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I. Theoretical part

1. Introduction

In the context of foreign language learning, myriads of factors which have an effect on the acquisition process come into play. One component with an especially large impact is *self-concept*, more precisely *foreign language learning self-concept* defined as “an individual’s self-descriptions of competence and evaluative feelings about themselves as a Foreign Language (FL) learner” (Mercer 2011: 14). Examining this definition in more detail, it becomes evident that on the one hand, it comprises a descriptive feature and on the other hand it also includes an affective dimension. When it comes to the connection between these two levels, it has been suggested that the former serves as a basis for the latter or as Bong and Skaalvik (2003: 12) put it: “We conjecture that the cognitive dimension of self-concept gives rise to the affective/motivational reactions.” Moreover, “[t]hese affective evaluations toward the self are believed to have important implications for further motivation” (Bong & Skaalvik 2003: 12). Hence, the notion of foreign language learning self-concept is closely related to various *affective factors*, such as for example motivation.

Currently, a wide range of literature in the field of second language acquisition, which also partly focuses on different variables and their impact on self-concept, can be found (see for example Dörnyei & Ushioda 2009 or Alrajhi & Aldhafri 2015). However, few researchers have specifically addressed the impact of *salient others*, i.e. *role models*, on secondary students’ ideal selves. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to investigate in how far people of personal importance have an impact on students’ *ideal foreign language selves*. It is expected that salient others play a major role concerning learners’ goals and aspirations in studying a foreign language. Hence, the findings will enable a better understanding of the interplay of students’ role models and their language selves. The starting point for this project will be the research question “In how far are secondary students’ ideal foreign language learning selves influenced by salient others?”. In order to answer this question, the results from a survey with 61 participants were analyzed and put into perspective.

The present thesis is divided into two main parts. The first one (I) gives an overview of the theoretical basis, namely essential background knowledge about the idea of self-concept, starting from affective factors in language learning (2) to then move on to foreign language

learning self-concept. Moreover, chapter 3 examines *general self-concept* in more detail and the following section (4) investigates *academic self-concept*.

The second part (II), then, focuses on the empirical part of this project. First, the methodology is explained and reasons for the different choices concerning data collection are given (6). Second, the results from the questionnaire are discussed (7), and parallels to previous research are drawn in 8. Chapter 9 mentions some limitations of this project, and the most important conclusions as well as possible future directions for research on the topic can be found in the final section (10).

2. Affective factors in language learning

As mentioned before, affective factors, such as motivation, play an indisputable role in the context of language learning (Kleinmann 1977, cited in Horwitz 2010: 156; Henter 2014: 373). Researchers such as Gass and Selinker (2008: 398, cited in Pavlenko 2013: 6) have used the term *language affect* for describing “feelings or emotional reactions about the language, about the people who speak the language, or about the culture where the language is spoken”. Hence, several different aspects are relevant in this context: the first category of feelings mentioned by Gass and Selinker can, amongst other things, refer to language anxiety whereas reactions about language users as well as their culture can be subsumed under the label of attitudes. In addition to language anxiety and attitudes, a discussion of motivation is of paramount importance for a thesis focusing on self-concept, which is why the following chapter will focus on the three mentioned kinds of affective factors in language learning, starting with motivation to then move on to attitude as well as anxiety.

Even though one can argue that motivation also comprises numerous cognitive factors, for example when it comes to *instrumental* or *extrinsic motivation* (for an overview of these types of motivation see chapters 2.1.1 and 2.1.2), the concept will, in line with Boekaerts’ proposition (1988: 230, cited in Helmke 1992: 11), be treated as a mainly affective one.

2.1. Motivation

In the following, the focus will be on motivation in general terms, more specifically on possible definitions as well as on advantages and disadvantages of the concept. We will then move on to different types of motivation, namely *integrative* versus *instrumental* as well as intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. Furthermore, since a prerequisite for a person’s intrinsic motivation is his/her willingness and decision to do something, for which the so-called *self-determination theory* gives a framework, the theory will be discussed, too.

Concerning the use of the term motivation, it was employed in the title of a book for the first time in 1916, implying that the history of the concept goes back to the early twentieth century (Wilson & Wilson 1916). It has been used in the social sciences in myriads of contexts to describe different determinants of our behavior and thoughts. Due to the multitude of meanings it has, its usefulness may, to some extent, be seen as restricted (Dörnyei 2020: 1). Nevertheless, the term continues to be widely used in psychology since it has three main advantages, or as Dörnyei (2020: 1) puts it:

(a) it has a definite *intuitive appeal*: people use it widely in a variety of everyday and professional contexts [...]; (b) it is not an abstract notion but a *tangible* and *discernible* phenomenon [...]; (c) when we observe people, the *difference* between the motivated and the unmotivated is *obvious* (Dörnyei 2020: 1-2; [original emphases]).

Hence, considering the above aspects, one can understand why – despite its enormous number of meanings – the term is still widely used.

Moreover, Mayr 1997 (cited in Ryan 2012: 5) foregrounds that motivation is a crucial aspect characterizing research in the humanities:

Motivation is a problem unique to life scientists. Indeed it is the organized nature of actions that separates the life sciences from the physical sciences, where organized, purposive behaviour [sic] does not occur, and where entropy is the dominant force. Instead, in the life sciences, and in the understanding of human behaviour [sic], the core interest is in discovering the bases of the negentropic, coherent, and integrated efforts of individuals as they pursue specific goals and outcomes.

When it comes to describing what motivation means, one possible convenient definition was proposed by Gardner (1985: 10) who, in the context of language learning, says that it “refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable [sic] attitudes toward learning the language“. The researcher underlines the necessity of a will to learn as well as of a positive view regarding the acquisition process. These elements are the subject of a vast number of publications on the topic, which were largely influenced by a model proposed by Gardner (1985, cited in Henter 2014: 374) and also by the publications by Gardner and Lambert (1972, cited in Dörnyei 1994: 273). As Henter (2014: 374) explains, Gardner’s 1985 model “is based on five motivational / attitudinal variables and their relationship with learning a foreign language [sic]: integralization, attitude toward the learning situation, motivation, integrative orientation and instrumental orientation.” Moreover, when looking at other constructs related to the one under consideration, it becomes clear that many of them have the potential to enhance motivation. However, motivation itself is seen as the single most powerful aspect supporting language attainment (Henter 2014: 374).

Additionally, Gardner and Lambert (1959: 267) presupposed that pupils have motives to learn the respective language, which are developed to different degrees. They mention two different types of motivation which can be relevant in the language acquisition process, namely “‘integrative,’ where the aim in language study is to learn more about the language group, or to meet more and *different* people; ‘instrumental,’ where the reasons reflect the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement” (Gardner & Lambert 1959: 267 [original emphasis]).

The two mentioned kinds of motivation already point toward the multifaceted and complex nature of motivation, which will be described in more detail in the following. More precisely, four relevant types of motivation – namely integrative, instrumental, intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation – will be discussed, followed by an overview of self-determination theory. The aim of the upcoming passages is to enable a better understanding of the deeply intertwined nature of self-concept and motivation in the context of language learning.

2.1.1. Integrative and instrumental motivation

Integrative motivation is best explained with the help of a quotation by Gardner (2010: 201-202, cited in Gardner 2012: 218). He describes this specific kind of motivation by stating that

someone who displays a number of affective characteristics can be said to be integratively motivated. [...] [T]hese characteristics include an open and accepting orientation toward the other language community and other communities in general, favourable [sic] attitudes toward the language learning situation, and a heightened motivation to learn the language [...]. Integrative motivation facilitates second language acquisition because it supports the persistence so important to develop proficiency in a second language, it accounts for active searching to find opportunities to use and strengthen the language, it provides the affective backdrop to make other-language contacts enjoyable and satisfying, etc. Furthermore because of the actions of these attributes, a related feature of the integratively motivated individual will be an absence of anxiety concerning the other language.

As becomes obvious from the above citation, a person who shows integrative motivation possesses three major aspects, namely an approving view toward the group of people speaking the target language, a positive perspective on the context of acquisition as well as a strong motivation to acquire the new language.

Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, has a prominent focus on future aspirations, for example related to a person's job (Simons, Dewitte & Lens 2000: 337). In fact, it can also be seen as a kind of extrinsic motivation (i.e. "the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome"; Ryan & Deci 2000: 71; for an elaboration of the concept see chapter 2.1.2) since it underlines the advantages which a certain action engenders but which are not part of the activity itself (Liu, Hau & Zheng 2020: 183). On the one hand, even though intrinsic motivation has been shown to have a highly positive influence on performance (Liu, Hau & Zheng 2020: 183), instrumental motivation can also have a significant positive impact on what students are capable of doing (Burton, Lydon, D'Alessandro & Koestner 2006: 759). On the other hand, one early study suggests that when it comes to comparing instrumental and integrative motivation, the latter will enhance language learning more than the former (Gardner 1960: 13). Additionally, it is crucial to point out that a person can show instrumental as well as integrative motivation at the same

time. As Rueda and Chen pointed out in 2005 (220), these two types of motivation can, in fact, be positively correlated.

2.1.2. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

The term intrinsic motivation describes a specific type of motivation whose definition was largely influenced by Ryan and Deci (Ryan & Deci 2000, Ryan 1995). The two researchers are well-known for the so-called self-determination theory (for an elaboration of the concept see section 2.1.3.) and described intrinsic motivation as “the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capacities, to explore, and to learn” (Ryan & Deci 2000: 70). Some scientists argue that exploring the surroundings was always caused by biological drives; however, this assumption can be rightfully questioned in view of the fact that animals continue exploring their territory even after their primary needs have been satisfied (White 1959: 298). Thus, learning for the sake of the activity as well as the growth of knowledge seems to be something that is deeply anchored in humans’ brains. When it comes to describing intrinsic motivation further, four relevant aspects can be identified: challenge, curiosity, control and context – also called “the 4 C’s” (Lepper & Henderlong 2000: 258).

Extrinsic motivation – as mentioned earlier – can be perceived in situations where something is done so as to reach a goal which is not part of the activity itself but independent from it (Ryan & Deci 2000: 71). Ryan and Deci elaborate (2000: 71) on the concept stating that “[f]or example, students who do their homework because they personally grasp its value for their chosen career are extrinsically motivated, as are those who do the work because they are adhering to their parents’ control”. The type of motivation under consideration was an essential area of research in the early 20th century with researchers studying in how far animals can be trained to do different kinds of tasks if they are offered rewards. The usefulness of this method was clear from the beginning. After 1950, however, the concept of extrinsic motivation was questioned, especially by proponents of intrinsic motivation. As described above, they opt for a view where activities are done for enjoyment (Lepper & Henderlong 2000: 258). Interestingly, when attempting to contrast the two different types of motivation, researchers in the 1970s discovered that “offering people superfluous extrinsic rewards for engagement in activities of initial inherent interest could undermine their subsequent intrinsic interest in those activities when extrinsic incentives were no longer available or contingent on those activities” (Lepper & Henderlong 2000: 259).

Furthermore, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation – as well as amotivation, which is not mentioned in more detail here – can be regulated in different ways. Ryan and Deci (2000: 70) represent these ways on a continuum (see Figure 1 below). On the left, we can see that amotivation is controlled by *non-regulation*. In the middle of the chart there is extrinsic motivation, which can be regulated by *external*, *introjected*, *identified* as well as *integrated regulation*. On the right, there is intrinsic motivation, which is managed by *intrinsic regulation* (Ryan & Deci 2000: 71). Concerning the regulation of extrinsic motivation, external regulation occurs when “behaviors are performed to satisfy an external demand or reward contingency” (deCharms 1968, cited in Ryan & Deci 2000: 72). Moreover, introjected regulation subsumes types of action which are performed so as to prevent feelings of culpability or worry as well as to achieve pride (Deci & Ryan 1995, cited in Ryan & Deci 2000: 72). Identified regulation, then, “reflects a conscious valuing of a behavioral goal or regulation” (Ryan & Deci 2000: 72). The last type of regulation that extrinsic motivation is connected with is identified regulation, which “is the most autonomous form of extrinsic regulation” (Ryan & Deci 2000: 72-73).

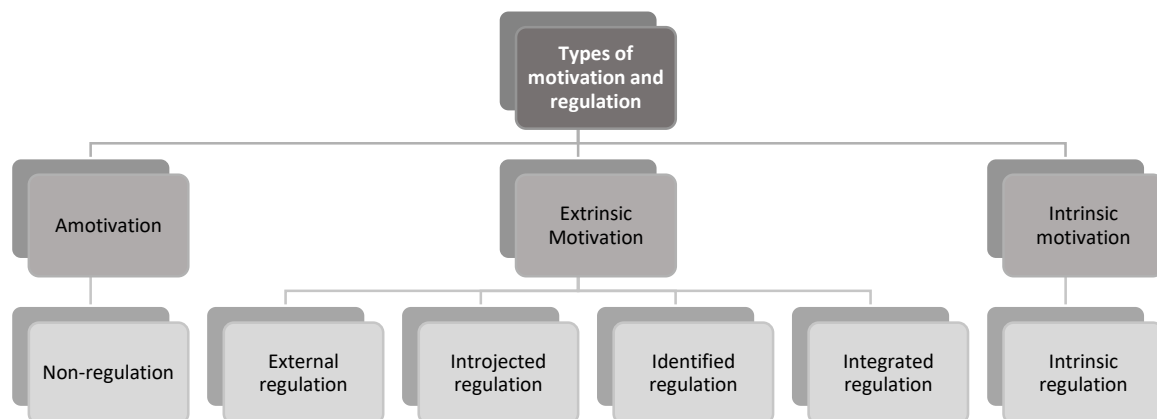


Figure 1: Types of motivation and regulation (adapted from Ryan & Deci 2000: 72)

2.1.3. Self-determination theory

In order for intrinsic motivation to be possible, a person needs to be self-determined (Deci & Ryan 1985: 30). Deci and Ryan (1985: 38) give a very clear explanation of self-determination when they state that it

is a quality of human functioning that involves the experience of choice, in other words, the experience of an internal perceived locus of causality. It is integral to intrinsically motivated behavior and is also in evidence in some extrinsically motivated behaviors. Stated differently, self-determination is the capacity to choose and to have those choices, rather than reinforcement contingencies, drives, or any other forces or pressures, be the determinants of one's actions. [...] Self-determination often involves controlling one's environment or one's outcomes, but it may also involve choosing to give up control.

The concept assumes three aspects to be crucial for a person's willingness to do something, their feeling comfortable as well as their self-regulation or as Ryan and Deci (2000: 68) put it, there exist "three innate psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness – which when satisfied yield enhanced self-motivation and mental health and when thwarted lead to diminished motivation and well-being".

To summarize, this subchapter (2.1) dealt with motivation, more precisely integrative versus instrumental as well as intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation to then move on to an overview of self-determination theory. We have seen that the various types of motivation overlap partly (Deci & Ryan 2000: 71) and in many cases, people are expected to be driven by more than one kind of motivation at the same time (Rueda & Chen: 2005 220). Another highly important factor which influences learning are one's beliefs or *attitude* towards language learning, which will be discussed in the following subchapter.

2.2. Attitude

This subchapter examines attitudes and their role for foreign language learning. The focus will be on two different types of attitude as well as goals connected to the acquisition of a second language.

In general terms, as pointed out by Allport (1954, cited in Gardner 1985: 8), "an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". Attitudes in foreign language learning, more specifically, can refer to two different things, namely attitudes toward the context of acquisition (Gardner 2005, cited in Wesely 2012: 99) as well as attitudes toward the community of the target language (Wesely 2012: 99).

When it comes to attitudes toward the speakers of a language, whether it may be English or any other language, Yashima (2009) coined the concept of *international posture*, which "tries to capture a tendency to relate oneself to the international community rather than any specific L2 group" (Yashima 2009: 145). Interestingly, Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu (2004: 125) claim that

[a]lthough English tends to be associated more with Westerners than non-Westerners, it is increasingly perceived as a means to communicate with Asian neighbors. Within the framework of the dual goals of Japanese EFL learners mentioned earlier, some students are most concerned with their immediate goals, such as tests, grades, and academic achievement, whereas other students seem to feel the international-communication goal to be personally relevant.

The above citation addresses two different aspects. First, the researchers explain that when learning English, the immediate goal does not have to be to talk to native speakers, but it can also be to use it for communication with people who do not have the same first language (L1), which is called *English as a lingua franca* (ELF). ELF describes “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer 2011: 7). Other terms for ELF are *English as an international/global/world language*, and *International English* (Seidlhofer 2004: 210). Second, Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu also refer to a type of instrumental motivation when mentioning academic achievement as being some students’ primary goal.

As already mentioned, the term international posture underlines an attitude where one’s perspective is not focused on solely one specific group of speakers but open toward a more global view. Interestingly, this view can also mean – just like in the quote above – getting the opportunity to communicate with people from neighboring countries as well as communities which are very far away.

On the whole, it can thus be said that in foreign language learning, there exist two major types of attitudes, namely those toward the context of acquisition (Gardner 2005, cited in Wesely 2012: 99) and those toward the group in which the target language is spoken (Wesely 2012: 99). Concerning the community of the target language, it seems relevant to stress that not every learner’s goal is to speak English with native speakers but in many cases, people aim to be able to communicate with speakers of different languages, hence use English as a lingua franca (Seidlhofer 2011: 7). The next section (2.3) looks at a predominantly negative aspect of language learning, namely language anxiety.

2.3. Language anxiety

The type of anxiety relevant for the context of this thesis is “[t]ypically referred to as *language anxiety* or foreign language anxiety (FLA), [and] this anxiety is categorized as a situation-specific anxiety, similar in type to other familiar manifestations of anxiety such as stage fright or test anxiety” (Horwitz 2010: 154 [own emphasis]). Guiora, Beit-Hallahmi, Brannon, Dull and Scovel (1983: 8, cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 125) assert that acquiring a language as such is “a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition” and add that it has a significant negative influence on a person’s sense of self as well as on their philosophy of life.

Even though the assumption that language anxiety always hinders achievement might seem obvious, early research yielded highly inconsistent results concerning this relationship. As suggested by Chastain in the 1970s, there can be “positive, negative, as well as non-significant correlations between anxiety and L2 achievement in French, German, and Spanish” (Chastain 1975, cited in Horwitz 2010: 156). In the 1980s, Horwitz (1986: 559), in an attempt to provide a reliable data collection tool for researchers from the field, developed the so-called *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS). Her aim was to avoid earlier inconsistent results, which she attributed to unsound data collection tools. With the help of the FLCAS, she found out that foreign language anxiety is somewhat correlated with test anxiety. Also, there is a connection between the construct and achievement in language class (Horwitz 1986: 561).

However, a more recent study (Cakici 2016: 194-195) showed no significant correlation between university students’ test anxiety and their achievement in English but a “significant inverse relationship between FLA and language achievement”. The author concludes that test anxiety is not a relevant aspect in anticipating a person’s language attainment. One can, on the other hand, assume that a high score in FLA might engender low academic achievement, meaning that people who show significant levels of foreign language anxiety are not likely to perform as well as their colleagues exhibiting lower levels of FLA (Cakici 2016: 194-195).

2.4. Summary

All in all, this chapter has given an overview of several affective factors which play an essential role in foreign language learning. The aspects chosen for further consideration were motivation, attitude as well as anxiety. After a section on motivation in general, different types of motivation, namely integrative versus instrumental and intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation have been discussed in more detail alongside with a discussion of self-determination theory.

Concerning the kinds of motivation, it has been shown that integrative motivation includes several factors: a positive opinion of the people speaking the respective language as well as of the context in which learning the language takes place. Moreover, integrative motivation also encompasses a strong will to acquire the linguistic system (Gardner 2010: 201-202, cited in Gardner 2012: 218). Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, is focused on goals which lie in the future, such as people’s occupational objectives (Simons, Dewitte & Lens

2000: 337). Thus, with this type of motivation, the drive to act does not come from ‘within’ the activity of language learning but rather from outside incentives. Furthermore, it was discussed that the term intrinsic motivation is used to describe situations in which people learn because they are interested in the topic or the activity and since they want to expand their knowledge. When it comes to extrinsic motivation, an exercise is carried out because there is an aim to be reached which does not lie in the activity itself (Ryan & Deci 2000: 71). Rather, there is a reward which will be received when the exercise is completed, which can have different forms such as for example money or a good reputation. Self-determination theory is connected to intrinsic motivation in the sense that for intrinsic motivation to be possible, being self-determined is a prerequisite (Deci & Ryan 1985: 30).

Additionally, after the comprehensive section on motivation, there was a passage dedicated to attitude which, in this case, refers to attitudes toward the context of acquisition (Gardner 2005, cited in Wesely 2012: 99) as well as toward the people who speak the target language (Wesely 2012: 99). After, there was a subchapter on anxiety which gave one possible definition of the concept to then move on to the finding that there seems to be a certain level of disagreement when it comes to the existence of correlations between foreign language anxiety and achievement in language class.

3. Foreign language learning self-concept

The present chapter addresses foreign language learning self-concept. First, there is a subchapter defining what the term means (3.1), followed by a synthesis of relevant studies from the field (3.2). In the end, the focus is on three research projects which are especially relevant for the context of this thesis (3.2.1-3.2.3). Please note that the term *self-image* will, as it has been done in other sources, be used synonymously with self-concept since there is no theoretical distinction between the two words (Petersen, Schulenberg, Abramowitz, Offer & Jarcho 1984: 94).

