije and Paula say some of their peers often communicate with each other in English in their spare time. These girls also view their peers as better than themselves when it comes to speaking English, and they therefore rarely participate. It is only on occasions that they join their peers in their English conversations.

However, two of the pupils, Myrvete and Binoch, like speaking English with some of their friends in their spare time. Myrvete in fact uses English very often when she communicates with certain friends, not just when speaking but also in writing, like when sending text messages and chatting on the Internet. She even used some English expressions and words during our interview. Binoch, who also speaks English with certain friends in his spare time, does it especially when he and his friends joke and use swearwords, as well as when they discuss football games. In addition, several of the pupils seem to agree that English is a better suited language when making certain jokes and when swearing.

To the question on which countries the pupils associate with the English language, all of them answer England and the US, but especially the US. However, Australia and Ireland are also mentioned. The picture of these countries, especially the US, is in all cases positive. It is in fact almost idealised since most of the pupils associate the country with celebrities, Hollywood, glamour, big cities and high buildings, a fascinating environment, and parties. All of the students are highly aware that this picture stems from the media.

However, Machmut, Binoch and Hasan also bring up something negative about the US; Binoch and Hasan mention the politics. Still, Machmut and Hasan want to go to the US, and have a positive view of the country. Binoch says that despite his opinion about the politics, he too has a positive view of the country, and he has American role models.

To the question if English as a school subject is important to them, everybody answers yes. This despite the fact that three of the pupils think it is difficult to study English. One of the girls, Myrvete, even says that she loves English and one of the boys, Ali, says “It is a small part of my life that affects me in a positive way”. Hasan says that he has difficulties in learning English and that he does not like to study it, but when asked if English is important to him, he answers “Yes of course”.

6.3.2 Plans and Visions for the Future
In order to find out what the pupils think of English from the perspective of future use, we asked them if they had any plans for the future and thereafter if they could see that these plans
entailed any use of English. Unfortunately, one of the pupils, namely Ali, must be left out in this question since his answer cannot be heard due to technical problems.

However, four of the pupils, namely Sanije, Machmut, Miriam and Hasan, believe that the English language will be necessary for future higher education. Out of these, Machmut and Sanije want to study abroad, and Miriam as well as Sanije thinks that English will be needed when studying on an international program in Upper Secondary School. Hasan, who wants to become a doctor, also wants to move as well as work abroad, and believes the English language will be necessary then. Except for Hasan, Myrvete also wants to move abroad, and, in addition, three pupils, namely Paula, Ali and Binoch want to travel and believe the English language will be necessary then. Binoch also believes that English will be useful when communicating with relatives.

6.3.3 Contact with Mother Tongues

In order to find out what relation or connection there might be between pupils’ views on the English language, from the different perspectives which this essay focuses on, and the pupils’ mother tongue and cultural background we decided to ask them pupils to tell us about their contact with their mother tongue and its different cultural expressions.

The languages represented amongst the pupils that we interviewed are Danish, Arabic, Punjabi, Albanian and Bosnian. Although all of the eight pupils who were interviewed speak one of the above languages at home, many of them gave the impression of being more proficient in Swedish than in their mother tongue. Eight out of six pupils were born in Sweden and the other two came to Sweden before turning one year.

Five of the pupils, namely Miriam, Myrvete, Binoch, Paula and Hasan, comment that they are not very proficient in their mother tongue and four of these are found at the multicultural school where we carried out half of the interviews. Only Miriam whom we interviewed at the integrated school says that she is not very proficient in her mother tongue. The reason for this is that she lives with her mother who was born in Sweden but has a Bosnian father, and therefore speaks Swedish with her daughter. Miriam hence only speaks another language with her Macedonian father.

When it comes to the pupils’ contact with their mother tongue it turned out that very few of them have much contact to speak of. All of them use their mother tongue more or less at home when speaking to their parents, and sometimes in their contact with certain friends and relatives. Only Ali and Sanije at the integrated school have much input of their mother tongue. Both of them have Arabic as their mother tongue and often watch Arabic TV (mostly series,
some films and talk shows), listen to Arabic music and one of them also reads Arabic magazines. Both these pupils also seem quite consistent in their use of Arabic at home. These are also two of the few pupils who do not complain about not being very proficient in their mother tongue.

