Degree Thesis 1
Level: Bachelor’s
The Role of Pupils’ Selves in Relation to Motivation

- A Literature Review on Upper Elementary Students Learning English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract:
In the globalized world, the English language has an important role. It expands and finds its way into curriculums as far away as in Asia. However, in Sweden English has been a part of the curriculum for over a half-century and most Swedes are able to understand and make themselves understood in English to a certain extent. Nevertheless, in the wake of globalization its importance has grown, and as a core subject in school and as a spread commercial language, mastering the English language has become a significant skill. Learning a foreign language is a delicate task that requires volition and a great deal of patience. In order to succeed, the learner must be motivated. Motivation is a powerful phenomenon, relevant within all learning, but not least when it concerns areas as demanding and challenging as language learning. This small-scale study investigates views in recent research of the role of pupils’ selves in relation to their motivation and what factors are considered to stimulate pupils’ selves. Asian studies dominate the reviewed material but also Swedish studies are represented. The findings of this study indicate that pupils’ selves are related to motivation. What stimulates pupils’ selves seems to match all activities and methods that strengthen autonomy, competence and relatedness. These findings support a motivational conscious teaching, where motivation is acknowledged as a vital element in learning in general and specifically in language learning.

Keywords: motivation, upper elementary school, English (second language), oral interaction, oral communication, language learning
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1. Introduction
The importance of communication is emphasized in the core content of the English syllabus. Speaking and listening as well as reading, writing and presenting are obvious parts of teaching in the English classroom. Teaching in the English subject should aim to enhance and develop students’ ability to understand and express themselves in English. Further, it should expand their ability to use English for different purposes, in ways adjusted for various situations and recipients (Skolverket, 2011a, pp. 32-34). In what ways this should be accomplished is not defined, which implies rich possibilities for teachers to conduct creative and engaging education.

During my teacher education, the importance of motivation has been emphasized in several contexts. Moreover, in the very first sentence of Tasks of the school in the curriculum, it is declared that the school has a responsibility “to promote learning, by stimulating the individual to acquire and develop knowledge and values” (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 11). In order to fulfill this, it is relevant to understand and learn how motivation and engagement can be promoted for these pupils.

In my experience, gained from my VFU, pupils seem more motivated and interested in subjects that they perceive themselves being good at. This suggests that how pupils visualize themselves is related to their motivation. If this is the case, how can teaching promote self-esteem? Accordingly, it is interesting to find out whether the answer to that question is of a universal nature or if diverse contexts, such as different cultures, seem to provide different answers.

1.1. Aim and research questions
This thesis aims to explore what research says about the relation between pupils’ self-image and motivation. The target group is, above all, pupils in the upper elementary class (grades 4-6) and how their visualization of themselves affects their motivation to learn English as a second language. In the process of the literature review, the following questions will be discussed:

- What effect do pupils’ selves have on their motivation to learn EFL?
- What would characterize a lesson that stimulates the pupils’ selves?

2. Background
This section starts out with definitions in order to facilitate the reading and continues with a discussion of the importance of the English language in Swedish society and consequently also as a school subject. Further, the challenge to speak English in class and the fortitude it requires for some pupils is considered.

2.1. Definition of terms and abbreviations
2.1.1. EFL
The abbreviation EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language and refers to when English is a subject in school, but not a language that is frequently used outside school (Pinter, 2006, p. 166).

2.1.2. FLL
Foreign Language Learning (Enever, 2011, p. 12)
2.1.3. L2
L2 refers to the second language a person learns in addition to the language first learnt (Dictionary.com).

2.1.4. Scaffolding
Scaffolding is a term used to describe personalized support given by a more competent peer to help a child forward in a learning process (Pinter, 2006, p. 168).

2.1.5. YELL
Young English Language Learners (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014, p. 152).

2.2. The English language in Sweden
The English language has a special position in Swedish society. Since the 1960s it has been the first foreign language in Swedish compulsory schools. Likewise, it is the only language that is mandatory throughout compulsory school and, as one of the core subjects along with Swedish and Mathematics, a pass grade is required to proceed to the upper secondary level (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014, p. 4). In the syllabus for English, it is clear that mastering the English language brings an advantage to Swedish citizens (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 32). English as a language and as a means for cultural expression can be found all over Swedish society and in several areas English is the commercial language; hence to remain independent in an interdependent world, understanding and using English is essential (Skolverket, 2011b, p. 8).

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate, which emphasizes the importance of an education that stimulates pupils to keep up an appetite for learning English throughout their lives, has carried out an investigation into English education in Sweden in terms of suitability. Most of the reviewed factors are applicable to learning in general but some are specifically favorable in language education. Firstly, the pupils must be provided rich input in the target language. This means that the teacher should use the English language as much as possible at a level that matches the pupils’ ability to understand. Further, the pupils need to get opportunities to use and process new language knowledge during English lessons. Secondly, the teachers’ strategies and methods need to support the pupils’ development, such as taking the pupils’ experiences and interests into account when planning exercises and likewise making them as authentic as possible. The teacher should also provide strategies that can help pupils solve communication problems when proficiency is not enough. Thirdly, the function of grammar ought to be clarified and stressed. Lastly, the English subject should also comprise knowledge about cultures where the English language is the first language (Skolinspektionen, 2010, pp. 12-15).

