

**THE OCCURRENCE OF VOICES IN THIRD GRADERS' BELIEFS
ABOUT THE EASE AND DIFFICULTY OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGES**

A Pro Gradu Thesis

by

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Oppijan käsitykset nähdään yhtenä mahdollisena selityksenä oppijan menestykselle opinnoissaan. Oppijoiden käsityksiä kielten oppimisesta on tutkittu 1980-luvun puolivälistä asti nojautuen erilaisiin teoreettisiin viitekehyksiin. Tässä tutkimuksessa hyödynnetään L.S. Vygotskyn ja M.M. Bakhtinin näkemyksiä ihmisen tietoisuudesta. Tutkimuksen kohteena ovat kolmasluokkalaisten lasten käsitykset vieraiden kielten helppoudesta ja vaikeudesta ja erityisesti ne äänet, jotka näyttävät vaikuttavan lasten käsitysten muodostumiseen.</p> <p>Aineisto koostuu lasten (n = 22) puolistrukturoiduista, nauhoitetuista ja litteroiduista haastatteluista. Näistä tarkasteluun valittiin ne osiot, joissa mainittiin vieraiden kielten helppous tai vaikeus. Aineistoa tarkasteltiin seuraavien tutkimuskysymysten pohjalta: 1) Millaisia ääniä voi kuulla ja kuinka nämä erilaiset äänet ilmenevät lasten puheessa kun he puhuvat vieraiden kielten helppoudesta ja vaikeudesta haastattelijan kanssa? 2) Onko yksittäisen lapsen käsityksissä vaihtelua tai ristiriitoja tarkasteltaessa niitä sisällön kannalta? Jos on, niin mikä mahdollisesti aiheuttaa vaihtelun tai ristiriidat? Analyysia varten helppous/vaikeus -osiot jaettiin ryhmiin sen mukaan, oliko niissä mainittu eksplisiittisesti 'minä', joku muu henkilö tai ei ketään henkilöä. Tältä pohjalta tarkasteltiin käsitysten rakentumiseen mahdollisesti vaikuttavien äänten ilmenemistä haastattelun muodostamassa dialogissa.</p> <p>Äänet ilmenivät lasten puheessa vaihtelevilla tavoilla. Helppous/vaikeus-osioissa lapset puhuivat välillä 'minä'-muodossa ja joissain paikoin mainitsivat myös jonkun muun henkilön. Viimemainittuja tosin oli suhteellisen vähän koko aineistossa. Helppous/vaikeus-osioiden joukossa oli myös paljon osioita, joissa ei mainittu itseä eikä ketään muuta henkilöä eksplisiittisesti. Kuitenkin osassa näitäkin tapauksia mahdollinen taustalla oleva ääni oli kuultavissa. Aineiston tarkastelu osoitti, että käsitykset voivat olla luonteeltaan ristiriitaisia ja yksilön käsitys jostain asiasta voi muuttua yhden haastattelunkin kuluessa. Näin ollen analyysin tulokset tukivat teoriataustassa esiteltyä määritelmää käsitysten luonteesta. Aineiston perusteella mahdollisia syitä käsitysten sisällössä ajoittain esiintyvään vaihteluun ja ristiriitaisuuksiin voivat olla toisiinsa kietoutuvat, erilaisia näkökulmia johonkin asiaan edustavat äänet, jotka käyvät dialogia ihmisen tietoisuudessa. Lisäksi asiaan voi vaikuttaa myös haastattelukonteksti ja haastattelussa käyty dialogi haastattelijan ja lapsen välillä. Olettaessa huomioon käsitysten dynaamisuus ja ajoittainen ristiriitaisuus sekä se, että ne voivat vaikuttaa ihmisen toimintaan sekä edistävästi että rajoittavasti, niiden tutkiminen ja esille tuominen on tärkeää. Ajatellen tulevaisuuden tutkimusta mielenkiintoista olisi esimerkiksi selvittää, voiko sloganin lailla esitetyistä ns. yleisistä kulttuurisista totuuksista tulla itsesäätelyyn vaikuttavia käsityksiä, vaikka henkilöllä ei olisi omakohtaista kokemusta asiasta tai hänen kokemuksensa olisi ristiriidassa yleisen käsityksen kanssa.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

There has been interest in learner beliefs about language learning from mid-1970s onwards and they have been studied by a variety of disciplines over the years (Kalaja and Barcelos, in press). The mainstream cognitivist approach about beliefs views human existence from a Cartesian standpoint, making a distinction between human body and mind (Dufva 1998, 2003:131-132). The mind, then, is seen as a container of knowledge memorized and stored in the form of static representations. In addition, the individuality of mental knowledge is stressed. Side by side with it, on the other end of the continuum of orientations, exists socio-culturally-oriented research (Kalaja and Barcelos, in press).

The present study looks at learner beliefs, more specifically those of third graders', from a socio-cultural and dialogical viewpoint. Views based on the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky (1978; 1987) and M.M. Bakhtin (1981; 1984; 1986) as discussed and further elaborated by various scholars, e.g. Wertsch (1991; 1998), Dufva et al (1996), Dufva (1998; 2003), Alanen (2003) and Aro (2009) are adopted in the study. The Vygotskyan view is often referred to as a sociocultural and the Bakhtinian view as a dialogical approach. The approach formed by connecting the ideas of these two scholars differs from the mainstream approaches. Firstly, within Vygotskyan/Bakhtinian approach mind is seen as having social origins. Secondly, knowledge is seen rather as variable than static in nature.

The data for the present study was gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews. The focus is on the voices heard in the subjects' beliefs as they appear in conversations about foreign languages, more specifically the ease and difficulty of them. The study aims at shedding light on the different kinds of occurrences of voices in the dialogue. Moreover, the nature of beliefs will be considered in the light of the data.

Firstly, Chapter 2 will clarify some basic assumptions and concepts of Vygotskyan/Bakhtinian thinking. In addition, the characteristics of beliefs will be described. Secondly, Chapter 3 will summarize six earlier studies which are close to the present one as to the theoretical assumptions used in them, the topic or both. Chapter 4 will describe the present study and chapter 5 will analyze the data. Finally, in chapter 6 the results of the present study will be discussed.

2 MAIN TENETS OF VYGOTSKYAN SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND BAKHTINIAN DIALOGISM

The researchers of cognition, language and philosophy have become interested in consciousness after the subject had been forgotten for decades (Dufva et al. 1996:6). In accordance with this new interest in the subject, some researchers have found the ideas of for example Vygotsky and Bakhtin useful. Vygotskian/sociocultural and Bakhtinian/dialogical approaches seem to be closely related when it comes to their views on cognition and consciousness. The following sections will describe in more detail these views which form a theoretical basis for how cognition and consciousness in general and beliefs in particular are seen in the present study. Section 2.1 will focus on the Vygotskian ideas and section 2.2 on Bakhtinian notions. Section 2.3 will draw together the threads from the previous two sections and describe how beliefs are seen in the present study.

2.1 VYGOTSKYAN IDEAS

The Russian scholar L. S. Vygotsky (1896-1934) was especially interested in the relationship between human language and consciousness (Kozulin 1990:151). His developmental theory has a high relevance to issues raised in contemporary metacognitive research (Bråten 1991b:318). According to Vygotsky (1987:43), the psychological methods and research strategies had served the purpose of atomistic and functional forms of analysis and were thus suitable for the study of mental functions as isolated and abstracted processes. He saw the importance of studying the problem of the connections and organization of various mental functions in the integrated structure of consciousness. Within Vygotskian thinking, consciousness is seen as developing in the first place only through activity and the explanation of consciousness, then, should be looked for in the interaction which links humans to each other and to their artifacts (Lantolf and Appel 1994:4-5). The role of the sociocultural setting is seen as very important in the development of higher mental functions of a human being.

2.1.1 The social origins of higher mental functioning

Vygotsky sees the human phylogeny as having taken place in two phases (Alanen 2002:217). As to biological evolution, there have not been many changes in the human being during the last hundreds of thousands of years. However, there has been an enormous acceleration in human development after tools and language have been taken into use. Moreover, also human mental processes have changed hugely as a result of the cultural changes caused by them. In Vygotsky's view human mind is a functional system in which the integration of symbolic artifacts into thinking enables the organization of the natural, or biologically specified, brain into higher, or culturally shaped, mind (Lantolf 2000:1-2). Among these higher mental capacities are voluntary attention, intentional memory, planning, logical thought and problem solving, learning, and evaluation of how effective these processes are (Lantolf 2000:2). These systems are often referred to by the term metacognition in modern jargon (Lantolf and Appel 1994:3).

The sociocultural approach sees human *action* as the phenomenon to be described and explained when investigating human mind (Wertsch 1991:8, original italics). Human beings are thus seen as coming into contact with their environment, creating both themselves and their surroundings through the actions in which they engage. Wertsch continues that this view is in opposition with the approaches focusing primarily either on the environment or a human being. The first one sees the human being as passively receiving information from his/her surroundings and the second one concentrates on an individual, taking environment only as a device that triggers certain developmental processes in him/her.

Wertsch (1991:46) maintains that despite the importance of Vygotsky's analysis of higher mental functioning, and his claims about its social origins and semiotic mediation, Vygotsky did not describe coherently how different forms of mediated action are connected to specific historical, cultural and institutional settings. The essential link between these settings and the individual mental functioning is to be found from the sociocultural situatedness of mediated action (Wertsch 1991:48). Thus, according to Wertsch, the historically, culturally and institutionally situated forms of mediated action as well as the way from their mastery to forms of mediated action on the intramental plane should be identified

2.1.2 Mediation

One of the basic assumptions in Vygotsky's thinking is that human psychological function is mediated. The emergence of higher mental functions in a child takes place in the process of **mediation** (Vygotsky 1978:55). According to Vygotsky, when learning to master their own psychological behaviour, children proceed from being dependent on other people to independence and self-regulation as a result of gaining control over culturally fabricated semiotic tools (Lantolf and Appel 1994:6). There are different stages in the development of child's self-regulation (Wertsch: 1985). At first, at the stage called object-regulation the objects in the immediate environment regulate the child's action. At the second stage, which is called other-regulation, the child is regulated by another person in social interaction. Dialogic speech is the primary means for other-regulation. At the next stage the child begins to take larger responsibility for strategic functioning until he/she achieves independent strategic functioning, i.e. self-regulation. Alanen (2003:57) maintains that self-regulation is a relative phenomenon, varying from activity to activity and from child to child.

Mediatedness of the human mind means that just as we human beings, instead of acting directly on the physical world, rely on tools and labor activity in changing the world and the circumstances under which we live in it, we also use symbolic tools, or signs (Lantolf 2000:1). Lantolf continues that with them we mediate and regulate our relationships with others and with ourselves, thereby changing the nature of these relationships. Moreover, human cultures have created these physical and symbolic, or psychological tools, i.e. artifacts, over time and made them available to succeeding generations. They, then, can modify these artifacts before passing them on to future generations. Symbolic artifacts, such as numbers and arithmetic systems, as well as music, art and above all language, are used by us humans to establish an indirect, or mediated, relationship between ourselves and the world. As Alanen (2003:60) states, then, when action is mediated, there is no direct connection between the subject and object of action but the relationship between them is mediated by a material or psychological tool.

One of the important concepts introduced by Vygotsky is called **the zone of proximal development**, i.e. **ZPD**. The term refers to the difference between the child's actual level of development and the level of performance that he/she achieves in collaboration

with the adult (Vygotsky 1987:209). The child will be able to do independently tomorrow what he/she is able to do in collaboration today (Vygotsky 1987:211). Moreover, the only useful instruction in childhood is that which moves ahead of development, leading it. The use of psychological tools, as well as all other functions in cultural development, is mastered in social interaction (Aro 2009:43). The ways appropriated from others, then, direct the coding of the child's mental functions and these functions affect an individual's relationship and actions with her/his surroundings.

Wertsch (1998:25-30) discusses the irreducible tension between the agent and the mediational means. One of his examples of this tension and co-operation has to do with multiplication tasks which involve large numbers. Thus, if faced with a multiplication problem such as 578×985 , few of us would be able to solve this problem without the help of mediational means i.e. by using a procedure in which we reduce this abstract conceptual problem into a series of very concrete operations (placing the numbers one above another and calculating in smaller pieces). Wertsch maintains that by doing this we apply a cultural tool, a specific mediational means that has certain **affordances** without which the solving of a complex multiplication problem would be quite difficult for most of us. The concept of affordance comes originally from Gibson (1979). In the present study, the dialogue between the interviewer and the child she is interviewing seems to provide affordances for the child in the process of constructing their beliefs.

However, in addition to providing affordances, mediational means may also constrain our action (Wertsch 1998:38-42). One's native language may set constraints on for example seeing time (Wertsch 1998:55). Thus, the ways that the language we speak represent the systems of tense and aspect set certain terministic screens employed by us whenever we speak. Beliefs may be seen as a specific type of mediational means like Alanen (2003) does. They, then, may constrain action as well. As Bakhtin (1981:293) says, word is "half someone else's". The speaker puts his/her own intention and accent into the words of others', or in Bakhtin's words, populates them with them. Thus, Bakhtin's terms include a clear reference to the agent's contribution to the mediated action they are involved in, i.e. to the action of producing utterances (Wertsch 1998:56). The following section will focus on the process through which the mediational tools and functions emerge on the inner level of an individual.

2.1.3 Internalization

The concept of **internalization** is also a central one in Vygotskian thinking and closely related to the concept of mediation. Internalization is the name for internal reconstruction of an external operation (Vygotsky 1978:56). In it socially mediated external forms of goal-directed activity get reconstructed on the inner, psychological plane (Lantolf 2000:13). According to Vygotsky (1978:56-57), a series of transformations take place in the process of internalization. Firstly, an operation initially representing an external activity goes through reconstruction and begins to occur internally. Secondly, as a result of transformation an interpersonal process becomes an intrapersonal one. As Vygotsky (1978:57; original italics) argues: “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, *between people (interpsychological)*, and then *inside the child (intrapsychological)*. This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals.” Thirdly, the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one is the result of a long series of developmental events (Vygotsky 1978:57). At first others organize and regulate, i.e. mediate, the activity of individuals, but in normal development, through the appropriation of the regulatory means others employ, we eventually begin to organize and regulate our own mental and physical activity (Lantolf 2000:13-14).

The terms social speech, private speech and inner speech are related to the concepts of mediation, internalization, other- and self-regulation. According to Lantolf (2000:15), **private speech** is speech which has social origins in the speech of others but has private or cognitive function. Private speech can be for example asking ourselves questions and answering them, telling ourselves that we cannot do something or that we have completed a task. Other people’s external social speech which they use to regulate a child’s activities becomes private speech used by the child to regulate his/her activities (Alanen 2003:57). **Inner speech** is what private speech ultimately becomes as cognitive development proceeds, a language without its formal properties, at the deepest level condensed into pure meaning (Lantolf 2000:15). In inner speech a person speaks to her-/himself and in outer speech to others (Vygotsky 1982:221). In some respects inner and outer speech are opposite to each other (Vygotsky 1982:222). In outer speech, then, a person materializes a thought into words whereas in inner speech the direction is from

outside to inside, which makes these two kinds of speeches different in their structures. As to egocentric speech, Vygotsky (1982:222) considers it a developmental phase preceding inner speech. The development of a child proceeds gradually from social to individual (Vygotsky 1982:224). Dialogue has a role as a precursor to inner speech (Vygotsky 1987:4).

Thus, in Vygotskian view higher forms of consciousness arise on the inner plane in the process of privatizing speech and our biological capacities are organized into a culturally mediated mind thereby (Lantolf 2000:15). However, Lantolf continues that once having grown inwards, mental activities do not have to remain, and usually they do not remain, as exclusively internal mental operations. When a person faces difficult tasks and in performing them tries to regain control over the mental processes, the processes may be externalized again. In the face of a particularly difficult task, the person may seek help from other people. Thus psychological processes become social again as the person looks for other mediation. In addition to other people, the person may look for help in cultural artifacts, for example some books, calculators or computers.

According to Wertsch (1998), the use of the term internalization, however, is somewhat problematic. Despite the possible important internal dimensions or changes in the internal dimensions of the people carrying out external processes, many forms of mediated action never develop toward being carried out on an internal plane. Wertsch, then, sees the term internalization as too strong, as implying something that often does not happen. As Wertsch (1998:51) argues, although an agent must be involved, a big part of the work is done by the mediational means. Therefore, in such cases speaking of mastering the use of a cultural tool would seem to be more appropriate than using the term internalization. In his discussion of the internalization of mediated action, Wertsch, then, prefers to use the term 'mastery'. With it he means "knowing how" (Ryle 1949, as quoted in Wertsch 1998:50) to use a mediational means fluently.

In the following sections the focus will be on the basic tenets of dialogical thinking, which has quite a lot in common with the Vygotskian ideas about human consciousness.

2.2 *BAKHTINIAN IDEAS*

2.2.1 Dialogue and language

A dialogical approach to language is based on the thoughts of the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin and the other members of the so called Bakhtin circle, e.g. Voloshinov (Dufva 1998:87). Dialogism emphasizes the interactional and dynamic nature of language and consciousness (Dufva et al. 1996:5). Consciousness and the whole human life are dialogic in nature (Bakhtin (1984:293). In Bakhtin's (1984:293) words "to live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. " A person participates in dialogue entirely and all through her/his life, with all his physical and mental existence (Bakhtin 1984:293). An individual is not an autonomous subject observing and perceiving the world outside him, which is how cognitivism sees the relationship between an individual and his surroundings (Dufva et al. 1996:32-33). Instead, dialogism sees an individual as an inseparable part of the whole formed by him and his surroundings. In order to an individual to exist there has to be an other, i.e. an individual exists only in relation to other. Consequently, an individual's consciousness is not only an individual but also a social phenomenon.

The members of the Bakhtin circle have a fundamentally different view on human cognition and language from the more traditional view on them. The trend within traditional psycholinguistics is to see mind from the Cartesian, dualistic point of view, according to which the mind is distinct from the body and the environment (Dufva 1998:89). Cognition is seen as being located on the brain, being a property of it. Because mind is taken as decontextualized and disembodied, body and environment are considered to be external contexts of cognition, not integral elements of it. These assumptions lead to the view that processes outside the brain are irrelevant for the study of cognition. (Dufva 1998.)

As to the dialogical approach to language and consciousness, it is characterized by some elements of a systemic view, which e.g. Järvillehto (1994) adopts when considering a human being, her/his psyche and her/his surroundings. According to Järvillehto (1994:79), in addition to the elements of the system, also the surroundings which the system is related to when its characteristics are defined affect these characteristics. When a characteristic is defined, the researched object is related to some part of the

surroundings. Thus, for instance heaviness is not an absolute characteristic of a stone. Instead, this characteristic may be born when the system is attached to the relation systems and the world of a person. The statement of a stone being heavy, then, means that the stone is proportioned to the ability of the person to lift it. Järvillehto (1994:80) defines the system as a whole formed by its elements where the co-operation of the elements enables the existence or function of the system. Psychic activity always includes the whole organism-surroundings system (Järvillehto 1994:97).

As was stated above, dialogical psychology of language draws on the systemic view. Within it mind is seen as being embodied and situated (Dufva 1998:89-90). It is assumed, then, that the brain does not produce cognitive functions alone, but the whole brain-body organism in a particular environment is seen as being responsible for the cognitive functions. Thus, the explanation for mental phenomena is to be looked for from the relationships involving the organism and its environment. Vygostky, as it was, also sees human consciousness as being formed in the interaction between a human being and the artifacts he/she uses and therefore his view seems to be closely related to the systemic view of human mind. As to Bakhtin, he thinks that human consciousness is dialogic in nature and that people use different speech genres in different situations in their speech. Thus, Bakhtin sees the environment and the whole situation as affecting the choice of certain kind of speech behaviour and thereby his views also seem to be close to systemic thinking.

Gibson's (1979) concept of **affordance**, which was talked about also in section 2.1.2, is an important one in systemic thinking. The assumption, then, is that the environment affords, i.e. provides the animal something to act upon (Gibson 1979:127-128). In perceiving, an organism and its surroundings get dovetailed and only things which are meaningful for the functioning of the organism are perceived (Järvillehto 1994:139-141). A human being, then, perceives things that her/his organism is tuned into perceiving. Also the lingual and cultural conventions of the society an individual lives in partly organize their perceptions of the world (Dufva et al. 1996:35).

