SUBJECT EXPERTISE AMONG TEACHER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AND SWEDISH - The ideal language teacher and self-efficacy beliefs

Master´s thesis
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English
Autumn 2015

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kielten laitos
Tekijä – Author Maria Tupala	
Työn nimi – Title Subject expertise among teacher students of English and Swedish - The ideal language teacher and self-efficacy beliefs	
Oppiaine – Subject Englanti	Työn laji – Level Pro Gradu - tutkielma
Aika – Month and year Elokuu 2015	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 74 sivua + liite

Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Käsitykset kielen oppimisesta ja opettamisesta ovat muuttuneet kielen rakenteita korostavista näkemyksistä yhä enemmän kommunikatiivisiksi (Abrahamsson 2009). Tämän tutkielman lähtökohtana onkin havainnoida näiden muuttuvien kielikäsitysten heijastumista kielenopettajaopiskelijoiden näkemyksissä selvittämällä, mitä kielitaidon osa-alueita he pitävät kaikista tärkeimpinä. Tutkielma keskittyy toisaalta oppiainekohtaiseen aineenhallintaan, minkä tarkoitus on kartoittaa opiskelijoiden valmiuksia kohdata tulevan työelämän haasteet. Jotta opiskelijoiden sopeutuminen työelämään tapahtuisi mahdollisimman sujuvasti, tulee heidän luonnollisesti hallita opettamansa kieli mahdollisimman hyvin. Kiviniemen (2000) mukaan aineenhallinta on yksi epävarmuutta aiheuttavista osa-alueista opettajien keskuudessa. Lisäksi tutkimuksen kohteena on tarkastella eroavaisuuksia englannin ja ruotsin opiskelijoiden välillä. Tutkielmalle asetetut tutkimuskysymykset ovat 1) Mitä kielitaidon osa-alueita opiskelijat pitävät kaikista tärkeimpinä opettajan asiantuntijuutta ajatellen? 2) Kuinka itsevarmoja opiskelijat ovat oman kielitaitonsa suhteen? ja 3) Mitä eroavaisuuksia englannin ja ruotsin opiskelijoiden välillä on? Tutkimus toteutettiin sähköisenä kyselynä, jonka tulokset analysoitiin IBM SPSS Statistics -ohjelman ja tilastollisen t-testin avulla. Tämän lisäksi avokysymysten tulkinnassa hyödynnettiin sisällönanalyysiä ja aineiston kvantifiointia. Osallistujia tutkimukseen oli 102, joista 50 vastasi kysymyksiin englannin ja 52 ruotsin kielen osalta. Kyselyn tulokset osoittivat, että opiskelijat pitävät kielitaidon osa-alueista tärkeimpinä sosiokulttuurisia taitoja, kun taas formaali kielitaito nähdään vähemmän merkityksellisenä. Opiskelijoiden käsitys omasta aineenhallinnasta näyttäytyi kuitenkin vahvimpana juuri formaalin kielitaidon kategoriassa, mikä on merkittävä tulos kielenopettajakoulutuksen kannalta, mikäli opiskelijoiden sosiokulttuurisia taitoja halutaan kehittää. Opiskelijoiden itsevarmuus oman kielitaidon suhteen oli yleisesti ottaen hyvä, mikä voidaan tulkita osoituksena opettajankoulutuksen toimivuudesta. Osallistujaryhmien välillä havaittiin kuitenkin tilastollisesti merkittävä eroavaisuus, jonka mukaan ruotsin kielen opiskelijoiden käsitys omasta kielitaidosta oli englannin opiskelijoita alhaisempi. Tämä eroavaisuus olisikin sopiva aihe jatkotutkimukselle. Lisäksi olisi hyödyllistä tutkia opiskelijoiden aineenhallinnan kehittymistä työelämässä valmistumisen jälkeen.

Asiasanat – Keywords
language teaching, subject teacher, expert, proficiency, competence, self-efficacy, confidence

Säilytyspaikka – Depository
JYX

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1. Introduction

Second language learning and teaching has come to be associated with an increasingly sociocultural and communicative perspective, overshadowing the traditional approaches that used to highlight the importance of grammar, vocabulary and using the textbook (see e.g. Abrahamsson 2009). Even though the transition is taking place, traces of the old-fashioned way of thinking may still continue to appear in both students´ and teachers´ unconscious behavior. Reflecting the ongoing change, this study will look into university language teacher students´ views on ideal language proficiency in order to find out what aspects of language are considered as ultimately significant. Additionally, this study will focus on self-efficacy beliefs, the purpose of which is to find out how confident the students feel about their language skills as future language teachers.

As Kiviniemi (2000: 64) points out, teachers tend to experience their first professional years as surprisingly heavy and overwhelming, and they might sometimes perceive their education as insufficient to meet the demands of working life. Since teaching appears this challenging especially in the initial part of the career, it is relevant to study language teacher students´ self-efficacy beliefs prior to their transition to the working life. It is my intention to find out how well-equipped the students feel to meet the challenges of their future work. Self-efficacy provides also a practical tool to predict well-being, because the higher self-efficacy beliefs the students hold about themselves, the more likely they are to endure difficulties and find enjoyment in their work in the future. Demonstrating slight insecurities among teachers, Kiviniemi (2000:64) found out that subject knowledge belongs to one of the categories that teachers perceive as problematic. Moreover, Llewellyn-Williams (2012) implied a relatively significant lack of language competence among teacher trainees.

The pedagogical side of teaching being tightly connected to subject knowledge and a highly relevant focus of research itself, this study will highlight the importance of subject matter knowledge. After all, it can be considered an initial building block for the construction of a

qualified language teacher´s professionalism. Subject knowledge is essential because it would be impossible to teach something if there was a lack of knowledge in the teacher´s repertoire. Subject knowledge is, therefore, a prerequisite for teaching with regard to any school subject. Secondly, teachers are expected to possess a subject knowledge that extends beyond the curriculum in order to allow more elaborate understanding and better knowledge structuring in class. Finally, subject knowledge associates quite heavily with teacher authority. In addition to pedagogical knowledge and subject knowledge, language teachers are naturally expected to be able to explain linguistic phenomena to pupils, which requires adequate metalinguistic knowledge. As the present thesis is limited to focus on subject knowledge alone, metalinguistic knowledge would be a possible focus of further research. To conclude, this study will focus on subject knowledge, and especially language teacher students´ subjective views about their ability to use the language.

A relative number of studies have focused on the development of beginning teachers´ professional identity. For example Nyman (2009) conducted a qualitative study on 11 newly qualified teachers by examining their essays and interviews over a period of four to five years, while Ruohotie-Lyhty (2011) focused on similar type of research on language teachers´ professional development. However, little attention has been paid on subject knowledge itself. A closer connection to language competence was provided by Dufva, Kalaja and Alanen (2007) who studied the construction of language students´ beliefs about language learning and teaching during university studies. Still, the level of language students´ confidence in their own language skills remains to be investigated. The present study will, therefore, add to the research on professional identity development among beginning teachers, providing an insight into the effectiveness of language teacher education, as well as the differences between English and Swedish. Furthermore, the present study can be exploited for further study on not only subject knowledge but also language teaching and pedagogics.

This thesis will begin by looking at language teaching in Finland. Chapter two will clarify the challenges of change that language students go through after graduation. Chapter two will also discuss language teacher education, language teachers´ subject expertise, and the

differences between English and Swedish. Chapters three and four will focus on outlining language competence by referring to Canale and Swain (1980), Johnson (2013), Saville-Troike (2012), Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) as well as the guidelines of The Common European Framework of Reference and The Finnish National Core Curriculum. Chapter five will draw on Bandura´s (1997) self-efficacy theory demonstrating the need for language teacher students to possess positive self-efficacy beliefs in the working life. Chapter six will illustrate the linguistic framework of this study, and chapter seven will cover the methods of data collection and analysis. The results of this study will be presented in chapter eight, and they will be discussed further in chapters nine and ten.

2. Language teaching in Finland

2.1 The difficulty of change

Understanding of second language learning and teaching has undergone drastic changes within the past five decades from structuralist views to the communicative aspects of modern language study (Abrahamsson 2009). In fact, ”language teaching and learning has undergone a ‘cultural turn’ since the emergence of ‘the Communicative Approach’ and ‘Communicative Language Teaching’ in the 1970s.” (Byram, Holmes and Savvides 2013: 251) Educationalists and linguists work with a continuous strive to find current and relevant methods to modernize language teaching, and these modern ideas are imposed to future teachers at universities. Today´s language students in Finland are educated to understand language as a means of communication rather than a set of structures, and to many language teacher students it appears to be self-evident that language teaching should be directed to reflect the communicative ideology. Sercu (2006: 55) notes that it has, in fact, ”become commonplace to state that foreign language learning should be viewed in an intercultural perspective”. She proposes an approach that looks beyond communicative competence and focuses on the development of intercultural competence. To support this view Byram, Holmes and Savvides (2013: 251) characterize intercultural competence to complement communicative competence, which constitute their notion of the ’cultural turn’.

As the shift towards communicative language learning is taking place, the traditional language classroom has to find ways to respond to the fresh breaths of intercultural air. The turning point of these traditions is problematized by Ruohotie-Lyhty and Kaikkonen (2009), whose case-study clarified the impact of personal school experience and teacher education on the work of six beginning language teachers. Their findings revealed that personal school experience has a significant role in constructing the practical knowledge of beginning teachers. Aaltonen and Uusi-Rajasalo (2010: 19), who studied the portfolios of 16 English teacher students, note that beliefs about teaching are shaped by previous school experiences, and they might indeed be unconsciously reflected in teaching behavior later on. Ruohotie-Lyhty and Kaikkonen (2009: 295-296) imply that young teachers possess frail capacity to meet the challenges of societal change with respect to language learning ideologies. This is due to them being ”at the mercy of the school environment” (ibid: 296) in which old-fashioned conventions might still prevail (e.g. frequent use of the textbook). All in all, beginning language teachers find themselves in a pivotal position as they have to find balance between previous school experiences, teacher training, and the conventions of already existing schools and working communities.

Aside from the linguistic view, school is an institution in constant change because of its immediate connection to society as a whole. Kiviniemi (2000:26) clarifies that the Finnish society and school system is changing with postmodernism. According to him, it is typical of the era that a shared societal ideology becomes shattered and replaced with cultural versatility and pluralism. This leads to a lack of order, stability and confidence. Consequently, postmodern citizens are left to deal with instability, transience and insecurity. Judging by Kiviniemi (ibid), beginning language teachers are about to proceed to professionalism in a fragile environment. To accumulate the strain, Nyman (2009: 12) points out that many newly qualified teachers also have to consider their personal circumstances after graduation, because for example family life can be an issue that affects career choices.

Students are evidently about to face multiple communal and individual challenges after graduation. According to Nyman (2010: 1) the initial years of working life are significant to determine the development of teacher identity, which is why it is crucial to study the transition phase. Beginning teachers need to move away from student identities and embrace adulthood in new working environments. This requires individual development of professional identity, which for the relevance of this study, contains advancing and restructuring subject matter knowledge.

2.2 Language teacher education

Finnish universities educate both primary school teachers and so called subject teachers. The distinction between these professions is that primary school teachers teach a variety of subjects at the lower grades of primary school (1-6), whereas subject teachers teach specific school subjects (e.g. languages, biology, mathematics) at various education levels. Primary school teachers´ and subject teachers´ educational pathways differ so that the education for primary school teachers is conducted in the Department of Teacher Education, while the subject teacher education is conducted in cooperation with subject-specific faculties *and* the Department of Teacher Education.

The degree of a language teacher in Finland is a master´s degree consisting of 300 ECTS study points including major (or minor) studies in the Department of Languages as well as 60 ECTS study points of pedagogical studies in the Department of Teacher Education. Subject teacher students are obliged to major in a subject that is taught either in comprehensive or upper secondary school (Subject teacher education, University of Jyväskylä) but for a language teacher the construction of a complete degree implies most commonly majoring in one language and minoring in another, additional language.

The selection of subject teacher education offers two alternatives. One option is to apply to study a school subject in a faculty, after which one can seek to gain access to pedagogical studies later on during university. Another alternative is to apply via a selection system that

grants access to pedagogical studies from the very beginning. This type of direct selection is used in the Department of Languages in the University of Jyväskylä, which is home to most of the participants of the present study. The direct selection is used because it combines subject studies more conveniently with pedagogical studies and provides a straightforward timetable for students.

The overall purpose of subject teacher education is to provide students with extensive qualification for teaching at the levels of comprehensive school, upper secondary school, vocational schools and adult education. To illustrate further, the pedagogical studies of subject teacher education highlight the following aspects.

- Interaction and cooperation
- Learning and instruction
- Education, society and change
- Scientific thinking and knowledge
- Know-how and **expertise** (Phenomena in teacher training 2014-2017, University of Jyväskylä)

It becomes evident that expertise is regarded as one of the core components of a subject teacher´s professional image. The significance of expertise is depicted already in the aims of subject teacher education, which declare that the education should support the growth of autonomous and ethically responsible *experts* who reflect their own behavior analyzing and renewing the educational environment in which they operate (Aims of teacher education, University of Jyväskylä). Expertise is also pointed out by Nyman (2010: 1) according to whom teacher students should be educated to evolve into pedagogically thinking expert teachers.

2.3 Subject expertise

How does one begin to define language teachers´ subject expertise? An obvious response is to say that teachers should master the languages that they teach. They must be proficient users of the language, and they have to be able to refer to metalinguistic knowledge when teaching the language in a classroom. The initial problem, however, is to define language competence.

What are the aspects of language that ultimately belong to a professional language teacher´s repertoire? This leads further to discussion about individual differences. Is it even possible to outline a specific language competence that fits all teachers? Another issue is to consider the pedagogical aspects of teaching, and determine the extent to which they are involved in the definition of subject expertise. While language competence will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three, this section will clarify the relationship between subject expertise and pedagogical knowledge .

Shulman (1986: 9-10) classifies three types of content knowledge: (1) subject matter content knowledge, (2) pedagogical content knowledge and (3) curricular knowledge. His categorization provides an extensive view on teacher knowledge, since subject expertise is immediately associated with the peripheral dimensions of pedagogy and the curriculum in addition to mere language competence. According to Shulman (1986: 9) the first category of subject matter content knowledge consists of the ability to provide students with argumented domain-specific truths. This comprises not only knowledge about how to use the language but also knowledge about metalinguistics. To elaborate, a teacher must be able to explain why particular factual statements are regarded as truthful, why they are worth learning, and how they relate to other facts (Shulman 1986: 9). Borg (2006: 39) concludes Shulman´s subject matter knowledge to involve ”knowledge of the facts of a discipline”.

The second type of content knowledge takes into account the teachability of specific subjects. Shulman (1986: 9-10) characterizes pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as the knowledge that transforms subject matter knowledge into a comprehensible form. This involves for instance knowledge of the factors that affect the learning process (e.g. age and background of the students). Loughran, Berry and Mulhall (2012: 7) further clarify PCK to be reliant on both subject matter knowledge and general pedagogics. They explain that subject matter knowledge would not transfer without subject-specific pedagogical knowledge, while general pedagogical abilities would fall short without knowledge of the subject. PCK lies somewhere in between the other two categories and, therefore, cannot be applied from one subject to another.

Shulman´s (1986) final aspect of subject expertise involves curricular knowledge, which most prominently refers to knowledge of different curriculum materials. According to Shulman

(1986: 10) teachers need to be familiar with a wide range of material resources in order to exploit them most suitably and effectively in teaching. He regards curricular knowledge as an area of expertise rarely emphasized to an adequate extent in teacher training, but as a vital knowledge base that provides teachers with practical ”tools of the trade” (Shulman 1987: 8) for different teaching purposes at different levels. Moreover, Shulman (1986: 10) discusses curricular knowledge in terms of observing the curriculum of other subjects, because teachers should always aim to link their teaching into corresponding topics in simultaneous classes.

As we can see, subject expertise contains multiple dimensions that connect and overlap with each other. In this thesis I will focus on subject matter content knowledge, excluding the notion of metalinguistic knowledge. Nevertheless, since the categories are so closely interlinked, it is rather likely that also metalinguistic knowledknowledgege, pedagogical content knowledge and curricular knowledge will be reflected in the participants´ responses.

2.4 English and Swedish in Finland

The present study will delve into subject expertise among two groups of language teacher students. My intention is to find out how subject expertise is perceived by students of both English and Swedish, and the purpose is to examine the possible differences in the students´ conceptions concerning each language. Language students at university can usually be assumed to possess high level language skills and motivation, but since the status of English and Swedish differs to some extent in Finland, I am aiming to see whether this is reflected in the participants´ answers.

In Finland the study of English usually starts at the age of 9 in primary school, whereas the study of Swedish begins at the age of 13 in secondary school. Therefore, the majority of Finnish students spend significantly more time on studying English than Swedish during their years at school. This timeframe highlights the importance of English, but takes into account the status of Swedish as a national language as well. The status of Swedish in Finland is strongly associated with the history of the nation and its importance is defended with arguments about cultural heritage and all-round education. Only Swedish is obligatory by law, but also English might be perceived as compulsory – in practice. English is often regarded as a self-evident option not only because of its global status and importance but also because it

might be the only language offered in many primary schools. However, only notions of ”mandatory Swedish” have bordered on negative associations. According to Kalaja et al (2011: 65) the obligatoriness of Swedish is often contrasted with presumptions of English as a useful language.

Kalaja et al (2011) investigated 199 university language students´ development as language experts, and the role of agency in learning English and Swedish in Finland by carrying out an open-ended qualitative questionnaire. According to them (2011: 64), language learners possess different beliefs about language learning and teaching, which are absorbed from textbooks, teachers´ comments, lessons and public discussions. Together with personal background, these beliefs shape the actual learning process of specific languages. Kalaja et al (2011: 65) suggest that even though the status of English and Swedish is differentiated by law in Finland, both languages are conveniently on display in the media and in everyday communication. Students are, according to them, offered equal opportunities for linguistic input. It cannot be argued that the Swedish language would not be present in the Finnish media. Whether students actually reach those sources and make use of them, however, is another issue.

The findings of Kalaja et al (2011) indicate that the school environment tends to highlight a traditional type of agency concerning both English and Swedish, referring to aspects of language learning such as grammar, vocabulary and textbook. On the contrary, actual language use gains significance in the leisure environment. Interestingly, however, the study shows that the opportunities for linguistic input and language use are not utilized to a similar extent among the learners. While learners of English appear active outside of school and attempt to make use of the learning opportunities available for them, the learners of Swedish are more likely to avoid these situations. According to Kalaja et al (2011) the distinction might derive from possible negative attitudes towards Swedish, or the fact that English is regarded as a more important focus of study, because of its significant status as a global lingua franca. Kalaja et al (2011) also consider the fact that students might experience English as a stronger linguistic resource, which makes them more inclined to grasp different learning situations to develop their language skills further (Kalaja et al 2011: 72-73). English might, indeed, be a stronger resource for many because there are better possibilities to hear and use

the language in Finland. Even though Swedish is represented in the Finnish media, especially popular culture associates with English-speaking countries to a dominant extent.

3. Subject expertise as language competence

To be able to examine English and Swedish language teacher students´ subject expertise and self-efficacy beliefs, it is relevant to define what kind of aspects one ultimately considers to be involved in language proficiency. As already implied in this thesis, it is easy to make the assumption that language teachers should possess an ideal language competence in which all areas of linguistic knowledge are mastered. This, however, remains an impossible task considering the context-dependent nature of language in which an individual´s linguistic repertoire is determined by various sociocultural factors (e.g. gender, class, personal interests). Stanley (2007: 2) illustrates this by pointing out that it is always people who refer to different phenomena through language, not words. Languages are definitely impossible to pin down to simple comprehensible entities because they are exposed to substantial variability among speakers. In a language classroom, for instance, it might be the case that students find certain aspects of language especially relevant for them (e.g. specific vocabulary of certain hobbies), and the teacher has to find ways to respond to the students´ needs despite a possible lack of knowledge or personal interest in the topic. As I am defining language competence rather exhaustively in this section, it is useful to bear in mind that I am creating an image of an ideal, in fact unattainable, language teacher.