Communication is stressed in the syllabus and it is required that pupils are able to interact to a certain extent in written as well as in spoken English. It is clearly stated that the required ability comprises the development of confidence to carry out a conversation despite insufficient linguistic skills. Moreover, teaching ought to contribute in developing creative and communicative pupils (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 32).

2.3. Learner characteristics and learning outcomes
The importance of encouraging young language learners is supported by findings in the Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) study. More than 1400 children in seven European countries are involved in the ELLiE study that aims to examine and transmit insight in the progress of implementing early FLL in European elementary schools (Enever, 2011, p. 9). One aspect of the study concerns how learner achievements are affected by learner characteristics, which comprises learners’ attitudes towards FLL, their motivation and their self-conception.
The study showed that both listening comprehension and oral production returned better results for pupils that nurture more positive feelings about learning a foreign language and have faith in their own ability (Mihaljevic´ Djigunovic´ & Lopriore, 2011, pp. 51-52). Generally, a young FLL starts out with a positive frame of mind. Although differences in learner characteristics are observable already from the beginning, they start to affect the pupils’ output more and more as their ability to reflect on their learning process grows. It is crucial that FL teachers recognize changes in pupils’ learner characteristics in order to prevent a declining motivation (Mihaljevic´ Djigunovic´ & Lopriore, 2011, p. 59).

2.4. Oral interaction

In order to facilitate for pupils to communicate orally, interaction in small groups is praxis in L2 classrooms. When pupils are given the opportunity to process new input collaboratively, research indicates that their understanding gets more profound. When a learner reveals that his or her comprehension seems to match with that of others, the new knowledge is strengthened and if the learner, on the contrary, discovers that something is misunderstood, reflection and preferably feedback can result in restructured and improved L2 understanding (Naughton, 2006, p. 169).

Despite the long-lasting and strong support for oral interaction in groups, some conditions must be fulfilled to enhance the outcome. Aspects like group composition and proficiency level, the characteristics of the task and so on determine the quality of the result. Furthermore, teachers among others have noticed that work in small groups tends to fail, due to factors like students’ inability to cooperate in a socially promoting way, their tendency to rely on their L1, diverse levels of participation and ability, and finally noise and other distractions. Further, pupils’ fear of suffering disgrace sometimes implies that they would rather pretend not to understand than to risk failing. In order to avoid the occurrence of such anxiety Naughton highlights the importance of negotiating a permissive environment, where peers in collaborating groups feel free to correct each other and also bear with receiving help. (Naughton, 2006, pp. 170-171).

In addition to the confidence that is needed to pull through, Naughton also considers that foreign language lessons in monolingual classrooms rarely offer authentic situations, which for some pupils leads to a loss of motivation (Naughton, 2006, p. 178).

2.5. Motivating pupils

How to motivate pupils that seem to have lost their interest is a tough challenge for teachers. Nevertheless, the fact that motivation is considered as a key factor for academic achievements cannot be overlooked. Most of the major motivation theories regard personal beliefs, environment and socialization as vital elements. Thus, the level of motivation depends on both internal and external factors. Although motivation is generally seen as coming from within an individual, teachers’ influence can be quite substantial. Accordingly, there are several strategies that a teacher can use to enhance students’ motivation, e.g. to believe in the students’ capability, show and transmit enthusiasm, make sure to create a permissive atmosphere, bear in mind that students are different, and never discredit a task’s difficulty level, set achievable goals, involve the students, and let them take responsibility for their learning process (Wery & Thomson, 2013, pp.103-107).
3. Theoretical perspectives
The articles selected for this thesis will be considered and reviewed from the perspective of theories that are presented in this section. However, merely parts of the theories that are relevant to this study are focused on.

3.1. Sociocultural perspective
Through the lens of sociocultural perspective a human being is born with certain biological preconditions, but social, cultural and historical circumstances are as important in the process of developing into an individual. Thus, within this perspective, the capabilities of a human being are not restricted by biological conditions. Humans’ ability to utilize tools to mediate actions enables her to go further and master abilities that would not be possible otherwise. Physical tools can be used to facilitate a certain phenomenon, and mental and linguistic tools can be used to facilitate mediation and communication (Säljö, 2015, pp. 91-92). Mediation proceeds between humans in interaction, and language is seen as the most important tool for interaction. Language makes it possible for humans to perceive and describe the surrounding world, from different perspectives and from different contexts (Säljö, 2015, pp. 93-94).

A central conception within the sociocultural perspective is that humans learn in interaction with others. When humans interact and communicate, they visualize knowledge and are able to learn from each other. By participating in and observing interaction between adults, children assimilate behavior and linguistic terms; thus learning occurs all the time and not only within organized learning situations. Vygotsky also emphasized the role of play as an important factor for development (Säljö, 2015, pp. 95-96, 105).

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is one of Vygotsky’s most well-known conceptions. From this view, a child’s possibility to acquire knowledge depends on his or her more capable peers’ ability to scaffold, i.e. support and help, the child into their mutual society and its conventions. The ZPD illustrates how knowledge is accessible step by step. You need to acquire certain abilities in order to be able to learn more about a subject (Säljö, 2015, pp. 99-100). As in this case with language: it is not possible to start writing a novel if the ability to associate letters with a phonetic sound has not yet been assimilated.

![Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)](Adapted from Säljö, 2012, p. 100)

New knowledge should connect to what has been already acquired, which means that it is important to understand what knowledge and understanding a child possesses in order to offer appropriate education and adequate support. In contrast to books or computers, a teacher has
the possibility to establish intersubjectivity, which implies that scaffolding can be personalized (Säljö, 2015, p.102).