3.1. Foreign language learning self-concept: definition

When it comes to defining foreign language learning self-concept, Mercer (2011: 14) offers a convenient definition, describing it as “an individual’s self-descriptions of competence and evaluative feelings about themselves as a Foreign Language (FL) learner.” What becomes evident here is that Mercer sees the concept as encompassing characterizations of the self on the one hand and a judgment of oneself as language learner on the other hand.

Hence, language learning self-concept has a prominent focus on affective factors, which is also underlined by Stevick (1980: 4, cited in Arnold 2021: 4) when he asserts that “[s]uccess [in language learning] depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom.” The researcher thus foregrounds the importance of an emotional component (“inside”) as well as a social dimension (“between”). Moreover, as Arnold (2021: 4) puts it “[i]nside the learner/teacher refers to the individual factors such as self-concept/self-esteem, anxiety, inhibition, attitudes, motivation, and learner styles which influence how they learn” [original emphasis].

When it comes to describing language learning self-concept in more detail, Course (2017: 109), after presenting the findings of a study investigating English language teaching trainees’ motivational self-systems, mentions that “language-learners’ selves are dynamic, active and constantly changing”. Hence, the focus here is on an active and ever-changing property. Comparing these features with the ones Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976: 411) posited for the general self-concept, describing it as “organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, differentiable”, one can see an important difference between the two definitions. Whereas the general self-concept tends to stay the same (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 411), the language learning self-concept changes permanently (Course 2017: 109). Consulting the earlier paper by Shavelson and colleagues,

this difference is explained in connection to the hierarchy of the self-system as they say that “as one descends the self-concept hierarchy [...], self-concept depends increasingly on specific situations and thus becomes less stable” (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 414). However, as the chapter by Course was written more than 40 years after the paper by Shavelson and colleagues, the insight that language learning self-concept is subject to constant changes might also stem from more recent studies.

3.2. Overview of relevant studies on foreign language learning self-concept

In recent times, publications from the field of foreign language acquisition have increasingly focused on language learner self-concept. Researchers have analyzed various institutional contexts and age ranges where students learn English. Waddington, for example, in her 2019 article, examined self-images of children in Spanish primary schools. Furthermore, Henry (2014) focused on the harmful effects of the L2 on the L3 self-concept in Swedish secondary school students and Yoshida (2013) investigated the relation between language learning self-concept and spontaneous speaking in Japanese language classes at an Australian university. Lau, Yeung, Jin and Low, in their relatively early study from 1999, explore the self-concept of Chinese learners of English in Hong Kong. In the following, the studies by Waddington (2019), Henry (2014) as well as Lau and colleagues (Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low 1999) will be summarized so as to provide an overview of the literature from the field. With the help of the following three subsections, the multitude of foci which have been chosen by researchers investigating self-concept will be presented.

3.2.1. Waddington: Spanish primary school students

Waddington’s study was carried out in a Spanish primary school in rural Catalonia (Waddington 2019: 39), where students are mostly taught in Catalan but also learn Spanish and English (Waddington 2019: 40). The study relied on action research with the aim of describing the development of foreign language learner self-concepts in young pupils. The participants were students between the ages of 10 and 12 and concerning data collection, several methods were utilized. Besides questionnaires, the researcher used group interactions and observations at three different stages of the process, namely before, during, and after the implementation of the project. More precisely, the focus was on a storytelling activity in English (Waddington 2019: 39-42). Waddington also elaborates on *self-efficacy*, which was defined as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura 1977, cited in Bong & Skaalvik 2003: 5)

and states that “the pre-intervention results showed that most students presented low levels of self-efficacy in relation to their perceived ability to tell a story in English; results which contrasted significantly with the postintervention data” (Waddington 2019: 44). Thus, the researcher underlines the possibility of enhancing students’ beliefs about themselves and their capacities with the help of an intervention phase. Additionally, she goes on to explain that she found three major types of aspects with the help of which

low self-efficacy levels were explained: perceived weaknesses in communication skills/comprehensibility; pronunciation/accent; identity-related issues/competing languages. Further analysis of these categories revealed 1) the presence of FLA [i.e. foreign language anxiety] among young learners [...]; 2) the belief that accent-related factors are a fixed identity trait representing a permanent barrier to effective communication; the assumption that L1 learning is easy and effortless (natural) while L2 learning is conceived as difficult [...] 3) that young learners already display awareness of the relation between language and identity and are starting to assume different positions (Waddington 2019: 47).

The first category mentioned here refers to foreign language anxiety, which was the topic of section 2.3., again underlining its importance in the context of foreign language learning self-concept. The second point foregrounds a position where people think that accent is something stable and learning a second language is a difficult undertaking. When it comes to the third aspect, it becomes clear that primary school students know about the connection between language and identity already and they begin to adopt three kinds of positions toward foreign language acquisition. These positions, namely a) defensive or resistant, b) neutral as well as c) favorable or affirmatory are represented in the following illustration (Figure 2).

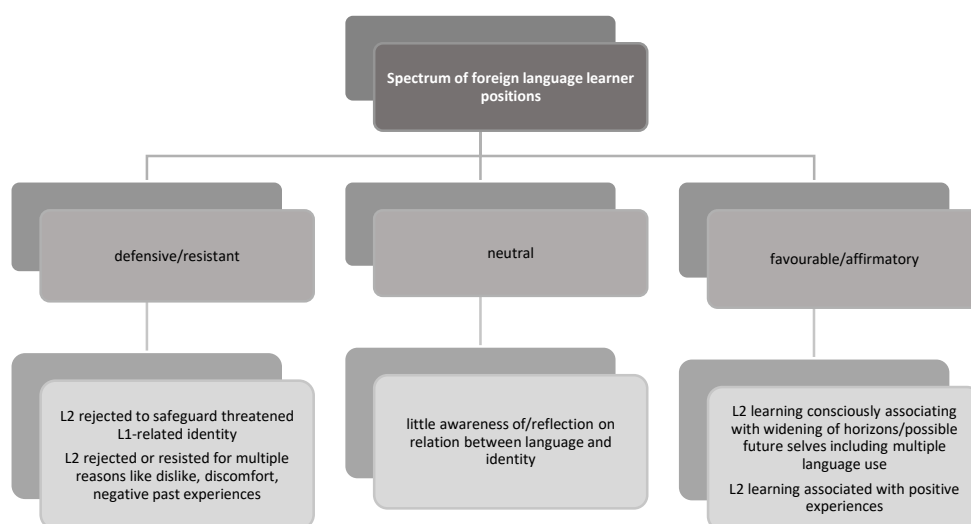


Figure 2: A possible spectrum of foreign language learner positions (Waddington 2019: 47)

On the left, we can see the position of students who are reluctant to use the foreign language due to a number of possible reasons. They might, for example, be antagonistic toward the subject itself, feel uncomfortable with it or have bad experiences connected to English. Learners who would find themselves represented in the category in the middle of the illustration are simply not conscious of the connection between language and identity. The position on the right, however, stands for a reflective behavior including a dimension of the self which points toward the future. Moreover, learning English is related to pleasant experiences (Waddington 2019: 47).

3.2.2. Henry: Swedish secondary school students

Henry investigated relations between students' L2 (second language) and their L3 (third language) self-concept (Henry 2014: 1). All of the adolescents, who were in eighth grade, had been studying English (L2) for 6 years and Spanish or German (L3) for nearly 3 years. The participants were attending a secondary school in Sweden. Concerning data collection, the researcher relied on semi-structured interviews, which were done in Swedish. The interview guidelines consisted of three subsections of questions out of which one focused on students' perspectives toward their third language (i.e. Spanish or German, respectively) as well as the context of acquisition and a future vision. The second part was there so as to find out more about instances of crosslinguistic awareness and the third subset of questions investigated if contrasts between L2 and L3 self-concept surface when learners look for analogies on a language level (Henry 2014: 9).

Regarding the results of the study, Henry found out that the majority of learners utilized English when encountering problems in German or Spanish. Also, he observed that "[a]lthough not all recognized situations where cross-referencing with English could extend beyond the search for linguistic similarities, the majority were familiar with making comparisons between how they could express themselves in German/Spanish and what they could do and say in English" (Henry 2014: 10). Thus, the ways students used their language potential seemed to be mostly focused on comparisons between the various languages.

Furthermore, the interview data analyzed by Henry points toward another noteworthy fact: the researcher found out that some pupils (around 33 percent) showed ways of opposing the potentially harmful consequences of unfavorable comparisons of self-concepts in different languages. Four different techniques for tackling these consequences were found, namely "(re)activating the ideal L3 self (four students), switching off negative thoughts (two

students), invoking a *feared self* (one student), and acting pragmatically (one student)” (Henry 2014: 10 [own emphasis]). The first strategy means that as difficulties are encountered, the individual reflects on why the respective exercise is worthwhile and will take into account which future advantages he or she will get from it. Secondly, language learners can, in order to work against negative effects of the comparison of self-concepts, disregard such disruptive thoughts on purpose or thirdly, it is possible for them to conjure up a feared image of themselves. As Markus and Nurius (1986: 958) explain, an ideal self would be more effective in terms of it leading to future action if the person encountered negative consequences when he or she did not continue a specific exercise or task. Henry specifies (2014: 12-13) that “[i]n language learning motivation, a feared self would involve not obtaining desired competence with the result that the individual fails to become a person with the envisioned language skills and accompanying personal/social advantages”. The fourth way of handling situations like the ones outlined above includes anticipating future compensation as well as keeping in mind that acquiring a language has the potential to be pleasing as well. Henry refers to this kind of method under the subheading “acting pragmatically – the ought self” (2014: 13). However, the usage of the term “ought self” seems inappropriate in this context since it has been defined as the “representation of attributes that someone (yourself or another) believes you should or ought to possess (i.e., a representation of someone’s sense of duty, obligations, or responsibilities)” by Higgins in his seminal 1987 article. Thus, it is highly questionable whether drawing a connection between the way students behave (i.e. thinking about something positive which happens in the future as result of an accomplished task connected to language learning or the enjoyment of language acquisition) as described by Henry (2014: 13) and the term of “ought self” is appropriate.

3.2.3. Lau, Yeung, Jin and Low: Chinese university students

Lau, Yeung, Jin and Low (1999: 752) outline that, as already mentioned by researchers such as Shavelson and others (1976: 411) in the context of general self-concept, global English self-concepts of learners of English as a foreign language consist of multiple dimensions (refer to section 4.1.1. to read more about the seven properties of self-concept and to section 4.1.2. to read about its hierarchical structure more specifically). Lau and colleagues administered a survey to advanced learners of English as a foreign language at a university in Hong Kong (Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low 1999: 748). The team argues that overall self-images were built on the basis of self-concepts in connection to different skill areas. They concluded

that learners are able to distinguish between the different competences (listening, reading, speaking and writing) (Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low 1999: 752) and this is why to some degree, self-concept improvement in foreign language classes might be more useful if it focuses on the various subskills (Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low 1999: 754). Nonetheless, this does not mean that regarding instruction in the foreign language classroom, teaching the different competences should only be done separately, or as the researchers put it “the multidimensional nature of the English self-concept construct does not contradict the relevancy of the global measure of English self-concept in reflecting students’ English self-perceptions in general” (Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low 1999: 754). Even though the study by Lau and colleagues yielded highly relevant results when it comes to showing a potential discrete English as a foreign language self-concept, it neglects other subskills such as lexicon or pronunciation, which could have been useful so as to receive a more distinct picture of learners’ view of themselves (Mercer 2011: 24).

3.3. Summary

As becomes evident by means of the above literature review of studies on language learner self-concept, previous work has been limited to studies focusing on more general properties of the sense of self, such as the emergence of young students’ language learning self-concept (Waddington 2019), the relation between L2 and L3 self-concepts (Henry 2014) or the importance of different subskills for the development of one’s sense of self (Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low 1999). Thus, the three studies which were described in more detail gave a glimpse into the vast spectrum of research which exists in the field.

However, as a result of the omnipresence of the internet in many parts of the world, students of English are exposed to a variety of authors as well as speakers producing texts in the target language. Hence, it is highly likely that these people, together with family members, friends, teachers and others have a significant effect on learners’ self-concepts. Despite this, no one to the best of my knowledge has examined in how far salient others have an influence on students’ foreign language learning ideal selves which is why the present thesis aims to shed light on this under-researched area.

To summarize, this chapter consisted of various sections. First, the focus was on a definition of foreign language learning self-concept as well as further elaborations of the concept (3.1). Following this, there was a synthesis of several relevant studies from the field (3.2) and subchapters describing three research projects in more detail (3.2.1-3.2.3). As foreign

language learning self-concept constitutes one dimension of academic self-concept and the latter, in turn, can be subsumed under general self-concept, the next chapter (4) will address general self-concept. It takes into account different perspectives on the self and describes various properties associated with self-concept.

4. General self-concept: introduction and definition

As mentioned before, this chapter looks at general self-concept. The first section focuses on general self-concept as described in the vast literature on the topic. There will be a brief historical outline and a definition followed by sections on various essential aspects of the concept (4.1 and 4.2) as well as explanations of subtypes of self-concept which have been proposed by different researchers (4.3, 4.4 and 4.5). In addition, chapters 4.6 and 4.7 examine the development of self-concept in children and adolescents along with an overview of various sex differences that have been found.

This chapter provides a definition of general self-concept, a historical overview as well as descriptions of some of the properties it possesses. Additionally, it examines various subtypes, explains its development and draws attention to sex differences which have been identified.

The history of the consideration of self-concept is very old. In fact, it goes back to the philosophers in ancient Greece (Harter 1996: 1). Millenia later, in the late 19th century, James' numerous publications became highly influential for the scientific exploration of the self-concept (Harter 1996: 1). James (1890, cited in Harter 1996: 1) distinguished between two types of selves, namely the 'I' and the 'Me'. As Harter (1996:1 [original emphases]) puts it,

the I was the knower, in contrast to the Me, which represented an empirical aggregate of things objectively known about the self. [...] The self as knower was viewed as the *subjective* self because it organized and interpreted one's experiences. The Me was viewed as objective or empirical self to the extent that it was the *object* of the I-self's creation. For James, the I-self also demonstrated more specific types of awareness, for example, a concern with one's personal continuity through time, and an awareness of the uniqueness of one's life experiences leading to the distinctness of oneself as a person.

Shortly afterwards, social interactions were at the core of research endeavors (Harter 1996: 3). Cooley (1902, cited in Harter 1996: 3) stated that peers act like a mirror which reflects their view on the person under consideration. He thus thought that the self depends a lot on how others see us. However, a grown-up person is

not immediately dependent upon what others think; he has worked over his reflected self in his mind until it is a steadfast portion of his thought, an idea and conviction apart, in some measure, from its external origin. Here this sentiment requires time for its development and flourishes in mature age rather than in the open and growing period of youth (Cooley 1902: 199, cited in Harter 1996: 4).

What the author describes here is the fact that children's self-concept depends largely on outside views; this strong impact, however, decreases with age. Overall, relevant points from the early history of the term self-concept are first that different perspectives, such as for example an objective and subjective view (James 1890, cited in Harter 1996: 1) can be

described and second that self-concept comprises an important social dimension (Cooley 1902, cited in Harter 1996: 3).

When it comes to descriptions of self-concept, the literature offers a broad spectrum of different versions (Hellmich 2011: 20). Opting for a comprehensive definition, self-concept can be defined in the tradition of Shavelson and colleagues who, in their seminal article from the 1970s, described it as “a person’s perception of himself” (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 411). Moreover, a more recent version is the one Dörnyei (2009: 11) used, explaining that it is “the summary of the individual’s self-knowledge related to how the person views him/herself at present”. The connection between the two mentioned definitions is obvious since they both foreground the fact that self-concept describes the image a person has of him/herself; however, there seems to be a more prominent focus on a cumulative as well as temporal aspect in the newer definition. Thus, according to Dörnyei (2009: 11), self-concept is formed through information about oneself in connection to how one currently sees oneself.

Furthermore, in the last decade, Thomsen and colleagues (Thomson, Lessing, Werner & Dresbach 2018: 93), have claimed that self-concept comprises the “kognitiv-deskriptive Komponente des Selbst”, meaning the person’s descriptions of him/herself without taking into account any judgements of those same descriptions yet. These evaluations, however, are subsumed under the term *self-worth*. Filipp and Greve specify that

[d]as Selbstkonzept [...] als die kognitiv-deskriptive Komponente des Selbst verstanden [wird] und [...] aus einer Vielzahl an Selbstbeschreibungen, die das Gesamtwissen über die eigene Person ausmachen [, besteht]. Dieses selbstbezogene Wissen, welches das Individuum im Laufe seines Lebens sammelt und im Gedächtnis speichert, beinhaltet nicht nur Wissen um Eigenschaften und Fähigkeiten, sondern auch um Fakten, Interessen und Gewohnheiten. Es umfasst dabei nicht nur Wissen über die gegenwärtige Person, sondern auch biografische sowie zukünftige Selbstbeschreibungen (Filipp 2005 & Greve 2000, cited in Thomson, Lessing, Werner & Dresbach 2018: 93).

This citation underlines the importance of different aspects when it comes to self-concept. First, attention is drawn to the descriptive nature of the concept. Second, it is stated that it includes a wide range of information about a person and third, the temporal aspect, which will be discussed in more detail in subchapter 4.1.3, is mentioned.

Another very recent definition of the term is the one by Balakrishnan (2020: 369) in which she states that it “describes the mental snapshot that individuals have of themselves (i.e. the sum of their self-perceptions, identities, role relationships, etc.)”. Again, the focus is very much on the descriptive nature and the author also foregrounds the fact that it comprises a variety of different aspects.

It is important to mention that self-concept is not a part of a person, yet the notion is convenient in describing and – to some extent – foreseeing how an individual will behave. The way somebody sees him/herself has a large impact on his or her actions and vice versa. As the construct cannot be directly observed, a person's self-concept must be deduced from his or her reactions to different contexts (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 411). Moreover, in academic contexts, researchers often distinguish between self-concept and *inferred self-concept* – the latter being “another's attribution of a person's self-concept” (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 411). Thus, the inferred construct describes an outside perspective, which will not be addressed in detail in the context of this thesis. Rather, as the empirical part of this thesis is based on self-report questions, the focus is on the ‘inside’ perspective.

4.1. Seven properties of self-concept

When attempting to describe self-concept in a more detailed way, one may come across the following seven crucial aspects it unites – it is “organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, differentiable” (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 411). First, a person's image of him/herself is based on previous personal experiences. These experiences are – in an attempt to simplify them – grouped together into categories (Bruner 1958, cited in Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 411). The different groupings “represent a way of organizing experiences and giving them meaning. One feature of self-concept, then, is that it is *organized* and *structured*” (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 411 [original emphases]).

Second, self-concept is also a construct which has many different features. The various relevant aspects for a person may include institutionalized education, acceptance in the community, bodily appeal as well as competence. The third property of the construct is its hierarchical structure, which will be explained in more detail in the following subsection (4.1.2). Moreover, a fourth important aspect is that self-concept tends to be stable overall. As opposed to elements which are located toward the end of the model (see Figure 3 in the following subchapter 4.1.2), general self-concept is not very prone to change (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 414).

The fifth relevant feature is the developmental property. Young children are not able to distinguish between themselves and their surroundings yet, which is something they learn as they get older. With growing maturity, their self-concepts will develop from all-

encompassing ones which are highly dependent on the context to more and more complex ones (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 414). Additionally, the sixth category is the evaluative aspect of self-concept. Thus, people do not only establish neutral descriptions of what they are like, but they assess themselves in different contexts. Such types of assessment “can be made against absolute standards, such as the ‘ideal’, and they can be made against relative standards such as ‘peers’ or perceived evaluation of ‘*significant others*’” (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 414 [own emphasis]). Due to the relative similarity of the two terms, the notions of significant others and salient others might lead to misunderstandings. Thus, it is important to underline that significant others as used in the above quotation refer to evaluators whereas salient others refer to role models (see Markus and Nurius 1986: 954). Finally, the last essential feature to be discussed is the fact that self-concept can be defined in contrast to other constructs with which it is related (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 415).

4.2. The hierarchical structure of self-concept

Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976: 413) described self-concept as consisting of different components which are hierarchically structured (see Figure 3 below). At the top of the model is general self-concept, which is divided into academic self-concept on the left as well social, emotional and physical self-concept on the right. Moreover, academic self-concept consists of several sub-areas of self-concept, which are specific to different subjects. Additionally, when investigating the subjects in more detail, the evaluation of behavior in different situations can be analyzed.