Bakhtin sees the notion of language as a unified system of forms only as an abstraction which results from isolation of language from its ideological functions and its historical becoming (Lähtenmäki 1994:15). In contrast, Bakhtin (1975:101, as quoted in Lähtenmäki 1994:15) considers it representing a diversity of concrete ideological and

social 'fields of vision' (*krugozor*). A large number of heteroglot languages surround an individual consciousness. A language, then, is a concrete opinion of the world located on the border of the self and other. For the words of a language to become one's own, he has to attach his intentions to them and commit himself to the 'field of vision' that the language in question represents (Lähtenmäki 1994:15).

Bakhtin does not deny the importance of traditional linguistic study which approaches language as a homogenous, invariant system (Lähtenmäki 2002). However, Bakhtin (1981:293) maintains that instead of being an abstract system of normative forms, language is rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world. When seeing language as a concrete phenomenon that takes place in a certain place and at certain time, language and communication should be studied as social action. According to Bakhtin (1986:78), it is live speech communication with other people, the concrete utterances that we hear and reproduce, from which we know our native language with its lexical composition and grammatical structure. The forms of language are assimilated by us in forms of utterances and in conjunction with these forms. Dialogism is interested in both individual and static and social and dynamic aspects of language and their interaction (Lähtenmäki 2002).

Bakhtin (1981) speaks about **heteroglossia**. The term heteroglossia attached to a single national language in dialogism means that instead of being a consistent, monolithic entity, a single national language is heterogenic, dynamic and layered (Lähtenmäki 2002:186-187). Thus, constantly changing language is seen as consisting of different ideological languages such as professional languages, languages of social groups, dialects etc. Heteroglossia is generated by the particular social contexts in which the language is used (Dufva 1998:92). Different ideological points of view, then, are represented in the different manifestations of language.

There are two important forces affecting language: **centrifugality** and **centripetality** (Bakhtin 1981:270-272). Centrifugality is the one that causes stratification and heteroglossia in language and the force that brings about order and consistency is called centripetality. Tacit social agreements considering daily conversations and explicit rules about language use given for example in dictionaries and grammar books and human authorities are examples of centripetal forces (Dufva 2003:138).

As was stated above, in dialogism different language forms are seen as being tightly bound to the contexts of their use and to their users, expressing their ideological values and efforts. Several forms of the social action within any particular community are reflected in the diversity and variation of its language (Lähteenmäki 2002:188). As to the meanings of linguistic expressions, they are seen as being born in the interaction between the speaker and the listener and they can be used for different purposes in the social practices of a community (Lähteenmäki 2002:198). Instead of having one core meaning that characterises all its uses, a linguistic expression is defined as relatively open meaning potential. Lähteenmäki continues that despite that meanings have a connection to the past and the future and are not created purely in a situation. Instead, linguistic interaction is structured and directed by the social conventions and norms characteristic of a linguistic society in question.

Dufva (1998) argues that when approached from a dialogical point of view, language knowledge should be seen as a procedure in the emergence of which interaction plays the central role. The situation is conducive to an individual's linguistic processes, giving cues as to how to proceed. As being partly evoked by the interaction in each situation, language knowledge, then, is not internal and individual only. The linguistic knowledge needed by individuals is to be found in the systemic relations that characterise any particular situation of language use. Dufva continues that despite the situationality, language is not created totally on the spot. Instead, utterances resemble each other structurally and words are used in an appropriate and conventional manner. Thus, the grammar and vocabulary of an individual's speech is characteristic of the language she is speaking and the possibility to invent new words and usages is limited. Dufva sees situationality as the explanation for this conventionality or semi-permanence in language. According to her, then, there are elements in each new situation that remind us of preceding situations. Dufva suggests that largely unconscious situational anticipations and assumptions form a basis for the production of external language behaviours. Thus, although experiences and anticipations evoked by different situations may lead to different language behaviours, the behaviours resemble the language use in similar situations. However, Dufva sees language knowledge as being within the individual.

2.2.2 Voice and appropriation

Next, the concepts of **voice** and **appropriation** will be explained. A person's initial idea of herself/himself is formed with the words, forms and tonalities received from others (Bakhtin 1986:138). Bakhtin (1986:92) argues that the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought is where our thought, whether philosophical, scientific or artistic, is born and shaped and this is reflected in the verbal expressions of our thought as well. Our speech is "filled with others' words" (Bakhtin 1986:89). Bakhtin (1986:124) argues that "each word contains voices that are sometimes infinitely distant, unnamed, almost impersonal (voices of lexical shadings, of styles, and so forth), almost undetectable, and voices resounding nearby and simultaneously." Voice represents the speaking personality, the speaking consciousness (Bakhtin 1981:434). The different voices which are in dialogue with each other in consciousness represent different perspectives to reality (Dufva et al. 1996:34). The degree of otherness and our-ownness, as well as degrees of awareness and detachment vary (Bakhtin 1986:89). Moreover, others' words have their own expression and evaluative tone which is assimilated, reworked and re-accentuated by us. The concept of voice is related to the speaking subject's perspective, intention, worldview and conceptual horizon (Wertsch 1991:51).

Dufva (1998: 94-99) argues tentatively that people's knowledge is a result of a series of interactions they are involved in during their lifetime. She uses the metaphor of biography in order to describe language knowledge which is seen as being gathered through innumerable observations and experiences of language use in various situations a person has been part of along her life span. The knowledge gathered this way serves a reservoir from which the knowledge emerges.

As was discussed above, referring to Alanen (2003:64), the notion of internalization is intertwined in many ways with term **appropriation**, which comes largely from Bakhtin (1981). According to Bakhtin (1981:293-294) the word in language is half someone else's. For a word to become one's own, the speaker needs to put his own intention and accent into it, appropriate the word and thus adapt it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Sometimes a word is not easy to assimilate into the speaker's context, it as if puts itself in quotation marks although the speaker would not want it to. According to Alanen (2003:64), appropriation is a relative phenomenon. It involves movement along

a continuum at the one, explicit end of which the subject is explicitly aware of others and at the other, implicit end the subject is not necessarily aware of his/her using words or ways of speaking he/she has heard from other people. Explicit awareness shows at the linguistic level in reported speech or action in which others act as agents. Moreover, the appropriation of mediational means is related to power and authority. The utterances of people who have power or authority or their solutions to problems, then, may be appropriated more easily than the words of less powerful people. Lack of overt others' voices in a learner's beliefs and confidence in voicing them suggests that the learner has appropriated the words he/she uses (Aro 2009:40). Wertsch (1998:53) sees the processes of mastering and appropriating cultural tools as analytically and in some cases empirically distinct. In some cases appropriation and mastery correlate at high or low levels and in others a high level of mastery and a low level of appropriation characterise the use of cultural tools Wertsch (1998: 57).

2.2.3 Utterance and speech genres

This section focuses on the Bakhtinian concepts of **utterance** and **speech genres**. Bakhtin (1986:71) considers the utterance a real unit of speech communication. The realization of language takes place in the form of individual, concrete, oral and written utterances by participants in the different areas of human activity (Bakhtin 1986:60). In reality speech exists in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people, utterances belonging to a particular speaking subject (Bakhtin 1986:71). The units of traditional linguistics, such as words, phonemes, morphemes, sentences etc. provide the material for the construction of unique utterances which are addressed to a reader or listener in a social context (Lähteenmäki 2002:190). Thus, within Bakhtinian thinking a clear distinction is made between an utterance and sentence which is a unit used when talking about the structure of language.

According to Bakhtin (1986:136), an utterance is never isolated, but, instead, "it always presupposes utterances that precede and follow it." An utterance is always more or less a response, expressing the speaker's attitude toward others' utterances (Bakhtin 1986:92). Bakhtin (1986:91) states that "any concrete utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere". Bakhtin (1986: 89) also argues that "our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness", varying degrees of

awareness and detachment.“ According to Bakhtin (1986:92; original italics) “the utterance is filled with *dialogic overtones*” and “our thought itself - philosophical, scientific, and artistic – is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others’ thought, and this cannot but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well.”

In addition to preceding links, the utterance is also related to subsequent ones in the chain of speech communion and the speaker expects an active, responsive understanding from the others for whom the utterance is constructed (Bakhtin 1986:94). This quality of an utterance of being directed to someone is called addressivity (Bakhtin 1986:95). Utterances express a speaker’s standpoint to some issue in a certain place at a certain time (Lähteenmäki 2002:190). Thus, despite the immanent sociality of language and communication, utterances are always also subjective and unique. Because utterances are used as tools of interaction in most different kinds of social situations, they are seen as reflecting the diversity of the social world and have a multiplicity of formal and contents related features also themselves (Lähteenmäki 2002:191). As to the length of utterances, it may vary from a one-word turn in a dialogue to a novel which has many parts.

Although the forms of utterances are diverse, Bakhtin has named some common features of utterances. Firstly, an utterance always has an absolute beginning and end, and the end of one utterance and the beginning of another is marked by the change of the speaking subject (Bakhtin 1986:71). This view of clear-cut boundaries between utterances is slightly criticized by Lähteenmäki (2002:191) who, referring to clear results of some conversational analyses, points out that quite often in conversations the speakers’ turns are partly intertwined and overlapping. Another common feature of utterances is that an utterance includes everything that the subject wants to say of the topic at the given moment and that the utterance forms an integrated whole to which the listener can react actively (Bakhtin 1986:76). The third feature characteristic of utterances is that when constructing an utterance a speaker has to choose a certain **speech genre** (Bakhtin 1986:78). Speech genre is also an important notion within the Bakhtinian line of thinking. Each word is related to the particular context where it has been used (Bakhtin 1981:293). According to Bakhtin (1984:202), when transferring from a mouth, a context or a generation to another, “the word... cannot completely free itself from the power of these concrete contexts into which it has entered.” Thus, there

is a taste of the communicative sphere of its earlier use, such as a profession, a genre, a party, a generation or an age group, in every word. Speech genres, then, are utterance types (Bakhtin 1986:60). They organize our speech almost similarly as grammatical forms (Bakhtin 1986:78-79). Dufva (1998:92) argues that “‘knowing a language’ means knowing different speech genres or appropriate ways to act and react in certain social situations in a meaningful manner“. Despite the uniqueness of an utterance, the demands that speech genres set to a speaker guarantee that the utterance has enough features expected by the listener and the discourse community and is thus mutually understandable (Lähteenmäki 2002:192).

2.3 *THINGS IN COMMON BETWEEN VYGOTSKIAN AND BAKHTINIAN THINKING AND THE VIEW ON BELIEFS*

Both Bakhtin and Vygotsky emphasised the role of social environment in the formation of an individual consciousness (Dufva 1998:89). According to Bakhtinian thinking, the development and existence of an individual consciousness takes place only through the social sphere (Lähteenmäki 1994:13). The existence of a self is dependent on the existence of other selves (Lähteenmäki 1994:1). Therefore, it is not possible to understand consciousness as a phenomenon separate from other consciousnesses and the social surroundings of the individual. Also the role of language in the formation of human consciousness is emphasised in the thinking of both Vygotsky and Bakhtin. Our knowledge develops and emerges in dialogical interaction (Aro 2009:34). As to learning, Bakhtin and Vygotsky seem to have similarity in their thinking as well. Bakhtin sees the interaction with both the social and physical world as the only way to be and to learn and Vygotsky sees the collaboration with a more advanced peer in one’s ZPD as constituting the ideal condition for learning. Moreover, self-regulation and its development, as it was, is one of the central concepts in Vygotskian line of thinking. When considered from the Bakhtinian point of view, self-regulation can be seen as the assimilation of the voice of the others into the voice of the self (Karasavvidis et al. 2000:270).

Beliefs appear to influence human actions in various ways (Aro 2009:14). The concept of belief has received many different definitions in the field of learner belief research (Aro 2009:26). The chapters above on central Vygotskian and Bakhtinian concepts and the basis they form for how consciousness, cognition and language are seen in the

theoretical framework informed by their ideas influence the view of beliefs in the present study. Next, the view on the characteristics of beliefs within the Vygotskian and Bakhtinian frameworks will be described. For a review of other, different approaches to learner beliefs, see Aro (2009).

The view on human cognition within the Vygotskian and Bakhtinian line of thinking differs from a Cartesian view. Dufva (2003:134-135) presents four arguments which are important when cognition and beliefs are approached with assumptions based on non-Cartesian views. Firstly, human cognition is seen as a **situated phenomenon**. It is assumed, then, that cognition occurs in time and space and the spatio-temporal context influences cognitive functions and is essentially present in the process of cognizing. Cognitive operations bear the mark of certain physical and social environment they develop and occur in. Thus, being a consequence of different interactions individuals have been involved in and exposed to, beliefs always reflect a certain point of view. The past and present social and cultural context they occur in should be considered in their analysis. Secondly, mind is assumed to be **embodied** in nature. This means that, instead of being located in the brain, mind is a result of different systems working as a whole in the brain, in the body and between the body and the world. Thirdly, Dufva describes cognition as **dynamic**, which means that cognition is seen as continuous action and involvement with the world. Beliefs can change and develop over the years and there may be even some micro-level change in them, i.e. they may be modified even while being verbalized (Dufva 2003:143). In most cases a belief emerges or becomes articulated at the very moment of speaking (Dufva 2003:144). Despite this, beliefs are not generated on the spot but they are always anchored to something, for example, to some events in the interviewees' past or to people who have been significant (Dufva 2003:143). The fourth of the arguments based on the non-Cartesian view is the presence of **systemicity** in all cognizing (Dufva 2003:136). As was discussed above, the systemic views, represented e.g. by Järvillehto (1994), see cognition as emerging in the process within a system formed by an individual and her/his environment. Thus, context is seen as an integral element of cognition (Dufva 2003:136).

Furthermore, according to Dufva et al. (1996), some of the voices which are in dialogue with each other in human consciousness are stronger than others. Therefore we are more conscious of some thoughts/things than of others. As the level of consciousness varies, consciousness can be considered a continuum from unconscious to very conscious.

Moreover, when seen from a Bakhtinian point of view, because of multivoicedness and interactivity of the human mind, there are messy and contradictory, competing beliefs present there simultaneously (Lähteenmäki 1994:17). Beliefs, then, are fundamentally polyphonic (Dufva 2003:138). Instead of being monotonous, logically organized schemata, beliefs consist of different voices which have various sources as their origins. Because of polyphony, beliefs are often rather unclearly expressed, incoherent and/or may have internal contradictions (Dufva 2003:139). In addition, there are both rational and emotional elements in beliefs (Dufva 2003:142). Beliefs are also influenced by the forces of centrifugality and centripetality which create diversity and uniformity in them (Dufva 2003:138).

According to Dufva (2003:140), in one sense it is impossible to capture a purely individual belief. The Other, for example, an interviewer asking questions or a partner in conversation, is already there. Thus, there has to be somebody or something evoking the experience and laying ground for the belief to be articulated. However, all memories are also highly individual (Dufva 2003:140). It is not possible for individuals to share totally similar experiences. This is obvious when remembering that each situation is looked at from each individual's own vantage point. Despite the individuality, however, memories also have shared elements (Dufva 2003:140).

Alanen (2003) views beliefs from a sociocultural perspective, describing the neo-Vygotskian approach to the study of learner beliefs. According to her (2003:66-67), beliefs are both individual and social, occurring on both mental and social planes and also as joint action. As being constructed in social interactions including the social milieu of a child, beliefs originate on the social plane. The (co)construction and appropriation/internalization of beliefs takes place through mediated action, dialogic speech as its most important form. In addition to an adult or another child, the child interacts also with mediational means and goals, problems, values and information provided by others and the context of activity.

Moreover, in Alanen's (2003:66-68) characterisation, beliefs can be described as both variable and stable. The variability, on the one hand, comes from them being (co)constructed in social interactions in specific contexts of activity. On the other hand, if (re)constructed beliefs are appropriated and internalized by the participants, they become part of their knowledge reservoir, a resource available for the possible use by

the individuals for interpretation and regulation of their (joint)activity. This explains the stability of beliefs. Alanen (2003:60) assumes that beliefs affect learning if they become used as mediating tools. Thus, she sees them as a specific type of mediational means which may or may not be used by the learner during the language learning process. When spoken out, learners' ideas about learning get shaped at the same time (Alanen 2003:59). The dialogical approach to learner beliefs is located in many ways in the middle ground between the cognitivist and the discursive (Aro 2009:39). Thus, although beliefs have their basis in the experiences stored in the respondents' memory, the emergence of them in speech is always dependent on the context.

People tend to keep their perspectives quite unreflectively (Wertsch 1998:42). Certain tools are often used without any conscious thought (Aro 2009:46). As Aro points out, learners, then, may act "blindly", using unworkable beliefs as tools. But, if being made aware of their beliefs, they may start questioning them, possibly developing more effective ones. Therefore it is important to pay attention to what the prevalent beliefs in our society are like and what sort of beliefs teachers and adults convey to children. Perceptions, as it was, are culture- and context-specific and we tend to perceive such things that we expect to perceive. Beliefs are likely to direct our expectations and thus also our perceptions.

3 EARLIER STUDIES WITHIN VYGOSTKYAN- BAKHTINIAN FRAMEWORK

This chapter will take a look at six earlier studies carried out within the framework influenced by sociocultural and dialogical ideas. The studies will be reported on in the order from the farthest in its focus to the nearest in its focus if compared with the focus of the present study.

Karasavvidis et al. (2000) examined the transition from other to self-regulation using Vygotsky's general genetic law of cultural development and Bakhtin's notion of genre appropriation in the study. The study was an attempt to replicate earlier sociocultural research findings on the development of self-regulation with older students and a formal

academic multiple-variant task. The aim was to extend that body of research by using both qualitative and quantitative discourse analytic approaches. The subjects were ten grade-ten students, mean age 15 years and 5 months, attending a private international boarding school. An experienced geography teacher was asked to teach the students how to solve correlational problems as if the task were a part of geography curriculum. There was an individual pre-test and post-test for each student for 30 minutes, conducted by the first author. After the pre-test and a 5 minute break each student was tutored by the teacher for about 3 hours. If an exercise was still being worked on after the time was up the student and the teacher finished it for the sake of completeness. Within the given time, seven students finished seven exercises and three students finished eight. The subjects took a 15 minute break after solving the first four exercises and a 5 minute break after the tutorial and before they were post-tested. The first author videotaped the interaction during the tutorials.

A coding scheme was developed for the purposes of quantitative discourse analysis. Speech function was used as a segmentation unit. Whenever an utterance served more than one purpose, a new segment was created. All transcripts were segmented and coded. In the process of coding attention was paid to several task-specific problem solving steps and thus both the content of the utterances and their function were taken into account. For the purposes of the qualitative discourse analysis, the genre was operationalized in two main ways: vocabulary and syntax. The terms introduced in the tutorial were seen as belonging to the first mentioned and the latter consisted of special language and phrases. The focus was on the appropriation of the concepts “variable” and “correlation”, the two most important and central concepts in the tutorial.

The quantitative discourse analysis in the study spoke for the notion of a transition from other- to self-regulation in the area of correlational reasoning. It was also found that teacher-regulation varied within tasks and that certain properties of discourse had an effect on how explicit student self-regulation was. The qualitative analysis also bore witness to the Bakhtinian notion of genre appropriation which was shown in the assimilation of the voice of the teacher into the voice of the student. With the help of their observations in the study and combining Vygotskian and Bakhtinian frameworks the authors propose a conception of learning with three main dimensions: genre, activity and principle.

In a study by Engeström's (1995) an alternative approach to the analysis of institutional conversations was formulated using an expanded unit of action as a basis. Activity theory was used as a framework within which Bakhtin's notions of utterance, social language, speech genre and voice were integrated into a coherent system. The study aimed at elaborating the methods so that conversations could be studied as local dialogues in which participants interactively constructed the referentially semantic content of the talk in progress.

Conversational data on medical consultations was used to scrutinize the methods. The data included 32 consultations held in two primary care clinics in Finland. The consultations were video-recorded and transcribed. Post-consultation stimulated-recall interviews were also included in the data. The latter mentioned were brought about when the videotaped consultation was viewed separately by the doctor and the patient, with the patient immediately after the consultation and with the doctor during the same day or the day after the consultation. Two subjects were producing utterances in the medical consultations, the doctor and the patient. In the analysis, the voices employed by the participants were described with the focus on the culturally given in them. A framework of voices was developed for the analysis. The culturally given was depicted by using two dimensions and the context of them was transformed into voices. The vertical axis of the framework depicted the historical construction of referential object in clinical action and the horizontal axis the generalized forms of communication about the object. The empirical analysis, then, aimed at clarifying the actual amount of these voices found in the talk of the speaking subjects. The aim was also to find out how these voices were used and what might go beyond the culturally given and expected.