Amongst the other pupils there is one boy, namely Hasan, who says that he sometimes watches Arabic television and one girl, namely Paula, who often watches Danish series. However, these pupils’ input do not seem as consistent or as important to them. All of the pupils have in common that although they do not have much contact with their mother tongue they occasionally listen to music in the very same language. The reasons for not having much contact with their mother tongue varied, one of them being that they are not very proficient in it, another one being that they simply do not appreciate the input available. Binoch says about the Indian films that his mother watches that “I just can’t sit through one of those films” and a boy who has got Arabic as his mother tongue said that he simply didn’t like Arabic TV-shows. However many of the pupils’ parents do have much contact with their mother tongue.

Two of the pupils, Binoch and Miriam, who are not very efficient in their mother tongue claim that they make use of English in their contact with their extended family. Ali also says that he sometimes makes use of some English words in his contact with his extended family, although he seemed fairly proficient in his mother tongue and had a lot of input.

When it comes to the way in which the pupils value their contact with and knowledge in their mother tongue, it seems like those who have the most contact and are the ones who are most consistent in their use of it at home, are also the ones who most value their contact with their mother tongue. Still all of them think that they in the future will find their mother tongue useful in their contact with family and relatives. However, none of them think that they will ever find themselves living in a country with their mother tongue as the official language, nor have use of their mother tongue in their future professional lives.

Hasan, who was born in Sweden but whose parents were born in Syria and Lebanon and hence partly speaks Arabic at home, sums up well how some of the pupils seem to view their contact with their mother tongue and also their cultural background. He says: “Well, Arabic, I don’t think that’s important ‘cause, okay, of course it’s important, ‘cause I’m from, my background is from the Arabic world, so of course it’s important to me. English is the most important ‘cause I live in Sweden. I mean, here you can’t manage with Arabic, but if you
have English, you’ll manage quite well. And that’s the way it is with most parts of the world.”

6.3.4 Views on Motivation in the English Classroom

In order to assess the pupils’ ideas about how their views on the English language affect their motivation in the English classroom, we asked them to tell us how they thought that their contact with the English language in their spare time as well as their plans for the future, affected their motivation to learn English at school. In some cases we explicitly asked them if they thought that their contact with the English language in their spare time and the thoughts about the future affected their motivation in the English classroom.

All of the eight pupils, except for Ali, believe that their contact with the English language and their plans for the future make them more motivated in the English classroom. One of the pupils explained how he sometimes finds himself unable to explain something, which frustrates him and motivates him to learn more. One of the pupils says that “When I think that I will need English in the future, I want to learn more. […] It will become useful”.

When being asked how they best learn English, seven of them say that it is through the combination of English classes and getting an input and making use of English outside the English classroom. They all seem to find that there is an interplay between the two. Some of them say that they get the foundation in school and that they learn new expressions and to make use of the language outside school. Sanije says that “Yes, well, I don’t think I could have managed the English language if it wasn’t for the teaching in school. But I still think that I’ve got most out of English from TV, actually […] they kind of lift each other up somehow, but I still think that the TV is what has had most impact on my English.”

7 Analysis

7.1 Views on the English Language in Relation to Identity, Social Context and Future Use

The aim of this essay has mainly been to look at pupils’ views on the English language from the perspectives of identity, social context and future use. We started by trying to find out in what ways pupils find the English language enriches their identity, but also what role it plays in their social context and what use they think that they will have of the English language in the future. However, throughout the writing of this essay, we have found that all these three

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2 Our translation
aspects are closely related, that social context and thoughts about the future play an essential role when it comes to identity. In this essay we have brought up various aspects and theories about identity, but the main focus has been on the so called social identity, which also seems to be the most commonly used aspect of identity in the context of second language learning. Social context obviously plays a central role when talking about social identity. In the same way thoughts about the future seem to play an essential role when looking at identity. Ricento talks about identity as, among other things, “how the person understands possibilities for the future” (898). Earlier in his article he relates to social identity as something which can be understood “in terms of how people see themselves and their social roles in relation to others, as well as the ways in which they understand their past, present and future” (891).

Taking the above into account, we have decided not to analyse our first two research questions separately, but rather primarily view them as a whole. We will first and foremost look at the aspect of identity and the way in which the other two aspects, social context and future use, interplay and effect the pupils’ views on the English language in relation to this very aspect.