In order to grasp the essence of ideal language proficiency, I will discuss Canale and Swain´s (1980) model of communicative competence, which has been influential in the field of linguistics in terms of dividing language competence into three basic aspects: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic. I will also take a look at Johnson´s (2013) and Saville-Troike´s (2012) introductory textbooks on language learning and teaching in order to provide more detailed examples of linguistic knowledge. These textbooks are also useful to examine because they belong to many language students´ compulsory studies at university, influencing their views about language as a phenomenon. In addition, I will discuss the work of Usó-Juan

and Martinez-Flor (2006), who analyze communicative competence through the four traditional language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Analyzing language from each of these perspectives Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor provide a useful tool for language teachers to plan and organize their teaching in terms of different activities and exercises, because their categorization portrays the four skills in relation to different language competencies. Moreover, Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) provide a renewed insight into language competence, underlining the significance of the intercultural aspect of language learning.

Each model emphasizes different elements of language and makes varying suggestions for categorization. However, the most distinctive tendency is that language is seen from roughly three angles, as suggested by Canale and Swain (1980). All of the models divide language into aspects that are structural (e.g. grammar) and aspects that are more strongly associated with interpersonal relations (e.g. politeness). Excluding Saville-Troike´s (2012) overview on linguistic content knowledge, each model also takes into consideration the strategic aspect of language use. Building on this observation, I will look at language first as (1) a system, then as (2) communication, and finally as (3) strategies.

Before looking into the three categories of language, I will briefly discuss Johnson´s view on language competence, which reflects studies in contrastive analysis and error analysis conducted especially around the 1970´s (Johnson 2013: 66-70, Saville-Troike 2012: 36-40). Johnson (2013: 14-15) notes that aspects of language learning are always linked to comparisons between one´s first language (L1) and the target language (L2). He says that language learning is not only a complex phenomenon that entails acquiring numerous aspects of skill and knowledge, but also affected by a language learner´s linguistic background. Johnson (2013: 15) suggests that the areas of knowledge that language learners find especially problematic would constitute the fundamental areas of linguistic competence that they are supposed to achieve through foreign language learning. The native language of an L2 learner, in other words, shapes the contents of linguistic knowledge that remains to be acquired. To provide an illustration, Johnson (2013: 15) clarifies that the learning of articles is much easier

for a learner whose native language applies a comparable system and vice versa. Even though this appears perfectly reasonable, I find the definition rather limited. Examining language teacher students´ linguistic competence, I am more inclined to focus on what the participants already know about language. The more they know, the higher self-efficacy beliefs they probably hold about themselves.

3.1 Language as a system

Canale and Swain´s (1980) model of communicative competence is based on grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competences, out of which the first category reflects the formal characteristics of language. This is the area of language competence that associates with the structural elements of language and the content knowledge of language as a system. According to Canale and Swain (1980: 29-30) the category contains aspects of grammar such as lexis, morphology, syntax, phonology and sentence-grammar semantics, and these competencies aim to allow language learners to express accurate meaning in utterances. Canale and Swain´s model (1980) has been influential in the field of linguistics, as for instance Yule (2010: 194) characterizes the three components of communicative competence identically. Also Johnson´s (2013) analysis of language competence reflects the much-cited model. Johnson (2013), however, uses the notion of systemic competence in order to describe the technical aspects of language, while Canale and Swain (1980) call this dimension grammatical competence.

Johnson (2013) discusses language competence in terms of systemic, sociolinguistic and strategic competences, and provides detailed examples of language use in each of the different categories. In this section I will focus on systemic competence, which according to him (Johnson 2013: 17) involves sounds (phonetics, phonology), grammar (morphology and syntax), lexis (words and vocabulary) as well as handwriting, spelling and punctuation. He is tempted to characterize the category of systemic competence as the mechanical skills of language, even though in his view language can never be perceived as a completely mechanical phenomenon. Saville-Troike´s (2012: 35) definition of the systemic aspects of language, on the contrary, rely on notions of lexicon, phonology, morphology and syntax.

The language system is discussed by Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) under the title ”linguistic competence”, which belongs to their five-dimensional model of communicative competence. This model is based on the four skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor all of the skills are involved in discourse competence, which lies at the center of their five-dimensional communication model. Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor set the four skills of language learning as a basis because they regard production (speaking and writing) and interpretation (listening and reading) as the core components of successful interaction. Overall, the model discusses aspects of (1) discourse competence, (2) linguistic competence, (3) pragmatic competence, (4) intercultural competence and (5) strategic competence, as Figure 1 illustrates. All of these concepts and the four skills of language learning function in accordance with each other to construct communicative competence in second language learning. (Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor 2006: 16-18) Linguistic competence, according to Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) reflects aspects of phonology, grammar, vocabulary and mechanical conventions.

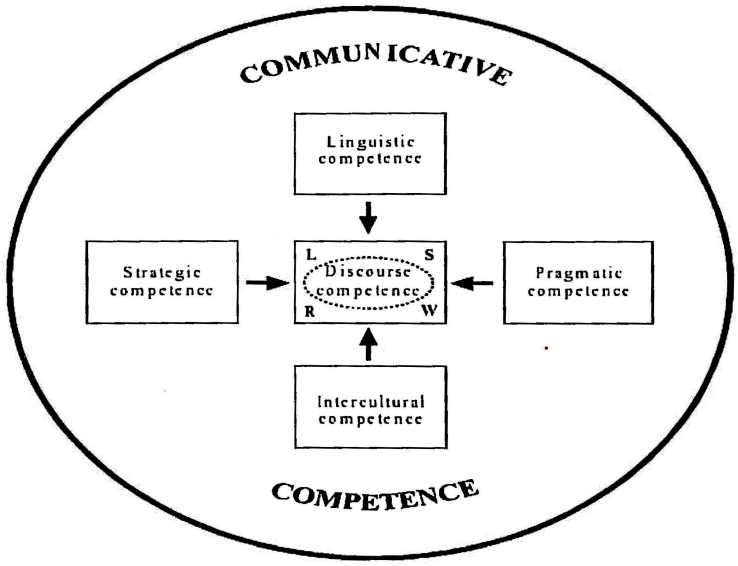


Figure 1. Linguistic competence in Usó-Juan´s and Martinez-Flor´s (2006: 16) model of communicative competence. (L=listening, S=speaking, R=reading, W=writing)

Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor aim to promote language learners´ communicative competence through the four skills of language learning. Their goal is to make language learners aware of the intercultural aspects of language learning, which will develop the learners´ understanding of cultural differences. (Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor 2006: 19) They analyze each of the four skills in terms of the five different competencies presented in their theoretical framework. In each analysis Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor place one of the four skills in the hub of their model of communicative competence (see Figure 1). When for instance listening is analyzed in relation to discourse competence, it illustrates a language user´s ability to hear and understand communicative utterances beyond the sentence level. For further examination, an overview is portrayed in Table 1.

Table 1. The four skills and the five competencies based on Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006: 37-40, 147-151, 268-271, 391-394)

	Discourse competence	**Linguistic competence**	**Pragmatic competence**	**Intercultural competence**	**Strategic competence**
Listening	•language above the sentence level •knowledge of discourse features (markers, coherence, cohesion) •situational context	•grammar •phonology (rhythm, stress intonation) •vocabulary	•situational and participant variables •politeness issues	•background knowledge of the culture •avoiding cultural mis-understanding •non-verbal factors (body language, facial expressions, eye contact)	•cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective lerning strategies •communication strategies
Speaking	•discourse markers (well, oh, okay) •conversational rules (turn-taking) •cohesion and coherence •knowledge of discourse types (genres)	•grammar, phonology and vocabulary •prosodic features (rhythm, stress, intonation)	•the function and appropriateness of utterances •politeness issues (social distance, power, degree of imposition) •register (formal/ informal)	•cultural factors (length of pauses) •non-verbal factors	•learning strategies (repetition) •communication strategies (avoiding breakdowns in communication, paraphrasing, making adjustments)

Reading	•discourse features (markers, cohesion, coherence) •formal schemata (how discourse types are organized) •contextual features	•grammar rules •knowledge of vocabulary •alphabet, •punctuation	•typography (capitalization, punctuation) •syntactic issues (constructions to simulate spoken discourse) •lexical issues (choice of verbs/ adverbs) •physical situation of a written text	•readers' background knowledge on the cultural factors involved in a written text	•the ability to use reading strategies to make up for interpretation problems and to enhance the communicative act between the writer and the reader
Writing	•cohesion •coherence •knowledge of the structure of written genres •communicative purpose and context	•vocabulary (context-related) •grammar •mechanical conventions (punctuation, spelling)	•text layout •graphic devices (e.g. italics) •syntactic devices (constructions to simulate spoken discourse) •linguistic devices (choice of verbs/ adverbs) •physical location of the text	•the rules and norms of target language community •cross-cultural awareness	•creating coherent text (revising drafts) •communication strategies (paraphrasing, restructuring)

3.1.1 Phonology and phonetics

To go into detail about systemic competence, Johnson (2013: 18) points out that many foreign language speakers have problems with pronunciation, which evidently associates with phonology. Sound systems differ quite radically from one language to another and language learners might, indeed, find certain foreign sounds completely overwhelming to mimic. According to Johnson (2013: 18) this can be explained by the fact that not all languages make use of similar phonemes (i.e. meaning-distinguishing sounds). Therefore, learners might find it difficult to even hear the difference between phonemes that do not occur in their native language. Saville-Troike (2012: 35) implies that a proficient language user distinguishes phonemes easily and pays attention to elements of speech such as syllable structure and intonation patterns (consonants and vowels, stress, pitch, duration, tone, pauses and stops). According to her, a skilled language user has a so called ”sharp ear” for languages. This is backed up by Johnson (2013: 20-22) who notes that a language learner´s pronunciation is complicated by language-specific stress and intonation patterns that can determine meaning in

a sentence. For instance, the associations of *He didn´t go to the store, did he?* can vary according to rising and falling intonation. So, it is not only important for the learner to observe and hear phonetic nuances but also to learn how to produce understandable utterances in a foreign language. Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) recognize both rhythm, stress and intonation as important aspects of phonology and include these prosodic features in their category of linguistic competence (table 1, 2nd column). Since their analysis reflects all the four skill categories, it becomes evident that phonology is specifically linked to the spoken forms of language (listening and speaking).

3.1.2 Morphology

According to Saville-Troike (2012: 35) it is characteristic of skilled language users to be able to distinguish morphemes, the small parts of words that carry meaning and indicate for instance number, tense and grammatical category (i.e. stems and affixes). Johnson (2013: 24) supports this view and explains that in order to become fluent speakers of English, language learners need to become aware of the most common morphemes in the English language, including for instance *-ed* (past tense) and *-s* (plural). Saville-Troike (2012: 35) points out the significance of morphology by explaining how words can be changed by using affixes. For instance, adding the suffix *-ly* into the word *slow* changes the word´s meaning and word class (*slowly*). As it becomes evident, knowledge of morphology helps language learners to expand their vocabulary through derivation. Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006), however, do not separate morphology (nor syntax) as an independent area of linguistic knowledge. Focusing on the intercultural aspects of language, they choose to refer to a wider category of ´grammar´ (table 1, 2nd column).

3.1.3 Vocabulary

Building up a large vocabulary is generally considered an important goal in second language learning. However, in order to build up a well-functioning vocabulary a language learner must become aware of the multiple dimensions that underly vocabulary knowledge. According to Johnson (2013: 28-30) these dimensions include a word´s denotation (i.e. the basic meaning

of the word), a word´s connotation (i.e. the emotional associations of the word) and a word´s collocation (i.e. knowledge about words that are used together). In addition, Johnson (ibid: 31) lists phrasal verbs as an important category, especially referring to the tricky cases of English in which verb particles do not carry literal meaning (e.g. She *gave in* too easily.). Finally, Johnson (ibid: 31-32) includes countables vs. uncountables in vocabulary knowledge, pointing out that there are nouns in the English language that cannot appear in the regular plural form (e.g. **furnitures*). Similarly, Saville-Troike (2012: 35) discusses the categories of word meaning (denotation) and lexical connections (collocation), but considers additional aspects such as pronunciation, spelling, idioms and grammatical category. According to these definitions, a skillful language user would have to know at least (1) the basic meaning of a word, (2) the spoken and written forms of a word, (3) the semantic field of a word, (4) the emotional associations of a word, (5) the idiomatic use of a word and (6) the grammatical category of a word. As it turns out, vocabulary knowledge is extremely multifaceted. Furthermore, it is self-evident that the more skilled a language user is the wider vocabulary he or she must have at his or her disposal. This, naturally, makes vocabulary learning a never-ending process.

3.1.4 Syntax

Dividing language into separate categories is only explanatory because in real life all levels of language are interlinked and work simultaneously (Saville-Troike 2012: 34) Syntax can, therefore, be regarded as an umbrella category for the previously discussed aspects of language (phonology, morphology, lexis). Johnson (2013: 26-27) begins with introducing the way in which interrogative phrases are formed in the English language by pointing out the unusual way to use the verb ´do´ in question formation. This is an aspect of syntax that he finds to cause problems for learners of English as a second language. To illustrate, producing the correct form *Does he like maths?* instead of the incorrect version **Likes he maths?* constitutes the area of difficulty. In addition, Johnson provides an example about tenses and explains that it is crucial for the learner not only to know how to form syntactic patterns, but also to know when to use them (*Did you see Titanic?* vs. *Have you seen Titanic?*) (Johnson 2013: 26-27). In her overview on language competence, Saville-Troike (2012: 35) discusses

syntactically correct sentence-formation in terms of word order, question formation, negation and connections between sentence elements (e.g. number correspondence with verbs).

3.1.5 Mechanical skills

Handwriting, spelling and punctuation are involved in Johnson´s (2013: 17) view on systemic language competence, as previously discussed in section 3.1. Similar aspects are included in Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor´s model, in which alphabet, spelling and punctuation are considered significant (table 1, 2nd column). Table 1 also illustrates that these so called mechanical conventions always go together with the written forms of language. It might be reasoned that the written forms of words that were discussed in section 3.1.3 on vocabulary knowledge cover the aspects of handwriting, alphabet and spelling. Punctuation, however, would still remain an aspects of language learning that does not fit into any other category.

3.1.6 Different approaches to systemic competence

To summarize the preceding section, table 2 will illustrate how the different categories of systemic competence are taken into consideration in each of the discussed approaches.

Table 2. Areas of systemic competence in different approaches.

	Phonology	**Morphology**	**Lexis**	**Syntax**	**Mechanical conventions**
Canale and Swain (1980)	+	+	+	+	-
Johnson (2013)	+	+	+	+	+
Saville-Troike (2012)	+	+	+	+	-
Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006)	+	-	+	-	+

3.2 Language as communication

It is noteworthy that the models of both Canale and Swain (1980) and Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) are based on an idea of language as a means of communication. This can be concluded from the fact that both theories are discussed under the title ”communicative competence”. Divergently, Johnson and Saville-Troike focus on ”categorizing the knowledge and skill involved in language use” (Johnson 2013: 15) and defining ”the areas of knowledge which every L1 or L2 learner must acquire” (Saville-Troike 2012: 35). Nevertheless, communicative aspects of language are taken into consideration more or less prominently in each model.

Canale and Swain (1980) begin by illustrating the nature of communication which in their view consists of interpersonal interaction in sociocultural context characterized by for example unpredictability and creativity. According to Canale and Swain communication can be either successful or unsuccessful, which is determined by the behavioral outcomes of interaction. Furthermore, communication entails verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written modes as well as production and comprehension skills. (Canale and Swain 1980: 29)

The sociolinguistic category in Canale and Swain´s (1980) model focuses on sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The first of these dimensions expresses the importance of sociocultural context, since rules of use determine the ways in which utterances are ”produced and understood appropriately”. Factors involved in the interpretation of communicative situations include topic, role of participants, setting, norms of interaction, attitude and register. Rules of discourse, again, refer to the concepts cohesion and coherence. The first term associates with grammatical connectors and links, and the latter is linked to combining utterances in meaningful ways. (Canale and Swain 1980: 30)

Similarly to Canale and Swain (1980), Johnson (2013) discusses sociolinguistic competence in terms of rules of use and rules of discourse. He provides examples that illustrate the context-dependent nature of language, and the way in which pragmatics and politeness issues manifest themselves in communication. Even though a language user might be able to formulate grammatically perfect sentences, utterances might fail in politeness: *”Hey*

professor, open the window, can´t you see we´re sweating in here!". In addition, rules of use are rather frequently affected by cultural differences. To provide an illustration, it would be completely ordinary for an American to ask *"How are you?"* without anticipating an answer to a question. (Johnson 2013: 32-35) Rules of discourse (Canale and Swain 1980, Johnson 2013), again, entail the previously-mentioned concepts of cohesion and coherence. To illustrate further, cohesive texts are joined together in a grammatically correct way using logical connectors (and, but, however), whereas coherent texts are joined together in a way that "makes sense". In other words, coherence requires connection and relevance between text elements. Interestingly, a text can be cohesive without being coherent, and coherent without being cohesive. Also, whether texts and utterances are perceived as coherent, is determined by context (A: *"Do you have a watch?"* B: *"I´m in a run"*). (Johnson 2013: 36-38)

Saville-Troike (2012) illustrates the communicative aspect of language through categories of non-verbal structures and discourse. She implies that non-verbal structures can sometimes act as the tiniest hints in a language user´s behavior to carry significance. Factors that can affect the interpretation of interaction involve facial expressions, spatial orientation and gestures. Further, she discusses the importance of discourse in linguistic competence. Advanced language users must be able to recognize the correct ways to combine sentences at the information level, and they must be able to participate in conversation and interaction with fellow interlocutors rather fluently. In other words, language is not only about *what to say* but also about *when, where* and *in what style* to say it. (Saville-Troike 2012: 35)

Communicative aspects of language gain substantial significance in Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor´s (2006) model, as they are embedded in up to three of their categories: discourse competence, pragmatic competence and intercultural competence. Discourse, in Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor´s (2006: 17) words, "refers to the selection and sequencing of utterances or sentences to achieve a cohesive and coherent spoken or written text given a particular purpose and situational context". Pragmatic competence they explain to contain aspects of illocutionary knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. Illocutionary knowledge Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor associate with the ability to perform speech acts, whereas sociolinguistic knowledge they tie in with issues concerning participants, situations and politeness, in more

detail. The component of intercultural competence is also differentiated into separate angles. Firstly, Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor define the concept in terms of sociocultural knowledge about target language culture and knowledge of dialects, using the term ”cultural awareness”. Secondly, they attach non-verbal factors to intercultural competence such as body language, use of space, touching and silence. (Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor 2006: 17) In addition, Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006:17-18) note that a language learner´s knowledge about his or her own culture is always interlinked to second language learning and the learning of foreign cultures.

Taking a look at the skill-specific categorization of Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor, it can be observed that in terms of discourse competence (Table 1, 1st column) all of the four skills emphasize knowledge of discourse features, such as markers (*oh, well*), cohesion and coherence. All of the skills are associated with knowledge of contextual factors and knowledge of different discourse types. The only exception is the skill of speaking which is specifically analyzed to tie in with knowledge about conversational rules (e.g. turn taking).

Pragmatic competence (Table 1, 3rd column) can be examined with separate regard to the spoken and written forms of language, as well. Considering the spoken forms (listening and speaking) participant variables and politeness issues are highlighted. For instance, Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor note that it is important to be aware of the appropriateness of utterances, as well as the social distance between interlocutors and the choice between formal and informal register. In contrast, the written forms of language (reading and writing) stress slightly different aspects such as typography, text layout, syntactic and lexical issues (e.g. constructions to simulate spoken discourse, choice of verbs/adverbs), as well as the physical location of the text. Clearly, more technical aspects of language are associated with the written forms.

Usó-Juan and Marinez-Flor´s category of intercultural competence (Table 1, 4th column) covers overall background knowledge of the target culture, which affects all of the four skills of language learning. Non-verbal communication seems to be the only aspect that can be regarded as skill-specific, relating specifically to the spoken forms. These culturally bound

conventions that determine how for example body language, facial expressions and eye contact should be handled are, however, very important aspects of language learning and the learning of intercultural competence (Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor 2006: 39).