Topics were used as the basis for dividing the consultation transcripts into sequences. The voices of a doctor and a patient in every sequence were analyzed with the help of the framework. A sequence was seen as a shared attempt to construct the referential object of the encounter and instrumentally solve the problem related to the object. A change in the topic of talk was seen as the beginning of new interactional work. The sequence within the consultation was seen as possibly mutually supportive and as possibly contributing to the production of meanings and solution shared by the patient and the doctor. The possibility of the sequence opening up a zone of misunderstanding and incompatible perspectives was also acknowledged. The focus of the study was on the arduous moves and innovative improvisations in the consultations. To study them,

mismatches of voices in the sequences, ruptures of conversations, innovations in interaction and exceptions and deviations from expected voices were searched for. Because such deviations were seen as possibly representing locally produced potentialities of change, they were paid special attention to.

A set of voices present in medical consultations was identified in the study. The study also exemplified a situation where the patient ventriloquated the doctor's words. In addition, it brought out interactional problems in constructing a shared referential object. On the basis of the study conversation analysis provides the unit of mediated action for contexts being studied as constituted by the course of talk. The study also showed how communicative actions, which people have accomplished locally, do different things. Although being deviations from routine encounters, these locally produced innovations exhibit social action which people are involved in and are not the exceptions in data.

In a study by Sorvari (1995) children's views of foreign languages were studied. The aim of the study was to clarify what kind of knowledge base children have when they start studying their first foreign language in grade 3. The main focus was on clarifying the children's foreign language awareness during the first grades of elementary school. The aim was also to compare the beliefs and knowledge of the children who had not started studying their first foreign language to those who had started studying English.

The subjects were grade 2 and 4 pupils from Haapaniemi school in Kuopio. The total number of the participants was 12 of whom five were girls and seven boys. The pupils were chosen for the study randomly by their teacher from those whose parents had given their acceptance for their children to take part in the study. A semi-structured interview was chosen for the data collection. The children's beliefs and knowledge about foreign languages were clarified using questions which tried to take into consideration all possible situations in which children deal with foreign languages. A pilot study was conducted in 1994. Its subject was a pupil in grade 1 in a Finnish elementary school in Järvenpää in which most school subjects were taught in English. The subject of the study had spent one year in the US when he was three years old. After the pilot study some questions were reformulated and the children were allowed some more time for answering the questions. In the main study the children were

interviewed individually in an empty classroom. Each interview took about 10-20 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for the analysis.

The results of the study showed that the pupils knew several foreign languages and English and Swedish were mentioned most often. The children had heard languages for example on TV, at school and on trips abroad. All of them said that they knew at least a little bit of English, sources being kindergarten, foreign countries, friends, parents and relatives living abroad as well as foreigners living in Finland that the children knew. The pupils, and particularly 2nd graders of them, had not heard much talking about foreign countries or languages at school. Also the older children had received relatively little knowledge from school. The children's attitudes towards foreign languages were positive. All of them wanted to learn at least one foreign language well. The pupils expected studying languages to be difficult at least at the beginning, but hard practice, reading, writing and speaking foreign languages were believed to be good ways for getting good results. The main reason for the subjects wanting to learn foreign languages was to manage better abroad. No major differences were found between the answers of the girls and boys. Between the two age groups some differences were found. Older pupils knew more about certain issues, especially about those learnt in grades 3 and 4. The older pupils' answers were also more varied. The 10-year-olds had better knowledge about the ways to learn foreign languages. The pupils in grade 4 had more experience of music and computer games than the younger ones and they could also define why language learning might be hard. Sorvari summarises that there was not much difference between the 2nd and 4th graders' answers. All in all, there were no great differences between the groups. The variation in the answers of each individual was much greater.

Dufva et al. (1996) studied beliefs about language, the teaching and learning of them. They tried to describe what their subjects thought about language and what these thoughts tell about the nature of knowledge and thus also about human consciousness. In the study there were ten subjects whose ages and educational backgrounds varied. The data consisted of a questionnaire, a videotaped group discussion and individual interviews of the subjects. The questionnaire inquired background information, opinions and memories of language learning. The purpose of the questionnaire was to tune the subjects into thinking about language. The aim of the group discussion was to focus linguistic contemplation on certain core questions. As to the interviews, they completed

and deepened the conversation. In both the group discussion and the interviews the conversation was allowed to run quite freely. The writers of the report participated in the group discussion. The videotaped group discussion and the interviews were transcribed for the analysis. The transcription was quite rough. The analysis was a cyclical process in which the data was gone through several times and the research questions became more accurate at the same time when thoughts were being found in the data. Dufva et al. were interested in what kind of everyday knowledge people had and what the way in which knowledge was talked about tells about the properties of the human mind and the way people process knowledge.

On the basis of dialogical background philosophy and their data Dufva et al. (1996) present a synthesis in which they state that consciousness is an existing phenomenon, a property developed in biological and cultural evolution and not monolithic. It is not a property of a human mind but of a system and it and its phenomena have to be described as interactional, i.e. as dialogical phenomena. Consciousness and mental knowledge are not to be described as static phenomena. Consciousness is a scalar phenomenon. In addition, it can be focused, also to language and the use of language and, as to time, on the past, the present and the future. In addition, on the basis of their data Dufva et al. identified three different contexts which had affected their subjects' knowledge of language: their personal history, Finnish language- and cultural community, Finnish school system and language teaching.

In a study by Alanen (2003) neo-Vygotskian sociocultural approach to mind was used for the examination of beliefs about language learning. The study was a small-scale empirical case study, which involved six children, two boys and four girls. Alanen (2003) defined learner beliefs as a type of mediational means used by the learners to mediate foreign language learning. The data used consisted of a semi-structured research interview and the focus was on children's linguistic interaction with the interviewers and with each other in two interviews. The initial individual interview was conducted in grade-1 and the second debriefing pair interview from the same children after a foreign language learning task about 18 months later, at the end of grade 2. The aim of the study was to show how beliefs were appropriated and how the process of asking questions itself might have been shaping the learner's utterances about their own learning. It was also hoped to gain insight into how learner beliefs develop over time.

Alanen (2003) used the Bakhtinian notion of appropriation in the analysis to examine the way in which the children expressed metacognitive knowledge. The notion of agency was adopted to interpret who the children's utterances could be associated with, others or themselves. The samples included in the study focused on the notions of internalization and appropriation evident in the children's utterances as they talked about their views of foreign language learning. The children brought up during the dialogue various objects, events or agents related to social practices around which they constructed their answers. Some of the utterances appeared to be appropriated from other people and others seemed to have as their bases the children's own experiences in the activities and actions they had themselves participated in. In the dialogue there appeared other people more or less important to the children and what these significant others had told them. If a child mentioned such others instead of themselves, it was interpreted as an indirect evidence of appropriation. The children appeared to create scaffolds by using others and their utterances in order to mediate their action in the dialogue of the interview. The children used other people and their words to help them in the interaction with the interviewer, which can be interpreted as an indication of other-regulation.

Alanen's (2003) data also indicated the children's increasing metacognitive awareness and self-regulation. In constructing their answers, the children also used their own experiences. In addition, the data illustrated joint construction of an answer in the interview, the highly contextual nature of learner beliefs and how beliefs can change. On the basis of the data it also appeared that power and authority associated with the agents affected the extent to which the children appropriated their utterances.

A study by Aro (2009) examined polyphony and agency in children's beliefs about language learning. In addition, she looked at how and why English was learnt in the participants' opinion. The study viewed beliefs from a dialogical and sociocultural point of view. The subjects of this longitudinal case study were a group of young Finnish L1 learners of English through grades 1-5. The data were collected when the children were in the first, third and fifth grades of school, having started the learning of English as their first foreign language in grade 3. Aro studied the emergence of beliefs in semi-structured interviews using particularly Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) concept of voice and Wertsch's (1998) notion of agency. In the analysis Aro focused on children's utterances and changes that possibly occurred in them over the years. Her research questions were

as follows: What are children's beliefs about the English language and the learning of English? Does the polyphony in the children's speech change from grade-1 to grade-5 when they talk about their beliefs about the English language and the learning of English? How is agency constructed in the children's beliefs over the years?

Aro examined the polyphony in the learners' answers through several cues. The content and formulation of what the children said was seen as indicative of the voice that could be heard. For example, the speech genre used by a child was seen as a possible index of a particular group of people or sphere of language use or characterisation as reflecting their point of view as to the topic in question. Also, others' voices might be used both overtly by quoting or more covertly or some of the answers might be marked clearly as their own. Agency was looked at on two levels: how the speaking consciousness was expressed and on the level of the content of the learners' utterances.

Aro's study revealed how the participants conceptualised learning and using English through the three interconnected layers of content, voice and agency. According to the results the learner's beliefs had both varying and repeated elements. As to the contents of the learners' beliefs, they seemed to become more and more similar over time which according to Aro suggests the influence of authoritative views. As the learners answered the interview questions they were evaluating and using the various voices they had come into contact with and at the same time they were also interacting with the other that was present, i.e. the interviewer. The voices of others became less and less evident over time which showed the development of the children's own voices as language learners. Over time the learners moved from other-regulated learning to a higher degree of self-regulation, which was shown by expressions of agency in their beliefs. However, by grade 5 the learners' views of themselves differed greatly. Some of the learners pictured themselves as active participants in the learning process and others as more passive. On the basis of her results, Aro describes the notion of agency as multidimensional. The learners could embody their own agency through voicework in their speech and also express their agency as learners and users of English in their descriptions of activity.

The studies summarized above draw on Vygotskian and Bakhtinian views of consciousness and are interested in similar phenomena as the present study. The studies of Aro (2009), Sorvari (1995) and Alanen (2003) are interested in children's language

beliefs, so their scope is close to the scope of the present study. In Dufva et al.'s (1996) study the subjects are adults, but the focus is on their beliefs about language. The study of Karasavvidis (2000) focuses on the assimilation of the teacher's voice into that of students' and Engeström (1995) is interested in the voices of the patient and the doctor in medical consultations. Thus, voice and its occurrence in the data is in an important role in these studies as well as it is in the present study. The summarized studies, particularly those of Alanen (2003), Aro (2009) and Dufva et al. (1996) give important information related to the concepts and phenomena which are central in the present study.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study attempts to clarify the nature of the grade 3 pupils' beliefs about foreign languages and their learning of languages, focusing particularly on the voices heard in their speech when they are talking about the ease and difficulty of foreign languages. If the view of beliefs discussed in section 2.3 is accepted, studying them is important. As was discussed above, linguistic and cultural conventions of the society we live in affect the way we perceive our surroundings. The different voices have an effect on our belief formation and the beliefs, then, influence the way we perceive things and act in the world and how we see ourselves. The ideas of Vygotsky and Bakhtin as elaborated by, for example, Alanen, Dufva, Lähteenmäki and Wertsch were used in the present study. The theoretical basis shows in the views on cognition and consciousness (see sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.2.1) and thereby also in the views on the character of beliefs (see section 2.3), in the use of the notion of **voice** (see section 2.2.2) in the analysis and in using **utterance** as an analytical unit (see section 2.2.3).

The research questions of the present study were as follows: 1) What kind of voices can be heard and how do these different voices appear in the children's speech when they speak about the ease/difficulty of foreign languages with the interviewer?

2) Considering the contents of an individual child's beliefs, is there variability or contradictions in them? If so, what might cause the variability or contradictions?

The data of the present study is a part of the data collected for a project entitled Situated Metalinguistic Awareness and Foreign Language Learning, which was carried out at the

Centre for Applied Language Studies at the University of Jyväskylä in 1999-2004. The present writer received the transcribed data from the interviewer who was one of the members in the team of the project. The participants were 22 grade 3 pupils in a Finnish primary school Normaalikoulu in Jyväskylä. Of them 13 were boys and 9 were girls. The participants had started learning English at the beginning of grade 3 and the interviews were conducted in December 1998, after about three to four months of studying it. A semi-structured interview was chosen as the method of data collection because it was considered a good way of encouraging dialogue between the researcher and the child to emerge as freely as possible and yet stay around the chosen topics. The topics discussed in the interview ranged from a child's family and hobbies to foreign languages, dialects and jokes. The interviews were conducted in Finnish. They were recorded and transcribed for the analysis (see Appendix 1 for transcription conventions and Appendix 2 for the interview schedule).

The unit of analysis in the present study was **utterance**. As was discussed in section 2.2.3, Bakhtin sees utterance as expressing the speaker's attitude toward other utterances. Utterance is a good unit of speech because it reflects the direction of verbal communication toward the other, which is essential in verbal communication (Kozulin 1990:182). The interviews were first read through several times and those parts which dealt with foreign languages were marked. After that the parts of the data in which the participants of the interview mentioned ease and difficulty were separated from the other excerpts on foreign languages. The topic of ease and difficulty were selected for more careful analysis because the grade 3 pupils, who had learned English at school for only a couple of months at the time of the interview, were assumed to have some knowledge based on their own experience about this topic.

The Bakhtinian notion of **voice** was used as a tool in the analysis. First, the excerpts were divided into groups on the basis of the possible explicit occurrence of the speaking personality, i.e. whether the child mentioned either 'I' or some 'other' in their speech. It also occurred that in many excerpts no one was explicitly mentioned. One of the groups, then, was named 'no-explicit-indication'. As in the study of Aro (2009) the content and formulation of what the children said were seen as indicative of the voice that could be heard. The analysis to be reported in section 5.1, then, will focus on different kinds of occurrences of voices. When the data were analyzed, some variability and contradictions were found in the contents of the children's beliefs between different

excerpts. Secondly, then, as to be reported in section 5.2, some of these variable and contradictory excerpts will be analyzed from the point of view of their content and possible reasons for the variability and contradictions will be considered.

5 THE ANALYSIS

In the following the data will be analyzed. Firstly, the analysis in section 5.1 will focus on the occurrence of voices in the children's utterances as they talked about the ease/difficulty in foreign languages with the interviewer. Secondly, the subsections of section 5.2 will discuss the variability and contradictions that came up as the data was approached from the point of view of the content of the dialogue.

5.1 *VOICES*

The cyclical process of the analysis brought forth different kinds of occurrences of voices. At first those pieces of dialogue in which the children clearly referred to themselves or to some other persons in their utterances were selected for the analysis. When the child referred to her/himself or some other people, for example, as an agent or as a speaker of certain words or some other way brought her/himself or other people to the foreground, it was interpreted as an indication of a voice in the study. The data also included plenty of utterances which did not have any explicit indications of voices affecting the construction of beliefs. On the basis of these notions, the data was categorized into groups of 'I', 'other' and 'no-explicit-indication'-utterances. The following sections will concentrate on some examples of each one of these groups respectively. Pseudonyms will be used in the excerpts. In addition, 'I' and 'other'-words are written in bold.

5.1.1 'I'

The focus in this section is on the pieces of data where the children say 'I'. In excerpt 1, the interviewer wants to know what the most difficult or easiest thing in reading English is in Atte's opinion:

Excerpt 1

Int.: mikä muuten ois sun mielestä vaikeinta tai helpointa sanotaan nyt näin englannin, lukemisessa?
Atte: no, kun **mulla** on niitä, pelejä ni niistä voi oppia.

Atte does not answer directly the interviewer's question. Instead, when saying *no, kun mulla on niitä, pelejä ni niistä voi oppia*. (well, as I have these, games so one can learn from them.), he seems rather to tell how it is possible to learn to read English. On the basis of his response, then, Atte seems to connect reading English with studying and learning English in general. It is probable, then, that playing games is easy, perhaps also fun in Atte's opinion, and thus also learning by playing is easy. 'I' in Atte's response is in the form which expresses possession. Its occurrence in Atte's utterance suggests that he speaks about his own experience of having learned by playing the games he has. However, when Atte says *pelejä ni niistä voi oppia*, he speaks about learning from games as a general possibility without mentioning himself. It may be, then, that this latter part of Atte's response is a generalization based on his own experience. However, it is also possible that in the beginning of his answer Atte wants to bring forth his personal connection to the contents of the rest of his response in which he reflects someone else's voice.

In excerpt 2 'I' occurs somewhat differently than in excerpt 1:

Excerpt 2

Int.: joo, entäs onko, mitä mieltä sä oot että onko, ihmisten yleensä helppo, oppia vieraita kieliä?
Daniel: no joskus ei, jos on jo-, jos on niinku vaikka suomi ja sitte, tai puola ja, tsekki ne on aika samanlaisia, ne on hirveen s-, ku **määki** ku **yks** puhu tsekkiä nii **mää** luulin että se puhu puolaa mut, mut puolalaiset olis helppo oppia tsekkiä ja sitte puola-, tsekkiä olis helppo oppia.

When inquired whether it is easy for people in general to learn foreign languages, Daniel does not just simply say that it is or it is not. His belief that ease/difficulty

depends on certain factors gets constructed little by little. At first Daniel's answer remains at a relatively impersonal level and it is not clear what the roots of his belief are, as he says *no joskus ei, jos on jo-, jos on niinku vaikka suomi ja sitte, tai puola ja, tsekki ne on aika samanlaisia, ne on hirveen s-*, (well sometimes it is not, if there is, if we have for example Finnish and then, or Polish and, Czech they are pretty much the same, they are very much the s-). After that Daniel elaborates his belief and makes his point more explicit by saying: *ku määki ku yks puhu tsekkiä nii mää luulin että se puhu puolaa mut* (because I also when one person spoke Czech I thought that s/he spoke Polish but,). In this utterance, Daniel gives an example from his own life. He mentions himself as an experiencer (*määki*) and also someone (*yks*) whose speech has been the source of his experience. The ending *-ki* at the end of the pronoun *mää* suggests that Daniel knows also someone else who had first thought that a person speaking Czech spoke Polish. If this is the case, it is not only Daniel's own experience that affects the belief construction but also the voice of someone else who has told Daniel about her/his experience. It might as well be that this is Daniel's way of saying that he had thought that a person speaking Czech had spoken Polish, which then leads him to think that the similarity between two languages makes it easy for the speaker of the one to learn to speak the other. In the rest of his turn Daniel says: *mut puolalaiset olis helppo oppia tsekkiä ja sitte puola-, tsekkiä olis helppo oppia.* (but the Polish it would be easy to learn Czech and then Poli-, it would be easy to learn Czech.). In these utterances, Daniel speaks about people in general, thus concluding what he has just tried to explain to the interviewer.

Excerpt 3 from Sakari's interview shows a relatively similar occurrence of 'I' as there was in excerpt 2:

Excerpt 3

- Int.: joo joo, okei, tota, mites sitte, sellanen asia et onks sun mielestä yleensä tärkeätä osata vieraita kieliä?
 Sakari: no on se englantti aika tärkeä ku sillä, tota noin jos menee johonki vieraaseen maahan ni sittei tiiä mitä puhua siellä.
 Int.: joo, entäs onks niinku yleensä helppo, oppia ihmisten vieraita kieliä?
 Sakari: no on se aika helppo ku **mä** olin Espanjassaki ni **mä** osasin, viikon päästä laskee neljään.

Also here the interviewer asks *onks niinku yleensä helppo, oppia ihmisten vieraita kieliä?*. (what do you think uh is it generally easy, for people to learn foreign languages?). Sakari's response is *no on se aika helppo ku mä olin Espanjassaki ni mä osasin, viikon päästä laskee neljään.* (well it is quite easy when I was in Spain also I

could, after a week count to four). In it Sakari first tells what he believes and after that gives an explanation for the belief.. 'Mä' (I) occurs twice in the explanation, in which Sakari tells about his own experience. The experience, then, seems to be the basis for his conclusion and belief considering people in general. That Sakari comes to think about his journey to Spain as he responds to the question considering ease/difficulty may be partly because of him having talked about a visit to a foreign country in his previous response.

In both Daniel's and Sakari's answers, 'I' comes forth in their observations about themselves, which then provide the basis for their beliefs about people in general. In excerpts 4, 5 and 7, on the other hand, 'I' occurs in utterances in which the children seem to emphasise their own relationship with ease/difficulty in foreign languages as a distinct phenomenon from other people's relationship with ease/difficulty in foreign languages.

In excerpt 4, Helmi answers the question *onks miten helppoo englantii kirjottaa?. siis, ihan kirjottaa siis ku aattelet?*, (how easy is it to write English?. I mean, just to write when you think about it?):

Excerpt 4

- Int: joo, entäs toi ihan, kirjottaminen onks miten, onks miten helppoo englantii kirjottaa?. siis, ihan kirjottaa siis ku aattelet?,
Helmi: no on se aika vaikeeta ku sitte ku osaa ääntää ni sit ei, **mulla** yleensä tulee vaikeuksia siinä kirjottamisen kanssa;
Int.: /nii joo ku aha et sä ta-, et sä joo/
Helmi: /((---) miten ne kirjottaa sillee/, ku nehän (---) yleensä, sillee eri tavalla.