As already mentioned in the method chapter, we tried to come up with questions for our interviews that would reflect pupils’ views on the English language in relation to identity. It seems appropriate to mention that the very word “identity” was never mentioned in any of the interviews, neither by us nor by the interviewees. Instead, we asked them about their contact with their English language and what importance it had to them. When analysing the result we have therefore had to return to our theories on identity in order to find a way to analyse these. We have consequently decided to analyse the idea of identity in the following way: 1) departing from Ricento’s theory on identity as referring to people’s ways of understanding their relationship to the world; 2) from the perspective of Brown’s theory on how people view themselves in terms of their value systems; 3) from the perspective of social identity (in conjunction with social context); and, 4) by looking at pupils’ thoughts about the future. Departing from these four perspectives we hope to be able to discern what role the English language plays for the pupils’ identity.

When it comes to the way in which pupils understand their relationship to the world, we decided to look at what the pupils relate to and what they spend their time on. As can be seen in the result chapter, it stands out as fairly obvious that the pupils spend a lot of time on English-speaking culture, mainly TV, films and music. As can be seen in the interviews their input is frequent and from the interviews we can also see that this contact is often prioritised. Hence, we find that the contact with the English language plays an important role in pupils’
relationship to the world. The pupils also claim that these contacts are important to them and all of them even claim that they cannot be without at least one of the contacts which they have mentioned. It does not seem far-fetched to interpret this frequent contact and the way in which the pupils say that the very same is important to them, as an expression of values. According to Brown, we tend to understand ourselves in terms of our value system, and our value system is hence closely connected to our identity (Brown 144). He also claims that our attitudes and beliefs are values internalised. The pupils’ attitudes hence give us a hint about their views on themselves, how they understand their relationship to the world.

In order to look further into the aspect of social identity, which can be said to refer to the characteristics one has in common with people in the same social group and an organised synthesis of other’s attitudes which one takes onboard, it seems appropriate here to take a look at what contact and views the pupils’ peers and families have of the English language. As has already been mentioned, our attitudes are commonly a result of parents’ and peers’ attitudes and the base of one’s identity is founded early within the family setting. The social context hence not only tells us something about the interviewees social identity but also what their values might stem from.

What comes across in the interviews is that all the pupils’ parents think that it is important that their children learn English. Most of the parents also speak English to a certain extent themselves. We also found that the proficiency in English amongst the pupils’ friends varied. However, all of them did have friends who were either as proficient as themselves and with approximately the same amount of input, or more proficient and with more input. The fact that parents and most friends also seem to value the English language, partly gives an explanation of the pupils’ own attitudes from the perspective of origin, but it can also be seen as an explanation to the pupils’ social identity, where they have internalised the combination of friends’ and family’s values. It should be mentioned in this context that English does not seem to be frequently used within the family setting, nor amongst friends (only occasionally), but still the pupils seem well aware of the fact that English is valued by the majority of the people in their social context.

Hence we can see that the pupils’ positive attitudes towards the English language partly seem to stem from the values that they find in their social context. However, we believe that there might be yet another important component when it comes to creating positive attitudes. It is obvious that the pupils primarily get English input from American music, TV and films, and the US is also the country which amongst the interviewed pupils as well as those who filled out the questionnaire is most commonly associated with the English language. When we
asked the pupils what picture they had of the US it turned out that they had almost idealised ideas about this country and very much associated it with glamour, fame and things of the like. Even those who had partly negative pictures of the US seemed to have chosen to focus on the positive things about the country. The pupils were very well aware of the fact that they had received this picture of the US from media. Music, film and TV are the kinds of media which very much reflect life-styles. We can draw the conclusion that the pupils’ positive attitudes towards the US partly explain their positive attitudes towards the English language. It also seems relevant to reflect upon whether these pupils somehow then even identify with those lifestyles that are presented in the media.

When it comes to the pupils’ plans for the future, it is clear that all of them think that they will have use of the English language in the future. It is also interesting that without having asked the pupils directly about their thoughts on the role of the English language in the future, more than half of them automatically told us about future plans where the English language plays an important role. Almost all of them believe that the English language will come to great use since they want to study or live abroad for a period of time. Only Binosh first says that he does not know if he will have use of the English language in the future, but then realises that he will when going on vacation and also when visiting his cousins with whom he speaks English. Later on he explains how the English language will also be a kind of “key-language” in life. Paula is initially not very sure whether she will have much use of the English language since she wants to become a farmer. But then she realises that she wants to travel and will have use of the English language then.