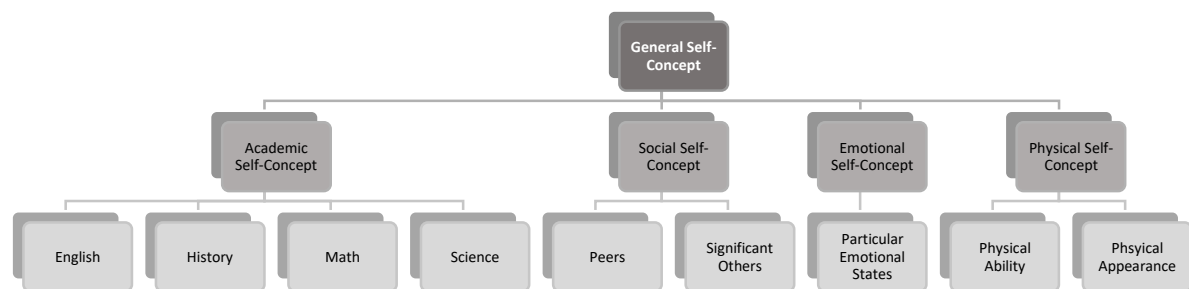


Figure 3: The hierarchical structure of self-concept (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 413)

4.3. A focus on the temporal aspect: Markus and Nurius' possible selves

A decade after Shavelson and colleagues, Markus and Nurius (1986: 954) mention *possible selves* and state that these encompass what a person could possibly become as well as what he or she wants to or does not want to be like. Moreover, they claim that

[a]n individual's repertoire of possible selves can be viewed as the cognitive manifestation of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears, and threats. Possible selves provide the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organization, and direction to these dynamics. As such, they provide the essential link between the self-concept and motivation (Markus & Nurius 1986: 954).

In the quote above, it becomes clear that the notion of possible selves has a strong focus on achievements somebody wants to attain, hence making it a concept which can point toward the future. However, it is important to mention that possible selves can also refer to experiences connected to the self which the person made earlier (Block 1981, cited in Markus & Nurius 1986: 955). *Past selves* which stay important for the respective person can reappear again in the present and they can be essential for the way the individual will act. Hence, it might be relevant for the person that he or she used to be successful in one area or scared of something in the past. It is crucial to state that “[d]evelopment can be seen as a process of acquiring and then achieving or resisting certain possible selves. Through the selection and construction of possible selves, individuals can be viewed as active producers of their own development” (Lerner 1982, cited in Markus & Nurius 1986: 955). More specifically, individuals take into account the image they have of themselves in the past as well as the idea they have about themselves in the future. When reflecting on possible future selves, the individual is highly influenced by people from his or her social surroundings, amongst others salient others. This term will be used interchangeably with role model.

When it comes to defining what a role model is, there are various different possibilities. Starting from dictionary entries, one could say that a role model is “a person that people admire and try to copy” (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries 2021) or “a person whose behavior in a particular role is imitated by others” (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary n.d.). Hence, there are two elements to be considered. First, the role model needs to be better at something than the person who looks up to him/her (Crosbie 2012: 19) and second, the considered activity or skill has to be something the person would like to improve in (Crosbie 2012: 21). Thus, as Crosbie (2012: 13) suggests, “a role model is *a person whom someone emulates*” [original emphasis]. This definition was adapted for the purpose of the survey, which led to this short German version: “eine Person, wie die ich sprechen/schreiben können möchte“ (see full questionnaire in the appendix).

4.4. Three types of selves: Higgins' actual, ideal and ought self

Shortly afterwards, Higgins (1987: 320-321) mentioned three types of selves, namely the *actual*, *ideal* and *ought self*, or as the researcher himself put it

[t]here are three domains of the self: (a) the *actual* self, which is your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) believes you actually possess; (b) the *ideal* self, which is your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) would like you, ideally, to possess (i.e., a representation of someone's hopes, aspirations, or wishes for you); and (c) the *ought* self, which is your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) believes you should or ought to possess (i.e., a representation of someone's sense of duty, obligations or responsibilities) [original emphases].

Thus, it is interesting to note that there are significant overlaps between the types of selves proposed by Markus and Nurius and those proposed by Higgins. Similarities concerning different aspects can be found. The various types of selves have been brought together in the following illustration (Figure 4).

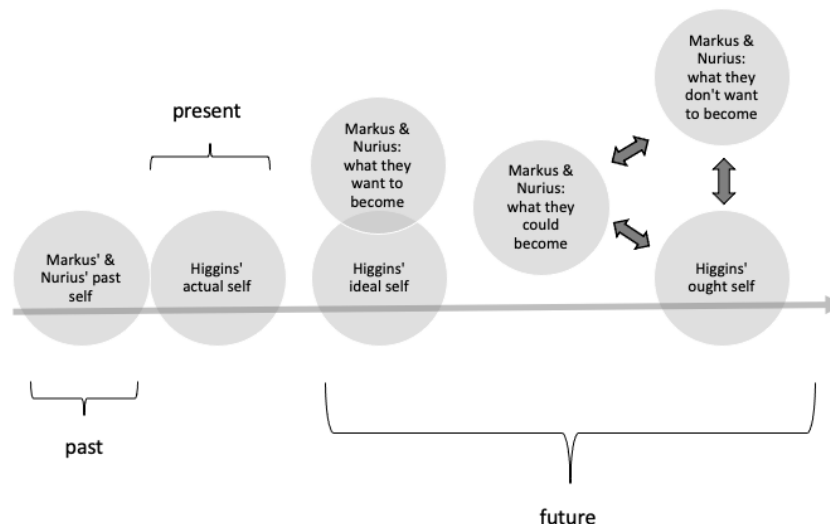


Figure 4: Relations of different types of selves

The illustration consists of a temporal axis reaching from the past up until the future. Regarding similarities between the terms and descriptions by Markus and Nurius as well as Higgins, it can be shown that Higgins' ideal self (1987: 320-321) seems to be similar to what Markus and Nurius (1986: 954) refer to when writing about what a person would like to be. Moreover, when the latter mention what people could become (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954), this could in fact be a hypernym for any type of *future self*. Higgins' ought self (1987: 320-321) as well as what Markus and Nurius (1986: 954) describe when mentioning what people do not want to become like can be seen as subtypes of future selves. Also, close

connections between what a person does not wish to be like as well as what he/she believes they should be like seem probable.

4.5. Dörnyei's ought-to and ideal self

Dörnyei (2014: 8), who was basing his ideas on what Higgins as well as Markus and Nurius had assumed earlier concerning general self-concept, specifies what he means by *ideal L2 self* as well as *ought-to L2 self*^d. When explaining what the former means, he claims that “the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because we would like to reduce the gap between our actual and ideal selves” (Dörnyei 2014: 8). The latter concept describes features which people think they must have so as to prevent potential bad consequences, meaning that the ought-to self can be very different from the aspirations the individual has (Dörnyei 2014: 8). The researcher argues that in order for an individual to be motivated for learning a language, he/she needs to have the desire to do so from within (see intrinsic motivation in 2.1.2.) and also needs to feel pressure from outside (see extrinsic motivation in 2.1.2). Additionally, another essential factor when it comes to the wish to acquire a language is “L2 learning experience, which concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the positive impact of success, the rapport between teachers and students or the enjoyable quality of a language course)” (Dörnyei 2014: 8-9).

In order for ideal as well as ought-to selves to be effective, six different prerequisites need to be met, namely “(1) availability of an elaborate and vivid future self image [sic], (2) perceived plausibility, (3) harmony between the ideal and ought selves, (4) necessary activation/priming, (5) accompanying procedural strategies, and (6) the offsetting impact of a feared self” (Dörnyei 2009: 18). Regarding the first point, even though one might take the existence of an ideal as well as ought-to self for granted, this assumption is erroneous. As a matter of fact, Higgins (1987: 321) suggests that not every person might be able to draw upon both types of self but could, for example, only be in possession of one of them. In addition, even if somebody has both an ideal and an ought-to self, it is possible that they are not detailed and illustrative enough to be useful (Dörnyei 2009: 19). Another essential condition for ideal and ought-to selves to be effective is that the individuals need to believe

¹ Please note that Higgins (1987) and Dörnyei (2009) used the term ‘ought self’ whereas Dörnyei (2014) opted for ‘ought-to self’

they are achievable, since a very implausible possible self is not expected to enhance motivation (MacIntyre, Mackinnon & Clément 2009: 197). The third prerequisite – harmony between the ideal and ought selves – means that a person's own expectations when it comes to academic achievement and the ones of the respective social surroundings should not be opposed to one another, or as Dörnyei (2009: 20) puts it “an important condition for effective desired possible selves is that they should feel congruent with important social identities”. Furthermore, future self-images are only helpful if they can be accessed, meaning that they must be activated and transferred into the working self-concept first (Markus & Nurius 1986: 964). What is also needed are specific steps that can be taken to achieve the ideal self:

Let us consider a learner who is energised [sic] by an attractive future ideal *self-guide*. In order to translate the aroused motivational potential into action, he/she needs to have a roadmap of tasks and strategies to follow in order to approximate the ideal self. For example, it is obviously not enough for an Olympic athlete merely to imagine herself walking into the Olympic stadium or stepping onto the podium if she has no coach or training plan (Dörnyei 2009: 20-21 [own emphasis]).

The scenario Dörnyei describes with the example of an Olympic athlete can, of course be transferred to different contexts, such as for example a language learner who imagines himself/herself able to communicate successfully with a native speaker in a professional context.

The last of the six prerequisites for future selves is the offset by a feared self. Oyserman and Markus (1990: 112) contend that it is beneficial to have an ideal self as well as the respective ‘opposing’ feared self. This could mean that a person who wants to get a job will, for instance, envisage the day he/she starts working at the desired workplace as an ideal self and the day he/she needs to go to the employment office as a feared self.

For this thesis, the main focus will be on the ideal self, thus the characteristics which someone wishes they had. However, the ideal self will, in this case, be seen as largely representing a person’s own aims and not somebody else’s. Salient others are expected to exert influence on learners in the sense that students want to imitate them, yet other people’s ambitions for the students (for example the goals parents might have for their children) will not be foregrounded. Also, future possible selves will be at the center of attention whereas past possible selves will not be addressed in detail.

4.6. Development of general self-concept in children and adolescents

In general, young children's self-concepts tend to be quite high at the outset or as Marsh (1989: 427) puts it "unrealistically high". Also, young children "do not rely on comparison with others to form their self-concept, nor do they consider the viewpoints of others as material for self-concept formation" (Balakrishnan 2020: 371).

Once they go to school, however, there seems to be an important decrease in self-concept (Marsh 1989: 427). As students get older and more experienced, their self-image becomes more refined since they incorporate more feedback they get from 'outside' and hence, their self-concept will deteriorate. For many children, this happens in various areas of self-image and for some this is even the case for all aspects (Marsh 1988, cited in Marsh 1989: 428). In fact, as children grow older, "both positivity and negativity are incorporated into the self-view" (Balakrishnan 2020: 371). Also, their view of themselves is more structured and more types of information, such as for example outside views, become relevant for self-concept formation (Balakrishnan 2020: 371).

Even though during adolescence, numerous changes concerning biological as well as social aspects take place, and one might assume that self-concept changes considerably, this supposition was found to be untrue by Dusek, Flaherty and Hill in their longitudinal study from 1981 (33-34). In order to get a precise idea of young people's self-concept, four different elements, namely adjustment, achievement/leadership, congeniality/sociability, and masculinity/femininity were examined. The researchers explain that although some juveniles might be subject to radical changes of their self-image, this is not true for the majority of the students between the ages of 11 and 18. They continue by describing the effects of the assumed severe changes in adolescent self-concept:

First, the results support the contention that expectations about the nature of adolescence taint our perspectives, perhaps causing us to overgeneralize the importance of some events (e.g. the growth of temper). [...] A second implication is that there is an overgeneralization of the rapidity of some aspects of change. To be sure, some changes – for example, physical growth – may occur relatively suddenly and unexpectedly, but most changes occur slowly, allowing their integration into the existing self-concept without necessitating its restructuring (Dusek, Flaherty & Hill 1981: 34).

Thus, Dusek, Flaherty and Hill (1981) discovered that changes in self-concept during adolescence are possible but, in many cases, they are not very drastic. Also, the developments that do occur might not be present for a long time (Dusek, Flaherty & Hill 1981: 34).

Overall, it has been found that at the start of adolescence (at around 11 years of age), individuals "shape their self-concept by selectively integrating or excluding the opinions of

others depending on which context they are in” and later on, “their self-concepts are richer and more structured” (Balakrishnan 2020: 371). Moreover, older juveniles reflect more on what is important to them and aim to get close to their ideal selves (Balakrishnan 2020: 371).

To summarize, young children’s self-concept is overly positive at the start and deteriorates once they get to school (Marsh 1989: 427). As juveniles get older, their self-concept becomes more and more specific and juveniles start to take what peers think about them into account (Balakrishnan 2020: 371). On the whole, changes in self-concept during adolescence are, in many cases, not very drastic (Dusek, Flaherty & Hill 1981: 33-34).

4.7. Sex differences in self-concept

After examining the literature concerning sex differences before 1977, Wylie (1979, cited in Marsh 1989: 419) came to the conclusion that there was no proof for differences in scores connected to participants’ sex concerning general self-concept. Nevertheless, she assumed that there might be differences in more specific domains, which can be overlooked when focusing on the global results. She reports, for instance, that girls tend to have “higher self-reported affiliation than boys” (Wylie 1979, cited in Marsh 1989: 419).

Marsh (1989: 426), however, claims that boys have slightly higher values of general self-concept than girls. He adds that “[c]ommon sense and a limited amount of empirical research suggest that sex differences are consistent with traditional sex stereotypes” (Marsh 1989: 427). Also, he mentions that there were slight differences between the sexes when it comes to various aspects of self-concept, such as for example looks. His results suggest that young girls had a better physical self-concept than boys, whose scores were higher in all other age ranges, especially during puberty (Marsh 1989: 427).

Overall, as young children, individuals compare themselves a lot with their parents. More precisely, girls imitate their mothers’ and boys their fathers’ behavior. As a result, gender-specific aspects are incorporated into their self-concept. Interesting tendencies can also be found when it comes to narrating biographical events:

When girls are told details of their life-stories, mothers use more details when explaining events and there is a greater emphasis on talk about roles and relationships as well as emotions. In turn, more focus is given to emotions, relationships, how one feels inside, and connectivity when girls as opposed to boys describe their own self-concept. While boys have less detail-rich narratives, their narratives are specialized in that boys zone in on activities where skill-building occurs in their descriptions of self-concept (Balakrishnan 2020: 371).

What becomes clear in this citation is that whereas mothers and then also girls focus on feelings as well as social relations when talking about themselves, boys highlight situations

in which they were able to acquire skills, which means that there is a difference concerning the orientation of boys' and girls' narratives. While male individuals seem to foreground a personal level, their female counterparts orientate themselves towards others. The focus on skill-building mentioned above might be relevant for an academic context as well.

4.8. Summary

To sum up, this chapter has given an extensive overview of general self-concept. First, the concept as such was defined and a brief historical outline was given, followed by a description of seven characteristics of self-concept, which, according to Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton are that it is “organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, differentiable” (1976: 411). Afterwards, its hierarchical nature (Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton 1976: 413) as proposed by the team of researchers was described in more detail. The following section addressed what Markus and Nurius (1986: 954) called possible selves, namely “the cognitive manifestation of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears, and threats”. Additionally, there were summaries of Higgins' (1987: 320-321) subtypes of selves –the actual, ideal and ought self – as well as Dörnyei' s (2014:8) ought-to and ideal self. Also, Figure 3 aimed to clarify the conceptual and temporal relations between the subtypes of selves. The last two sections focused on the development of self-concept during childhood and youth in addition to a brief glimpse into sex differences in self-concept.

In the following (chapter 5), we will move down the self-concept hierarchy to investigate academic self-concept (see also Figure 3).

5. Academic self-concept

This chapter comprises a section defining academic self-concept, followed by a summary of the *internal/external frame of reference model*. Moreover, a section describing how girls' and boys' sense of academic self develops over time has been included, followed by a passage tackling discrepancies between those two groups.

5.1. Academic self-concept: definition

Academic self-concept can be seen as a more specific domain of self-concept, namely a part which describes an individual's thoughts and aspirations in the context of education. It describes the "Fähigkeitsselbstkonzept, bei dem es sich um die Einschätzung der eigenen (u. a. schulbezogenen) kognitiven Leistungsfähigkeit handelt, und das sich weiter in verschiedene fachspezifische Selbstkonzepte unterteilt." (Aust, Watermann & Grube 2010: 96). Helmke (1992: 13) also uses the term *self-confidence* – or "leistungsbezogenes Selbstvertrauen" – in this context. He elaborates on the term stating

[d]amit ist eine relative stabile bereichsspezifische [...] Kompetenzüberzeugung gemeint, die neben dem Fähigkeitsselbstbild auch komparative und prospektive Selbsteinschätzungen der eigenen Leistungen sowie Aspekte der Bewältigbarkeit allgemeiner unterrichtlicher und fachlicher Anforderungen umfaßt [sic] (Helmke 1992: 13).

As already indicated in the citation above, for an institutionalized educational context, it is expected that comparisons across different dimensions/subjects (Möller, Streblow, Pohlmann & Köller 2006: 480) as well as comparisons with peers and feedback from other people are essential in the emergence of students' academic self-concepts (Helmke 1992: 41).

Initially, it was suggested that the various self-concepts for different subject areas correlate (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976: 436); an assumption which was later found to be false in a study by Marsh (1986: 136), who showed that "except in the case of the youngest children, Math and Verbal self-concepts are nearly uncorrelated." Decades later, this claim was supported by Rost and Sparfeldt (2002: 137), who investigated students at secondary school level. Moreover, the internal/external frame of reference model as proposed by Marsh (1986) is also built on the presumption that self-concepts for math and languages are not closely related. As this model offers a convenient and well-founded framework, which will help contextualize aspects related to gender discussed in subchapter 5.4, it will be briefly described in the following.

5.2. Internal/external frame of reference model

In line with what Möller and colleagues (Möller, Streblow, Pohlmann & Köller 2006: 480) as well as Helmke (1992: 41) said later, Marsh argues that, for a self-concept to emerge, different factors come into play. An individual's math as well as verbal image of him/herself is based on "external and internal comparisons, or frames of reference" (Marsh 1986: 133). External comparison refers to a situation in which the person contrasts him/herself with students from his or her group or class (i.e. from the respective frame of reference) (Marsh 1986: 133). Thus, this first aspect underlines the importance of social comparisons in an educational context in general, and more specifically for the emergence of students' academic self-concepts, which can also be explained with the help of the so-called *big-fish-little-pond effect* (Marsh 1987: 280). This term was introduced to describe the effect of social comparisons in schools, whereby one student is bound to have a lower academic self-concept in a school with a high level than he or she would have in an institution with a lower level (Marsh & Parker 1984, cited in Marsh 1987: 281).

Moreover, internal comparisons happen when an individual contrasts his or her assumed competence in math with his or her verbal skills. Hence, somebody may have the impression that what they can do in one subject is better than what they are capable of in another area. The person performs better in math than languages and other academic fields, which means that

[t]his student's math skills are below average relative to other students (an external comparison) but above average relative to his or her skills in other academic areas (an internal comparison). Depending on how these two components are weighted, this student may have an average or even an above-average self-concept in mathematics despite his or her poor math skills (Marsh 1986: 133).

Surprisingly, the model also anticipates that in this hypothetical case, success in math will engender a more negative verbal self-image and vice versa. Therefore, a very positive self-concept for one subject is more probable to occur if the competence in this field (for example math) is high and if the person is more successful in it than in the other academic area (for example verbal skills) (Marsh 1986: 134).

When it comes to gender and the internal/external frame of reference model, it has been shown that people from groups with a higher status tend to compare themselves and their achievements with members from their group while those with a lower status contrast themselves with people from a higher status (Fiske & Berdahl 2007: 686), which means that in math and science, girls

vergleichen sich mit den Jungen, die in diesen Domänen im Mittel etwas höhere Leistungen erbringen als die Mädchen. Dass die Jungen umgekehrt in den sprachlichen Fachdomänen ihre Leistungen nicht

unterschätzen, kann darauf zurückgeführt werden, dass sie dazu neigen, sich nur innerhalb der Gruppe ihrer Geschlechtsgenossen zu vergleichen. (Hellmich 2011: 125).

Thus, there seems to be a dissimilarity between the ways in which boys and girls compare themselves with others. Whereas girls compare their achievements with what boys are capable of in math and science, where their male counterparts perform better on average, boys will rather contrast themselves with other boys (Hellmich 2011: 125).

5.3. Development of academic self-concept in children and adolescents

Even before starting school, children accumulate information about themselves and their competence (Haußer & Kreuzer 1994: 469). However, the information they collect is still somewhat general but becomes more differentiated with age. Interestingly, children as young as five to eight are aware that people surrounding them watch and evaluate what they are doing. Also, it has been suggested that from this age period onwards, the view of others becomes increasingly important. A bit later, at ages 9-12, the self-image starts to develop into a more refined one and “Kinder sind bereits in diesem Alter in der Lage, Eigenschaften, die hinter einzelnen Verhaltensweisen und Geschicklichkeiten stehen, zu bewerten und diese auch zu formulieren“ (Krapp 1997: 335, cited in Hellmich 2011: 27). Moreover, social comparisons as well as feedback from teachers play an essential role for pupils’ self-concept (Krapp 1997: 335, cited in Hellmich 2011: 27). As students get older, their self-image is more and more based not only on their parents’ feedback but also on information about themselves they receive at school (Spinath 2004: 67).