3.3 Language as strategies

Strategic competence is discussed with regard to two types of strategies by Canale and Swain (1980: 30-31): grammatical and sociolinguistic. According to them, strategies that relate to grammatical competence refer to situations in which a language learner is required to paraphrase grammatical forms due to a lack of knowledge or momentarily recall. Strategies that relate to sociolinguistic competence, for instance, come to use when a language learner is unaware of the social status of an interlocutor.

In general terms, the importance of strategic competence can be pinned down to avoiding breakdowns in communication. Because the linguistic resources of a language learner are limited, it is very likely that challenging communicational situations will occur, which is why Johnson (2013: 38) considers strategic competence a highly important type of competence. He presents strategies such as paraphrasing (Bialystok 1990, as quoted by Johnson 2013:38), word coinage (Tarone 1977, as quoted by Johnson 2013: 38), resorting to one´s native language, and mime (Tarone) as useful aspects of a language learner´s strategic competence.

Johnson (2013: 38-39) implies in his overview on strategic competence that communication strategies are hardly learned in the traditional language classroom. This is backed up by Stern (1978, as quoted by Canale and Swain 1980: 31) who notes that strategic competence usually develops best through real-life experiences of communicative situations. Johnson (2001: 38) goes on to argue that the classroom environment might actually hinder the development of fluent communication skills. In schools language learning situations are usually rather controlled and pupils know very accurately what the teacher expects of them. Therefore, there is no room for any linguistic risk-taking, which Johnson (2013:39) characterizes to be present in most communicative situations outside of the classroom.

Strategic competence relates to both communication strategies and learning strategies according to Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006:18). In other words, strategic competence involves both avoiding blocks of interaction and employing the most effective ways of learning to achieve language proficiency. A competent language user can, therefore, adjust his or her speech in conversation so that the flow of communication will not be interrupted, as already suggested by Johnson (2013) and Canale and Swain (1980). Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006:18) discuss the matter further by noting that strategic competence should also be seen from the perspective of learning abilities. This means that a language learner should consciously pay attention to his or her learning methods in order to adopt the most functional approaches to language learning. In terms of the productive skills (speaking and writing) repetitive learning strategies are mentioned as effective ways of learning (e.g. revising written drafts), as one can observe in Table 1 (5th column). Overall, Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) illustrate the importance of communication strategies in line with Johnson (2013) and Canale and Swain (1980) by pointing out how for example paraphrasing and restructuring can prevent interpretation problems.

4. Guidelines for language teachers

4.1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

When a language teacher´s profession is concerned, it is necessary to examine the guidelines that the Council of Europe provides for professionals in the field. Since it is my intention to define the ideal language skills of a language teacher, I will examine the way in which language competence is characterized in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and discuss the learning objectives that are presented in the framework as aspects of ideal language proficiency.

In terms of language education policies, it is an aim of the Council of Europe to increase linguistic diversity in Europe and, thus, promote understanding and social cohesion among European member states. By viewing all languages as equally valuable systems of interaction and allowing European citizens to learn multiple languages, linguistic diversity will be

guaranteed. Linguistic competence works therefore as a tool for people to encounter nationalities and cultures other than their own. (Council of Europe language education policy) Judging by the approach, language education is regarded as an urgent matter, which evidently puts language teachers all over Europe in the hot spot.

One of the purposes of the framework is to illustrate and define the skills of an ideal language user, and to set a standard for assessing language users on a common scale. This, however, is not sufficient to understand the processes of language learning and teaching as such. It is noted in CEFR that "statements of learning objectives say nothing about the processes by which learners come to be able to act in the required ways" or "the ways in which teachers facilitate the processes of language acquisition and learning." (Council of Europe 2001: 18) Therefore, in addition to the reference levels, CEFR provides guidelines for language educators to achieve the goals of language learning, and provides alternative approaches to language teaching. This, however, would be the focus of a further study on pedagogics. The framework is not supposed to take a stand on current language learning and teaching theories or favor one theoretical trend above others. Thus, its approach is declared to be totally non-dogmatic (Council of Europe 2001: 18).

According to the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2001: 13) communicative language competence consists of three components: (1) linguistic, (2) sociolinguistic and (3) pragmatic competence. Firstly, linguistic competence comprises lexical, phonological and syntactic knowledge. Secondly, sociolinguistic competence associates with aspects such as politeness and the norms concerning relations between social groups (generations, sexes, classes). Finally, pragmatic competence entails linguistic functions and the production of speech acts, highlighting the importance of discourse, cohesion and coherence as well as knowledge of different text types.

In addition to analyzing a language user´s communicative competence in terms of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competencies CEFR differentiates between declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence and ability to learn (Council of Europe 2001: 101-106). Out of these four dimensions I will discuss declarative knowledge,

because it entails aspects of sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness, which I believe to be involved in a language learner´s communicative competence. The other three components involve factors that are less strongly connected to the development of linguistic competence (at least as far as the language classroom is concerned), presenting basic practical skills (e.g. cooking) and characteristics of a language learner (introvert/extrovert).

According to CEFR declarative knowledge covers a language user´s overall knowledge of the world, which is usually shaped by the native language of an individual to a notable extent (Council of Europe 2001: 101-102). An individual´s education and personal experiences also affect the way he or she sees the world, but the image of reality is always created in congruence with language. The close connection between language and thinking, in fact, causes a rather interesting phenomenon: all human competence and knowledge can be perceived as aspects of communicative competence (Council of Europe 2001: 101). Another part of declarative knowledge is sociocultural knowledge, which CEFR associates with target culture knowledge concerning factors such as everyday living (food, working hours, hobbies), living and housing conditions, interpersonal relations (class, sexes, family, generations, race, political groups), values/beliefs/attitudes, body language, social conventions and ritual behavior (Council of Europe 2001: 102-103). The final aspect of declarative knowledge is intercultural awareness, an aspect that embodies the contrastive nature of sociocultural knowledge. To gain intercultural awareness, language users need to learn to take multiple perspectives on cultures and see the differences in each culture from those perspectives (Council of Europe 2001: 103). In other words, intercultural awareness means to compare and contrast culture-specific sociocultural knowledge.

CEFR provides standard learning objectives for foreign languages internationally. It works as an umbrella tool for designing syllabi and learning materials as well as assessing language learners on common grounds. Firstly, the framework differentiates between productive and receptive activities, which concern speaking and writing skills, listening and reading skills as well as the skills required in audio-visual reception. Secondly, it takes into account interactive activities, including both spoken and written interaction. Thirdly, CEFR discusses mediating activities, a term that covers the idea of a language user mediating linguistic knowledge to

another people in situations that need clarification (e.g. interpretation or translation). (Council of Europe 2001: 57-72, 73-87, 87-88) The framework comprises six reference levels (A1/A2, B1/B2, C1/C2) and the descriptions of the skills of corresponding language users in each of the aforementioned categories. Learning strategies are also discussed in the framework to a notable extent in association with each activity.

4.1.1 Productive and receptive activities

CEFR clarifies that **speaking** skills involve for example reading written texts aloud, speaking from notes, acting out a rehearsed role, speaking spontaneously and singing. (Council of Europe 2001: 58) The framework analyzes the levels of reference with regard to overall oral production, sustained monologue (describing experience/argumentation), public announcements (e.g. giving instructions) and addressing audiences (e.g. giving a public speech). As we can see, there are multiple dimensions to oral production, which implies that the level of a language learner´s oral production proficiency can vary according to different situations and contexts. To illustrate further, the framework describes the ideal skills (level C2) of oral production in the following manner.

> Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. (Council of Europe 2001:58)

According to CEFR **writing** may refer to completing forms, writing articles, making posters, writing reports, making notes, writing according to dictation, creative writing and writing personal or business letters (Council of Europe 2001: 61). The levels of reference are analyzed in terms of overall written production, creative writing and the writing of reports and essays. The overall written production of a skilled language user at the C2 level is clarified as follows.

> Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader to find significant points. (Council of Europe 2001:61)

It becomes evident that especially clarity and logical structure are highlighted in these descriptions. The interactive purpose of production activities is also considered, since it is

noted that the receiver should be able to find significant points in the production. Similar aspects are pointed out in one of the more specified descriptions, which will be illustrated next. The framework characterizes the C2-level writing of reports and essays in the following way.

> Can produce clear smoothly flowing, complex reports, articles or essays which present a case, or give critical appreciation of proposals or literary works.
> Can provide an appropriate and effective logical structure which helps the reader to find significant points. (Council of Europe 2001:62)

When producing speech or written text in a foreign language a language user must make use of his or her full linguistic repertoire and balance between different areas of proficiency trying to display strenghts and conceal weaknesses. **Strategies** that can be applied in the process of language production involve planning, execution, evaluation and repair. For instance, a language user can make use of planning so that he or she consciously prepares and calculates an utterance so that it corresponds to, for example, the linguistic resources of the language user or the audience. Execution covers the actual utterance or the production of a written text and involves, for example, compensation strategies such as restructuring and paraphrasing. Evaluation is associated with monitoring the success of communication, which in conversation can be perceived through signals such as facial expressions and gestures. Finally, repair is listed as a production strategy. It is explained to take place in both speech and writing whenever a language user observes an error and makes use of self-correction. (Council of Europe 2001: 63-64)

According to CEFR **listening** activities include listening to public announcements, listening to media, listening as a member of a live audience and listening to overheard conversations (Council of Europe 2001: 65). Overall, listening is considered an activity in which ”a language user as listener receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers”. The C2-level listener is characterized as such.

> Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast native speed. (Council of Europe 2001: 66)

To gain insight into the conventions of speech interpretation, the C1-level description takes into account a slightly wider range of issues. Language users are, for instance, required to

understand topics outside of their own field, but they are allowed have some trouble with unfamiliar accents. Idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms must also be recognized as well as differences in register.

Reading activities are discussed in CEFR with regard to reading for general orientation or information, following instructions and reading for pleasure (Council of Europe 2001: 68). These activities require the advanced reader (C2) to understand not only genres but also subtle distinctions in colloquialisms. The overall reading comprehension at the ideal C2-level is defined as follows.

> Can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings. Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning. (Council of Europe 2001: 69)

Somewhat unconventionally, CEFR makes a notion of **audio-visual reception** skills in addition to the four basic skills of language learning (Council of Europe 2001: 71). This category entails following a text while it is being read aloud, watching television/video/films with subtitles and using new technologies. The framework analyzes the reference levels in terms of watching television and film. In this category, the C2-level description emphasizes the understanding of slang and idiomatic usage in films, whereas for instance the B2-level is associated with understanding news and documentaries that usually appear in standard dialect.

CEFR discusses reception **strategies** similarly to production strategies in terms of planning, execution, evaluation and repair. Reception strategies illustrate the way in which language users can make use of contextual knowledge in order to find meaning in texts and spoken input. The first step (planning) involves the act of framing, which is to prepare for the upcoming linguistic input by activating mental structures (or schemata), setting up expectations and recognizing relevant context-related knowledge. The second step (execution) includes the act of inferring, which refers to filling in possible gaps in the input to be able to interpret the message. Next, a language user resorts to hypothesis testing to see whether the received input actually corresponds to the activated mental schemata (evaluation). Depending

on the outcome of the evaluation process, a language user might have to return to step one and search for new ways to interpret meaning (repair). (Council of Europe 2001: 72)

4.1.2 Interactive activities

CEFR provides examples of interactive activities such as informal discussion, formal discussion, debate, interview and negotiation (Council of Europe 2001: 73-84). The evaluation of spoken and written interaction is analyzed in terms of overall spoken interaction, understanding a native speaker interlocutor, informal discussion, correspondence and notes/messages/forms among other aspects. The framework characterizes interactive activities to involve both productive and receptive activities simultaneously with collaborative strategies (negotiation of meaning, turn-taking), which are applied in order to achieve mutual discourse (Council of Europe 2001: 73). CEFR also notes that the written forms of interactive activities have gained consideration in the modern society, in which written online communication has come to play an increasingly significant role in everyday life (Council of Europe 2001: 82). Strategies that CEFR specifically relates to interaction include turn-taking (execution) and clarification requests (repair) (Council of Europe 2001: 84-85). The overall spoken interaction at the C2 level is characterized as follows.

> Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it. (Council of Europe 2001: 74)

4.1.3 Mediating activities

In mediation, a language user is not expected to express his or her own views but to convey those of other people. The point is to mediate knowledge between different parties that have difficulties in understanding each other due to linguistic or other restrictions. This category includes activities such as interpretation (formal or informal), written translations (formal or literary texts), as well as summarizing and paraphrasing (e.g. the contents of an article). Since mediation is a slightly unconventional category to define language skills, I choose not to look

at the strategies of mediation here. Illustrative scales for this category are not presented in CEFR, either. (Council of Europe 2001: 87-88)

4.2 Finnish National Core Curriculum

While CEFR sets the standards for language use at the continental level, the national core curriculum defines the aims of language teaching in Finnish schools. In order to see what aspects of language are considered significant, I will take a look at the guidelines of the curriculum. Even though these standards are initially supposed to define the skills of a pupil, they apply to the teacher as well. It must be understood, nonetheless, that a teacher has to achieve an even more advanced level of language competence in order to be qualified. Since the present study focuses on English and Swedish, I will examine the curriculum in terms of both languages at the basic and upper secondary education levels (English as an A1-language and Swedish as a B1-language). I must, however, note that the curriculum emphasizes rather similar aspects in both language categories, so quite few distinctions will be illustrated in the following discussion.

The curriculum for basic education (2014) differs slightly from the one intended for upper secondary education (2013). The basic education curriculum separates between objectives and core contents. Learning objectives include language proficiency, cultural skills and learning strategies, whereas the contents of teaching is discussed with respect to themes, structures and communication strategies. The curriculum for upper secondary education, again, focuses more on outlining the contents and focus of each course. Common for both curricula is that they apply the reference levels of CEFR. Naturally, the more advanced a language learner is (grade one vs. grade nine) the higher the reference level must be. Table 1 provides an example of how the CEFR-levels are used in the curriculum. To refer back to section 2.4 on the differences between English and Swedish, it evident that the expectations for pupils´ language skills are very different concerning the two languages.

Table 3. Final assessment criteria for a grade of 8 in the ninth grade (for an appendix see the national core curriculum)

	Listening comprehension	Speech	Text comprehension	Writing
Swedish	A2.1	A1.3	A1.3	A2.1
English	B1.1	A2.2	B1.1	A2.1

It is not surprising that the curriculum highlights the development of pupils overall learning strategies, since the purpose of school is not only to guide the learning process of individual pupils but also to provide learners with skills for independent study. This dimension is an important part of the curriculum, and language teachers should indeed pay attention to it. Nevertheless, I do not find this category to determine language competence directly, which is why I will focus on the curriculums´ statements about language proficiency, cultural skills and communication strategies in more detail. Even though strategic competence as a term might be misleading, it should be seen as separate from general learning and study strategies.

In terms of **language proficiency**, the Finnish curriculum highlights the importance of the communicative and cross-cultural aspects of language learning. For instance, grammar is regarded as important especially from the viewpoint of communication. The curriculum does provide precise examples of certain structures (e.g. the declension of verbs, key tenses, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, syntax and conjunctive structures) but focuses strongly on the significance of communications skills in everyday life situations.

The **cultural skills** of a language learner are explained to consist of several points. As far as the Swedish language is concerned, interaction and co-operation with the Nordic countries and Finland´s Swedish-speaking population is held in high regard. Furthermore, appreciation of the Nordic way of life and Finnish bilingualism are mentioned in the curriculum as important aspects of cultural skills. Foreign languages (including English) are associated more strongly with European identity and general multilingualism and multiculturalism. The curriculum notes that pupils ought to learn to understand that languages are culturally bound, which explains why each language functions differently. In addition, one should learn to understand other cultures against one´s own background, making comparisons between

cultural groups. This reflects the idea of intercultural awareness previously discussed in CEFR (section 4.1). Language learners should also become aware of the historical background of the target culture region and in the case of English gain knowledge of its different variants. Communication with native people, according to the curriculum, should be native-like and language users should be able to act according to the demands of the target culture, respecting and valuing the culture. Important points are discussed in the curriculum with respect to cultural skills, but I think that the notion of being native-like is much arguable, since successful communication does not depend on, for example, accent.

Finally, **communication strategies** illustrate a language learner´s capability to conform to interactive situations by planning one´s messages, monitoring and correcting output, using approximate expressions to compensate for a lack of knowledge, relaying on non-verbal communication, and constructing meaning with the help of an interlocutor and situational hints. While emphasizing the importance of these strategies, the curriculum points out that it is fundamental to merely accustom the pupils to using their language skills in real life.

4.3 Language competence in teaching

The previously discussed systemic, sociocultural and strategic aspects of language provide multiple and sometimes rather complex perspectives on language competence. If one is to believe that ideal language proficiency requires knowledge of all of the discussed points, it would imply that language teachers should master them as well. I believe that these ideals are there for a reason, but no language teacher should ever be expected to attain them. I find systemic knowledge to be the most important area of linguistic knowledge for a language teacher, sociocultural knowledge being a significant compliment to systemic knowledge. Only after these categories would I emphasize the usefulness of strategic competence.

5. Language teacher students´ self-efficacy beliefs

5.1 Self-efficacy theory

As it is my intention to find out how competent language students feel about their language skills as future teachers, it will be relevant to root the idea of self-confidence to theoretical background. The closest connection to self-confidence can be found in the concept of self-efficacy, developed by psychologist Albert Bandura as a part of his social cognitive theory around the 1980´s.

Bandura´s self-efficacy theory highlights the idea of belief. Self-efficacy is seen as a ”core belief that one has the power to produce changes by one´s actions” (Bandura 1999: 28). In order to be able to perform an action successfully, an individual needs to believe that he or she is capable of managing the assignment. Bandura (1997: 2-3) further explains that without possessing positive self-efficacy beliefs, people would have low desire to approach any tasks. The theory points out that high self-efficacy beliefs predict not only successful actions but also persistence in the face of obstacles. People who possess feelings of capability are likely to endure and overcome difficulties, whereas people with lower feelings of efficacy are at risk of falling into a downward cycle caused by stress, anxiety and depression. (Bandura 1999: 30)

> ”Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one´s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments.” (Bandura 1997: 3)

A concept that underlies self-efficacy theory is triadic reciprocal causation, according to which personal cognitive/affective/biological factors, behavior and environment interact with each other (Bandura 1999: 23). Because all of these categories are interlinked, human functioning and self-efficacy can be regarded as a ”dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences” (Karabenick and Urdan 2010: 3). Self-efficacy is further shaped by different factors including mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states (Bandura 1997: 80-81, 86-87, 101, 106-107, Tupala 2013: 3).

Urdan and Pajares (2006: 73) consider mastery experiences (i.e. actual performances and the outcomes of those actions) to shape self-efficacy most significantly. To illustrate, positive experiences raise self-efficacy, whereas negative experiences lower it. Urdan and Pajares note, however, that an individual´s self-efficacy is not prone to very sudden changes. Therefore, single experiences of success or failure will not radically unbalance otherwise consistent perceptions of self-efficacy.

The notion of vicarious experience is an important part of self-efficacy theory, because adequacy is not always possible to assess in absolute measures (Bandura 1997: 86). In these cases, skills and abilities must be compared with the performance of others, in order to make sense of how well certain assignments are managed in relation to group norms. Social comparison takes place usually between individuals who work with corresponding tasks in similar types of situations, such as peers and co-workers. According to Bandura surpassing fellow co-workers, for example, affects self-efficacy positively, whereas being outperformed by them has a negative effect (Bandura 1997: 87). Urdan and Pajares (2006: 73) point out that witnessing a co-worker perform a task successfully may sometimes lead to positive thoughts about one´s own capabilities. Seeing someone else manage a task might actually create an image of the task as being easy. Urdan and Pajares go on to note that recurrent failure in a task that is already mastered by others will, nevertheless, have a negative effect on self-efficacy.