All pupils, hence, think that they will have use of the English language in the future, but the majority of the pupils do not only think that they will have use of it but also that it will be a big and important part of their future. What is also interesting is that most of the pupils believe that their contact with the English language will increase with time. Considering Ricento’s and Brown’s theories on identity, the fact that the pupils understand their possibilities for the future as containing the English language to a rather great extent, suggests that the English language does play an important role to their identity. However, it should also be mentioned that none of the pupils see themselves as living out the rest of their days in an English-speaking country, but they rather see themselves studying there or living for a limited period of time. This observation will be of great importance in the following chapter which will deals with the above matters related to the pupils’ mother tongue and cultural background, since they do not see themselves as living in a country where their mother tongue is spoken either.
7.2 How Pupils’ Views on the English Language are Related to Cultural Background and Mother Tongue

In the interviews, it can be seen that practically all pupils have a great amount of input of the English language.

All the pupils who we interviewed speak more than one language. However, we cannot see any signs of less input of the English language due to proficiency in more than one language. In fact, all of the pupils that we interviewed, except for one, have more, or just as much contact with the English language as with their mother tongue. This leads on to the question if the pupils value their contact with the English language and its culture more than the contact with their mother tongue and cultural background. In the answers one can see that there are no contradictions in the way pupils value the contact with their mother tongue and English. However, the pupils do seem to value the different contacts differently and from different perspectives, where the contact with English is based on an interest for the English-speaking culture, which takes up a significant part of the pupils’ daily life, as well as plans for the future, whereas the contact with their mother tongue is based on a need and a desire to be able to communicate with their extended family and keep in touch with their cultural background.

Moreover, the pupils seem to have a selective behaviour when it comes to what role the different languages as well as cultures play in their present and in their future life. More specifically, the English culture, the mother tongue culture and the Swedish culture all in some way play a part in the pupils’ cultural capital. This means that the pupils’ do not abandon one culture for another, but instead they invest in other cultures, to refer back to the chapter of Identity, Social Context and Second Language Learning. Ricento states that “if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (Ricento 899).

Furthermore, the pupils seem to have a relaxed relation to their contact with the different cultures, just like Ayse, the Turkish girl who Ålund brings up in the theory chapter under Target Language Culture versus Multiculturalism in the Language Classroom. In other words, the pupils do not seem to experience any conflicts between the Swedish culture, the mother tongue culture and the English culture, but instead they seem comfortable with the different roles that each culture plays in their lives.
7.3 Views on Motivation in the English Classroom

The results of the interviews clearly show that pupils believe that their contact with the English language in their spare time and future plans, motivates them in the English classroom. In addition, all of the pupils see some kind of future use when it comes to English. To the question how the pupils think they best learn English, they all answered that they best learn English through a combination of different inputs. More specifically, they feel that their contact with English in their spare time and their contact with English in the classroom complement each other.

When it comes to the pupils’ motivation it is both instrumental and integrative in the way that it is based on both instrumental as well as integrative kinds of needs. Here it is appropriate to refer back to Brown and his distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation. In the case of the pupils, the instrumental needs are those which refer to future plans such as education, career and travelling, whereas the integrative are those which refer to the pupils’ contact with the English-speaking culture in their spare time. The interviews show that the instrumental motivation dominates amongst the pupils since all of them see that they will have practical use of English in the future when moving on to higher education, travelling etc. However, there are also tendencies of integrative motivation, but they are neither as dominating nor as easily observed. There are pupils though who are fascinated by primarily the American culture and who wish to spend a period of time there. This can be interpreted as partly an integrative motivation. However, none of them express a wish to settle in the US or completely integrate into the culture. Hence, there is no evidence of complete integrative motivation which would imply an abandonment of one’s own culture.