In line with the findings on general self-concept mentioned earlier (Marsh 1989: 427), there seems to be a tendency for academic self-concept to decline with age as well. For example, as an early article by Morse (1964: 198) suggests, young students have a high opinion about themselves and their academic achievement as the vast majority of pupils in third grade he examined stated they were content with the work they did at school while only slightly more than half of the learners in grade 11 did so. Furthermore, he asserts that “[i]n the low grades, 93 percent felt they were doing the best work they could; only 37 percent of the seniors felt this way” (Morse 1964: 198).

Additionally, after reviewing several studies on children before adolescence, Marsh (1989: 419) concluded that there tends to be a decrease in self-concept before puberty. In some cases, no decline was identified but none of the said studies showed a growth in self-concept for this age range either. Piers and Harris (1964: 93) found that the results in scores for self-images of students from grades three and ten were similar, although they differed

significantly from those of the learners in grade six. The researchers drew attention to the increase in self-concept scores between grades six and ten. Also, Marsh, Parker and Barnes (1985: 422) demonstrated that students' values were high in grade seven and then showed a decrease until grade nine. From grade nine until grade twelve, the scores rose again.

On the whole, as Marsh (1989: 419) puts it

[t]he most clearly documented effects are the systematic increases in self-concept during late-adolescent and early-adult years. There is also good evidence for decreases in self-concept during preadolescence. These results imply a curvilinear age effect in which the decline in self-concept must reverse itself sometime during early or middle adolescence, but empirical support for this conclusion was mixed.

Moreover, as underlined by several researchers, for example the team consisting of Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reumann and Midgley (1991: 552), the periods of transition between different schools appear to play a central role in adolescents' academic sense of self. The team analyzed data from juveniles concerning four different areas and concluded that students' math, English as well as social self-concept deteriorated after starting junior high school "but perceptions of social ability increased during 7th grade. Perceptions of sports ability declined across 6th and 7th grades" (Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reumann & Midgley 1991: 552). Furthermore, Anderman and Midgley (1997: 269) also drew attention to a more positive self-concept of learners in fifth grade than of those in sixth grade (after transitioning to middle school).

To summarize, subchapter 5.3 has shown that even young children know that they are being assessed by the people around them (Krapp 1997: 335, cited in Hellmich 2011: 27). Also, there seems to be an overall decline of academic self-concept with age (Morse 1964: 198) and as kids get older, their view of themselves becomes more refined since they consider more information they receive from 'outside', for example from parents or educators (Spinath 2004: 67). Furthermore, researchers have argued that the periods of transition between two schools are essential for adolescents' academic self-concept (Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reumann & Midgley 1991: 552).

5.4. Gender differences in academic self-concept

Overall, empirical evidence shows significantly better self-concepts among boys and men than among girls and women (see for example Furnham's 2001 meta-analysis). Concerning subject- or area-specific self-concepts, it has been found that even at primary school, girls consider themselves to be better at languages than boys do, who, in turn, think they are more competent in math and science (Hellmich 2011: 120). It is important to stress that the perceived differences in ability partly reflect reality since boys' performance in these

subjects is better. The actual differences in performance are, however, smaller than students think (Hellmich 2011: 121). In the context of a large-scale international research project, for example, researchers found out that girls' reading scores were significantly better in 38 out of 40 countries' results (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Foy 2007: 48). On the one hand, when it comes to math, it has been shown that girls in eighth grade have a considerably lower self-concept than boys even though "the relationship between mathematics achievement and mathematics self-concept does not vary by gender" (Goldman & Penner 2016: 414).

On the other hand, Jansen and colleagues (Jansen, Schroeders & Lüdtke 2014: 19) examined students' science self-concept and showed that boys' perceived competence in physics and chemistry was higher. The researchers explain that "[t]he self-concept of female students in physics and to a lesser degree in chemistry did not correspond to their ability as measured by grades and test scores, that is, female students tended to underestimate their ability compared to male students" (Jansen, Schroeders & Lüdtke 2014: 19). Thus, the relationship between performance and actual test scores in various subjects seems to vary as findings by different researchers are contradictory.

5.5. Summary

In summary, this chapter gave one possible definition of academic self-concept and described the so-called internal/external frame of reference model which explains that a person's sense of self is connected to comparisons between different kinds of areas 'inside' and 'outside' of the person. Thus, an individual compares various types of self-concepts in relation to, for example, academic areas but also in connection to peers (Marsh 1986: 133). The next part was an outline of the development of academic self-concept in youth, which showed that overall, it seems to decline with age (Morse 1964: 198). The last subchapter consisted of an overview of gender differences in self-concept where one of the most important findings was the fact that in many cases, both girls' performance as well as self-concept are better when it comes to languages and in the majority of the studies considered, boys outperform girls in math and science (Hellmich 2011: 120).

The second main part of this thesis (II) will describe the research project which was carried out in an attempt to get a better understanding of secondary students' foreign language learning ideal selves.

II. Empirical part

The following section of this thesis deals with the survey which was conducted in order to answer the research question (In how far are secondary students' ideal foreign language learning selves influenced by salient others?). The first chapter (6) looks at the applied methodology and explains issues such as the sample size as well as the sampling technique. Chapter 7 presents the results of the questionnaire with the help of various values and graphic representations. In chapter 8, the findings are linked to relevant literature from the field and some limitations of the present thesis are discussed, alongside with suggestions for further research. Some important conclusions are drawn in the final chapter (10).

6. Methodology

When it comes to the applied data collection methods, based on what has been found out in the thorough literature review, the next step was to devise a questionnaire to be administered to students in an upper secondary school in Lower Austria. In order to better understand the influence salient others have on the specific group of foreign (English) language learners' ideal selves, items focusing on various aspects of self-concept were put together. It was decided to have a piloting phase with 8 pupils. During this phase, the participants gave constructive feedback, which prompted me to make some minor changes. First, in item 58, examples of social media platforms were added, namely Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. Second, the answer option "Nein" in item 46 as well as the subheading 3.5 were highlighted in gray. This way, students who picked "no" could be directed to the next question more easily (for details consult the full questionnaire in the appendix). Moreover, little boxes, which had unfortunately disappeared due to compatibility issues, were added for various items in parts 3.4 to 4.0.

As a next step, the questionnaires were administered to 61 grade 10 and 11 students (so pupils between 15 and 17 years of age), of who 31 were female and 30 were male. The sample size is fitting for the purpose of this thesis since, as has been pointed out by Dörnyei & Taguchi (2009: 63), it is large enough to carry out correlational analyses. When it comes to the sampling method, convenience sampling (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2009: 61) was used as access to the participants was given already. Also, more complex sampling methods, such as for example random sampling (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2009: 61) are not required as the aim of this thesis is not to obtain results which are generalizable and moreover, employing such a method would have gone beyond the scope of this project. Additionally, the time which

was available for data collection at school was limited due to many phases of distance learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following subchapter (6.1) will underline the importance of the present thesis and explain which research questions were the starting part of the research project.

6.1. Rationale

This section will describe the rationale of the empirical part. As mentioned above, the literature about self-concept which can be found in second language acquisition is abundant (see for example Dörnyei & Ushioda 2009 or Alrajhi & Aldhafri 2015). Still, hardly any scholars have investigated the impact of *salient others*, i.e. *role models*, on secondary students' ideal selves which is why this thesis seeks to examine in how far people of personal importance have an impact on students' *ideal foreign language selves*. Starting from the overall research question ("In how far are secondary students' ideal foreign language learning selves influenced by salient others?"), several additional research questions were formulated in an attempt to get a more in-depth understanding of the topic at hand.

The additional research questions are the following:

- Which features do the participants have?
- How can the participants' (general, academic and English learning) self-concept be described?
- What are the main reasons why students learn English?
- What are the students' future selves able to do in English?
- How common is having an English role model?
- Who are the students' role models?
- Which characteristics do the students value in their role models?
- What are the correlations between role models and English learning self-concept?

This subchapter explained the research interest and mentioned the research questions. The next one (6.2) will describe how the questionnaire was constructed.

6.2. Questionnaire

A large part of the questionnaire (1-3.3) consists of six-point Likert scales where the students are asked to select one box for each of the statements they are presented with. The options range from "trifft überhaupt nicht zu" (1) on the left to "trifft voll und ganz zu" (6) on the

right². The reason why six-point scales are employed is so as to ensure that students do not have the possibility to decide on a neutral option if they do not really want to choose one of the ‘sides’, which is an important issue mentioned by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009: 28).

On the whole, many items were taken from published articles while others were written especially for the purpose of this thesis. For an overview of the sources consult Table 1 below.

Table 1: Questionnaire items and sources

Part	RQ	Items	Source
1.	How can the participants’ general self-concept be described?	1-9	Marsh 1992, cited in Leung, Marsh, Craven and Abduljabbar 2016: 139
2.	How can the participants’ academic self-concept be described?	10, 14	Marsh 1992, cited in Leung, Marsh, Craven and Abduljabbar 2016: 139
	How can the participants’ academic self-concept be described?	11-13	Schwanzer, Trautwein, Ulrich & Südow 2005: 193-194
3.1.	How can the participants’ English learning self-concept be described?	15, 17, 19,	Marsh 1992, cited in Leung, Marsh, Craven and Abduljabbar 2016: 139
	How can the participants’ English learning self-concept be described?	16, 18, 20, 21	Rost & Sparfeldt 2002: 14
3.2.	What are the main reasons why students learn English?	22-31	own
3.3.	What are the students’ future selves able to do in English?	32-45	own
3.4.	How common is having an English role model? Who are the students’ role models?	46-50, 53	Muir, Dörnyei and Adolphs 2019a: 8-9
	Which characteristics do students value in their role models?	51, 52	own
	Which characteristics do students value in their role models?	54	own
3.5.	Which features do the participants have?	55-58	own
4.	Which features do the participants have?	59-62	own

² For an English rendering of the questionnaire go to Appendix F

Concerning the content of the items, the questions at the beginning address general self-concept (1) to then move on to academic self-concept (2). The nine items on general self-concept were adapted from Marsh's *Self-Description Questionnaire II* (Marsh 1992, cited in Leung, Marsh, Craven and Abduljabbar 2016: 139; see Table 1 above). In the original version, the questions were in English so all of them were translated and for some of them, the wording was slightly changed (see for example the use of "meistern" as a translation for "do"). Also, it was decided to leave out one of the items which would have been part of the subscales from the original questionnaire. More precisely, the item "Overall, I'm a failure" was omitted due to its wording, which did not seem appropriate to the researcher. Additionally, three out of five on the academic self were taken from a questionnaire by Schwanzer, Trautwein, Ulrich and Südow (2005: 193-194), which offers a broad variety of items focusing on the self. The subscale which seemed relevant was "intellektuelle Fähigkeiten" as it aims at a self-assessment of general cognitive capacities. The respective items were adapted concerning their wording. The other two items, again, come from Marsh's *Self-Description Questionnaire II* (1992, cited in Leung, Marsh, Craven and Abduljabbar 2016: 139).

Moreover, the following section of the questionnaire (3.1) investigates language learning self-concept with a prominent focus on a specific future dimension of the self, namely the ideal self, which, as mentioned before, embodies goals and aspirations a language learner has (Higgins 1987: 320). Many of the questions for this section were found in an article by Rost and Sparfeldt (2002: 14), who used their *DISK-Gitter* for other subjects than English, namely math, German, physics, and history. However, as the items as such are formulated in a very general way, they can easily be adapted to fit another subject as well. Also, the fact that the questions were supposed to be employed, amongst others, for German shows that they can be used for languages in general since there are no language-specific elements regarding L1 learning in the scale. Three items from the *Self-Description Questionnaire II* (Marsh 1992, cited in Leung, Marsh, Craven and Abduljabbar 2016: 139) were employed for this section as well.

In section 3.2 of the questionnaire, the focus is on primary reasons for learning English. More precisely, the passage consists of statements in relation to different kinds of motivation for acquiring the language. While some items can be categorized as aiming at intrinsic motivation, such as "Ich lerne Englisch vor allem, weil es mir Spaß macht", others seek to

find out more about extrinsic motivation, for example “Ich lerne Englisch vor allem, weil ich es im Job verwenden möchte”.

Section 3, then, examines the students’ ideal selves. In an attempt to use language accessible to the target group, the passage was called “Zukunftspläne in Bezug auf Englisch” and is based on 14 different statements all starting with “Im Jahr 2023 möchte ich...”, for which the pupils should again choose one option from 1-6 depending on how much they agree with the respective sentence.

The next section (3.4) looks at the students’ role models/salient others. There are several questions focusing on different characteristics of the person as well as one item which investigates what kind of properties students think are essential for someone worth imitating. A part of the questions for 3.4 was adapted from Muir, Dörnyei and Adolphs (2019b). This passage is followed by section 3.5., where the aim is to find out more about the students’ usage of English. In the end, the focus is on some relevant personal data from the participants. As mentioned above, the full questionnaire can be found in the appendix (Appendix D).

6.3. Steps of analysis

In order to get a better understanding of language learners’ self-concept, different steps of analysis were taken. First, as the data was collected using paper-and-pencil questionnaires, the answers had to be digitalized. More precisely, there were all put into excel files and conditional formatting was used to get an overview of the broad tendencies concerning the answers given in the questions for the Likert items. The majority of steps involved descriptive statistics, hence “numbers that are used to summarize and describe data” (Bell 2018: 15). Furthermore, these kinds of procedures “do not involve **generalizing** beyond the data at hand” (Bell 2018: 15; [original emphasis]).

First, the mean, the median as well as the standard deviation were calculated for each of these items. The mean is calculated by dividing all the values by the number of values which exist (Brell, Brell & Kirsch 2017: 32), whereas the median is the value which can be found in the middle when listing all of them (Brell, Brell & Kirsch 2017: 29). The median is not prone to change due to outliers (Brell, Brell & Kirsch 2017: 30).

Moreover, absolute and relative frequencies of the six answer options were established and, in some cases, options 1-3 as well as 4-6 were added up so as to get a general overview of how large the proportion of participants was who agreed or disagreed with the respective

statements. In general, absolute frequencies can help to get an understanding of how the received characteristic values are distributed (Brell, Brell & Kirsch 2017: 14) whereas relative frequencies can help if one aims to compare different values with each other and are often expressed in percentages (Brell, Brell & Kirsch 2017: 16). Additionally, boxplots were created for many Likert items since they “geben einen schnellen Eindruck von der Struktur einer Verteilung und den Lage- und Streuungsparametern“ and they make it possible to compare different data sets with each other (Brell, Brell & Kirsch 2017: 44).

For the items after item 46, thus the ones which are not Likert items but rather categorical values for closed answer formats or categorical values for open question formats, absolute and relative frequencies were calculated (if applicable). For questions where this was not possible, categories were established in order to classify the received answer options as well as detect differences and similarities between them.

In order to examine possible relations between the results of the different items, the so-called Goodman-Kruskal lambda was employed (Goodman & Kruskal 1954). This value indicates the “proportional reduction of error when predicting a random observation’s category for one variable given (versus not knowing) its category for the other variable” (Kvålseth 2017: 1118). It can also be described as “a measure of the degree of similarity between binary or dichotomous variables. It provides an index, on a scale ranging from 0 to 1, of the presence or absence of a characteristic on one variable given its presence or absence on the other variable (Colman 2015: 188)”.

The formula employed to calculate lambda is the following:

$$\lambda = \frac{(\text{probability of error in case 1}) - (\text{probability of error in case 2})}{(\text{probability of error in case 1})}$$

One of the main inconveniences of lambda is that it can, in some cases, be 0 despite an existing dependence between the considered values (Kvålseth 2018: 1130). However, the values described in the following still enable a general understanding of connections between the different questionnaire items.

This chapter (6) described what the rationale of the thesis at hand is, how the questionnaire was put together and which sections it consists of. In chapter 7, the focus will be on the findings of the survey.

7. Findings

This section describes the results of the questionnaire. It was decided to use guiding questions as subheadings for the different sections which follow. Since the 2019 large-scale study about role models in language learning by Muir, Dörnyei and Adolphs offers a suitable structure, the sequence applied here was adapted from the researchers' article. Concerning the following subchapters, 7.1 gives a general overview of some of the participants' features to then move on to descriptions of their self-concept (7.2). 7.3 examines the reasons why students learn English and 7.4 looks at their future selves. Chapter 7.5 investigates how common it is to have a role model for learning English and chapter 7.6 focuses on who exactly the mentioned role models are. Chapter 7.7 deals with characteristics which the students value about their role models. The last subchapter, 7.8, aims to find connections between the answers given for the various questionnaire items.³

7.1. Which features do the participants have?

In order to give a general overview of the participants' features, this section deals with some aspects which were found to be relevant for further analysis of the results. As mentioned above, 61 participants ($N = 61$), out of whom 31 (50.82%) were female and 30 (49.18%) were male, filled out the questionnaire (see Figure 5). All the students were either from grade 10 ($n = 16$; 26.23%) or grade 11 ($n = 45$; 73.77%; see Figure 6) and the questionnaires were handed out during class time.

³ Please mind that the figures in the graphs are always rounded whereas in the text they are not.

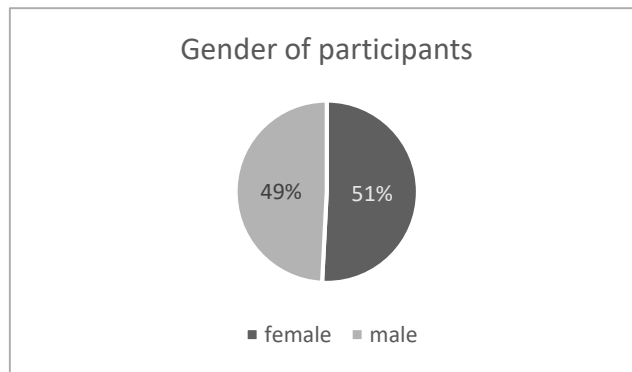


Figure 5: Gender of participants

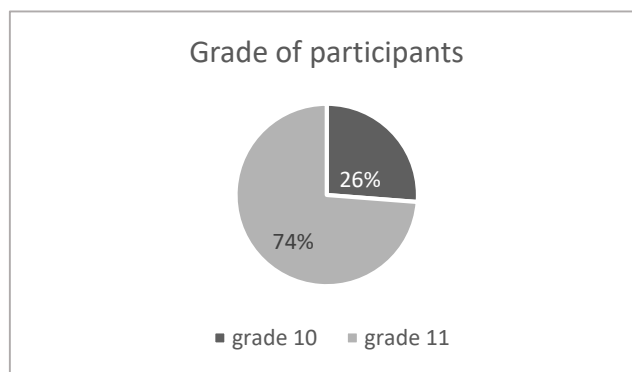


Figure 6: Grade of participants

When it comes to the participants' age, 6 of them were 15 years old, 33 were 16 and 22 were 17, which amounts to an average age of 16.26 years (see also Figure 7).

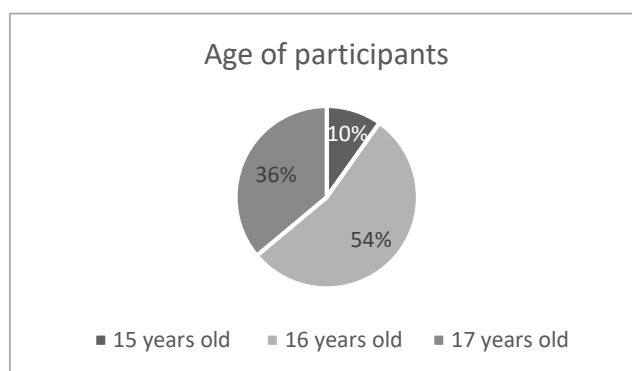


Figure 7: Age of participants

Furthermore, having a look at the students' motivation for learning English, 86.89 percent agreed with the statement "Ich lerne Englisch vor allem, weil es mir Spaß macht", which indicates that their level of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci 2000: 70) is high. In fact,

examining the figures in more detail, one can see that a total of 16 students – so more than a fourth of the respondents – selected “trifft eher zu”, 22 (which means more than a third) crossed “trifft zu” and another 16 opted for “trifft voll und ganz zu” (see also Figure 8 below). Considering that the sample used for this thesis was not a self-selected one (where some bias towards people who are highly invested in a topic might be expected), the above-mentioned numbers might seem surprisingly high. However, giving a reliable explanation for these figures is not possible solely with collected data. An in-depth analysis of the more specific reasons for students’ intrinsic motivation would have called for follow-up interviews with several adolescents which were, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this thesis.

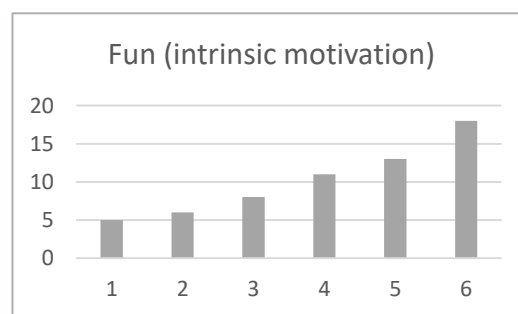


Figure 8: Fun (intrinsic motivation)

Additionally, extrinsic motivation also plays a vital role for the context of this project. Out of 61 participants, around half of the pupils said that they were learning English primarily because they would like to use it in their job (the figures from the Likert scales “trifft eher zu”, “trifft zu” as well as “trifft voll und ganz zu” were added here again so as to give a broad overview). Interestingly, the same numbers – 30 students who agreed and 31 who disagreed respectively – were found for the item “Ich lerne Englisch vor allem, weil ich es beim Studieren verwenden möchte“. The Figures below (9&10) summarize the numbers which were just discussed.