Another factor that belongs to self-efficacy theory is verbal persuasion, which according to Urdan and Pajares (2006: 73) may enhance individuals´ self-efficacy beliefs. According to them the support of significant others and verbal encouragement can promote feelings of capability, but do not guarantee sustained self-efficacy in the face of disappointments. Finally, capability beliefs are influenced by physiological and affective states. Urdan and Pajares (2006: 73) explain how temporary conditions (e.g. raised heart rate, increased anxiety) might contribute to feelings of insecurity, while the lack of negative symptoms might increase positive self-efficacy beliefs.

Outcome expectations play a significant role in determining human behavior. Bandura (1997: 22) explains that people tend to engage in activities that are likely to yield desired outcomes, promoting feelings of control and satisfaction. Conversely, people are inclined to shun tasks that might lead to failure and disappointment. However, if people value certain activities to an adequate extent, they are prepared to tolerate lower feelings of efficacy for longer periods of time (Urdan and Pajares 2006: 73-74).

5.2 Self-efficacy in the working life

As already discussed in this thesis, the transition phase from university to professional life causes a significant amount of strain on young teachers. This expresses the need for positive self-efficacy beliefs among students who are about to face a challenging working life (Nyman 2009, Ruohotie-Lyhty and Kaikkonen 2009, Kiviniemi 2000). The present chapter clarifies the significance of self-efficacy, pointing out the demanding nature of the teaching profession, as it might take its toll on even the most experienced of teachers.

According to a survey conducted by the Finnish Trade Union of Education in 2003 a third of teachers experience significant work-related stress. The study concerned 1,347 teachers from early childhood education to university. According to the study, more than a half of teachers believe that they work too much, and three out of four teachers experience feelings of haste and hurry in their work. Fortunately, the study depicts also a positive outline according to which 82 per cent of teachers are generally content with their current jobs. To sum up, the survey indicates that teachers are usually strongly committed to their work. They value what they do and find satisfaction and fulfillment in their jobs. However, only less than a half of teachers find their working hours adequate in relation to the assigned tasks. (Workplace barometer, Trade Union of Education in Finland)

Betoret and Artiga (2010) conducted a questionnaire for 724 Spanish primary and secondary school teachers focusing on barriers, coping strategies, self-efficacy and burnout in teaching. According to them teachers´ self-efficacy beliefs shape the way in which coping strategies are applied in order to overcome teaching difficulties (Betoret and Artiga 2010: 650). On the

contrary, pedagogical barriers (e.g. student misbehavior and demotivation, lack of shared decision making and workload) might act as predictors of teacher burnout (Betoret and Artiga 2010: 649). According to Betoret and Artiga (2010: 650) teacher students should be encouraged to a more active use of coping strategies, and teacher training should focus on developing the type of skills and capacities that promote feelings of efficacy, in order to overcome the possible barriers and difficulties. Bandura (1999: 31) supports this by pointing out that ”human well-being and accomplishments require an optimistic and resilient sense of efficacy”. The self-efficacy beliefs that language teacher students hold about themselves act, accordingly, as worthy indicators of the students´ future careers and well-being. Indeed, the self-predictive nature of efficacy-beliefs is what makes the phenomenon relevant to study.

5.3 Previous studies on self-efficacy and language skills

A rather reminiscent study to the present one was conducted by Kinnunen (2012), who set a questionnaire for pre-service English teachers in Finnish universities about teacher self-efficacy beliefs and aims. She based her study on Bandura´s self-efficacy theory, delving into young teachers´ perceptions of themselves as teachers. Kinnunen (2012: 1) justified her research by arguments about the benefits of high self-efficacy beliefs and the way in which those beliefs reflect themselves in successful teaching careers. Overall, the study focused on two aspects: (1) self-efficacy beliefs and (2) the aims of future teachers.

Kinnunen clarifies the relationship between the aspects of (1) self-efficacy and (2) teachers´ aims by pointing out that teachers´ aims are always connected to self-efficacy beliefs. According to her (2012: 25), ”if a teacher does not view teaching about different cultures an important aim for oneself, he or she is unlikely to place much emphasis on how well he or she is able to teach the subject”. Therefore, in order to examine language teacher students´ self-efficacy beliefs in this study, it is also relevant to find out what aspects of language competence are perceived as important.

The results of Kinnunen indicate that young teachers hold mainly positive self-efficacy beliefs about themselves. Most insecurity was found to exist among teaching grammar and managing

the classroom. Some of the participants depicted insecurity in additional areas, such as teaching culture and speaking English in the classroom. (Kinnunen 2012: 34, 37-38) For the relevance of this study, Kinnunen (2012: 35-36) found out that some beginning teachers suffered from rather low self-efficacy concerning their language skills, because they did not seem to trust their overall knowledge of the language. Kinnunen examined various aspects of language teaching, many of which exceed the focus of this study (e.g. communicating and connecting with students, motivating students and using diverse teaching techniques). However, the previously discussed results already provide relevant data to be considered in this thesis: lack of efficacy in grammar, culture and speaking English in the classroom.

According to Kinnunen (2012), pre-service teachers regarded motivating and encouraging students as one of the most important aims in teaching. More precisely, the encouragement towards authentic language use was considered significant. Oral communication stood out as another aspect valued by pre-service teachers, according to whom one should move away from an error-centered view of language, rather focusing on the functional aims of language use in communicative situations. Skill-specific aspects that were perceived as important aims comprised oral communication, culture, meta-learning, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening/ reading comprehension and grammar. These aspects were regarded as relevant from the viewpoint of communication – precisely in line with the Finnish National Core Curriculum (section 4.2). Furthermore, it was not only the participants´ tendency to idealize communicative competence but also their willingness to motivate students towards authentic (or any kind of) language use that reflected the statements of the curriculum quite identically.

Kinnunen (2012: 31) found out that positive efficacy beliefs were associated with teaching oral communication, cultural topics and grammar, as well as motivating students. These aspects seem to reflect the previously discussed aims of the pre-service teachers, which suggests that the students´ competence stands in line with their own priorities. However, consistent conclusions cannot be drawn because, as previously discussed, some students perceived these aspects as sources of difficulty. Cultural topics and grammar depicted, therefore, extreme variation among respondents.

Language teacher students´ self-efficacy beliefs can be understood to reflect the actual levels of language proficiency rather closely. Therefore, it can be assumed that the better language skills students have, the higher self-efficacy beliefs they also hold about themselves and vice versa. This thesis has demonstrated the urgency for adequate language skills and self-efficacy beliefs among beginning teachers, expressing a concern about a possible lack of proficiency especially in the Swedish language. A lack of subject knowledge is suggested by Llewellyn-Williams (2012) who studied two dozen trainee teachers at a Welsh university in a three-year longitudinal study. She looked into trainee teacher motivation, language attrition and the strategies available for teachers trainees to reactivate their lapsed language skills. The main findings depict that effective reactivation requires both structured input and exposure to the target language.

According to Llewellyn-Williams (2012: 62) there is a concern among university tutors that some teacher trainees do not possess adequate language proficiency in order to work as competent language teachers in the future. She underscores the significance of subject knowledge and mentions that teachers in all disciplines should constantly maintain and consolidate their subject knowledge, which provides the basis for her research. The study of Llewellyn-Williams (2012) was conducted in the context of a language program that aimed to support trainee teachers´ subject knowledge by reactivating lapsed language skills.

The lack of subject knowledge usually results from decreased use of foreign language under certain periods of life. Llewellyn-Williams (2012: 62) mentions circumstances such as focusing on family life and pursuing additional career paths as possible obstacles for language sustainability. She found out, however, that some participants did not possess adequate language skills even in the beginning. In addition, what significantly contributed to the attrition of language skills was the teacher trainees´ tendency to prioritize the acquisition of new professional skills as the most important focus (Llewellyn-Williams 2012: 65). To illustrate, the teacher trainees were more inclined to focus on aspects of teaching such as classroom management and student motivation, instead of enhancing their own subject knowledge.

6. Framework of the present study

Drawing mostly on the the approaches of Canale and Swain (1980), Johnson (2013), Saville-Troike (2012) and Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006), the present study will adopt a comprehensive view on language competence and make use of a variety of language categories to find out about students´ experiences concerning language expertise. The research questions that I am aiming to answer are (1) What are the students´ views on the most important aspects of a language teacher´s subject expertise? (2) How self-confident do the participants feel about their language competence? (3) What are the differences between English and Swedish? It is important to examine these questions because the participants´ perceptions of ideal language expertise will affect their daily work in the future. After all, teachers enjoy a relative amount of freedom to influence the contents of teaching in Finland. Furthermore, it is relevant to see how the students´ ideals and their perceived competence eventually correspond. The framework presented here has been chosen to suit the survey method of a questionnaire, containing an exhaustive number of competence categories to ensure accuracy in the results. When it comes to assessing personal language competence, the framework is structured to support the participants in the answering process. The more concrete and detailed questions they are posed, the easier it will be for them to provide reliable answers. In addition, the framework will allow me to gain knowledge of the participants´ skills in a number of categories which is significant in terms of interpreting the results, and drawing final conclusions.

LANGUAGE AS A SYSTEM:

(1) Phonology and phonetics:
- Pronunciation
- Prosodic features (rhythm, stress, intonation)
- ”Sharp ear” (e.g. hearing the difference between phonemes)

(2) Morphology:
- the most common morphemes (stems/inflections/affixes)

(3) Vocabulary:
- Denotation
- Connotation
- Collocation
- Phrasal verbs

- Uncountables
- Idiomatic expressions
- Word class

(4) Syntax:
- Word order
- Interrogatives
- Negation

(5) Mechanical skills:
- Spelling
- Punctuation

LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATION:

(1) Conversational norms:
- Politeness (topic, role of participants, setting, attitude and register)
- Turn-taking (markers)
- Non-verbal behavior (body language, facial expressions, spatial orientation, gestures, touching, silence, eye-contact)
- Negotiation of meaning (the help of an interlocutor and situational hints)

(2) Cultural knowledge:
- Intercultural awareness
- Values, beliefs and attitudes
- Dialects
- Interpersonal relationships (class, family, generations, race, sexes, political groups)
- Everyday living (food, working hours, housing, hobbies)

(3) Written discourse:
- Knowledge of different text types
- Cohesion and coherence

LANGUAGE AS STRATEGIES:

(1) Contextual clues
- Inferring and filling in gaps

(2) Mutual discourse
- Clarification requests

(3) Paraphrasing and restructuring
- Self-correction

(4) Compensation strategies
- Planning messages
- Using approximate expressions
- Word coinage
- Resorting to ones native language
- Mime

7. Data and methods

I chose questionnaire as a method of data collection because I wanted to cover a relatively vast number of respondents in the study. I also found that a questionnaire might be better suited for the present study since my research questions focused not only on ideal language competence but also perceptions of individual language competence, which is personal. Asking the question *how competent do you feel* in person might, in fact, have resulted in uncomfortable interviews and possibly sugarcoated responses. In addition, the fact that I wanted to find out *how well* the participants thought they mastered the languages of English and Swedish, I found the Likert-scale to suit the questionnaire perfectly. To increase the reliability and validity of this study, I structured the questionnaire so that usually more than one question measured a specific phenomenon (e.g. vocabulary skills). According to Kalaja, Alanen and Dufva (2011: 150) this is especially characteristic of the Likert-scale method. Furthermore, since my intention was to gather statistically relevant data, I chose questionnaire as they are especially suited for quantitative research and analysis (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009: 9). Questionnaires are also practical and effective in that they can produce large amounts of data in rather short periods of time (ibid: 6).

Even though the present study employed to a large extent quantitative methods, an open-ended section was included in the questionnaire to find out what the participants thought of ideal language expertise. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allowed the respondents to reflect on the multiple competence categories commenting more freely on whatever they perceived as significant or insignificant. The questionnaire was structured so that it began with a battery of closed questions concerning first *language as a system,* then *language as communication* and finally *language as strategies.* This guided the respondents so that they received an idea of the different categories based on the questions presented in each section. After each question battery the respondents were asked to describe how important they regard the corresponding aspects for a language teacher in an open form. Finally, to make it stand out even more clearly which categories the participants preferred, they were asked to prioritize aspects of language competence numerically. The prioritization section of the questionnaire was chosen to ensure distribution in the answers. The purpose

was to avoid a situation in which all the participants would have said that all aspects of language are highly important for a language teacher.

The participants of this study consisted of 102 teacher students of English and Swedish who had either fully or almost completed the pedagogical studies of subject teachers. Whether the participants studied their language as a major or minor subject did not make any difference. The purpose was to examine students who had enough teaching experience to have constructed some kind of image of themselves as language teachers. This was important because the questionnaire required the participants to reflect on not only their own language skills but also their beliefs about language teaching. Since the questionnaire was distributed towards the end of the spring term, it was possible to involve also the students who had been working on their pedagogical studies during the same academic year.

The web-based questionnaire was planned and piloted in the spring of 2015 before the actual distribution in March-April. The MrInterview survey link was sent to students in the University of Jyväskylä through a mailing list, after which I contacted a few staff members to provide a hand with the distribution. To accumulate the number of responses, the questionnaire was sent forward to the University of Eastern Finland together with universities of Tampere, Turku, Oulu and Helsinki. An estimation of 70 per cent of the respondents who took part in the survey are from the University of Jyväskylä, but also the other universities are well represented in this study. The total number of responses added up to 102, out of which 50 were English and 52 Swedish. It must be pointed out that some participants might, in fact, have contributed to both language categories, since it is possible to study both languages as a combination. The participants were also instructed to fill in the questionnaire twice, if they wished, with separate focus on each language.

The methods of analysis applied in this study involve both statistical analysis and content analysis. The numerical analysis of the closed questions was carried out through IBM SPSS Statistics, making use of the t-test procedure to find out about the statistical significance of the

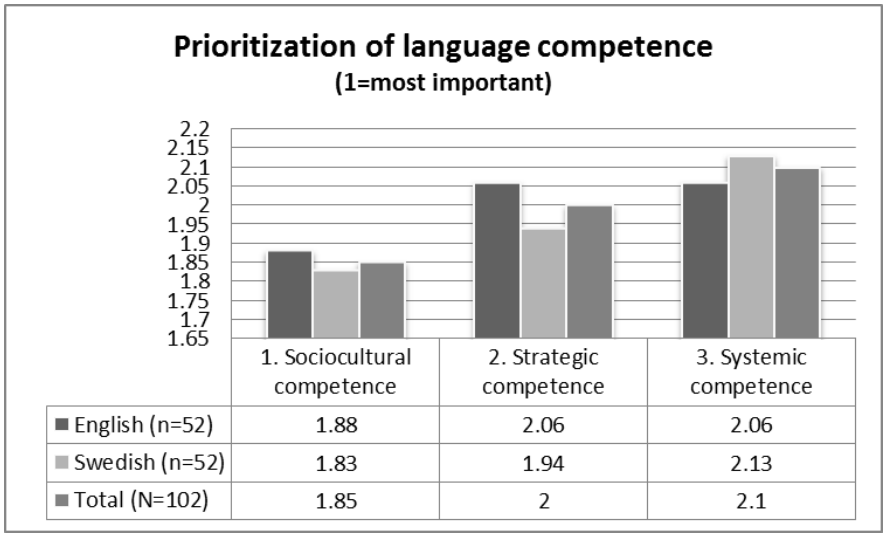
results. On the contrary, a qualitative data-driven approach was applied in the analysis of the open-ended section as I wanted to examine possible similarities and trends in the participants´ answers. I analyzed the data by looking for recurrent themes and patterns, using the procedure of quantification in order to find out how common it was for something to appear. More precisely, I counted the frequencies of similar types of answers. (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 93-95, 120)

8. Students´ experiences about subject expertise

Throughout the study I have been looking at language from three perspectives: (1) language as a system, (2) language as communication and (3) language as strategies. In order to be consistent, I will make use of a similar division also in the analysis of the data. In addition, I will analyze language competence from a general point of view. Each section will focus on the most important aspects of a language teacher´s linguistic knowledge and students´ self-efficacy beliefs. Additionally, each section will take into account the most distinctive differences between the language groups of English and Swedish.

8.1 Prioritizing language competence

Table 4. Prioritization of language competence.



	1. Sociocultural competence	2. Strategic competence	3. Systemic competence
English (n=52)	1.88	2.06	2.06
Swedish (n=52)	1.83	1.94	2.13
Total (N=102)	1.85	2	2.1

Question: Prioritize the following aspects in terms of a language teacher´s subject expertise (i.e. language competence). Set values 1-3 according to your opinion (1=most important).

The participants were asked to prioritize different areas of language competence in order to find out about their views on the most important aspects of knowledge for language teachers. Before delving into more detailed points, I will discuss the overall prioritization of the three aspects of language: systemic, sociocultural, and strategic competence. Rather unexpectedly, the data revealed sociocultural competence to rise on top as the foremost priority for a language teacher to master in general, as illustrated in table 4. Strategic competence surpassed systemic competence as the second priority, leading to the conclusion that the grammatical aspects of language were not considered as significant as the other two categories. The ranking order was almost identical in English and Swedish, the only distinction being the fact that the English respondents did not depict any preference between strategic and systemic competence. This result corresponds to the previously discussed notions of the cultural turn (Byram, Holmes and Savvides 2013) and the expanding intercultural perspective (Sercu 2006).

In order to gain insight into the participants´ preferences concerning subject expertise, I will look at the open-ended questions of the data, and discuss some of the themes that arouse from the body of student responses. One of the most distinctive themes, in fact, speaks for the importance of formal knowledge, which appears in contradiction with the previously discussed ranking order in which systemic skills took the least valued part. When the participants were asked to characterize the importance of systemic knowledge in an open form, 7 out of 50 (14%) English respondents and 9 out of 52 (17%) Swedish respondents referred to systemic knowledge as either enhancing teacher effectiveness or acting as a complete prerequisite for teaching. Here are a couple of excerpts that illustrate the participants´ understanding of subject expertise as a precondition very clearly.

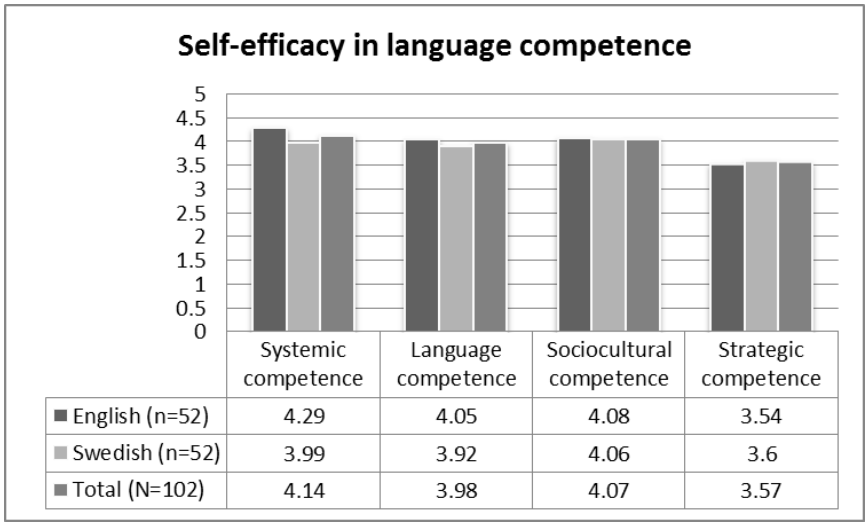
> (1) T41: Edellä mainittujen osa-alueiden hallinta on erittäin tärkeää opettajan ammatissa. Ellen minä hallitsisi kyseisiä osa-alueita, kuinka voisin opettaa niitä oppilailleni?
> To master the previously mentioned skill categories is extremely important in teaching. If I did not master these skills, how could I teach them to my students?
>
> (2) T71: Minusta opettajan oma kielitaito on perusta hänen pätevyydelleen. On ensisijaisen tärkeää osata oma opetettava aineensa. Pedagogiset taidot ovat myös tärkeitä, mutta eivät niin tärkeitä kuin oman aineen hallinta.
> In my opinion, language skills form the basis of a teacher´s qualification. It is primarily important to master one´s subject. Pedagogical skills are also important, but not as important as mastering the subject.