Furthermore, to refer to Brown once again, our needs play a significant role when it comes to motivation, in the sense that when we see that there is a possibility for our needs to be fulfilled, we become motivated. In the same way, when we see no fulfilment of needs, our motivation tends to fail us. Moreover, Brown also brings up how the concept of needs “is often interpreted in a social context” and how the lack of being able to see how needs are being met might affect language learning. He says that “you may be unmotivated to learn a foreign language because you fail to see the rewards, connect the learning only to superficial needs (e.g. fulfilling a requirement), and see no possibility of a social context in which this skill is useful” (Brown 161). However, this seems not to be the case when it comes to the interviewed pupils, since they all have the opinion that the English language fulfils some kind of need, in the present as well as in the future, and they are therefore motivated to learn the language.
8 Conclusion

We started off our study with the aim to find out what attitudes pupils have towards the English language from the perspectives of identity, social context and thoughts on future use. We decided to focus our research on interviews carried out with pupils who, due to their cultural background, have a L1 other than Swedish and English. We were fairly convinced that pupils with Swedish as their mother tongue would have much English input and realise the importance of proficiency in English for the future. However, we were curious to find out whether pupils with other cultural backgrounds, due to their proficiency in another language and also access to other cultural input, also would have much input and value the proficiency in English. Furthermore, we wanted to see how these pupils’ attitudes affected their motivation to learn English.

Since the interviews, which constitute the main focus of our research, exclusively were carried out with pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish (although the majority of them were born in Sweden), we have not aspired to make a comparison between pupils with a Swedish cultural background and pupils with a cultural background other than Swedish. Instead, we have tried to create a somewhat isolated understanding of these cases.

The results show that all of the pupils interviewed for this essay somehow find that the English language has got something to do with them as individuals in the way they relate to the language and value it, but also in the way English plays an important role in their plans for the future. The results of the interviews also show that there does not seem to be a contradiction or conflict in the fact that the pupils already have access to another language than English and Swedish, and hence other cultural input. This fact does not seem to undermine the pupils’ interest for or estimation of the English language. On the contrary, the pupils seem to in a more conscious way, than when it comes to their mother tongue, take part of English-speaking cultural expressions. Nor does the fact that their mother tongues open up possibilities to travelling and making international contacts, make them feel that the English language is not necessary for the same purposes. Instead they seem to find that the different languages serve different purposes and hence, increase such possibilities. Also here we find that the English language plays an intentionally central role in the pupils’ plans for the future, whereas their mother tongue is seen more as an inevitably necessity in order to be able to communicate with their family.

From the perspective of cultural identity and multiculturalism the above founding is especially interesting. All the interviewed pupils seem to view language and cultural access as
an asset which adds to and enriches their cultural capital and hence also their identity. None of
the pupils find a need to abandon one culture for another. From a Swedish perspective it is
also interesting to note that none of the pupils see themselves as living out all their days in the
country where they or their parents were born, nor in an English-speaking country, but rather
in Sweden. However, all of them see themselves as keeping in contact with their cultural
background through visits to their “home countries”, and also as travelling to English-
speaking countries with the purpose of having vacation, studying or working for a period of
time. Consequently, all of them find that they have a need of all three languages and, as
already mentioned, they do not seem to experience any conflict between the three. Nor do
they find that there is a conflict from the perspective of cultural identity but, rather, that the
three cultures/languages constitute an investment in their identity.

9 Teaching Implications

It seems pertinent to look at what implications our results have in a teaching context. First and
foremost, we believe it to be of great importance to be aware of the above in order to be able
to make teaching relevant. We believe that if we can relate teaching to pupils’ contact with
and interest in the English language in their spare time their motivation in the English
classroom might increase even more. Young people undoubtedly have a great cultural input in
the form of primarily music, TV and films, and maybe we should ask ourselves if bringing in
more of this in the English teaching would increase pupils’ interest and motivation in the
English classroom. However, in order to make teaching relevant and prepare our pupils for
the future we also have to equip them for the future and cater for tools which will be
necessary when making use of the English language in studies and in their professional lives
and which they do not seem to obtain in their spare time. Developing a proficiency in reading
more advanced texts as well as writing the very same does not seem to be given much notice
in pupils’ spare time, but will be well needed if they want to fulfil their future plans.

Carrying out this study has made us aware of the importance of never losing the meta-
perspective in language teaching and of making pupils reflect upon their English studies from
various perspectives. We suspect that especially the questionnaire served as some kind of an
eye-opener to several of the pupils, especially since the one pupil, Paula, who had not been
given time to fill out the questionnaire before the interview, at first did not think that she had
any contact with the English language in her spare time, nor that she would have any use of it
in the future. However, after having given it some thought and having been given some
concrete suggestions, she realised that she did have contact with the English language in her spare time and that she probably also would have use of it in the future. As a result we believe that it is important to make pupils aware of the contact they actually have with the English language in their spare time, that it is in fact a fairly big part of their life, and also make them reflect upon what use they will have of the English language in the future. This, we believe is one way of bringing in the meta-perspective in language teaching and of increasing pupils’ motivation in the English classroom.