Reid (2007), whose work derives from a sociocultural framework, argues that motivation rising from within an individual is optimum. However, it can be difficult to achieve, as it requires not only that the learner nurtures a wish to accomplish, but also that potential obstacles seem possible for the learner to tackle. The learner must not end up in a position where helplessness is experienced as this can result in de-motivation. Teachers ought to provide adequate support and scaffolding to help students to avoid this state of mind. In other words, it is important to set up conditions for students to succeed and already in the stage of planning, motivation should be considered, both in how a student can be rewarded and how to encourage self-motivation. Reid emphasizes the importance of motivation in learning and compares motivation for learners to fuel for engines (Reid, 2007, pp. 11, 14).

3.2. The L2 Motivational Self System
Dörnyei defines motivation as the phenomenon “responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it.” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 4). In order to establish new ways of motivating language learners Dörnyei designed a new theory: The L2 Motivation Self System. Although strongly connected to previous research in the L2 field, the new theory also builds on psychology. Within the field of psychology the “self” is a recurring and ambiguous concept. However, Dörnyei points out a change of course from a static self-concept regarded as an individual’s self-knowledge in relation with his or her current self-image, to future dimension of possible selves characterized by images of what the individual might become (Dörnyei, 2009, pp. 9-11).

The L2 Motivational Self System recognizes two possible selves: The ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self. The difference can be defined in terms of inducements. The ideal L2 self is associated with an aspiration to realize a desired self-image, whereas the ought-to L2 self desires to match external expectations and requirements (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 18). In addition to providing future images of one’s self, where desirable qualities are obtained, possible selves should serve as guides helping learners move forward and acquire preferred abilities (Dörnyei, 2009, pp. 11, 13). Imagination is a crucial part of possible-selves and to Dörnyei it is the most fascinating. Describing language learning as an utterly demanding and sometimes boring process with progresses as well as setbacks, Dörnyei explains how he felt that those who succeeded must be endowed with a vision strong enough to persuade the learner to continue (Dörnyei, 2009, pp. 16, 25).

Nonetheless, this perception was later supported by empirical data found when analyzing the results from a study in Hungary (Dörnyei, 2009, pp. 25-26). The study was initiated by Dörnyei and Csizér as they recognized a negligence of what motivates learners within L2 motivation research, especially from a learning-situational perspective. As the number of strategies that incentivize different learners are extensive, Dörnyei and Csizér aimed to compile a limited selection that could serve as convenient recommendations for teachers that attempt to develop a motivationally conscious way of teaching. The study was carried out among 200 teachers of English from different locations in Hungary, with different teaching experiences, teaching in different types of educational institutions. The results of the study include a selection of ten macrostrategies that are found to motivate L2 learners (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998, pp. 203, 208-210). Table 1 displays the final version of Dönyei’s and Csizér’s Ten commandments for motivating language learners (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998, p. 215).
Table 1.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Set a personal example with your own behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Present the tasks properly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop a good relationship with the learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Increase the learners’ linguistic self-confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Make the language classes interesting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Promote learner autonomy.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Personalize the learning process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Increase the learners’ goal-orientedness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Familiarize learners with the target language culture.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Materials and method

4.1. Design

This thesis is a systematic literature review that aims to map and synthesize evidential knowledge of the chosen area of interest. The working process has been characterized by careful and conscious selection and with an ambition to mirror different views of the area. The considered and selected material consists of both experimental studies and literature reviews. Within systematic literature reviews, it is generally accepted that they ought not to be restricted to experimental studies (Eriksson Barajas, Forsberg & Wengström, 2013, p. 31).

4.2. Search strategies and selection criteria

Initially the selection of primary sources was carried out on all databases available through the University of Dalarna. During the procedure, I came to prefer Eric (Ebsco), partly because of the service Eric Thesaurus that helped me finding useful search words and partly as I thought it rendered best results. However, the Education database and Google Scholar also provided relevant results.