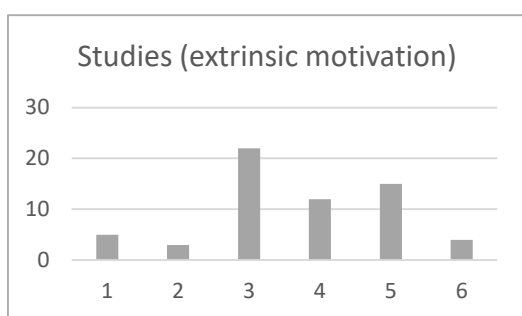


Figure 10: Studies (extrinsic motivation)



Figure 9: Job (extrinsic motivation)

Having a look at the time the students spend using English in some way outside of school per day (item 55), it becomes clear that only a very small number (4 pupils so 6.56%) chose option a (less than 30 minutes) and equal numbers of adolescents (19 each, which means 31.15%) went for options b (between 30 minutes and one hour), c (between one hour and 2 hours), and d (more than 2 hours). Refer to Figure 11 below for an overview of item 55.

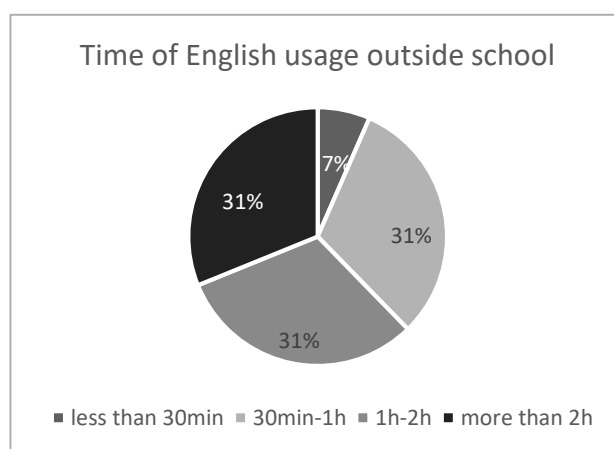


Figure 11: Time of English usage outside school

7.2. How can the participants' self-concept be described?

Overall, different dimensions of the self were addressed. First, there were nine items focusing on general self-concept, followed by five items which addressed pupils' academic sense of self. The third set of items sought to get a better understanding of their English learning self-concept. In order to get an overview of students' self-concept, it was decided to calculate the median (Md), the mean (M) as well as the standard deviation (SD) for each

of the items (1-21). Furthermore, general tendencies are described with the help of absolute as well as relative frequencies and boxplots are employed in order to provide a concise graphical representation of the main tendencies of the various items which accounts for outliers. In the following subsection (2.2.1), the focus is on general self-concept.

7.2.1. How can the participants' general self-concept be described?

When it comes to the adolescents' general sense of self, the mean of the majority of the items is over 4 (for an overview of the figures from items 1-9 see Table 2), which seems to indicate a high level of agreement with the different statements.

Table 2: General self-concept: results

Nr.	item	Md^4	M^5	SD^6
1	Im Großen und Ganzen kann ich viele Dinge, auf die ich stolz sein kann.	5	4.51	1.12
2	Die meisten Dinge, die ich mache, mache ich gut.	4	4.15	0.98
3	Wenn ich es wirklich versuche, kann ich fast alles erreichen, was ich will.	5	4.84	0.84
4	Ich kann Dinge so gut meistern wie die meisten anderen Leute.	4	4.43	0.88
5	Ich mache mir mehr Sorgen als notwendig.	5	4.82	1.27
6	Ich bin oft verwirrt und durcheinander.	3	3.38	1.34
7	Ich bin ein nervöser Mensch.	4	4.07	1.44
8	Ich bin schnell aufgebracht.	4	3.56	1.27
9	Ich mache mir über viele Dinge Sorgen.	5	4.56	1.34

Overall, the means from the first nine items range between 3.38 (item 6; “Ich bin oft verwirrt und durcheinander”) and 4.84 (item 3; “Wenn ich es wirklich versuche, kann ich fast alles erreichen, was ich will”). Concerning standard deviation, the item with the smallest variation is item 3 and the one with the most variation is item 7 (“Ich bin ein nervöser Mensch”).

On the whole, one striking finding from this first section of the questionnaire (items 1-9) is that a significant number of students selected options 4 and 5 for the first four items (see Figure 12) and the standard deviation for these is rather low. Moreover, all the items (1-4) show one or two outliers (option 1 and/or option 2). Hence, the level of agreement in this

⁴ Median

⁵ Mean

⁶ Standard deviation

section is high, which indicates that many of the students have a positive general self-concept. However, when it comes to items 5-9, the results look very different. The representations for items 5 and 9 show that a large number of pupils went for options 4, 5 and 6 and there are no outliers. It is worth stressing that the two statements in question have a similar meaning (“Ich mache mir mehr Sorgen als notwendig”, “Ich mache mir über viele Dinge Sorgen”); thus, the comparable results could be an indication for the students’ conscientiousness.

Items 7 and 8, which resemble each other to some degree concerning their content (“Ich bin ein nervöser Mensch” and “Ich bin schnell aufgebracht”), are similar in that a lot of participants decided on options 3, 4 and 5 and nobody gave an answer that would need to be qualified as an outlier. Item 6 shows different tendencies as a majority went for options 2, 3 and 4, thus indicating less agreement among the participants.

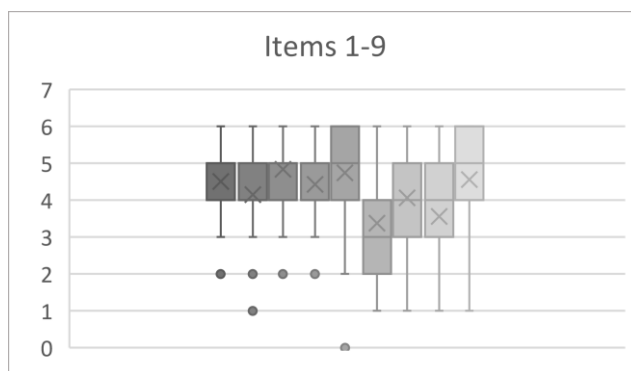


Figure 12: Boxplots items 1-9

When it comes to the first item (“Im Großen und Ganzen kann ich viele Dinge, auf die ich stolz sein kann”), looking at the percentages of pupils who selected the respective options of the Likert scale, one can see that none of the adolescents decided on option 1 “trifft überhaupt nicht zu”, 7% crossed option 2 “trifft nicht zu”, 11% opted for 3 “trifft eher nicht zu” and a fourth went for option 4 “trifft eher zu”. A significant number (39%) went for option 5 “trifft zu” and 18% opted for 6 “trifft voll und ganz zu”. Also, one can see that for item 5, 50 percent of the data range between 4 and 6. There is also an outlier (0) for this question since one of the participants did not cross any of the options. Additional interesting results can be seen by examining the boxplot of item 1 (see Figure 13), item 4 (see Figure 14) as well as item 7 (see Figure 15). These three items were chosen for a more in-depth analysis as they cover different levels of self-concept, namely a self-oriented perspective in item 1, an

orientation towards others in item 4 as well as a description of a certain character quality in item 7.

The boxplot for item 1 shows that half of the obtained data ranges between 4 and 5, thus underlining yet again the frequency of these two answer options. Moreover, it becomes clear that, as 2 is outside of the two whiskers and hence outside the interquartile range multiplied by 1.5, this result can be classified as an outlier (Brell 2017: 44).

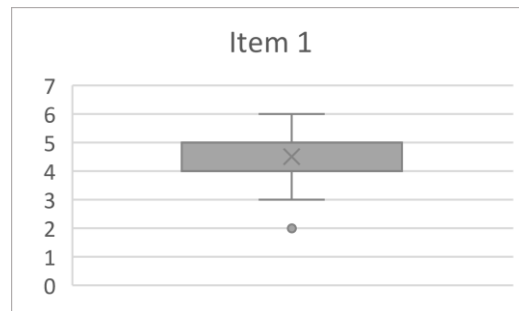


Figure 13: Boxplot item 1

Additionally, item 4 (“Ich kann Dinge so gut meistern wie die meisten anderen Leute”) showed a slightly different picture. Whereas nobody (0%)/hardly anybody (2%) went for options 1 and 2, 11 percent opted for the third, 39 percent for the fourth, 38 percent for the fifth and 10% for the sixth option. The boxplot for this item (see Figure 14 below) also indicates the prevalence of options 4 and 5 as well as revealing the fact that answer option 2 is, again, an outlier.

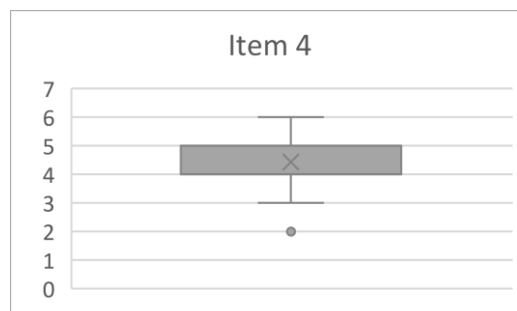


Figure 14: Boxplot item 4

An interesting contrast compared to the other items can be seen for item 7 (“Ich bin ein nervöser Mensch”), where the distribution was much more even. 3 percent decided on option 1, 13 percent on option 2, 20 percent on option 3, 21 percent on option 4, 23 percent on option 5 and another 20 percent on option 6. The boxplot (see Figure 15) again draws

attention to the fact that the majority of the participants decided on options 3, 4 and 5 as well as showing that there is no outlier for item 7.

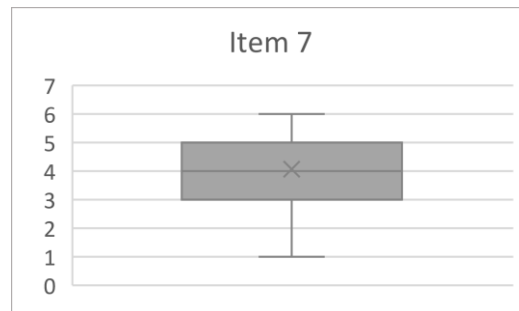


Figure 15: Boxplot item 7

In short, the nine items addressing students' general self-concept revealed that their overall sense of self seems to be rather positive, which can be inferred from the high level of agreement with items 1-4. Moreover, a significant number of participants crossed options 4, 5 and 6 for items 5 and 9, which shows that a lot of them deal with a large amount of worry. Fewer pupils reported being nervous (item 7) or being upset quickly (item 8) and an even smaller number describe themselves as confused (item 6). After this description of the participants' general self-concept, their academic self-image will be examined in more detail.

7.2.2. How can the participants' academic self-concept be described?

Table 3: Academic self-concept: results

Nr.	Item	<i>Md</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
10	Ich lerne in den meisten Fächern schnell.	4	4.26	1.14
11	Ich habe oft das Gefühl, nicht so gescheit wie andere zu sein.	3	3.26	1.46
12	Bei vielen Aufgaben bin ich mir schon im Voraus sicher, dass ich sie nicht lösen kann, weil ich dafür nicht begabt bin.	3	2.85	1.35
13	Ich würde mir wünschen, so intelligent wie die anderen zu sein.	3	3.08	1.45
14	Ich bin in den meisten Fächern gut.	5	4.54	1.19

The items focusing on students' academic self-concept consisted of two statements where the underlying assumption is that participants have a positive sense of self if they agree with the statements (items 10 and 14) and three items which point towards a negative image of oneself (11, 12 and 13).

On the whole, the medians from items 10-14 range between 3 (item 11, 12 and 13) and 5 (item 14) and the means from 2.85 (item 12) to 4.54 (item 14). When it comes to standard deviation, the item with the smallest variation is item 10 and the one with the most variation is item 11.

Concerning similarities between the values, it seems essential to stress that two statements which resembled each other concerning their content (11 “Ich habe oft das Gefühl, nicht so gescheit wie andere zu sein” and 13 “Ich würde mir wünschen, so intelligent wie die anderen zu sein”) yielded nearly the same results. The median for the two items is the same (3) and the standard deviations are nearly the same (1.46 and 1.45, respectively). Also, the values for the means are close to each other and the distributions of the answers are comparable – in both cases, approximately two thirds of the participants disagreed or somewhat disagreed with the items. The percentages for the various answer options are very similar (for details go to Appendix F) as well.

Furthermore, the results of the two items which point towards a positive academic self-concept (10 “Ich lerne in den meisten Fächern schnell” and 14 “Ich bin in den meisten Fächern gut”) were also somewhat similar in that in both cases, around a quarter of the students disagreed or somewhat disagreed (i.e. went for options 1-3) with the statements and approximately three quarters agreed or somewhat agreed (i.e. decided on options 4-6). Concerning the overall values which were found for items 10-14, the means ranged between 2.85 and 4.54 and the medians between 3 and 5 whereas the standard deviation yielded values between 1.14 and 1.46.

Additional similarities of items 10 and 14 can be seen from the boxplots. In both cases, a significant number of participants selected answer options 4 and 5 (see Figure 16 below). Furthermore, 1 and 2 are outliers as they are outside the interquartile range multiplied by 1.5. The results for items 11, 12 and 13 show that a considerable amount of the students opted for 2, 3 and 4 (as well as option 5 for item 11). Also, no outliers were identified.

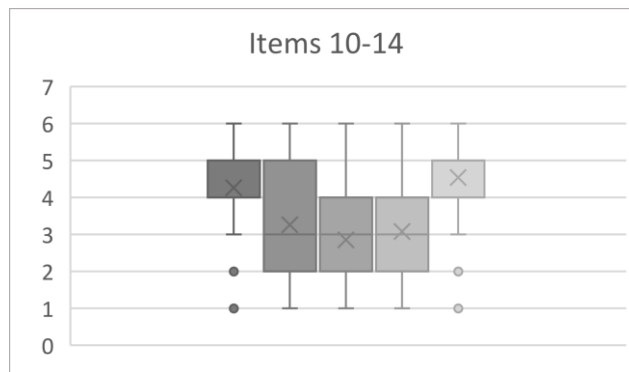


Figure 16: Boxplot items 10-14

7.2.3. How can the participants' English learning self-concept be described?

Table 4: English learning self-concept: results

Nr.	item	<i>Md</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
15	Das Lernen im Englischunterricht ist leicht für mich.	5	4.33	1.18
16	Ich kann im Englischunterricht Sachen selbst herausfinden.	5	4.57	0.90
17	Englisch ist eines der Fächer, wo ich am besten bin.	3	3.30	1.73
18	Manchmal fühle ich mich im Englischunterricht besser als andere.	3	3.26	1.45
19	Ich bekomme gute Noten im Englischunterricht.	4	3.85	1.48
20	Ich bin im Englischunterricht zufrieden mit meiner Fähigkeit, vor der Klasse zu sprechen.	4	3.59	1.46
21	Es fällt mir im Englischunterricht leicht, Probleme zu lösen.	4	4.13	1.13

Concerning the students' English learning self-concept, the questionnaire contained seven items (numbers 15-21; see Table 4 above) which were all worded in a positive way, thus indicating a positive sense of self if one of the options 4-6 was chosen. Overall, the medians range between 3 and 5 and the means range between 3.26 (item 18) and 4.57 (item 16). The smallest standard deviation (0.90) can be found in item 16 and the item with the most variation is item 17 (with a standard deviation of 1.73).

Some of the most striking results of this section include the seemingly high level of agreement with item 15 ("Das Lernen im Englischunterricht ist leicht für mich"). The overall mean of this item is 4.57 and the median is 5. Moreover, with a value of 0.90, the standard deviation is rather low. Considering the number of participants who decided on the different answer options (1-6), it becomes clear that in fact, slightly more than a fifth somewhat disagreed. However, the strong overall tendency of agreeing or partly agreeing with item 15

is yet again underlined by the fact that 72 percent of the students went for options 4-6 of the Likert scale, illustrating their agreement with the statement.

In addition, another aspect worth mentioning is the fact that much fewer pupils reported English as being one of their best subjects (item 17: “Englisch ist eines der Fächer, wo ich am besten bin”). In fact, slightly more than half (54%) of them disagreed or somewhat disagreed with this statement whereas 46 percent agreed. Also, at 1.73, the standard deviation is high, and the mean score is only 3.30. Concerning item 17, one has to mention one crucial aspect which may have led to it being less reliable than anticipated. More precisely, the question was adapted from Leung’s questionnaire (2016: 139) and translated to German. The original version was “English is one of my best subjects” (Leung 2016: 139), which was changed into “Englisch ist eines der Fächer, wo ich am besten bin”. This was where the problem occurred since the German version could refer to two different things. First, one can mean that the person him/herself is better in English in comparison to other subjects or second, the statement could address a social comparison and mean that he/she is more competent in the language than his/her peers.

Interestingly, for item 18 (“Manchmal fühle ich mich im Englischunterricht besser als andere”), the majority of participants (59%) selected options 1-3, showing that they do not agree with the statement. Nearly a third of the students chose option 2 (“trifft nicht zu”) and around a fifth went for “trifft eher nicht zu”. However, the interpretation of these results should be done cautiously as there might be a bias due to *social desirability* (Wasylikiw 2007: 891), which means that one is, in some instances, likely to select an answer option which is less honest but more socially accepted.

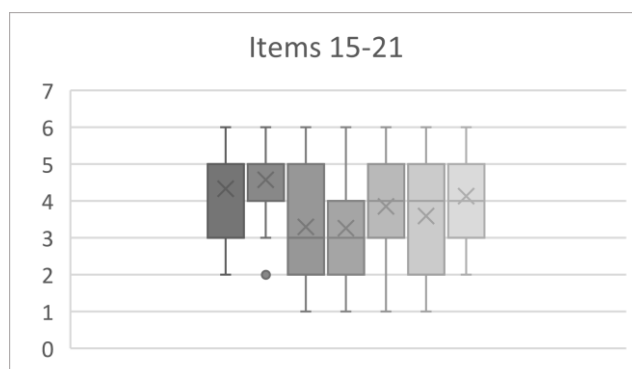


Figure 17: Boxplot items 15-21

Overall, the boxplots of items 15-21 (see Figure 17) show that when it comes to items 15, 19 and 21, many participants decided on options 3, 4 and 5 thus pointing towards relatively high rates of agreement with the respective statements. Additionally, a significant number of students opted for 4 or 5 in item 16 but there was an outlier in this case as well (option 2). Items 17 and 20 yielded partly comparable results as the majority of participants chose options 2-5. However, the medians are different (3 for item 17 and 4 for item 20, respectively). Moreover, more than half of the pupils opted for 2, 3 or 4 in item 18, showing low to moderate agreement with the statement “Manchmal fühle ich mich im Englischunterricht besser als andere”. As already mentioned above, especially with this item, it is important to consider a possible social desirability bias (Wasylikiw 2007: 891).

7.3. What are the main reasons why students learn English?

In total, ten items focused on the participants’ motivation for learning English (see Figure 18).⁷ More precisely, there were ten phrases for finishing the sentence “Ich lerne English *vor allem*, weil...” where the participants had to, again, opt for the number on the Likert scale they most identify with. The phrases addressed various areas and different kinds of motivation. When it comes to job and future studies, it was found that a vast majority of 87 percent is motivated to learn English as it will enhance their job opportunities in the future (item 22; see also Figure 18 below). However, only around half of the participants would like to use the language at work. Another item where around 50 percent agreed was number 30 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil ich es beim Studieren verwenden möchte”). For this item, the mean value is 3.67 and thus the lowest from all the items of this section. Interestingly, both item 23 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil ich in Zukunft besser Jobaussichten haben will“) and item 30 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil ich es beim Studieren verwenden möchte“) both nearly split the participants in half whereas for all the other items, there is a tendency towards either agreeing or disagreeing with the respective statement.

Agreement was high for item 25 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil...ich es bei der Nutzung verschiedener Medien (Serien, Social Media,...) verwenden will“) with a mean value of 4.67 and 87 percent of the participants who agreed or somewhat agreed. Curiously, the

⁷ Refer to Figure 18 for the broad categories where you will also see the percentages of students who agreed and disagreed; or go to the appendix for the full questionnaire.

percentages of students who agreed were exactly the same for items 25 and 22. Item 22, however, addressed job opportunities. Additionally, more than 75 percent of the students reported wanting to use English in their private life (see item 28) as well as wanting to participate in English class (see item 29). Item 28 also showed the highest mean value (4.93) of all the questions from this subset. Also, the majority of the pupils, more precisely 69 percent, said that they enjoyed learning the language (see item 31). Interestingly, the standard deviation of this item was 1.63 and thus rather high.