Finally, when it comes to culture it is interesting to consider in what ways the pupils’ own cultural backgrounds and experiences can be a resource in the conveyance of English-speaking cultures in the English classroom. Although the English language is represented by a vast diversity of cultural expressions, many pupils have a fairly limited and often idealised view of the English-speaking world. As English teachers we have an important task in widening our pupils’ view of the English-speaking world as well making them aware of the complexity of the very same. We believe that the pupils’ own cultural identity and experiences can be a great resource in this task.
Works Cited


Electronic Sources

Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (online)
Available on the 5th of November 2007 at: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket)
Available on the 5th of November 2007 at: www.skolverket.se
Enkät

I denna enkät vill vi ta reda på vad du tänker om det engelska språket och vad det betyder för dig i din vardag, samt på viket sätt du tror att du kommer att få användning av engelskan i framtiden. Undersökningen är anonym och du behöver inte skriva ditt namn på enkäten.

1. □ Tjej □ Kille

2. Vilket år är du född?____________________________________

3. I vilket land är du född?________________________________

4. I vilket land är din mamma född?________________________

5. I vilket land är din pappa född?__________________________

6. Vilka språk talar ni hemma hos dig?_____________________

7. Hur gammal var du när du började läsa engelska i skolan? ______________

8. Vilka länder tänker du när du tänker på det engelska språket?

9. Ungefär hur ofta på din fritid ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>flera gånger i veckan</th>
<th>en gång i veckan</th>
<th>en gång i månaden</th>
<th>ett par gånger om året</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) Tittar du på TV-program på engelska</td>
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<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Lyssnar du på musik på engelska</td>
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<td>c) Ser du filmer på engelska</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Chatter du på engelska</td>
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<td>e) Spelar du datorspel på engelska</td>
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<td>f) Läser du Internetsidor på engelska</td>
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<td>g) Läser du tidningar på engelska</td>
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<tr>
<td>h) Läser du böcker på engelska</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
i) Reser du till länder där man talar engelska  □  □  □  □  □  □

j) Är du i situationer där man talar engelska  □  □  □  □  □  □

10. Vilka utav dessa kontakter med engelskan tycker du är viktiga för dig?

☐ TV-program  ☐ Musik  ☐ Filmer  ☐ Chatt
☐ Datorspel  ☐ Internet  ☐ Tidningar  ☐ Böcker
☐ Resor  ☐ Andra situationer

11. Vilka skulle du vilja ha mer utav?

☐ TV-program  ☐ Musik  ☐ Filmer  ☐ Chatt
☐ Datorspel  ☐ Internet  ☐ Tidningar  ☐ Böcker
☐ Resor  ☐ Andra situationer

12. För vilken typ av TV-program tycker du att det är viktigt att kunna engelska?

☐ Sportprogram (tex. Eurosport)  ☐ Serier (tex. Heroes)
☐ Nyheter (tex. CNN, BBC)  ☐ Talk shows
☐ Tecknat (tex. Simpsons)  ☐ Musikprogram (tex. MTV)

13. För vilken typ av musik tycker du att det är viktigt att kunna engelska?

☐ Hip-hop  ☐ R’n B  ☐ Rap  ☐ Pop
☐ Rock  ☐ Annan

14. Tror du att din kontakt med det engelska språket på fritiden påverkar din motivation att lära dig engelska i skolan?

☐ Ja, jag blir mer motiverad.

☐ Ja, jag blir mindre motiverad.

☐ Nej, det gör ingen skillnad.
15. Tror du att du kommer att ha användning av det engelska språket i framtiden, efter att du har gått ut gymnasiet?

☐ Ja  ☐ Nej

Om du har svarat ”ja” på fråga 15, fortsätt här (annars gå vidare till fråga 17).

16. På vilket sätt tror du att du kommer att ha nytta av det engelska språket i framtiden? (kryssa gärna för flera alternativ)

☐ Jag vill arbeta utomlands.

☐ Jag vill arbeta på ett företag i Sverige med internationella kontakter.