At the beginning of her response Helmi speaks at a general level so that her belief *no on se aika vaikeeta ku sitte ku osaa ääntää ni sit ei*, (well it is quite difficult because then when you know how to pronounce so then you don't,) could be interpreted as considering people in general. However, when she after a short pause continues, saying *mulla yleensä tulee vaikeuksia siinä kirjottamisen kanssa*; (I will usually get difficulties with writing), Helmi clearly starts talking about herself. As she does this after seemingly having spoken about people in general, she probably wants to emphasise that she speaks about difficulties she has when writing English. It also becomes clear that the belief has its roots in Helmi's own experience.

In excerpt 4 Helmi seems to emphasise that she speaks exactly about her difficulty without suggesting, however, that her case would be exceptional from that of other's. When it comes to Nuutti's utterance in excerpt 5, it includes a clear view about the distinction between his and other people's language aptitude:

Excerpt 5

Int.: entäs sit sellanen asia et onks ihmisten yleensä helppo oppii vieraita kieliä vai onkse vaikeeta?
Nuutti: ei se kovin helppoo oo mutta **minulle** se oli kyllä ihan helppoo.

As the excerpt shows, Nuutti believes that it is not very easy for people in general to learn foreign languages. However, on his own initiative Nuutti adds *mutta minulle se oli kyllä ihan helppoo*. (but it was easy for me.). Thus, Nuutti's utterance clearly brings forth that he believes there to be a difference between his aptitude and that of people in general. The roots of Nuutti's belief that learning foreign languages is difficult for people in general, although Nuutti himself has experienced it as easy, might be looked for from a piece of dialogue in an earlier part of the interview, when the interviewer asked about the foreign language skills of the other members of Nuutti's family and his relatives:

Excerpt 6

Nuutti: mä oon meiän, meiän perheen paras englannissa, mun isoveliki vaikka se on mulla, mua niin, ((tauko)) tuo isosiskoo ja isoveliki ni, isoveliki on mua, kahe-, tota yheksän vuotta vanhempi ja, isosiskoki on ni, yheksän vuotta vanhempi ni, eiku kymmenen vuotta vanhempi ni, ni mä, ni ei ne osaa, ne osaa silti huonommin englantia ku minä.
Int.: jees tota entäs, ää, entäs isä ja äiti tota mites ne?
Nuutti: no ei ne osaa mitään kieltä paljoo yhtään.
Int.: entäs tota, ää, kukaan muu sukulainen että tiiätkö sä yhtään?
Nuutti: eei siellä kukaan oikeen osaa, mutta emmää nyt tiiä, emmää tiiä niistä sukulaisista oikein paljoo.

Nuutti tells about himself that *mä oon meiän perheen paras englannissa*, (I'm the best at English in our family) and about his brother and sister that although they are several years older than Nuutti, *ne osaa silti huonommin englantia ku minä* (they however know English less than I). When it comes to his mother and father, Nuutti says: *no ei ne osaa mitään kieltä paljoo yhtään*. (well they don't know any language much).

About his relatives Nuutti tells: *eei siellä kukaan oikeen osaa* (no-o none of them knows much). It is possible, then, that the view Nuutti has about the foreign language skills of his significant others and himself in relation to them affect the construction of Nuutti's belief.

Excerpt 7 is one more example of the occurrences of 'I' which seem to bring forth a child's relationship with foreign languages as distinct from other people's relationship with languages:

Excerpt 7

Int.: no, tota, entäs toi englanti et mikä siinon niinku, englannin kirjottamisessa ja lukemisessa onks siinä jotain hankalaa?
Tapio: no ei, no siinon vaan se hyvä että, jos menee Englantiin niin saa puhua siellä.
Int.: joo, joo, entäs sitte ihan tollanen ku aattelee niinku, englantii kirjojetaan ni onks se tota jotenkin hassua, hassun tuntusta ku vertaa sitä suomen kirjoitukseen?.
Tapio: no ei **mulle**.

In the dialogue above the interviewer tries to clarify Tapio's belief about the possible difficulty of reading and writing English. In her first turn she first asks *mikä siinon niinku, englannin kirjottamisessa ja lukemisessa* (what it is in it uh, writing and reading English,), and then reformulates the question a bit by asking *onks siinä jotain hankalaa?* (is there something difficult in it?). Tapio answers straightforwardly *no ei*, (well there isn't,), and adds *no siinon vaan se hyvä että, jos menee Englantiin niin saa puhua siellä*. (well the good thing in it is that if you go to England you can speak there.) However, the interviewer makes a new question considering the same topic, asking *ku aattelee niinku, englantii kirjojetaan ni onks se tota jotenkin hassua, hassun tuntusta ku vertaa sitä suomen kirjoitukseen?*. (when thinking about uh, writing English so is it uh somehow funny, funny when compared with the writing of Finnish?). Also this time Tapio's answer comes quickly, as he says *no ei mulle* (well it isn't for me.). In the second answer, then, Tapio confirms his words of the first answer. *Mulle* (for me) in the response seems to emphasise that this is Tapio's relationship to the topic and that although he does not say it aloud, Tapio is probably aware of the possible difficulty of writing English for some people despite his own experiences of it. Moreover, Tapio's responses to the questions seem very assertive and straightforward.

Excerpt 8 also exemplifies quite an assertive way of expressing a belief. Heikki uses the possessive form of 'I' in excerpt 8:

Excerpt 8

Int.: selevä, okei, no niin, sitte semmonen kysymys että miks sä halusit valita, miks sä halusit lukee englantia?
Heikki: no se on **mun** mielestä kaikkein helpoin.

When saying *mun mielestä* (in my opinion), Heikki seems to literally emphasize that what he says is really his opinion. At the same time he responds to the interviewer's question by talking clearly about himself when she asks *miks sä halusit valita* (why did you want to choose) and *miks sä halusit lukee* (why did you want to read).

In excerpts 7 and 8 the subjects' responses come quickly and with ease. Excerpt 9 exemplifies co-construction of belief between the interviewer and a child. In it, 'I' occurs as Jesse on his own initiative comments on his ability to answer the question asked by the interviewer:

Excerpt 9

Int.: joo, okei, no niin sä osaaksä lukee englantii osaat, joo, no mikä siinon tota, vaikeeta tai helppoo ja, onks se, englantii helppoo kirjottaa?
Jesse: mm, no kirjotus on helppoo, ((tauko)) mikä siinä oli se kysymys?. ((naurahtaa))
Int.: ((naurahtaa)) onks tota ku sä, onks, poikkeeks sun mielestä mi-, se miten englantii kirjotetaan joteski niinku esimerkiks siitä miten suomee kirjotetaan?
Jesse: mm, no tietenki ku **mä** en hirveesti sitä osaa, nii.
Int.: joo, mutta kumminki tota se ei niinku periaatteessa oo sillai niinku,
Jesse: hirveen vaikeeta.
Int.: nii.
Jesse: nii.

Excerpt 9 begins with the interviewer's rather complicated question. In his first turn Jesse responds to its last part, which goes *onks se, englantii helppoo kirjottaa?* (is it, easy to write English?), by telling that *no kirjotus o helppoo* (well, it is easy to write). Then, after a pause, he continues by asking *mikä siinä oli se kysymys?* (what was the question in it?). After that the interviewer reformulates the question, saying *poikkeeks sun mielestä mi-, se miten englantii kirjotetaan joteski niinku esimerkiks siitä miten suomee kirjotetaan?* (does it in your opinion differ how, how English is written somehow for example from how Finnish is written?). Here the interviewer asks explicitly for Jesse's opinion, which is shown by her words *sä* (you) and *sun mielestä* (in your opinion). Jesse, too, refers to himself in the response, which, however, is not a direct answer to the question asked. Instead, in his response *mm, no tietenki ku mä en hirveesti sitä osaa, nii.* (mm, well of course as I don't know it very much, so.) Jesse

wants to bring forth that actually he is not an expert in the issue asked about. Thus, 'I' occurs interestingly in the utterance, showing Jesse's self-reflection of his knowledge of English which he considers to be relatively limited. In the rest of the dialogue Jesse's belief about the writing of English seems to get constructed in co-operation between him and the interviewer. After Jesse's turn *mm, no tietenki ku mä en hirveesti sitä osaa, nii.* the interviewer says *joo, mutta kumminki tota se ei niinku periaatteessa oo sillai niinku,* (yeah, but anyway uh it isn't uh in principle in that way uh,), and Jesse seems to complete her utterance by saying *hirveen vaikeeta.* (terribly difficult.). Jesse's turn is followed by first the interviewer and then Jesse saying *nii.* (yes.). As a result of their co-construction of a belief in a dialogue the interviewer and Jesse come to an agreement that writing English is not terribly difficult. This can be seen as an example of scaffolding, a phenomenon which came up also in the study of Alanen (2003) when the others and their utterances appeared to be used by the children in their attempt to create a scaffold for mediating their action in the dialogue while trying to answer the interviewer's question (Alanen 2003:76).

Like Jesse in the previous excerpt, also Nuutti in excerpt 10 takes an active role in the task set by the interviewer:

Excerpt 10

Int.: entäs mikä tota niinkun olis sun mielestä niinku englannin, lukemisessa tai kirjottamisessa vaikeinta, tai siis yleensäkin?
 Nuutti: vaikeinta.
 Int.: nii, tai ylipäätään, jompi kumpi.
 Nuutti: ai mikä sana on vaikee?
 Int.: ei vaan yleensä ku, niin no mikä sana, joo sano.
 Nuutti: no, **mä** en yleensä muista miten 'acquired' kirjoitetaan.

Nuutti does not respond at once to the question *entäs mikä tota niinku olis sun mielestä niinku englannin, lukemisessa tai kirjottamisessa vaikeinta, tai siis yleensäkin?*. (then what uh in your opinion uh would be the most difficult in reading or writing English, or I mean in general?). Instead, he first seems to consider the question for a while, repeating *vaikeinta* (the most difficult). Then, the interviewer having said *nii, tai ylipäätään, jompikumpi* (yes, or generally, one or the other.), Nuutti wants the interviewer to specify the question more by asking *ai mikä sana on vaikee* (you mean which word is difficult?). Nuutti apparently tries to clarify the question more by linking it to a familiar unit of language, i.e. a word. When the interviewer answers *ei vaan yleensä, ku niin no mikä sana, joo sano.* (no I mean generally when, okay which word,

yeah, say.) she apparently first tries to keep the question in a more general level, but then asks Nuutti to give the word, when noticing that this is how Nuutti tries to understand the question. As can be seen from the response *no, mä en yleensä muista miten 'acquired' kirjoitetaan.* (well, I don't usually remember how 'acquired' is written.), Nuutti's belief gets constructed on the basis of his own concrete experience from a situation in which he has been writing English. Thus, Nuutti's own voice can be clearly heard from the answer.

Section 5.1.1 has shown 'I' occurring in different ways in children's responses. In some of the utterances there was a direct reference to the child's own experience as a basis of her/his beliefs. Sometimes the child and the interviewer seemed to construct the belief together. Sometimes the children's beliefs came up very straightforwardly and other times it took a while and some consideration before the child came to an answer. Chapter 5.1.2 will study the occurrences of other people in the children's speech.

5.1.2 'Other'

In the following paragraphs the analysis will focus on the excerpts in which the child mentions some other persons in her/his utterances about ease/difficulty in foreign languages. According to Alanen (2003:80), if there are other people in a prominent role in the dialogue, that can in some ways be taken as an indication of other-regulation. The significant others, then, are present at the symbolic level. As the data included relatively few such utterances and each one of them seemed to bring forth something new about the occurrence of the 'other' in children's speech, all the excerpts belonging to the group are analysed here.

Excerpts 11 and 12 have similar features.

Excerpt 11

Int.: entäs tota, sanotaanko näin et sun ois niinku, onks sun helppo muistaa sanoja?
Helmi: no ei se ny nii hirmu helppo oo mutta **meiän**, meillä on kotona (--), semmonen semmonen englannin, niin tota sanakirja ja sitte meillä on semmonen, mikäs tää nyt sem-, **meiän äiti** on tehny semmosii lappuja, niin kirjottanu toiselle puolelle englanniks ja toiselle puolelle suomeks ni, sitte **se** kyselee aina.

In this excerpt the interviewer challenges Helmi to talk about her own opinion by saying *sanotaanko näin et sun ois niinku, onks sun helppo muistaa sanoja?*. (let's say that it would be like, is it easy for you to remember words?.) At the beginning of the response Helmi states rather generally, i.e. not mentioning herself or any other person, *no ei se ny nii hirmu helppoo oo* (well it's not that easy) and before the first short pause continues with a conjunction *mutta* (but) and a possessive pronoun *meiän* (our). After the pause Helmi tells about an English dictionary that they, the pronoun probably referring to their family, have at home and starts telling about something else that they have by saying *ja sitte meillä on semmonen, mikäs tää nyt sem-*, (and then we have such a, what is it such-). At this point Helmi mentions her mother, telling that *meiän äiti* (our Mom) has cut paper slips on the one side of which she has written words in English and on the other in Finnish. After this Helmi mentions the mother once more, saying: *sitte se kyselee aina* (then she always asks questions). It seems probable that, in addition to *meiän äiti* (our mom) and *se* (she), Helmi starts referring to her mother already with the first *meiän* (our) in her utterance. In the response as a whole, then, Helmi seems to bring forth her mother as a person whose actions and perhaps also advice make it easier to remember words or lessen the difficulty that Helmi believes there to be in memorizing them.

In excerpt 12 Tilda brings forth 'other' in quite a similar manner as Helmi in excerpt 11.

Excerpt 12

Int.: entäs toi, yleensä englannin kirjottaminen ku aattelee ni onks se miten, niinku, helppoo vaikeeta?
 Tilda: no, ((tauko)) no kun sen tietää miten ne kirjojetaan ja sitte, ni, joskus **ope** saattaa kirjottaa taululle miten ne kirjojetaan.

In this case the interviewer asks about the possible ease/difficulty in writing English at a very general level: she uses third person verbs, the adverb *yleensä* (generally or usually) and nominalization in *englannin kirjottaminen* (writing English). The beginning of Tilda's response is general; she does not talk about anyone in particular, but uses a passive-like expression *no kun sen tietää* (well when you know it). However, the use of the pronoun *ne* (they), which appears twice in Tilda's response makes it look as if she were talking about her personal experience. As can be seen, the issue is rather ambiguous for Tilda and she actually does not give a straightforward answer to the question of whether she believes that writing English is easy or difficult. However, it

seems quite probable that she talks here about things which make writing English easier. She seems to think about a situation in which she is writing English words (or whatever the unit of language she refers to with the pronoun *ne* (they)). As she thinks about writing 'them', she also comes to think about her teacher, mentioning her/him. The teacher, then, seems to occur in Tilda's speech as an 'other' whose instruction is related to Tilda's experience of ease in writing English. Thus, the mother in Helmi's and the teacher in Tilda's response seem to occur as the girls gradually construct their responses to questions considering a multifaceted issue. These others (the mother and the teacher) seem to be related to the ease point of view of the topic, as if having the role of advisors or helpers in the girls' experiences.

Also in excerpt 13 significant other people are brought up as advisors.

Excerpt 13

Int.: mitäs tota iloo englannin lukemisesta on?
Daniel: no jos menee Englantiin tai Usaan ni voi tietää, osaa englantia sit puhua.
Int.: no onks miten helppoo tai vaikeeta niinku kirjottaa tai lukee sitä englanninkielisiä sanoja?
Daniel: no joskus mut ei yleensä nii.
Int.: mitä sä teet silloin jos sä, se on vaikeeta ni?,
Daniel: ai missä niinku?,
Int.: nii, jos et sä muista miten joku sana kirjoitetaan ni mitä sä teet?.
Daniel: no pyydän apua.
Int.: keltä sä pyyät apua?.
Daniel: no jos mä oon kotona nii **iskältä** tai, **Orvokilta** sitten, jos mä oon koulussa ni **opettajalta**.

In excerpt 13, as an answer to the interviewer's question *no onks miten helppoo tai vaikeeta niinku kirjottaa tai lukee sitä englanninkielisiä sanoja?*. (well how easy or difficult is it to kind of write or read that English words?., Daniel says *no joskus mut ei yleensä nii*. (well sometimes but not usually so.). The interviewer asking what Daniel does if facing difficulties, Daniel *says no pyydän apua*. (well I ask for help.) In response to the interviewer's question *keltä sä pyyät apua?*. (who do you ask for help?.), Daniel says *no jos mä oon kotona nii iskältä tai, Orvokilta sitten, jos mä oon koulussa ni opettajalta*. (well if I'm at home then dad or, Orvokki then, if I'm at school then the teacher.) Thus, the others 'dad', 'Orvokki' and 'the teacher' appear in Daniel's speech as people who help when he needs it. However, differently from excerpts 11 and 12, the child names the others after the interviewer asking *keltä sä pyyät apua?* (who do you ask for help?), whereas in excerpts 11 and 12 the others come up on the interviewees' own initiative.

In excerpt 14 the topic ease/difficulty arises, although not being asked about. Here other people and their speech appear in Nuutti's speech as sources for his own experiences and observations.

Excerpt 14

- Int.: minkä kielen sä haluaisit ottaa englannin jälkeen, jos pitäs valita?.
- Nuutti: emmä niinku englantia mä en niinku siinä ku, mä amerikkaa puhun ihan hy-, tosi hyvin ku sillä, nii, siinä Englannissa **ne** sillee, puhutaan sillee ihan sillee hassu sillee ((mumisee epämääräisesti)) nii Amerikassa se puhutaan vähän paremmin.
- Int.: missä sä oot kuullu, ooksä telkkarissa vai tunneksä jonkun (englantilaisen)?
- Nuutti: joo ja, ku, englannintunnillaki ni, **se** sanoo kyllä, puhutaan kyllä ihan kummallista sössötystä.
- Int.: jee, entäs tota, miten amerikkalaiset sitte puhuu?.
- Nuutti: **ne** puhuu sillee, ei **ne** puhu sillee niinku, ku kirjojetaan, c a n heittomerkki t, ni siinä, englannissa se on can't ((lausuu brittiläisittäin 'can't') ni se on kyllä parempi ni, se on parempi sanoo ni, tossa amerikassa sanoo can't ((lausuu amerikkalaisittain 'cän't') siellä ni, se on helpompaa.
- Int.: joo ootko sä tota, mistä sen kuullu et ne amerikkalaiset sanoo sen niin?.
- Nuutti: mä oon nähny amerikkalaisia elokuvia ja meillä oli, Kortepohjan koulussa, yks **amerikkalainen**

In excerpt 14 Nuutti does not actually answer the question *minkä kielen sä haluaisit ottaa englannin jälkeen, jos pitäs valita?*. (which language would you like to take after English, if you had to choose?). Instead, he wants to clarify his relationship with English. Nuutti's utterances show that he is well aware of some of the differences between British and American English, and he seems to identify himself with American English, as he says that *nii Amerikassa se puhutaan vähän paremmin*. (so in America it is spoken a little better.). 'Other' occurs in Nuutti's speech as he tells that *englannintunnillaki ni, se sanoo kyllä, puhutaan kyllä ihan kummallista sössötystä*. (in English lesson, s/he says, it is very strange mumbling spoken.). Here Nuutti uses the pronoun *se* (it) which is often used in Finnish when referring to a person in informal speech. It seems probable that when speaking about *se*, Nuutti means his English teacher. The way the teacher in the lessons and the Americans in the movies and the American person Nuutti knows speaks seems to affect the construction of Nuutti's belief about English. Thus, *se*, *ne*, and *amerikkalainen* occur in Nuutti's speech as a source which affects the construction of his own experience into words in the interview situation.

Excerpt 15 is also from Nuutti's interview.

Excerpt 15

- Int.: entäs sit sellanen asia et onks ihmisten yleensä helppo oppii vieraita kieliä vai onkse vaikeeta?.
- Nuutti: ei se kovin helppoo oo mutta minulle se oli kyllä ihan helppoo.
- Int.: mikä siinä, niinku vaikeinta on tota, yleensä ihmisille ku, sun mielestä?.
- Nuutti: (--), alkas ihmetellä **pomo** mikä siinä on vaikeeta.
- Int.: nii.
- Nuutti: no ku joskus ujustuttaa niin kauheesti ni ei välillä uskalla ees puhua.
- Int.: joo, entäs tota mikä helppoo?.
- Nuutti: helppoo, sanojen osaaminen, osaa sen kaikki sanat ja se on ihan helppoo sitte puhua mutta, ku ei vaa, välillä ujustuttaa.

