

“I feel like in English I am more myself”: Experiences of
Bringing forward Language Identity in Interviews of Second
Language Speakers of English

Annariikka Heikkilä

MA Thesis

English, Degree Programme for Language Teaching and Learning

School of Languages and Translation Studies

Faculty of Humanities

University of Turku

February 2021

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UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

School of Languages and Translation Studies / Faculty of Humanities

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MA Thesis, 53 p., 12 app.

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Identity and language identity are widely studied in the field of second language acquisition. Identity in relation to language has been studied from many perspectives, for example race, gender, ethnicity, and religion to name a few (see e.g., Preece 2016). In addition, personality traits in second language as a part of identity have been examined. However, how second language speakers of English actually perceive bringing forward their identity is not much researched.

The aim of this study was to examine how second language speakers of English experience bringing forward their identity in English. The research questions were the following: 1) how do participants experience expressing themselves in English in comparison to their native language(s), 2) how do participants experience bringing forward their identity when speaking in English as a second language, and 3) what kind of possible selves participants have as second language English speakers. The data were collected by interviewing six (n=6) adult second language speakers of English. Four participants (n=4) were Finnish, one participant (n=1) was Slovak, and one participant (n=1) was Italian. The data were analyzed with content analysis.

The results showed that participants mostly felt they could express themselves in English as in their native languages, but majority of them still felt there was a difference when speaking in English. Bringing forward identity in English was considered important and most felt it was transmitted through English. It was also discovered that participants had experienced pressure to be a certain kind of English speaker. Half of the participants wished to attain nativelike competence in English, but also fluency and sociolinguistic competence were set as goals.

The results suggest that participants consider language identity from a personal perspective and the need to express it is also individual. In future, research could be conducted on more individuals' comprehension of language identities through qualitative methods.

Key words: identity, language identity, English as a second language, second language learning

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Abbreviations

FNAE = Finnish National Agency for Education

L2 = Second language

NNS = Non-native speaker

NS = Native speaker

ELF = English as a lingua franca

1 Introduction

The interest in identity research has grown fast. Furthermore, in the field of second language learning, studies have been made and both the language teacher and the language learner identities have been examined from various aspects (e.g., Jenkins 2007; Du 2015). Identity and language in relation to various groups and communities such as race, ethnicity, gender, and religion, have been studied as well (e.g., Preece 2016). Language identity also induces interest outside the academia. For example, Finnish National Agency for Education (FNAE, 2020) has outlined a language profile, which is an obligatory part of language studies in the Upper Secondary School. The purpose of this language profile is to survey the student's linguistic skills in different languages and to make these skills recognized throughout their studies (ibid.). Language identity plays a part in recognizing these linguistic abilities and skills. Nevertheless, there is still little knowledge on the identity and its effects.

Like many concepts in humanities, the identity is an abstract entity, and it cannot be measured or examined in a laboratory. There are contradicting views as to how it is constructed, and the concept of identity has been seen differently throughout the history. For instance, in the 1970s and 1980s, learners' identities were considered being rather stable and not changing (Norton and Toohey 2011, 419). Nowadays, the more prevailing idea is that identity is a fluid entity which can be affected by external factors, for example the people in the communication situation (ibid.). Consequently, if the social context can influence the identity formation, languages have the same capability.

In addition to research on language identities in various contexts and communities, the change of identity and personality in second or foreign languages have been studied. For example, Dewaele and Nakano (2013) examined how different feelings were perceived in various languages. They noticed that learners often recognize feeling differently when speaking in a foreign language (Dewaele and Nakano 2013, 117). Expressing different personality changes has also been the object of interest in language identity research (e.g., Ożańska-Ponikwia 2012; Veltkamp et al. 2013). Most studies focusing on the personality of the learner have tried to find a link between a certain personality trait and a successful language learning (Liang and Kelsen 2018, 756). Therefore, many studies used specific predetermined personality traits to measure this link in their research and used quantitative methods (e.g., Liang and Kelsen 2018, Dewaele and Nakano 2013). However, in light of this research, I was not able to find

studies examining individuals' perceptions of expressing identity in the second language. In the field of second language learning, most research examining language identity is conducted through qualitative or ethnographic methods (Morita 2012, 28). In addition, I preferred to rely on the participants' own descriptions and thoughts of their identity without using a predetermined model or a test, and that is why I chose to use a qualitative method in my research.

In this thesis, the aim is to examine experiences of second language speakers of English concerning bringing forward the identity in English. The data were gathered by interviewing six (n=6) second language speakers of English. Four (n=4) participants had Finnish as their native language. One participant (n=1) reported Slovak and Hungarian as her native languages, and one participant (n=1) had Italian as her native language. The data were analyzed with content analysis. My research questions are the following:

1. How do participants experience expressing themselves in English in comparison to their native language(s)?
2. How do participants experience bringing forward their identity when speaking in English as a second language?
3. What kind of possible selves participants have as second language English speakers?

This thesis consists of five sections. In the following section (Section 2), I will present an overview of the literature and research conducted in the field of identity and second language learning. In the Section 3, I will introduce the methods which were used to find and analyze the data. The results of the research along with references to earlier research will be presented in the Section 4. Finally, the results are considered and discussed in more detail in Section 5. In addition, the limitations and suggestions for future research are outlined in the final section.

2 Identity and second language learning

In this chapter, I will focus on the concepts of identity and language identity. These concepts will be discussed in relation to a second language and in more detail regarding how to express language identity in a second or a foreign language. In the first subsection (2.1), the focus will be on defining identity and also its relationship to language. In the second subsection (2.2), language identity is observed from the perspective of second language learning, English as a global language, and the contexts in which the identity is conveyed through English. The last subsection (2.3) will focus on expressing and bringing forward language identity in a foreign language.

2.1 Identity

Identity as such is a rather vague term and it is often interconnected with the concept of 'self'. Mercer and Williams (2014, 2) state that the field of research concerning with the concept of self is full of other terms, such as 'self-concept', 'identity', 'self-efficacy' and 'self-esteem'. The main focus of this research is identity, and in order to have a general idea of what it is, I will first take a look at the definitions of identity, and then its relationship to language. In addition, the composition of identity is discussed.

2.1.1 Defining identity

When focusing on the concept of identity, Mercer (2012, 11-12) points that the self-concept is often used interchangeably with identity. As she defines it, "[i]dentity is an individual's sense of self in relation to a particular social context or community of practice" (Mercer 2012, 11-12). In turn, the self-concept is constructed of everything we believe of ourselves to be and it also has multiple dimensions in different domains (Mercer 2012, 11). As an example, Mercer explains a learner identity to be a learner's "sense of self as a language learner or user in relation to a particular linguistic community or learning context", while learner's self-concept focuses on the general image of his or her competence and beliefs of themselves as a language learner (Mercer 2012, 12). Like Mercer, Morita (2012, 26-27) notes that the identity is constructed in a certain context. When individuals interact with each other, they conceptualize their identity in relation to the experiences, qualities, and knowledge of other members of the given community (ibid.). Morita's definition of identity comes very close to that of Mercer's: "identity [...] as individuals' sense of who they are in relation to the particular social context or

community of practice in which they participate” (Morita 2012, 27). According to Mercer (2012) and Morita (2012), the social context is a crucial factor when the individual is constructing their identity. Clark (2013) agrees with the above mentioned authors, but also adds an individual dimension to identity by stating that:

Identity is as much a social and cultural phenomenon as an internal and psychological one. As well as being something constructed or emanating from within ourselves, or as fixed social categories, identity is also a sociocultural phenomenon that comes from and within, interactional discourse contexts that are social and cultural in nature. (Clark 2013, 7)

The challenge is to see how much identity formation is connected to other people. In social constructionism, individuals cannot be distinct by themselves and are psychologically seen significant only in their social relations (Illeris 2013, 53). This would suggest that all identity construction is connected to other people. However, when coming across a choice that an individual needs time to think over, one usually tries to connect to the most inner identity or self in order to stay the same even after the decision (Illeris 2013, 54-55). This implies that there is a part of self that is not completely dependent on other people.

Korostelina (2007, 35) notes that there seems to be some sort of consensus among the researchers that identity is formed of *individual identity* and *social identity*. The former refers to identification to a certain kind of person or set of characteristics, while the latter indicates identification towards a group of people sharing the same interests, thoughts, and values (Korostelina 2007, 35). In other words, the individual identity is based on the idea that every individual is somehow distinct and unique from others. However, “[t]his understanding can be developed only through interaction, through which individual assess themselves as identical to or different from others” (Korostelina 2007, 35). This leads to the observation that even the individual identity is constructed in relation to others as it is dependent on the social context, and whether the individual feels togetherness with these people or not.

Thus, if the individual identity is dependent on the social context, it can change from one situation to another. Norton (2014, 60-61) supports this idea and states that from the point of view of the poststructuralist theory, identity can be seen as multiple and changing. How the relationship between the person and the world is viewed is a part of what identity can communicate (ibid.). Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005, 22-23) support this idea in their list of three nowadays accepted ideas of identity.

Firstly, as Norton (2014) says, identity is not stable, but changing and being able to transform (Varghese et al. 2005, 23). Also, the importance of seeing individuals as “intentional beings” is emphasized (ibid.). Secondly, identity is always connected to the social, political, and cultural contexts. This is related to concepts of *assigned identity*, which refers to the identity given by other people, and *claimed identity*, which refers to the identity one considers him- or herself to have (ibid.). These concepts could be compared to social and individual identity. Assigned and social identity are both seen from the perspective of individual’s relationship to other people or a group, while claimed and individual identity are reflected based on individual’s own image of themselves. Thirdly, language and discourse are used as means to negotiate and construct identity (ibid.). Norton also emphasizes the importance of discourse in language and identity: “[e]very time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to larger social world, and reorganizing that relationship across time and space” (Norton 2010, 350). This leads to the next topic at hand: the relationship between identity and language.

2.1.2 Identity and language

The role of language in identity formation is of great importance. Evans (2018, 7-8) poses a question of whether the identity exists itself or if it is constructed in language and dependent on it. The former case would suggest that ideas form first and then words will actualize them. In the latter case, these ideas need signs and symbols to be organized in the first place (ibid.). Whichever the case may be, language is a central part of being a human and some might even call it the most important characteristic of our species (Edwards 2009, 20). The language is shared with others, but the individual selects the words and uses them (Evans 2018, 15-17). This distinct use of language leads to *idiolect*, which means an individual’s unique way of using a language including the particular accent and dialect, the combination of formal and informal language, and the distinct ways to use stress and intonation (Edwards 2009, 21). Thus, language is a marker of the individual identity, but it also has a social dimension. Almost all spoken language use is targeted to communication with other people, and as the identity is constructed in contrast to others, the same applies to language use.

As stated above, identity and language change in time and they are never completely stable. Yet, the past has an important role in identity formation. Joseph states that “[i]dentity, [...] is grounded in beliefs about the past: about heritage and ancestry,

and about belonging to a people, a place, a set of beliefs and a way of life” (Joseph 2016, 19). Language is one of the most influential ways of how belonging is seen, as language acts a part in people’s communication, place names, heritage, and beliefs (ibid.). For instance, regional variation in a language can be a clear marker of an individual’s heritage, and since the language varies temporally as well, it can relate something about the speaker’s generation. Race, gender, nationality, religion, and social class among many other factors can help in defining the groups in which an individual belongs to (Joseph 2016, 25). These groups share values and codes and give the individual a passage to one kind of an identity (Chassy 2015, 47). Language is also a part of this group identity, as it carries the values promoted by the group members. An example of this could be jargons. For instance, adolescents often use new words that are not comprehensible to older people, and people in certain professions often have a specific vocabulary for some essential words not used outside of their working context.

Language as a marker of belonging to a certain group can give various impressions to the people outside of the group as well. People not belonging to a certain group can still identify an individual as a member of this group based on the individual’s use of language (Chassy 2015, 49). A good example of this are dialects that often carry connotations, which can be positive or negative and which are associated with the speakers. For example, a person could be considered to be relaxed and laid back, while someone else can be thought to be smart and polite, based on the dialect they speak. This is closely linked with the assigned identity since it is given by others. Still, no matter how persistent it is to compare dialects with one another, Edwards (2009, 65) argues that rating dialects is linguistically as pointless as rating languages. Some studies have shown that when the participants with no contextual or linguistic knowledge of a certain language were asked to listen and tell how appealing different varieties of this language sounded, they could not tell the differences between the varieties or distinguish them (Edwards 2009, 66-67). Therefore, the dialect as a part of language identity is not equally significant to everyone, since only those who are aware of these differences in dialects are able to give value to them (Edwards 2009, 67). Those who consider their dialect to be a crucial part of their identity might use it to distinguish themselves from other dialect groups more easily.

Therefore, the language plays a part when developing the feeling of belonging to a certain group, but it also acts in an individual’s personal past (Joseph 2016, 29-30). According to Joseph, the knowledge we attain in our first language acquisition

incorporates to our memory and nervous system, and it constitutes of mental knowledge and *habitus* (ibid.). Native language does not prescribe what an individual can do or think, but it directs how these are displayed and which things are easier to realize. As Joseph claims, “[t]o be a native speaker is a historical fact concerning the formation of one’s *habitus*, the set of dispositions, schemata of action and perception that individuals acquire and incorporate through their social experience” (Joseph 2016, 30). If this is considered in the light of foreign language learning, attaining all these sets of rules and customs embedded in the language might become an impossible task. Consequently, the identity in another language cannot be identical to that of a native language.

Historically, the idea of identity in relation to the idea of language has changed over time. In the structuralist view, the linguistic system uses specific signs as markers of meaning and every linguistic community has its own practices that provide value to these signs in the language (Ciepiela 2011, 8). The social practices within the linguistic group make linguistic signs understood consistently by the members of the group. Therefore, the structuralist view considers language users as a rather homogeneous group in which the language has only one universal meaning within that group. Since the language signs are seen to bear only idealized meanings and stable patterns, this view also limits the construction of identity and the identity is seen rather stable and fixed. The more recent view is poststructuralism, in which language is seen “not as a set of idealized forms independent of their speakers or their speaking, but rather as situated utterances in which speakers, in dialogue with others, struggle to create meanings” (Norton 2014, 63). Consequently, the meaning of the used language depends on the context, the person who speaks the language, and their experiences and social relationships. Thus, when the poststructuralist view is considered from the perspective of identity, it supports the idea of identity as not fixed, but multiple and changing. As stated in the previous section, this view of identity is the prevailing one, and it is also used in this research.

2.1.3 Composition of identity

As discussed above, defining identity is not straightforward. Language plays an important role in identity but determining the whole composition of identity is still not unambiguous. There are multiple perspectives and ideas of how identity is composed and what it includes.