☐ Jag vill studera vidare vid universitet/högskolan och tror att jag kommer att behöva engelskan då.

☐ Jag vill resa.

☐ Jag vill kunna ta del av information på engelska.

☐ Jag vill kunna ta del av TV, musik och litteratur på engelska.

17. Hur tror du att din syn på nytan av engelska i framtiden påverkar din motivation att lära dig engelska i skolan?

☐ Dåligt, eftersom jag inte tror att jag kommer att ha någon nytta av engelskan i framtiden.

☐ Bra, eftersom jag tror att jag kommer att ha nytta av engelskan i framtiden.

☐ Det gör ingen skillnad.

18. Finns det någon i din omgivning som du tycker är duktig på engelska?

☐ Mina lärare

☐ Mina föräldrar

☐ Mina vänner

☐ Mina syskon

☐ Annan: Vem? __________________________
19. Finns det någon i din omgivning som tycker att det är viktigt att kunna engelska?

☐ Mina lärare
☐ Mina föräldrar
☐ Mina vänner
☐ Mina syskon
☐ Annan: Vem? __________________________

20. Var tror du att lär dig engelska bäst?

☐ I skolan ☐ Utanför skolan


☐ Jag tycker att det är viktigt att kunna ta del av den engelskspråkiga ungdomskulturen, tex. musik, film och TV-program.
☐ Den engelskspråkiga ungdomskulturen är bättre än den svenska.
☐ Modersmålsundervisning är viktigare än engelskundervisning.
☐ Det engelska språket skapar möjligheter för framtiden, tex. arbete och utbildning.
☐ Engelskan är ett världsspråk som man måste kunna för att få veta något om världen.
☐ Alla mina kompisar pratar engelska.
☐ Jag tycker att det finns andra kulturerna som är mycket intressantare och viktigare än den engelskspråkiga kulturen.
☐ Jag behöver inte engelskan. Jag kan andra språk och det räcker.
☐ Det ger status bland kompisarna att vara duktig på engelska.
☐ Man går miste om mycket om man inte kan engelska, tex. information och nöje.
☐ Jag tycker att det är roligt med engelska.
☐ Man får en roligare fritid om man kan engelska.
☐ Det engelska språket är viktigt för att få kontakt med människor från andra kulturer.
Det engelska språket är viktigt för mig.
Som avslutning ber vi dig svara på en av dessa två frågor:

22. a) Det engelska språket är viktigt för mig eftersom…
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b) Det engelska språket är inte viktigt för mig eftersom…
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___________________________________________________________________________
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Tack för Din medverkan!!!
**Intervjufrågor**

I intervjun koncentrerede vi oss på att ställa öppna frågor samt följdfrågor så fort det fanns tillfälle till det. Detta eftersom det är vad Johansson och Svedner rekommenderar i avsnittet om kvalitativa intervjuer i *Examensarbete i lärarutbildningen*.

1. Vill du berätta lite om dig själv? (ålder, intressen/fritid, bakgrund/familj)

2. Vill du berätta lite om din kontakt med engelskan på fritiden? Exempel: När var, hur, hur ofta använder du engelskan?

3. Har din kontakt med engelskan förändrats sen du började läsa språket i skolan?

4. Finns det någon av de kontaktarna du har med engelskan på fritiden som du skulle kunna vara utan respektive inte kunna vara utan? Förklara!

5. Har du några förebilder inom den engelskspråkiga världen?

6. Hur påverkar den kontakten du har med engelska på fritiden din motivation att lära dig engelska i skolan?

7. Förutom svenska pratar du också x. Hur ser din kontakt ut med det språket? Vad tror du det beror på?

8. Hur ser din familjs kontakt med engelskan ut?

9. Hur ser dina vänners kontakt med engelskan ut? Använder ni engelskan när ni umgås utanför skolan?

10. Hur ser dina framtidsplaner ut?

11. Tror du att du kommer ha användning av engelskan i framtiden?

12. Finns det några andra språk som du tror du kommer ha användning av i framtiden?

13. Vilka länder förknippar du med engelska språket?

14. Har du varit i något/några av dessa länder?

15. Skulle du vilja åka till något/några av dessa länder?

16. Vilken bild har du av dessa länder och hur har du fått den?

17. Hur tror du att du bäst lär dig engelska?