When the interviewer and Nuutti talk about the learning of foreign languages and the interviewer asks *mikä siinä, niinku vaikeinta on tota, yleensä ihmisille ku, sun mielestä?*. (what in it, uh is the most difficult uh, for people in general, in your opinion?), Nuutti starts by saying: (--), *alkas ihmetellä pomo mikä siinä on vaikeeta*. (the boss would start wondering what is difficult in it.). In this turn Nuutti does not actually answer the question yet; instead, he seems to frame the question again as if he were figuring out a situation from working life where one is expected to explain to the boss why s/he has difficulties in something. It is interesting that Nuutti speaks about a boss here; the utterance sounds a bit odd given that it comes from a child's mouth. It seems, then, that Nuutti has heard someone familiar to him talking about his/her boss and now reflects her/his voice in order to direct himself in the task.

In excerpts 16 and 17 the voice of mother and the topic ease occurs in the speech of both Niina and Piia when they are asked about the reason for their choice of English as the first foreign language. However, the way the mothers occur in the girls' speech differs clearly in the two excerpts. Excerpt 16 is from Niina's interview:

Excerpt 16

- Int.: no et tietystikkään jos et sä oo tavannu ni, ((naurahtaa)) okei. no niin, tota, tämmönen kysymys, miks sä valitsit niinku englannin ensimmäiseks vieraaks kieleks, tai miks sä halusit lukee englantia etkä jotain saksaa taikka ranskaa?.
- Niina: no se on helppo kieli.
- Int.: joo, onks siitä mitään, muita syitä että, miks sä valitsit englannin?.
- Niina: no meiän **äiti** ei jaksu opettaa ku ne on niin helppoja, muita on aika vaikeeta ku, mä osaan jo, vähän englantia koska mä olin, pienempänä englanninkielisessä koulussa.

When the interviewer asks *miks sä valitsit niinku englannin ensimmäiseks vieraaks kieleks, tai miks sä halusit lukee englantia etkä jotain saksaa taikka ranskaa?*. (why did you choose uh English for the first foreign language or why did you want to learn English and not something like German or French?.) Niina tells first that *no se on*

helppo kieli (well it is an easy language). Thus, at first Niina just states a belief about English being an easy language without mentioning herself or any other person. As the interviewer then asks about possible other reasons for Niina's choice, her response begins: *no meidän äiti ei jaksa opettaa kun ne on niin helppoja, muita on aika vaikeeta ku*, (well, our mother doesn't bother to teach because they are so easy, others are quite difficult because,). The referents of the pronouns *ne* (they) and *muita* (other) remain unclear, although on the basis of the context it seems that *ne* refers to something in English, for example words, and *muita* possibly to other languages. However, this unclarity strengthens the impression that Niina repeats here what has been said in an earlier situation. Considering the occurrence of 'other', i.e. the mother, in Niina's speech here, when saying *no meidän äiti ei jaksa opettaa ku ne on niin helppoja*, Niina does not use any reporting verb to show that this is what the mother has said. Instead, she just seems to state that the mother does not have interest or does not see any point in teaching English to Niina and that the ease of English is a reason for this. However, it seems probable that Niina reflects her mother's voice in a situation in which she and the mother have talked about Niina's choice of the first foreign language. The belief of English being an easy language, then, seems to affect the mother's readiness to teach English to Niina and thus also her choice of a foreign language.

The comparison of excerpt 16 with excerpt 17 shows a difference in how the 'other' may come forth in a child's speech:

Excerpt 17

Int.: ((tauko)) eehe, no niin, miten, miksi sinä halusit, lukee englantia, miksi sä valitsit englannin ensimmäiseksi vieraaksi kieleksi?.

Piia: no mun äiti sano et se on helpompaa.

Like in the previous excerpt, the interviewer asks also here why the child, i.e. Piia, chose English as her first foreign language. The ease of English is the reason for the choice of English also in Piia's case and the mother occurs in her response, too. On the basis of the comparative form of the adjective 'easy', it seems quite probable that Piia reflects here a conversation in which she and her mother have compared different foreign languages. However, Piia clearly tells that it was her mother who had said that English was easier. Piia's utterance, then, may be characterised as reported speech, which is probably one of the most obvious indications of other's voice according to

Bakhtin. The way Piia brings forth her mother suggests that she is aware of this being her mother's belief. In comparison, in her speech Niina seems to present the ease of English as a fact. On the basis of excerpt 16 the mother's voice seems to be at least one source of the belief stated by Niina. However, she does not present the mother in a role of a speaking subject as Piia does in excerpt 17.

In excerpt 18 Tommi brings forth several 'others' in his speech in a rather similar manner as Piia does in her speech, however with only one 'other' in her case.

Excerpt 18

Int.: no miltä se kuulosti se ruotsi?
Tommi: aika oudolta.
Int.: joo, haluaisiksä oppia sitä?
Tommi: e.
Int.: mikset?
Tommi: no en tiiä seuraavaks kieleks mä otan ehkä saksan, mullon nyt englanti.
Int.: joo otaksä, ooksä kuullu koskaan saksaa?. miltä se kuulostaa, ooksä koskaan?
Tommi: no **meiän luokkalaisia jotkut tytöt** ni aina puhuu ni, musta tuntuu et se on vähän helppoo.
Int.: joo, entäs tota, ((tauko)) ranskaa?,
Tommi: mun **isoveli** lukee sitä ni **se** sano et se on aika vaikeeta, **se** ei osaa paljoo.
Int.: joo, entäs//
Tommi: tai osaa se mut, ei kovin hyvin.
Int.: nii joo, entäs italiaa?.
Tommi: en (osaa) ikinä.
Int.: entäs, haluaisiksä oppia venäjää?,
Tommi: en.
Int.: mikset?
Tommi: en mä tiiä ku, mun **serkut** sano et se on tosi vaikeeta.

In excerpt 18 the topic ease/difficulty arises in the dialogue considering the choices of foreign language. It seems that Tommi's beliefs about the ease of particular languages strongly affects his language choices. The first 'others' in the excerpt can be found in Tommi's response *no meiän luokkalaisia jotkut tytöt ni aina puhuu ni, musta tuntuu et se on vähän helppoo*. (well some girls from my class always speak so, I think it is very easy). (The Finnish expression "vähän", which is normally translated "a bit" in English, usually means "very" when used by children in this kind of connection). The way Tommi brings forth the girls in his speech suggests that his belief about German is based either on how German has sounded to him when having been spoken by the girls or on his conclusion that German must be easy as the girls from his class *always* speak it. In any case, the girls in Tommi's speech seem to be the sources for his own experience of or ideas about the ease of German.

The second 'other' can be found in the part of the excerpt in which Tommi is being asked about French. Tommi mentions his brother in his response *mun isoveli lukee sitä ni se sano et se on aika vaikeeta, se ei osaa paljoo*. (my big brother studies it so he said that it is quite difficult, he does not know it much), thus reporting his brother's voice in his speech. Tommi does not clearly say what he himself thinks about French. However, reading between the lines, it seems that because the brother has said that French is quite difficult and because the brother does not know French much Tommi is also likely to believe that it is difficult.

The 'other' occurs in Tommi's speech for the third time when the interviewer wants to know whether Tommi wants to learn Russian. Tommi at first tells that he does not, and when asked about the reason for this, Tommi says *en mä tiää ku, mun serkut sano et se on tosi vaikeeta*. (I don't know because, my cousins said that it is really difficult.). Also in this case Tommi reflects the voice of 'others' in his speech, reporting what the cousins have told him. However, the utterance *en mä tiää ku*, at the beginning of Tommi's response suggests that Tommi himself is not quite sure about the reason, although he brings forth the cousins' opinion as one source affecting his willingness to learn Russian. It seems, then, that while Tommi's awareness around the issue is awoken during the dialogue he probably also becomes more aware of the lack of his own experience of Russian language. This awareness, then, shows in his speech as his own voice when he says *en mä tiää ku*,.

In excerpt 19 Veli mentions two 'other' people when talking about the difficulty of learning foreign languages with the interviewer.

Excerpt 19

- Int.: joo, entäs tota, onks ihmisten helppo oppii vieraita kieliä sun mielestä?
 Veli: no, riippuu vähän haluaako sitä oppii vai ei, ja toiseks että, ((tauko)) niinku, miten miten, niinku, on (kukin) niinku luotu osaamaan mitä, tahansa.
 Int.: onks niinku, kenen ois sun mielestä vaikeeta oppii, vierasta kieltä?
 Veli: no, emmä nyt oikein tiää, ((tauko)) ei meiän luokalla niinku englannissa oikein oo ja, silleen et se, meiän luokan **Pasi** niin se on vähän huono ku siltä otettiin, uskonnon koe niinku otti, pois ku se ei osannu;
 Int.: joo tai, tai niinku yleensä niinku aatellaan niinku että, ei niinku teiän luokalla mut siis yleensä että, millon olis ihmisen vaikee oppia vieraita kieliä?
 Veli: no mä en tiää se mun **serkku** ni se, on ollu, se nyt, meni kuusvuotiaana ja on nyt niinku neljännellä luokalla, se on opeteltu englantii jo niinku, niinku vuoden ja kuitenkin se ei tunnu osaavan oikein, mitään.
 Int.: joo mutta, sust se on aika helppoo?
 Veli: on.
 Int.: joo, sulloli se, sä muistat sanat ja, kaikkee tällasta?
 Veli: no kyllä yleensä.

At the beginning of excerpt 19, when the interviewer asks *onks ihmisten helppo oppii vieraita kieliä sun mielestä*, Veli names two factors which the ease depends on, i.e. *haluaako sitä oppii vai ei*, (whether you want to learn it or not) and *niinku, miten miten, niinku, on (kukin) niinku luotu osaamaan mitä, tahansa*. (how how, sort of, each one is sort of created to know anything). The first factor comes quite effortlessly and the second demands a little bit of formulation from Veli. However, Veli speaks here about two factors which are usually considered as possible ones affecting the ease or difficulty in learning, motivation and aptitude, although not exactly in these terms. It takes Veli a while to consider the response to the question *onks niinku, kenen ois sun mielestä vaikeeta oppii, vierasta kieltä?*. (is it uh, for whom do you think it would be difficult to learn, foreign language?.) as the beginning of Veli's answer *no, emmä nyt oikein tiiä*, (well, I don't know, really) and the pause following it show. After the pause Veli continues *ei meiän luokalla niinku englannissa oikein oo ja, silleen et se, meiän luokan Pasi niin se on vähän huono ku siltä otettiin, uskonnon koe niinku otti, pois ku se ei osannu*; (there aren't in our class uh in English really and, I mean that this, Pasi in our class he is really bad because he was taken, the religion exam uh was taken, away because he didn't know;). This response, although Veli at first thinks about English, seems to have more to do with difficulty in the school subject of religion than in foreign languages. Probably the way the interviewer phrases her question, the word *kenen* (for whom) in it, is one reason for Veli trying to mention concrete persons in his answer. However, as he does not seem to find anyone in his class as an example of a person having difficulties in languages, Veli tells about a classmate who had difficulties in another school subject, i.e, religion. However, eventhough the interviewer reformulates the question as the dialogue continues, saying *tai niinku yleensä niinku aatellaan niinku että, ei niinku teiän luokalla mut siis yleensä että, millon olis ihmisen vaikee oppia vieraita kieliä?*. (or I mean generally uh if we think about uh that, not uh in your class but I mean generally that, when would it be difficult for a human being to learn foreign languages?.), Veli still brings up a concrete person, mentioning his cousin as an example of a person with poor language skills. In his first response in excerpt 19 Veli seems to speak about people in general. As the interviewer then asks more questions about the subject, it is probably easier for Veli to tell about his own observations of 'others'. This would also be in accordance with the belief he expressed in the first response, i.e. that ease in learning foreign languages depends on the individual's

willingness to learn and his/her talent. Believing so, Veli is perhaps disposed to bring up different people when considering the issue.

Chapter 5.1.2 has considered the pieces of dialogue which talked about ease/difficulty and in which other people were mentioned. The others occurred in childrens' speech e.g. in the role of an advisor and as sources of the observations which helped the interviewees construct their beliefs. Sometimes the children also clearly reported other people's speech. Chapter 5.1.3 will view some utterances which did not have an explicit indication of the source of the beliefs brought forth.

5.1.3 'no-explicit-indication'

In addition to 'I'- and 'other'-responses, the data included plenty of utterances in which the children spoke at a rather general level, without explicitly mentioning themselves or any other person in their speech. In some of these 'no-explicit-indication'-utterances, the dialogue included features which indicated the possible source of the beliefs indirectly. In some of them, in turn, it was difficult to define whose voice was speaking. The following analysis will concentrate on these no-explicit-indication utterances.

Excerpt 20 is an example of a piece of dialogue on the basis of which it is difficult to say the possible voices behind the belief.

Excerpt 20

Int.: joo, ((tauko)) selvä. miten, luuletko et yleensä ihmiset oppii helposti vieraita kieliä?
Piia: se riippuu ihmisestä.
Int.: joo, millä lailla?
Piia: no, miten innokas se on opettelemaan ni sitä helpommin se oppii sitä.
Int: joo, että niinku innokas sä tarkotat sillä että?,
Piia: niinku, lukee sitä mielellään ja kirjottaa hirveesti ja sillai;

Piia's response to question *luuletko et yleensä ihmiset oppii helposti vieraita kieliä?*. (do you think that people usually learn foreign languages easily?.) is *se riippuu ihmisestä*. (it depends on the person.). According to Piia *miten innokas se on opettelemaan ni sitä helpommin se oppii sitä*. (how eager s/he is to learn the easier s/he learns it.) When the interviewer asks *että niinku innokas sä tarkotat sillä että?*, (with uh eager you mean that?), Piia defines that an eager person *lukee sitä mielellään ja kirjottaa hirveesti ja sillai*; (likes reading it and writes a lot and that kind of things;). These beliefs may be

based on general, slogan-like knowledge that a person's motivation, the amount of work s/he does, and how much s/he likes the subject to be studied is related to how easy or difficult learning is for him/her. Piia may have heard beliefs related to the issue for example from her family members or teacher. On the other hand, it is also possible that Piia has herself experienced that when she works hard and likes what she is doing, it feels easier to learn.

In excerpt 21, despite the lack of direct references to 'I' or 'other' in the dialogue, it seems that Jesse's beliefs have roots in a personal experience.

Excerpt 21

Int.: entäs tota ooksä koskaan miettiny semmosta asiaa et puhu-, kirjotetaanko suomee samalla tavalla ku sitä puhutaan?.
Jesse: no ei kaikkia sanoja.
Int.: ahaa mitä ei?.
Jesse: no, ei tuu nyt just mitään semmosta mieleen, mutta englannissa ainakin kaikki sanat.
Int.: joo, okei, tota onks se muuten helppoo vai vaikeeta se englannin, sitte ku ne on erilaisia ne?,
Jesse: ei, ku sen osaa niinku, esimerkiks, e ni iiks muuttuu ni sen osaa, arvata melkein aina, ja sitten niin, ai, ni sitte i, eli ai.

Topic difficulty arises in the excerpt as the interviewer asks Jesse *kirjotetaanko suomee samalla tavalla ku sitä puhutaan?*. (is Finnish written the same way that it's spoken?.) Jesse answers *no ei kaikkia sanoja* (well not all the words), and as the interviewer then asks *ahaa mitä ei?* (aha which words aren't?), Jesse says *no, ei tuu nyt just mitään semmosta mieleen, mutta englannissa ainakin kaikki sanat*. (well, right now none of those comes to my mind, but at least in English all the words.) This leads the interviewer to ask *onks se muuten helppoo vai vaikeeta se englannin, sitte ku ne on erilaisia ne?* (is it easy or difficult in English, because they are different they?). When responding *ei, ku sen osaa niinku, esimerkiks, e ni iiks muuttuu ni sen osaa, arvata melkein aina, ja sitten niin, ai, ni sitte i, eli ai*. (no, when one knows it uh, for example, e changes into i so one is able, to guess it almost always, and then, ai, so then i, that is ai.) Jesse, with a passive-like expression, tells his seemingly firm belief that when knowing what to do, the difference between writing and pronunciation in English does not cause difficulties. He gives an example of the pronunciation of letters e and i, thus showing that he speaks on the basis of his own knowledge and experience of English.

Excerpt 21 showed Jesse's view on writing English which seemed to be based on the knowledge and experience he had already gained. In excerpts 22 and 23 both Jesse and

Jaakko answer the question whether it is easy or difficult in general to learn foreign languages and they both bring up Chinese, a language they have not studied at school, in the conversation related to the topic.

Excerpt 22

Int.: joo, okei. ja, onks yleensä niinku helppoo vai vaikeeta oppia vieraita kieliä?
Jesse: mm no, ((tauko)) no kiinaa ei oo kyllä helppo mutta ni,
Int.: miks ei sitä oo helppo oppia?
Jesse: no ku se on semmosta ni, ku, niin ne jotka ni on vaikka ni, kiinalaisia ni ei, kaikki edes osaa kunnolla itekkään sitä.
Int.: joo, miltä se kuulostaa kiina?
Jesse: ((matkii kiinalaisen puhetta jotenkin seuraavasti: hai sung tsing tsang))
Int.: joo, ook-, missä sä oot kuullu sitä?
Jesse: no, ((tauko)) kaikkialla telkkarissa ku niissä on kaikkia tulvia uutisissa tulee niistä (jotain).

When Jesse is inquired *onks yleensä niinku helppoo vai vaikeeta oppia vieraita kieliä?* (is it generally uh easy or difficult to learn foreign languages?) he first considers the question a bit and then says *no kiinaa ei oo kyllä helppo mutta ni*, (well it is not easy to learn Chinese but,). According to Jesse the reason for Chinese being difficult to learn is *no ku se on semmosta ni, ku, niin ne jotka ni on vaikka ni, kiinalaisia ni ei, kaikki edes osaa kunnolla itekkään sitä*. (well because it is such, because, so those who for example are, Chinese so they don't, all even know it properly themselves.). When asked how Chinese sounds, Jesse imitates the language and after an inquiry also tells that he has heard Chinese on TV. According to the dialogue, then, Jesse has some own experiences as a basis for his beliefs. The comparison of excerpts 22 and 23 shows an interesting similarity between Jesse's and Jaakko's beliefs.

Excerpt 23

Int.: joo, entäs tämmönen asia, onks ihmisten yleensä helppo vai vaikee oppia vieraita kieliä?
Jaakko: no, no ei nyt riippuu mitä maata opiskelee, jos vaikka tuolta, ni joku kiinalainen opiskelee suomee niin siihen voi kestää vaikka kolmekin vuotta että oppii,
Int.: joo, mikä ois vaikee kieli oppia?
Jaakko: no, se japani tai kiina.
Int.: miks?
Jaakko: no kun ne on sellasta, siinä voi mennä vähän sanat sekasin kun jotain 'tsing' ja 'tsang', tai ne sanoo ku pitäs sanoo 'tsing' ja sit ne sanoo 'tsits',
Int.: joo, tota ooksä koskaan nähny kirjotettua kiina tai japania?
Jaakko: oon,
Int.: missä?
Jaakko: yhdessä mun tietokirjassa jossaki, ja sitte TV-sarjassa.
Int.: joo, ooksä käyny kiinalaisessa ravintolassa syömässä koskaan?
Jaakko: en oo mutta ajanu aika monta kertaa ohi. sitte mä oon, siitä ihan ohi kävelly Kyproksella.

According to Jaakko the ease/difficulty in learning foreign languages *riippuu mitä maata opiskelee, jos vaikka tuolta, ni joku kiinalainen opiskelee suomee niin siihen voi*

kestää vaikka kolmekin vuotta että oppii, (depends on what country you are studying, if for example from, some Chinese studies Finnish it may take even three years to learn,). As the interviewer asks *mikä ois vaikee kieli oppia?*. (what language would be difficult to learn?.), Jaakko says *no, se japani tai kiina*. (well, that Japanese or Chinese.) and when being asked *miks?*. (why?.), his response is *no kun ne on sellasta, siinä voi mennä vähän sanat sekasin kun jotain 'tsing' ja 'tsang', tai ne sanoo ku pitäis sanoo 'tsing' ja sit ne sanoo 'tsits'*, (well because they are such, words may get mixed when something 'tsing' and 'tsang', or they say when it should be said 'tsing' and then they say 'tsits'). In these utterances Jaakko states how he believes things to be in a relatively assured manner, without any explicit references to 'I' or 'other'. Jaakko's beliefs, however, seem to be at least partly based on his own experience. A bit earlier in the interview he has told that if he had to choose a foreign language, his choice might be Chinese because it sounds so nice, and that he has heard it on TV and on some radio channels. In addition, in excerpt 23 Jaakko gives examples of Japanese and Chinese words as they have sounded to him and his answer to the question *joo, tota ooksä koskaan nähny kirjutettua kiina tai japania?*. (yeah, well have you ever seen written Chinese or Japanese?.), is *oon*, (yes,). Jaakko's words *tai ne sanoo ku pitäis sanoo 'tsing' ja sit ne sanoo 'tsits'* show that Jaakko seems to think that Chinese/Japanese speakers have a tendency to mix the words of their own languages.