Illeris (2013, 70-79) has developed his own model to describe identity structure, in which the identity is divided to three circles: *core identity*, *personality layer*,

and *preference layer*. The core identity refers to the part in which a person “contains the experience of being a distinct and particular individual, being the same in different situations and connections” (Illeris 2013, 70). The core identity is the most fixed part of identity and could perhaps be compared to individual identity. While the core identity focuses on the individual’s relationship with themselves, the personality layer is more concentrated on the features turned to surrounding world, but also to the individual (Illeris 2013, 72-73). It refers to the individual’s wish how they want to be seen in relation to other people and the world. For example, values, behavior, attitudes, objectives, and communication methods are a part of this (ibid.). The personality layer is relatively stable, but it still has more flexibility in it than the core identity. The most unstable one is the preference layer, which is connected to mundane situations and automatic routines, how we solve them, and how we experience them (Illeris 2013, 73-74). In these conditions, where the preference layer is most present, we act the way we understand ourselves, but we are less engaged with these routines and thus more willing to change them if that is considered reasonable and not conflicting with the core identity and the personality layer (ibid.). Illeris’ model is a clear representation of identity, and a plausible one as well. However, as he himself notes, it is only a hypothetical model of what he has concluded of the concept of identity (Illeris 2013, 70). Thus, it cannot be directly adopted without deliberation.

Nevertheless, Illeris’ model is not far from the previously dominant “onion model”, in which identity is also described with circles (Korostelina 2007, 59). The circles closest to the core are related to the most important layers of individual’s identity, while the more external circles refer to salient identities but not as crucial as the situational identities (ibid.). This model emphasizes the importance of different identity layers, but it lacks the relationship between identity systems. Worchel et al. (2000, 29-32) propose a model in which the individual identity is composed of four dimensions. First, the *personal characteristics* consist of personality traits, physical characteristics, skills, abilities, personal experiences, and all other features that make a person unique (Worchel et al. 2000, 29). Second, the *intragroup identity* includes the individual’s relationship with a particular group and their role in it (Worchel et al. 2000, 30). It is emphasized that the intragroup identity is more connected to the individual’s position in the group, and not so much with the membership of the group as such. This is explained by the fact that the third dimension, *group membership*, includes this feature (Worchel et al. 2000, 31). In addition, the group membership is also connected to *outgroups*, in other words the groups

the individual does not belong to. The last dimension is a *group identity*, in which the group itself includes distinct characteristics in a wider social context among other groups (Worchel et al. 2000, 32).

Consequently, this model includes social aspects to the individual identity, which have usually been kept somewhat separated from it. It also rejects the juxtaposition of social and individual identities and emphasizes the connection between the four dimensions (Korostelina 2007, 60). Norton takes a rather different standpoint and relates desire to identity: “identity relates to desire — the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation, and the desire for security and safety” (Norton 1997, 410). These desires in turn are linked to material resources (ibid.). What an individual is capable to do in society, affects their view of the world in which they relate their identity. For example, the ability to speak foreign language(s) can give an individual more resources compared to those who cannot, and thus have an influence on the individual’s understanding of the world and future possibilities.

As can be seen from above, constructing identity and determining its components is not uncomplicated. Even the individual him- or herself might experience feelings of uncertainty when pondering over their identity. Bogaerts et al. (2019, 892) use the dichotomy of *identity synthesis* and *identity confusion*. People with identity synthesis feel a sense of self-continuity in various contexts and times, and they have set firm goals, plans, and beliefs (ibid.). In turn, those with identity confusion experience a shattered sense of self which does not help individuals to aim for certain goals or having a clear direction (ibid.). In a case in which the identity synthesis overrides the confusion, the identity can be considered to be well developed and stable (ibid.). Yet, both of the above can act at the same time for example in different fields. Consequently, an individual can have a very strong idea of their identity when speaking in their native language, but when changing to a foreign language the individual can experience confusion over what they are like or should be like.

In turn, this comes close to the concept of *possible selves* which represents the individual’s thoughts of what they could become, what they want to become and what they are afraid of becoming (Dörnyei 2005, 98). As Dörnyei states, “possible selves are specific representations of one’s self in future states, involving thoughts, images, and senses, and are in many ways the manifestations, or personalized carriers, of one’s goals and aspiration” (Dörnyei 2005, 99). To the individual, this possible self in the future is as real as the self in present (ibid.). The positive view of one’s possible self gives directions

to one's actions, but the feared possible self can also act as a guide to individual, who might try to avert an unwanted kind of future state. *Ideal self* is the representation of the self and features that the individual would like to be or have, while *ought-to self* refers to the kind of attributes individual thinks he or she should possess (Dörnyei 2005, 100). Both of these can act as motivational contributors, but the ideal self is considered to be more positive in its impact on learning.

As we have seen above, the current perception suggests strongly the flexible and changing features in the identity. The different ways the social context is represented, the desires and resources related to identity, and individual's images of possible selves have a very strong position in identity formation. One of the most essential building blocks of society is education and learning the customs of one's culture. Illeris (2013, 69) emphasizes this importance by stating that learning develops and changes identity like it develops and changes other mental conditions. Because the focus of this study is in expressing identity with a second or a foreign language, the relationship between identity and second language learning will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 Identities in second language learning

Learning additional languages plays an important role to get connected with other people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Second language learners might have more variety and possibilities to construct their identity as foreign language users than monolinguals who form their identity only within the limits of one language. As Higgins (2011, 1-3) states, the identity formation should be examined in today's global world where it happens and from the perspective of mobility. For example, she introduces five scapes which make it possible for language learners to construct different kinds of identities (Higgins 2011, 3). Ethnoscape refers to the moving of for example immigrants, refugees, and tourists, while technoscape indicates the flow of technology across borders (ibid.). Finanscape focuses on the flow of money, mediascape refers to moving of information and images, and ideoscape indicates the flow of ideas. These scapes create new zones in which new identities can be constructed. As Higgins (2011, 3) notes, the scapes do not replace the traditional identities but they blend with the local languages and cultural practices giving the individual more possibilities to construct these identities.

2.2.1 Identities and possible selves in imagined communities

As discussed above, Dörnyei introduced the individual's possible selves (ideal self and ought-to self) which shape the identity formation. Dörnyei (2005, 105-106) also introduces the construct of *The Motivational L2 Self System* in which he combines these concepts of possible self and ideal self to the motivational aspect of language learning. According to it, the motivation learners experience constitutes of three parts. *Ideal L2 Self* represents the kind of version of oneself that the learner wants to become, *Ought-to L2 Self* is the kind of self that learners think they should be including social expectations, and *L2 Learning Experience* focuses on the situational motives which take place during language learning experience (ibid.). This theory emphasizes the identity's effect on motivation. If a learner has a very strong image of their possible self as a proficient L2 speaker and wishes to achieve that goal, it can be a highly important motivator to language learning. Although the purpose of this study is not to focus on the motivation of language learning, possible selves can shape the identity in second language as well. Therefore, they were used to create the interview frame of this study.

However, the motivation created by the ideal L2 self might not be enough itself to help the individual to learn a second language. Thus, Norton and Toohey (2011, 420-422) add the effect of investment on language identity. This draws to the notion that while motivation has traditionally been seen as a fixed part of the learner identity, it was not enough to predict success in language learning, since some highly motivated students still lacked in achieving higher levels in second language learning (ibid.). It was noticed that "learners 'invest' in the target language at particular times and in particular settings [...]. As the value of learners' cultural capital increases, so learners reassess their sense of themselves and their desires for the future" (Norton and Toohey 2011, 420). While this view emphasizes the fact that motivation alone is not sufficient enough to guarantee a success in language learning, it should be noted that the language identity is not always dependent on the language skills. A language learner can have a strong language identity even though his or her abilities in this language are in the elementary level.

As stated above, the social context including different people in it has a major influence on identity construction. Individuals are involved with various communities in their daily life, for instance with their families, workplaces, and possible religious communities. In addition to these, individuals belong to their *imagined communities* in which they affiliate with people they do not necessarily even know (Norton and Toohey 2011, 422). Nations are a good example of this, as the members of

a particular nation will never get to know everyone in that community. Therefore, imagined communities are applicable in second language learning as well, since many foreign language learners imagine the target language community and culture when learning the language, and they might even picture themselves as a part of it. Norton and Toohey (2011, 422) argue that for the learners this idea might be as real as the actual communities and have a great impact on learner's investment in language learning. Dörnyei's theory of L2 Motivational Self System supports this idea (Dörnyei 2005). The learner's ideal L2 self can include the idea of the learner as a part of the target language community and act as a motivational contributor to the language learning.

In the case of less frequently studied languages which can be associated to certain communities and nations, this affiliation can easily act as a source of motivation to language learning. However, Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009, 2-3) pose a question whether the affiliation to a specific target language group is possible in the case of English. Norton (1997, 421-426) raises this issue as well by asking who owns English in international spheres. She states that feeling of having no claim on English might make the learners believe they are not and cannot be rightful speakers of English (Norton 1997, 422). While this view can be true in some cases, it cannot be generalized to all English learners. Some learners might experience the lack of affiliation to English speaking communities, whereas others could easily identify themselves more for example to American English speakers than to Indian English speakers. Furthermore, the identification to English language communities does not necessarily need to be directed towards a specific native speaker community of English.

This is visible in Pavlenko's study (2003a). Her study focuses on the imagined communities among 44 preservice and in-service English second and foreign language teachers enrolled in TESOL program (Pavlenko 2003a, 254-256). This particular program offered the participants a wide understanding of multilingualism, second language learning, and the dichotomy of *non-native speakers* (NNS) and *native speakers* (NS) of English. Pavlenko used linguistic autobiographies concerning the participants' views of second language teaching and learning written at the end of the program (ibid.). She noticed that while there were three possible imagined communities, native speaker community, non-native speaker/L2 learner community, and multilingual/L2 user community, most non-American participants had felt feelings of inferiority in the past, when they had had NS community as a goal but could not reach it (Pavlenko 2003a, 257-266). Consequently, they had to content themselves with the NNS

community. However, due to the raised awareness of the meanings of bilingualism and linguistic diversity during the program, many participants had changed their views and joined “the imagined community of multilingual and multicompetent individuals” (Pavlenko 2003a, 265).

2.2.2 Identities and English as a global language

Jenkins (2007) has examined identity from the perspective of globalization and especially of English as a *lingua franca* (ELF). As mentioned above, nowadays the flow of people, technology, and ideas create new possibilities for identity formation and alternative language learning goals (Higgins 2011). As noticed from the previous section, although the aim for some English language learners might be to sound like the native speakers of English, some may find it more comfortable to learn English “as part of their own linguacultural community” (Jenkins 2007, 199) or within a NNS community.

What is notable in Jenkins’ study is that it focuses on the teachers’ ELF identity and their perceived attitudes towards native speaker and non-native speaker English accents (2007, 206-231). In her study, she interviewed 17 non-native teachers from various countries. The aim was to discover the participants’ desire to signal their native language identity and native-like English identity in L2 English (Jenkins 2007, 206). The results were somewhat contradicting. About half of the participants told they liked their own accent, but most of them would still have been pleased if someone had mistaken them for a native English speaker (Jenkins 2007, 212). Surprisingly, some of those who told they disliked their accent would still have chosen their own instead of choosing any possible English accent (Jenkins 2007, 214). It seems as if those participants wanted to develop their English speaker accents, but still wished to keep their native language identity somehow noticeable. This is slightly contradicting with the notion that Jenkins also points out: “[o]ne of the most prevalent beliefs, and one that was articulated by every one of the participants in one way or another was that an NS English accent is ‘good’ and an NNS ‘bad’” (Jenkins 2007, 217). This seems to indicate that the native-like English is seen to be the ‘correct’ one, but the speaker’s own native language is still seen so important that its influence on second language English is considered acceptable.

Not all nations rely on a common language as a part of the national identity construction (Pavlenko 2002, 164-165). However, people who accept their native language accent to be a part of their non-native English identity probably link their

national identity more profoundly together with their native language than those who wish to attain a completely ‘pure’ English accent. Jenkins’ study (2007) focuses only on the attitudes towards English accents, but it would also be interesting to examine other aspects of a language from this point of view. Zacharias (2012) conducted a somewhat similar study to that of Jenkins’, but she focused on Indonesian English foreign language students and their multilingual English identities. The results were analyzed through response journals in which the 30 participants were asked to share their understandings and feelings on language, culture, and identity (Zacharias 2012, 237). The participants were not explicitly asked to write about their native language or English language identities (ibid.). Some participants thought English gave them more educated appearance, while many found it as a threat to their Indonesian culture and felt that English should only be used in certain situations (Zacharias 2012, 242). The idea of English being a restrictive factor in someone’s cultural and linguistic identity is concerning. As mentioned above, Jenkins (2007) discovered the native English accent is seen as ‘good’ and Zacharias’ study seems to support this idea. Many of the participants in Zacharias’ study felt linguistic inferiority to the native speakers of English (Zacharias 2012, 242). The positive feedback from native speakers concerning the participants’ English skills had a notable influence on participants’ identities (ibid.). This draws to the conclusion that a native speaker’s opinion can be one of the major factors affecting the second language identity construction.

2.2.3 Identities in different contexts

One thing to keep in mind is that people learn languages for multiple of reasons and these reasons might lead the learner’s language identity to a certain direction (Anwaruddin 2012, 13). Anwaruddin’s study (2012) focuses on the English learner identity, which was examined through autobiographical writings. There were 18 first-year undergraduate participants from Bangladesh. Anwaruddin lists the three most important findings: “most students constructed their identity as ‘user of English’, they considered themselves ‘privileged’ to have gotten the opportunity to learn English, and their geographical location was crucial to their identity construction as well successful learning of English” (Anwaruddin 2012, 19).

What is emphasized in Awaruddin’s study (2012), is the cultural context in which English is learned. In Finland, for example, students might take learning English for granted, whereas for many people elsewhere it can be a privilege. In Anwaruddin’s

study (2012), the notion of geographical location is also very likely culturally linked, but nevertheless an important factor to consider. People learn English in various contexts which can have a major impact on how the language is learned and how the learners construct their language identity. If an individual has a very limited access to choose the language to be studied or they are forced to study a predetermined language due to the circumstances or the environment, they might lack the motivation to learn this particular language. This lack of motivation could also reflect to language identity and have a negative effect on it.

The formation of language identity should be a personal matter, at least to some extent. Nonetheless, in some contexts or countries, there might be language policies whose purpose is to expose language learners to a predetermined view of the target language. Pavlenko (2003b) examined foreign language policies in relation to national identities in post-World War I USA, post-World War II Soviet Union, and post-communist Eastern Europe. She argues that in addition to the national identity construction, the economic, cultural, and social considerations have an influence on foreign language education (Pavlenko 2003b, 328-329). The decision of which languages are chosen to be taught are often linked to the manner those languages are presented to the learners (*ibid.*). For example, in the post-World War I USA German was seen harmful and not fit to be studied by the American people, and this led to questioning learning of all foreign languages. Contrary to the USA, in Soviet Union the learners were encouraged to learn English as they might someday be in a war with capitalist countries (*ibid.*). However, Pavlenko notes that despite the context and predetermined foreign language policies language learners have a possibility to create oppositional identities in these contexts (Pavlenko 2003b, 329). This would suggest that the individual still has the choice to affect their view of the target language and consequently their language identity.

Nevertheless, the influence of context on language identity cannot completely be overlooked. Du (2015) did research on identity and self-presentation of 29 American college students who studied in China by interviewing them during their study program. Three major themes were discovered. First, the feeling of otherness in positive and in negative was experienced, as many of the students had a foreigner identity but many of them was still able to use it in their advantage in some situations (Du 2015, 254-262). Second, the development of students' own views of their self and identity also took place, when some students found more open and global perspective to look at things, and for others studying abroad validated their national identity (*ibid.*). Last, the ability to

speak in Chinese gave the participants pride of themselves and separated them from foreigners who did not know the language. Considering Du's study, when it comes to individual's view of identity while encountering other cultures, it seems that it can both set the speaker apart from their own national identity or strengthen it. This is very likely dependent on individual's former experiences and the context of speaking. For example, one participant stated that he disliked America when he was in Europe, but in China he missed his country (Du 2015, 257). This would suggest that the language identity is not irrelevant to or separated from the location and the environment of the individual.