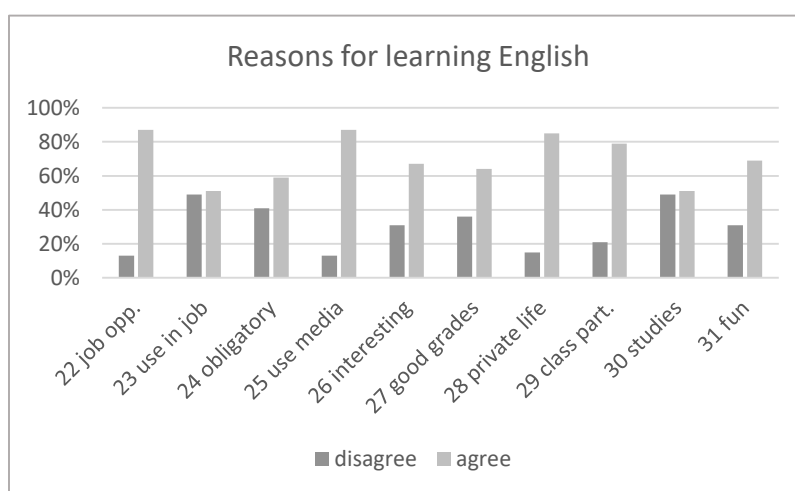


Figure 18: Reasons for learning English

Taken as a whole, one can see that important motivational factors for learning English seem to be connected to different domains (for details see Figure 18). Both vocational as well as school-related aspects are crucial for many of the participants and second, things concerning their private life (i.e. media usage and communication with others) play an essential role when it comes to their motivation for learning the language.

7.4. What are the students' future selves able to do in English?

Table 5: Future selves – categories

Category	Items	Number of items
job	37	1
university	38	1
private	34, 35, 36	3
language competence	32, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45	5
test result	33	1

more than 1 category (job, university, private)	39, 40	2
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A total of 14 items focused on the students' future selves connected to learning English. Again, the items consisted of Likert-type scales and the statements always started with “Im Jahr 2023 möchte ich...”. In order to get a better understanding of what they addressed, they have been put into five different categories, which are shown in Table 5 above.

Looking at the table, one can see that the most items can be found in the category “language competence”, followed by the category “private”. The other groupings are job, university, and test result. Also, two items could be put into more than one category.

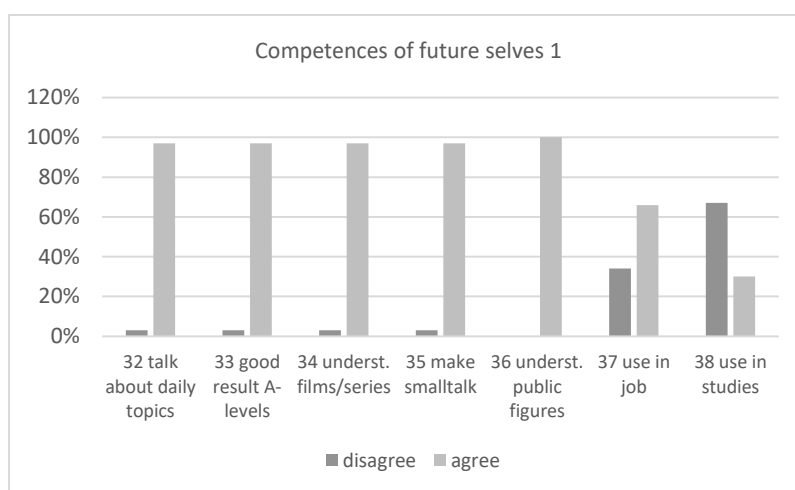


Figure 19: Competences of future selves 1

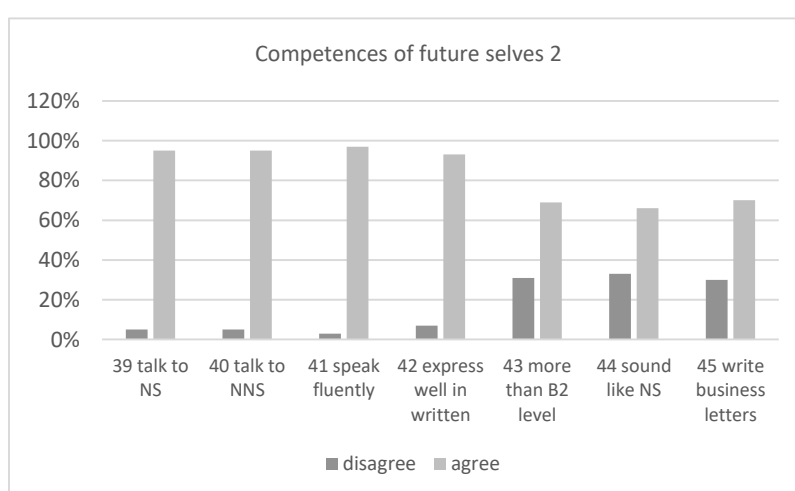


Figure 20: Competences of future selves 2

When it comes to the results of the survey, the extent of agreement is very different for the various statements (see Figures 19 and 20 above). One of the most striking findings is that all of the participants would like to be able to understand English-speaking public figures (item 36). More precisely, 6 out of 61 students (10%) chose answer option 4, 20 (33%) opted for option 5 and 35 (57%) selected the sixth option. Furthermore, items 32, 33, 34, 35, 39, 40, 41 and 42 all showed similar tendencies in that over 90 percent of the pupils agreed or partly agreed with the respective statements. Additionally, at least two thirds of the pupils also agreed with items 43-45. These statements included the language level students would like to achieve (over B2), sounding like a person whose first language is English as well as writing business letters. Concerning the item which focused on the use of English at work (item 37), around two thirds of the participants reported wanting to do so. When it comes to studying in English (item 38), only 30 percent of the adolescents decided on options 4-6 and thus expressed their desire to do so.

On the whole, what has been found out concerning students' future language learning selves is that many of them aspire to improve in English for various reasons. All the participants would like to have the ability to understand public figures and a vast majority also pursues numerous other aims – such as using the language in their job – whereas only less than a third would like to study in English.

7.5. How common is having an English role model?

A total of 15 out of 61 students, which means nearly a fourth of the participants, reported having a role model when it comes to learning English (see Figure 21). Out of these students, seven were female and eight were male (see Figure 22).

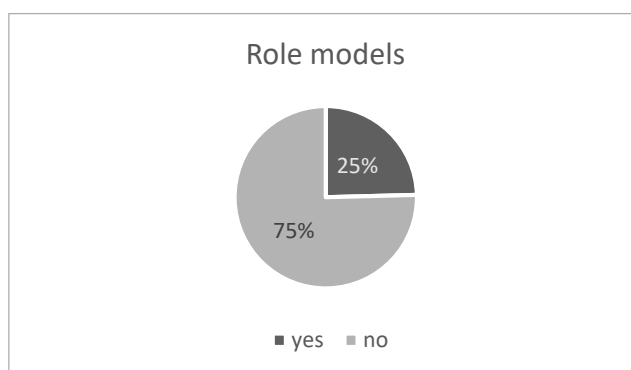


Figure 21: Role models

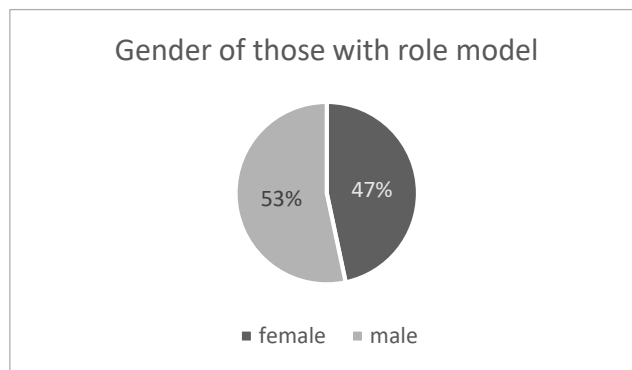


Figure 22: Gender of those with role model

Due to the relatively small sample size of the study as well as the fact that the participants resemble each other concerning at least two characteristics, namely their age group as well as their educational background, generalizations of any sort are not possible. However, because of the applied sampling method (convenience sampling; Dörnyei & Taguchi 2009: 61), the data is presumably less biased than it would have been with a self-selected sample.

7.6. Who are the students' role models?

Overall, as one participant mentioned two role models, the results comprise 16 different salient others. In order to better illustrate which kinds of people the students referred to, their answers were put into five different categories, namely famous people, family and partners, friends and acquaintances, other, and teachers (see Figure 23).

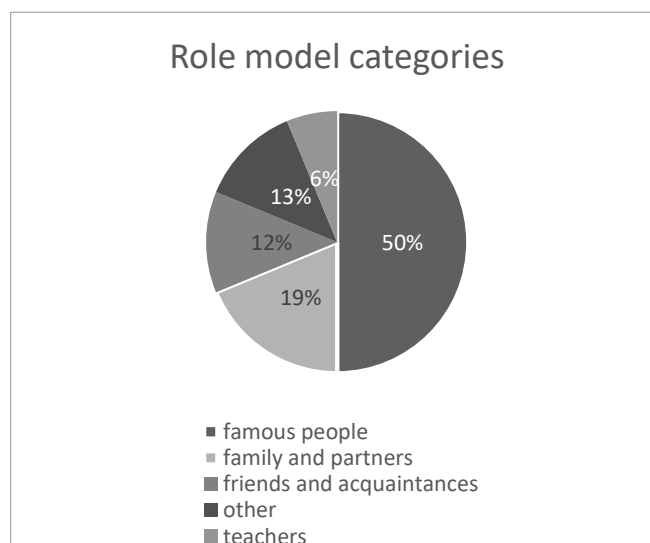


Figure 23: Role model categories

Half of the role models can be classified as belonging to the first subgroup (famous people) whereas 18.75 percent belong to the second (family and partners), 12.5 percent to the third (friends and acquaintances) and fourth groups (other) and 6.25 percent to the fifth category (teachers), which is also illustrated in Figure 24 and Table 6. Put differently, 50 percent of the models were famous people whereas an overall percentage of 37.5 of the role models were personally known to the participants and 6.25 belonged to the category “other”. Also, Table 6 aims to describe the relations participants have with their salient others and in case a famous person was mentioned, also their name. In one case, a participant gave a friend’s full name, which was, of course, changed so as to ensure anonymity.

Table 6: Role model categories

Category	Percent	Answers
famous people (8)	50	• Arnold Schwarzenegger • Lauren Cimorelli – Sängerin/Bandmitglied • Liam Payne – Sänger • Harry Edward Styles (Sänger und Schauspieler) • Emma Watson – Schauspielerin • Danny Gonzalez – Youtuber • Mister Beast – Youtuber • Magnus Carsen (Schauspieler)
family and partners (3)	18.75	• Vater • mein Bruder, welcher [sic] studiert • mein Freund/Beziehung
friends and acquaintances (2)	12.5	• Sandra Hofer⁸ – eine gute Freundin von mir • eine Bekannte
other (2)	12.5	• Mimis [sic] – God of War (2018) [note: male character of a video game] • generell Amerikaner/Briten
teachers (1)	6.25	• Lehrerin

Another aspect which seemed relevant was whether the people the students mentioned as their role models are native speakers of English or not. On the whole, 8 pupils went for a salient other whose first language is English, and 7 students chose people who are speakers of another tongue (see Figure 24 below).

⁸ name changed

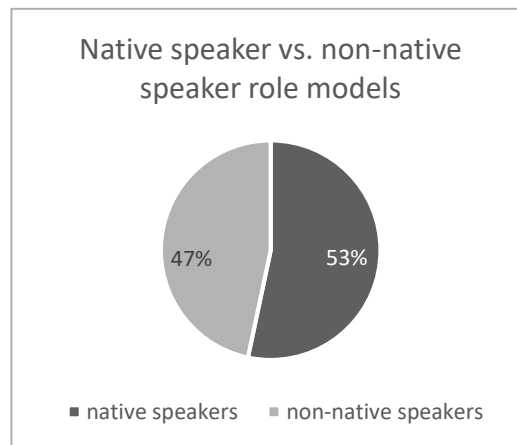


Figure 24: Native speaker vs. non-native speaker role models

When looking at the gender of the role models (see also Figure 25), it becomes apparent that 10 out of 15 were male, 4 female and 1 diverse (the respective student's answer referred to American or British people in general, not a specific person).

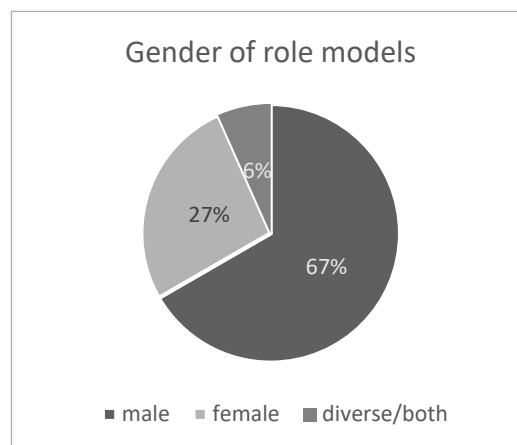


Figure 25: Gender of role models

Moreover, the role models' countries of origin can be taken into account. Overall, six salient others were from Austria, another six from the British Isles, four from the US and one from Norway. In total, there were seventeen different answers concerning nationality as one participant mentioned two role models and another student talked about people from Britain and America in a general sense.

7.7. Which characteristics do students value in their role models?

Item 52 from the questionnaire addressed aspects the participants like about their role model's English. In order to ensure more freedom concerning the answer given, an open

question format was used. The wording was the following: “Das mag ich am Englisch dieser Person“. The different answers were collected and then put into various categories (see Table 7).

Table 7: Characteristics valued in role models

Category	Number of contributions (out of 17)	Answers
phonetics/sound	8	• Aussprache • klingt auch etwas heimisch, man merkt dass er aus Österreich kommt • den Akzent (x2) • Man merkt nicht wirklich den österreichischen Akzent • es klingt schön • Dialekt • ich mag wie es klingt • hört sich sauber [und flüssig] an⁹
fluency	3	• flüssiges Sprechen • redet schnell und flüssig • hört sich [sauber und] flüssig an
character quality	2	• Sie hat so viel Selbstvertrauen beim sprechen [sic] • sehr enthusiastisch und freundlich
lexicon	2	• Wortschatz • ihre Ausdrücke
possibilities	1	• Fähigkeiten, Möglichkeiten
authenticity	1	• sehr authentisch, typisch amerikanisch

⁹ This statement was split up and put into to categories – more precisely, “hört sich sauber an” was put in the category “phonetics/sound” and “hört sich flüssig an” was classified as belonging to “fluency”.

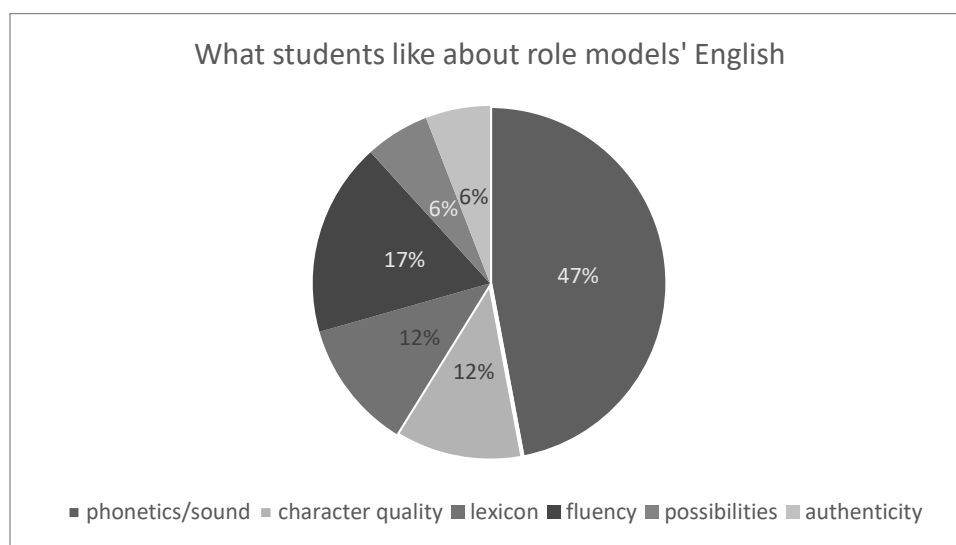


Figure 26: What students like about role models' English

The most striking result is the fact that aspects concerning phonetics were mentioned most often (see Figure 26). 8 out of 17 comments were put into the first category (phonetics/sound). The students wrote down different elements referring to, for example, their salient other's accent, (see "den Akzent", "Man merkt nicht wirklich den österreichischen Akzent"), their dialect (see "Dialekt"), or how the person sounds on a more general level (see "klingt auch etwas heimisch, man merkt dass er aus Österreich kommt", "es klingt schön", "ich mag wie es klingt", "hört sich sauber [und flüssig] an").

Additionally, some pupils referred to their role model's fluency when speaking English. More precisely, 3 out of 16 answers addressed this subcategory. Other aspects which were mentioned focused on the vocabulary a person employs as well as an authentic kind of language usage. The last contribution by one of the adolescents, "Fähigkeiten, Möglichkeiten", was put into the category "possibilities". It seems likely that the student meant skills and possibilities connected to their role model's language competence. However, due to the general meanings of the two employed terms, one cannot be sure what exactly the participant was referring to.

7.8. What are the correlations between role models and English learning self-concept?

In order to examine potential relations between the results of item 46 (where the students were asked whether they had a role model) and various items focusing on English learning self-concept, the Goodman-Kruskal lambda was used (Goodman & Kruskal 1954). Even though this measure is described as one to be used for two nominal variables (Kvålseth 2017: 1118), data can be downscaled and treated as if it was nominal (Brell, Brell & Kirsch 2017: 11). This way, it was possible to use lambda for one set of ordinal data and one set of nominal data. More precisely, in many cases, the relations between different items with Likert scales and item 46 were analyzed. Moreover, other connections, such as for example between the participants' as well as the role models' gender or between the daily use of English (item 55) and different Likert items, were examined (see Table 8). As a first step, contingency tables for the respective items were put together to then calculate the lambda values. Item 46 (asking the students whether they have a role model) was treated as the independent variable whereas the other items were treated as dependent variables.

Table 8: Lambda values

items	lambda value
17 & 46	1
19 & 46	0.70
20 & 46	0.73
25 & 46	0.67
31 & 46	0.75
43 & 46	0.73
44 & 46	0.82
55 & 46	0.70
55 & 17	0.79
55 & 19	0.79
55 & 20	0.79

When it comes to the lambda values of item 46 ("Ich habe ein Vorbild für das Englischlernen") and different items with Likert scales, the numbers range between 0.13 and 1. The smallest figure was found for items 60 and 47, thus for the participants' as well as the role models' gender, indicating the lack of a strong connection between these values. The

majority of values lie between 0.67 (for items 25 and 46) and 0.82 (for items 44 and 46). Interestingly, one of the calculations even yielded a value of 1, demonstrating perfect association of items 17 (“Englisch ist eines der Fächer, wo ich am besten bin”) and 46 (“Ich habe ein Vorbild für das Englischlernen”; Suich & Turek 2003: 111). Thus, there seems to be a strong connection between having a role model and perceiving oneself as competent in English class. However, as mentioned before, there might be some bias concerning item 17 as the wording is ambiguous. On the one hand, one could think that it refers to one’s personal competence in the language as opposed to achievement in other subjects (which would be an intrapersonal perspective). On the other hand, participants might also think about their English skills in contrast to what their colleagues are able to do (which would be an interpersonal or social perspective).

Additionally, items 44 and 46 are also strongly correlated as lambda for these two questions is 0.82, showing that if one knows the answer a participant gave for item 44 (“Im Jahr 2023 möchte ich...wie eine Person klingen, deren Erstsprache Englisch ist”), one will have significantly better odds when guessing the response (Khamis 2008: 159) the person gave for item 46 (“Ich habe ein Vorbild für das Englischlernen, an dem ich mich orientiere [...]”). Furthermore, important connections (see the lambda value of 0.79) exist between item 55 (the time students spend using English outside of school, thus their use of *extramural English* – see also chapter 8) as well as items 17 (“Englisch ist eines der Fächer, wo ich am besten bin”), 19 (“Ich bekomme gute Noten im Englischunterricht”) and 20 (“Ich bin im Englischunterricht zufrieden mit meiner Fähigkeit, vor der Klasse zu sprechen”), thus their extramural English as well as their actual self.

7.9. Summary

With the help of several guiding questions, which were partly taken from Muir and her colleagues’ (Muir, Dörnyei & Adolphs 2019a) article, chapter 7 has presented the results of the survey dealing with foreign language learning self-concept. More precisely, the participants’ characteristics were described in 7.1 to then move on to different aspects concerning their self-concept in 7.2. Also, the reasons why pupils learn English were explained in 7.3 before focusing on their future selves (see chapter 7.4). The participants’ role models were described in more detail in 7.5, 7.6 as well as 7.7. The last subchapter (7.8) drew attention to some correlations between various questionnaire items. In the next section (8), the most important results will be discussed with the help of literature from the field.

8. Discussion

This chapter will summarize the main findings from the questionnaire and connect them with relevant literature. Furthermore, some implications of the research project will be explained.

As already mentioned, the aim of this thesis was to get a better understanding of secondary students' role models for learning English and the connection between role models and self-concept. The starting point was the following research question: 'In how far are secondary students' ideal foreign language learning selves influenced by salient others?'. It was expected that salient others play a major role concerning students' aspirations when learning a language as they

may perform an informal scaffolding function beyond the formal curriculum. The fact that this scaffolding generally takes place in other spaces (in a cafe or at a piano lesson, for instance) emphasises [sic] how important it is for educators to gain a fuller awareness of the investment or identity work of their learners in a variety of social and linguistic situations (Haines 2012: 9).