Previously in section 2.3 subject expertise was discussed in terms of Shulman´s subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curricular knowledge in order to illustrate that subject expertise is very closely connected to the pedagogical aspects of teaching. As anticipated, the English participants did take a stand on the question about pedagogics in the open-ended section, even though the questionnaire was set out to examine subject expertise as mere language competence. 6 out of 50 (12%) English respondents reported that pedagogical skills bear either comparable or higher importance with regard to subject expertise.

> (3) T30: Opettajan ominaisuuksista kielitaitoa tärkeämpää on mielestäni pedagoginen osaaminen (mielekkäiden ja monipuolisten tuntien suunnittelu, yms.).
> Considering the characteristics of a teacher, I find pedagogical abilities more important than language skills (planning pleasant and versatile lessons, etc.).

8.2 Self-efficacy in language competence

Table 5. Self-efficacy in language competence. (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)



	Systemic competence	Language competence	Sociocultural competence	Strategic competence
English (n=52)	4.29	4.05	4.08	3.54
Swedish (n=52)	3.99	3.92	4.06	3.6
Total (N=102)	4.14	3.98	4.07	3.57

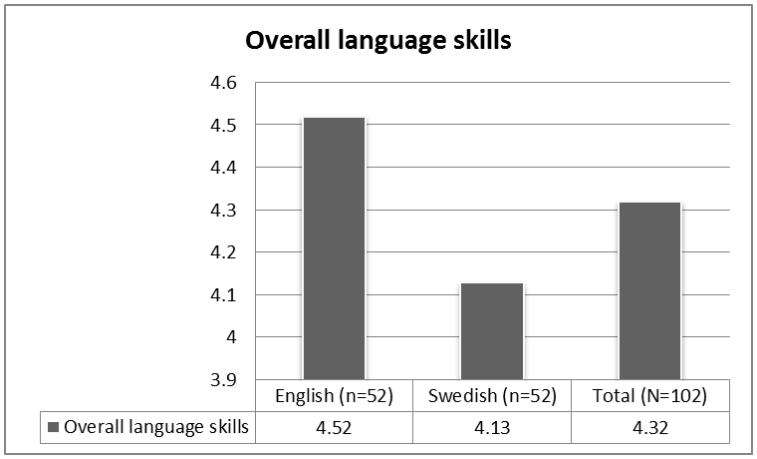
The participants´ self-efficacy in different language categories was measured by using a scale from one to five, the value of five representing the most positive self-efficacy beliefs. The questions were formed as statements about good language skills (I can produce correct sounds) and the alternatives ranged from ”completely disagree” to ”completely agree”. The second column in table 5 depicts students´ self-efficacy in their comprehensive language competence, in which all the Likert-scale questions on systemic, sociocultural and strategic

competence have been taken into consideration as an average. The other columns, again, depict students´ self-efficacy with separate regard to the three aspects of language.

Table 5 indicates that the English respondents perceived systemic competence as the strongest category of proficiency, whereas the Swedish respondents placed sociocultural competence in the first place. The Swedish participants´ preference of sociocultural competence, however, relies on a rather slight distinction, which makes it more relevant to focus on the general line. Overall, the strongest self-confidence was found in systemic language skills, sociocultural competence placing second. The most poorly mastered aspect of language turned out to be the category of strategic competence.

It becomes evident that the previously discussed prioritization stands in contradiction with students´ self-efficacy beliefs. It was noted in section 8.1 that sociocultural competence gained the most significance, while systemic competence took the least valued part. It seems, however, that students were the most confident in systemic competence in particular, an aspect which they clearly perceived as less significant.

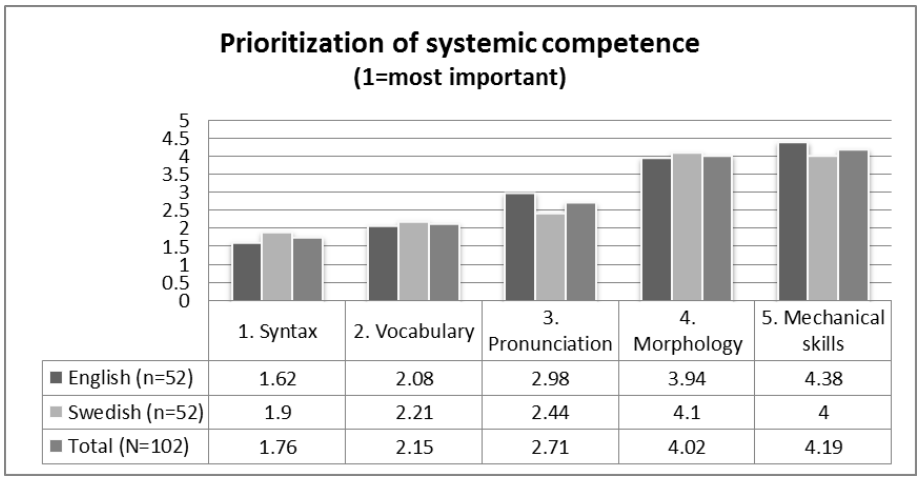
Table 6. Students´ estimation of their overall language skills. (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)



In addition to the various statements about language skills in different categories, the participants had to answer a question on overall language competence. The results revealed that the English participants´ overall self-efficacy level was higher than the Swedish participants´, which is illustrated in table 6. This observation was found to be statistically significant as the value of sig was 0.006 according to a t-test. As a rule, values under 0.05 are considered statistically *almost significant*, values under 0.01 are considered statistically *significant* and values under 0.001 are considered statistically *very significant* (KvantiMOTV, hypothesis testing). The lower self-confidence among the Swedish respondents might derive from the differences discussed in section 2.4. The study of Swedish begins at a later age, and the Finnish National Core Curriculum also sets lower expectations for its competence. Looking back, it can be observed that the participants´ conceptions of their overall language skills varied according to their own estimation. Previously, table 5 depicted an average self-efficacy value of 3.98. When the participants had to answer a plain question on language competence, however, they depicted an efficacy level of 4.32. In other words, when the students had to consider more detailed statements about language competence while answering the questionnaire they estimated their self-efficacy levels slightly lower.

8.3 Prioritizing systemic competence

Table 7. Prioritization of systemic competence.



	1. Syntax	2. Vocabulary	3. Pronunciation	4. Morphology	5. Mechanical skills
English (n=52)	1.62	2.08	2.98	3.94	4.38
Swedish (n=52)	1.9	2.21	2.44	4.1	4
Total (N=102)	1.76	2.15	2.71	4.02	4.19

Question: Prioritize the following aspects in terms of a language teacher´s subject expertise (i.e. language competence). Set values 1-5 according to your opinion (1=most important).

Next I will look further into systemic competence and analyze how students prioritized the five following components: pronunciation, morphology, vocabulary, syntax and mechanical skills. In this section I will refer to Canale and Swain´s (1980) grammatical competence and Johnson´s (2013) systemic competence as either *systemic* or *formal* knowledge of the language. It can be observed in Table 7 that syntactic knowledge was regarded as the most valued skill category. Subsequent emphasis was put on vocabulary knowledge, after which the participants placed pronunciation skills. The fourth preferred knowledge type was morphology, while mechanical skills remained at the bottom. In fact, since systemic knowledge was considered the least important type of linguistic knowledge in the overall categorization, a conclusion can be drawn that mechanical skills (spelling and pronunciation) was the least valued aspect of language altogether. The results depict only slight alteration between English and Swedish concerning morphology and mechanical skills. The English respondents followed the average line, according to which morphology was placed on top of mechanical skills. The Swedish respondents, however, provided an exception to that rule, setting more value on spelling and punctuation than knowledge of morphemes.

Out of the five components in systemic competence I will first discuss pronunciation**,** which gained rather significant attention in the open-ended section of the questionnaire: 15 out of 50 (30%) English participants and 12 out of 52 (23%) Swedish participants commented on pronunciation in one way or another. Both language groups recognized the importance of pronunciation, but a notable amount of the English respondents (7/50) referred to pronunciation as a slightly less significant skill category.

The fact that the English respondents considered pronunciation less important resulted from approximately two points according to the open-ended section. First of all, the participants pointed out that it is difficult to determine English pronunciation aims because there are several existing variants of the language. To illustrate, one might find it difficult to choose for example between Indian and British accent. In addition, it was noted by the participants that the learning of English is nowadays quite often aimed towards using the language as a lingua franca, in which foreign accents and sometimes even incorrect pronunciation patterns are easily tolerated. The students believed, therefore, that pronunciation does not necessarily need

to be associated with native language groups or accents. It was, however, taken into consideration that pronunciation should be carried out in a phonologically correct and understandable manner, which is illustrated in the following excerpts.

> (4) T33: Ei tarvitse olla täydellinen, natiivinomainen ääntämys tai sanavarasto, jotta voi käyttää vierasta kieltä, tulee ymmärretyksi ja muut ymmärtävät sinua.
> One does not need perfect native-like pronunciation or vocabulary skills in order use a foreign language and to become understood.

> (5) T8: Esimerkiksi ääntämisen tapauksessa opettajalla itsellään ei mielestäni tarvitse olla natiivinkaltaista ääntämystä, mutta teoreettisen tietouden kielen fonologisista piirteistä pitää kuitenkin olla sillä tasolla, että hän osaa arvioida omaa osaamistaan eikä esimerkiksi yritä käyttää omaa puutteellista tuottamistaan esimerkkinä äänteitä harjoiteltaessa.
> For example in the case of pronunciation, it is not a requirement for a teacher to be native-like. A teacher, however, needs theoretical knowledge of phonological features in order to evaluate his or her skills and to be able to set a correct example.

The second reason for the lesser emphasis on pronunciation among the English respondents related to linguistic input. Students seemed to believe that learners of English have access to abundant linguistic input, and that they are provided with models of pronunciation also outside the classroom. As a consequence, the teacher does not have to remain the only source of pronunciation, which again makes the skill category less crucial for the teacher to master. The following example expresses the redundancy of pronunciation rather bluntly.

> (6) T34: Lausuminen jos on heikohko niin oppilaat saavat sen elokuvista, eli ei ole sekään tärkeää. If pronunciation skills are weak, students pick it up from movies. So, even that is not important.

The Swedish respondents, on the contrary, regarded pronunciation as a mainly important category for a language teacher to master, but what especially came up in this language group´s responses relates to the variants of Standard Swedish and Finland Swedish. 5 out of 52 (10%) Swedish teacher students commented on the fact that the pronunciation of Swedish depends quite heavily on the chosen variant. It is true that the two variants of Swedish differ quite radically from each other. However, it is always relevant to consider whether one should choose one variant over the other when speaking Swedish as a foreign language learner. Here is an example to provide a participant´s view on the issue.

> (7) T54: Fonologia-osaan liittyen täytyy mainita, että on tietysti otettava huomioon, onko oma ääntämys ruotsin- vai suomenruotsia tavoitteleva.
> With regard to phonology, I must point out the difference between the aims of Standard Swedish or Finland Swedish in one´s pronunciation.

Punctuation prompted a small number of comments in the open-ended section: 3 out of 50 English respondents and 3 out of 52 Swedish respondents mentioned punctuation in their answers. The prioritization section of the questionnaire depicted punctuation as the least valued skill category, and a similar trend can be interpreted in the students´ answers.

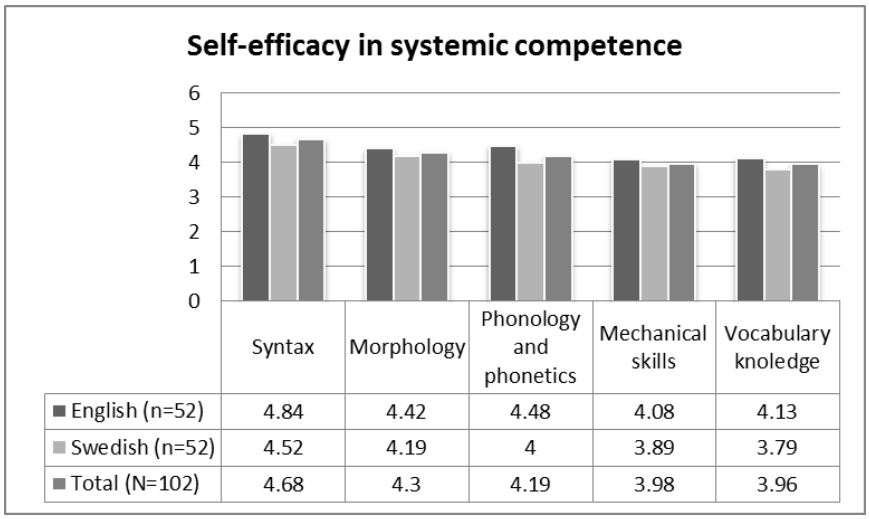
> (8) T24: Esimerkiksi on vaikea kuvitella opettajaa joka ei osaa rakentaa kysymyslauseita, kun taas pilkkusäännön tarkka hallinta ei ole ihan niin kriittistä.
> For instance, it is difficult to imagine a teacher who cannot form an interrogative, whereas detailed knowledge of punctuation in not that critical.

The preceding excerpt depicts also the significance of syntactic knowledge, which arose on top as the most important skill category within systemic knowledge (table 7). Syntax, however, was not mentioned in more than a couple of the open-ended answers. A possible reason for this is that students perceive sentence-formation as a self-evident skill category for a language teacher to master. Vocabulary, which was placed as the third most important language category, came up in some of the participants´ answers: 2 out of 50 English participants and 3 out of 52 Swedish participants characterized vocabulary skills as important in their open-ended responses. Morphology, which was placed as the fourth most important skill category, was not brought up by the participants, as far as its significance in subject expertise was concerned. Here is an example to illustrate vocabulary skills.

> (9) T14: Peruskoulun jälkeisissä opinnoissa mm. sanavarastoon ja idiomaattisuuteen liittyvän osaamisen tärkeys kasvaa.
> After comprehensive school vocabulary knowledge and idiomatic expressions gain significance.

8.4 Self-efficacy in systemic competence

Table 8. Self-efficacy in systemic competence. (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)



	Syntax	Morphology	Phonology and phonetics	Mechanical skills	Vocabulary knoledge
English (n=52)	4.84	4.42	4.48	4.08	4.13
Swedish (n=52)	4.52	4.19	4	3.89	3.79
Total (N=102)	4.68	4.3	4.19	3.98	3.96

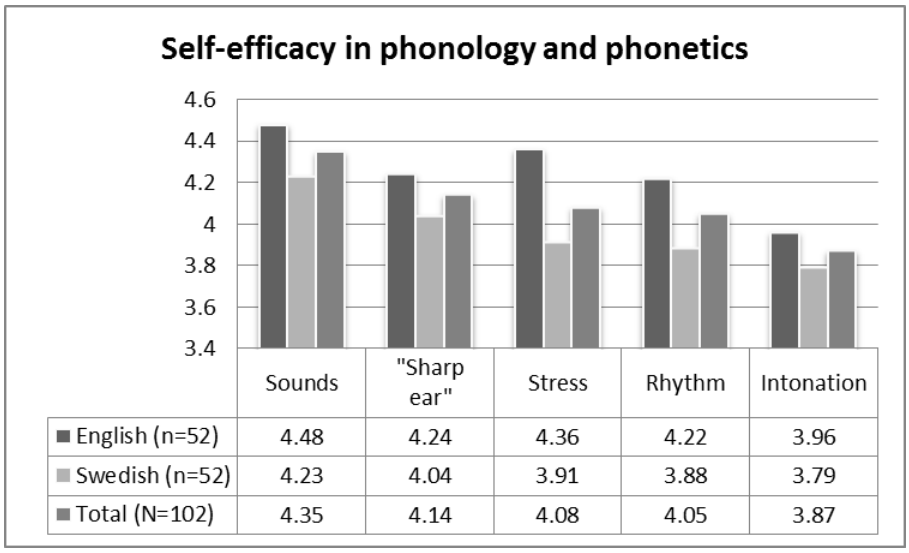
Table 8 illustrates an overall strong level of self-efficacy in systemic competence, in which syntax was considered the most self-confidently mastered category. Mechanical skills and vocabulary knowledge, again, appeared as the most poorly mastered areas of language competence. The second most important category was found to be morphology, after which the participants placed phonology and phonetics.

When comparing the results of the prioritization task (table 7) with the students´ self-efficacy beliefs (table 8), one can observe that the students´ self-efficacy in syntax stands in line with their perceptions of its significance, since syntax was prioritized as the most important category. On the contrary, a difference can be detected in the participants´ views on vocabulary knowledge. As it was illustrated in table 7, the students prioritized vocabulary knowledge rather high (i.e. the second place right after syntax). Nevertheless, their self-efficacy in the corresponding category did not demonstrate very strong competence. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants regarded vocabulary knowledge as highly important, but experienced a simultaneous lack of adequacy in their own proficiency.

A possible explanation for this might lie in the fact that language learning has traditionally been associated with knowledge of vocabulary and grammar in particular, according to which

the participants might have placed emphasis on vocabulary skills. In addition, vocabulary knowledge contains multiple aspects, as it was clarified in section 3.1.3. Therefore, the students might have recognized the fact that vocabulary knowledge requires continuous learning, which is why their skills could never be characterized as fully adequate. Even though mechanical skills were prioritized as the least valuable skill category in table 7, students depicted strong confidence in the category. It seems, therefore, that mechanical skills were not emphasized as highly significant, but that students did not find difficulties in mastering the skill category either.

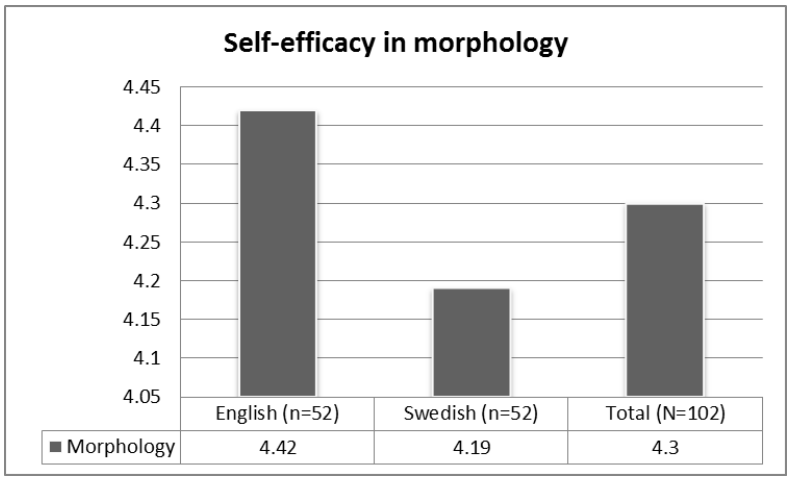
Table 9. Self-efficacy in phonology and phonetics. (1=low self-efficacy, 5=high self-efficacy)



	Sounds	"Sharp ear"	Stress	Rhythm	Intonation
English (n=52)	4.48	4.24	4.36	4.22	3.96
Swedish (n=52)	4.23	4.04	3.91	3.88	3.79
Total (N=102)	4.35	4.14	4.08	4.05	3.87

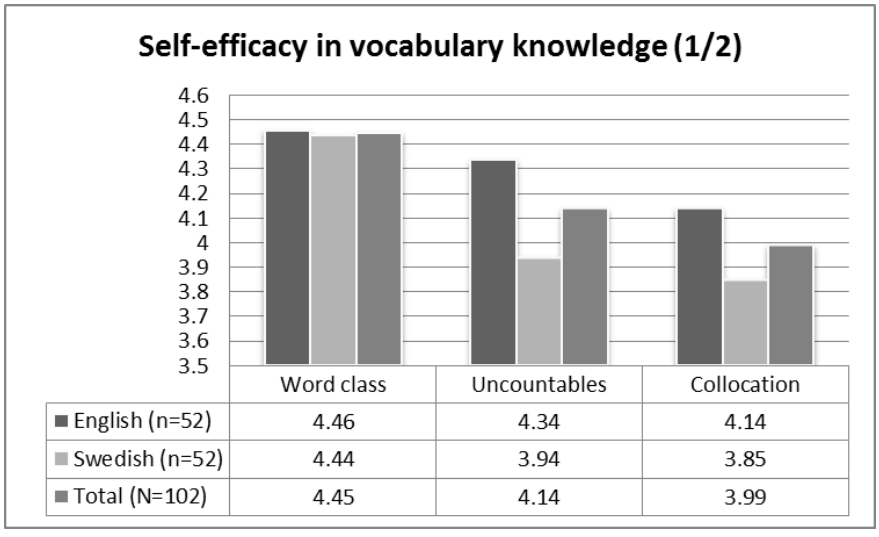
In terms of phonology and phonetics students of both English and Swedish depicted generally positive self-confidence, since the mean value fell approximately around four in each category, as depicted in table 9. There was a distinction between the language groups, since the Swedish students´ self-confidence seemed to fall systematically lower in each category. Only the category of stress, however, depicted statistical significance (sig value 0.001). Producing correct sounds was perceived as the easiest category to master overall, while producing target-language intonation depicted a lower self-efficacy among respondents within both language groups. The participants of this study appeared relatively confident in pronunciation compared to the fact that Johnson (2013) perceived it as a category to cause problems for many second language learners.