2.3 Changing identity in second language

So far, I have discussed the concept of identity, the relationship of identity and language, and the language identity formation in second language learning. Since the focus of this thesis is on expressing and bringing forward identity in a second or a foreign language, this section will have a brief overview on the research done in this field. Studies illustrating individual's expression of themselves often use the concept of personality or focus solely on examining personality traits in second language. However, personality as a concept can have a somewhat different meaning in everyday language than in academic field. This is why I chose to follow Edwards' view (2009) when it comes to the relationship between identity and personality:

Personal identity – or personality – is essentially the summary statement of all our individual traits, characteristic and dispositions; it defines the uniqueness of each human being. [...] The uniqueness of the individual comes about, then, through the particular combination or weighting of building blocks drawn from a common human store. To accept this is to accept that no rigid distinction can in fact be made between personality and social identity. (Edwards 2009, 19-20)

Within the limits of this thesis, it was not reasonable to make a distinction between the identity and personality. Therefore, in this thesis they are seen interchangeable. In the actual interviews conducted for this study, only the term 'identity' was used to prevent misunderstandings and to avoid terminological gaps.

Lasan and Rehner (2018) examined 38 Canadian university students who learned French as a second language and their abilities to express their own identity in French, and also their abilities to perceive other French speakers' identities. The study was conducted by using questionnaires and interviews. They noticed that the participants could be categorized into three groups according to their answers (Lasan and Rehner

2018, 636-638). The first group consisted of 19 learners who considered to have both abilities: expressing their own identity and perceiving others' identities. The second group included 16 participants who felt they were only able to perceive others' identities, and the third group, three learners, answered having neither of the abilities (ibid.). It is notable that no participant considered being able to express their identity but not perceiving others' identities. This would suggest that expressing identity is more challenging than detecting others' identities in a second language. Lasan and Rehner (2018, 632-633, 643) consider the difficulties in expressing and perceiving identities being due to a limited sociolinguistic competence. Detecting different formality levels and using language appropriately in relation to social factors (such as age, gender, social background) is not an easy job for a L2 learner who has not been raised in the target language community. Yet, according to Lasan and Rehner (2018, 632) having an adequate sociolinguistic competence is a necessity to a successful expression of identity in a second language. Kamara (2017) also studied the presentation of self among 31 international students in Canada and noticed that the rules and procedures in social and academic environments can limit international students' expression of identity. However, he notes that these international students still had a strong wish to express their identities even through the cultural challenges (Kamara 2017, 304).

Whether there is a change in language identity and personality in different languages is not very widely examined, but there are some studies focusing on that. Dewaele and Nakano (2013) studied multilinguals' perceptions of their feelings when switching languages. The participants were asked in a Likert scale how logical, serious, emotional, fake, and different they felt in each language they knew (L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5) (Dewaele and Nakano 2013, 113). It was discovered that there was a systematic shift from L1 to additional languages when it came to being logical, serious, emotional, and authentic, and that those values decreased for languages other than native (Dewaele and Nakano 2013, 117). For feeling different, there was a gap between L1 and L2, but in L3 and L4 it did not grow any bigger. This study supports the idea that foreign language speakers change their identity when switching languages and that it is linked to the proficiency and the perceptions the speaker has of themselves. However, it must be kept in mind that sometimes feeling different might not be because of the language that is used, but because of the context it is spoken in. Also, the concept of 'different' itself can be interpreted in multiple ways by the participants.

Whether a speaker's whole personality changes when changing the language or not, is a controversial topic. While some research subjects claim to be different, Dewaele (2015, 94) notes that "[i]t does not suggest that bilinguals have totally different personalities in their different languages, simply that they show a slightly different face in one language compared to another". According to this, the core of identity and personality stays the same, but the second language determines what parts of the identity we are able to bring forward. This correlates with Lasan and Rehner (2018) and their notion of need of adequate sociolinguistic competence in identity expression. Nevertheless, Dewaele (2015, 102-104) did research on the reason why bilinguals and multilinguals feel different speaking in different languages but was only able to exclude the variable age of onset. Otherwise, the answers given by the participants were varied, including for example verbal and non-verbal behavior, having a different personality, and lower level of proficiency. Yet not every participant knew the reason and therefore a firm conclusion cannot be made.

As stated above, personality traits in relation to second language learning have attracted interest among researchers. Ożańska-Ponikwia (2012) examined personality traits and feeling different but she also added emotional intelligence to the equation. One of her major results was that there was a link between feeling different and some emotional intelligence components, such as empathy, social awareness, emotion expression, and emotion management (Ożańska-Ponikwia 2012, 230-231). In light of this, she suggests that people who score high on emotional and social intelligence, tend to notice the change of their personality and behavior in second language (*ibid.*). This is an interesting thought as it would suggest that not everyone notices the change in their personality when switching languages, but it would require certain kinds of personality traits in the first place to remark the change.

The second language has often been seen as somewhat limiting to bring forward identity. However, Veltkamp et al. (2013) take a different stand to this view. They argue that as languages determine what and how we are able to think and carry internal cultural norms and values, they have an essential impact on how we see ourselves and implement it (Veltkamp et al. 2013, 496-497). While cultures provide limits and conventions to express oneself, language is a tool through which to apply them. They conclude: "[i]n the case of multilingualism, [...] individuals gain access to multiple cultural meaning systems and can switch between culturally appropriate behaviors accordingly" (Veltkamp et al. 2013, 497). This view would suggest that the second language itself does not restrict

expressing identity and personality, but rather gives more cultural knowledge and space to do that. The study of Veltkamp et al. (2013, 501-502) on five personality traits with 68 German-Spanish late bilinguals supports the theory of language modulating the personality and a cultural frame shift. Since their study is conducted with late bilinguals, they argue that the possible effect of context is not applicable, which it could be in case of early bilinguals who might have had to develop two personalities for two cultures (ibid.).

To conclude, I have discussed the concept of identity and its relation to language. There is a wide range of research made in those fields and the identity seems to evoke a lot of discussion in academia. However, how and to what extent identity is brought forward in a second language is not that widely studied. Consequently, the aim of this study is to gain experiences and perspectives of expressing identity from the second language speakers of English. As noted above, English has a global position as a lingua franca, and this is why it was chosen to be the focus of my research. In the next section, I will present the research questions and the methodology of this study.

3 Methodology

In this section, I will present the methods which were used to conduct the study in more detail. First, interview as a data collection method is discussed and justified. Next, the research subjects are introduced, and third, the procedure of the interviews is explained. Finally, the methods of analysis are presented. The purpose of this study is to find out what kind of challenges there are related to expressing one's identity in a second language. Thus, this research is conducted with the aim of answering the following research questions:

1. How do participants experience expressing themselves in English in comparison to their native language(s)?
2. How do participants experience bringing forward their identity when speaking in English as a second language?
3. What kind of possible selves participants have as second language English speakers?

The purpose of the first question is to find out what kind of differences there might be when speaking in one's native language in comparison to speaking in English. These differences could help explain the challenges of expressing thoughts and one's identity in a second language. The second research question is related to the actual expression of identity and how it is experienced. Whether the participants find that they are able to bring forward their identity in English and if they consider it important or not, could have an impact on their purposes of using English. The last research question aims to examine the participants' possible selves, which can direct their language identity in English. These possible selves can also contribute in setting goals and aims to their use of English language.

3.1 Interview

As the aim of this research is to understand individuals' perspectives when it comes to language identity and because of the lack of qualitative research of expressing identity in different languages, I chose to conduct this study by interviewing people on their views of the topic. One of the reasons for this was that an interview gives the interviewee a chance and liberty to tell their views themselves (Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara 2009,

205). As the results of this kind of study cannot be easily predicted, interview gives more flexibility to the answers and it is more adjustable. The answers to research questions can be complicated and complex and in this case for example a survey would not be a fitting method (ibid.). The results of the interviews cannot be widely generalized, but they can provide some views and perspectives that second language speakers might experience. In addition, the purpose of this study was to gain personal and well thought answers of the research subjects, and in the light of aforesaid qualities, I found that the aims of the research were most attainable through interviewing people.

Interviews can be categorized in many ways depending on the aspects which are scrutinized. Leinonen, Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta, and Heiskanen (2017, 87-90) introduce a survey interview, which takes place in direct communication between the interviewer and the interviewees, and it is usually based on a questionnaire. The structure of the survey interview can vary from having a well thought and a clear interview frame to having no particular structure at all (Leinonen, Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta, and Heiskanen 2017, 89). In turn, Dörnyei (2007, 134-136) categorizes interviews only based on how structured they are. In structured interviews, “the researcher follows a pre-prepared, elaborate ‘interview schedule/guide’, which contains a list of questions to be covered closely with every interviewee” (Dörnyei 2007, 135). In unstructured interviews, the researcher focuses more on creating an atmosphere in which the interviewees would speak more freely. There are usually only a few questions to guide the interview (Dörnyei 2007, 135-136). The last category is a semi-structured interview which is located somewhere between the two previous interview types. The researcher has pre-prepared questions, but the interviewees are encouraged to elaborate their answers and speak more freely and in more depth than in a fully structured interview (Dörnyei 2007, 136).

From these categorizations, I chose to use the survey interview (Leinonen, Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta, and Heiskanen 2017, 87-90), as it emphasizes the interaction of the interviewer and the interviewees. I also decided to use a semi-structured interview frame (Dörnyei 2007, 136) in order to give the interviewees more freedom to elaborate their answers and to not bind the interview too strictly to the pre-prepared questions. The interview was formed to answer the interests of this research without a previously existing layout. The questions were formed based on the themes that emerged from the theoretical framework. The questions were first formed in Finnish, and then translated into English. The interview was piloted and edited afterwards to better fit the research.

In the beginning, the participants were asked some background questions such as their age, gender, native language(s), what other languages they have learned and how much they used them. The actual interview was categorized into four sections. The first section focused on the interviewees' images of their native language or languages and English. This was done to have an idea of what kind of attitudes participants had towards their native language and English language, as in Jenkins' study (2007). The questions in the second section were about interviewees' behavior in their native language(s) in different situations in order to get some kind of an image of their identity and personality in their native language(s) (Edwards 2009). As stated in the previous section, the term 'personality' was not directly used in the interviews because of the possibility of misunderstanding. In turn, the third section focused on the interviewees' behavior in English and also their views of bringing forward their identity in English. Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005) was also used to form the questions. In the fourth section, the interviewees were asked about their identification to both language groups, their native language or languages and English. This was done to obtain an image whether the participants had imagined communities concerning the languages in question (Norton and Toohey 2011). At the end of the interview, the interviewees were given the chance to specify their answers and to speak freely of the topic if they had any thoughts of it. Both interview frames, the Finnish and the English versions, can be seen in the appendices (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

3.2 Research subjects

To find the research subjects effectively and fitting the aims of the study, convenience sampling was used (Dörnyei 2007, 129). This resulted to the research subjects' availability and willingness (*ibid.*). There were altogether six (n=6) research subjects. The only requirements for participation were that all research subjects were to be over 18 years old and their native language(s) were some other than English. Also, all of the research subjects had studied English and used it in various situations and environments. Their English skills were not tested, but the research subjects were given the chance to describe their English skills in their own words and from their perspective. All the participants had also lived in a foreign country or countries, although that was not a prerequisite for the participation.

Table 1 The research subjects (names are pseudonyms)

	Age	Gender	Native language/s	Other known languages	Periods lived abroad (over two months)
Interviewee 1: Lotta	25	Woman	Finnish	English, Swedish	Japan: 3.5 months
Interviewee 2: Martha	30	Woman	Slovak, Hungarian	English, Czech, Japanese, German, Korean, Finnish	United Kingdom: 3 times 3 months Japan: 1 year, 6 months Finland: 3 years
Interviewee 3: Manuela	23	Woman	Italian	English, French, German, Japanese	Japan: 5 months
Interviewee 4: Ella	47	Woman	Finnish	English, Swedish, French, Italian	Australia: 1 year Sweden: 6 months
Interviewee 5: Janne	30	Man	Finnish	English, Swedish, Japanese, German	Japan: 11 months
Interviewee 6: Roosa	25	Woman	Finnish	English, Swedish, German, French, Spanish	United Kingdom: 6 months

The ages of the interviewees varied from 23 to 47. All participants except Janne were women. Four of the interviewees had Finnish as their native language (Lotta, Ella, Janne and Roosa). Martha's native languages were Slovak and Hungarian, and Manuela's native language was Italian. All the interviewees knew at least one other foreign language in addition to English. All Finnish participants said they had learned Swedish. Other

languages that were known by more than one participant were German (Martha, Manuela, Janne and Roosa), French (Manuela, Ella and Roosa), and Japanese (Martha, Manuela and Janne). Languages that were mentioned by only one participant were Czech (Martha), Korean (Martha), Finnish (Martha), Italian (Ella), and Spanish (Roosa). All interviewees had lived abroad for over two months at least once. Most participants had lived in Japan (Lotta, Martha, Manuela and Janne). Martha and Roosa had lived in the United Kingdom, while Ella had lived in Australia and Sweden. Martha had also lived in Finland.

3.3 Procedure

The interviews were held in autumn 2020. The interview was piloted with two interviewees and edited after that. The piloted interviews were not included in the final data. In order to give the interviewees an idea of the interview, some questions were sent to them beforehand. In addition, this gave the interviewees a chance and more time to think about their answers and situations in which they might have come across the asked circumstances. The interviews took place either in face to face meetings or in video meetings through Skype or Zoom. Four interviews were held in video meetings (Martha, Manuela, Janne and Roosa) because of the timing or the location of the interviewer and the interviewees and two interviews were held face to face (Lotta and Ella). Four interviews were done in Finnish (Lotta, Ella, Janne and Roosa), and two were done in English (Martha and Manuela). The durations of interviews were the following: 29.03 minutes (Lotta), 48.25 minutes (Martha), 25.48 minutes (Manuela), 28.26 minutes (Ella), 49.05 minutes (Janne), and 42.23 minutes (Roosa). The interviews were either video and voice recorded (video meetings) or only voice recorded (face to face interviews) (Dufva 2011, 136). Before each interview, general information about the structure of the interview frame was provided to prevent an unnerving situation for the participants. The participants were able to ask questions before the interview and during it if they needed more clarification to the questions or did not understand them.

3.4 Analysis

The recorded interviews were transcribed and anonymized to protect the interviewees' privacy. The interviewees were also given pseudonyms. The transcriptions included all utterances that the interviewees and the interviewer had. The length of pauses, thinking sounds and other linguistic surface phenomena were not included as they did not add

information to the content of the utterances (Dörnyei 2007, 247). Also, words that participants repeated many times at one point or were said wrong and corrected, were omitted from the transcriptions.