Both Jesse and Jaakko, then, express their beliefs in a rather assured manner. They also seem to share a belief, apparently related to their view that Chinese (and also Japanese in Jaakko's case) are difficult languages, that Chinese/Japanese are difficult even for native speakers of them. It is possible, then, that the boys have talked about the issue and they are both reflecting also the voices from that conversation when speaking with the interviewer.

Excerpts 22 and 23 showed pieces of dialogue emerging around the question whether it is easy or difficult for people in general to learn foreign languages and on the basis of them Jesse and Jaakko seemed to believe that ease/difficulty is related to the language to be studied. Also Atte in excerpt 24 seems to believe that the language influences the ease/difficulty but his beliefs about the issue get constructed a bit differently.

Excerpt 24

- Int.: joo, entäs onko ihmisten yleensä helppo oppia vieraita kieliä?
Atte: ((tauko)) no, on nyt suomalaisen helpompi oppii, öö englantia ku englantilaisen suomee.
Int.: miks?.
Atte: no koska, ne on sillee, ääntää sillee, ihmeellisesti.
Int.: ai siis et sun, sun mielestä niinku se ääntäminen on helpompaa, suomalaisten on helpompi oppii ääntää englantii kun suomalaisten, eiku englantilaisten suomee, entäs joku tollanen kiinan oppiminen oisko se helppoo vai vaikeeta?
Atte: no, vaikeeta.
Int.: miks, ((tauko)) osaatko sanoo (mitään)?.
Atte: ((tauko)) vaikeeta se on.

When the interviewer asks Atte *onko ihmisten yleensä helppo oppia vieraita kieliä?*. (is it usually easy for people to learn foreign languages?. Atte first considers the question for a while, as indicated by a pause. After that he says *no, on nyt suomalaisten helpompi oppii, öö englantia ku englantilaisten suomee*. (well, it's easier for Finns to learn, uh English than for English people to learn Finnish.) The answer does not include any clear hints about the possible source behind the belief. However, as the interviewer asks why, Atte says *no koska, ne on sillee, ääntää sillee, ihmeellisesti*. (well because, they are so, pronounce in such a, strange way.) On the basis of this latter answer, Atte seems to relate ease/difficulty to pronunciation. It also shows Atte's awareness of the difference between English and Finnish pronunciation and it is possible to hear Atte's own experience when he says that English people pronounce *sillee ihmeellisesti* (in such a strange way). The latter answer does not clearly explain the first belief that it is easier for Finns to learn English than vice versa. It may be, then, that the response to the first question partly reflects the general belief that Finnish is a difficult language for speakers of other languages.

The second belief comes forth in an answer to the question *entäs joku tollanen kiinan oppiminen oisko se helppoo vai vaikeeta?*. (what about learning something like Chinese would it be easy or difficult?). Atte's answer is *no, vaikeeta* (well, difficult.). As the interviewer asks why, Atte, after a pause just says *vaikeeta se on* (it is difficult.). With this statement he confirms what he has said in the first answer and does not explain more what the reason is for him believing so. This, then, is an example of an utterance which does not contain any hints about the voices behind the child's belief.

Excerpts 25 and 26 are from the pieces of dialogue in which, despite the lack of clear indication of voices, some other features of the speech suggest that there is some 'other' person's voice influencing the construction of the child's belief. In excerpt 25 the topic

ease is being discussed from two different perspectives. At first it arises in the dialogue about Tuomo's language choices:

Excerpt 25

Int.: joo, okei. nyt sitte tämmönen juttu että mitä, minkä kielen sä vieraan kielen sä valitsisit, englannin jälkeen nyt jos pitäs kohta valita toinen vieras kieli (--)?
Tuomo: öö, se oli toi emmää muista, se oliii, höm, ((tauco)) emmää muista mikä kieli se oli.
Int.: saksa, ruotsi, ranska?
Tuomo: se toisiks helpoin se, öö se oli toi, se,
Int.: mm italia, ei.
Tuomo: ei, ((naurahtaa)) ruotsi vai joku tämmönen emmää muista.
Int.: joo. nyt sitte noin yleensä ni mitä sä luulet oikein että oppii, oppiiko ihmiset helposti, vieraita kieliä?
Tuomo: joskus.
Int.: mistä se johtuu?
Tuomo: no että osaa, tota, ei ku tota, lukee hyvin ja, tekee kaikki hyvin.

When the interviewer asks which foreign language Tuomo would choose after English Tuomo says *öö, se oli toi emmää muista, se oliii, höm, ((tauco)) emmää muista mikä kieli se oli* (uh, it was that I don't remember, it was, hm, ((pause)) I don't remember which language it was.) As can be seen, Tuomo seems to know already which language he is going to take but he has to consider and try to remember its name. As he does not remember it, the interviewer suggests *saksa, ruotsi, ranska?* (German, Swedish, French?) The topic ease comes forth in Tuomo's response *se toisiks helpoin se, öö se oli toi, se* (that second easiest that, um it was that, that). Also this response shows Tuomo's difficulty in remembering what actually is that second easiest language, and as the interviewer suggests Italian, he says *ei, ((naurahtaa)) ruotsi vai joku tämmönen emmää muista*. (no, ((laughs)) Swedish or something like that I don't remember.). Thus, Tuomo is not totally sure about the name of the language that he is going to choose but despite that believes that it is the second easiest. Although Tuomo does not mention anyone else in his speech, that he classifies the language as *joku tämmönen* (something like that) and says *emmää muista* (I don't remember) three times, suggests that his belief of the language being second easiest is based on someone else's voice, probably mother or father's. Also the fact that a child of his age hardly knows enough different languages in order to classify them according to their ease suggests that this probably is a belief based on someone else's voice.

In excerpt 26 the interviewer and Tommi discuss the ease/difficulty of learning foreign languages for people in general:

Excerpt 26

- Int.: joo, tota, entäs tällanen asia että, onks susta yleensä tärkeätä että ihmiset osaa, vieraita kieliä?.
- Tommi: no, onhan se jos, niinku ne pääsee työpaikalle ni, jos siellä tulee (joku) että, pitää lähettää, jollekin semmonen kirje ni, englanniks.
- Int.: joo, entäs onko, tärkeätä sit sellanen, eh, tärkeätä vaan että, onko yleensä ihmisten vaikee vai helppo, oppia vieraita kieliä?.
- Tommi: no, pienenä se on tosi helppo mutta sitte ku, jos on aikuisena eikä oo lukenu ja on työtön ni sit ku menee jonneki, niille kursseille ni se on tosi vaikeeta, (---)
- Int.: miksi se on, miks se on sun mielestä pienenä helpompaa?.
- Tommi: no, silloin sen oppii helpommin.
- Int.: joo, millä lailla?.
- Tommi: no, aikuisena oot ollu, jossain paikassa työssä ni, jos sä haluat oppii, jotain ulkomaankieltä ni sun pitäs aina, sen jälkeen mennä jonnekin kurssille.

Tommi's answer to question *onko yleensä ihmisten vaikee vai helppo, oppia vieraita kieliä?* (is it generally difficult or easy for people, to learn foreign languages) is *no, pienenä se on tosi helppo mutta sitte ku, jos on aikuisena eikä oo lukenu ja on työtön ni sit ku menee jonneki, niille kursseille ni se on tosi vaikeeta*, (well, it is very easy when you are little but then when, if you are as an adult and haven't studied and you are unemployed so when you go somewhere, to those courses so it is very difficult.). Tommi speaks in an assured manner, stating without hesitation how things are. He does not mention himself or any other particular person in his speech. However, he speaks about working life, a topic of which a child does not have own experience. It seems probable, then, that Tommi reflects someone else's voice. It is possible that he has heard someone familiar to him talking about language courses arranged for the unemployed. It may also be that some adult familiar to Tommi has participated language courses during her/his unemployment or in the evenings after work, and her/his experiences are reflected in Tommi's belief about the difficulty of learning foreign languages as an adult. That Tommi comes to talk about working life in this connection may also be due to him having talked about it in the preceding question-answer sequence. At the beginning of excerpt 26 the interviewer asks *onks susta yleensä tärkeätä että ihmiset osaa, vieraita kieliä?*. (do you think in general that it is important that people know foreign languages?.) and Tommi's response is *no, onhan se jos, niinku ne pääsee työpaikalle ni, jos siellä tulee (joku) että, pitää lähettää , jollekin semmonen kirje ni, englanniks*. (well, it surely is if, uh they get to some working place and, if there somebody comes that, they have to sent, a sort of letter to somebody, in English.) Thus, he is already thinking about working life when being asked about ease/difficulty.

The dialogue continues by the interviewer asking *miks se on sun mielestä pienenä helpompaa?* (why do you think it is easier when you are little?) and Tommi answering

no, sillon sen oppii helpommin. (well, you learn it easier then). As a response to the interviewer's question *millä lailla?* (how?) Tommi says *no, aikuisena oot ollu, jossain paikassa työssä ni, jos sä haluat oppii, jotain ulkomankieltä ni sun pitäs aina, sen jälkeen mennä jonkkekin kurssille.* (well, as an adult you have been, working in some place so, if you want to learn some foreign language so you should always, after that go to some course.) On the basis of the dialogue, Tommi seems to consider learning foreign languages as simple for children, but he seems to believe that extra work is needed from adults to learn them. His belief, then, seems to be based on the view that children acquire a language and adults must learn it. It may also be that the difficulty Tommi believes adults to have is related to the thought that in addition to working, they will also have to go to courses, but children, in comparison, learn at their "work", i.e. at school. In any case, on the basis of the dialogue, foreign languages and working life seem to be tightly connected in Tommi's beliefs and they probably echo the voices of his significant others.

As excerpts 20-26 show, when expressing their beliefs about ease/difficulty of foreign languages, the children quite often talk about people in general. They do not necessarily refer to themselves or any particular other people but instead use passive-like expressions. Related to this, excerpts 27 and 28 show an interesting feature in Nuutti's and Tapio's speech, a tendency to change into speaking about people in general instead of an individual.

Excerpt 27

Int.: minkä kielen sä haluaisit ottaa englannin jälkeen, jos pitäs valita?
 Nuutti: emmä niinku englantia mä en niinku siinä ku, mä amerikkaa puhun ihan hy-, tosi hyvin ku sillä, nii, siinä Englannissa **ne** sillee, puhutaan sillee ihan sillee hassu sillee ((mumisee epämääräisesti)) nii Amerikassa se puhutaan vähän paremmin.
 Int.: missä sä oot kuullu, ooksä telkkarissa vai tunneksä jonkun (englantilaisen)?
 Nuutti: joo ja, ku, englannintunnillaki ni, **se** sanoo kyllä, puhutaan kyllä ihan kummallista sössötystä.

Excerpt 27, which was already discussed as a part of a larger piece of dialogue in section 5.1.2, is related to the topic ease/difficulty as Nuutti speaks about British English as strange and funny in it and on the basis of the dialogue this strangeness seems to be related to the experience of difficulty. In his first turn Nuutti at first says *siinä Englannissa ne sillee*, (in that English they in such,) continuing *puhutaan sillee ihan sillee hassu sillee* (it is spoken in such a funny uh). Thus, he seems in a way to correct himself by changing into passive after first having spoken about English people, referring to them with a pronoun *ne* (they). This happens also in Nuutti's second turn in

which he first says *se sanoo kyllä*, (s/he says,) and then continues *puhutaan kyllä* (it is spoken): Nuutti changes *se sanoo* (s/he says), which refers to a certain person, to passive construction *puhutaan* (is spoken). Thus, in his first and second response Nuutti at first talks about a particular group of people or a particular person, using the pronouns “ne” (they) and “se” (it). In both cases, however, he then decides to use passive expressions. It seems as if he was building his response on the basis of his own experiences from situations in which he has heard someone speaking English and American English and at the same time making generalizations based on these experiences.

Also Tapio seems to prefer a passive form in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 28

Int.: joo, onks susta niinku englannin oppiminen helppoo vai vaikeeta?
 Tapio: mm, en osaa sanoo.
 Int.: joo, jou’utko sä hirveesti niinku, sanoja niinku, miten sä opettelet sanoja?
 Tapio: ((pitkä tauko))
 Int: sä vaan opit ne. ((naurahtaa))
 Tapio: no nii, sitä niinku vaan oppii ku ne, kertoo sen.

In excerpt 28, as the interviewer asks *onks susta niinku englannin oppiminen helppoo vai vaikeeta?*. (what do you think uh is learning English easy or difficult?.), Tapio answers *mm, en osaa sanoo* (uh, I can’t say). Then the interviewer tries to clarify the issue by attaching it to something more concrete, asking *jou’utko sä hirveesti niinku, sanoja niinku, miten sä opettelet sanoja?*. (do you have to lot of uh, words uh, how do you study words?.). The question seems to be rather difficult as it is followed by a long pause. After that the interviewer continues the dialogue by suggesting *sä vaan opit ne*. (you just learn them). By using the pronoun *sä* (you) she speaks about Tapio. However, in his response *no nii, sitä niinku vaan oppii ku ne, kertoo sen*. (well yeah, one just learns when they, tell it.) Tapio speaks about people in general by using the expression *sitä oppii* (one learns). In the same utterance he uses the pronoun *ne* (they) when referring to the people who tell about the thing to be learned and the pronoun *sen* (it) when referring to the thing that is being told about and learnt. Probably the referent of *it* is a word as the learning of words has been discussed in the previous turns. Pronouns *ne* and *sen* attach a personal feeling to the utterance, as if Tapio was telling about something he has experienced. However, instead of speaking about himself, Tapio chooses a passive-like construction although the interviewer refers expressly to him.

Excerpt 29 is one more example of 'no-explicit-indication' pieces of dialogue.

Excerpt 29

- Int.: okei, tota, miks sä valitsit englannin, miks sä halusit lukee englantia. /tykkääksä siitä vai?/
- Jaana: /musta se, se,/ sillä pärjää monessa maassa,
- Int.: mimmonen kieli se on, tykkääksä sä englannista?.
- Jaana: no se on, se on sellanen, ihan mukava kieli.
- Int.: joo, onko se miten helppoo?.
- Jaana: on se sillee et se on ihan,
- Int.: onks siinä sitte, mitä siinä on vaikeeta?.
- Jaana: ((huokaa)) se, lukeminen se on hirveen vaikeeta sillee et,
- Int.: millä tavalla?.
- Jaana: no ku, siis ku, se on niin vaikeeta ku, tietysti se on niin vaikeeta ((nauraa))
- Int.: ((nauraa)) kun, kun kun.
- Jaana: tota, ku siinä pitää lukee eri lailla ku kirjottaa.
- Int.: joo, niin se on siinä vaikeeta että,
- Jaana: mm.
- Int.: joo, entäs tota nyt tämmönen kysymys että onks sun mielestä yleensä, tärkeetä ihmisten, osata vieraita kieliä?.
- Jaana: noo, joissaki tilanteissa tietysti se on aikuisena koska jotkuthan (erilaiset) saattaa tulla kysymään että >hei mi-, että, mis-, minne, missä se paikka on missä se on= ni, on se kuiteski ja sitte jos käy ulkomailla, ni tietysti se on, tota, sillee.
- Int.: entäs onko sun mielestä yleensä ihmisten helppo, oppia vieraita kieliä?.
- Jaana: sehän riippuu oppitaidosta, jos on, no, joillekin sehän on hirveen vaikeeta varmaan ja, joillekin sitte taas helppoo.
- Int.: joo, no kelle se on helppoo?.
- Jaana: no ehkä, se on (sellanen) joka, tahtoo myös opetella, tai sil-, no, no en mää nyt tiiä.
- Int: no entäs millos se ois vaikeeta?.
- Jaana: no jos ei oo yhtään siis halua keskittyä siihen ja, ei yhtään kuuntele mitään ni, sitte se, saattaa vaikeuttaa sitä oppimista.

At the beginning of excerpt 29 the interviewer, referring to English, asks, *onko se miten helppoo?* (how easy is it?). Jaana's response is *on se sillee et se on ihan*, (it is in that way that it is quite.). Next the interviewer asks *onks siinä sitte, mitä siinä on vaikeeta?*. (is there in it then, what is difficult in it?). Now Jaana sighs and answers *se, lukeminen se on hirveen vaikeeta sillee et*. (that, reading it's very difficult in that way that.) When the interviewer wants to know *millä tavalla?* (in what way?), Jaana struggles to come up with an answer, saying *no ku, siis ku, se on niin vaikeeta ku, tietysti se on niin vaikeeta ((nauraa))* (well because, so because, it's so difficult because, of course it's so difficult ((laughs))). It seems to be difficult for her to define more precisely why reading is difficult, but her words "of course it's so difficult" show that she is convinced of the difficulty and, moreover, seems to consider it a well-known fact. The interviewer, then, joins the laughter and spurs Jaana to come into the answer saying *kun, kun kun*. (because, because because). Now Jaana comes into terms with what she wants

to say, her answer being *tota, ku siinä pitää lukee eri lailla ku kirjottaa*. (well, because in it you have to read aloud differently from writing.)

A bit later the interviewer asks *entäs onko sun mielestä yleensä ihmisten helppo, oppia vieraita kieliä?* (well do you think it is easy for people in general to learn foreign languages?). Jaana's answer *sehän riippuu oppitaidosta, jos on, no, joillekin sehän on hirveen vaikeeta varmaan ja, joillekin sitte taas helppoo*. (it depends on learning skills, doesn't it, if it is, well, for some people it is probably very difficult, isn't it and, for some, then, easy.) comes in a quite assured manner. The suffix *-hän* at the end of the pronoun *se* (it) when she says *sehän riippuu oppitaidosta, jos on, no, joillekin sehän on hirveen vaikeeta varmaan ja, joillekin sitte taas helppoo*. (it depends on learning skills, if it is, well, for some it is probably very difficult and, for some then very easy.) suggests that Jaana speaks here about something that she assumes to be something generally known, as if at the same time asking the interviewer "is it not?". The use of the word *varmaan* (probably), however, shows that she is not totally sure about the issue. As the interviewer then wants Jaana to specify *no kelle se on helppoo?* (well for whom is it easy?.), Jaana's answer is *no ehkä, se on (sellanen) joka, tahtoo myös opetella, tai sil-,no, no en määhän nyt tiiä*. (well perhaps, it is (such) who, also wants to study, or so, well, well I don't know now.). In this answer the words *ehkä* (perhaps) and the half word *sil-*, which is probably a beginning of the expression *silleen* often used in spoken Finnish when trying to describe something for which the speaker does not find the right words show that Jaana is a bit unsure of what she actually wants to say. Then, at the end of the response, she clearly expresses this uncertainty as she says *no en määhän nyt tiiä* (well I don't know now.) If compared with what she said first in an assured manner, i.e. "it depends on learning skills, doesn't it", this part of the dialogue differs from it, as Jaana seems to become more unsure about the belief about the issue. The interviewer, then, asks *no entäs millos se ois vaikeeta?* (well when would it be difficult?). Now Jaana has come to terms with what she wants to say, giving concrete examples of things which may hinder learning in her words *no jos ei oo yhtään siis halua keskittyä siihen ja, ei yhtään kuuntele mitään ni, sitte se, saattaa vaikeuttaa sitä oppimista*. (well if one does not have any will for concentrating onto it and, one does not listen to anything at all so, then that, may make learning more difficult.) Thus, excerpt 29 exemplifies the inarticulateness there may be behind a belief which is first expressed rather easily and in a relatively assured manner and then asked to be specified a bit more. As suggested by Dufva et al. (1996:44), some opinions which are expressed

quickly and assuredly may be rather mechanical repetition of a heard opinion instead of being based on profound and personally experienced awareness.