To assure reliability, exclusively peer-reviewed reports and articles have been taken into consideration in the process of selection. Another search-criteria concerned the age of the material and no article older than 10 years was selected in order to obtain results as up-to-date as possible. As much recent material, relevant to my aim, originates from Asia, I found it impossible to limit the selection to exclusively European studies. The abstract of each article was read in order to determine whether it is a report or article that can be of assistance in answering my research question. Due to that procedure, studies concerning L2-learners living in target language and culture settings were removed, as these learners are likely to have other motives than L2-learners of a foreign language. An overview of selected articles is found in Table 2.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of article</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Publ. Year</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessing English Vocabulary and Enhancing Young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners’ Motivation through Games, Songs, and Stories</td>
<td>Chou, Mu-hsuan</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Explorative study on the affects of games, songs and stories, in encourage pupils and extending their vocabulary, in Taiwan.</td>
<td>Positive effects were registered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivational Orientations and Psychological Needs in EFL Learning among Elementary School Students in Japan</td>
<td>Carreira, Junko Matsuzaki</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Exploratory factor analysis of the motivational orientations in 5th and 6th grade in Japan. Motivational orientations were found to encompass: intrinsic motivation, introjected-and identified regulation as well as external regulation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of motivational strategies in language instruction: The case of EFL teaching in Taiwan.</td>
<td>Cheng, H. F., &amp; Dörnyei, Z.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>A modified replica of a former Hungarian study, exploring teachers’ use of motivational strategies in Taiwan. Similarities as well as differences from the Hungarian results were registered among the preferred motivational strategies, indicating the existence of universal as well as context/culture dependent strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Application of the L2 Motivational Self System to Motivate Elementary School English Learners in Singapore</td>
<td>Magid, Michael</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Explorative study on motivating effects of enhanced visions of ideal L2 self, among 5th grade pupils in Singapore. The pupils’ motivation and self-confidence were significantly improved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language-Related Computer Use: Focus on Young L2 English Learners in Sweden</td>
<td>Sundqvist, Pia; Sylvén, Liss Kerstin</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Explorative study investigating the L2 English related activities pupils in Sweden engage in during their sparetime and the relationship between gender, L1 and motivation for learning English. YELL:s and in particular boys engages considerable in activities involving English, especially playing games and watching films. This group did not excel regarding motivation and self-assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of Participation and Semiotic Mediation in Board Games for Second Language Learning</td>
<td>Luk, Jasmine C. M.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Article that discusses a study on how boarding games can promote 4th grade pupils’ in Hong-Kong to use L2 English and to enhance their L2 language development. Social activities, such as board games, were found to promote situated purposeful language use.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language education among young learners in East Asia: A review of current research (2004–2014)</td>
<td>Butler, Yuko Goto</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Literature review about early L2 English learning in East Asia. First, policy literature is reviewed and then empirical studies are reviewed. In the result empirical studies are organized by relevance to the findings of the policy literature.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Storyline’: a task-based approach for the young learner classroom</td>
<td>Ahlquist, Sharon</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Empirical study on learning L2 English with a storyline approach, aiming to identify which features in particular that appeals to upper elementary pupils in Sweden and how this approach affected the language learning. Result shows that a particular tasks within a storyline approach are highly motivating and in addition linguistic benefits were observed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3. Analysis
When analyzing the selected material, content analysis served as the method. Eriksson Barajas et al. (2013) describe a conceivable procedure within this method, which I have embraced. Hence, the articles and reports were thoroughly read in full, twice. Some parts were read more times as I felt it was necessary in order to fully grasp the content. The material was divided into parts that were labeled in order to subsequently categorize them into logical categories, in order to facilitate comparison between the different studies (Eriksson Barajas et al., 2013, p. 164). The labels and categories that were used in this procedure will be accounted for in the Results section. Generalizability is another issue with literature reviews but I will take this up specifically in the discussion of the results.

4.4. Ethical aspects
As the selected material for this study merely consists of peer-reviewed articles and reports, no source is used that jeopardizes anonymity protection. The aim of this study is to find out how pupils’ self images are related to motivation and how pupils’ selves can be stimulated during English lessons in the upper elementary school; thus, it ought to be relevant to society, which is a requirement from the Swedish Council of Science (Björkdal Ordell, 2007, p. 26). As the material has been selected with the precondition that it should contain some contribution to answer at least one of the research questions, it is relevant and valid for the study. In order to further ensure reliability effort has been put into reproducing referred data accurately. Further, articles and reports will be selected in a way that endeavors to illuminate a variety of aspects and views, and no relevant perspective will be withheld. All included material will be accounted for (Eriksson Barajas et al., 2013, p. 70).

5. Results
In this section relevant content from each included study is presented. The headings mirror the way the material was categorized during the analysis.

5.1. Motivation and psychological needs
In order to find out if and how pupils’ selves affect their motivation to learn English as a foreign language, Carreira (2012) conducted an extensive, quantitative study of 505 pupils aged 10-12 years old from three different public schools in Tokyo, Japan (Carreira, 2012, p. 195). The study focuses on the relation between different forms of motivation and psychological needs from the perspective of a theory known as self-determination-theory (SDT). Within SDT, it is pertinent to divide motivation according to motive. At one end, intrinsic motivation is found, representing the most independent kind of motivation that induces learners to interact and engage in activities for no other reason than enjoyment. At the other end, extrinsic motivation, which is recognized as the form of motivation that is not detached from the actual activity, but has rather external motives. Within the domain of education, extrinsic motivation is divided into four subcategories according to the degree of self-determination. The synergy between different motivational orientations is the theoretical basis of SDT (Carreira, 2012, pp. 191-193).

Carreira’s findings indicate that autonomy is strongly related to intrinsic motivation (Carreira, 2012, p. 198). This entails, according to Carreira, the importance of providing pupils with an appreciation of being in charge of their own language learning: thus teachers ought to involve pupils in didactic decisions, training them to take responsibility (Carreira, 2012, pp. 193, 198). In addition to autonomy, competence and relatedness were also found to relate positively to intrinsic motivation. Consequently, it is crucial to empower pupils to feel competent by the
moderate enhancement of difficulty that allows success frequently and to create a permissive classroom environment and show the pupils interest as well as care (Carreira, 2012, pp. 198-199).

### 5.2. Motivation in a globalized world

A literature review of research in East Asia was conducted by Butler, who aimed to identify typical problems and characteristics of EFL learners within an Asian context, but also elucidate the differences between various contexts within Asia (Butler, 2015, pp. 303-304). The popularity of learning a second or foreign language such as English, which is associated with strong economics and political influence, has increased considerably due to globalization. In several East Asian countries, English is taught in low-grade levels: however, the motivation to learn seems to decrease incrementally as the learner grows older. Accordingly, research on the area of attitudes and motivation among young EFL learners has gained ground (Butler, 2015, p. 303).