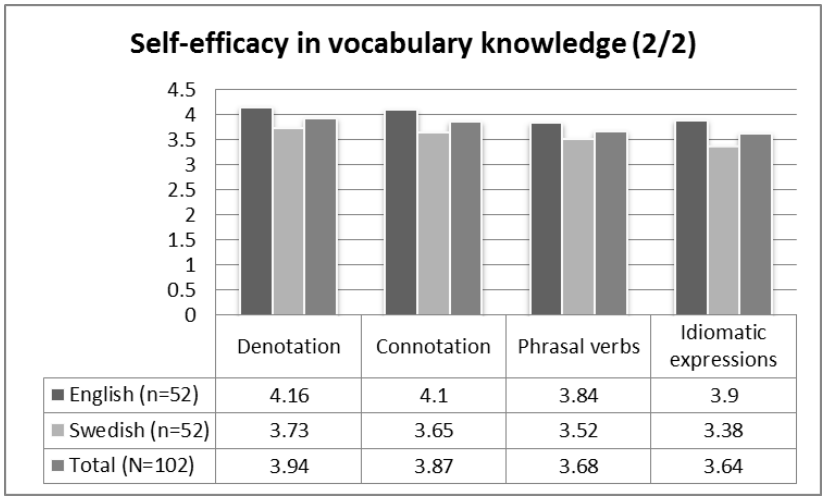
Table 10. Self-efficacy in morphology. (1=low self-efficacy, 5=high self-efficacy)



Self-efficacy in morphology followed a similar line to the previous category, as one can observe in table 10. The general self-confidence in this category seemed to be positive, but there was still a minor difference between the language groups: the English students´ self-efficacy was slightly more positive compared to the Swedish students´ self-efficacy (sig value 0.059).

Table 11. Self-efficacy in vocabulary knowledge. (1=low self-efficacy, 5=high self-efficacy)

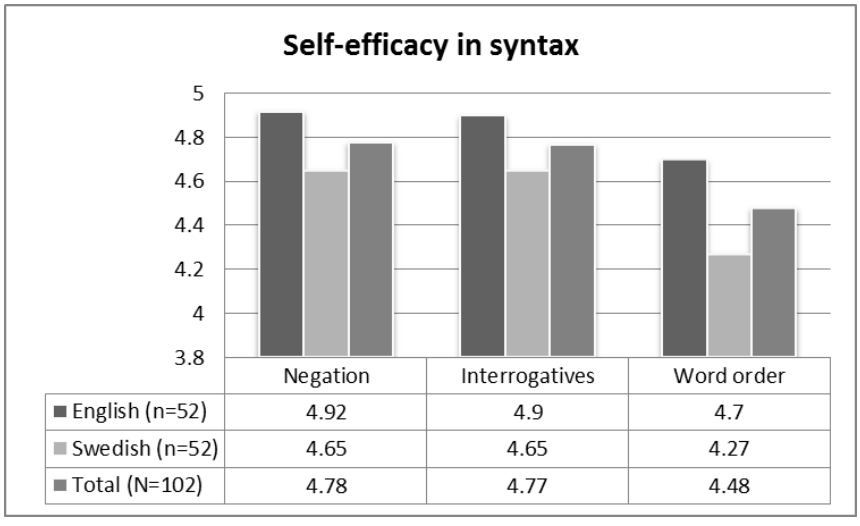




	Denotation	Connotation	Phrasal verbs	Idiomatic expressions
English (n=52)	4.16	4.1	3.84	3.9
Swedish (n=52)	3.73	3.65	3.52	3.38
Total (N=102)	3.94	3.87	3.68	3.64

When looking into the aspects within vocabulary knowledge in table 11, it can be observed that the English students´ self-confidence continued to rise above the Swedish students´ self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy was significantly lower among the Swedish respondents in the categories of uncountables, denotation, connotation and idiomatic expressions (sig values 0.005, 0.02, 0.008 and 0.006). Word class, collocation and phrasal verbs, on the contrary, did not seem to depict major differences in the English and Swedish students´ answers. The fact that word class was mastered most proficiently by both language groups suggests that knowing how to place words into grammatical categories must be a rather fundamental aspect of language competence in general. Overall, vocabulary knowledge illustrated positive self-efficacy beliefs among both English and Swedish language teacher students. The most poorly mastered aspects of vocabulary knowledge were phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions.

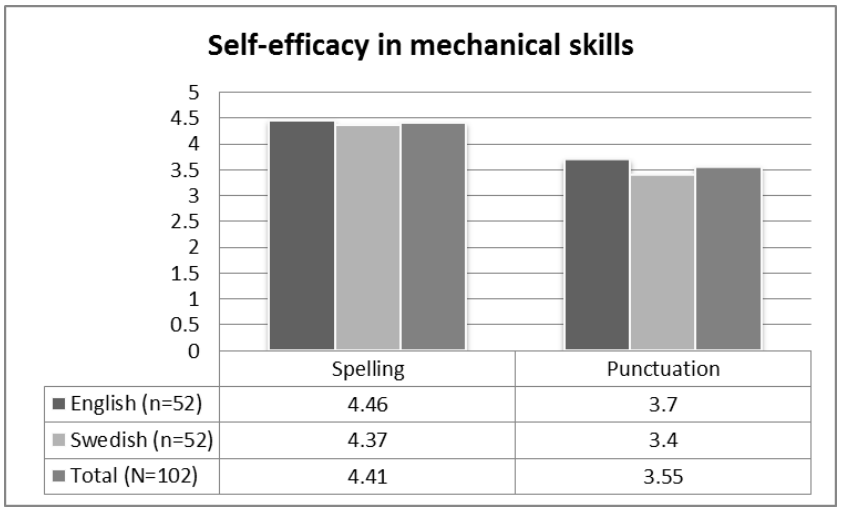
Table 12. Self-efficacy in syntax. (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)



	Negation	Interrogatives	Word order
English (n=52)	4.92	4.9	4.7
Swedish (n=52)	4.65	4.65	4.27
Total (N=102)	4.78	4.77	4.48

The tendency of the English students surpassing the Swedish students in self-efficacy continues in the results of syntax, which are illustrated in table 12. The differences were statistically significant as the sig values fluctuated between 0.002 and 0.007 in all the categories. Syntax depicted self-efficacy as generally very strong, which can be illustrated by the exceptionally high mean values of 4.90 and 4.92 in the English participants´ answers concerning interrogatives and negation. Another observation can be made with regard to word order, which did not seem to be mastered exactly as well as the other two aspects of syntax (total 4.48). This is a rather surprising result, since one might argue that regular sentence-formation would be easier to master than question-formation and negation. However, it is evident that the questionnaire lacks for example a notion of indirect clauses (e.g. *John asked whether I wanted to come to the party*), which might possibly underly students´ hesitation in the category of word order.

Table 13. Self-efficacy in mechanical skills. (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)



	Spelling	Punctuation
English (n=52)	4.46	3.7
Swedish (n=52)	4.37	3.4
Total (N=102)	4.41	3.55

Even though mechanical skills were mastered rather well as an entity (see section 8.3), the results depicted in table 13 reveal a lower proficiency in punctuation than in spelling among both language groups. As previously discussed, both English and Swedish students prioritized mechanical skills as the least valuable category. In addition, punctuation gained attention in the open-ended section mainly because of its uselessness. Based on the low score for self-efficacy in punctuation (total 3.55) and the fact that it was not considered very significant either according to the prioritization or the open-ended section, it appears that there is a

connection between these points. In other words, students did not depict high self-efficacy in punctuation because they did not consider it as an important aspect in the first place. It must also be noted that the prioritization section of the questionnaire did not separate spelling and punctuation, but referred to mechanical skills as a category of its own. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that the participants voted for the irrelevance of mechanical skills with a bias towards punctuation. The participants might actually have placed greater emphasis on spelling, since they also demonstrated a higher level of self-efficacy in that category (total 4.41).

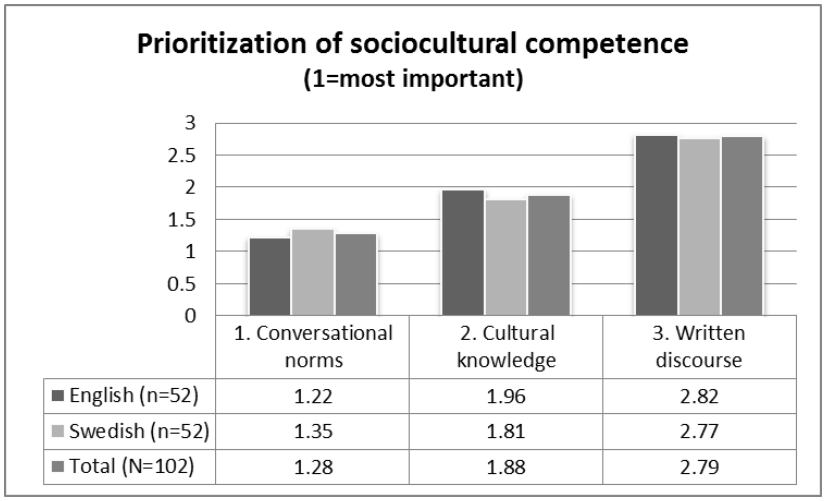
In addition to characterizing ideal language expertise, the participants were encouraged to reflect on their individual skills in the open-ended section to find out about self-efficacy beliefs. A number of respondents did comment on their language proficiency, but the themes that arose from the data proved to be relatively scattered. One English and one Swedish student reported a lack of vocabulary knowledge. Similarly, one English and one Swedish participant expressed insecurity in teaching the language because of its status as a minor subject. A lack of proficiency in grammar was mentioned by two English respondents, and pronunciation was perceived to cause difficulty by three English participants and one Swedish respondent. Overall, 12 per cent of the students expressed their insecurities in the data. However, the specific areas of language competence causing the difficulties varied from respondent to respondent. On the contrary, 4 out of 50 (8%) English participants and 5 out of 52 (10%) Swedish participants portrayed overall confidence in the formal skills. Here are a few examples to illustrate.

> (10) T1: Oman osaamiseni koen olevan opettajan työn edellytämällä tasolla.
> I feel that my competence is adequate for teaching.

> (11) T42: Oma osaaminen on hieman heikompaa, kuin mitä toivoisin, etenkin kielioppijuttujen kanssa, kun moni niitä tulee itselle ns. selkärangasta, eikä niitä osaa selittää auki.
> My competence is slightly lower than I would like, especially with grammar because it comes to me automatically and I do not know how to break it down.

8.5 Prioritizing sociocultural competence

Table 14. Prioritization of sociocultural competence.



	1. Conversational norms	2. Cultural knowledge	3. Written discourse
English (n=52)	1.22	1.96	2.82
Swedish (n=52)	1.35	1.81	2.77
Total (N=102)	1.28	1.88	2.79

Question: Prioritize the following aspects in terms of a language teacher´s subject expertise (i.e. language competence). Set values 1-3 according to your opinion (1=most important).

When the participants were asked to prioritize aspects within sociocultural language competence, they regarded understanding conversational norms as the most significant category, comprising communicative issues such as politeness, turn-taking, non-verbal behavior and negotiation of meaning. In the second place the respondents placed cultural knowledge, which entailed both intercultural awareness and knowledge of the target culture (values, beliefs, attitudes, dialects and interpersonal relationships). The English respondents were given the possibility to limit their cultural knowledge to a single country, so that it was not a requirement for the English students to be experts of all the English-speaking cultures. Written discourse was placed third, leading to a conclusion that the students did not consider knowledge of target culture text types or cohesion/coherence as significant as the other two categories. The results of sociocultural knowledge are illustrated in table 14.

According to the open-ended section of the questionnaire, sociocultural competence was regarded as significant approximately by 28 per cent of the English respondents and up to 42 per cent of the Swedish respondents. Students depicted not only strong preference towards cultural skills but also an understanding of culture as an inseparable part of language. Here are a few examples to illustrate the participants´ views on the congruence between language and culture.

(12) T82: Kulttuurin ymmärtäminen on merkittävä osa kansainvälisyyttä ja kielitaitoa.
Understanding culture is a significant part of internationality and language competence.

(13) T72: Todella tärkeää, opettaja ei opeta ainoastaan kieltä vaan myös kulttuuria ja maantuntemusta.
Very important, teachers teach not only the language but also culture and knowledge of the country.

(14) T84: Opettajan on tärkeä jakaa kulttuuritietouttaan, joka on tärkeä osa-alue esimerkiksi opetussunnitelmassa. Kieli ja kulttuuri kuuluvat yhteen.
It is important for a teacher to convey his or her cultural knowledge, which is for example an important part of the curriculum. Language and culture belong together.

The importance of conversational norms was highlighted by 8 out of 50 (16%) English participants and 4 out of 52 (8%) Swedish respondents. Since this category was classified as the foremost priority in sociocultural skills according to the prioritization, it is only presumable that it arouse attention in the open-ended section. Here are examples to illustrate conversational norms.

(15) T19: Kulttuuri on osa kieltä ja pragmaattiset taidot osa kieltenopetusta.
Culture belongs to language and pragmatic skills belong to language teaching.

(16) T49: Viestinnän kommunikatiivisuus on tärkeää.
The communicative aspect of interaction is important.

It becomes evident that the results of the open-ended section provide an alternative perspective to the prioritization of sociocultural skills. As 28 per cent of the English respondents and 42 per cent of the Swedish respondents underscored cultural knowledge, and merely 16 per cent of the English respondents and 8 per cent of the Swedish respondents referred to conversational norms, it can be concluded that students placed greater emphasis on cultural knowledge. This stands in contradiction with the previously reported results of the prioritization task, in which conversational norms were preferred to cultural knowledge. The results portray notable variation especially among the Swedish participants.

The students´ views on the congruence between language and culture might, in fact, be a possible explanation for the differences in the results of the prioritization task and the open-ended section. When the participants had to prioritize conversational norms, cultural knowledge and written discourse, they may have perceived culture as an aspect already embedded in language competence. Accordingly, they might have prioritized conversational

norms on top of cultural skills based on a belief that conversation skills require more attention. Furthermore, the reason why cultural knowledge gained more attention among the Swedish participants (42%) compared to the English participants (28%) might be rooted in the fact that the Swedish language is relatively easy to associate with a specific target culture, which might make the Swedish students more inclined to comment on cultural knowledge.

The world status of English was already problematized in section 8.3, and the issue continued to gain attention in the open-ended section of sociocultural competence. The participants pointed out that since there are so many existing variants of the English language, it is both unnecessary and too demanding for a single language teacher to be an expert of all the English-speaking cultures simultaneously. Even though the dilemma was recognized when instructing the participants in the answering process, up to 11 out of 50 (22%) respondents ended up commenting on the issue in their open-ended answers. What also ties in with the global status of English is the fact that 6 out of 50 (12%) participants referred to the use of English as a lingua franca. Some of them were, in fact, of the opinion that since English is spoken globally and even among non-native groups, it lowers teachers´ expectations to know about the original English-speaking countries. Here is an excerpt to provide an insight into the issue.

> (17) T14: Englannin muuttuessa yhä globaalimmaksi kieleksi kohdekielen puhujien kulttuurin osaamisen tärkeys hälvenee.
> As English is becoming more and more global, it is becoming less and less important to know the culture of its original speakers.

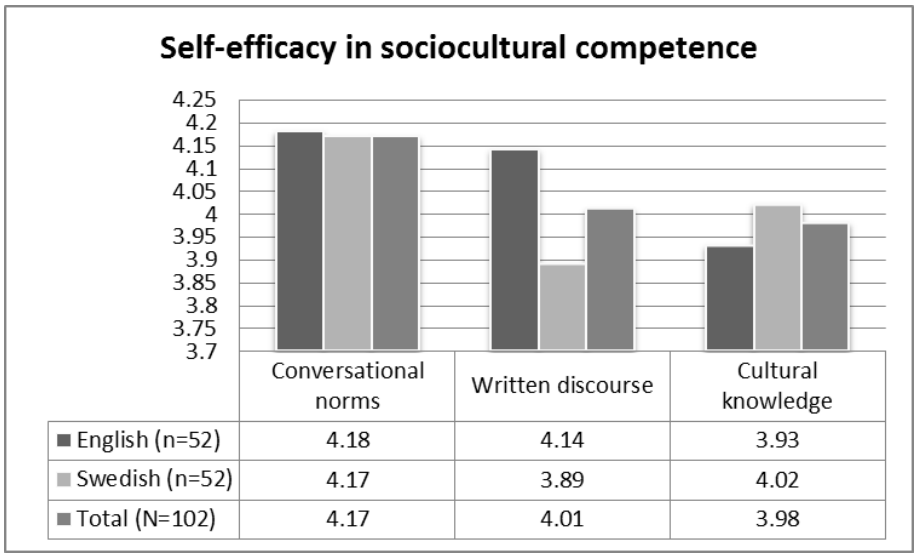
Another theme that arose from the body of student responses associated with politeness issues, which is naturally involved in the notion of conversational norms. In addition to good conversation skills, the students seemed to believe that politeness is a significant aspect of communication and second language skills. A total of 3 out of 50 (6%) English respondents commented on the importance of politeness.

> (18) T40: Monipuoliset keskustelutaidot, kuten mm. merkitysten rakentaminen yhteistyössä, ymmärretyksi tuleminen, ymmärtäminen, ymmärtämisongelmien selvittäminen ja kohteliaisuus ovat kaiken kommunikoinnin perusta.
> Comprehensive conversation skills, such as negotiating meaning, being understood, understanding, overcoming difficulties in understanding and politeness are the basis of all communication.

It can be interpreted from the open-ended responses that the students perceived sociocultural competence to complement language teaching as for example 4 out of 102 (4%) said that a teachers´ knowledge of the target culture might enhance student motivation. On the contrary, 4 out of 50 (8%) English respondents and 1 out of 52 (2%) Swedish respondents expressed their preference of formal knowledge to sociocultural. This ties in with section 8.1 and the results of the open-ended section, according to which the students emphasized formal knowledge. Occurring themes in the data were also knowledge of text types (2 out of 50 English responses), knowledge of dialects (1 English and 1 Swedish response) and aspects of everyday living (1 English respondent).