Sometimes 'no-explicit-indication' utterances may express slogan-like beliefs whose source the speaker would not necessarily be able to define at the moment of speaking. Children's choice to speak about people in general instead of themselves or particular other people may also be due to them wanting to keep the conversation on a neutral, general level or to make generalisations on the basis of their own experiences or other people's voices. Thus, they can be seen as having appropriated or being about to appropriate a speech genre which to use for this purpose. As shown by excerpts 20-29, sometimes speech may include indications of children's own or other people's voices although they are not explicitly expressed. Next, the contradictions and variability in the children's views when talking about ease and difficulty of foreign languages will be looked at.

5.2 *EASE AND DIFFICULTY: CONTRADICTIONS AND VARIABILITY IN THE VIEWS*

Before turning to the analysis of some extracts which show the sometimes contradictory and variable nature of children's beliefs as they occur in the dialogue with the interviewer, some general observations on the contents of the dialogue as to ease and difficulty of foreign languages will be made. Ease and difficulty of foreign languages appeared to be a multi-faceted phenomenon. Sometimes the children did not give a straightforward answer to the question asked or seemed to understand it a bit differently than the interviewer probably had meant it. Many of the children were of the opinion that reading and writing English is quite difficult. Also, pronunciation was said to be difficult. One child mentioned that feeling shy is what makes speaking difficult. However, in some excerpts, the child seemed to be convinced of English being easy.

Some of the children seemed to think that people in general learn foreign languages quite easily and some that they do not. For example Russian, Chinese and Japanese were mentioned as difficult and English, on the other hand, as easy. Some children seemed to think that ease/difficulty depends on the person studying the language, for example how diligent he/she is, and some that it depends on the language that is studied.

The children seemed to be well aware of the difference between how English is written and pronounced and generally speaking that was considered a feature causing difficulty.

Next, in subsections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2., the above-mentioned variability in the views will be analyzed and the possible reasons for it discussed. Firstly, in section 5.2.1 examples will be given about the possible influence of different voices from earlier situations as a source of variability in a child's belief construction. Secondly, in section 5.2.2. analysis will bring up the influence of the interview as a source of variability in a child's belief construction.

5.2.1 Voices from earlier situations

This section will focus on two cases selected from the data which show how beliefs may change during the interview, possibly because different voices get intertwined as the child's belief gets constructed in the situation. The first case consists of three pieces of dialogue from Niina's interview.

Excerpt 30

Int.: joo, no okei, entäs sitte tällanen asia. ää, mikä siinä englannin lukemisessa tai kirjottamisessa on helppoo tai vaikeeta?.
Niina: no ei mikään oo helppoo.
Int.: okei, no mikä on vaikeeta?.
Niina: no kaikki.
Int.: niinku mikä esimerkiksi?.
Niina: no, ((tauko)) ei tiää mitenkä kirjojetaan.

Niina's initial response to the question *mikä siinä englannin lukemisessa tai kirjottamisessa on helppoo tai vaikeeta?* (what in reading or writing English is easy or difficult?) is *no mikään ei oo helppoo*. (well nothing is easy.) and when she is asked *no mikä on vaikeeta?*. (well what is difficult?.), Niina answers *no kaikki*. (well everything.). On the basis of these utterances, Niina seems to have a relatively strong belief that English is difficult at least when it comes to the literary side of it. Niina's responses in the excerpt are probably based on her own experiences of English. She has learned it for a few months at school, and before that also at preschool and from her mother, which is shown in excerpt 32. A little later the interviewer asks about the difficulty of German, Chinese and Japanese:

Excerpt 31

Int.: okei, (--) nyt sitte tämmönen juttu että jos sun pitäis valita joku vieras kieli jota sä haluaisit lukee englannin jälkeen ni mikä se olis?
Niina: ((tauco)) saksa.
Int.: saksa, miks?
Niina: no, ((tauco)) no sitä nyt tarvii.
Int.: joo ooksä, kuullu muuten saksaa missään?
Niina: oon.
Int.: missä?
Niina: no jos me ollaan oltu Saksassa käymässä tai,
Int.: joo, ooksä, käy-, ooksä käyny Saksassa?
Niina: oon monta kertaa.
Int.: joo, onks teillä niinku tuttuja siellä vai, /lomalla/ (--)?,
Niina: /ei/
Int.: joo, tota, miltä se saksa kuulosti sitte?
Niina: mm, ihan kivalta.
Int.: ihan kivalta, oliko se vaikee kieli sun mielestä?
Niina: no ei se nyt oikein.
Int.: joo, tota entäs joku tällänen, ((tauco)) kiina tai japani?
Niina: ei.
Int.: ooksä kuullu koskaan kiinaa?
Niina: oon mä joskus kuullu.

The beginning of excerpt 31 shows that Niina would study German if she had to choose some foreign language after English. When asked *ooksä, kuullu muuten saksaa missään?*. (have you, by the way heard German anywhere?.) and *missä?*. (where?.) Niina says *oon*. (yes.) and *jos me ollaan oltu Saksassa käymässä tai*, (if we have visited Germany or,). When the interviewer asks *miltä se saksa kuulosti sitte?*. (what did German sound like then?.) Niina says *mm, ihan kivalta*. (umh, quite nice.) and when asked *oliks se vaikee kieli sun mielestä?*. (did you think it was a difficult language?.), Niina says *no ei se nyt oikein*. (well not very.). The word *oikein* which Niina uses as an adverb defining the difficulty indicates that Niina is slightly hesitant in her opinion. As the interviewer asks *tota entäs joku tällänen, ((tauco)) kiina tai japani?*. ((uh what about something like, ((pause)) Chinese or Japanese?.), Niina says *ei*. (no), and her response to the question *ooksä koskaan kuullu kiinaa?*. (have you ever heard Chinese?.) is *oon mä joskus kuullu*. (I've heard it sometimes.). On the basis of the dialogue, Niina's beliefs seem to have roots in her own experiences about these languages, which are, however, probably more limited than her experiences of English. The utterances in excerpts 30 and 31 are interesting if compared with what Niina says in excerpt 32 in which the topic ease/difficulty appears again:

Excerpt 32

- Int.: no et tietystikkään jos et sä oo tavannu ni, ((naurahtaa)) okei. no niin, tota, tämmönen kysymys, miks sä valitsit niinku englannin ensimmäiseks vieraaks kieleks, tai miks sä halusit lukee englantia etkä jotain saksaa taikka ranskaa?.
- Niina: no se on helppo kieli.
- Int.: joo, onks siitä mitään, muita syitä että, miks sä valitsit englannin?.
- Niina: no meiän äiti ei jaksa opettaa ku ne on niin helppoja, muita on aika vaikeeta ku, mä osaan jo, vähän englantia koska mä olin, pienempänä englanninkielisessä koulussa.
- Int.: joo, mis-, missä englanninkielisessä koulussa sä olit?.
- Niina: sellasessa, /esikoulussa/.
- Int.: /olikse missä?/
- Niina: paitsi siellä puhuttiin englantia ja siellä oli sellasia, siellä oli englanninkielinen opettaja.
- Int.: aha, olikse tuolla Kortepohjassa vai missä se oli?.
- Niina: en mä tiiä, niitä oli eri paikoissa.
- Int.: joo, tykkäsiksä siitä?.
- Niina: noo oli se ihan kiva.
- Int.: saiko siellä puhuu suomee yhtään?.
- Niina: sai, tai siellä puhuttiin suomee, ((tauko)) välillä.
- Int.: joo, sää, mut sää siellä sitte rupesit jo, entäs epulla ja topulla tuota, onks, ooksää sillon englantia koskaan lukenu missään?.
- Niina: e.
- Int.: ei, onks teiän äiti tota, opettanu sulle englantii kotona?.
- Niina: on se vähäsen.
- Int.: joo, tota, ((tauko)) yhym, mikä englannissa on helppoo, mikä siinä on vaikeeta?.
- Niina: ((pitkä tauko)) no jotkut sanat tai ne, sanontatavat, ne on vaikeita.
- Int.: joo, muistaksä yhtään minkälaiset (--)?.
- Niina: e.
- Int.: joo, jotkut sanat kuiteski tota, onks ne niinku vaikee muistaa vai, mikä siinä on?.
- Niina: ne on hankala sanoa.

The beginning of excerpt 32 was already analysed in section 5.1.2, where it was used as an example of the occurrence of ‘other’ in a child’s speech. Niina’s response to the question *miks sä halusit lukee englantia etkä jotain saksaa taikka ranskaa?* (why did you want to study English and not something like German or French?.) is *no se on helppo kieli* (well it is an easy language.) On the basis of this answer, Niina seems to believe that English is an easy language and the ease of English comes forth as a reason for Niina having chosen English instead of for example German or French. The response also seems to contain a view of English as easier than other foreign languages. Thus, it seems to be quite contradictory if compared with what Niina says in excerpt 30, i.e that everything in reading and writing English is difficult and that German is not so difficult. One reason for these contradictions can probably be found from Niina’s response to the question *onks siitä mitään, muita syitä että, miks sä valitsit englannin?* (are there any, other reasons that, why you chose English?). Niina tells: *no meiän äiti ei jaksa opettaa ku ne on niin helppoja, muita on aika vaikeeta ku, mä osaan jo, vähän englantia koska mä olin, pienempänä englanninkielisessä koulussa.* (well our mom does not bother to teach because they are so easy, other are quite difficult because, I know already, a bit of English because I was, in an English school when I was

smaller.) In this response, as was already discussed in excerpt 16, at least when saying *no meidän äiti ei jaksaa opettaa ku ne on niin helppoja*, Niina seems to tell what the mother has said to her and the mother's voice from a probable earlier conversation about language choices apparently has a strong role in its construction. All in all, the contradiction in Niina's beliefs about ease/difficulty of English and other languages shown in excerpts 30, 31 and 32 may be a result of her own experiences about English being difficult and German not very difficult getting intertwined with her mother's voice telling that English is easy and other languages are difficult to teach.

Another example of contradictions in what the child says at different points of the interview is shown in the comparison of two excerpts from Tommi's interview, which were already analysed from a different point of view in sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3.

Excerpt 33

Int.: joo otaksä, ooksä kuullu koskaan saksaa?. miltä se kuulostaa, ooksä koskaan?,
Tommi: no meidän luokkalaisia jotkut tytöt ni aina puhuu ni, musta tuntuu et se on vähän helppoo.
Int.: joo, entäs tota, ((tauko)) ranskaa?,
Tommi: mun isoveli lukee sitä ni se sano et se on aika vaikeeta, se ei osaa paljoo.
Int.: joo, entäs//
Tommi: tai osaa se mut, ei kovin hyvin.
Int.: nii joo, entäs italiaa?.
Tommi: en (osaa) ikinä.
Int.: entäs, haluaisiksä oppia venäjää?,
Tommi: en.
Int.: mikset?.
Tommi: en mä tiää ku, mun serkut sano et se on tosi vaikeeta.

When the interviewer asks Tommi *ooksä kuullu koskaan saksaa?. miltä se kuulostaa, ooksä koskaan?*, (have you ever heard German?. what does it sound like, have you ever?.), Tommi tells that *no meidän luokkalaisia jotkut tytöt ni aina puhuu ni, musta tuntuu et se on vähän helppoo*. (well some girls at my class always speak so, I think it's really easy.). On the basis of this response, Tommi's belief about ease of German, then, is based on the conclusions he has drawn when having heard his classmates speaking German. As the interviewer asks about Tommi's view of French, Tommi answers by reporting what his brother has told him: *mun isoveli lukee sitä ni se sano et se on aika vaikeeta, se ei osaa paljoo*. (my big brother studies it so he said that it's quite difficult, he doesn't know it much.). When the interviewer asks about Italian, Tommi says *en (osaa) ikinä* (I will never know it), and as the interviewer asks *entäs, haluaisiksä oppia venäjää?*, (what about, would you like to learn Russian?.) Tommi says *en* (no). When asked *mikset?*. (why not?.), Tommi says *en mä tiää ku, mun serkut*

sano et se on tosi vaikeeta. (I don't know because, my cousins said that it was really difficult.). In these utterances Tommi, then, brings forth beliefs according to which foreign languages may be difficult. As was discussed in excerpt 18, he at the same time brings forth that he tells what other people have said to him. The comparison of excerpts 33 and 34 shows the variability of Tommi's belief:

Excerpt 34

Int.: joo, entäs onko, tärkeätä sit sellanen, eh, tärkeätä vaan että, onko yleensä ihmisten vaikee vai helppo, oppia vieraita kieliä?
Tommi: no, pienenä se on tosi helppo mutta sitte ku, jos on aikuisena eikä oo lukenu ja on työtön ni sit ku menee jonneki, niille kursseille ni se on tosi vaikeeta, (---)
Int.: miksi se on, miks se on sun mielestä pienenä helpompaa?
Tommi: no, sillen sen oppii helpommin.

In excerpt 34, when being asked *onko yleensä ihmisten vaikee vai helppo, oppia vieraita kieliä?* (is it usually difficult or easy for people, to learn foreign languages?), Tommi says: *no, pienenä se on tosi helppo mutta sitte ku, jos on aikuisena eikä oo lukenu ja on työtön ni sit ku menee jonneki, niille kursseille ni se on tosi vaikeeta*, (well when one is small it is really easy but then when, if you are an adult and you haven't studied and you are unemployed so then when you go somewhere, to those courses then it is really difficult.). According to this part of the dialogue Tommi seems to believe firmly that it is easy for children in general to learn foreign languages. As was discussed in excerpt 26, the references to working life suggest that his belief is based on somebody else's words. As to excerpt 33, Tommi first brings up a belief that German is an easy language and a bit later that French and Russian are difficult. In addition, he states that he will never know Italian. Thus, Tommi's utterances at the beginning of excerpt 33 and in excerpt 34 seem to support each other but the comparison of the latter part of excerpt 33 and excerpt 34 shows an inconsistency: on the one hand, Tommi seems to believe that French and Russian are difficult for his significant others who most probably are still children, and on the other hand that it is very easy for children to learn foreign languages. It is possible, then, that this is due to different voices getting intertwined in the belief construction.

5.2.2 The context of the dialogue

This section will focus on examples of the possible effect of the interview context on how the beliefs get constructed and the variability occurring during the construction. Excerpt 35 begins by the interviewer asking Heikki *mitä mieltä sä oot tosta englannin kirjottamisesta, onkse helppoo vai vaikeeta?*. (what do you think about writing English, is it easy or difficult?):

Excerpt 35

- Int.: jees, sulle tulee Aku Ankka, ((tauko)) joo, ai niin vielä yks asia tosta tota, mitä mieltä sä oot tosta englannin kirjottamisesta, onkse helppoo vai vaikeeta?
Heikki: on se kyllä aika vaikeeta.
Int.: miks?. miltä se tuntuu, mikä siinä on?.
Heikki: no siinon niitä kaikkia, outoja kirjaimia sit kaikkia niitä, kaksoispisteitä ja muita.

It is probable that in his response *on se kyllä aika vaikeeta*. (it is quite difficult .) Heikki conveys his own experiences of writing English as he already has some. This is confirmed by Heikki's answer to the question *miks?* (why); when telling that *siinon niitä kaikkia, outoja kirjaimia sit kaikkia niitä, kaksoispisteitä ja muita*. (it has all those, strange letters then all those, colons and others.) Heikki gives examples of the things that cause difficulty. Interestingly, among them is colon. It seems, then, that writing in general, with its rules considering for example punctuation, and not only writing English may sometimes seem difficult. In excerpt 35, then, the general difficulty in writing is reflected in Heikki's response to a question considering the writing of English.

Later in the interview topic ease/difficulty appears again:

Excerpt 36

- Int.: selevä, okei, no niin, sitte semmonen kysymys että miks sä halusit valita, miks sä halusit lukee englantia?.
Heikki: no se on mun mielestä kaikkein helpoin.
Int.: joo, tyk-, onkse tärkeä kieli sun mielestä?.
Heikki: no, kyllä se aika tärkeä ku aika monessa maassa niinni englantiaki puhutaan.
Int.: joo, onkse susta helppoo?.
Heikki: ((tauko)) no on se aika helppoo.
Int.: joo, onks siinä mitään vaikeeta?. se kirjottaminen nyt on kun, mutta mites tota, muuten, onks ne sanat onkse helppo ääntää?.
Heikki: no jotkut on aika vaikeita.
Int.: niinku, mitkä sanat?.
Heikki: en oikein muista.

Heikki's answer to the question *miks sä halusit lukee englantia?*. (why did you want to learn English?.) is *no se on mun mielestä kaikkein helpoin*. (well I think it is the easiest.). According to the dialogue in an earlier part of the interview, Heikki has heard other languages, at least German and French both of which he considers a bit odd. Thus, he has some own experiences about other foreign languages which may affect the belief construction here so that he may describe English as the easiest foreign language in his opinion. The dialogue continues with the question *onkse susta helppoo?*. (do you think it is easy?.), pronoun 'it' referring to English. Heikki's response after a pause is *no on se aika helppoo*. (well it is quite easy.) But when the interviewer asks whether there is anything difficult, whether the words are easy to pronounce, Heikki says: *no jotkut on aika vaikeita*. (well some are quite difficult.) On the basis of excerpts 35 and 36, then, Heikki's view of English, when it comes to the topic ease/difficulty, seems to vary during the dialogue. In a general level Heikki seems to believe that English is relatively easy, even the easiest foreign language. But when the interviewer specifies the question more, trying to make Heikki pay attention to different areas of the language (eg. writing or pronunciation), he says there is something difficult in it. It seems, then, that in addition to own experiences and possible voices of other people from earlier dialogues, the way the interviewer phrases her questions, seems to affect the construction of Heikki's beliefs here.

Also Emilia's utterances in excerpts 37 and 38 show the variability of the beliefs considering the topic ease/difficulty.

Excerpt 37

- Int.: joo, joo, entäs tota, onks, miten helppoo tai vaikeeta niinku kirjottaa tai lukee sitä englanninkielistä tekstiä?
 Emilia: ((tauko)) no, on se aika vaikeeta.
 Int.: joo, mikä siinon vaikeeta?
 Emilia: no jos ei tiiä jotain sanaa ni sit on aika vaikee tietää.
 Int.: joo, mitä sitte, mitä sä teet sillon jos et sä niinku, tiiä jotain sanaa?
 Emilia: noo, ((tauko)), mä saatan kattoo jostain kirjasta.
 Int.: joo, jees. entäs tollanen, ku pitää tehdä kotitehtäviä ja sitte kirjottaa niitä englannin sanoja ni onks se hankalaa (vai) vaikeeta?
 Emilia: no, ei se kauheen vaikeeta oo.
 Int.: joo, mitäs jos ei muista, miten joku sana kirjoitetaan, mitä sä sitten?
 Emilia: mä katon siitä englannin kirjasta.
 Int.: joo, hyvä, okei. tota, ((tauko)) ää, ooksä koskaan nähny ihan oikeeta englanninkielistä kirjaa?.

When the interviewer asks *onks, miten helppoo tai vaikeeta niinku kirjottaa tai lukee sitä englanninkielistä tekstiä?*. (how easy or difficult is it to write or read that English text?.), Emilia's answer after a pause is *no, on se aika vaikeeta*. (well, it is quite

difficult.) The interviewer asking more specifically what is difficult in it, Emilia answers *no jos ei tiää jotain sanaa ni sit on aika vaikee tietää.* (well if you don't know some word then it is quite difficult to know.) After that the interviewer asks *mitä sä teet sillon jos et sä niinku, tiää jotain sanaa?.* (what do you do then if you don't uh, know some word?.) and Emilia tells that *mä saatan kattoo jostain kirjasta.* (I may check from some book.). When the interviewer asks *ku pitää tehdä kotitehtäviä ja sitte kirjottaa niitä englannin sanoja ni onkse hankalaa (vai) vaikeeta?.* (when you have to do homework and then write those English words so is it difficult (or) difficult?.) Emilia's response is *no, ei se kauheen vaikeeta oo.* (well, it's not terribly difficult.). This fourth question-answer sequence is still followed by the interviewer's question about what Emilia does then if she does not remember some word and Emilia's response is *no mä katon siitä englannin kirjasta.* (well I look from that English book.).

As excerpt 37 shows, on the one hand Emilia seems to think that writing or reading English text is quite difficult. On the other hand, writing English words when doing homework is not that difficult in her opinion. It is possible that Emilia's belief seems so different in her fourth response if compared with the first three responses because she has just answered the question about what she does when not knowing. Thus, she is already thinking about a way to manage a situation of not remembering a word and because of that the situation does not seem so difficult. The surrounding dialogue and the way the interviewer phrases her questions, then, seem to affect the construction of Emilia's beliefs. As to excerpt 38, it shows one more side of Emilia's beliefs about the topic ease/difficulty of English.

Excerpt 38

Int.: aika hyvä joo, ((tauko)) mites tota, sä valitsit nyt englannin ensimmäisenä vieraana kielenä. halu-, miks sä valitsit sen?
 Emilia: no ku se on aika helppoo ja mä osasin ennestään sitä ku mullon semmonen oma kirjaki.
 Int.: aha, ahaa minkälainen kirja se on?
 Emilia: se on semmonen, missä on joitaki semmosia sarjakuvia niin niissä, niissä ne juttelee englanniks ja sit siinon suomeks ja sitte sillee miten ne lausutaan.
 Int.: aha, joo, mistä sä sen sait?
 Emilia: no, mun kummitädiltä.
 Int.: joo, miten vanha sä olit sillon ku sä sait sen?
 Emilia: mm, seittämän varmaan.

Here, once again, the topic ease arises when the interviewer asks the child why s/he chose English for the first foreign language. Emilia's answer begins *no ku se on aika helppoo* (well because it is quite easy). Thus, here Emilia states a belief that English is quite easy although she at the beginning of excerpt 37 said that it is quite difficult to

write or read English text. Thus, like Heikki in excerpt 35, also Emilia seems to believe in a general level that English is quite easy, but when asked more specific question about English, difficulty comes up in the speech. The comparison of Heikki's and Emilia's answers in different parts of their interviews shows that their beliefs considering the topic appear to be variable and even somewhat contradictory in relation to each other. It seems that the type of question, how the interviewer asks about the topic and which sides of it get emphasised in the emerging dialogue and the process of the interview as a whole have an effect on what kind of and in which manner a belief is expressed in the situation. In some cases the knowledge based on the children's own experience seems to come up only when the interviewer asks them to consider the issue more thoroughly or from a particular point of view.

Dufva (2003:136) argues that beliefs may incorporate several different, possibly also contradictory, perspectives. The data of the present study supports this argument. The process of analysis in section 5.2 revealed that sometimes the children's beliefs seemed to change during the interview. Thus, sometimes there even seemed to be a contradiction in what a child said about ease/difficulty at one place if compared with what s/he said at some other place.

6 DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to shed light on the occurrence of different voices in children's beliefs about the ease and difficulty of foreign languages as they appeared in interviews. In addition, the nature of the beliefs was also considered in the light of the background theory and the data of the present study and some general observations on the contents of the beliefs were made. In this final chapter a general overview of the findings of the study will be given and they will be compared with the results of the earlier studies on learner beliefs within the Bakhtinian-Vygotskian framework. The present study will also be evaluated.

First, a couple of comments on the contents of the data. On the basis of them the general belief among the children seems to be that English is easier than other foreign languages. This may be due to its position as a lingua franca and as a language of the Western consumer and entertainment market. It is almost impossible to avoid hearing and seeing a lot of English in Finland. Therefore, English probably had felt more familiar to the children than other foreign languages even before they had started studying it at school. The results of the present study contributed to the view of Alanen (2003), Aro (2009), Dufva et. al (1996) and Dufva (2003) on the characteristics of learner beliefs. The beliefs about the ease/difficulty of the foreign languages are not unambiguous and knowledge about them not monolithic. Instead, the analysis showed that beliefs are variable. Sometimes a belief about an issue might vary even during one and the same interview. The results also support the view of consciousness as a continuum from unconscious to conscious.

The division of the ease/difficulty extracts of the data into groups containing 'I', 'other' and 'no-clear-indication' voices showed that the pieces of dialogue selected for the analysis, i.e. the pieces in which ease/difficulty was talked about, contained relatively little reported speech in which the child explicitly mentioned another person as the original (to her/him) source of what s/he said. The analysis also showed that the references to the children themselves ('I'-voices) or other people occurred in variable ways, suggesting different degrees of appropriation of and commitment to the views represented by the beliefs. As to 'no-clear-indication'-excerpts, despite the lack of clear reference to 'I' or 'other', they sometimes occurred in a way which suggested the

possible source of voice behind them. Sometimes the children's answers also contained features which suggested that they were about to appropriate a belief they had heard from someone else but their expression of it was not totally fluent yet. On the basis of the way the child spoke about the issue, then, it seemed like s/he knew that this was what s/he was supposed to say as an answer to a question about the particular issue, but s/he stumbled a bit on it or seemed to try to remember what should be said.

The analysis also showed that in some cases a child's belief seemed to vary during the interview. When thinking about possible factors which might have caused this kind of variation, it seemed that the context of the interview and voices from some earlier dialogues the child had participated in might have been the reasons. The data supports a view that beliefs are both stable and variable, they are dynamic and situated. Also, it seems that awareness raising is needed sometimes. As Dufva et al. (1996) found, sometimes a belief seems to be very vague at first, but as the issue is discussed further, it becomes clearer. The data, then, seem to support Dufva's (2003:139-140; original italics) arguments that often a belief is inarticulate and that "*somebody* or *something* is needed in order to evoke the experience and lay ground for the belief to be articulated". Similarly as in Alanen's (2003) study, the data also exemplified co-construction of a belief in the process.

Interview as a method for collecting data about beliefs has its shortcomings. A question arises about the limitations of taking children's conceptual formulations as evidence of what and how they think (Edwards 1993b:207, as quoted in Aro 2009:156). Thus, as also pointed out by Aro (2009:156), the data shows us what the children *say* they think or do and not necessarily what they think or do. Moreover, as was discussed in the theoretical background and also shown by the data of the present study, variability is one characteristic of beliefs and the context of the interview seemed to be one factor affecting their construction. The beliefs, then, could have been somewhat different if the interviewer had phrased her/his questions differently or brought forth different points in them. It also has to be remembered that in a qualitative study such as the present one, the results are based on the writer's interpretation of the data.

However, because of the fluctuating nature of beliefs, the use of an interview as a method of data collection seems well-founded. If compared with some other methods of data collection, for example a questionnaire, it seemed to give deeper insights into the

variable nature of beliefs. This, of course, took place at the cost of generalizability of the results. As there was no statistical analysis in the study, then, no generalizations can be made on the basis of it. But the purpose, after all, was not to produce generalizations but to shed light on the occurrence of different voices in the dialogue of the interview. If the data had been collected in some way which produces a large amount of relatively fixed kind of data which would have been easy to analyze quantitatively, some interesting features about the dialogical nature of beliefs might have stayed out of sight.

As was discussed in section 2.1, mediational means may sometimes constrain action. This applies also to beliefs if they are seen as one type of mediational means. The general belief seems to be that English is an easy language. In case the child has difficulties in learning it, then, how does it affect her/his view of her/himself as a learner? Does it make her/him believe that s/he has no language aptitude and thereby influence her/his orientation towards studying languages? An interesting topic for future research would be to clarify whether slogan-like beliefs can become used as self-regulative beliefs, even if a person has no experience of her/his own of the issue the belief considers or her/his experiences are in conflict with the general belief.

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APPENDIX 1: Transcription conventions

Välimerkit osoittavat joko sävelkulkua tai taukoa tai molempia. (The punctuation shows either intonation or pause or both.)

Taukoa edeltävä sävelkulku (The intonation preceding a pause)

. selvästi laskeva (clearly falling)

, tasainen (even)

; epäselvä (unclear)

? edeltävällä ilmauksella kysymysfunktio (the preceding expression has a question function)

(--) sananpituinen epäselvä jakso (a word-long unclear sequence)

(---) sanaa pitempi epäselvä jakso (an unclear sequence longer than a word)

(sillä) epäselvästi kuultu sana (an unclearly heard word)

// puhunnos keskeytetään (the utterance is interrupted)

-sana jää kesken (the word remains uncompleted)

vinoviivat osoittavat päällekkäiset puhunnat (slashes show overlapping speech)

esim. (for example) /tietokoneen ääressä/

/joo pelaaksä/

kaksinkertaisissa sulkeissa litteroijan kommentit esim. ((tauko)) (the transcriber's comments in double brackets for example ((pause)))

APPENDIX 2: The interview schedule

Lasten tieto äidinkielestä ja vieraasta kielestä

Joulukuu 1998

Haastattelemme tässä sinua *sinun omista mielipiteistäsi* lukemisesta ja kirjoittamisesta (ja sen sellaisesta) ja sitten myös suomen kielestä ja muista kielistä. Aluksi me kysellään myös vähän sinusta itsestäsi ja sinun harrastuksista. Sinä olet muiden teidän luokkalaisten kanssa tässä meidän tutkimuksessa mukana jossa kysellään lasten mielipiteitä ja omia ajatuksia tästä asiasta. (Keväällä tehdään myös sitten “testejä”, “kokeita”??). Saat nyt itse kertoa ihan mitä ajattelet, koska tässä on tärkeintä sinun oma mielipiteesi.

(1) Perhe

-nimi, ikä

-ketä perheeseesi kuuluu? sisarukset: iso- vai pikkuveljiä tai -siskoja? lemmikkejä?

-oletko aina asunut Jyväskylässä? ellei, missä?

-mummot ja vaarit, muut sukulaiset (missä päin Suomea asuvat? asuuko sukulaisia ulkomailla?)

(2) Harrastukset

-jäähkiekko, jalkapallo (fudis), baletti, voimistelu, uinti, kuvis, kansantanssi, partio, kerhot, tietokoneet

(3) “Lukemisharrastus”/kirjat, Kirjeenvaihto, kirjeenvaihtokaverit

-luetko kirjoja, minkälaisista kirjoista pidät? (kuvakirjat, sarjakuvakirjat, “tietokirjat”, satukirjat)

-luetko joka päivä jotain? onko teillä “läksyjä”, kotitehtäviä?

-luetaanko (tai onko luettu) sinulle ääneen kotona? minkälaisia kirjoja, kuka lukee?

-kuunteletko tai kuuntelitko pienempänä esimerkiksi satukasetteja tai muita kasettikirjoja?

-onko sinulla itselläsi kirjoja?

-onko teillä kotona (paljon) kirjoja? kenellä, minkälaisia kirjoja (työ, harrastus, viihde...)? kuka lukee, kuinka paljon?

-käytkö kirjastossa, onko sinulla kirjastokortti; lainaatko koulun kirjastosta?(Astrid Lindgren; Pepit etc.)

-onko sinulla jotain lempikirjaa tai kirjailijaa?

-oletko koskaan kiinnittänyt huomiota siihen, minkä maalaisia ne kirjat on? missä ne tapahtuu?

-tapahtuuko ne Englannissa? Amerikassa? Australiassa? Ruotsissa?

-mistä sä tiedät missä ne tapahtuu? (sanotaanko niissä, millasia nimiä ihmisillä niissä on? jne.)

-oletko koskaan lukenut englanninkielistä kirjaa? oletko koskaan nähnyt englanninkielistä kirjaa?

-oletko koskaan nähnyt englantia kirjoitettuna muualla kuin oppikirjassa? missä? (mainokset, TV, elokuvat?)

-luetko mieluummin kirjoja jotka tapahtuu Suomessa? vai riippuuko se?

-millä tavalla sä tykkää kirjoittaa? isot kirjaimet (tikku), pikku kirjaimet (tekstaus), kauno?

-onko sulla kirjeenvaihtokaveria?

-mistä?

-onko sulla päiväkirja? kirjoitatko sä siihen?

-onko sulla Ystäväni -kirjaa? Ootko sä kirjottanut sellaseen itse?
-mitä muuta sä oot kirjottanut?
-käytätkö sä tietokonetta? e-mailia?, irkussa?

-mitä hyötyä sinun mielestäsi lukemisesta on?
-onko kivaa, hyödyllistä, tärkeää osata lukea ja kirjoittaa? entäs jos ei osaisi lukea ja kirjoittaa?

-osaatko lukea englantia? mikä siinä on helppoa/vaikeaa? (kirjoittaminen)

(4) *Lehdet*

-luetko lehtiä? tilataanko jotain lehteä nimenomaan sinulle (Koululainen, Aku, Nakke, Nalle Puh, Suosikki, Mix, mitä muuta...)?
-ostetaanko tai tilataanko kotiin lehtiä? sanomalehtiä (KSML; Hesari), aikakauslehtiä (Apu, Seura, Kodin kuvalehti, Anna, Me Naiset, Suomen kuvalehti), harrastuslehtiä (autot, hevoset, tietokoneet)...? kuka lukee? luetko itse "aikuisten" lehtiä?
-luetko koskaan ilmaisjakelulehtiä, mainoksia, joita tulee kotiin? (Suur-Jyväskylän lehti, Tiimarin mainokset...)
-puhutaanko lehdissä olevista asioista kotona?
-oletko koskaan lukenut englanninkielisiä lehtiä? millasia? ymmärsitkö sä mitä niissä sanottiin?

(5) *Tietokone*

-onko sinulla kotonasi tietokone?
-oletko käyttänyt tietokonetta koulussa tai jossain muualla?
-mitä teet/olet tehnyt tietokoneella? (pelaaminen, nettailu, sähköposti, piirtäminen, kirjoittaminen; miten osaat käyttää esim. pelejä (jos et osaa lukea); englanninkieliset / suomenkieliset)
-pelaatko sä englanninkielisiä pelejä?osaatko sä käyttää englanninkielisiä pelejä?
-tiedätkö mitä tarkoittaa PLAY, SAVE, QUIT, LOAD, SETUP? KEYBOARD? MOUSE?
CONTROLS? JOYSTICK? PLAYER? EASY? HARD? MEDIUM? SKILL?

(6) *Televisio, videot, elokuva, radio, musiikki*

-katsotko joka päivä TV:ta? mitä ohjelmia katsot? mikä on lempiohjelmiasi?
-katsotko aikuisten (Kauniit ja rohkeat) vai lasten ohjelmia (sunnuntaiamun piirretyt, Animaaniset..)?
-mitä ohjelmia haluaisit katsoa, mutta et saa?
-katsotko koskaan esimerkiksi uutisia? onko helppo ymmärtää mitä uutisissa sanotaan? (ellei, miksi?)
-katsotko enää lasten ohjelmia (esim. Pikku Kakkosta)? (jos "lapsellisia", miksi?)
-tykkäätkö mainoksista; mikä on hyvä mainos (muistatko ulkoa jotain mainostekstejä tai sanontoja?)
-tykkäätkö englanninkielisistä vai suomenkielisistä ohjelmista?
-luettele englanninkielisiä ohjelmia
-kuunteletko radiota? (missä, millaisia ohjelmia?)

-katsotko videoita? minkälaisia? (Muumit, Disneyn piirretyt, jännärit...)
-onko ne englanninkielisiä vai suomenkielisiä?

-käytkö elokuvissa? mitä elokuvia olet käynyt katsomassa (Disney, suomalaiset, Eläintohtori)? kuka on suosikinäyttelijä? mikä paras elokuva?
-onko ne englanninkielisiä vai suomenkielisiä?

-ootko kskaan kuunnellut mitä ne sanoo videolla tai TV:ssä tai elokuvissa englanniksi?
-muistatko yhtään englantia niistä? mitä? Mitä tarkoittaa I love you? Onks se opetettu tunnilla?
-mistä sä kuulit sen? Muistaksä mitään muita juttuja?
-tiedäksä mikä on sama ruotsiksi? jne.

-kuunteletko paljon musiikkia? "lastenlauluja" (Karuselli, Tenavatähti, Bestis-kasetit) vai "poppia"?
-mikä on suosikkilaulajasi tai -bändisi? (Spice Girls, Backstreet Boys, Aikakone, heavy...)
-tykkäätkö enemmän suomalaisesta vai ulkomaisesta? (ymmärrätkö sanoja?)
-muistaksä mitään englanninkielisiä laulujen nimiä? bändien nimiä? Mistä sä tiedät että ne on englantia?

(8) Englanti ja muut vieraat kielet

-puhuuko sun vanhemmat tai kukaan muu sun perheestä vieraita kieliä? mitä? (ruotsia, englantia, saksaa, venäjää, ranskaa jne.)
-osaatko itse puhua jotain muuta kieltä kuin suomea? mistä/miten olet oppinut sitä?
-entä osaaksä puhua englantia?
-mikset/miksi/miten paljon
-mitä muita vieraita kieliä tiedät? (oletko kuullut puhuttavan niitä? missä?)
-oletko käynyt ulkomailla? (missä, kenen kanssa? lomamatkalla? tiedätkö mitä kieltä siellä puhutaan?); oletko asunut ulkomailla?
-opitko siellä yhtään jotain vierasta kieltä? (esim. sanoja: kiitos, päivää jne.)
-oletko tavannut/ tunnetko jonkun, joka ei osaa puhua suomea? oletko yrittänyt jutella hänen kanssaan? millä kielellä?

-miksä sä halusit lukee englantia?
-tykkääksä englannista?
-onko susta tärkeää osata englantia? ootkos sä tarvinnut englantia koskaan (pelit yms.)
-mihin sitä sun mielestä vois käyttää?

-onko susta englanti helppoo vai vaikeaa
-mikä siinä on helppoo? vaikeaa?
-muistatko sä hyvin sanoja?
-olisiko sinusta tärkeää osata vieraita kieliä?, minkä takia?
-haluaisitko itse oppia jotain muuta vierasta kieliä?
-mikä sinusta olisi kiva kieli? luuletko että kieliä oppii helposti?

(9) Kielen vaihtelu: kirjakieli / yleiskieli / oikeakielisyys / puhekieli / murteet

-oletko huomannut, että eri ihmiset puhuisivat eri paikoissa puhutaan eri lailla (vaikka sukulaisesi jotka asuvat muualla kuin Jyväskylässä)?
-tiedätkö eri murteita? (miten esimerkiksi niissä sanottaisiin?)
-tunnetko ihmisiä, jotka puhuvat eri murretta kuin sinä? kuka/ketkä?
-puhutaanko sinusta Jyväskylässä murretta? minkälaista se on?
(-onko sinusta hyvä puhua murretta vai kirjakieltä?)

-puhutaanko sinun mielestäsi eri lailla kuin kirjoitetaan? (vertaa esim: uutiset, sanomalehti, koulukirja; se millä lailla itse puhut?) missä asioissa kirjoitettaisiin eri lailla kuin sanotaan tai puhutaan?

-puhutaanko koulussa ja kotona sinun mielestäsi eri lailla? oletko huomannut jotain eroja? (jos ajattelet vaikka miten äiti puhuu ja opettaja tai rehtori puhuu?)
-onko sinusta ollut hankala, että koulussa pitää istua hiljaa ja saa puhua vasta sitten kun on viitannut? (onko mukavaa, kun kaikki ei hälise yhteen ääneen?)

-puhutko sinä itse sinun mielestä eri lailla kuin aikuiset (vaikka a) ope b) äiti /iskä)?
-puhutko sinä sinun mielestä eri lailla silloin kun sinä puhut vaikka a) opettajalle tai b) omille kavereille mitä eroa siinä olisi?
-onko sinusta yleensä hankalaa vai helppoa puhua aikuisten kanssa? vieraitten kanssa? käydä asioilla vaikka kaupassa tai pankissa?

-millä lailla sinun mielestäsi puhutaan oikein? (onko siinä sinun mielestä sellaisia asioita, mitä pitää muistaa tai millä lailla ei saa sanoa?)
-mikä olisi sinusta huonoa kieltä? (onko se jotain jota tehdään "väärin", onko se jos sanotaan "tuhma sana" vai mitä?)
-kuka sinun mielestä voi määrätä, mikä on hyvää ja mikä huonoa kieltä? (kirja, äiti, isä, opettaja, sinä itse?)
-korjaako äiti/isä/ opettaja/ joku muu sinun puhettasi? miltä se tuntuu?
-onko joku joskus nauranut jollekin mitä sanot tai sanoit? tai onko sinusta joku joskus sanonut jotain hassusti tai väärin ja sinua on naurattanut

-ooksä huomannut koskaan että englantia puhutaan vähän eri tavoin?
-tiedäksä että Englannissa puhutaan englantia vähän eri tavalla kun Amerikassa?
-tiedäksä sen vai ooksa tosiaan kuullu että ne puhuu eri tavalla?
-entä TV-sarjoissa?

(10) Leikit, vitsit, lorut

-leikittekö te välitunnilla kahdestaan jonkun kanssa vai isolla porukalla? millaisia leikkejä? leikkiikö tytöt ja pojat keskenään? millaisia asioita te puhutte välitunnilla?
-osaatko loruja (maalari maalasi taloa...ex-leidi, ex-leidi, tsika-tsika-bum-bum...)?
(-onko sinulla jotain salakieliä tai merkkikieliä? (kontinkieli...))
-tykkäätkö kuunnella tai kertoa vitsejä? (haluatko kertoa vitsin?) tykkäätkö kuunnella tai kertoa kummitusjuttuja, kauhujuuttuja?

Kiitokset, pikku osallistumislahja...Koodinimi?