Butler refers to studies in Japan that focus on children’s willingness to communicate. He references two studies that state that attitudes towards learning positively affect young Japanese pupils’ motivation and their will to communicate in English. In both studies Attitudes towards learning – comprise confidence in English, belief in effort, positive attitude towards learning in general and positive attitude towards multiple languages. Other findings from Japan showed that the way children perceive classroom atmosphere affects the way they perceive their own competence and consequently their willingness to communicate. In one of the studies, the researcher found that willingness to communicate increased in accordance with the pupils’ motivation, perception of their competence and their interest in language. Consequently, willingness to communicate was replaced by the wider concept of willingness to continue learning as a component for intrinsic motivation (Butler, 2015, p. 318). In Korea the results of a survey indicated that pupils acquiring private lessons were more motivated than others. The same study also addressed the teachers and their appreciation of declining motivation amongst pupils. From their perspective teachers’ practices and attitudes affected students’ motivation negatively. Likewise, societal pressure and widening gaps between students’ achievements were identified as additional demotivating factors. Butler also refers to studies in China and Taiwan, but not without reservation. Due to the fact that the studies were predominantly based on surveys not customized to children, the results of essentially all studies could be misleading. Overall, Butler advocates for more contextualized approaches to understanding motivation. Further research is needed to find out the reason for declining motivation among pupils and how to prevent such development (Butler, 2015, 319).

Chou (2014), as well, mentions the issue of gradually declining motivation among EFL learners and states that research among primary school pupils learning EFL in Taiwan has been scarce. In particular studies focusing on tasks designed to appeal to pupils are rare in this context (Chou, 2014, p. 285). Determined to find out whether activities like games, songs and stories motivate pupils in a Taiwanese EFL class and additionally if and how their vocabulary was affected, Chou performed a study, which was both quantitative and qualitative, comprising a total of 72 pupils from 8 to 11 years old. The participating pupils attended an intensive English course that aimed to enhance their vocabulary and to increase knowledge about foreign cultures (Chou, 2014, p. 287). Overall, the study confirmed Chou’s presumption: all activities seemed to encourage the young EFL learners to interact. Field notes and self-assessment showed enthusiasm and appreciation, and the latter also revealed that the pupils believed that games, songs and stories helped them to understand, memorize and increase their vocabulary. The
pupils, who had performed one test before the intensive course, also carried out a post-test that confirmed an extended vocabulary across all participants (Chou, 2014, pp. 291-293).

In line with Butler and Chou, Luk as well recognizes the reluctance associated with a more playful approach to teaching that is related to some cultures. Also in this study, Asia is at its heart, and Luk refers to a classic Chinese text with a Confucian view embracing diligence and holding play in contempt that although timeworn still prevails among a great deal of educators as well as parents in the region. Taking a sociocultural stance, Luk discusses how play, according to Vygotsky, socializes children and engages them to try out new abilities. With a conviction of the benefits of letting children play in order to learn, Luk wanted to find out if playing board games can be advantageous in order to promote English learning among young learners (Luk, 2013, pp. 352-353, 355).

Luk’s small-scale study was carried out in a school in Hong Kong, with exclusively ethnic Chinese students. It encompasses six pupils of which three with diverse English skills were selected to be thoroughly analyzed while participating in board games in English. Conforming to a sociocultural viewpoint, the students initially participated as players instructed by experts and subsequently as facilitators autonomously instructing other pupils (Luk, 2013, p. 355). Mediation of different resources was of prior interest to Luk, and the study demonstrates that the students were motivated to use different mediation resources, such as embodied interactive practices, i.e. bodily actions and discursive resources in order to make themselves understood and were not deterred by insufficient vocabulary. According to Luk, this indicates that the use of a participation metaphor is important in language learning. The participation metaphor refers to a way of trying to understand language learning where contextualization and interaction have a more prominent position than in the traditional acquisition metaphor. Thus, duplicate roles increased the students’ possibilities to utilize even more interactive resources. Luk concludes that the students’ apparent effort to negotiate verifies a development of the students’ English language learning (Luk, 2013, pp. 365-366).

Dörnyei, who carried out a study along with Csizér where ten macrostrategies were selected, based on Hungarian teachers’ views, set up a modified replication about 10 years later in Taiwan. The study that apart from Dörnyei was set up by Cheng, involved 387 teachers of English. The mentioned modification refers to the fact that the original questionnaire was revised due to further work on systematization and comprehensibility of motivational strategies that since the study in Hungary was carried out by Dörnyei (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007, p. 155).

Cheng’s and Dörnyei’s study within an Asian context demonstrates similarities as well as differences compared to the original study within a European context. The aspect that was most regarded as motivational in both studies was that teachers show suitable and exemplary manners of behavior. Other aspects that both studies identified as highly motivational were: to promote learners’ self-confidence, to create a pleasant classroom climate and to properly introduce tasks. The authors concluded that macro-strategies that were highly rated in both studies are universal (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 161-162, 169). Nevertheless, other strategies seemed to be clearly cultural-specific. For instance, learner autonomy that Hungarian teachers ranked among the top ten strategies was considered the least important out of 48 strategies in total, by the teachers of English in Taiwan. Although the authors discuss that the perception of autonomy might be different in Asia, they also consider that the long Chinese tradition of education with teachers in total control might be incompatible with activities that involve leaving parts of the teacher functions to the students. To observe and celebrate students’ efforts, on the other hand, was
highly rated in Taiwan as opposed to in Hungary, where it did not make the list of top ten strategies (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 162, 169-170).