However, due to some limitations of the present project (see also chapter 8.7), it was not possible to fully answer the research question. Still, the findings give valuable insights into pupils' self-concept as well as their goals concerning language learning. The next subchapter will deal with ambitions the students have.

8.1. Learners' future possible selves

When it comes to the learners' aspirations, thus what their future possible selves are able to do in English, a number of different items focused on this aspect and one of the most interesting findings is that all of the participants aim to understand public figures in the future. Additionally, a vast majority of the students would like to speak about everyday topics, get a good grade in the school-leaving exams, understand films and TV series in English, make small talk, talk to people whose first language is either English or another language (not their first language) about basically any topic, speak fluently as well as being competent in written English. Overall, one can hence say that the students have ambitious goals concerning their competence in English and these aims concern different domains, such as school as well as their private life. In order for ideal selves to be effective, six conditions need to be met, more precisely "(1) availability of an elaborate and vivid future self image [sic], (2) perceived plausibility, (3) harmony between the ideal and ought selves, (4) necessary activation/priming, (5) accompanying procedural strategies, and (6) the offsetting impact of a feared self" (Dörnyei 2009: 18). Thus, the existence of the future self-images as shown from the questionnaire responses are by far not sufficient for the students to reach their language learning goals.

8.2. Time spent using English outside of school

With regard to the time students spend using English outside of school – thus their use of extramural English (Sundqvist 2009: 25), defined as “English outside the walls of institutions” – it has been found that hardly any of the students reported using the language for less than half an hour a day whereas around 30 percent each said they are using it for 30 minutes-1 hour, 1-2 hours, as well as more than 2 hours. These results show the large amount of time which the participants spend with extramural English. Comparing the figures with the ones Schwarz (2020) received for her sample of Viennese students in grade 10, one can see similarities in that in both cases, the amount of time spent using English outside of school per day seems surprisingly high (Schwarz 2020: 217-218). In fact, by analyzing 383 diary entries by 118 participants, she found that on average – depending on the calculation – the mean time students spent with English was either 3 hours 51 minutes or 4 hours 7 minutes per day and she concluded that these figures “at first appear[...] to be an incredibly large amount of time given that these teenagers attend school, have to do homework, need some sleep and probably also have hobbies that do not involve English” (Schwarz 2020: 218). The figures which were found with the help of the questionnaire for this thesis were not as high, but they still point towards a significant amount of input the students receive in English during their free time.

8.3. Existence and properties of salient others

Overall, it has been found that out of 61 participants, 15 (so approximately a quarter) said that they had a salient other. Comparing this figure with the one obtained by Muir and colleagues (Muir, Dörnyei & Adolphs 2019a: 8), who found that 68.1 percent of their respondents had a role model, this figure might seem surprisingly small. However, it is crucial to mention that the group of researchers employed a very different sampling procedure. In fact, they posted a link to their survey on the *Cambridge Online Dictionary* website, which means they went for a self-selected sample where the participants were highly likely to have a special interest in learning the language already as they independently chose to first consult the site and then to also fill out the questionnaire (Muir, Dörnyei & Adolphs 2019a: 8). The survey employed for this thesis, on the contrary, was administered at a secondary school during class time and all the students were asked to take part. Of course, they could have decided not to fill out the survey, which none of them did – a circumstance which is probably partly linked to the fact that the questionnaire was

administered during class time. Another aspect which could have played a role here is that, as Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009: 73) noted, pupils in educational institutions are – in many cases – motivated to fill out a questionnaire simply because they are told to do so. Typically, very large numbers of children or adolescents take part in surveys, or more precisely “[g]roups of students are typically ‘captive groups’ in the sense that a response rate of nearly 100% can be achieved with them” (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2009: 68)

Moreover, when it comes to the categories of role models which were mentioned by the participants, half of them were famous people, 37.5 percent were personally known to them and 6.25 were put into the category ‘other’ (such as for example a character from a video game). Interestingly, some of the relative frequencies found here were very similar to the ones by Muir and her colleagues. In fact, their sample showed 55 percent of public figures and 37.8 percent of people the participants knew personally (Muir, Dörnyei & Adolphs 2019a: 10).¹⁰

Concerning the language background of the role models, it has been found that a slight majority (8 out of 15 students) has role models whose first language is English whereas 7 pupils went for people with a different mother tongue. The fact that a native speaker does not always function as the preferred role model for learning a language has also been reported by other researchers, such as Sung (2013: 18), who focused on pronunciation. He showed that due to a variety of reasons, some students favored non-native speakers (Sung 2013: 18-19). While some learners had trouble understanding native speakers, others did not wish to be seen as Americans and hence did not imitate an American way of speaking. Others said they preferred non-native speakers as role models despite or actually because of their foreign accent (Sung 2013: 19), which was also reported by some students from the Austrian secondary school. One participant, for example, opted for Arnold Schwarzenegger and when asked about positive aspects related to the way he speaks said that he “klingt auch etwas heimisch, man merkt dass er aus Österreich kommt”. Additionally, Sung (2013: 19) found out that two students did not consider it beneficial to focus on one sole role model for learning English, but “may prefer to develop their own English pronunciation through exposure to different speakers of English” (Sung 2013: 20). This might, in fact, also apply

¹⁰ Please note that only the top five role model categories were given in the article, which is why the ones given do not add up to 100 percent.

to some of the pupils who took part in the Austrian survey and said they did not have a role model since a vast majority of the participants (93.4%) reported using English for at least 30 minutes a day outside of school. Hence, they are very likely to be in contact with speakers of the language which means that many of them probably do not have a specific person they look up to but prefer having a lot of different people they listen to or read texts from.

Additionally, it has been found that in the dataset obtained for the present thesis, a vast majority of the salient others (71.42%) were male, whereas only 28.57 percent of them were female and 7.14 percent were diverse. The findings from Muir and colleagues also show predominantly male role models (Muir, Dörnyei & Adolphs 2019a: 9). More precisely, 59.6 percent were men, 37.6 women and less than 3 percent belonged to the category ‘other’. Concerning potential relationships between the participants’ and their role models’ gender, there does not seem to be a strong connection in the sample of Austrian secondary students as lambda of the two respective items is only 0.13.

With regard to characteristics which participants value about their role models, it has been shown that they could be put into six different categories. First, almost half of the contributions (47.06%) referred to aspects related to the person’s way of speaking, such as their pronunciation or accent. In addition, nearly a fifth of the pupils’ answers (17.65%) addressed fluency and around 12 percent of the responses referred to character qualities or lexicon whereas approximately 6 percent mentioned ‘possibilities’ (which is a somewhat ambiguous answer) as well as authenticity. Muir and colleagues (2019a: 17), in their large-scale study on role models, found that the characteristics their participants valued about their salient others could all be put into the following broad categories: overall command of English, paralinguistic features, personal attributes and accent/variety of English. If attempting to assign the six categories found in the present study to these more general ones, one could put phonetics/sound with accent/variety of English, fluency with paralinguistic features, character quality with personal attributes, lexicon with overall command of English and authenticity with accent/variety. The somewhat equivocal category ‘possibilities’ would not fit in any of the four groups.

8.4. General self-concept

When it comes to general self-concept, as discussed above, the items employed for the questionnaire of this thesis yielded relatively high means (see Table 2 in chapter 7.2.1). In fact, they ranged between 3.38 and 4.84. More precisely, it has been found that concerning

the first four items, which were all part of the subscale ‘general self-concept’ in the article they originally appeared in (Leung, Marsh, Craven & Abduljabbar 2016: 139), the overall mean of the Austrian students’ sample is 4.48 (see Table 9 below).

Table 9: Comparison of means and standard deviations (general self-concept)

Subscale	Mean Australian sample (Leung et al.)	Mean Chinese sample (Leung et al.)	Mean Austrian sample (new)	Standard deviation Australian sample (Leung et al.)	Standard deviation Chinese sample (Leung et al.)	Standard deviation Austrian sample (new)
Genl = General self-concept (G) ¹¹	4.84	3.99	4.48	0.91	0.91	0.99
Emot = Emotional stability (E)	3.96	3.83	4.07	1.24	1.18	1.44

In comparison, the means of the group of researchers were 4.84 and 3.99, respectively (Leung, Marsh, Craven & Abduljabbar 2016: 132). Also, the standard deviations showed the following results: 0.91 for the Australian as well as the Chinese sample, and 0.99 for the Austrian sample. However, it is important to stress that in the original, there were 6 items out of which only 4 were used for the present thesis. Thus, the results cannot be compared one-to-one. What the different values can nonetheless do is show a certain similarity as the difference between the standard deviations differ only marginally.

Moreover, looking at the values which were found for items 5-9 of the questionnaire which this thesis is based on, the items actually constitute the whole subscale ‘emotional stability’ of the ones used by Leung and colleagues (Leung, Marsh, Craven & Abduljabbar 2016: 139). The Austrian sample shows a mean of 4.07 whereas the Australian sample shows a mean of 3.96 and the Chinese one was 3.83. Also, the standard deviations from the group of researchers were 1.24 and 1.18 and the new one from the Austrian sample 1.44. Again, there seem to be comparable tendencies when it comes to the above-mentioned figures. Whereas the means are all close to 4, the standard deviations range between 1.24 and 1.44. Thus, despite the different geographical contexts the research projects were done in, the received

¹¹ Only 4 out of 6 items were used in the Austrian sample.

figures vary only slightly, which could point towards parallels in the self-concept of high school students on different continents. However, further research would be required to validate assumption.

8.5. Correlations between different questionnaire items

I have also discussed some connections between different questionnaire items with the help of the Goodman-Kruskal lambda (Goodman & Kruskal 1954). One of the most remarkable results to emerge from the data is that perceived competence in English class (item 17) and having a role model for language learning (item 46) are strongly correlated. Even though there might be some bias concerning item 17 due to its ambiguous wording (see also chapter 7.8), the perfect association between the two items is still indicative of a relationship between English skills and having a salient other for language learning. The aforementioned connection and findings from other scholars foreground the significance of salient others in language learning (Muir 2019a: 20), which is why educators should actively motivate students to look for one or more role model(s) who they can emulate and learn from.

Additional items with important relations are 44 and 46 as well as 55 and 17, 19 and 20, respectively, which draws attention to connections between the wish to sound like a native speaker (item 44) and having a role model (item 46). In light of the fact that nearly half of the role models the students mentioned were non-native speakers, it seems interesting that there is a strong connection between the aspiration to sound like a person whose first language is English and having a role model. Hence, there appears to be a discrepancy between participants who are oriented towards ELF or non-native models for language learning and those who are oriented towards native speaker models like the ones proposed by “virtually all SLA [second language acquisition] research” (Seidlhofer 2004: 213). Also, the time participants use English outside of school (i.e. their use of extramural English, see also 7.8 and an earlier passage of this chapter) seems to be related to their perceived competence (item 17), their grades (item 19) as well as their speaking competence (item 20).

8.6. Reasons for learning English

Regarding the primary reasons why students learn English, it has been found that intrinsic, extrinsic as well as instrumental motivation play a role. In order to determine whether integrative motivation was relevant as well, one would have needed items focusing on aspects such as if the participants have an “open and accepting orientation toward the other language community” (Gardner 2010: 201-202, cited in Gardner 2012: 218). When it comes

to intrinsic motivation, item 26 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil ich es spannend finde”) and item 31 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil es mir Spaß macht”) are statements which belong to the category of intrinsic motivation and in both cases, the majority of participants agreed or somewhat agreed, showing the importance of intrinsic motivation for learning English. Furthermore, item 23 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil ich Englisch im Job verwenden will”) and item 24 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil es ein Pflichtfach ist”) reflect extrinsic motivation and here, around half or more than half of the students reported agreeing with the respective statements. Item 22 (“Ich lerne English vor allem, weil ich in Zukunft bessere Jobaussichten haben will”) could be categorized as belonging to instrumental motivation as it has an important focus on future goals, for example connected to the pupils’ future work (Simons, Dewitte & Lens 2000: 337). A vast majority of participants mentioned their job prospects as one of their main reasons for learning English, foregrounding the role which instrumental factors play. Other items, namely 25 as well as 27-30 could be categorized as belonging to different kinds of motivation, which is why the focus here was on the ones where the decision was clear. Still, what has been shown is that students learn English due to a multitude of reasons, such as the ones discussed above which were put into the categories of intrinsic, extrinsic as well as instrumental motivation.

8.7. Limitations

As it is the case with any research project, this thesis has some limitations. First, one must state that due to the relatively small sample size ($n=61$), no generalizations for the overall population can be made. Thus, put differently, it can be argued that there is a sampling bias, which means the findings cannot be transferred to the target population (McCutcheon 2008: 784). However, the tendencies found in this specific sample foster a better understanding of students’ English learning role models as well as various dimensions of their self-concept. Moreover, this study can serve as a starting point for future research projects seeking to better understand this area of interest.

Another factor worth mentioning is that the data might have been slightly impacted by the fact that the researcher works at the school where the questionnaires were administered. Hence, many students knew me before and some of them were pupils I teach regularly, which is why it is essential to mention a possible *acquiescence response bias*. When this kind of bias occurs, the respective respondent tends to agree with the items that he/she is presented with, no matter which content they address (Holbrook 2008: 3). In general, this kind of bias can arise in any case, although it might be stronger if the researcher also has another role for

the participants, for example – as it was the case in this study – the role of a teacher. It is possible that some pupils feel the urge to agree with more items if they know the questionnaire comes from their teacher as he/she is the same person who grades them and therefore acts as a gatekeeper for them.

Additionally, a common type of bias in research, namely social desirability bias, occurs when participants are prone to respond in a more positive way, thus distorting the results since the given answers are less truthful (Wasylikiw 2007: 891). This may happen in two different ways: “[o]ne involves self-deception, whereby a person provides inaccurate information but believes that it is accurate” (Wasylikiw 2007: 891) and the other one “is impression management whereby people intentionally distort responses to appear better than what they are” (Wasylikiw 2007: 891). It has been demonstrated that self-reports, which were also employed for the present thesis, are particularly sensitive to social desirability bias (Wasylikiw 2007: 891). In order to reduce this kind of bias, the items used in the questionnaire were, as suggested by Wasylikiw (2008: 891), formulated with great care. More precisely, some of them were taken or adapted from previous studies, which ensures they had been tested and utilized before. Other items were new ones which were piloted – together with all the other questions – with a group of eight students (see also chapter 6). The second step to diminish a bias connected to social desirability was to tell the participants that the results of the survey were going to be anonymized and treated in a strictly confidential way. This was first done orally before handing out the questionnaires and moreover, the printed survey includes a passage at the top where this is underlined again (see also full questionnaire in Appendix D).

8.7. Suggestions for further research

As briefly mentioned before, in order to answer the proposed research question, follow-up interviews, for example in the form of focus group interviews, would be needed to receive a more detailed picture of students’ language learning selves. In this kind of context, the possibility of direct interaction and asking open questions would foster a better understanding of the factors involved in the construction of self-concept as well as in choosing a role model for learning English. Hence, further research is required to fully answer the research question (“In how far are secondary students’ ideal foreign language learning selves influenced by salient others?”).

Furthermore, more inferential procedures to analyze the received data could enable an even more in-depth understanding of language learner selves. It would, for example, be highly interesting to investigate whether or not there are any dissimilarities concerning the answers of female and male participants. One could examine potential gender differences linked to some of the various research questions, such as for example “What are the main reasons why students learn English?”. Even though the sample size applied in the present study would be large enough for other statistical procedures catering for these kinds of results, such as the chi square test (Brell & Brell 2017: 64), this would have gone beyond the scope of this thesis.

Moreover, it would be highly interesting to replicate the study used as a basis for this thesis so as to find out whether the results are comparable when investigating another sample. One could, for instance, administer the questionnaire to students at a different age or school to see if parallels exist. In light of what Course (2017: 109) assumed to be true (see also chapter 3.1), namely that “language-learners’ selves are dynamic, active and constantly changing”, instructive results would be expected. Replicating the study with a different sample would probably be easier with slightly older rather than younger secondary students as the survey items – at least partly – require in-depth reflection and some of them also presuppose long-term planning when it comes to the pupils’ language learning goals. Another option would be to use the questionnaire with university students from different majors to be able to detect potential similarities and differences in their language learning selves.

On the whole, different aspects, such as sample size, acquiescence response bias and social desirability bias may have impacted the results of this study. The findings can nonetheless serve as a starting point for future research projects, for example with participants from a different age group. Also, to gain an even better understanding of students’ foreign language learning selves, it is suggested to employ interviews in addition to a questionnaire.

9. Conclusion

The aim of this master's thesis was to examine the relationship between foreign language learners' role models and their ideal future selves. It was expected that the former are highly significant when it comes to learners' goals and aspirations concerning their language learning. The first part (I) consisted of a literature review which gave an overview of several relevant areas for the context of the project. It started with sections on affective factors in language learning (1) before discussing foreign language learning self-concept (2). Furthermore, the third chapter (3) addressed general self-concept and the fourth section (4) dealt with academic self-concept. The second part (II) described the research project which was carried out in the context of this thesis. After an explanation of the methodology in the first chapter (6), there was an overview of the results (7) as well as the discussion and interpretation of these in chapter 8. The most important conclusions were drawn in chapter 9.

Overall, the literature review has shown that a variety of affective factors, namely motivation, attitude as well as language anxiety, are crucial for language learning and teaching. Special attention was drawn to motivation as this concept was also crucial for the questionnaire. When it comes to foreign language self-concept, it has been defined as the image a person has of their language skills. The extensive section on general self-concept has provided a definition before moving on to a description of the different properties it has. Also, various features the notion has were mentioned in detail to then explain its hierarchical nature as well as different types of self. Additionally, the chapter which tackled academic self-concept has given a definition and described, amongst other things, the internal/external frame of reference model.

Moreover, the research project which was carried out for this thesis yielded highly relevant results concerning secondary students' self-concept and role models they have for language learning. The survey mostly consisted of Likert items which the participants from grades 10-11 at a secondary school in Austria had to rank according to how much they agreed with them. Among the most important findings is the fact that all the students would like to understand public figures in the future (which many of them probably can already). Also, half of the role models of the participants are famous people, which could be linked to the fact that English is widely used by adolescents outside of school. Furthermore, a large proportion of role models consists of people who the participants know and a slight majority of them has English as a first language. Interestingly, two thirds of the salient others are male

and when asked which characteristics they value about their role models, a large number of participants mentioned aspects related to the way they speak. Also, significant relationships exist between having a role model and students' perceived competence and grades in English. The aforementioned findings as well as results from other researchers underline the importance of role models in language learning (Muir 2019a: 20), which is why teachers should actively encourage pupils to search a salient other who they can imitate and learn from.

This thesis has two main strengths when it comes to the approach which was chosen. Firstly, I opted for a broad understanding of self-concept, considering not only language learning self-concept as such but also the broader notions of general as well as academic self-concept, which enabled a more in-depth understanding of not only different sub-areas of the self-image but additionally, it helped put the findings of the empirical part into perspective. Secondly, this project seems to be one of the first to examine role models in the context of foreign language self-concept, opening up a whole new field of interest for researchers, educators and students alike.

However, due to the relatively small sample size of 61 participants, the findings might not be transferable to the whole population (i.e. all secondary students of English as a foreign language) and the proposed research question could not be fully answered since follow-up interviews would have been necessary. Additional limitations could exist due to social desirability as well as acquiescence response bias. Different steps were taken to reduce this kind of impact on the data and hence, the results still enable a better understanding of foreign language learners' self-concept and the importance of role models for them.

Based on the findings of the thesis at hand, future work should employ self-report questionnaires and follow-up interviews, for example in focus groups, so as to get a more in-depth understanding of the interplay between students' language learning role models and their future ideal selves. Moreover, it would be highly interesting to use the survey designed for this project with a different sample, such as for instance participants from another age group. This way, further research could contribute to making language learning an even more meaningful and sustainable endeavor for students.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Abstract (English)

When it comes to foreign language acquisition, innumerable factors have an influence on the learner. One crucial aspect to consider is self-concept. The aim of this thesis was to show potential connections between English language learners' ideal selves and their role models (i.e. salient others). With the help of self-report questionnaires which were administered to 61 Austrian secondary students aged 15-17, it was found that for all of them, it is important to be able to understand public figures who speak English in the future. Moreover, the majority of the participants also aim to get good grades in their school-leaving exams, watch films in English and talk to native speakers as well as non-native speakers about a variety of topics. Correlational analyses, which have been done with the help of the Goodman-Kruskal lambda, demonstrated, amongst others, significant relationships between students' perceived competence in English class and having a role model as well as the wish to sound like a native speaker in the future and the existence of a salient other. The findings of the present thesis underline the importance of role models for foreign language learners, which is why educators should actively encourage pupils to search for a salient other appropriate to their personal needs.