Because the focus of the research was on the research subjects' own thoughts and ideas concerning their language identity, the data were analyzed with content analysis (Dufva 2011, 139; Weber 1990). Weber (1990, 12) describes content analysis as unobtrusive, since not the researcher nor the research subjects know what is analyzed in advance. This means that the method of analysis does not affect the gathering of the data. The analysis was made manually without any computer programs. The transcriptions were read through multiple times and coded by highlighting relevant sentences and paragraphs (Dörnyei 2009, 250-251). The coding focused on finding similarities and differences in participants answers, as well as common themes that came up. A summary of each participants' answers to certain questions was used as an analytical tool to organize the research data and to find frequent themes (Dörnyei 2007, 254-256). The interpretations and conclusions of the analysis are presented in the following section.

4 Results

The results of this study are presented in five subsections. The first section (4.1) focuses on participants' views of expressing themselves in their native languages while the second (4.2) focuses on the same in English. The third section (4.3) adds information to this by discussing the things participants felt easier to express in English. In the fourth section (4.4), participants' experiences of bringing forward their identity in English are examined and in the fifth section (4.5), participants' images of their possible selves in English are discussed.

4.1 Expressing oneself in native language

The question of whether participants had experienced troubles expressing themselves in their native languages resulted in quite like-minded answers. The participants mostly felt that in normal situations they had no difficulties in expressing themselves. Problems only occurred when the situation or topic of discussion was somehow unfamiliar. For example, Janne stated that when he was living abroad, there were times when Finnish words, even the very basic ones, would not come to his mind. He reasoned this as follows:

Jos mä puhun englantia mä aattelen englanniksi, jos mä puhun suomea mä aattelen suomeksi, [...] ne on nii jotenkin erillään noi noi kielet ja niitten logiikat et mä en, en saa niitte välille yhteyttä. Sitte ku mä oon puhunu pitkään pelkästään englantia, nii jotenki mä luulen et se ei vaan niinku tahdo vaihtua takaisin sieltä suomen kieleen. (Janne)

If I speak English I think in English, if I speak in Finnish I think in Finnish, [...] those languages and their logics, they are somehow so separate that I can't make a connection between them. When I have spoken only English for a long time, I somehow think that it just doesn't want to change back to Finnish. (Janne, my translation)

For Janne, switching the language back to Finnish after a long exposure to speaking and thinking only in English was probably the reason for his difficulties. For Lotta, different interests or perspectives could result in communication challenges in her native language. Roosa added that if she was emotional, for example angry or sad, these kinds of problems might arise. Thus, most participants considered that challenges occurring in their native languages were occasional and were caused by different perspectives of the speakers, difficult topics, emotions, or a long exposure to some other language. Nevertheless, Ella and Martha felt they had come across these kinds of situations rather often. They stated the following:

Kun luulee kirjoittavansa ja tarkoittavansa jotain tiettyä [...] tai olettaa että sen voi ymmärtää vaan niinku on itte ajatellu nii yllättäen se ei pidäkkää paikkaansa. [...] sit joku joka ajattelee asioista eri tavalla, ni näkee sen viestin, [...] ja lukee sen eri tavalla kuin mitä olin itse ajatellut. [...] Olen törmännyt tähän usein. (Ella)

When one thinks writing and meaning something specific [...] or assumes that it can only be interpreted the way I have thought, then surprisingly it doesn't hold up. [...] then someone who thinks differently of things sees the message [...] and reads it differently than what I myself had thought. [...] I have often run into this. (Ella, my translation)

This happens often to me in the sense that I have problems remembering certain words in my native language in Slovak. [...] it's certain words that simply don't pop into my head immediately, and this can be a problem with my parents because they don't speak English [...] then I really have to either take the time and, either think of the word or think of a synonym or simply look up the word in Google which kind of breaks my, I don't know my argument [...] when I cannot just say this word and then everything kind of breaks and, so it can be frustrating. (Martha)

Ella's explanation of these situations with communication challenges comes close to that of Lotta's. As both considered this was caused by the different expectations, perspectives, or way of thinking from the speakers, it was only Ella who said this would happen constantly. Martha's case in turn is somewhat comparable to Janne's experience. Martha thought her problems arose from the fact that she had lived in Finland for years and was not exposed to Slovak that much anymore. English had become her everyday communication language, and she stated feeling more secure using English than any other language. Thus, it is not too surprising that her native language Slovak was not always the easiest language for her anymore. The difference in Janne's and Martha's experiences was that Janne did not live abroad anymore whereas Martha did.

Consequently, interviewees felt that mostly there were no difficulties in expressing themselves in their native languages. However, a long exposure to some other language was reported to have an influence if there were challenges. Certain topics of discussion or differing perspectives between the speakers could also have resulted in miscommunications.

4.2 Expressing oneself in English

Most participants viewed that expressing opinions was relatively easy for them in English. When it came to differences in expressing opinions in English and in

participants' native languages, only Roosa considered that there were no differences at all. This is apparent in the following examples:

Because English is not my native language [...], so I guess that's easy to come off like rude sometimes in English, because you don't know how to pick your words, sometimes they have like different meanings, you know nuances that you recognize clearly in your native language, so you have like wider vocabulary to choose from. (Manuela)

Onhan näissä se, kielissä tietysti oma persoonansa, [...] emmä englanniksi pysty nii lyyrisesti ilmasemaan omia mielipiteitä tai niinkun siitä puuttuu tiettyjä semmosia nyanseja, plus sitte et [...] se on kuitenkin eri henkilö ku puhuu englantia ku kuka puhuu sitte suomea mun sisällä. (Janne)

Of course, these languages have their own characteristics, [...] I can't express my opinions so lyrically in English, or like it's lacking the kind of nuances, plus [...] it is still a different person who speaks English than who speaks Finnish inside me. (Janne, my translation)

The differences seemed to mostly focus on vocabulary and smaller nuances like Manuela and Janne both mentioned. Roosa was the only who thought that differences in expressing opinions were due to the social environment rather than the language which was used.

Even though all the participants had good English skills and felt conveying opinions was quite easy, they had experienced difficulties as well. The interviewees were asked about situations, in which they felt they could not express themselves as they wished, or in which their speaking partner did not completely understand them. Most interviewees recognized these kinds of situations but could not always think of a specific situation. However, Martha gave an excellent example:

I once joked with a friend or more like an acquaintance, we weren't that close. And her language, her native language is English, she's from America, and I never really used to joke with her a lot as I used to be this reserved person but, it happened, I made a joke. But she took it very seriously and she then got hurt in the process to the point of crying. [...] even though other people joked in this exact manner or even in the worst manner with her I think, she somehow [...] misunderstood it coming from me, like she took it a bit more seriously, and they, maybe because she knew me as a serious person or reserved person, I guess unconsciously to me it sounded rude or accusing of her so. We ended up explaining the whole situation, but I still feel like the damage was never undone. (Martha)

Martha's story is a drastic example of a misunderstood situation in which her discussion partner started to cry. When asked for a reason why Martha thought this misunderstanding happened, she offered an explanation in which her speaking partner had a different kind of image of Martha being a more serious and reserved person than what she actually was.

Considering Martha's joke from this point of view, her speaking partner might have taken it literally and did not understand it was a joke. Martha stated that she should have been more mindful and considered the appropriateness of the joke at the time. Nevertheless, this example gives an idea of what could happen when the assigned identity does not correspond to the claimed identity (Varghese et al. 2005). The girl in question had very likely assigned a certain kind of identity to Martha from her point of view, but Martha did not act according to that identity in the end. In addition, Martha's sociolinguistic competence might have been too limited at the time (Lasan and Rehner 2018), as she had not understood what kind of effect the joke could have. Manuela, Lotta and Ella had also come across situations in which they were not completely understood. According to them, vocabulary was usually the biggest reason for this:

Sometimes it was maybe a problem with the vocabulary with the words. Especially when I was younger so, once like I order a pepperoni pizza but, pepperoni meal means like pepper bells in Italian and it's a kind of sausage in English, so my mom was vegetarian and I ordered like a meat pizza, that's like some miscommunication. [...] also with my relatives in Canada, a couple of times I use very old terms, they were not used anymore in English, at that time they were like what are you saying, but then like I chose other words and I expressed myself yeah correctly. (Manuela)

Muistan joskus urani alkuaikoina että kirjoitin johonkin jotain raportteja ja kirjoitin siihen jonkun, en muista enää mikään se sana oli, mä luulin et se sana tarkoittaa muut ku mitä se tarkoitti. [...] Joten se viesti meni iha mykkyrälleen ja, sit mä selittelin sitä jälkikäteen ja ei se sit oikein hyvin päättyny. (Ella)

I remember at some point in the beginning of my career that I wrote some reports somewhere and I wrote there some, I don't remember anymore which word it was, I thought that word means something different than what it did. [...] So that message went completely pear-shaped, and then I explained it afterwards and it didn't really end well. (Ella, my translation)

Manuela's and Ella's stories are quite relatable since their communication problems arose from inadequate vocabulary. For Manuela, the problem was apparent in words regarding food, but in Ella's case the challenge was related to using English words in her work. Lotta did not come up with a specific example, but she also recognized situations in which wrong choice of words, or a 'funny synonym' might have altered the tone of the discussion. She also added that if she had started the conversation from 'the wrong end' or the aims of the speakers had been different it usually resulted in her meaning left deficient. All these narratives are examples of situations in which expressing one's meaning was not completely achieved. However, these problems were not necessarily

connected to expressing their identity but the message. The situation in which an individual is when speaking another language has a great importance in whether the main purpose of using this language is to express one's identity or to deliver the message. Since identity is changing and influenced by various situations, the need to be understood can override the identity expression in some situations. Janne and Roosa considered this topic as follows:

On paljon tilanteita et mä haluisin ilmasta jonkun asian tietyllä tavalla, mut mun täytyy enemmän keskittyä siihen et mä saan sen niinku viestin läpi, enemmän ku se että millä tavalla mä sen tuon esille, [...] varsinkin jos asia on semmonen missä niinku, sanasto on ihan täysin jossain tuolla passiivisen puolella. (Janne)

There are many situations where I would want to express something in a specific way, but I have to focus more on that I get the message through, rather than focus on what way I bring it forward, [...] especially if the topic is the kind of in which, the vocabulary is completely on the passive side. (Janne, my translation)

Just sinä päivänä kun mä muutin sinne [Englantiin] ja sit olin ollu jotenkin iha tunnemyllerryksis vuorokauden vähintään ja sit ku mä yhtäkkiä näinki siel keittiös ensimmäisen kämppiksen, sit mä jotenki iha täysin jäädyin [...], halusin tietää et onks ne keittiön kaapit jotenki nimetty et mikä on kenenki, sit mä en niinku en vaan jotenkin saanu sitä kysyttyä [...], sönköti vaa jotai mut ei siit tullu mitään. (Roosa)

On the day I moved there [to England] I had been somehow completely in an emotional rollercoaster within the previous 24 hours and when I suddenly saw the first roommate in the kitchen then I somehow totally froze [...], I wanted to know if the kitchen cupboards were named like which belongs to whom, then I just somehow couldn't ask that [...] I just stuttered something, but it came to nothing. (Roosa, my translation)

Janne thought that there were times when he had to only focus on delivering the message rather than on how the message was delivered. He also mentioned the receptive vocabulary being the reason for this. In turn, Roosa's story differs in that she did not consider vocabulary being the biggest problem, but the emotional state she was in. She had just moved to England for an exchange and she had been quite emotional and cried the previous day. Then, when the first actual conversation took place, she could not express herself the way she wanted to.

To conclude, everyday topics and general communication seemed to be quite effortless to the participants, but the difference between native language and English was reported to exist. This result is similar to the results in Dewaele and Nakano's study (2013), in which the feeling of different was noticed as a gap between L1 and L2. Perhaps there is always some kind of a shift to another role or identity when changing to some

other language than the native one, no matter how easy and fluent expressing oneself was in this language. Nevertheless, all the participants had experienced situations in which the communication did not work as intended. Usually, the reasons were a limited vocabulary, a state of emotional outburst or a lack of sociolinguistic competence.

4.3 Things easier to express in English

Despite some communication complications and misunderstandings, the participants had also experienced moments in which there were no difficulties to express themselves in English. Mostly these situations were related to everyday discussion situations. Manuela and Ella even reported feeling satisfaction when being completely understood. Manuela thought this was a result of her becoming more confident in her use of English, whereas for Ella, these moments were related to her work and a successful use of English in those circumstances. Roosa named a 'relaxed atmosphere' as one factor to help expressing herself in English. Yet, she added that this was dependent on the language. For instance, if she were to speak French the relaxed atmosphere would probably not help in expressing herself since her French was less fluent than her English. Janne had an interesting point of view to consider things that were easy to express in English:

Tähän tulee ehkä semmonen jännä ilmiö [...], mä oon huomannu et [...] on hyviä englanti päiviä ja huonoja englanti päiviä [...], tähän mulla ei o mitään selitystä [...] et mistä se johtuu, mut siis joinakin päivinä ei vaan kerta kaikkiaan tuu mitään suusta ulos mikä ois järkevää englanniksi ja sitte toisina päivinä niinkun on kunnan Shakespearena siellä pyörimässä ja kaikki jotenkin niinkun tulee semmosessa muodossa ulos kun, kun todellakin haluaa. (Janne)

In this there's an interesting phenomenon [...], I have noticed that [...] there are good English days and bad English days [...], for this I don't have any explanation [...] as to why it happens, but in some days there is just nothing senseful coming out of my mouth in English and then in some days I'm going around like a real Shakespeare and everything comes out in the form I want it to. (Janne, my translation)

Janne himself considered it interesting that sometimes English just flowed easily and in some days he would have huge difficulties in expressing his thoughts. He said that occasionally other variables might have affected this, for example if he had slept too little or had consumed alcohol the previous day. Yet sometimes there did not seem to be any obvious reason to explain why he had troubles in expressing himself in English.

In addition to being understood, the interviewees had noticed that some things were easier to express in English than in their native languages. Lotta, Manuela

and Janne mentioned translatability as some kind of a factor here. According to them, some words or expressions could simply not be directly translated into their native languages or other languages that they used. Lotta mentioned ‘trendy idioms’ as an example of this. Manuela added that often these words were somehow culturally linked to the language in question. Janne said he usually used English expressions for humoristic reasons in Finnish conversations. Ella commented that some words simply came to her mind first in English and that things related to her work were also quite often easier to handle in English. However, as the following quotations show, these easily expressed things might also be dependent on topics of discussion or feelings:

I guess whenever it comes to social issues, religion, [...] topics such as sexual orientation or climate change I feel like it's always easier to speak in English. Probably because [...] all these topics are so widely discussed in English but maybe not so much in my native language so, whenever I start speaking about it in Slovak, people might get defensive because it's not your everyday topic. [...] Tough topics are easier to discuss in English than it in Slovak I would say. (Martha)

Mun mielest ehkä jossain määrin tunteiden ilmaisu on helpompaa englanniks. [...] Mut se ehkä johtuu siit et niinku englanninkielinen puhekulttuuri on muutenki aika erilaist verrattun suomen kieleen, esimerkiks no englanniks jos puhutaan nii puhelinkeskustelut yleensä päättyy johonki ‘love you’ mut hyvin harvoin Suomes sanotaan mitään tollasta. (Roosa)

I think that maybe to some degree expressing feelings is easier in English. [...] But it might be caused by English speaking culture being pretty different in comparison to Finnish one anyway, for example if speaking in English telephone discussions often end to some expression like ‘love you’ but in Finnish something like that is rarely said. (Roosa, my translation)

For Martha, some topics were easier to discuss in English than in Slovak. She thought this was the case because these topics were discussed more widely in English and people would not get that defensive. She had mentioned earlier that Slovaks were more conservative in their opinion due to a strong Catholic influence and maybe this conservative view could also be seen as an influential factor in the choice of discussion topics as well. As Martha stated, English is the global language used everywhere, and therefore there are probably better resources to talk about some topics in English and maybe a more receptive atmosphere among English speakers. As for Roosa, she stated that feelings were easier to express in English, though she did acknowledge the difference might simply be due to the conversation cultures, which are rather different in English and in Finnish. This would once again point to the sociolinguistic competence (Lasan and

Rehner 2018). Roosa seemed to have internalized these norms related to expressing emotions in English speaking cultures, in which saying for example ‘love you’ casually at the end of a conversation on a phone is more accustomed than in Finnish speaking culture.

Thus, being able to express themselves was considered quite uncomplicated. Additionally, depending on the word, expression, day, topic, and feelings, participants felt that some things were easier to express in English. These occasional words or ‘trendy idioms’ are probably partly picked up from the world of media. Since the mobility is globally very quick, borrowing linguistic features is also easier (Higgins 2011, 1-3).

4.4 Bringing forward identity in English

The interviewees were asked about how their identity is brought forward and whether they consider it important that their identity is shown in English. Not all participants were able to tell how exactly their identity was shown, but everyone thought that it was transmitted somehow. Lotta and Roosa listed expressions, body language, and gestures as ways to bring forward identity. Manuela also told she used a lot of gestures, but she considered it was an Italian thing. Be that the case or not, those gestures would still convey her identity. In addition, all of them mentioned word choices as one way to show identity. Ella and Martha gave somewhat opposite answers to this question:

Kyl mä uskon et se niinku välittykin, mut ei joo ei varmastikaan samal tasol [...] jos nyt mennään siihen pelkästään tunnepuoleen niin [...] sitä tunnetta ei ole siin samal taval ku jossain, ko äidinkieles. [...] mut sehä riippuu sit taas siit et niinku, mikä se kuulija on. [...] Se voi olla sille iha sama juttu. Et se on vaan semmonen työkieli, se englantti. (Ella)

I do believe that it is transmitted, but certainly not to the same level [...] if we go solely to the emotional part then [...] that feeling is not there in the same way as in some native language. [...] but again it depends on what the listener is. [...] It can be the same thing for them. That it is only that kind of a working language, English that is. (Ella, my translation)

I feel like when I speak in English, I guess not to the full degree but more than in other languages it is myself speaking like really who I am. [...] So I feel like in English I am more myself, even than in my own native language. (Martha)

Ella thought that her identity was shown in English as well, but not to the same degree as in Finnish. She had a very different point of view to approach this topic in comparison to other participants. She mostly used English in her work as a jurist and because of that she

used English daily. In the beginning of the interview, she made a rather clear distinction between Finnish (her native language) and English. She said that Finnish was the 'language of the identity' and she used it to express feelings and 'not feelings'. Ella was clearly capable of communicating in English since she used it in her work constantly, but when it came to bringing forward her identity, she felt there was a difference compared to her native language as can be seen from the quotation above. She had stated earlier that English was a quite neutral language and that it lacked the emotional level. She continued saying that this was probably caused by the fact that she had learned Finnish first. Thus, for Ella, English was mostly connected to her work which probably restricted her language use and as she continuously stated, Finnish was the language in which she expressed her emotions. Consequently, it seems that for Ella there was a clear identity synthesis (Bogaerts et al. 2019) when it came to the roles of Finnish and English in her identity. Finnish was to express her identity and emotions, whereas English was used to express things in her work. If this were considered from the perspective of the model of Worchel et al. (2000), Ella's intragroup identity and group membership to her work as a jurist would probably include English language too.

In contrast, for Martha bringing forward her identity was more comfortable in English than in other languages. English had become the language in which she could transmit her identity the best, even better than in her own native languages. However, she still stated that she could not express her identity to a full degree in English. This seems to imply that there were some parts of her identity that could be brought forward only in her native languages or in some other language she knew. The strong position of English in Martha's identity expression was very likely because of her constant use of English and the context she used it in. She had lived in Finland for three years, and since her Finnish skills were not adequate to be used in all situations, English had become very important in her everyday life.

Janne had some distinctive thoughts of bringing forward his identity in English. The first quotation is his direct answer regarding the question, but the second one was his own reflection at the end of the interview when he had the possibility to speak freely about the topic:

Mul on tietysti oma persoona pohjalla mut mul on ihan eri persoona puhumassa kuitenkin englannin kieltä, ei niinku mitenkään valtavan paljon erilainen mut mä ite tiedän ja tiedostan sen että, [...] suomen kieltä mä käytän ihan eri tavalla ku englannin kieltä. [...] nää kielet on iha erilaisia keskenään, ni totta kai se vaikuttaa myös siihen et millanen

niinkun mun identiteetti kummassakin kielessä on. Mut et mitään semmosta niinkun persoonallisuuseroahan mussa ei tuu siinä kohtaa, et emmä nyt yhtäkkiä jakaannu kahtee eri persoonaan jos mä puhun kahta eri kieltä. (Janne)

Of course, I have my own persona there, but I still have a completely different persona speaking English, not drastically different but I myself know and acknowledge that [...] I use Finnish in a completely different way than English. [...] these languages are totally different, so of course it has an effect on also what kind of my identity in both languages is. But there is no kind of personality difference happening at that point, I don't suddenly split into two distinct personas if I speak two distinct languages. (Janne, my translation)

Mua harmittaa se, sellaisena ihmisenä, joka tykkää suomen kielestä, että nää mun englantia puhuvat kaverit jotka tykkää englannin kielestä, niin mä saan niinkun nauttia [...] heidän [...] siitä kielen käytöstä ja siitä miten he rakastaa englantia, mut he ei niinku pysty tekemään samaa mulle ku ei osaa suomee, et musta tuntuu heidän kanssaan varsinkin että [...] osa musta [...] jää sen taakse et he ei osaa suomea. Ja se on jollain tavalla, no epäreilu on väärä sana mut vähä semmonen niinku harmillinen juttu et ku haluais et he he niinkun tuntis mut myös suomen kielen puhujana mut he ei sitä voi varmaan ikinä tehdä. (Janne)

I'm annoyed by that, as a person who likes Finnish language, that these English speaking friends of mine who like English language, that I get to enjoy [...] their [...] use of language and how they love English, but they cannot do the same for me 'cause they don't know Finnish, so when I'm with them I feel that [...] part of me [...] stays behind of the fact that they can't speak Finnish. And somehow it is, well unfair is a wrong word, but a bit like unfortunate thing when I wish they would know me also as a Finnish speaker, but they probably cannot ever do that". (Janne, my translation)

Janne saw a clear distinction in himself when he spoke in English compared to when he spoke in Finnish. In addition, he considered knowing and acknowledging this separation while speaking. Interestingly, this clear change of identity and character somewhat contradicts with Dewaele's view (2015, 95), in which he considers that people do not have different personalities in different languages but simply different parts of it are shown. Janne considered it hard to say what the differences were in specific, but that they were more likely small things than big changes. However, Finnish had more analogies and circumlocutions in his opinion. Dewaele's study (2015) shows that there are no clear results or conclusions as to why people feel different when speaking in different languages. Janne explained this distinction of character with the completely different natures of English and Finnish languages and that this was also the reason why he had different identities in respective languages. Nevertheless, the second quotation would suggest that Janne was not completely content with this distinction and wished that his two native English-speaking friends were able to perceive Janne's Finnish character as well. Janne seemed to have being annoyed by the idea that his friends would form a

distorted assigned identity for him (Varghese et al. 2005) based on only his use of English and not his native language.

When it came to the participants' perceptions whether they brought forward their identity consciously or not, they were almost unanimous in answering no. Only Janne argued that he tried to consciously transmit things from Finnish into English:

Yritän tuoda niinku niitä mitkä mun mielestä suomen kielessä on hauskoja juttuja, niin jos mulle vaan päähän pälkähtää joku semmonen tapa millä tavalla mä voisin tuoda omaa semmosta suomalaisuutta siihen englannin kieleen ni [...] kyl mä sen käytän hyväksi. Ja just ehkä sen takia et kun nää mun kaks natiivia kaveria on semmosia jotka tykkää kielistä ni mä tiedän et he arvostaa hirveästi sitä että [...] tua jotenki erilaista ilmaisu pöytään. (Janne)

I try to bring out those things that I find funny in Finnish language, so if I can only come up with a way in which I could bring forward the kind of Finnishness to the English language then [...] I will use it. And maybe just because these two native friends of mine are the kind of that like languages, so I know they appreciate greatly that [...] I bring different expressions to the discussion. (Janne, my translation)

For Janne, bringing his Finnish identity to English was a conscious choice. According to Ożańska-Ponikwia's study (2012), in which people with high emotional and social intelligence were consciously aware of their personality change in different languages, this would be an indication of certain kind of personality traits in Janne's character. However, Janne considered this was probably partly due to his two native English speaking friends. Janne considered many of his answers through the relationships and discussions he had with these friends. He described his friends being very interested in languages and learning them, which was a common interest with Janne. Since he knew his friends appreciated new ways of expressing things in different languages, it was probably quite easy and natural for him to consciously ponder how to bring forward his identity also in English. He also stated in the end of the interview that he had thought of language identity and challenges of expressing oneself in a foreign language before. This general interest in languages seems to have been one cause for Janne's conscious way of transmitting his identity.

The importance of bringing forward one's identity in English gave some variety in answers. Most interviewees felt that showing their identity in English was important, even if it happened unconsciously, but some felt it depended on other variables.

Emmä sano et mä kovin, niinku tietoisesti yrittäisi niinku tuoda sitä omaa identiteettiä. [...] mut sit kuitenkin haluais et niinku et se keskustelun tai se vastapuoli, sais semmosen tietynlaisen käsityksen ja [...] et siin keskustelus näkyis myös se oma identiteetti, nää ehkä vähä ristiriidas. (Lotta)

I don't say that I would very consciously try to bring out that own identity. [...] but then still, I'd want that the other side of the conversation would get a certain kind of impression and [...] that my identity would be shown in that conversation, these are maybe a bit controversial. (Lotta, my translation)

I guess I am altering my identity a little bit because it's something different what I put out and something completely different what I feel inside so, it depends. But in normal life I feel like, I don't alter, or I don't do anything with my identity. And so, to answer the question I think it is important for me. (Martha)

Lotta saw the unconscious way of transmitting her identity as somewhat controversial to her wish to bring forward her identity in general. She stated earlier that it was hard to evaluate how she brought forward her identity if gestures and facial expressions were not counted. This might explain her view in which the importance of bringing forward her identity was not in direct line with the unconscious way of doing that. In turn, Martha also considered bringing forward her identity in English important, even though she said that she sometimes altered herself consciously in situations in which she wanted to appear different than what she felt. For example, giving a presentation was this kind of a situation, though it could also be an example of a situation in which a different part of her identity was shown. However, Manuela had a different view to approach this question:

It's not so important but it depends on the kind of relation that I want to establish with the other person. I mean if I were like at the bar and I'm talking to, you know, a waitress I wouldn't care like to put forward my identity, maybe [...] when I was in Japan you know, I want to make friends of course, you have to show a little bit of yourself. (Manuela)

For Manuela, the importance of bringing forward her identity depended on the people she was dealing with. When it came to meeting occasional people, she did not see the point of conveying her identity, but in Japan where she lived for five months she acknowledged that in order to make friends she needed to bring forward more of herself. This could be related to Manuela's perception of imagined communities (Norton and Toohey 2011). She wanted to be a part of the community of other exchange students in Japan and consequently, she made more effort to express herself in this context. Janne and Roosa also considered that showing their identity was important, but in their case it was dependent on the language they used, as the following quotations show:

Mä luulen et kielellinen identiteetti on mulle joka tapauksessa ollu aina tärkeetä, oli kieli mikä tahansa. [...] japanin kielessä niin, se on, ja [...] miksei nyt ruotsin kielessäkin ni se on vaan pyrkimys saada jotenki oma asia ilmastua kun kerran kielellinen taito on niin heikkoa, mut tämmösessä kielessä [englannissa] mihin mä voin ihan hyvin puristaa oman identiteetin joukkoon ni totta kai, totta kai se tulee sinne laitettua. (Janne)

I think that language identity has in any case always been important to me, no matter which language. [...] in Japanese it is [...] and why not in Swedish too, there is just the attempt to somehow express own opinion since the language skills are so weak, but in this kind of language [English] in which I can easily squeeze my identity with it then of course, of course it is put there. (Janne, my translation)

On tärkeetä kuitenkin et on se kieli mikä hyvänsä nii sit pystyy tuomaan esille sen oman itsensä [...] mä luulen et haasteita ois enemmän jos kommunikoi sellaisel kielel mitä ei kauheen hyvin osaa tai mitkään ei suju yhtä vaivattomasti ku englanti, eli jos mä nyt vaikka yrittäisin kommunikoida vaikka ranskaksi ni sit mun identiteetti ei varmaa sen puheen välityksellä niin hyvin välittyis, mut sit kuitenkin siin on muutaki mitä kautta se identiteetti voi välittyä. (Roosa)

Regardless of the language it is important to be able to bring forward oneself [...] I think there would be more challenges if one communicated with a language which one doesn't know very well or which is not as fluent as English, that is if I tried to communicate in French for example, then my identity wouldn't transmit very well in the speech, but still there is something else too through which identity can be transmitted. (Roosa, my translation)

Although it was not asked in the interview, Janne and Roosa both pondered this question from the perspective of other languages than English as well. The level in which they considered their skills to be in each language had an influence on their aims of bringing forward their identity. Janne gave Japanese and Swedish as examples of languages in which he mostly tried to focus on conveying the message, and Roosa used French as an example of a language in which she would have had to transmit her identity through something else than language alone. Again, the sociolinguistic competence (Lasan and Rehner 2018) plays a role in this. Both Janne and Roosa seemed to lack the adequate knowledge and skills in other languages than English and felt that their identities were not as easily transmitted. Nonetheless, as Roosa mentioned, language is not the only way to express identity. Roosa had another interesting comment at the end of the interview concerning the importance of language identity:

Me ollaan just englannin aineopettaja opiskelijoit nii meil on aika kuitenkin vahva semmonen kieli-identiteetti englannin kielessä, et ei välttämättä kaikil oo sellaista et jos

esimerkiks opiskelee jotai, no ihan mitä vaan muuta, missä se englanti ei oo se pääjuttu. (Roosa)

We just are English language teacher students, so we have a certain kind of pretty strong language identity in English language, so not necessary everyone has that for example if they study something, well anything else in which English is not the main thing. (Roosa, my translation)

Roosa considered that her strong language identity in English was greatly due to the fact that she studied English and was about to become an English teacher. This kind of a strong identity probably emphasizes the importance of identity in English language and very likely in all foreign languages. This could indicate that language students might have a stronger basis to form and express their identities in a foreign language than people who are not that engaged to learn or handle things in foreign languages. However, as already stated, identity is changing and varies over time (Norton 2014). Therefore, no individual can have a complete lack of language identity, but its importance can shift from time to time.

In conclusion, the interviewees reported varying opinions of expressing identity depending on their personal relation to English, context of using it and to what degree they felt identity was transmitted through English. It was mostly considered to happen unconsciously, with one exception. Almost all participants felt that bringing forward one's identity was important. The degree of this importance depended on the context, the people, and the languages.

4.5 Participants' possible selves in English

The interviewees' ideal and ought-to selves (Dörnyei 2005, 98-100) were also examined. The interviewees were asked what kinds of English speakers they wanted to be and whether they considered having pressure to be a certain kind of in English. Considering the following quotations as examples, half of the interviewees wanted to be or sound more like native English speakers:

Semmonen natiivi tietenki. [...] Se ois nii helppoa [...] puuttuis se et sun pitää tarkistella sitä ja tätä ja et meniks tää nyt, et onkohan tämä nyt suurin piirtei oikein tää lauserakenne jotta se tulee ymmärretyksi [...] siin mieles se ois hirveen hieno ku ois täysin kaksikielinen esimerkiksi. (Ella)

The kind of native of course. [...] It would be so easy [...] it would miss the need to check this and that and whether this sentence structure is roughly correct so that it is understood

[...] in that sense it would be really great to be a bilingual for example. (Ella, my translation)

Haluaisin että kielitaito ois aika lähel natiivin kielitaitoo [...] vaikka no se nyt ei ehkä ainakaan nykyään enää oo sellainen mitä pidetään ykköstavoitteena vaa enemmän et ois semmonen kommunikatiivinen kompetenssi [...], mut kyl itelle kuitenkin varmaan koska paljon just on tällaisis piireissä mis englannin kielen taito on tosi hyvä just niinku englannin opiskelijoiden keske [...] niin sit kyl se ois niinku oma tavote olla sillee aika lähellä natiivin kielitaitotasoo. (Roosa)

I would want my language skills to be quite near the ones of a native speaker [...] although, it is not maybe something that is considered as the most important goal nowadays anymore but rather that one would have a kind of a communicative competence [...], but for myself, as I am quite often in circles in which English skills are really good, like among English students [...] then it would be my goal to be very near the native speaker's language skills. (Roosa, my translation)

Ella, Roosa, and Janne all considered native like English skills as their aim or ideal. Ella and Janne also mentioned how nice it would be a bilingual. It is interesting to note how these three participants clearly stated the native speaker level of proficiency as their aim, while the other three reported that they would rather focus on for instance fluency. In the case of Ella, one explanatory factor might have been the time in which she had learned English. Sounding like a native speaker has been a prevailing goal in English teaching and this thought might have stayed with Ella. Pietilä and Lintunen (2015, 23-24) consider this a rather unprofitable aim because only few language learners are able to achieve it. Roosa touches on this idea when stating that nowadays the communicative competence is considered more important to achieve. However, she still wanted to attain native like English skills. In her case, the explanation was probably her studies as a major student of English as she herself told. The explanatory factor for Janne was his native English speaking friends. Interestingly, he considered that in a conversation with non-native English speakers there was no attempt to use more complicated English because of the non-native speakers' lack of adequate English skills. This seems to indicate that for Janne, speaking with his native English friends gave him motivation to use even the most difficult expressions, because he knew nothing he said would be misunderstood.

Martha's answer was somewhat similar to the participants above, but yet, she did not wish to sound like any specific native English speaker either:

I wish I could sound more natural in my English and have and develop a more neutral but still natural accent so, not too American, but also not too British or any other native English

speaking countries [...] not to sound that I'm translating word by word what I'm thinking in my native language, but to sound like yeah it's coming naturally for me. (Martha)

What is interesting with Martha's answer is that she wanted to sound natural in English but still not like a native English speaker. This idea comes close to the results of Jenkins' study (2007), in which the participants wanted to have a more native like English accent, but they still valued their own way of speaking and would not change it. It seems as if many non-native English speakers, for example Martha, have an urge to sound better and more fluent, but still they do not want to be identified as native English speakers. Yet, Martha also stated that she definitely did not want to sound Slovak or Slavic either. Considering this from the perspective of Pavlenko's research (2003a), it seems like Martha did not want to identify herself to the imagined community of native speakers of English, nor the one of non-native speakers of English, but rather to the multilingual/L2 user community.

Manuela did not consider sounding like a native speaker was her goal, but she too felt it was important to develop her English skills. Her wish was to become a more comfortable English speaker in all contexts, for example in business and social situations. She wanted to become understood in all situations and saw a good level of English as a means to accomplish this. Again, this would indicate to the direction of sociolinguistic competence (Lasan and Rehner 2018) and that Manuela maybe wished to have more knowledge and competence in English in more diverse environments. Lotta also came close to this thought:

Englanninkielisiin tilanteisiin helpommin sopeutuva, [...] aikaisemminkin puhuttiin siitä identiteetistä et se jotenki ehkä itekki oppis niinku tunnistamaa et mitä, mitä voi niinku tuoda vähä itteään siihe keskusteluun, tai niinku millaisil valinnoilla. Ehkä semmonen niinku rennompi ja just vähä semmonen niinku omannäkösempi englanninkielen puhuja. [...] keskusteleminen ois niinku tosi paljo helpompaa [...] jos se oma identiteetti ois siin niinku vahvemmin mukana. (Lotta)

More adaptable in situations happening in English, [...] earlier we talked about identity, so that maybe I could learn to recognize what I can like bring forward of myself to the conversation, or with what kind of choices. Maybe more relaxed and like looking a bit more like myself as an English speaker. [...] having a conversation would be like a lot easier [...] if that own identity was more strongly involved. (Lotta, my translation)

Lotta's aim was to become more adaptable and relaxed in different situations, but interestingly, she also wished to be able to bring forward her identity and to seem more like herself when discussing in English. It seems very likely that this aim was inspired by

the interview itself, which can be seen from Lotta's reference to earlier topics during the interview. She seemed to become more conscious of her own language identity and eager to be more aware of it when speaking in English. In addition, Lotta considered that discussing would be easier if she were able to express her identity more.

When it came to feeling pressure to be of a certain kind when speaking in English the participants had varying answers. Manuela and Janne thought they had had pressures before, but not anymore. Manuela told this was caused by the school system, as in Italy they taught British English and wanted students to use that variety of English. This is not that drastic a situation as the examples in Pavlenko's study (2003b), but it still directs the formation of identity in English. Nowadays, Manuela thought the only pressure came from herself to not make mistakes, but she considered this a very little pressure. She had also noticed during her exchange that not even the native speakers of English put pressure on her, and because of this she felt there was no need for her to put more pressure on herself either. Janne had similar thoughts about this. In the beginning, he had thought that Finnish accent in English was horrible and that one could not speak English unless they could speak it perfectly. He had realized he needed to shake off these kinds of thoughts if he wanted to continue conversations in English. Nowadays, Janne thought language was a way to communicate something to others and since he was capable of doing that he did not feel the pressure anymore. Lotta had a very neutral way of inspecting this topic, since she thought she both had felt and did not have felt pressure to be a certain kind of an English speaker:

Joku yleinen käsitys et kaikki osaa puhuu jotenki tosi sujuvasti englantii tai sopeutuu semmosii tilanteisiin mis niinku pitää puhuu englannin kielel, mut sit taas jotenki, usein sit ehkä en just koe painet koska aattelee vaan sillee et ku se ei oo oma äidinkieli. (Lotta)

Some general conception that everyone can speak English very fluently or adjust themselves to the kind of situations in which one has to speak English, but then again somehow, often I just maybe don't feel pressure because I think it's not my own native language. (Lotta, my translation)

The common view in which everyone can or should be able to speak English might increase pressures but nevertheless, Lotta thought that as a foreign speaker of English she did not need to feel that pressure. She also stated that even though the pressure was thought to be coming mostly from other people, it was probably initiated by herself. Lotta's answer could be compared with Martha's, who said she did not want to have a Slavic accent when speaking in English, but she did not consider having any conscious

pressure to achieve this. Martha also added that sometimes when strangers had noticed her accent she felt bad about it and wondered if this was some kind of pressure. If it were, it would have seemed to arise from her own goal to sound natural in English and not from the expectations of others. Also, the contrast between Martha's claimed and assigned identities (Varghese et al. 2005) could be an explanatory factor.

Although for some the pressure was minimal or even non-existent, two participants clearly stated having felt pressures, according to the following quotations:

Juristien pitää olla tietynlaisia, niinku se semmonen ennakoasetelma on vallitseva. [...] Mutta, mun mielest siltiki vaan tiettyyn pisteeseen. (Ella)

Jurists need to be certain kinds of, like that kind of a pre-setup is prevailing. [...] But, in my opinion still only to a certain point. (Ella, my translation)

Kyl mä luon iteki ittelleni, ja aika paljon paineita siit et pitäis puhuu täydellisesti, ja kyl mä olin sellanen jo ennen kuin esimerkiks opiskelin englannin aineenopettajaks, et kyl mä oon ollu sellanen jo yläasteella ja lukiossa [...] ja sitte se ympäristö ketä siin on, et esimerkiksi just se et jos ihmiset tietää et mä opiskelen englanninopettajaks ni silloin on paineet vaikka ne ihmiset ite ei oliskaan mitään hirveen hyvii englannin puhujii, mut sit ne tietää et mun pitäis olla nii sit silloin on paineet [...] sit silloin myös että jos ne muut kenen kaa mä puhun on tosi hyviä, ni silloin tulee kans paineit. (Roosa)

I do create pretty much pressure to myself that I should speak perfectly, and I was that kind of already before I for example studied to be an English language teacher, so I have been like that already in middle school and in upper secondary school [...] and then the environment, who are there, so for example if people know that I study to become an English teacher, then there is pressure even though those people themselves were not very good English speakers, but then they know that I should be, so then there is pressure [...] also when the others who I speak with are really good, then there is pressure. (Roosa, my translation)

Ella seemed to view that her profession as a jurist gave her the pressure to be a certain kind of English speaker. She gave youth language as an example of not desired English language use. Ella also felt these pressures and expectations maybe came from some external institute. However, she still noted that these expectations were limiting only to a certain point. In turn, Roosa was certain when stating that she felt pressures coming from herself and others. Especially the fact that she was studying to be an English teacher gave her stress and made her feel that others expected her to be almost perfect in English. When she was asked to specify where the pressure came from, Roosa admitted that the original source might have been herself, even when people who knew Roosa studied English were present. Roosa stated that she usually imagined that those people thought she should be

perfect since she was an English student. Consequently, although the pressure depended on people around her, she was the one who initiated the pressure by presuming other people's thoughts.

Perhaps these differences to other participants can be explained by the contexts in which Ella and Roosa used English. For them, English was closely related to their profession, or future profession in Roosa's case. Ella was constantly in contact with people in the same profession which required a certain kind of image of professionalism, and as a result, her English use was also determined by these expectations. This notion is in accordance with Dewaele's point of view (2015) that people show different parts of their personality in different languages. In Ella's case, she mostly transmitted her professionalism and credibility in English. As she only considered her English language identity through her work, it is unfeasible to know if that identity had been different in another context. In comparison, Roosa might not have yet been in the profession, but she was still surrounded by people who either were English students like herself, or with people who knew she was studying to become an English teacher and expected her to be good in English. For her, the pressure might have been related to the imagined community (Norton and Toohey 2011) of English teachers, and in her view she needed to have excellent skills in English to be a part of this group.

To conclude, for three interviewees the ideal L2 self was to be a native like speaker of English while the other three wished to be more fluent in English and having more confidence and abilities to speak in English in various contexts. Two participants reported having no pressure anymore, even though they might have felt it before. Two participants had a quite neutral view since they argued having some pressure but only to some degree. However, two participants clearly felt having had pressure because of their profession or future profession.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, I will first draw a short conclusion of the study and its results from the perspective of research questions. Then, I will discuss the results in more depth and in relation to the field of identity research and second language learning. The limitations of this study are also considered along with the suggestions for future research concerning the topic in question. The aim of this study was to examine what kind of experiences second language speakers of English had of expressing their identity in English. The research questions were the following:

1. How do participants experience expressing themselves in English in comparison to their native language(s)?
2. How do participants experience bringing forward their identity when speaking in English as a second language?
3. What kind of possible selves participants have as second language English speakers?

To answer the first research question, participants felt that in most situations expressing themselves happened without complications. Despite that, all participants had experienced communication challenges in their native language(s) as well as in English. There was a difference between a native language and English in what kind of reasons played a part in these situations. Quite often the difficulties in the native language were due to an unfamiliar topic, differing expectations and perspectives of the speakers, or a long exposure to some other language. In English, the challenges were mostly caused by an insufficient vocabulary or a lack of sociolinguistic competence (Lasan and Rehner 2018). Nevertheless, some things were considered easier to express in English. For example, words that could not be directly translated to participants' native languages, discussing about certain topics, and expressing feelings were mentioned.

When it comes to the second research question, there was more variation in the participants' views. Some thought that word choices, gestures and expressions were the means to bring forward identity, whereas some could not name any concrete examples. The degree to which identity was shown varied among participants, but almost all thought that it happened unconsciously. All participants thought that bringing forward their identity in English was important, but this importance could depend on the context

or the people in this context. The third research question was related to participants' possible selves. For half of the participants, the ideal seemed to be close to a native speaker of English. To the others, the aims were fluency and ability to communicate with ease in various contexts. Pressure to be a certain kind of English speaker was felt from one end to the other. All had experienced pressure, but while some considered it still had an effect on them, some felt they no longer experienced it.

The results indicate that expressing identity in second language was considered important. Certainly, most people probably wish that their individual and claimed identities (Korostelina 2007; Varghese et al. 2005) would be transmitted regardless of what language is used to communicate. However, from the perspective of the individual, there can be considerable differences as to how they relate to their language identity. Perhaps for some people bringing forward their identity through various languages is not that important and conveying the message is their main goal when speaking in a foreign language. This idea emerged from Roosa's comment, in which she implied that as an English language student, her language identity in English could be stronger than the language identities of those who do not study English. In addition, the participants of this study had all lived abroad and learned more than one foreign language. Their rather positive attitudes towards expressing themselves and their wish to bring forward identity in English could be explained by their interest towards foreign languages and other cultures. The relevance of expressing identity is therefore greatly dependent on the individual. Furthermore, the language in question influences whether the aim of communication is to convey just the message or also the identity. This was detected in Janne's and Roosa's comments.

Nonetheless, even if an individual does not consider language identity consciously or have an interest in it, there is a certain urge to promote and recognize linguistic knowledge in the society. An example of this would be the language profile (FNAE 2020), which was mentioned in the Introduction and in which the students' language skills are gathered and recognized. This seems to indicate that language identity should be taken into account more closely in second language learning and teaching. Norton and Toohey (2011, 429) state that some "researchers encourage teachers to regard students' identities as potential, and to experiment with activities that do not lock students into 'finalized identities'". The results of this study imply that this is not always the case. Manuela reported that in Italy the goal was to sound like a British English speaker. In turn, Janne reflected that according to the prevailing conception in Finland, one should

be able to speak English perfectly before actually starting to communicate with it. These kinds of goals and images do not encourage learners to construct a very stable identity synthesis in English (Bogaerts et al. 2019, 892).

If the expression of identity in second language learning and teaching should be more focused on, one way to do this could be emphasizing the skills related to the sociolinguistic competence (Lasan and Rehner 2018). This can be seen from the results of this study, as the lack of appropriate vocabulary was often mentioned to be a reason for misunderstandings and communication challenges. Vocabulary can be seen as a part of sociolinguistic competence because it has a great significance in creating language appropriate to various communication situations. Moreover, difficult topics could be added under the concept of sociolinguistic competence, since often these kinds of topics require knowledge of the social factors as well.

Although conducting this study was planned and the interview was piloted, there are limitations concerning the results of the study. All the participants were acquaintances of the researcher. On one hand, this might have led to more cautious answers but on the other hand, it could also have helped to create a relaxed atmosphere for the interviews. Four out of six interviews were held and recorded in video meetings which could have affected to the results. The quality of recordings might not have been at the same level as the ones done in person. Also, the participants might have found the interview situations differently because of the differing interview situations. The video meeting itself might have affected the interviewees' answers. Another factor to consider are the challenges of interview method in general. The participants could talk about the same topic differently in some other context. In addition, it is also possible that they wanted to give the 'right' answers, or in other words, answers which were expected to (Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara 2009, 206). Nevertheless, this is not restricted to the interview method alone, but it can be applied to some other research methods as well.

One more limitation is the language in which the interviews were held. For Finnish participants (n=4), the interviews were held in their native language Finnish. In Martha's and Manuela's case, the interviews were held in English and not in their native languages. The interview questions were first formed in Finnish, and then translated into English, which might have resulted in some word choices that were not the best equivalents in English. Thus, understanding of the words and their meanings might have been slightly different in both languages used in the interviews. In addition, as the aim of the research was to examine English language identity, it could have been more fluent

and natural to talk about the topic with one's native language than in the language which was the focus of the research. Nonetheless, both Martha and Manuela were confident in English and did not seem to struggle with their answers.

In future, language identity could be researched from various aspects. The individuals' perspectives towards language identity have not been researched much. It would help to understand how differently language identity can be comprehended. One possible course could be examining language identities of people who have not lived abroad. All participants in this study had done so, even though it was not a prerequisite for participation, and they also seemed to have a general interest towards languages. Differences in language identities between language students and students of other disciplines would be interesting as well. Language identity has been researched widely, but as in many fields of second language learning, studies are often focused on the perspective of English. Consequently, language identities could be studied among other languages too, and perhaps compare them to language identities in English. Since English has a position as a global lingua franca, research among less frequently studied languages might give new insights to language identities.

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Appendix 1: Interview frame in Finnish

Questions given to the interviewees beforehand are marked in italics.

Taustakysymykset:

- Ikä?
- Sukupuoli?
- Äidinkieli (/kielet)?
- Mitä muita kieliä osaat? Paljonko niitä käytät? Milloin / missä tilanteissa?
- Oletko asunut/oleskellut ulkomailla yli 2kk ajanjaksoja? Missä ja kuinka kauan?

Varsinaiset kysymykset:

1. Mielikuvat kielistä

- Miten kuvailisit suomen kieltä (/äidinkieltäsi)? / Millainen kieli suomen kieli (/äidinkielesi) mielestäsi on? (Apuna: voit kuvailla vaikka adjektiiveilla, esim. helppo, vaikea, cool, tylsä jne.) → Jatkokysymys: Miksi kuvailisit suomea (/äidinkieltäsi) näin / tällä/näillä adjektiiveilla?
- Miten kuvailisit englannin kieltä? / Millainen kieli englannin kieli mielestäsi on? (Apuna: voit kuvailla vaikka adjektiiveilla, esim. helppo, vaikea, cool, tylsä, pakko osata jne.) → Jatkokysymys: Miksi kuvailisit englantia näin / tällä/näillä adjektiiveilla?
- Mitä ajattelet englannin kielestä verrattuna suomen kieleen (/äidinkieleesi)?

2. Oma toiminta suomen kielellä (/äidinkielellä)

- Millä adjektiiveilla kuvailisit itseäsi?
- Miten toimit muiden ihmisten kanssa, jos olet isossa porukassa vieraiden ihmisten kanssa? (esim. koulutus, uusi harrastus, juhlat tms.)
- Millaiseksi koet itsesi vieraiden ihmisten seurassa? (Apuna tai erillisinä kysymyksinä: Tutustutko mielelläsi uusiin ihmisiin? Oletko varautunut uusien ihmisten seurassa?)
- Miten toimit muiden ihmisten kanssa, jos olet pienessä porukassa tuttujen ihmisten kanssa?
- Millaiseksi koet itsesi tuttujen ihmisten seurassa? (Esim. ystävät, perhe)

- Tuotko helposti mielipiteitäsi esille vieraiden ihmisten kanssa keskustellessa? Entä tuttujen ihmisten seurassa?
- Oletko koskaan äidinkielelläsi puhuessa kokenut tilannetta, jossa et ole osannut ilmaista ajatuksiasi niin kuin olisit halunnut tai koet ettei keskustelukumppanisi ymmärtänyt kunnolla mitä tarkoittit? → Voitko kuvailla tilanteen / antaa esimerkin? → Mistä luulet, että tilanne johtui?

3. Oma toiminta englannin kielellä

- Millaiseksi koet englannin kielen taitosi? (kirjallinen ja suullinen taito)
- Pidätkö englannin kielellä puhumisesta tuntemattomien ihmisten kanssa? Entä tuttujen ihmisten kanssa? → Miksi / miksi et?
- Onko sinun helppoa ilmaista mielipiteitäsi englanniksi? Miksi / miksi ei? → Koetko, että tässä on eroa mielipiteiden ilmaisuun äidinkielelläsi verrattuna? Miksi / miksi ei?
- Millä tavoin / Miten identiteettisi näkyy tilanteissa, joissa puhut englantia? (Apuna: idiomit, sanavalinnat, äänenpaino, mielipiteiden kertominen jne.) → Yritätkö tietoisesti tuoda identiteettiäsi esille englantia puhuessasi? Miksi / miksi et? → Onko identiteettisi esiin tuominen sinulle tärkeää englantia puhuessasi? Miksi / miksi ei?
- Oletko koskaan kokenut tilannetta, jossa et ole osannut ilmaista itseäsi niin kuin olisit halunnut englannin kielellä tai koet ettei keskustelukumppanisi ymmärtänyt kunnolla mitä tarkoittit? Voitko kuvailla tilanteen / antaa esimerkin? → Mistä luulet, että tilanne johtui?
- Oletko koskaan kokenut tilannetta, jossa olet osannut ilmaista itseäsi juuri niin kuin halusit englannin kielellä? Voitko kuvailla tilanteen / antaa esimerkin? → Mistä luulet, että tilanne johtui?
- Oletko koskaan huomannut tai ajatellut, että joidenkin asioiden ilmaiseminen englanniksi olisi mieluisampaa tai helpompaa kuin omalla äidinkielelläsi? → Miksi / miksi ei? Millaiset asiat?
- Millainen englannin kielenpuhujana haluaisit olla? / Millainen olisit ideaalina englannin kielenpuhujana? → Miksi?
- Koetko, että sinun pitäisi olla tietynlainen puhuessasi englanniksi? / Koetko painetta olla tietynlainen puhuessasi englanniksi? → Miksi / miksi et? Koetko painetta muilta ihmisiltä vai itseltäsi?

4. Identifioituminen kieliin ja sen käyttäjiin

- Tunnetko tai oletko koskaan tuntenut yhteenkuuluvuutta muiden suomen kielen (/äidinkielesi) puhujiin? → Miksi / miksi et? Missä tilanteissa?
- Tunnetko tai oletko koskaan tuntenut yhteenkuuluvuutta äidinkielenään englantia puhuvien kanssa? Entä ei äidinkielenään englantia puhuvien kanssa? → Miksi / miksi et? Missä tilanteissa?

5. Haastateltavan muita ajatuksia

- Haluatko vielä kertoa omia kokemuksiasi aiheeseen liittyen? Haluatko tarkentaa aikaisempia vastauksia? Muita ajatuksia?

Appendix 2: Interview frame in English

Questions given to the interviewees beforehand are marked in italics.

Background questions:

- Age?
- Gender?
- Native language (languages)?
- What other languages can you speak? How much do you use them? When / in what situations?
- Have you lived or been abroad for periods of over 2 months? Where and for how long?

Actual questions:

1. Images of languages

- How would you describe your native language? / What kind of language do you think your native language is? (Help: you can use adjectives e.g. easy, hard, cool, boring etc.) → Why would you describe your native language like this / with this/these adjective(s)?
- How would you describe English language? / What kind of language do you think English language is? (Help: you can use adjectives e.g. easy, hard, cool, boring, have to know etc.) → Why would you describe English language like this / with this/these adjective(s)?
- What do you think of English language compared to your native language?

2. Interviewee's behavior in their native language

- Which adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
- How would you act with other people if you were in a large group with people you do not know? (e.g. new hobby, party etc.)
- How do you feel with people you do not know? (Help or separate questions: Do you like to get to know new people? Are you reserved with new people?)
- How would you act with other people if you were in a small group with people you know?
- How do you feel with people you know? (E.g., friends, family)

- Do you easily express your opinions when discussing with people you do not know? What about with people you know?
- *When speaking in your native language, have you ever come across with a situation, in which you have not been able to express your thoughts as you wished, or you felt the person you discussed with did not completely understand what you meant? → Can you describe the situation / give an example? → What do you think caused the situation?*

3. Interviewee's behavior in English

- What kind of English skills do you have in your opinion? (written, oral)
- Do you like speaking in English with people you do not know? What about with people you know? → Why / why not?
- Is it easy for you to express your opinions in English? Why / why not? → Do you think there is a difference in expressing your opinions in English than compared in your native language? Why / why not?
- *In what ways / How is your identity shown in situations in which you speak English? (Help: idioms, word choices, emphasis, telling opinions etc.) → Do you consciously try to express your identity when speaking in English? Why / why not? → Is it important to you to bring forward your identity when speaking in English? Why / why not?*
- *When speaking in English, have you ever come across with a situation, in which you have not been able to express your thoughts as you wished, or you felt the person you discussed with did not completely understand what you meant? Can you describe the situation / give an example? → What do you think caused the situation?*
- *When speaking in English, have you ever come across with a situation, in which you have been able to express yourself exactly like you wished? Can you describe the situation / give an example? → What do you think caused the situation?*
- *Have you ever noticed or thought that expressing some things in English would be more pleasant or easier than in your native language? → Why / why not? What kind of things?*
- *What kind of English speaker would you want to be? / What kind of would you be as an ideal English speaker? → Why?*

- *Do you think that you should be a certain kind of when speaking in English? / Do you feel pressure to be a certain kind of when speaking in English? → Why / why not? Do you feel pressure coming from other people or from yourself?*

4. Identification to languages and their users

- Do you feel or have you ever felt togetherness with other speakers of your native language? → Why / why not? In which situations?
- Do you feel or have you ever felt togetherness with native English speakers? What about with non-native English speakers? → Why / why not? In which situations?

5. Other thoughts

- Do you want to share other experiences concerning the topic? Do you want to specify your answers? Any other thoughts?

Appendix 3: Finnish summary

Johdanto

Kiinnostus identiteetin tutkimusta kohtaan on kasvanut ja myös kielten oppimisen ja opettamisen parissa. Identiteetin suhdetta kieleen on tutkittu monelta kannalta, esimerkiksi rodun, etnisyyden, sukupuolen ja uskonnon näkökulmista (esim. Preece 2016). Persoonallisuutta yksittäisinä piirteinä ja osana identiteettiä on myös tutkittu jonkin verran. Usein nämä tutkimuksen keskittyvät kuitenkin löytämään yhteyden tietyn persoonallisuuden piirteen kielen oppimisen välillä (Liang ja Kelsen 2018, 756). Kieli-identiteetin esiin tuomista yksilön näkökulmasta ei kuitenkaan ole juuri tutkittu. Tästä johtuen tämän pro gradu -tutkielman aiheena on tutkia englantia toisena kielenä puhuvien kokemuksia kieli-identiteettinsä esille tuomisesta englannin kielellä. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli vastata seuraaviin tutkimuskysymyksiin:

1. Miten osallistujat kokevat itsensä ilmaisun englanniksi verrattuna äidinkieleensä?
2. Miten osallistujat kokevat identiteettinsä esiin tuomisen englannin kielellä englantia toisena kielenä puhuvina?
3. Millaisia mahdollisia mielen osallistujilla on englantia toisena kielenä puhuvina?

Identiteetti ja kieli

Identiteetin tutkimuksen saralla on monia näkemyksiä siitä, miten 'identiteetti' kuuluisi määritellä, mikä sen suhde on kieleen ja mitä komponentteja siihen kuuluu. Melko yleisesti hyväksytty näkemys on kuitenkin se, että identiteetti muodostuu yksilön suhteesta muihin ihmisiin ja kontekstiin (esim. Mercer 2012, 11–12; Morita 2012, 26–27). Sitä, kuinka suuri osa identiteetistä muodostuksesta on yhteydessä toisiin ihmisiin, on kuitenkin haastavaa tutkia. Korostelina (2007, 35) jakaa identiteetin *yksilölliseen identiteettiin* ja *sosiaaliseen identiteettiin*. Ensimmäinen viittaa identifioitumiseen tietynlaista henkilöä tai tiettyjä henkilökohtaisia piirteitä kohtaan, ja korostaa yksilön ainutlaatuisuutta (ibid.). Jälkimmäinen tarkoittaa identifioitumista tiettyä ryhmää kohtaan, joka jakaa samat mielipiteet, arvot ja ajatukset (ibid.). Tästä jaosta huolimatta myös yksilöllinen identiteetti määritellään suhteessa toisiin ihmisiin, esimerkiksi siten, kokeeko yksilö itsensä osana jotain ryhmää vai ei.

Koska identiteetti muodostetaan suhteessa toisiin ihmisiin ja tilanteisiin, se johtaa päätelmään, että identiteetti ei ole koskaan täysin pysyvä ja se voi muuttua ajan ja tilanteen mukaan (Norton 2014, 60–61). Myös kieli on yksi tähän vaikuttava tekijä.

Aikaisemman näkemyksen mukaan kieli nähtiin rakenteena, jossa tietty kielellinen merkki ymmärrettiin aina samalla tavalla ryhmän sisällä (Ciepiela 2011, 8). Vallalla olevan käsityksen mukaan kielen merkitykset kuitenkin vaihtelevat kontekstista ja puhujista riippuen (Norton 2014, 63). Vaikka kieli jaetaan muiden ihmisten kanssa, yksilön valitsemat sanat ja tavat käyttäviä kieltä muodostavat idiolektin, yksilön oman ainutlaatuisen tavan käyttää kieltä (Edwards 2009, 21). Kieli voi kuitenkin toimia yksilön linkkinä erilaisiin ryhmiin esimerkiksi historian tai yhteisten mielenkiintojen kautta. Perinteet, historialliset paikannimet ja murteet ovat usein tiukasti tekemisissä kielen kanssa (Joseph 2016, 19). Kielellä on myös paikkansa yksilön menneisyydessä (Joseph 2016, 29–30). Äidinkieli toimii osana yksilön muistia ja hermostoa, ja vaikka se ei rajoita sitä, mitä yksilö voi ajatella tai tehdä, se ohjaa sitä, miten nämä ilmaistaan ja toteutetaan (ibid.).