5.3. Motivation and self confidence

Another researcher attempting to get an understanding of the decreasing motivation among Asian students that Butler describes (Butler, 2015, p. 317), is Magid who performed a study in Singapore among 16 5th graders that lacked the interest as well as confidence to learn English (Magid, 2013, p. 230). Magid had set up a program of his own, influenced and based on Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System. Imagery is described as a central part of Magid’s program, designed to boost the participants’ vision of themselves as qualified speakers of English. In order to infer that the activity that focused on intensifying their Ideal L2 Self, in fact was the component that potential improvements could be related to, Magid divided the students into two groups where only one of the groups was exposed to that very activity. Nevertheless, both groups attended 16 hours of workshops during four months that partly consisted of scripted imagery situations and imagery scenes that were aimed to promote the pupils’ ability to imagine and partly of activities, such as read aloud, describe pictures and converse, aimed to promote their oral ability (Magid, 2013, pp. 228-230). The additional activity the experimental group attended as distinct from the control group, consisted of sessions where Magid read scripted imagery situations, specifically constructed to strengthen the ideal L2 self image of the participators. Further, they gained help to map their goals and their way to realize their visions (Magid, 2013, p. 230).

The quantitative as well as the qualitative data collected by Magid show that within both groups the pupils got more motivated and confident, although the figures for the experimental group were more cogent. As for the attitude towards learning English, 90 % of all participants testified to a more favourable approach. Magid also discerned that attitudes are positively related to motivation, and further that confidence is interrelated with motivation. Moreover, pride is mentioned as a frequent feeling among the attendees which also increased their motivation: They felt proud imagining themselves master the English language, and became motivated to realize their vision in order to obtain the feeling of pride among themselves and among their loved ones (Magid, 2013, pp. 231-233, 235).

Like Magid, Ahlquist takes the importance of a positive self-image into account and argues that the holistic approach of Storyline includes practical abilities as well as linguistic, which can strengthen pupils with various skills (Ahlquist, 2013, p. 42). Storyline is described by Ahlquist as a kind of role-play where the pupils work out roles within a particular narrative. The children perform tasks that drive the plot including not only theoretical ability, but also artistic ability, as Storyline integrates art and drama in addition to the English subject. According to Ahlquist pupils as well as teachers seem to find it fun to attend a Storyline session, which prompted her to further explore what in particular attracted the participators and also to evaluate the learning outcomes (Ahlquist, 2013, pp. 41-42). The study performed in Sweden comprises five weeks of pupils in an age-integrated class, 11-13 years old, attending a Storyline session where the pupils took on roles as newcomers in a town interested in sustainability. Influenced by a sociocultural perspective Ahlquist created the Storyline reportedly based on the syllabus targets for English (Ahlquist, 2013, pp. 42-43).

The data collected consisted of observation notes, journal notes, questionnaire responses, interviews with teachers, and student-produced materials. The most preferred features turned out to be art work and group work. As for the latter, this worked despite obvious collaboration difficulties in at least one of the groups. Ahlquist noted that some pupils hesitated and tried to
avoid speaking in English. However, some learners felt that they improved their speaking skills, and the fact that some of them ascribed greater confidence as the main reason for their progression induces Ahlquist to emphasize the solidarity aspect of the Storyline approach (Ahlquist, 2013, pp. 44-45). In addition, advancements in grammar, lexical gains and enhanced listening ability were noted among the participants. Interestingly, shortcomings sometimes referred to the fact that it was a long time since they studied that particular area. For Ahlquist, this indicates learning divided into separated sections, which implies teachers more frequently evaluate learning outcomes. Another relevant point is that when the pupils wrote authentic texts, in this case emails, they tend to be more accurate and to Ahlquist this signifies the importance of meaningfulness (Ahlquist, 2013, pp. 46-47). In summary, Ahlquist advocates that the Storyline approach inspires and engages pupils to learn. However, to keep up the fascination Storyline should be alternated with other activities (Ahlquist, 2013, pp. 48-49).

5.4. Motivation and technology
A Swedish study investigates possible effects on English language proficiency in relation to time spent on digital games during their spare time. The 66 4th graders participating in the study was divided into three groups, by how much time they spent on digital gaming. (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014, pp. 13-14).

One aspect taken into account was motivation and although 88% in total agreed that English is interesting, frequent gamers were even more positive and all of them either agreed or agreed strongly with the statement that the English subject is interesting. Anyway, those who rated their English proficiency highest were those who did not play at all (non-gamers); on the other hand, this group as well as the group representing moderate gamers included the pupils rating their proficiency very low, which was not the case in the group of frequent gamers (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014, p. 13). Interestingly, frequent gamers’ use of strategies seemed to differ somewhat from those practiced by moderate and non-gamers. More frequent gamers try to rephrase and less frequent gamers tend to revert to Swedish when they find themselves missing a word or an expression (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014, p. 13).

6. Discussion
In this section the results are considered and discussed in relation to the aim of this thesis, from the perspective of the included background theories. Initially, an attempt to answer the research questions is made and lastly, the method used to carry out this study is discussed.