8.6 Self-efficacy in sociocultural competence

Table 15. Self-efficacy in sociocultural competence. (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)

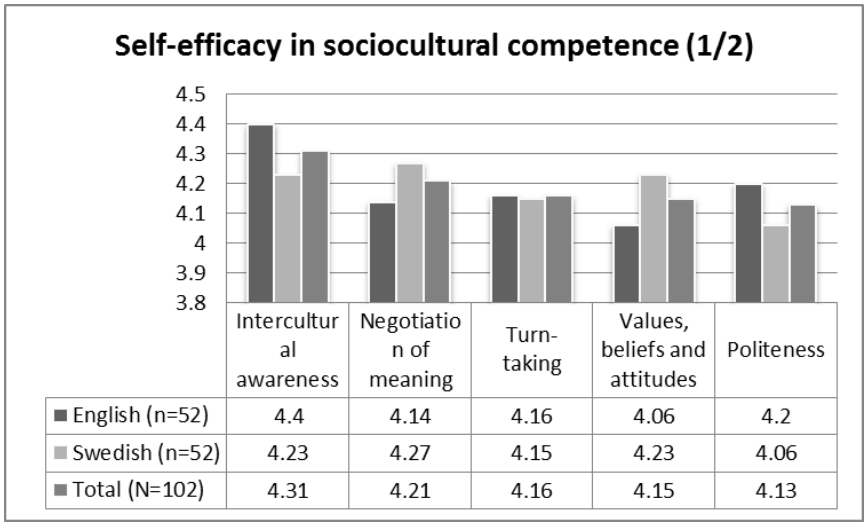


	Conversational norms	Written discourse	Cultural knowledge
English (n=52)	4.18	4.14	3.93
Swedish (n=52)	4.17	3.89	4.02
Total (N=102)	4.17	4.01	3.98

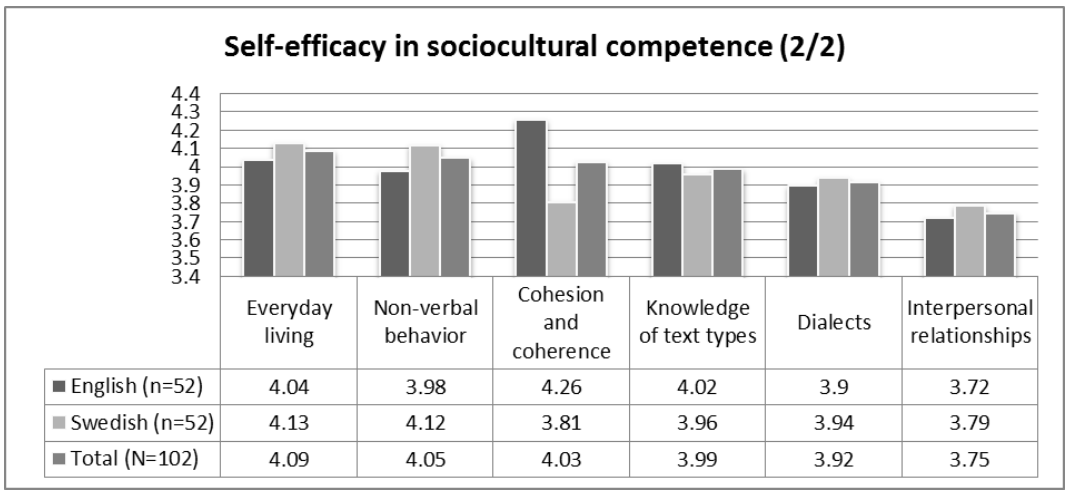
Sociocultural competence continues to depict a strong level of competence within both language groups, as it can be observed in table 15. The strongest category was found to be conversational norms, which was also prioritized as the most important category, as previously discussed. Therefore, the results illustrate consistency between the students competence and their beliefs about the most important aspects of language proficiency. The second category to depict high self-confidence was written discourse, which the students

however placed least emphasis on in the prioritization. Cultural knowledge remained as the most poorly mastered area of sociocultural knowledge, comprising aspects such as dialects, interpersonal relationships and everyday living. The fact that conversational norms depicted such confidence might actually be rooted in the participants personalities. Many language students are out-going, because they are generally eager to use their language skills in real life situations. On the contrary, the fact that cultural knowledge was perceived as the weakest category overall might be explained by the fact that in order to master this category perfectly, students are required to absorb a massive amount of knowledge. It might also be the case the participants lacked experience of traveling to an English or Swedish-speaking country.

Table 16. Self-efficacy in sociocultural competence (detailed). (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)



	Intercultural awareness	Negotiation of meaning	Turn-taking	Values, beliefs and attitudes	Politeness
English (n=52)	4.4	4.14	4.16	4.06	4.2
Swedish (n=52)	4.23	4.27	4.15	4.23	4.06
Total (N=102)	4.31	4.21	4.16	4.15	4.13



	Everyday living	Non-verbal behavior	Cohesion and coherence	Knowledge of text types	Dialects	Interpersonal relationships
English (n=52)	4.04	3.98	4.26	4.02	3.9	3.72
Swedish (n=52)	4.13	4.12	3.81	3.96	3.94	3.79
Total (N=102)	4.09	4.05	4.03	3.99	3.92	3.75

Looking further into sociocultural competence, it can be detected in table 16 that intercultural awareness was the category in which the participants felt most proficient. Categories at the top of the list include also negotiation of meaning, turn-taking, values/beliefs/attitudes and politeness. These categories speak for the importance of both conversational norms and cultural knowledge, which were also prioritized as the most important aspects of sociocultural skills in the previous section. As already discussed, written discourse was prioritized as the least significant category, which might possibly underly the fact that the students self-efficacy was correspondingly slightly lower in the categories of cohesion/coherence and knowledge of text types.

The results did not reveal major differences between English and Swedish respondents, since the mean values fluctuated quite consistently between 4.4 and 3.72, as table 16 illustrates. The t-test did not reveal statistical significance either, expect for the category of cohesion and coherence which demonstrated a sig value of 0.001. Self-efficacy was, in other words, strong within both language groups. The categories to illustrate the weakest competence were dialects and interpersonal relationships. Dialects might have ended up at the bottom of the list partially because of the fact that the English language portrays so many of them, which makes them difficult to master. Dialects, however, can be regarded as tricky for second language learners in general. For instance, the southern accent of Swedish provides a good example of a challenge for students. Interpersonal relationships, on the contrary, might have caused confusion among the participants. This question measured the students´ understanding of the relationships between for example different social classes, family members and generations in the target culture. To consider these types of relationships as an outsider might actually seem somewhat unordinary.

As opposed to the closed questions, which depicted a strong competence among both English and Swedish participants, the open-ended section of the questionnaire illustrated a less self-confident trend among the Swedish respondents. A total of four Swedish respondents reported that their skills in the sociocultural category were lacking. Correspondingly, only one English respondent commented on their skills in a negative tone. Some of the Swedish participants characterized their sociocultural skills as being in the developing process, partially due to the

fact that they had not yet undergone the obligatory language practice belonging to their studies. The English group depicted an opposite trend. While none of the Swedish respondents mentioned confidence in sociocultural skills, a total of three English respondents commented on these skills positively. Here are examples of both English and Swedish responses.

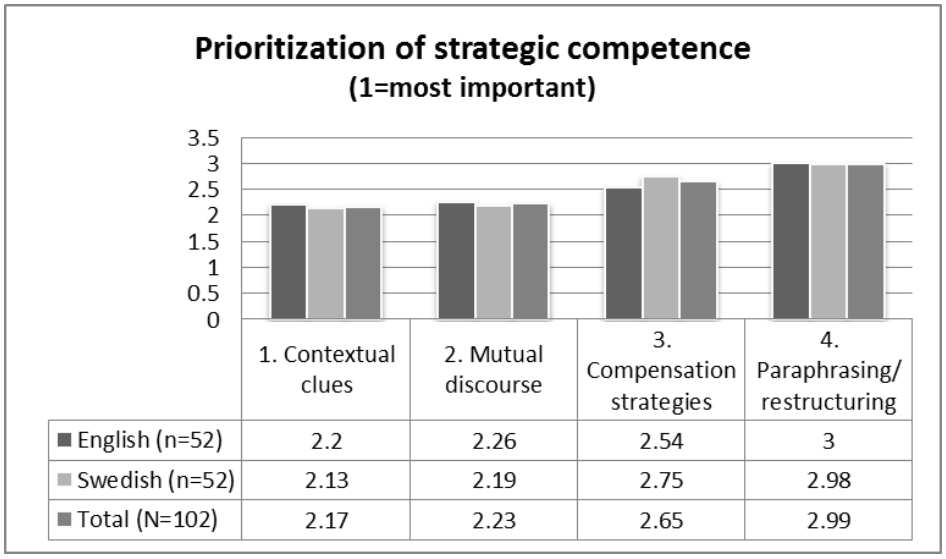
(19) T53 (Swedish): Ruotsalaisen kulttuurin tuntemus on minulla puutteellista. Minun pitäisi viettää enemmän aikaa kohdemaassa näiden taitojen parantamiseksi.
My knowledge of the Swedish culture is lacking. I should spend more time in the country to enhance these skills.

(20) T68 (Swedish): Osaaminen moniin näihin on vielä rakentumassa.
Competence in many of these is still developing.

(21) T24 (English): Omaa osaamistani pidän hyvänä sillä olen ollut paljon tekemisissä kohdekulttuurin kanssa.
I believe my competence to be good because I have had a lot of contact with the target culture.

8.7 Prioritizing strategic competence

Table 17. Prioritization of strategic competence.



	1. Contextual clues	2. Mutual discourse	3. Compensation strategies	4. Paraphrasing/ restructuring
English (n=52)	2.2	2.26	2.54	3
Swedish (n=52)	2.13	2.19	2.75	2.98
Total (N=102)	2.17	2.23	2.65	2.99

Question: Prioritize the following aspects in terms of a language teacher´s subject expertise (i.e. language competence). Set values 1-4 according to your opinion (1=most important).

Concerning strategic competence, the prioritization section of the questionnaire revealed that the participants set most value on contextual clues. This comprised observing the setting of a conversation and, for instance, inferring possible topics. The second most important aspect was mutual discourse, which referred to the way in which interlocutors can find support in

one another in order to construct meaningful communication. The third most valued category was compensation strategies, including for example the use of new words and approximate expressions in case of difficulties. The least valued aspect of strategic competence was found to be paraphrasing and restructuring. A deductive tendency can be observed in the participants answers because they placed greater emphasis on the more general aspects of strategic competence, which involve the setting and the interlocutor. The more narrow aspects concerning the individual, on the contrary, were considered to bear less significance. This observation supports the overall line of the survey which has so far demonstrated a socioculturally oriented approach to language competence in which communication plays a central role. In addition, the results of this section, which speak for the importance of mutual discourse, support and reflect the fact that the participants placed emphasis on conversational norms within the category of sociocultural competence, as previously reported in section 8.5. However, it must be noted that the categories of strategic competence, in general, are somewhat difficult to rank since most of the strategies appear on the unconscious level varying quite rapidly from situation to situation.

The results of the open-ended section illustrated students´ beliefs about the significance of strategic competence. 19 out of 50 (38%) English respondents and 22 out of 52 (42%) Swedish respondents mentioned that strategic competence is important considering language use in real life. Furthermore, the participants commented on the fact that it is important for the language teacher to convey knowledge about strategic competence, accustoming the pupils to flexible language use. This was emphasized by 17 out of 50 (34%) English participants and 18 out of 52 (35%) Swedish participants. A third perspective to strategic competence, which was pointed out by 6 out of 50 (12%) English respondents and 6 out of 52 (11%) Swedish respondents, related to the way in which a language teacher can make use of strategic competence in a classroom. Here are examples of the three perspectives.

> (22) T50: Nämä osa-alueet vaikuttavat mielestäni minkä tahansa kielisessä kommunikaatiossa (myös äidinkielisessä sellaisessa) ja olisi hassua olla ottamatta niitä huomioon.
> These categories affect communication in all languages (including communication in the mother tongue) and it would be silly not to take them into consideration.
>
> (23) T68: Tärkeää hallita puheen ymmärrystä tukevia keinoja, jotta osaa opettaa myös niitä oppilaille. It is important to master speech interpretation strategies in order to be able to teach them to pupils.

(24) T8: Kielellisten strategioiden osaaminen on opettajalle tärkeää, koska niiden avulla voidaan auttaa erityisesti heikompia oppilaita kielen opiskelussa.
It is important for a teacher to know linguistic strategies in order to be able to support the ones with language learning difficulties.

The multiple perspectives demonstrate the fact that the students seemed to have understood strategic competence very differently, which was unexpected especially for the part of using strategic competence in a classroom. When preparing the theoretical framework of this study and outlining the contents of the questionnaire, I aimed to focus on the qualities of a language teacher mostly as a user of language - not teacher. This was due to the fact that I wanted to focus on pure subject expertise, leaving out the pedagogical aspects.

In addition to the multiple perspectives, the students´ conceptions varied concerning the importance of the latter aspect. Three English participants and two Swedish participants were of the opinion that strategic competence does not, in fact, bear much significance in the classroom environment. Another tendency related to the fact that the students wanted to avoid an error-centered view of language, which came up in 7 out of 50 (14%) English responses and 3 out of 52 (6%) Swedish responses. Finally, the participants commented on the use of mother tongue in communicative situations. Three English and three Swedish students mentioned the use of mother tongue as an undesirable language strategy. These participants pointed out that it is not necessarily meaningful to resort to native language in language teaching, because the purpose of the language classroom is to maximize the use of the target language. In real life situations, again, the participants did not report to benefit from using the native language, since the interlocutor would seldom understand it. Here are examples to illustrate the preceding points.

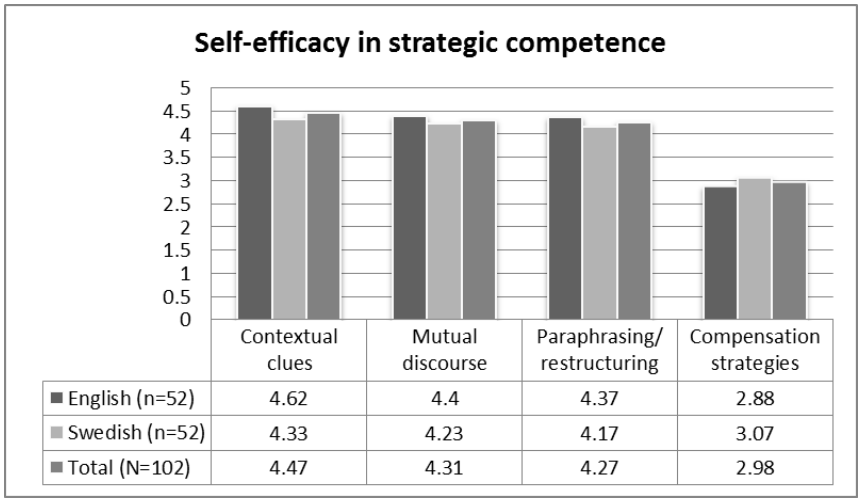
(25) T7: Strategiat eivät ole kovin tärkeitä opetustilanteessa silloin, kun viestintä on opettajan ja oppilaan välistä. Strategies are not very important when communication takes place between teacher and pupil.

(26) T10: On tärkeää uskaltaa yrittää ja tehdä virheitäkin. Paras tapa oppia.
It is important to dare to try and make mistakes, too. The best way to learn.

(27) T3: Oman äidinkielen käyttö tulisi mielestäni pitää minimissä. Harvemmin autenttisissa tilanteissa suomeksi voi selvittää yhtään mitään.
The use of one´s native language should be minimized. There is seldom much use of Finnish in authentic situations.

8.8 Self-efficacy in strategic competence

Table 18. Self-efficacy in strategic competence. (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)



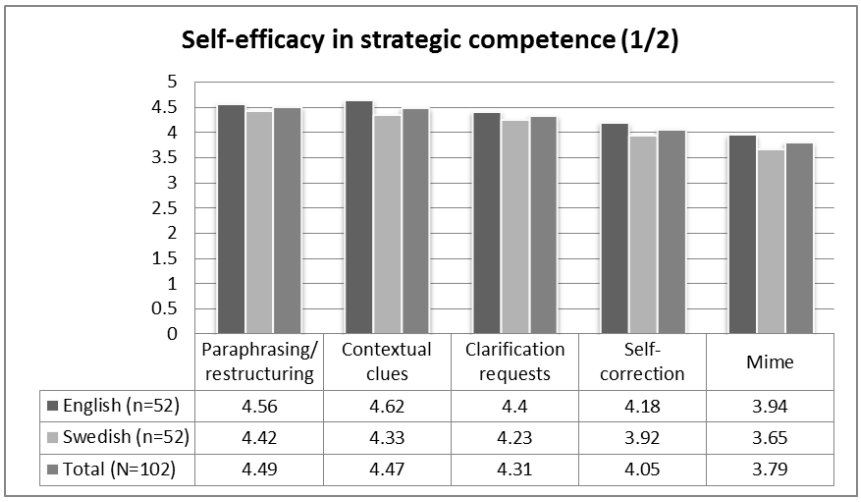
	Contextual clues	Mutual discourse	Paraphrasing/ restructuring	Compensation strategies
English (n=52)	4.62	4.4	4.37	2.88
Swedish (n=52)	4.33	4.23	4.17	3.07
Total (N=102)	4.47	4.31	4.27	2.98

Table 18 depicts the participants´ self-efficacy concerning strategic competence, and illustrates consistency between the participants´ answers with regard to the previously discussed prioritization. As contextual clues was considered the most significant aspect of strategic competence, the students also illustrated the strongest confidence in that category. Correspondingly, as mutual discourse was placed second in the prioritization, the students depicted subsequent efficacy in that category. The last two dimensions, however, revealed slight alteration in the students´ answers. Paraphrasing/restructuring placed fourth in the prioritization but rose in the third place concerning self-efficacy. Compensation strategies, again, was considered the third most important aspect of strategic competence but came in the fourth place with regard to the students´ efficacy beliefs. The results portrayed slight differences between the language groups, as the English participants´ self-efficacy appeared stronger in three of the categories. Compensation strategies, on the contrary, depicted stronger self-confidence among the Swedish respondents.

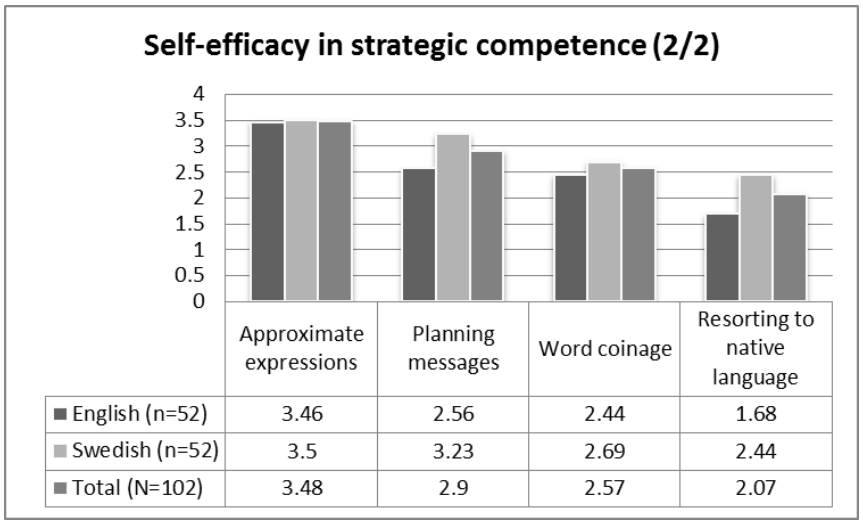
A possible reason for the fact that compensation strategies was mastered on a weaker level of confidence overall might rely on the fact that the category entailed, for instance, the aspects of resorting to native language and planning messages. As already discussed, the participants did not regard resorting to native language as very practical. In addition, they pointed out in the open-ended section that planning messages might actually have a negative effect on the

spontaneity of a conversation. To conclude, because these strategies were not regarded as useful, there was no need for the students to depict strong self-efficacy in them either. In addition, the prioritization section of the questionnaire referred to compensation strategies as a category of its own, which probably underlies the inconsistency between the students´ priorities and their perceived efficacy beliefs.

Table 19. Self-efficacy in strategic competence (detailed). (1=low self-efficacy/5=high self-efficacy)



	Paraphrasing/ restructuring	Contextual clues	Clarification requests	Self-correction	Mime
English (n=52)	4.56	4.62	4.4	4.18	3.94
Swedish (n=52)	4.42	4.33	4.23	3.92	3.65
Total (N=102)	4.49	4.47	4.31	4.05	3.79



	Approximate expressions	Planning messages	Word coinage	Resorting to native language
English (n=52)	3.46	2.56	2.44	1.68
Swedish (n=52)	3.5	3.23	2.69	2.44
Total (N=102)	3.48	2.9	2.57	2.07

Looking at strategic competence in more detail, it appears that paraphrasing/restructuring was the strongest self-efficacy category overall, while contextual clues and clarification requests placed subsequently. The fourth aspect was self-correction, the value of which was also taken into consideration in the overall category of paraphrasing/restructuring in the previous table.

This resulted in a slightly lower average, which explains the differences between table 18 and table 19. A clear tendency, however, can be detected in table 19 in terms of compensation strategies. All the subcategories of compensation (mime, approximate expressions, planning messages, word coinage and resorting to native language) appeared at the bottom to illustrate the weakest self-confidence among respondents.

The fact that the participants depicted so much stronger competence in paraphrasing/ restructuring compared to compensation strategies is a rather peculiar result because it is, in fact, rather difficult to draw a line between the categories. Is paraphrasing and restructuring seen as strategies that occur only after an utterance, or is it possible that some sort of self-correction takes place already before an utterance? If this is the case, it cannot be argued that for example approximate expressions or planning messages would differ significantly from paraphrasing and restructuring.

Strategic competence revealed to depict statistical significance between the language groups of English and Swedish in terms of planning messages and resorting to native language. Planning messages seemed to be mastered much more confidently by the Swedish respondents compared to the English, which was demonstrated by a sig value of 0.001. The other category that shared the participants´ views was resorting to native language. Possibly due to the fact that Swedish is so closely attached to the Finnish language and culture, the Swedish respondents seemed to be more comfortable with resorting to native language in communicative situations (sig 0.000).

4 out of 50 English and 2 out of 52 Swedish participants commented on their own competence in language strategies in the open-ended section. These students reported that they are accustomed to using, for example, expressions and gestures in conversation. Furthermore, they expressed their competence in using assimilated language (in a classroom), paraphrasing and accepting mistakes. Avoiding blocks of communication was also discussed by the students, who seemed to be very flexible in their attempts to get the message across. One English respondent reported an especially strong sense of confidence in their strategic skills over the categories of systemic and sociocultural competence. Here is an example to illustrate.

(28) T43: Itse en häkelly helposti suullisissa tilanteissa ja pyrin jatkamaan puhumista ja yritän viedä viestiäni perille mahdollisimman monen eri strategian avulla tilanteesta riippuen. Tähän asti esitetyistä osioista koen etenkin tämän osioni kysymykset omiksi vahvuuksiksini.
Personally, I am not very easily baffled by communicative situations. I aim to continue talking and try to get the message across using as many strategies a possible depending on the situation. Out of the previous categories especially this one reflects my strenghts.

9. Discussion

Table 20. A summary of the most important aspects of language competence in the data.

	Overall	**1. Sociocultural competence**	**2. Strategic competence**	**3. Systemic competence**
Prioritization	**1. Sociocultural** **2. Strategic** **3. Systemic**	1. Conversational norms 2. Cultural knowledge 3. Written discourse	1. Contextual clues 2. Mutual discourse 3. Compensation strategies 4. Paraphrasing and restructuring	1. Syntax 2. Vocabulary 3. Pronunciation 4. Morphology 5. Mechanical skills
Differences between English and Swedish	English participants regarded strategic competence equally important to systemic competence.	The status of English affects the ideal competence.	No differences	Swedish participants preferred mechanical skills to morphology.
Open-ended responses	Pedagogical knowledge was highlighted by 12%.	Sociocultural competence regarded as significant by 35% Cultural knowledge was preferred to conversational norms (35% vs. 12%). Systemic competence preferred to sociocultural by 5%.	Strategic competence was characterized as important by 40%. Using the mother tongue was not recommended by 6%.	Systemic competence was highlighted by 16%. Pronunciation less significant according to the English participants (14%).

Table 20 provides a summary of the results, portraying the overall finding that language students regarded (1) sociocultural knowledge and (2) strategic competence as more important than (3) systemic competence. The fact that sociocultural knowledge was emphasized to the most significant extent is perhaps typical of these students who have been educated to see language as a means of communication (Byram, Holmes and Savvides 2013). It is also natural that the students highlighted the

use of language strategies, because those strategies are embedded in communicative language use. However, the fact that systemic competence did not gain as much attention as the other two categories was unexpected, since I believe the category to construct the ultimate core of language competence. The importance of the sociocultural and strategic aspects of language should not be underestimated by any means, but it is my understanding that these categories are complementary to systemic competence, since they could not really exist on their own. In the end, systemic competence did not gain very much significance in the open-ended section either. Only 16 per cent of the respondents commented on the importance of systemic knowledge, compared to the fact that sociocultural knowledge was supported by 35 per cent and strategic competence by 40 per cent of the participants. Merely 5 out of 102 (5%) respondents regarded systemic competence as a foremost priority in language competence.

The results revealed an overall communicative ideology to language competence, which can be further demonstrated by the fact that language students preferred conversational norms and cultural knowledge to written discourse, as illustrated in table 20. In addition, the students emphasized content-related aspects of conversation as they set value on contextual clues and mutual discourse over the categories of compensation strategies and paraphrasing/ restructuring. This suggests a tolerance of errors, which was one of the trends that came up in the participants answers in the open-ended section, reflecting the results of Kinnunen according to whom error-centeredness should be avoided especially when teaching oral production (section 5.3). Furthermore, the communicative ideology was supported by the fact that the English participants´ demonstrated a rather flexible attitude to pronunciation, since they noted that pronunciation does not necessarily have to resemble any existing variant of the language.

The fact that the respondents (12%) highlighted the importance of pedagogical knowledge in the open-ended section was anticipated, as the relationship between subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge was clarified in section 2.3. Some of the participants, however, suggested that pedagogical knowledge would bear higher significance to subject expertise.

This, according to Shulman (1968), is impossible because pedagogical knowledge could not exist without knowledge of the subject.

Table 21. A summary of the participants´ self-efficacy in different categories.

	Overall	**1. Systemic competence**	**2. Sociocultural competence**	**3. Strategic competence**
Self-efficacy	**1. Systemic** **2. Sociocultural** **3. Strategic**	**1. Syntax** 1. Negation 2. Interrogatives 3. Word order **2. Morphology** **3. Phonology and phonetics** 1. Sounds 2. Sharp ear 3. Stress 4. Rhythm 5. Intonation **4. Mechanical skills** 1. Spelling 2. Punctuation **5. Vocabulary knowledge** 1. Word class 2. Uncountables 3. Collocation 4. Denotation 5. Connotation 6. Phrasal verbs 7. Idiomatic expressions	**1. Conversational norms** 1. Negotiation of meaning 2. Turn-taking 3. Politeness 4. Non-verbal behavior **2. Written discourse** 1. Cohesion nd coherence 2. Knowledge of text types **3. Cultural knowledge** 1. Intercultural awareness 2. Values, beliefs and attitudes 3. Everyday living 4. Dialects 5. Interpersonal relationships	**1. Contextual clues** **2. Mutual discourse** 1. Clarification requests **3. Paraphrasing and restucturing** 1. Paraphrasing/ restucturing 2. Self-correction **4. Compensation strategies** 1. Mime 2. Approximate expressions 3. Planning messages 4. Word coinage 5. Resorting to native language
Differences between English and Swedish	Higher self-efficacy among the English participants concerning overall language skills The Swedish participants depicted the strongest self-efficacy in sociocultural competence.	The Swedish participants self-efficacy was especially lower compared to the English in vocabulary and syntax.	Cohesion and coherence was mastered more confidently by the English participants.	Planning messages was mastered more confidently by the Swedish participants. Swedish respondents more confident in resorting to native language.
Open-ended responses	-	12% expressed their insecurities.	Swedish students expressed their lack of competence (8%).	-

Table 21 depicts the participants´ perceived level of language competence which revealed to be the strongest in (1) systemic competence, subsequent in (2) sociocultural competence and the lowest in (3) strategic competence. Compared to the results of the prioritization, this order was slightly less unexpected, as for instance systemic competence is an area of language competence traditionally emphasized to a significant extent at Finnish schools. Therefore, it was only natural that the participants depicted strong confidence in the formal skills. The fact that strategic competence placed third, on the contrary, might reflect the fact that the participants of this study, who can be considered highly proficient language users, do not necessarily possess an urgent need for the use of language strategies.

The participants´ confidence in their own language skills revealed to be surprisingly positive. The overall efficacy level fell at an average of 3.98 on a scale from one to five, and most of the skill categories depicted strong self-confidence among both English and Swedish students. The category of compensation strategies was the only exception to demonstrate an efficacy value under three (2.98), drawing the line between positive and negative self-efficacy. Resorting to native language turned out to be the ultimate low point in this study, illustrating a score as low as 1.68. As previously discussed, however, this category was not considered useful by the participants, which compensates for the fact that they did not illustrate strong self-efficacy in it. The highest scores of this study appeared in the category of syntax, which revealed exceptionally high values for the English participants´ self-efficacy concerning interrogatives (4.90) and negation (4.92). As it turns out, the anticipated lack of self-confidence was not portrayed in the participants´ answers to practically any extent, providing positive news for the students and language teacher education.

Even though this survey demonstrated an overall strong level of self-efficacy, the Swedish students´ confidence was found to remain weaker in relation to the English, as hypothesized. In addition to the question that measured overall language competence, the Swedish participants´ efficacy was found to be significantly lower in the categories of syntax, vocabulary and cohesion/coherence. Recognizing the fact that there might be alternative ways to explain the difference, these results suggest that there might actually be a connection between the status of Swedish and the learning outcomes of the language. As already

discussed, Swedish is often contrasted to English as a less useful language, which might underly possible negative attitudes or decreased motivation (Kalaja et al 2011). The fact that this survey revealed planning messages and resorting to native language to depict higher competence among the Swedish students does not necessarily argue for superior language proficiency either. Instead, the Swedish respondents might have experienced a greater need to resort to these strategies, due to a possible lack of competence. In fact, the open-ended section of this survey revealed that the Swedish participants had minor concerns about their proficiency in systemic competence (12%) and sociocultural competence (8%). This illustrates slight correspondence to Kinnunen (2012) who found out that teacher students experienced a lack of competence in grammar and culture.

What appeared as slightly peculiar in the results is that systemic knowledge was considered the least significant aspect of language competence, but it was the category to portray the highest efficacy beliefs among students. This might derive from the fact that the participants have gained a significant amount of exercise in the systemic aspects of language at school, but absorbed a communicatively oriented type of thinking especially during their years at university. This reflects the notions of Ruohotie-Lyhty and Kaikkonen (2009) who mentioned that both previous school experience and teacher training affect the construction of language teachers´ professional identity.

The communicatively and socioculturally oriented ideology is further detectable in the results of cultural knowledge, which the participants characterized as highly significant within the category of sociocultural competence. Cultural knowledge, by contrast, revealed to be the least confidently mastered aspect of sociocultural competence altogether. This illustrates the students´ understanding of ideal language learning as culturally oriented, simultaneously expressing a lower sense of confidence in their skills. The students´ perceived lower proficiency in this category reflects the ongoing change quite suitably. They vote for the communicative ideology, but are still in the process of developing their own proficiency towards it.

10. Conclusion

This study indicates the ongoing change between the traditional and the modern language learning ideologies to be rather straightforwardly reflected in today´s language teacher students´ experiences about subject expertise. Students set the most value on sociocultural and communicative language learning, aiming to develop good conversation skills together with a strong sense of cultural knowledge. At the same time, however, their actual language competence relies most heavily on the traditional aspects of language: structures, grammar and syntax. This is an important result to consider in terms of language teacher education. Is the communicative ideology actually gaining ground besides as an ideal? Are students actually developing towards the aim?

This thesis demonstrates a strong level of self-confidence among language teacher students, who experience a sense of well-preparedness for the challenges of their future work. This predicts well-being and success in the students´ teaching careers, which is positive news not only for the students but also language teacher education. The beginning careers of language teachers would, in fact, be a relevant focus of further research. It would be interesting to see how the transition process eventually takes place, and how students begin to restructure their subject matter knowledge, conforming to the conventions of their new working communities. The differences between English and Swedish would also be a relevant subject for further study, as it appears that there is a connection between the status of Swedish and the learning results of the language.

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Appendix 1

Kysely Englannin ja Ruotsin aineenopettajaopiskelijoille

Sukupuoli: Mies/Nainen

Vastaan kyselyyn seuraavan kielen osalta: Englanti/Ruotsi

YLEINEN KIELITAITO (1=täysin eri mieltä, 5=täysin samaa mieltä)

	1	2	3	4	5
Minulla on vahva englannin/ruotsin kielitaito.					

FORMAALI KIELITAITO - FONOLOGIA JA FONETIIKKA
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi). (1=täysin eri mieltä, 5=täysin samaa mieltä)

	1	2	3	4	5
Osaan tuottaa oikeaoppisia äänteitä.					
Puheeni on rytmisesti sujuvaa.					
Pystyn tuottamaan oikeaoppisen sanapainon.					
Osaan tuottaa luontevan/kohdekielenomaisen intonaation puheessani.					
Minulla on tarkka korva kielen äänteille/erotan äänteet toisistaan.					

FORMAALI KIELITAITO - MORFOLOGIA
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi). (1=täysin eri mieltä, 5=täysin samaa mieltä)

	1	2	3	4	5
Tunnistan yleisimmät kohdekielen morfeemit ja osaan hyödyntää niitä sanojen muodostamisessa (sanan vartalo, päätteet).					

FORMAALI KIELITAITO - SANASTO
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi). (1=täysin eri mieltä, 5=täysin samaa mieltä)

	1	2	3	4	5
Minulla on laaja kohdekielen sanavarasto.					
Tiedän, millaisia tunteita tai mielikuvia sanoihin yhdistyy.					
Tiedän, mitä sanoja käytetään yleensä toistensa yhteydessä.					
Hallitsen kohdekielen fraasiverbit.					
Tiedän, mitä sanoja voi/ei voi käyttää monikossa.					
Osaan käyttää idiomaattisia ilmauksia kohdekielellä.					
Tunnistan helposti, mihin sanaluokkaan sanat kuuluvat.					

FORMAALI KIELITAITO - LAUSEOPPI
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi). (1=täysin eri mieltä, 5=täysin samaa mieltä)

	1	2	3	4	5
Osaan muodostaa oikean sanajärjestyksen kohdekielellä.					
Osaan muodostaa kysymyslauseita kohdekielellä.					
Osaan muodostaa kielteisiä lauseita kohdekielellä.					

FORMAALI KIELITAITO - MEKAANISET TAIDOT
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi). (1=täysin eri mieltä, 5=täysin samaa mieltä)

	1	2	3	4	5
Hallitsen kohdekielisen oikeinkirjoituksen.					
Hallitsen kohdekielen pilkkusäännöt.					

Kuinka tärkeää opettajan on mielestäsi hallita edellä mainitut osa-alueet? Haluatko kommentoida omaa osaamistasi näissä osa-alueissa?
HUOM! Vastaathan vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

SOSIOKULTTUURISET TAIDOT - KESKUSTELUTAIDOT
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

	1	2	3	4	5
Osaan ottaa kohteliaisuutta ajatellen huomioon seuraavat tekijät: aihe, osallistujat, ympäristö, asenteet ja kielenkäytön tyyli/rekisteri.					
Osaan tulkita/käyttää puheenvuoron vaihtumista merkitseviä signaaleja.					
Osaan tulkita kehon kieltä, ilmeitä, tilan käyttöä, eleitä, koskettamista, hiljaisuutta ja katsekontaktia kohdekielisessä kulttuurissa.					
Osaan hyödyntää keskustelukumppanin apua merkitysten rakentamisessa.					

SOSIOKULTTUURISET TAIDOT - KULTTUURITIETOUS
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi). Englannin kohdalla voit rajata tietämyksesi haluamasi kohdemaan kulttuuriin (USA, Iso-Britannia jne.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Osaan ymmärtää kulttuurien välisiä eroja suhteessa omaan taustaani.					
Ymmärrän kohdekielisen kulttuurin arvoja, uskomuksia ja asenteita.					
Minulla on tietoa kohdekielen murteista ja/tai variaatioista.					
Ymmärrän kohdekielen kulttuurissa vallitsevia suhteita eri tahojen välillä/sisällä (yhteiskuntaluokat, perhe, sukupolvet, sukupuoli, rotu, poliittiset ryhmät).					
Minulla on tietämystä kohdekielen työ-, asumis-, harrastus- ja ruokakulttuurista.					

SOSIOKULTTUURISET TAIDOT - KIRJOITETTU VIESTINTÄ
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

	1	2	3	4	5
Minulla on tietämystä kohdekielisistä tekstityypeistä ja -lajeista.					
Minulla on osaamista koheesion tuottamisesta kohdekielisessä tekstissä.					

Kuinka tärkeää opettajan on mielestäsi hallita edellämainittuja taitoja? Haluatko kommentoida omaa osaamistasi näissä osa-alueissa?
HUOM! Vastaathan vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

STRATEGISET TAIDOT
HUOM! Vastaathan kysymyksiin vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

	1	2	3	4	5
Suunnittelen viestini etukäteen ennen kuin sanon sen ääneen kohdekielellä.					
Käytän ”sinne päin” olevia ilmaisuja, jotta saan viestini perille.					
Keksin uusia sanoja saadakseni viestini perille.					
Turvaudun omaan äidinkieleeni, jos keskustelu on pysähtymässä.					
Käytän elekieltä/pantomiimia, jotta saan viestini perille.					
Muotoilen tarvittaessa sanomani uudelleen.					
Korjaan itseäni, jos teen virheen.					
Käytän hyväkseni kontekstin tarjoamia vinkkejä pystyäkseni päättelemään, mistä on kyse.					
Pyydän keskustelutoveriani selittämään tarkemmin, jos en ymmärrä.					

Kuinka tärkeää opettajan on mielestäsi hallita edellämainittuja osa-alueita? Haluatko kommentoida omaa osaamistasi näissä osa-alueissa?
HUOM! Vastaathan vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

Aseta tärkeysjärjestykseen seuraavat osa-alueet kielenopettajan asiantuntijuutta eli kielitaitoa ajatellen. Kirjoita laatikoihin numerot 1-5 sitä mukaa, mitä pidät tärkeimpänä (1=tärkein).
HUOM! Vastaathan vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

Lausuminen	
Morfeemien tunnistaminen ja hyödyntäminen	
Sanavaraston laajuus/vahvuus	
Lauseiden muodostaminen	
Oikeinkirjoitus ja pilkkusäännöt	

Aseta tärkeysjärjestykseen seuraavat taidot kielenopettajan asiantuntijuutta eli kielitaitoa ajatellen. Kirjoita laatikoihin numerot 1-3 sitä mukaa, mitä pidät tärkeimpänä (1=tärkein).
HUOM! Vastaathan vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

Keskustelutaidot (mm. kohteliaisuus)	
Kulttuuritietous (arvot, murteet, ihmissuhteet, jokapäiväinen elämä)	
Tekstilajien ymmärtäminen	

Aseta tärkeysjärjestykseen seuraavat taidot kielenopettajan asiantuntijuutta eli kielitaitoa ajatellen. Kirjoita laatikoihin numerot 1-4 sitä mukaa, mitä pidät tärkeimpänä (1=tärkein).
HUOM! Vastaathan vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

Kompensaatiostrategiat (”sinne päin” -ilmaisut, elekieli)	
Korjaaminen ja ilmaisujen uudelleen muotoilu	
Kontekstin hyödyntäminen	
Keskustelukumppanin hyödyntäminen	

Aseta tärkeysjärjestykseen seuraavat osa-alueet kielenopettajan asiantuntijuutta eli kielitaitoa ajatellen.
Kirjoita laatikoihin numerot 1-3 sitä mukaa, mitä pidät tärkeimpänä (1=tärkein).
HUOM! Vastaathan vain valitsemaasi kieltä ajatellen (englanti/ruotsi).

Formaali kielitaito	
Sosiokulttuuriset taidot	
Strategiset taidot	

KIITOS VASTAAMISESTA!