Identiteettiä on yritetty hahmottaa erilaisilla malleilla. Illeris (2013, 70–79) jakaa identiteetin kolmeen tasoon: ydinidentiteetin, persoonallisuuskerrokseen ja preferenssikerrokseen. Ensimmäinen taso kattaa yksilön ainutlaatuisuuden ja sen, mikä erottaa hänet muista yksilöistä. Toinen taso viittaa yksilön toiveisiin siitä, miten hän haluaa muiden ihmisten näkevän ja ymmärtävän hänet. Kolmas ja uloin taso sisältää arkielämään liittyvät rutiinit ja tavat, jotka yksilö liittyy sisempiin identiteetin tasoihinsa, mutta on silti valmis muuttamaan näitä rutiineja tarpeen vaatiessa (Illeris 2014, 73–74). Worchel et al. (2000, 29–32) puolestaan ehdottavat mallia, jossa identiteetillä on neljä ulottuvuutta. Ensimmäinen, yksilölliset piirteet, viittaavat niihin taitoihin, ulkoisiin seikkoihin ja kokemuksiin, jotka tekevät yksilöstä ainutlaatuisen. Ryhmänsisäinen identiteetti koskee yksilön roolia ja paikkaa tietyn ryhmän sisällä. Ryhmän jäsenyys puolestaan tarkoittaa yksilön identifioitumista tiettyyn ryhmään ja samalla myös eroavaisuuksia muista ryhmistä. Ryhmäidentiteetissä tarkastellaan koko ryhmän paikkaa, arvoja ja ajatuksia suhteessa muihin ryhmiin (ibid.). Dörnyein (2005, 98–100) motivaatioon liittyvässä mallissa identiteettiin liitetään myös mahdolliset minät. *Ideaaliminä* havainnollistaa sitä itseä, joka yksilö haluaisi olla, kun taas *pitäisi-minä* viittaa sellaiseen minään, joka yksilön pitäisi olla omasta mielestään (ibid.).

Identiteetti vieraan kielen oppimisessa

Osana identiteetin muodostumista ovat mahdolliset minät ja ne linkittyvät *kuviteltuihin yhteisöihin* (Norton ja Toohey 2011, 422). Kuvitelluissa yhteisöissä yksilöt eivät välttämättä edes tunne kaikkia sen jäseniä. Hyvä esimerkki tästä ovat eri kansakunnat.

Myös vieraita kieliä oppiessa yksilö voi kuvitella itsensä osana kohdekielen puhujien joukkoa ja tämä kuviteltu yhteisö voi olla yhtä todellinen yksilölle kuin oikeat yhteisöt ja ryhmät, joihin hän kuuluu (ibid.). Pienten kielten kohdalla tällainen kuviteltu yhteisö linkittyy melko yksioikoisesti tiettyyn kulttuuriin ja maahan, mutta englannin kielellä ei ole vain yhtä oikeaa kieliyhteisöä ja maata, jossa sitä puhuttaisiin äidinkielenä (Ushioda ja Dörnyei 2009). Pavlenkon tutkimuksen mukaan (2003a, 254–256) tutkittavilla oli kolme englannin kielen puhujien kuviteltua yhteisöä: natiivipuhujien yhteisö, ei natiivien puhujien yhteisö ja monikielisten käyttäjien yhteisö. Natiivipuhujien yhteisöä pidettiin lähes saavuttamattomana ja sen seurauksena monet kokivat joutuvansa tyytymään ei natiivien englannin puhujien yhteisöön. Monikielisten käyttäjien yhteisö nähtiin kuitenkin miellyttävämpänä vaihtoehtona tälle.

On huomattu, että tällainen natiivinomainen kielitaito englannin kielessä on melko usein tavoitteena ja esimerkiksi natiivinmaista aksenttia englannin kielessä pidetään jollain lailla 'hyvänä' (Jenkins 2007, 217). Siitä huolimatta Jenkinsin tutkimuksessa (2007, 212–214) havaittiin, että suurin osa niistä, jotka vastasivat pitävänsä omasta aksentistaan, olisivat kuitenkin olleet tyytyväisiä, jos joku olisi luullut heitä natiiveiksi englannin puhujiksi. Sen sijaan osa niistä, jotka eivät pitäneet aksentistaan, olisivat kuitenkin valinneet sen kuin minkä tahansa natiivinomaisen aksentin (ibid.). Zachariaksen tutkimus (2012, 242) keskittyi indonesialaisten englannin kielen oppijoiden äidinkielen ja englannin kielen identiteetteihin. Huomattiin, että moni näki englannin kielen uhkana omalle kulttuurilleen ja koki kielellistä alemmuutta englannin natiivipuhujia kohtaan (ibid.). Positiivinen palaute heiltä vaikutti suuresti oppijoiden identiteetteihin.

Myös konteksti, jossa vieraita kieliä opiskellaan, vaikuttaa kieli-identiteetin muodostumiseen. Vaikka kieli-identiteetin muodostumisen tulisi olla henkilökohtaista, myös ulkopuoliset tahot, esimerkiksi valtion kielipolitiikka, voivat vaikuttaa siihen. Pavlenko (2003b, 328–329) toteaa, että esimerkiksi ensimmäisen maailmansodan jälkeisessä Yhdysvalloissa saksan kieli nähtiin vahingollisena, eikä amerikkalaisten tulisi opiskella sitä. Toisen maailmansodan jälkeisessä Neuvostoliitossa puolestaan rohkaistiin opiskelemaan englantia, koska tulevaisuudessa saatettaisiin olla sodassa kapitalistisia maita vastaan (ibid.). Kielipolitiikan painostuksesta huolimatta yksilöllä on kuitenkin mahdollisuus muodostaa vastakkaisia identiteettejä (Pavlenko 2003b, 329).

Identiteetin ilmaisu vieraalla kielellä

Identiteetin ilmaisu ja esille tuominen vieraalla kielellä ei yleensä ole yhtä mutkatonta kuin äidinkielellä. Lasan ja Rehner (2018, 636–638) tutkivat, miten kielen oppijat pystyivät itse ilmaisemaan identiteettiä ja aikomuksia tai miten he tunnistivat ja havaitsivat toisten ihmisten identiteetin ja aikomukset. Huomattiin, että oppijat voitiin jakaa kolmeen ryhmään: niihin, jotka kykenivät sekä itse ilmaisemaan identiteettiään että tunnistamaan muiden identiteetin; niihin, jotka pystyivät vain havaitsemaan toisten identiteetin; ja niihin, jotka eivät kyenneet kumpaankaan (ibid.). Huomattavaa oli, että kukaan osallistujista ei vastannut osaavansa ilmaista itseään, mutta ei pystyvänsä havaitsemaan muiden aikomuksia. Näitä vaikeuksia Lasan ja Rehner (2018, 643) selittävät sosiolingvistisen kompetenssin puutteella. Toisin sanoen, vieraan kielen oppijoiden kielellinen tietämys kohdekielen käytöstä erilaisissa konteksteissa ja erilaisten sosiaalisten tekijöiden huomioon ottaminen puhetilanteessa on liian rajallinen.

Vieraan kielen oppijat tuntevat usein erilaisuutta kun he puhuvat vieraalla kielellä (Dewaele ja Nakano 2013, 117). Suurin ero tässä oli äidinkielen ja toisen kielen välillä. Muiden vieraiden kielten kohdalla tämä ero ei juurikaan enää kasvanut (ibid.). Tämä kuitenkin tukee sitä näkemystä, jossa identiteetin ilmaisu muuttuu vieraalla kielellä puhuessa. Sen määrittäminen, kuinka paljon identiteetti muuttuu vieraalla kielellä puhuessa, on kuitenkin haastavaa. Dewaelen näkemyksen (2015, 94) mukaan koko identiteetti ei muutu, vaan eri kielillä näytetään hieman erilaiset kasvot itsestä. Veltkamp et al. (2013, 496–497) perustelevat, että koska kieli ohjaa ajattelua sekä kantaa merkityksiä, kulttuurisia arvoja ja normeja, sillä on myös vaikutus siihen, miten ihmiset kokevat itsensä ja ilmaisevat sitä. Jos yksilö osaa useampaa kieltä, hänellä on myös pääsy useampaan kulttuuriseen merkitysjärjestelmään ja voi näin muuttaa käyttäytymistään eri kulttuureihin sopivaksi (Veltkamp et al. 2013, 497). Tämän näkemyksen mukaan vieraat kielet eivät ole itsessään rajoittavia identiteetin ilmaisussa, vaan antavat yksilölle lisää kulttuurista tietoa ilmaista sitä.

Tutkimuksen toteutus

Tutkimuksen tiedonkeruumenetelmänä käytettiin haastattelua (Dufva 2011, 131–145). Haastattelurunko muodostettiin kirjallisuudesta nousseiden teemojen perusteella vastaamaan tutkielman tutkimuskysymyksiä. Aluksi kysyttiin osallistujien taustatietoja: ikää, sukupuolta, äidinkieltä tai äidinkieliä ja mitä muita kieliä osallistujat osaavat. Varsinaiset kysymykset jaettiin neljään kategoriaan. Ensimmäisessä kategoriassa

kysyttiin osallistujien yleisiä mielipiteitä ja kokemuksia äidinkielistään ja englannin kielestä. Toisessa osassa keskityttiin osallistujien käyttäytymiseen erilaisissa tilanteissa äidinkielellään. Kolmannen kategorian kysymykset liittyivät puolestaan englannin kielen käyttöön erilaisissa tilanteissa ja myös oman identiteetin esiin tuomiseen englannin kielellä. Neljännessä osassa keskityttiin osallistujien identifioitumiseen eri kielen käyttäjäryhmiä kohtaan. Lopuksi osallistujilla oli myös tilaisuus kommentoida tai kertoa vapaasti omia ajatuksiaan aiheeseen liittyen.

Osallistujia oli kuusi (=6). Kaikki olivat yli 18-vuotiaita ja osasivat puhua ja käyttää oman arvionsa mukaan hyvin tai erinomaisesti englannin kieltä. Neljän osallistujan (=4) äidinkieli oli suomi. Yhden osallistujan (=1) äidinkieli oli italia, ja yksi osallistuja (=1) ilmoitti äidinkielikseen slovakian ja unkarin. Kaikki osallistajat olivat asuneet vähintään kerran ulkomailla yli kahden kuukauden ajan, vaikka se ei ollut edellytyksenä tutkimukseen osallistumiselle. Tutkimushaastattelut pidettiin syksyllä 2020, joko kasvokkain tai videoyhteydellä. Haastattelut litteroitiin ja anonymisoitiin ja haastatelluille annettiin pseudonyymit. Haastattelut analysoitiin sisällönanalyysia käyttäen (Dörnyei 2009, 245–257). Aineistosta etsittiin vastauksien samankaltaisuuksia ja erilaisuuksia sekä muita esille nousevia teemoja tutkimuskysymyksiin liittyen.

Tutkimuksen tulokset

Osallistajat kokivat, ettei heillä ole ollut suuria haasteita ilmaista itseään äidinkielellään. Jos tällaisia tilanteita on tullut vastaan, se on useimmiten johtunut vaikeasta aiheesta, keskustelijoiden erilaisista näkemyksistä tai pitkästä altistuksesta muille kielille. Myös englannin kielen kohdalla suurin osa haastatelluista koki, että itsensä ilmaisu on onnistunut ilman suuria vaikeuksia. Yhtä haastateltua lukuun ottamatta kaikki kertoivat kuitenkin tuntevansa eron englannin kielen ja äidinkielen välillä puhuessa. Englannin kielen kanssa tapahtuneet kommunikaatiovaikeudet johtuivat usein riittämättömästä sanastosta, tunnemyrskystä tai sosiolingvistisen kompetenssin puutteesta. Jotkut asiat olivat kuitenkin helpompi ilmaista englanniksi kuin omalla äidinkielellä.

Osallistajat uskoivat oman identiteettinsä välittyvän englannin kielellä ainakin tiettyyn pisteeseen asti. Eleet, sanavalinnat ja ilmeet mainittiin tapoina tuoda omaa identiteettiä esille. Yksi haastateltu kertoi sen olevan harmillista, ettei hän voinut tuoda itseään täysin esille englannin kielen kautta ja koki että hänellä oli kaksi eri persoonaa, toinen, joka puhui suomea ja toinen, joka puhui englantia. Osallistajat pitivät oman identiteetin ilmaisua englannin kielellä melko tärkeänä, riippuen tilanteesta ja

muista ihmisistä. Vain yksi osallistuja kertoi tietoisesti pyrkivänsä tuomaan identiteettiään esille englantia puhuessa.

Puolet haastatelluista piti natiivinomaista kielitaitoa ideaalina englannin kielen puhujana. Muut halusivat olla sujuvampia englannin kielellä tai osata puhua paremmin englantia erilaisissa konteksteissa. Kaikki osallistujat olivat kokeneet jonkinlaista painetta olla tietynlainen englantia puhuessaan, mutta kaksi heistä totesi, etteivät he enää kokeneet näin. Kaksi haastateltua kertoivat kokevansa välillä painetta, mutta melko vähäisenä. Kaksi osallistujaa totesi paineita olleen paljonkin ja heidän kohdallaan ne liittyivät työhön tai tulevaan ammattiin.

Pohdinta

Vaikka tutkimuksen tuloksista voidaan nähdä, että identiteetin ilmaisu englannin kielellä koetaan tärkeäksi, on sen tärkeys melko yksilökohtaista. Kaikki tähän tutkimukseen osallistuneet olivat asuneet ulkomailla, ja heillä tuntui olevan positiivinen asenne vieraita kieliä kohtaan. Kaikille kielten opiskelijoille identiteetin välittyminen ei kuitenkaan välttämättä ole päämääränä, vaan osalle viestin välitys vieraalla kielellä voi hyvinkin riittää. Tästä huolimatta kielellisen tiedon ja kieli-identiteetin tunnistaminen ja tiedostaminen voidaan kokea tärkeäksi myös yhteiskunnan tasolla. Esimerkiksi Suomessa lukion kieliohjelmaan kuuluu pakollisena osana kieliprofilin tekeminen (FNAE 2020).

Jotta identiteetin välittyminen onnistuisi kielen oppijoilta myös tulevaisuudessa, kielten opetuksessa kannattaisi kiinnittää huomiota sosiolingvistisen kompetenssin vahvistamiseen (Lasan ja Rehner 2018). Tämän piiriin kuuluvat myös sanaston monipuolisuus ja erilaisten teemojen ja aiheiden käsittely. Nämä taidot auttaisivat vieraiden kielten oppijoita ilmaisemaan itseään erilaisissa tilanteissa. Kieli-identiteetin tutkiminen myös tulevaisuudessa voisi antaa uusia näkökulmia. Esimerkiksi identiteettien vaihtelua useampien vieraiden kielten kesken olisi mielenkiintoista tutkia. Myös eri alojen opiskelijoiden näkemykset identiteetin esiin tuomisesta vierailla kielillä voisivat antaa lisää tietoa sen tärkeydestä.