6.1. What effect do pupil’s selves have on pupils’ motivation to learn EFL?
Carreira’s (2012) findings about how autonomy, competence and relatedness correlate with intrinsic motivation are interesting in relation to the aim of this study. Pupils’ that regard themselves as self-determined and competent are likely to have a positive self-image and even more so if they also are feeling comfortable and part of the group. This implies a quite strong relation between pupils’ selves and motivation. In the same vein, the decreasing motivation among young EFL learners, which appears to be a considerable problem in parts of Asia, is partly explained by the lack of these basic needs. Butler (2015) points out aspects like teachers’ attitudes and pressures from society as possible causes, which indeed seem to define extrinsic rather than intrinsic orientation of motivation and probably will not contribute to strengthening pupils’ selves. Dörnyei and Cheng’s study (2007) indicates that pupils’ autonomy is not supported by the Taiwanese teachers of English. This could imply that the pupils will not feel
self-determined and competent and consequently their self-image might deteriorate. Nevertheless, anticipating possible implications in different cultural settings will probably not match reality.

From the stance of a sociocultural perspective, it becomes obvious that Carreira’s basic needs are highly applicable also in that perspective. The Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) for instance is a conception that prevents learners from failing as it recommends small steps, one at the time. In other words, the learner’s ability to succeed and feel competent is considered important. As the support is gradually removed, the learner gets more and more autonomous. Reid (2007) who also takes a sociocultural stance highlights the importance of moderate challenges as he highlights that exercises that seem impossible to a learner can result in demotivation. Finally, the traditional sociocultural view that learning takes place in interaction with others coincides to a certain extent with relatedness. With this in mind, I find it possible to conclude that learning based on the sociocultural perspective can contribute to strengthening the learner’s self-image and to increasing intrinsic motivation.

The importance of pupil’s selves can be regarded as the foundation of the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 9). The future images of oneself should, with the power of imagination, serve to provide the learner with self-confidence and will-power to improve their L2 skills. The distinction made between inducements for ideal L2 selves and ought-to L2 selves can be compared to orientation of motivational power. The ideal L2 self aspiring to realize a desired self-image corresponds to intrinsic motivation, while the ought-to L2 self rather aspiring to please others has more extrinsic motives. However, according to Dörnyei (2009), the connection between imagination and motivation is an established conception, and as the imagination is used to visualize a desired image of one-self, the pupil’s self is highly relevant. Magid (2013), who carried out a study influenced by Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System, found among other things that confidence is significant in the process of language learning, and that it affects motivation and vice versa.

Magid also found that attitude is strongly connected to motivation. I find it interesting to reflect on whether and how the improved attitudes of Magid’s pupils were affected by improved confidence. Likewise, in the Swedish study on digital gaming and English proficiency (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014), it was found that frequent gamers over-all showed a positive attitude towards the English subject. Further, they were more disposed to correction strategies that do not include using the L1. Could this imply that their frequent exposure to English makes them more confident, and that this improved confidence in turn upgraded their attitude as well as their motivation?

6.2. What would characterize a lesson that stimulates the pupils’ selves?

The rich presence and availability of the English language and culture in our society probably require a different teaching approach than what is applicable in areas where English is less widespread. The fact that children in Sweden and in similar countries deal with more English language in their spare time than in school could implicate, as Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014) indicate, that teachers have to find ways to interconnect and synthesize input from various sources of English. This view is supported by Skolverket (2011a) which advocates that teaching should contribute in developing not only communicative but also creative pupils that are confident enough to manage a conversation although their language skills might be insufficient. The use of games, songs and rhymes to engage the pupils that already is a common part of
teaching in Europe, at least in the lower grades, appears to be a substantial part of recent research in East Asia. Although there might be differences in what is regarded as valid activities due to context and time, some mutual features seem to be viable.

Based on children’s statements in Ahlquist’s (2013) study on Storyline, group work is an appreciated form of teaching. The Storyline conception seems to be a good example of group work where the pupils are given opportunities to use and process new knowledge as The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2010) recommends. Although Luk’s (2013) interest was primarily to find out how pupils took advantage of mediation resources, both Chou (2014) and Luk found that playful activities encourage pupils and enhance their proficiency. These studies all confirm ideas of the sociocultural perspective, and as they all are activities that promote independent interaction from the participants, they are also likely to stimulate their self-conceptions. In the case of Sundqvist and Sylvén, it seems to be the other way around. Pupils that frequently engage in English activities during their sparetime might see themselves as too competent for the tasks in school or, from a sociocultural perspective, are stuck in the center of the Zone of Proximal Development. As Sundqvist and Sylvén note, education must match the pupils’ experiences, but maybe this does not mean that schools must provide the same technological challenges that they engage in on their spare time, as long as the pupils’ proficiency is measured and moderately challenged. The ELLiE study (Ennever, 2011) found that different learning characteristics started to impact on learning achievements at the age of 10-11 years which corresponds with the 4th graders that participated in Sundqvist and Sylvén’s study. Subsequently, the ELLiE study advises teachers to keep track of changes in pupils’ attitudes and motivation, in order to prevent declining motivation.