Appendix B: Abstract (German)

Unzählige Faktoren, darunter zum Beispiel das Selbstkonzept, beeinflussen den Spracherwerb. Das Ziel dieser Masterarbeit war es, mögliche Zusammenhänge zwischen den „ideal selves“ von Fremdsprachenlernenden und deren „salient others“ (Vorbildern) zu zeigen. Mithilfe von Fragebögen, die von 61 Schüler*innen an einem österreichischen Gymnasium ausgefüllt wurden, konnte gezeigt werden, dass alle Teilnehmer*innen in Zukunft gerne Personen des öffentlichen Lebens verstehen würden. Zusätzlich möchte die Mehrheit gute Noten auf ihre Englisch-Matura erzielen, englische Filme ansehen und sich mit Erst- und Zweitsprecher*innen über verschiedenste Themen unterhalten können. Korrelationsanalysen, welche mithilfe des Goodman-Kruskal Lambda gemacht wurden, haben unter anderem ergeben, dass es wichtige Zusammenhänge zwischen der Sprachkompetenz in Englisch und der Existenz eines Vorbilds bestehen. Weiters gibt es eine Verbindung zwischen dem Wunsch, wie ein*e Erstsprecher*in zu klingen sowie der Existenz eines „salient other“. Die Ergebnisse der vorliegenden Masterarbeit unterstreichen die Wichtigkeit von Vorbildern für Sprachlernende. Es wird empfohlen, dass Lehrkräfte Schüler*innen aktiv darin bestärken sollten, ein passendes Vorbild zu suchen.

Appendix C: Non-plagiarism declaration

I hereby declare that all of the information my thesis is based on has been put together by me personally and has not been plagiarized from any unacknowledged sources. I have properly referenced all cited or paraphrased material.

Gänserndorf, 2021 Katharina van Linthoudt

Appendix D: Full questionnaire (German)

Selbstkonzept beim Englischlernen



Liebe Schülerin, lieber Schüler!

Dieser Fragebogen dient als Basis für meine Masterarbeit und besteht größtenteils aus verschiedenen Aussagen, bei denen du jeweils **eine Zahl von 1 (trifft gar nicht zu) bis 6 (trifft genau zu) ankreuzen** sollst. Lies dir die Sätze aufmerksam durch und entscheide nach Bauchgefühl, was du wählst. **Es gibt hier keine falschen Antworten!** Wichtig ist, was du persönlich denkst.

Insgesamt gibt es vier Bereiche. In den ersten drei Teilen geht es um verschiedene Aspekte des Selbstkonzepts (also darum, wie man sich selbst sieht und einschätzt) und danach geht es noch um einige wenige persönliche Daten von dir aber keine Sorge – diese werden alle anonymisiert.

Vielen Dank für deine Bereitschaft, diesen Fragebogen auszufüllen! :)

Bei Fragen kannst du dich gerne bei mir unter a01305295@unet.univie.ac.at melden. Wenn dich die allgemeinen Ergebnisse oder die fertige Arbeit interessieren, kannst du mir ebenfalls schreiben.

1. Allgemeines Selbstkonzept

	1 trifft über- haupt nicht zu	2 trifft nicht zu	3 trifft eher nicht zu	4 trifft eher zu	5 trifft zu	6 trifft voll und ganz zu
Im Großen und Ganzen kann ich viele Dinge, auf die ich stolz sein kann.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Die meisten Dinge, die ich mache, mache ich gut.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Wenn ich es wirklich versuche, kann ich fast alles erreichen, was ich will.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich kann Dinge so gut meistern wie die meisten anderen Leute.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich mache mir mehr Sorgen als notwendig.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich bin oft verwirrt und durcheinander.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich bin ein nervöser Mensch.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich bin schnell aufgebracht.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich mache mir über viele Dinge Sorgen.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

2. *Schulisches Selbstkonzept*

	1 trifft überhaupt nicht zu	2 trifft nicht zu	3 trifft eher nicht zu	4 trifft eher zu	5 trifft zu	6 trifft voll und ganz zu
Ich lerne in den meisten Fächern schnell.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich habe oft das Gefühl, nicht so gescheit wie andere zu sein.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Bei vielen Aufgaben bin ich mir schon im Voraus sicher, dass ich sie nicht lösen kann, weil ich dafür nicht begabt bin.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich würde mir wünschen, so intelligent wie die anderen zu sein.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich bin in den meisten Fächern gut.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

3. *Selbstkonzept beim Englischlernen*

3.1. Selbstkonzept beim Englischlernen insgesamt

	1 trifft überhaupt nicht zu	2 trifft nicht zu	3 trifft eher nicht zu	4 trifft eher zu	5 trifft zu	6 trifft voll und ganz zu
Das Lernen im Englischunterricht ist leicht für mich.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich kann im Englischunterricht Sachen selbst herausfinden.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Englisch ist eines der Fächer, wo ich am besten bin.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Manchmal fühle ich mich im Englischunterricht besser als andere.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich bekomme gute Noten im Englischunterricht.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Ich bin im Englischunterricht zufrieden mit meiner Fähigkeit, vor der Klasse zu sprechen.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Es fällt mir im Englischunterricht leicht, Probleme zu lösen.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

3.2. Gründe für das Englischlernen:

Ich lerne Englisch *vor allem*, weil...

	1 trifft über- haupt nicht zu	2 trifft nicht zu	3 trifft eher nicht zu	4 trifft eher zu	5 trifft zu	6 trifft voll und ganz zu
ich in Zukunft bessere Jobaussichten haben will.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ich Englisch im Job verwenden will.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
es ein Pflichtfach ist.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ich es bei der Nutzung verschiedener Medien (Serien, Social Media,...) verwenden will.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ich es spannend finde.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ich gute Noten haben möchte.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ich es im Privatleben zum Kommunizieren verwenden will (mit Freund*innen, im Urlaub,...).	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ich im Unterricht mitarbeiten möchte.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ich es beim Studieren verwenden möchte.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
es mir Spaß macht.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

3.3. Zukunftspläne in Bezug auf Englisch:

Im Jahr 2023 möchte ich...

	1 trifft über- haupt nicht zu	2 trifft nicht zu	3 trifft eher nicht zu	4 trifft eher zu	5 trifft zu	6 trifft voll und ganz zu
Alltagskonversationen auf Englisch meistern können.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ein gutes Ergebnis bei der Matura erzielen/erzielt haben.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
englischsprachige Filme/Serien verstehen können.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Smalltalk auf Englisch führen können.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
englischsprachige Personen in der Öffentlichkeit verstehen.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Englisch in der Arbeit verwenden.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
auf Englisch studieren.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
mit Menschen, deren Erstsprache Englisch ist, über (fast) alles sprechen können.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
mit Menschen, die nicht meine Erstsprache sprechen, über (fast) alles auf Englisch sprechen können	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
fließend Englisch sprechen können.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

mich schriftlich gut auf Englisch ausdrücken können.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
ein höheres Niveau als das Maturaniveau (B2) in Englisch erreichen.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
wie eine Person klingen, deren Erstsprache Englisch ist.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Geschäftsbriefe auf Englisch verfassen können.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

3.4. Vorbilder für das Englischlernen

a) Ich habe ein Vorbild für das Englischlernen, an dem ich mich orientiere (also eine Person, wie die ich sprechen/schreiben können möchte; wenn du mehrere hast dann denke an die wichtigste).

☐ Ja → weiter zur nächsten Frage

☐ Nein → weiter zu Abschnitt 3.5. (ebenfalls grau hinterlegt)

b) Geschlecht meines Vorbilds:

☐ weiblich

☐ männlich

☐ divers

c) Ist die Erstsprache der Person Englisch?

☐ Ja

☐ Nein

☐ Ich weiß es nicht

d) Herkunftsland der Person (wenn du es nicht weißt schreibe bitte „unbekannt“ in das Feld)

e) Mein Vorbild ist... (bitte bei Person der Öffentlichkeit den Namen und Beruf angeben - z.B. „Emma Watson-Schauspieler“ und bei Familienmitglied/Freund*in/Lehrkraft etc. eine genauere Bezeichnung - z.B. „meine Schwester“)

f) Das denke ich, wenn ich die Person höre/etwas von ihr lese:

g) Das mag ich am Englisch dieser Person:

h) Im Allgemeinen finde ich diese Merkmale wichtig für ein Vorbild beim Englischlernen (Mehrfachantworten möglich):

- ☐ die Sprachvarietät (amerikanisches, britisches, australisches Englisch etc.)
- ☐ die Sprachrichtigkeit
- ☐ die Größe des Vokabulars
- ☐ die Flüssigkeit beim Sprechen
- ☐ die Nationalität
- ☐ das geschriebene Englisch
- ☐ die Persönlichkeit
- ☐ das Selbstbewusstsein beim Englisch Sprechen
- ☐ den Humor
- ☐ den Job

i) Ich möchte (mich) gerne ... (Mehrfachantworten möglich)

- ☐ so wortgewandt sein wie mein Vorbild
- ☐ so flüssig Englisch sprechen können wie mein Vorbild
- ☐ so klar ausdrücken können wie mein Vorbild
- ☐ so selbstsicher sprechen können wie mein Vorbild
- ☐ so eine gute Aussprache haben wie mein Vorbild
- ☐ so ein umfangreiches Vokabular haben wie mein Vorbild
- ☐ so ansprechende Texte schreiben wie mein Vorbild

3.5. Verwendung der Sprache außerhalb der Schule

a) Zeit an einem durchschnittlichen Tag, in der ich in meiner Freizeit Englisch auf irgendeine Art und Weise verwende (lesen, hören, schreiben, ...):

- 0 weniger als 30 Minuten
- 0 zwischen 30 Minuten und 1 Stunde
- 0 zwischen 1 und 2 Stunden
- 0 mehr als 2 Stunden

b) Personen, mit denen ich außerhalb der Schule Englisch spreche (Mehrfachantworten möglich)

- ☐ Familie
- ☐ Freund*innen
- ☐ Bekannte
- ☐ Personen der Öffentlichkeit (zB Politiker*innen, Schauspieler*innen, ...)
- ☐ Ich spreche Englisch nur in der Schule
- ☐ Sonstige: _____

c) Personen, mit denen ich außerhalb der Schule Englisch schreibe/chatte
(Mehrfachantworten möglich)

- ☐ Familie
- ☐ Freund*innen
- ☐ Bekannte
- ☐ Personen der Öffentlichkeit (zB Politiker*innen, Schauspieler*innen, ...)
- ☐ Ich spreche Englisch nur in der Schule
- ☐ Sonstige: _____

d) Medien, die ich auf Englisch nutze (Mehrfachantworten möglich)

- ☐ Fernsehen, Filme, Serien
- ☐ Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube,...)
- ☐ Zeitungen
- ☐ Magazine
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Keine
- ☐ Sonstige: _____

4. Persönliche Daten

- a) Alter: _____
- b) Geschlecht: _____ (m/w/d)
- c) Klassenstufe: _____ (zB 9 = 5. Klasse AHS/1. Klasse BHS etc.)
- d) Pläne für nach der Schule (Mehrfachantworten möglich):
 - ☐ Studium
 - ☐ Lehre
 - ☐ Kolleg
 - ☐ Ausbildung
 - ☐ arbeiten
 - ☐ Auslandsjahr
 - ☐ Freiwilliges soziales Jahr
 - ☐ Grundwehrdienst Bundesheer
 - ☐ Zivildienst
 - ☐ Sonstiges: _____

Du bist nun am Ende des Fragebogens angelangt. Noch einmal vielen Dank für deine Unterstützung und alles Gute für deine weitere Schulzeit! ☺

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Appendix E: Full questionnaire (English)

English learning self-concept



Dear student!

This survey will serve as a basis for my master's thesis and mostly consists of different statements where I would like you to **cross one of the options from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree)**. Please read the sentences carefully and decide based on your gut feeling what you opt for. **There are no wrong answers** here. It is important what you personally think.

There are three different sections. The first three sections deal with different aspects of self-concept to then move on to some personal data but don't worry – they will be anonymized.

Thanks a lot for your help! :)

If you have any questions, you can reach me at a01305295@unet.univie.ac.at.

1. General self-concept

	1 totally disagree	2 disagree	3 somewhat disagree	4 somewhat agree	5 agree	6 totally agree
Overall, I have a lot to be proud of.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Overall, most things I do turn out well.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
If I really try I can do almost anything I want to do.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I can do things as well as most people.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I worry more than I need to.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I often feel confused and mixed up.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I am a nervous person.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I get upset easily.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I worry about a lot of things.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

4. *Academic self-concept*

	1 totally disagree	2 disagree	3 somewhat disagree	4 somewhat agree	5 agree	6 totally agree
I learn things quickly in most school subjects.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I often have the feeling that I am not as intelligent as the others.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
For most tasks, I know in advance that I will not be able to do them because I am not good at them.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I wish I were as intelligent as the others.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I am good at most school subjects.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

5. *English learning self-concept*

5.1. Overall English learning self-concept

	1 totally disagree	2 disagree	3 somewhat disagree	4 somewhat agree	5 agree	6 totally agree
Work in English classes is easy for me.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I can work things out by myself in English class on my own.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
English is one of my best subjects.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I sometimes feel more competent than others in English class.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I get good marks in English.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I am happy with my English presentation skills.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
It is easy for me to solve problems in English class.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

5.2. Reasons for learning English:

I learn English **primarily** because...

	1 totally disagree	2 disagree	3 somewhat disagree	4 somewhat agree	5 agree	6 totally agree
I want to have better job opportunities in the future.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I want to use English in my job.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
it is an obligatory subject.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I want to use it for different types of media (social media, series...).	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I think it is interesting.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I want to get good grades.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I want to use it to communicate in my private life (with friends, on holiday...).	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I want to participate in class.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I want to use it for my studies.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
I like it.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

5.3. Future plans for English

In 2023, I would like to...

	1 totally disagree	2 disagree	3 somewhat disagree	4 somewhat agree	5 agree	6 totally agree
be able to talk about day-to-day topics in English.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
get a good grade in the A-levels	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
be able to understand English films/series.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
be able to make smalltalk in English.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
be able to understand public figures when they speak English.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
use English in my job.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
use English for my studies.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
be able to talk to people whose first language is English about (nearly) any topic.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
be able to talk to people whose first language is not English about (nearly) any topic.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
be able to speak English fluently.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
be able to express myself well when writing in English.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
have a higher language proficiency than required for my A-levels (B2).	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

sound like a person whose first language is English.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
be able to write business letters in English.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

3.4. Role models for learning English

a) I have a role model who I emulate (so a person who I would like to talk/write like; if you have more than one please think about the most important one)

☐ Yes → continue with the next question

☐ No → go to section 3.5. (also marked in gray)

b) Gender of my role model:

☐ female

☐ male

☐ diverse

c) Is your role model's first language English?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

d) Country of origin of the person (if you don't know it, please write "unknown")

e) My role model is... (please write name and profession if it's a public figure and an explanation of the relationship if it's a friend/family member etc, e.g. Emma Watson-actress/my sister).

f) This is what I think when I hear this person/read something this person has written:

g) This is what I like about this person's English:

h) Overall, I think these aspects are important for a role model (choosing multiple options possible):

- ☐ variety (e.g. American, British, Australian English etc.)
- ☐ accuracy
- ☐ vocabulary size
- ☐ fluency
- ☐ nationality
- ☐ written English
- ☐ personality
- ☐ self-confidence when speaking English
- ☐ humor
- ☐ job

i) I would like to...(choosing multiple options possible):

- ☐ be as eloquent as my role model
- ☐ speak as fluently as my role model
- ☐ express things as precisely as my role model
- ☐ speak as confidently as my role model
- ☐ have a pronunciation which is as good as my role model's
- ☐ have a lexicon which is as large as my role model's
- ☐ write texts which are as appealing as my role model's

3.5. English usage outside of school

a) Daily time spent using English during my free time in some way (reading, listening, writing,...):

- 0 less than 30 minutes
- 0 between 30 minutes and 1 hour
- 0 between 1 and 2 hours
- 0 more than 2 hours

b) People who I speak English with outside of school (choosing multiple options possible):

- ☐ family
- ☐ friends
- ☐ acquaintances
- ☐ public figures (actresses etc.)
- ☐ I speak English at school only
- ☐ other: _____

c) People who I write/text in English with outside of school (choosing multiple options possible):

- ☐ family
- ☐ friends
- ☐ acquaintances
- ☐ public figures (actresses etc.)
- ☐ I write in English at school only
- ☐ other: _____

d) Media which I use in English (choosing multiple options possible):

- ☐ TV, films, series
- ☐ social media (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube,...)
- ☐ newspapers
- ☐ magazines
- ☐ radio
- ☐ none
- ☐ other: _____

4. Personal data

e) Age: _____

f) Gender: _____ (m/f/d)

g) Grade: _____

h) Plans for after school (choosing multiple options possible):

- ☐ studies
- ☐ apprenticeship
- ☐ “Kolleg“
- ☐ vocational training
- ☐ work
- ☐ year abroad
- ☐ “Freiwilliges soziales Jahr“
- ☐ national service (“Grundwehrdienst“)
- ☐ community service as alternative to military service (“Zivildienst“)
- ☐ other: _____

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you again for your participation and all the best for the rest of your time at school! ☺
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Appendix F: Questionnaire results items 1-45

Nr.	item	Md ¹	M ²	SD ³
1	Im Großen und Ganzen kann ich viele Dinge, auf die ich stolz sein kann.	5	4.51	1.12
2	Die meisten Dinge, die ich mache, mache ich gut.	4	4.15	0.98
3	Wenn ich es wirklich versuche, kann ich fast alles erreichen, was ich will.	5	4.84	0.84
4	Ich kann Dinge so gut meistern wie die meisten anderen Leute.	4	4.43	0.88
5	Ich mache mir mehr Sorgen als notwendig.	5	4.82	1.27
6	Ich bin oft verwirrt und durcheinander.	3	3.38	1.34
7	Ich bin ein nervöser Mensch.	4	4.07	1.44
8	Ich bin schnell aufgebracht.	4	3.56	1.27
9	Ich mache mir über viele Dinge Sorgen.	5	4.56	1.34

10	Ich lerne in den meisten Fächern schnell.	4	4.26	1.14
11	Ich habe oft das Gefühl, nicht so gescheit wie andere zu sein.	3	3.26	1.46
12	Bei vielen Aufgaben bin ich mir schon im Voraus sicher, dass ich sie nicht lösen kann, weil ich dafür nicht begabt bin.	3	2.85	1.35
13	Ich würde mir wünschen, so intelligent wie die anderen zu sein.	3	3.08	1.45
14	Ich bin in den meisten Fächern gut.	5	4.54	1.19

15	Das Lernen im Englischunterricht ist leicht für mich.	5	4.33	1.18
16	Ich kann im Englischunterricht Sachen selbst herausfinden.	5	4.57	0.90
17	Englisch ist eines der Fächer, wo ich am besten bin.	3	3.30	1.73
18	Manchmal fühle ich mich im Englischunterricht besser als andere.	3	3.26	1.45
19	Ich bekomme gute Noten im Englischunterricht.	4	3.85	1.48

20	Ich bin im Englischunterricht zufrieden mit meiner Fähigkeit, vor der Klasse zu sprechen.	4	3.59	1.46
21	Es fällt mir im Englischunterricht leicht, Probleme zu lösen.	4	4.13	1.13

Ich lerne Englisch *vor allem*, weil...

22	ich in Zukunft bessere Jobaussichten haben will.	5	4.57	1.07
23	ich Englisch im Job verwenden will.	4	3.79	1.37
24	es ein Pflichtfach ist.	4	3.84	1.49
25	ich es bei der Nutzung verschiedener Medien (Serien, Social Media,...) verwenden will.	5	4.67	1.14
26	ich es spannend finde.	4.5	4.18	1.33
27	ich gute Noten haben möchte.	4	3.80	1.47
28	ich es im Privatleben zum Kommunizieren verwenden will (mit Freund*innen, im Urlaub,...).	5	4.93	1.21
29	ich im Unterricht mitarbeiten möchte.	4	4.20	1.09
30	ich es beim Studieren verwenden möchte.	4	3.67	1.31
31	es mir Spaß macht.	5	4.23	1.63

Im Jahr 2023 möchte ich...

32	Alltagskonversationen auf Englisch meistern können.	6	5.34	0.79
33	ein gutes Ergebnis bei der Matura erzielen/erzielt haben.	5	5.31	0.85
34	englischsprachige Filme/Serien verstehen können.	6	5.46	0.91
35	Smalltalk auf Englisch führen können.	6	5.51	0.74
36	englischsprachige Personen in der Öffentlichkeit verstehen.	6	5.48	0.67
37	Englisch in der Arbeit verwenden.	4	4.21	1.31
38	auf Englisch studieren.	3	2.98	1.51
39	mit Menschen, deren Erstsprache Englisch ist, über (fast) alles sprechen können.	6	5.23	0.92

40	mit Menschen, die nicht meine Erstsprache sprechen, über (fast) alles auf Englisch sprechen können	5	5.25	0.81
41	fließend Englisch sprechen können.	6	5.20	1.08
42	mich schriftlich gut auf Englisch ausdrücken können.	5	5.05	0.97
43	ein höheres Niveau als das Maturaniveau (B2) in Englisch erreichen.	4	4.26	1.34
44	wie eine Person klingen, deren Erstsprache Englisch ist.	4	4.03	1.39
45	Geschäftsbriefe auf Englisch verfassen können.	4	4.28	1.28