Magid (2013) advocates that his program not only improves learners’ L2 proficiency but makes them more confident and motivated as well. I find his study rather small with regard to his conclusions. Nonetheless, Dörnyei’s (1998) substantial contribution on L2 motivation confirms that imagination is connected to motivation and a couple of his recommended strategies for developing motivational teaching equal the ambitions of Magid’s program, for example; “increase the learners’ linguistic self-confidence” and “increase the learners’ goal orientedness”.

Pointing out what characterizes a lesson that stimulates pupils’ selves is rather complex. With Carreira’s (2012) study in mind, it seems reasonable to encourage teachers to take fundamental psychological needs into account when selecting activities. In order to personalize education and provide adequate challenges, it is important to find out each pupil’s level of proficiency. Too advanced challenges could undermine a pupil’s self-image and no challenge at all could result in demotivation, as the self-image does not develop. This could be a potential risk if a teacher neglects to realize the amount of English activities that for instance a frequent gamer, from Sundqvist and Sylvén’s study, engages in outside school. Furthermore, teachers ought to be aware of their responsibility to create and preserve a supportive climate in the classroom. This is a strategy that Wery and Thomson (2013) emphasize as important. It is crucial that pupils feel free to interact and that they do not fear to formulate or pronounce something incorrectly. Naughton (2006), as well, argues that anxiety can result in a pretended lack of understanding, to avoid possible failures.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2010) accentuates the importance of starting from the pupils’ interests and experiences when planning activities. In terms of psychological needs, this can be matched with relatedness. Lastly, establishing as good relations as possible with each and every pupil probably also has an impact on the pupils’ selves. To feel related and accepted
surely contributes to a strengthened self-image. These findings bear resemblance with the sociocultural perspective as well as with Dörnyei’s ten commandments (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998), but hopefully I have managed to present them from a perspective where pupils’ selves and motivation are in focus.

Further, pupils’ fear of suffering disgrace sometimes implies that they would rather pretend not to understand than to risk failing. In order to avoid the occurrence of such anxiety Naughton highlights the importance of negotiating a permissive environment, where peers in collaborating groups feel free to correct each other and also bear with receiving help. (Naughton, 2006, pp. 170-171).

6.3. Method discussion
The framework of this degree thesis is a systematic literature review on the relation between pupils’ self-image and motivation. A systematic literature review aspires to account for all available evidence in the selected area (Eriksson Barajas et al., 2013, p. 31). Due to limited time and space though, this review should be seen as a small contribution to what some researchers have found out about pupils’ selves and motivation in the EFL classroom. Within the results generated by the utilized search-words, I have tried to select different views on the subject. However, the results were scarce and most of it originated from an Asian context, which is discussed in my study. The reason for the predomination of Asian studies, I believe, is a result of the more recent introduction of EFL as a mandatory subject in elementary school in that context.

As my results mirror the material generated with the search words used, I believe that the results of this study would be similar if someone else performed it, within a near future. In other words, this study is characterized by generalizability, with the proviso that it is performed within a reasonable time.

7. Conclusion
Learning a foreign language requires a great deal of effort. In such learning situations, a learner must be motivated enough to accomplish it. The motive for it, however, can originate from different sources. The will to master a language can be one reason, but it could also be about a wish to succeed in school subjects or pressure from parents to succeed et cetera. Although motivation to me already in the beginning of my work seemed like an intricate conception, it has grown to appear even more complex. It is not necessary to fully understand the phenomenon of motivation in order to, as a teacher, contribute to enhancing motivation among pupils. There is practical advice on how to work in a consciously motivational way provided by researchers in the subject.

Findings from this study indicate that pupils’ selves are related to motivation. Carreira (2012) found that autonomy, relatedness and competence are strongly related to intrinsic motivation and in order to strengthen pupils’ self-images Magid (2013) suggests that learners visualize themselves as competent language learners. Although most of the examples of declining motivation derive from Asian studies, it does not mean that Europe and Sweden are not faced with these problems. The ELLiE study (Enever, 2011) encourages teachers to observe their pupils’ change in attitudes towards language learning. If they start to perceive themselves as achieving less than their peers their motivation is likely to decline. Thus, in order to motivate pupils it is necessary to encourage their self-images and provide moderate challenges that serve to strengthen their self-conception.
The imagery part of theory of L2 motivational self-system is new to me and to my knowledge it is a rather neglected area of L2 learning, at least in Sweden. In sports contexts, it is common to use imagery to improve performances. Dörnyei compares language learning to professional athletic training and refers to the literature that confirms that imagery and vision often motivates sport careers (Dörnyei, 2009, p.25). This makes me curious to know more about the possible impact of imaginary within language learning and it would be interesting to take part in more research in that area.

All things considered, my aim and research questions were answered to some extent, but instead of feeling satisfied I am inspired to learn more. In my forthcoming empirical study, motivation will again be in focus, as I believe there is much more to find out. My particular interest is in how teachers’ behaviors affect pupils’ volition and motivation to make efforts to do well. By teachers’ behaviors, I primarily mean their ability to create good relationships with their pupils, to an extent where the pupils feel appreciated, cared for and believed in by their teacher. How to accomplish a study that measures soft values and makes it possible to sort out what particular behavior that stimulates certain particular behavior of different pupils, is a great challenge. My intention is to use mixed methods, where the quantitative part consists of a survey that several classes in grade five respond to and a corresponding survey that their teachers respond to, and the qualitative part consist of interviews following up the results of the surveys. The aim is to find out if the social work teachers often find themselves engaging in, is profitable in a learning perspective.
References: