Language specialists' views on studies, work and professionalism

Master's thesis

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English

May 2018

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos
Tekijä – Author Nisula, Paavo	
Työn nimi – Title Language specialists' views on studies, work and professionalism	
Oppiaine – Subject Englannin kieli	Työn laji – Level Pro gradu -tutkielma
Aika – Month and year Toukokuu 2018	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 76 + 2 liitettä

Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Työelämän muutokset suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa ovat herättäneet keskustelun yliopistojen ja työelämän välisestä suhteesta. Maailman muuttuessa entistä globaalimmaksi ja digitaalisemmaksi uusia työtehtäviä ja työpaikkoja syntyy samalla kun vanhoja, jo vakiintuneita ammatteja poistuu. Yliopistot ovat pyrkineet vastaamaan yhteiskunnan ja työelämän odotuksiin lisäämällä työelämäorientaatiota opintosuunnitelmiinsa. Aihealuetta on kuitenkin tutkittu toistaiseksi vähän. Etenkin humanistisilta aloilta valmistuvien generalistien siirtymisestä opinnoista työelämään on olemassa vain rajallisesti tutkimustietoa. Jyväskylän yliopistosta valmistuvat kieliasiantuntijat kuuluvat tähän ryhmään, ja toistaiseksi tätä ryhmää ei ole tutkittu lainkaan.

Tässä tutkielmassa on tavoitteena esitellä Jyväskylän yliopistosta valmistuneiden englannin kielen kieliasiantuntijoiden näkemyksiä opinnoistaan, niiden valmistamisesta työelämään ja heidän käsityksestään ammattitaidosta yleensä. Tämän tavoitteen saavuttamiseksi toteutettiin syksyllä 2017 haastattelututkimus, jossa kahdeksan vuosina 2008-2009 opintonsa aloittanutta ja jo valmistunutta, työelämään siirtynyttä kieliasiantuntijaa haastateltiin edellä mainittujen teemojen osalta. Analyysissä pyrittiin tutkimaan sekä osallistujien ammatti-identiteetin rakentumista opinnoissa ja töissä, että kieliasiantuntijoiden työllistymiseen vaikuttavia tekijöitä sisällönanalyysin ja diskurssianalyysin menetelmillä. Identiteetti valittiin teoreettiseksi pohjakäsitteeksi sen monipuolisuuden vuoksi.

Aineiston perusteella saatiin selville, että englannin kieli valittiin opiskeltavaksi pääaineeksi yleisesti persoonalliseen identiteettiin liittyvistä syistä: osallistujat kokivat olevansa hyviä kielessä, he olivat kiinnostuneet englanninkielisten maiden kulttuurista ja kieli nähtiin yleisesti hyödyllisenä opiskeltavana aineena. Sivuaineet sen sijaan valittiin ammatillisiin syihin nojaten: pääaineen, englannin kielen, merkitys oli vähäinen tulevaisuuden uran suunnittelussa. Kieliasiantuntijaidentiteetin ja mahdollisten työtehtävien kuvailu aiheutti myös vaikeuksia. Kieliasiantuntijaa ei myöskään pidetty ammattina: kaikki kieliasiantuntijat ovat yksilöitä, joilla on erilainen opiskelu- ja työtausta, ja tämän myötä erilaiset työelämätaidot.

Asiasanat – Keywords higher education, English, working life, professional identity
Säilytyspaikka – Depository: JYX
Muita tietoja – Additional information

Contents

1 Introduction

The concept of work in the Finnish society has undergone notable changes in the past few decades. Some established professions have already become obsolete due to digital innovations, while new jobs are emerging; it has been said that the current young generation will have jobs that we cannot even yet imagine. This development raises many questions, one of which concerns employability: what skills are necessary for working life in the future? According to Lairio et al. (2013: 119), humanities and social sciences are especially facing challenges concerning employability: if it is not easy for generalists to define and express their skills and knowledge in the current situation, the employers may not have even an educated guess of one's capabilities based on their education. Moreover, entering working life is not always simple even with a Master's degree: overall, generalists face more challenges in that compared to professionals (Puhakka et al. (2010: 49). The professional identity development can be argued to be more difficult as well, especially if the student does not have a clear idea of their future when starting the studies. (Lairio et al. 2013: 119).

Despite the uncertainty of the future, good language and communication skills will always have their place. The University of Jyväskylä provides high-level research on the role of language in society, and it educates language specialists in several languages. Following the political climate considering employment, the working life orientation has emerged also in the teaching at the Department of Language and Communication Studies: since 2014, there has been an obligatory course module called Workplace Learning and Internships as a part of Master's degree studies concerning the issue. In research, there is still discussion going on about the relationship of working life demands and higher education; Penttinen et al. (2013) argue that there is not yet common understanding of what and how could be done so that both sides would benefit, and more importantly, would not suffer. Overall, the topic has not been studied extensively so far.

The aim of this thesis is to provide information of graduated language specialists' views on studies, professionalism and working life. The idea for the study topic came in spring 2017. I had started my studies in teacher training in 2009, but after completing Bachelor's degree, I decided to change to language specialist orientation to find out what other work possibilities would there be for me instead of teaching English. While the English studies were interesting, I did not seem to find my calling in terms of research. As most of the students, the concerns about future employment started to rise as the graduation started to loom ahead. How could I use the knowledge I have gotten in my studies at working life? What are the skills I should have at this point, and where can I use them? Who would need an employee like me? In my frustration, I started to think that I might not be alone with these thoughts. Maybe other language specialists, graduating as generalists in humanities, have similar questions about their future; discussing these could be beneficial for the whole language specialist community. Therefore, I decided to seize the opportunity in form of the Master's thesis to explore these questions with the help of my peers.

The concept of identity was used as a starting point in exploring the participants' thoughts about their professionalism. Identity is a highly researched topic in many fields: in this thesis, it seemed a reasonable theme for research as the aim was to explore what kind of professionals language specialists are. Professional identity is usually seen as a mix of personal and social identity; while the personal traits, beliefs and goals affect finding the suitable education, the education environment and workplaces function as communities of practice, which is usually a social situation and leads into identity negation processes. Therefore, both the time at the university and the working life experiences were discussed in the empirical part of this study.

The first three chapter discuss the theoretical background of this study. First, the concept of identity is explored in chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents previous research of professional identity development in Finnish higher education context, while chapter 4 discusses the studies in English at the University of Jyväskylä and provides information of working life possibilities for English language specialists in Finland.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical part of the study, and the findings are presented in chapter 6. Finally, chapter 7 concludes the study.

2 Identity

The theoretical considerations used as background reference in this thesis are two-fold: therefore, they are divided into two chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on the concept of identity in general terms. Firstly, identity and its different interpretations in research literature are explored, starting with a brief look at the history of identity as a topic of interest in research. Then, the discussion of social identity and the role of language in identity development are explored. Finally, the studies in professional identity development in higher education context are presented. This last section functions as a gateway to the next chapter as well.

Chapter 3 focuses on higher education and working life. First, section 3.1 explores previous research on generalists in working life and the connection between higher education and current working life demands. Then, section 3.2 focuses on the previous studies on employability of the generalists in current working life. Finally, chapter 4 introduces the context of the study, starting by presenting the University of Jyväskylä and studies in English at the Department of Language and Communication Studies, and then discussing the working life prospects of graduated language specialist students.

2.1 Brief look at the history of identity research

When discussing the development of the concept of identity, it is useful to take a few steps back in time to see where things have started. The philosophical thinking of person and identities evolved during the early modern era, which is seen to begin at the start of the Renaissance in the early 1500s, and to end at the Enlightenment around 300 years later, in the mid-1700s. In this time, the psychological questions of the humankind started to surface among the so-called elite. One reason for this was the

overall development of the society: whereas there still definitely were people who had to use all their energy for physical surviving, the growing wealth enabled groups of people to start focusing on the psychological aspects of self-development. Before that, the answers for the philosophical questions had been found mostly from different religions, and for some, they still are. (Cote and Levine 2016: 3–4.)

In the early modern era, such social categories as gender, race and sexuality attributed strongly to a person's role in the society. Social identities were seen as *ascribed* and *prescribed*, meaning that people were usually born into certain society classes and professions. However, as the world and humankind progressed, the identities started to shift from prescribed and predetermined to the accomplished ones: this was achieved through self-chosen occupations and relations to other people. After the industrialization in the mid-1800s and on to the contemporary era, social categories and class division did not determine as much a person's social identity than before. Today, people in all social groups need to be able to socialize and strategize constantly with members of other groups for example when seeking work, and to justify their belonging to certain groups, thus negotiating the pre-existing identities and in some cases, creating new ones. (Cote and Levine 2016: 25–26.)

The concept of identity has been examined in research quite extensively since the philosophical development of 18th century. The first scientific traditions and frameworks started to emerge in psychology and sociology at the early 1900s. Hall (1999: 21–22) discusses the different eras of defining identity. He refers to identity being performed by subjects, and thus names the different eras of understanding the concept of identity as *Enlightenment subject*, *sociological subject* and *postmodern subject*. Concisely, in the Enlightenment era, the focus of identity was in the self-concept. This notion is parallel with the origins of identity research in the field of psychology. Later, when sociologists began to study identity, there was a shift from self to others. In the postmodern era, multiple individual identities are recognized, and they are treated as constantly changing.

In research, identity is usually examined from two different angles: either studying social groups and their interaction, or looking at the individual concept of self and questions of self-development. Most of the research concerning identities started originally in the field of psychology. Erik H. Erikson's work during 1950s, studying especially childhood and adolescence (see Erikson 1963) is often referred to as a culmination point in academic research concerning identities. Moving on from Erikson, the research on identity in 1970s and 1980s concentrated on questions about social psychology. Whereas identity as a psychological concept was focusing on the individual, adding the social aspect allowed the discussion to include relations to other people and their effect on identity construction. In the 1980s, Henri Tajfel was one of the main scholars to discuss identity development in terms of socio-psychology. In his book, he defines "social identity" as "shorthand term to describe (i) limited aspects of the concept of self which are (ii) relevant to certain limited aspects of social behaviour" (Tajfel 1982: 3). In addition, he states that when discussing "identity", it is important to choose the viewpoint one is examining the concept from, as otherwise the discussion will be too general and sterile. Furthermore, Joseph (2010: 13) offers a view of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory as revolutionary to the social-scientific identity research at the time, as it treated social identity as "a matter of self-concept, rather than of social categories into which one simply falls".

Edwards (2009: 15) summarizes in his book how in the 1980s, identity had not yet established its status in social-scientific research. He states that Erikson's work put identity development "in the spotlight" at that time. The linguistic research of identity started to emerge soon after; he mentions for example Gumperz's 1982 work *Language and Social Identity* as one of the most important studies that appeared during the first half of the decade. During the last almost 30 years, the use of "identity" as a study topic has exploded; lately, it has become a buzzword with many definitional nuances, and its ambiguity leads also to misuse the concept (Edwards 2009: 16). Some attempts to define identity in social-scientific research are presented in the next sections.

2.2 Personal and social identities

According to Vignoles (2011: 1), identity is one of the most researched concepts in the field of social sciences. The research on the issue has grown rapidly over a few decades, and as the amount of it has increased, the definition of "identity" has become more and more complex. In general terms, the focus is usually either on *personal identity* or *social identity*, although these definitions do overlap. Personal identity, also referred to as personality, is the summary of the individual traits that define the uniqueness in people (Edwards 2009: 19). Social identities are then constructed in the interaction between individuals. Lawler (2014: 7) states that defining "identity" requires defining the aspect: how identity is thought about in the scope of the study. She continues to note that identity is something that is "produced between persons and within social relations" (Lawler 2014: 19). This illustrates the social nature of identity development. Jenkins (2008: 17) argues that the word "social" is redundant when discussing identities, because people construct identities by interaction, which is inherently social anyway.

In regard of studying identity from a personal and individual viewpoint, the concept of "self" is used extensively. According to Jenkins (2008: 49), "self" is "individual's reflexive sense of her or his own particular identity". Sedikides et al. (2010: 98) have divided the study of "self" into three categories: *individual*, *relational* and *collective*. The individual self consists of the attributes that make us unique: no other person may have the same collection of attributes such as traits, experiences and goals. Relational self sees the person in relation to others: how do we see ourselves as individuals (and how we are seen) compared to others. Collective self sees people as members of social groups. The groups are then compared to other groups: what kind of traits do we have within our group, how do they differ from the traits of that group, and so on. Furthermore, Vignoles (2011: 9) discusses two main ways for studying individual, relational and collective identities: focusing on either *identity contents* or *construction processes*. Studying identity contents leads to investigating the factors that are associated with personality: in other words, what makes us unique compared to other.

These aspects can then be explored relationally or collectively. Another way to study identity is to focus on the construction processes: how an identity is constructed on the three levels. However, this may lead to problematic situations such as over-simplification or incorrect labelling, which are discussed briefly in the following chapter.

As mentioned, personal and social identities overlap. Law et al. (2002: 434) state that "social identity is understood as a 'self' who is different from 'others' ". Some aspects of social identities are universally agreed across the different fields of research. These are for example the plurality, reflexivity and variability of identities within an individual: everyone has multiple identities, which they can change and perform when interacting with others. However, while there is some agreement, common problems in terms of social-scientific identity research occur as well. Blommaert (2005: 206) states that social identity categories have to be recognized by others in order to be established at all. While we may be perceived differently by others than how we see ourselves, one's own perception of their social identity may also change over time: therefore, it may be complicated to study social identity categories. In addition, all social categories have features one can either identify or disidentify with; for example, in case of "students", some may think of sitting at the library tediously writing essays while some associates them using the government-granted student loan for excessive partying. Thus, there is no simple way of describing the different features of social categories. In addition, as mentioned earlier, all people belong to many different social categories simultaneously, which do not overrule each other. (Lawler 2014: 11.)

In this study, the focus is on professional identity; the definition of the concept is presented more closely in section 2.3. According to Eteläpelto and Vähäsantanen (2010: 43–44), professional identity development is seen as a mix of both personal and social identities. While working life has radically changed in the postmodern era, the previous professional identity development methods still exist. Whereas in the past people had a job that they learned from other skilled members of the community, nowadays they do not necessarily have only job or profession throughout their lives.

This requires constant professional identity renegotiations. Furthermore, they continue to claim that it is likely that the emphasis shifts between personal and social identity development strategies during a person's career. For example, at a new job and working place environment, the social identity strategies have a crucial role in adapting to the new situation: as all other members of the work community have already created the cultural atmosphere in the situation, the newcomer most likely attempts to "fit in" in this new social group. After they have acquired the cultural knowledge and social atmosphere, the aspects of personal identity can then flourish in the work environment. These results follow the theorization of the *community of practice*, first coined by Lave and Wenger in 1991. In his solo book, Wenger (1998: 5, 149) develops the concept further, and he states that the community of practice is "a point of entry into a broader conceptual framework". In short, the communities of practice in the working life context are groups of people (or employees) working together, learning and thus developing and negotiating their professional identities as they go. Overall, Lave and Wenger's theorization has been used extensively in studying the role of language and discourse in professional contexts. The relationship of discourse, language and identity development in research is discussed further in the next section.

2.2.1 Language and identity development

Language affects tremendously how people construct and develop their identities: after all, nothing happens in a void. According to Jenkins (2008: 5), the process of identifying other people allows us to construct a map of human world, a large part of which is done through language and semiotics in general. The problem in the mapping process is that it may lead to constructing oversimplified assumptions and labels of other people. Blommaert (2005: 204) claims that identity research, expanding over many social-scientific disciplines, becomes problematic if identities are seen only as labelled categories. Instead, he suggests that identity research in terms of discourse should be seen as a semiotic process: in his words, identity should be studied as "*particular forms of semiotic potential, organized in a repertoire*" (Blommaert 2005: 207).

This means that people should be seen in the discourse studies as performing identities using a collection of signs that they can access. In addition, the performance-approach of identity research offers a meaningful way to exploring social identities in discourse.

While there are as many ways to define or describe "identity" as there are scholars using it as their research topic, there are not established theoretical frameworks in the field of discourse research to study it methodically. For example, Fairclough (2003: 1) states how it is difficult to "think of relatively detailed presentation of a framework for linguistic analysis" that suits the social research fields such as discourse studies. Furthermore, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) discuss this problem in their article, while also giving a great view on the history of sociocultural linguistics research. Based on the discussion and research in social sciences and discourse studies, they have defined identity as "the social positioning of self and other" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 586). This definition includes the key aspects regarding identity: it is positioned socially through language use between individuals, who are part of different groups.

To solve the problem of not having a universal understanding of how identity should be studied in terms of discourse, Bucholtz and Hall have suggested that there should be an effort to create theoretical frameworks; in addition, they suggest their own solution. As a starting point for creating a framework for analysis, they suggest five (5) principles to be considered in sociocultural identity research and analysis. These principles illustrate the many levels identity can be studied in discourse, having intersubjectivity as a key point. The goal is to "*assemble elements of sociocultural linguistic work on identity into a coherent model*" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 586). In summary, the principles explore identity in the following terms:

1) Identity is emerging through social interaction and thus, language use
2) Identity is positional in three (3) levels: macro-level, such as age, gender or race; local levels within macro-level categories; and as temporary roles taken in social situations.
3) Identity is indexical, depending on the social occurrence at hand

4) Identity is relational in multiple axes simultaneously, and should be regarded as such

5) Identity is partial: any construction may be e.g. partly intentional or partly habitual, partly ideological or an outcome of the perception of others; all these can be shifting during interaction.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 607) state that these five principles, named Emergence, Positionality, Indexicality, Relationality and Partialness accordingly, represent the ways scholars across the socio-cultural research fields could approach identity as a research topic. The attempt to provide a theoretical framework for discourse-oriented identity research seems to derive from the shear amount of different scientific fields that study identity: as language has a crucial role in performing social identities, it would be beneficial to all research and science to have an established, well-known framework to use for discourse analysis. This could also provide results that could be comparable to other studies more reliably. Overall, the discussion around this topic is continuing.

2.3 Professional identity development in university education

In this study, the focus is on professional identity. This section presents examples of how *professional identity* and *professional identity development* have been studied in the field of higher education, particularly in the Finnish context. While there is not a high amount of research available, as discussed by the scholars themselves as well in their articles, some examples were found. The focus of these studies has been in the development of professional and academic identities at the university studies and the difference in generalists and professionals. Connected to these, the studies concerning the situation of generalist students' working life prospects and the role of working life orientation and guidance in the university studies are discussed in chapter 3.

As mentioned previously, the definition of identity as a study viewpoint is usually relevant to the context and the study topic at hand. Based on the literature, one of the

most studied fields in terms of professional identity seems to be education, as is the case in this study as well. Trede et al. (2012) examined journal articles in higher education aiming to develop a systematic approach to look into the theories and philosophical stances concerning the discussion about professional identity in research literature. After a careful selection process, they used 20 different articles addressing professional identity as their data. In result, they found only one (1) prescribed definition for *professional identity*, and 19 others that described the concept loosely. In short, that definition, "the sense of being a professional" (Trede et al. 2012: 374) uses the mix of concepts in both psychological and sociological fields of identity research. In their conclusion, they state that there is still a need for "upfront and focused discussions on what professional identity development means" (Trede et al. 2012: 382).

In the field of education, academic identity is another identity category that can be connected to professional identity. Lairio et al. (2013: 118) discuss academic identity and professional identity as the key theoretical concepts in the identity-related research in higher education. They argue that academic identity has a strong connotation to higher education environment, and it is linked to the "commitment to one's own scientific field" and the academic community in general. After all, higher education has been based on constructing student's academic identity and specialization on the chosen subjects' theoretical knowledge. Professional identity, however, is constructed by one's relationships with working life and the professional field, were it linked to the scientific field at hand or not. This notion sums up the challenges in professional identity development currently: the path from academic life to working life is not linear anymore, and as Lairio et al. (2013: 116) cite Watts and van Esbroeck, "transition into appropriate employment (...) is much more complex and problematic than hitherto". Today, it is common for university students to enter working life before graduating. This makes the transition from studies to professional life less significant life event than before; nevertheless, according to Lairio et al. (2013: 117), it does create stress in forms of balancing the studies and work.

In the scope of this study, the concept of professional identity is closely linked to higher education environment. In the research literature studying higher education students and their identity development, the concept of an academic identity is usually present as well. In this thesis, the focus is on the professional identity while it could be argued that some aspects, such as the academic skills learnt at the university studies, could be examined in parallel. However, as the participants have been employed outside universities, studying their academic identity is not in the interests of this study. The skills they have acquired at their university studies are seen as a part of their professional identity. The professional identity development is seen to be a mix of personal and social construction processes. As seen in chapter 5, the affinity to languages seems to be based on the personal values and life experience, whereas gaining working life knowledge and professional growth has occurred mostly in social situations.

3 Higher education and working life orientation

This chapter discusses the previous research of working life orientation in the higher education context. The Finnish higher education system is presented briefly first. Then, the situation of working life orientation as a part of university studies in Finland is explored. As the empirical part of this study focuses on generalists in humanities and their views on working life, the employability as a study topic is discussed further in the last section. This chapter leads to presenting the context of the study in chapter 4.

3.1 Working life orientation as a part of university studies

Higher education has a dual structure in Finland: universities focus on scientific research, whereas universities of applied sciences, also known as polytechnics, emphasize practical approach and close connections with working life (Higher Education). In recent years, as the view of university education has changed in the

postmodern society, also universities have started to build connections into working life as well. In 2018, there are 14 universities operating within the Ministry of Education and Culture's administrative branch in Finland (Universities in Finland). 25 600 new students started their studies in Finnish universities in 2016. In total, there were 154700 university students at the time. There has been a slight decline in the number of students in recent years: in 2016, the decline was two percent. Out of all students, 18% studied in the field of arts and humanities. (Statistics Finland.)

As the information society is evolving, so is the higher education system. This development is seen in the connection between university education and working life: as discussed previously, studies concerning working life have also entered the language specialist education. In their article, Penttinen et al. (2013) discuss the current relationship of the university education and the working life demands. They argue that the discussion of narrowing the gap between education and work is vague and multifaceted, and that there is no common understanding of what and how could be done in order to combine the demands of working life with the holistic aims of higher education. They then continue to state that "the development of expertise, working life orientation and professional identity can be enhanced in higher educational programmes" (Penttinen et al. 2013: 884). In their viewpoint, more research is needed in order to understand the current situation. Some studies have been done so far: for example, Lairio and Penttinen (2006) conducted a research at the University of Jyväskylä, the results of which indicate that students have many questions concerning their careers at the end of their studies. The three question categories, presented by the study, are concerning personal identity searching, education-related questions and possibilities in the labour market (Penttinen et al. 2014: 885). According to the research, students in all fields have similar career concerns, related to the topics above.

In general, studies of the university graduates' views on their education and competence in working life are rare, according to Tynjälä et al. (2006: 77). This thesis is also attempting to fill that gap in its own right, following in the footsteps of the large research project conducted by Tynjälä and her team of scholars. For their study, they

conducted a survey in Finnish universities, which aimed at both gaining information of students' perception of the skills needed in their subsequent professions and how they perceive the role of university education offering those skills. In total, 955 people answered the survey within four fields: computer sciences, teacher education, general educational sciences and pharmacy. Quantitative analysis methods were used to organize the data. In all four fields the participants had studied, and currently worked in, social skills were rated as the most important job qualification. Moreover, 64% of the participants reported that they had learnt the most important skills needed for work at work, not at university. The main role for universities was seen to be offering theoretical or domain-specific knowledge. However, the main defects of the university education was seen to be *too* theoretical, and not offering e.g. the social skills, which were seen universally useful in working life. (Tynjälä et al. 2006: 80–82.)

In 2018, the working life orientation is considered as an important part of all studies: after all, higher education is still seen as a reliable path into working life. However, the studies of theorizing working life orientation in studies are also still scarce. In their article, Penttinen et al. (2013) introduce a pedagogical model for combining working life orientation into higher education. According to their study, working life orientation as a concept can be divided into three distinct categories: the working life relationship of an individual, knowledge and skills in working life and employability. First of the three, the working life relationship of an individual, concerns our experiences and conceptions of work in general: some factors in the construction are e.g. our upbringing, education, socialisation and overall life experience. Therefore, the working life relationship is seen as a socially constructed product, instead of an individually formed concept. The relationship is unique for all individuals, which poses challenges for the career counselling in the higher education. Secondly, knowledge and skills in working life can be divided into two sub-categories: *general* and *field-specific* skills. General skills are working life skills that can be applied in all positions and fields, whereas field-specific skills are learned mostly through education. Gathering a field-specific skill set may affect the graduated students' employability either positively or negatively: Penttinen et al. (2013: 887) mention a

higher education graduate survey, which implied that the competition in the graduate job market is related mostly to the field-specific skills. Thirdly, employability refers to the graduated students' competence in relation to job market. Moreover, the concept of employability can be used when discussing both what kind of skills a person has and what kind of knowledge a person has concerning the overall process of finding work. Out of the three categories, employability is the one Penttinen et al. want to emphasize in the higher education as a key tool in narrowing the transition from studies to work. Some studies and publications have emerged concerning employability of graduated studies in humanities specifically; these are discussed further in the next section.

3.2 Employability of the generalists in humanities

One aspect in the discussion of university students' professional identity is the division between *generalists* and *professionals* (sometimes referred as professionalists). Lairio et al. (2013: 119) discuss the difficulty of professional identity development especially among generalists, i.e. students who do not gain a particular profession or work qualification along the degree diploma. The challenges in creating a strong view on one's professionalism and possible work possibilities are facing the generalists more strongly than their counterpart, the professionals. The studies show that the changes in working life are most clearly present in humanities and social sciences (Lairio et al. 2013: 119). On the positive note, generalists may have acquired extremely positive study experiences, which have affected positively both academic and professional identity development. In addition, in many working life environments, a broad range of transferable and diverse skills are demanded in order to succeed, which is generally suited to the profile of a generalist (Prokou 2009, cited in Lairio et al. 2013: 119).

Employability between professionals with field-specific skills and generalists with a wide set of working life skills has also been under scrutiny in the recent years. In 2010, University of Kuopio and University of Joensuu merged to form the University of

Eastern Finland (UEF). When this was in the works at the end of the first decade of the 2000s, a study was conducted to examine the employability between professionals and generalists that had graduated in 2001 and 2002 from either university in the merge. The research questions in this study concerned the graduates' skills and knowledge of the labour market, the labour market itself at the time and the differences between graduates with professional qualifications and the ones with a generalist degree. Overall, the results were good: two-thirds of the participants had found work at the time of graduation, and five years later 83% were employed, which suggest high employability of the generalists at the time. (Puhakka et al. 2010: 48–49.) It is worth noting that the study was completed over a decade ago: the results may not be relevant in 2018. Unfortunately, similar studies with current working life perspective were not found; however, statistics of how students have been employed after studies in general are collected regularly. For example, Akava (2018) publishes figures concerning employment regularly. These show that in 2018, the unemployment of recently graduated higher education alumni has decreased compared to the previous year.

When compared to professionals with specific vocational skills, Puhakka et al. (2010: 49) state that in terms of finding employment after studies, generalists seem "to encounter more difficulties in their transition to working life" in Finland. While professionals find work in the median time of 2 months after graduation, for generalists the number is 4 months. They also mention that these numbers are rather good compared to the other European Union countries. However, only around a half of the generalists reported that a Master's degree was required in their first job, whereas four out of five professionals needed the degree in order to get work in the first place. Moreover, the generalists did not find the skills learnt at the university as useful in their jobs as the professionals did. (Puhakka et al. 2010: 49.)

What kind of skills should the generalists in humanities acquire in the higher education to help getting work then? To shed light on this, Carver (2006) conducted a study in the University of Turku in which he interviewed 22 participants, 12 working

life representatives and ten university faculty members, about the preparedness of students in humanities entering working life. All participants were asked similar questions concerning the studies in the field of humanities in general; how they prepare for working life, what skills they offer and what is needed in order to be able to find employment after studies. Based on the results, Carver (2006: 28–30) divided the expertise of an academic humanities student into seven (7) categories:

- Theoretical knowledge and expertise of one's field of study
- Social skills
- Communication skills
- General working life skills
- IT skills
- International skills
- Business and economic skills.

Employability is also present in an information booklet for students in humanities at the University of Helsinki, written by Hartikainen and Mattila (2008). The booklet discusses overall aspects of studies in humanities, and how to use skills gained through education when applying for working life. Hartikainen and Mattila (2008: 11) refer Manninen's division into three skills that academics need when entering working life: *academic skills*, *concrete skills* and *employment skills*. Academic skills are gained through education, such as theoretical knowledge, problem solving skills, research skills and systematic thinking skills. Concrete skills may include language skills, IT skills, and communication and social skills. Finally, employment skills include the knowledge of working life in one's field including how to find work in the first place. The studies suggest that for generalists, the academic skills have a minor role in employability: the focus is on general working life skills and on personal attributes such as social skills.

The participants in this study, introduced in section 5.2.3, represent generalists who all have English as their major subject, complemented by different minor subjects. One

of the aims is to provide a well-rounded view of the similarities and differences between graduated language specialists. In the analysis, one focal point is the skills the participants have gained in the university education, and how they view their university studies in regard to gaining those skills that may affect their employability. These findings are discussed in chapter 6.

4 Language specialists and working life

In this chapter, the studies in English as the context of the study are presented. In addition, the language specialist working life situation is discussed.

4.1 English studies in the University of Jyväskylä

The University of Jyväskylä, commonly abbreviated as JYU, was established in 1863, and it was the first university to offer Finnish-speaking teacher training in Finland (Campus and History). Humanities have a strong presence in the university's strategy: one of the five core research fields is "languages, culture and communities in global change processes" (Strategy of the University of Jyväskylä 2015–2020). In 2018, the recently combined Department of Languages and Communication Studies offers degree studies in eight (8) languages: Finnish, Swedish, English, French, German, Russian, Latin and Finnish Sign Language (Oppiaineet). In addition, it is possible to complete study modules in Spanish, Italian and Slovak (Sivuaineopiskelijalle). The teaching aim of the Department is to "provide each student with the multifaceted skills and knowledge required by the tasks of future language and communication experts". In addition, the department "highlights the importance of creating working life connections during one's studies". (Operation and objectives). Thus, working life connections are also a part of the department's goals in the current societal environment.

English is the largest foreign language section in the department: in 2017, there were 465 English major students enrolled to university studies in all degree levels. (Vuolle

2018, personal communication.) Currently, the Department of Languages and Communications has a placement for 50 new students yearly to study English as a major subject. The department offers two study programmes for English students: *Language Specialist* and *Specialist in Language Learning and Teaching.* Within the programmes, there are five focus points in teaching:

- Language learning and teaching
- Discourse and social interaction
- Communication skills
- The Study of Language - its forms, meanings and functions
- Language, Culture and Society.

Out of the possible 50 new students, there are 30 placements in the language learning and teaching specialization and 20 placements in the language specialist specialization. (Englannin kieli - English.) Later in this thesis, the two student groups are referred as *teaching specialists* and *language specialists*.

The syllabus of English studies is examined in every three years. In this study, the participants are assumed to have followed the 2009–2012 syllabus in their Bachelor's Degree studies. The next iteration, the 2012–2015 syllabus, was most likely followed in the Master's Degree studies. In the 2009–2012 syllabus, the studies in English started by completing courses in Basic Studies. There were no optional courses in this study module; all students regardless of orientation were required to complete all Basic Studies courses, which for English major students were 30 credits in total at the time. Next, the students move onto Subject Studies (50 credits in total). At this point, the different orientations between teacher specialists and language specialists started to establish as all students chose one of the three specializations: *Language Learning and Teaching, Text and Discourse* and *Language, Culture and Society.* All teacher specialists were required to choose the first of the three, whereas the language specialists chose between the other two. Students were required to complete an introductory course or

their chosen module; otherwise, they were able to choose other courses within that module that suited their interests the best.

The syllabus structure was altered from the 2009–2012 syllabus to the 2012–2015 one. The most notable change was creating separate syllabus documents for the language learning and teaching specialization and the language specialist specialization; in the 2009-2012 syllabus, all information is presented in a single document. The current 2017–2020 syllabi are also separately produced for language specialists and teacher specialists, while the structures are identical to each other. It can be argued that producing separate official documents to guide the English studies, may not only help students follow their specialization, but also help the students' professional identity development process. It should also be emphasized that some of the course requirements and offerings have changed since the participants of this study have studied at the university, i.e. between 2008 and 2017. The syllabi starting from 2007 are publically available at the Department's website.

4.2 After studies: language specialists in working life

Language specialists acquire Master's Degree with a varying combination of subjects: in this study English functions as the major subject, and it is complemented with the minor studies of one's choice. This causes the situation where it is difficult, if not impossible, to have a clear view of language specialists' working life possibilities, as the degree compositions vary greatly. In addition, for example internships and personal networks may affect to the employment. There are some statistics collected by individual universities that show figures of English majors in working life: however, these do not comment the variety of workplaces or job titles the graduated students have. Therefore, it is not meaningful to look into those numbers at this study.

Töissä.fi - website provides some information on the graduated English majors in working life. It collects statistics from all Finnish higher education institutes, and it is developed and updated by the University of Helsinki Centre for Continuing

Education. The statistics are based on the surveys aimed for university alumni, who had been graduated five years prior. (Tietoa palvelusta). The information of English language alumni is based on five different degree programs across Finnish universities, which are not presented separately. In total, based on 276 respondents in surveys conducted in 2010-2016, the website has collected 146 unique job descriptions for students graduated from studies in English language. The jobs are divided into 11 sectors:

- Teaching and training
- Planning, development or administrative duties
- Communications and media
- Office work
- Research or development
- Management and supervisory duties
- Customer service /patient care
- Marketing and sales
- Consulting or Training
- Finances and financial administration
- Other.

The highest percentage of English language graduates, 50%, works for municipalities or federation of municipalities. The second largest number was employed by corporations, 26%, and universities come third with 9%. (Englannin kieli: Where do graduates go?)

Some possible working life titles and job descriptions are mentioned also in the 2015–2017 syllabus for the language specialists. The guidelines presented in this syllabus are also currently used as part of the current 2017–2020 syllabus. When describing the language specialist specialization, it is stated that language specialists may work in "corporations, organizations and communities as e.g. content producers, publicists, localizers, technical writers and in language planning positions". The possible work assignments may include "writing, processing and proofreading texts, planning and

realizing communication and presentations either independently or in groups". Other possibilities are language specialist roles in producing different types of texts for varying purposes. (Monialaiseksi kieliasiantuntijaksi tähtäävä pääaineopiskelija.)

In the recent syllabi, the Department of Language and Communication Studies has reacted to the societal changes in the relationship between university education and working life. Since 2014, there has been an obligatory module called Workplace Learning and Internships (5-15 credits) in English studies. This was first introduced as a part of the 2015–2017 syllabus. It is possible to complete the requirements in different ways, such as internships, working life related projects or courses and working as a congress assistant at the university. The goal is to "improve the expertise of language specialists on working life", while workplace learning is described as "target-oriented, guided and evaluated studying done in actual working environments" (Internships and Workplace Learning in Languages). In the light of this thesis, it is worth noting that while this kind of module was not an obligatory part of the participants' studies, many of them did complete internships, mostly in office assistant positions. In any case, the development can be argued to be positive in helping language specialists to transition from the university to working life.

5 Data and methodology

5.1 Aim of the study and the research questions

The aim of the present study is two-fold. Firstly, it aims to provide information of graduated language specialists' views on working life and how their studies have prepared them for it. Secondly, it discusses how the participants of the study explore their professional identities in both higher education and working life contexts. The data consists of interviews of recently graduated language specialists', who discuss their studies, work experience and professionalism. As all participants have graduated as English majors at the University of Jyväskylä, and they have similar study backgrounds leading to the linguistic expertise. However, all participants have

a unique degree composition in minor subjects, which may have affected their identity development and working life orientation at the studies.

The research questions for the present study are:

1. How do the participants discuss a) the studies of English and b) their selected minor studies in relation to their professional identity and working life?

2. How do the participants view professions and professionalism?

3. What skills and traits do the participants see as important for professional language specialists in working life?

5.2 Data collection

In this chapter, conducting interviews as a data collection method and choosing the participants by sampling are discussed. The participants of the study are also presented.

5.2.1 Interview as a data collecting method

For this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as a suitable method for gathering information: it is also one of the most used methods to collect qualitative data (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2001: 34). When studying a phenomenon in which the human experience is in focus, interview is an excellent method to gain information. As Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 41) state, interview is a method that enables the researcher to gain knowledge about participants' thoughts, experiences and emotions. Naturally, there are other methods to collect similar data, such as questionnaires; for this study, the interview was chosen for its flexibility: the possibility of posing elaborative questions and changing the order of interview questions based on the respondents' answers were seen valuable for successful data collection. (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 85.)

Semi-structured interviews are similar to unstructured interviews as the discussion is meant to flow freely, and the collected data aims to describe experiences and thoughts of the participants. The main difference is that in semi-structured interviews, both the themes and the questions are decided beforehand. There is a possibility for the researcher to ask clarifying questions based on the participants' answers on point, and thus modify the interview plan on the go, but the goal is not to veer off the main themes. In other words, semi-structured interviews are not as free, or open-ended, as completely unstructured interviews, but there is more freedom to react in the interview situation if something unexpected happens in terms of participants' answers. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 48.) For this study, the interview questions were planned beforehand according to the themes; however, as gathering data progressed, some questions were added and others elaborated based on the first few interviews. While the interviews followed a structure, the questions were not posed in the same order for all participants in cases where participants started to discuss a theme that was planned to be explored in later questions by the interviewer.

The data for the present study was collected by interviewing eight (8) graduated students who had studied English as their major subject at the University of Jyväskylä. The participants for this study were found by using writer's own networks: this is discussed further in the next chapter. All interviews were conducted and recorded between July and September 2017, after which they were transcribed; there was approximately 8 hours of recorded data in total. The recordings were made by using two devices, ZOOM H1 audio recorder and Samsung Galaxy A5 (2015) smartphone, in order to have a backup if either device was not functioning properly. The interviews were organized using various messaging platforms, and they were held in public places such as restaurants and cafeterias. The choice for interview places was based on creating a relaxing atmosphere; however, the downside of speaking of issues concerning identity among other people was a relevant question. The place for the interview was negotiated individually with all participants; therefore, it is assumed

that the chosen places were suitable for the interviews, as the participants were aware of the nature of the study beforehand. All interviews were conducted in Finnish.

5.2.2 Choosing the participants by sampling

In qualitative research, it is common to choose the participants directly and not randomly, which is the case in this thesis as well. When studying a phenomenon that includes only a small number of possible candidates for data collection, it is reasonable to consider different sampling methods. Koerber and McMichael (2008: 462) narrow the suitable sampling methods for qualitative research into three categories: *convenience*, *purposeful* and *theoretical* sampling. In this study, the sampling is both based on convenience and purposefulness. The convenience sample consists of people who are easily contacted and available. A purposeful sample is rather self-explanatory: the group of informants is chosen for a particular purpose, having "certain traits or qualities". Both types of samples have their pitfalls: in terms of convenience sampling, the familiarity of the informants may lead to overgeneralization by the researcher. Purposeful samples may include too little variation, and in the worst cases, the researcher may try to achieve certain results, which guide the choice of suitable informants. (Koerber and McMichael 2008: 463–464.) These concerns were considered in this study by selecting participants with different degree compositions. This requirement was assumed to offer data that had enough variation to offer meaningful results.

The participants for this study were handpicked by the researcher using a method called snowball sampling. This method was selected due to the small pool of possible candidates, the selection criteria and convenience: possible participants were easy to contact through previous connections and they were willing to participate as they have done similar research work themselves, and thus they were familiar to the challenges in data collection. The sampling process started in spring 2017, when the final decisions of the general direction of the present study were made. In snowball sampling, the interviewer asks suitable participants directly to become informants for

the study: in addition, they may ask the participants to recommend other members of the same community to participate. As I am a member of the community interviewed for this study myself, I had a few candidates in mind when starting to formulate the research setting. After I had used all my own knowledge of my student colleagues' study history, I asked these candidates if they would be willing to participate and if they also had anyone else in mind who would fill the criteria to be an informant. Using their knowledge and connections, the rest of the participants were found.

All participants have started their studies at the University of Jyväskylä in either 2008 or 2009. These years were chosen for a few reasons. Firstly, participants from that period have had time to make the transition from studies to working life. Secondly, time was a relevant issue; the interview questions required the participants to recall and reflect memories, thoughts and events, and it was assumed that it was still possible to return to those. However, after first two interviews, it came clear that preparing the remaining participants for the interview by asking them to explore their study history, especially the minor studies, would be fruitful. In addition, most of the previous connections made by the researcher had started their studies in those years. Therefore, starting years 2008 and 2009 served also as a convenient starting point for the selection process.

Snowball sampling, as all sampling, has its problems. Tracy (2013: 136) notes that snowball samples may "*skew to one type of group, clique or demographic*". The solution to avoid this is to create a sample with maximum variation: this was also the goal in this study. Some concerns were based on the possible amount of suitable candidates. As the intake of students of English at the University of Jyväskylä is not large to begin with, the theoretical maximum pool of possible participants is estimated to be approximately 50-100 people. Some students change their orientation from language specialist to teaching, some quit studies overall and some change their major subject during their studies at the university. However, the main concern in selecting the participants was the possible similarity in composing the degree: in order to gain a round understanding of the study topic, it would be beneficial to have participants

with divergent choices in their minor studies. This was somewhat achieved: however, as there are certain minor subjects that are seen beneficial by both the university and the society in general such as Business and Communication, these were heavily represented in the data. In general, it could be questioned how much variation there could be in the language specialist student body overall, as it is already a small group in numbers.

The participants gave oral permission to use the data in this study. The anonymity of the participants is considered in the data transcription and excerpts presented in the analysis. The names for the participants were chosen randomly, and they are typical Finnish names for males and females in the age cohort. While being gender-specific, the names do not represent the participant's gender in all cases, as they were assigned randomly.

5.2.3 Participant profiles

The process of choosing participants for this study was presented in the previous chapter. The chosen name, year of birth, the study years at the University of Jyväskylä and the composition of their Master's Degree are presented on the table below. In the last column, the letters B and S refer to Basic and Subjects study modules respectively.

Name	Year of birth	Years of studies	Minor Studies
Elina	1987	2008-2014	Marketing (S) / Basic Business Studies (B), Swedish, Organizational Communication and Public Relations (B)
Joonas	1990	2009-2015	Journalism (B), Organizational Communication and Public Relations (S), Intercultural Studies

Miia	1989	2008-2014	Marketing (S) / Basic Business Studies (B), Intercultural Communication
Lauri	1988	2008-2014	Intercultural Studies, Basic Business Studies, Psychology (B)
Hanna	1987	2009-2016	Intercultural Communication, Art History (B), Political Science (B)
Juuso	1989	2009-2016	Marketing (S) / Basic Business Studies (B), Psychology (B)
Riikka	1988	2008-2016	Basic Business Studies, Intermediate Business Studies (S) , Commercial Law (B), Swedish (B)
Tommi	1990	2009-2017	Information Systems Science (S), Statistics (B)

5.3 Data analysis methods

This study is qualitative and data-oriented. For analysing the data, a mix of different qualitative analysis methods was used: both content analysis and discourse analysis methods were utilised. The content analysis methods were used as a starting point in the data processing. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018: 103) state that content analysis can be understood in two ways: it can be seen either as an analysis method on its own, or as a theoretical framework for other qualitative analysis methods. In this study, the content analysis is viewed as the latter: it functions as a framework for the analysis. As the interviews were semi-structured, the themes according to which the data was

organized such as studies in English, professional identity in relation to studies and the relevant skills for language specialists were known beforehand. While the themes were decided beforehand, the focus on the analysis shaped during the process.

After concluding the interviews, the verbal content of the recorded data was fully transcribed in order to deepen the understanding of the topic, and to explore if any new themes occurred. As the focus is on the content, the prosodic features or other non-verbal notions typical to e.g. conversation analysis data were not made; if it was seen relevant or interesting for the purposes of the study, laughter was mentioned in the transcription to unveil the sarcastic humour or hesitation that would not be revealed in the text otherwise,. The coding was heavily based on the interview structure: answers to particular questions that produced the most relevant answers were both marked in a different colour in the original transcription and moved to another text document. This method helped to see which parts were and were not being processed compared to the original data.

Metsämuuronen (2005: 235) cites Syrjäläinen's description of content analysis, which starts by familiarizing oneself with the possible theoretical frameworks and other relevant scientific background for the chosen study topic. In this study, the process started with studying identity: how it is, and has been, viewed in sociological research so far. The role of language and discourse was seen as a key aspect in that regard. After that, finding studies of professional identity development for generalists were searched, and while there were not an abundance of research in that field, a good understanding of the topic could be formed based on the results. Simultaneously with this, the data was coded, read and reread, and the background literature reviewed and processed further. The analysis was also revised and deepened in many iterations; first drafts were mainly reporting the contents, after which the discourse analysis methods were implemented more carefully.

There are some well-known challenges in data-oriented content analysis, which are also common in qualitative research in general. For instance, it cannot claim to be fully

objective, as there are no "pure" observations in terms of methodology and concepts: these are always decided by the researcher, which will in a way or another affect the results (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 109). In this study, the results of the analysis cannot be theorized or generalized: in a larger sense, the goal is to provide information of a small group of informants representing a slightly larger higher education student body. Presumably, with other group of participants, there would be different results and analysis; this thesis thus presents only a glimpse of the phenomenon at hand. In addition, I as the writer belong to the social group as well: this is acknowledged, and it adds to the notion of the generalization of the results. As I have had my own experience as a university student and a language specialist, there is a concern that the results can be affected by my personal views as well. As a positive note, the maximum variation was created based on the degree composition; while my degree includes basic study module in Communication and Media, the other minor subject differ greatly, being pedagogical studies and other foreign languages. Otherwise, the analysis aims to be as objective it can be in these circumstances.

Schreier (2012: 47) compares discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis (QCA) by stating that in QCA, the analysis is based on the realist assumptions of the world; it does not make assumptions of the relations between language and society. Using discourse analysis methods as a tool for research includes an assumption that language use has an effect on the social reality. In other words, content analysis is suitable for exploring what is said in the interviews, whereas discourse analysis is sensible when interests are in how it is said. As mentioned, the practices of discourse analysis are used in the data analysis as well. When exploring the participants' identity development process, the discourse analysis methods are used more extensively, whereas in other areas, such as describing the studies in English and the relevant skills for language specialists, the focus is on content analysis.

6 Language specialists' views on studies, working life and professionalism

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. It is organized in a chronological manner: first, the focus is on the participants' studies at the University of Jyväskylä. The studies in English are discussed from three perspectives: the reasons for applying for higher education studies, why the participants chose English as their major subject and how they chose the supporting minor subjects for their individual degree compositions. Then, the focus moves from studies to working life. First, the concept of professionalism is explored both in general level and as language specialists. After that, the employability is explored through the skills that language specialists should have acquired in their education and what kind of work they could do overall. Overall, the aim is to provide information about the participants' professional identity development during their studies in English and after graduating, and discuss their views of employability and working life as language specialists. The excerpts presented in the analysis have been translated from Finnish to English; the original transcribed quotes in Finnish are presented in Appendix 2.

6.1 Participants' reasoning for choosing English as a major subject

> *I picked English because it had been my favourite subject at school and I had been always quite good at it. (Juuso) (1)*

English has an unequivocal status as a lingua franca in the global world of 2010s. This is also acknowledged in Finland, where English is the most studied foreign language in comprehensive schools and upper secondary schools throughout the country (Tilastotietoa kielivalinnoista). As all foreign languages, in school English is studied mostly for communicative purposes, whereas university level education goes deeper into both general linguistics and applied linguistics. In the University of Jyväskylä, the focus is in the latter: while the principles of general linguistics are taught to all

language majors, research and teaching in English focuses on discourse studies, i.e. language use in society.

At the early part of the interview, the participants were asked why they chose to apply for English studies at the University of Jyväskylä. Seven out of eight participants had graduated from upper secondary school in Finland before attending university, and most of them mentioned that it had been either their favourite subject, or they had gotten the highest possible grade, laudatur, in the English matriculation examination. The discussion around this topic illustrated two viewpoints: firstly, gaining higher education had a value as such for most of the participants. Secondly, all participants showed strong identification with English as a foreign language. Both aspects imply that the participants' have had positive school experience in terms of English, and they may have already started to develop their academic identity around that. These two notions are explored further with examples next.

The participants can be divided into two groups: students who applied to higher education straight from the secondary education, and students who had had gap years between the secondary education and university studies. Both groups are united in an opinion of seeing higher education as valuable: however, this is shown more strongly in the latter group's answers. For example, Hanna states that university studies "*felt self-evident*".

> H: How and why did you decide to apply to study English?
>
> Hanna: English? Well that's a good question. In a hindsight, I didn't actually know enough about other options, or even thought about them. I just had decided that English was interesting, I am good at it and I can use it well. Going to university felt self-evident to me, I didn't really know what else I could have done or where I could have applied to. (2)

When starting studies, Hanna had been out of upper secondary school for three years. She does not explain why she had such a strong urge for studying English, only stating, "*I just had decided that English was interesting, I am good at it and I can use it*". Significantly, Hanna seems not to have even considered other options during her gap

years: as she notes, "*I had decided that English interests me*", it can be argued that she had a strong motivation for studying it as a major subject. It is not clear if the motivation is originally intrinsic or extrinsic: intrinsic motivation refers to doing something for the inherent satisfaction, as opposite to extrinsic motivation, that derives from external pressures and rewards (Ryan and Deci 2000: 56).

It could be argued that most of the participants had intrinsic motivation to apply for higher education, as the reasons for the choice of their major subject can be traced to their personal identity features. Juuso expresses an urge to study *something* after one gap year since upper secondary school graduation:

> Juuso: I had a gap year, and after that, I got a feeling that now I have to go to study somewhere, I want to study something. (3)

The two excerpts by Hanna and Juuso above illustrate that education in general is important to both participants. This could be deduced from other participants as well: the positive view of their academic identity had probably started already in upper secondary school. Juuso says that his application process started with "*a feeling that now I have to go to study something*". The use of word "feeling" in a sense of an urge can be argued on one hand to be connected to his personal identity: most likely university education was in line with his values. On the other hand, it may be that "university student" was an identity category group he wanted to belong to; in this case, the process could be further discussed as a social identity process.

The data revealed that choosing English as a major subject was based on three motives. Firstly, the participants had strong English language identity: they have exceedingly positive view on English language and culture. Secondly, in relation to the previous notion, it was seen as an easy access to university studies. Thirdly, it had utility value in terms of working life: while no signs of seeing English as a main vehicle into employment were found in the data, it was seen to complement other subjects well. These three motives are presented next in more detail.

As language use is a social practice, English-speaking culture can be argued to have a significant role in language identity development. While Lauri showed affinity for American culture, Miia positioned her English language identity into British culture:

> Lauri: It felt like British English was the only accepted variety of English for many. For me, it was more that I liked American stuff even though I've never even visited the United States. But somehow that culture was more fascinating to me [compared to the British culture] (4)

> Miia: One thing was also that I had been au pair for two summers in England and I had become close to the language and I wanted to do something with it. (5)

Miia states that English had become "*close to her*": in other words, the personal experience in Great Britain had given her a strong, positive connection to the language. Moreover, Lauri reflects how he had never been in the United States, but American culture interested her regardless. In addition, he states that he felt being in a minority with his interest in American culture, and most likely American English, among other English students at the University. This suggests that there is variety in terms of cultural identity among the students: it is unknown why Lauri sees American English and culture being in the minority. Other participants did not state clearly their interests in English-speaking cultures: therefore, no implications could be made in that regard.

Elina's narration of her thought process when applying for English studies serves as an example of English as an easy access to university studies:

> Elina: Then I started to think that "well if I even were accepted to study at university, then if I figure out at some point [what I want to do for work], it would be easier to change [the major subject], I guess". Then I thought, "I am a bit interested in English and I've been good at it, so that could be something I could be accepted to study". (…) I thought it would be quite all-around useful subject so that even though I didn't know clearly what I'll become, it must be useful. (6)

Miia discusses the same topic in slightly different manner:

> Miia: When I was at the upper secondary school, I wasn't really interested in anything else but languages. Psychology was a bit interesting too but then, it's so difficult to get into university to study it. (7)

Miia mentions Psychology as another option for university studies, but also she felt that it would be "*very difficult*". Interestingly, Psychology was an only subject that also others had considered as a possible major subject. In the context of this study, Psychology can be juxtaposed with English: whereas English was seen as both easy to learn and a useful access route to higher education, Psychology was seen as too difficult a subject to apply for and to study. This affirms further the strong language identity in terms of high self-esteem in English skills. Therefore, English, and perhaps other languages as well, can work as a "gateway subject" into university for the linguistically talented. Nevertheless, despite seeing English solely as an easy way to be accepted to university, Elina thinks English as a "*well-rounded, useful subject*", which complements many other subjects well.

Similarly to the other unanimous reasons for choosing English, most of the participants were also united in the follow-up question of "*Did you think about your future career when applying for studies in English*?". Only Lauri mentioned briefly his motivation to apply for English in terms of working life:

> Lauri: I thought that I would like to work in international positions in some way. Actually, now that I think of it, in some point I wanted to become a translator. Yeah, I had actually forgotten about that already, it was probably originally about that [why I applied for English studies]. (8)

Lauri seems to have thought of his future career when applying: he states that he would possibly like to "*work in international positions*". He also states that translating had seemed as a viable career option originally, but for some reason he had both forgotten it and not pursued it further. In all other cases, it was evident that the participants did not have clear professional ambitions when applying for university studies. In the excerpt below, Joonas specifically states how he did not think about working life when applying for higher education:

> Joonas: In my upper secondary school, student guidance was based on looking at your grades and "well you've got the best grade in that, apply to study that". It wasn't that I would have been thinking what profession I'd like to have – it was just about what I like to study and what I am good at. (9)

Joonas reflects his experience of the upper secondary school career guidance: for him, it was based mainly on the good grades. As he had the highest possible English grades, it was the suggested direction for him. In addition, he mentions how he did not think about what profession he would like to have in the future: this shows the lack of awareness of the possible work in general, most significantly concerning English. While English was the core subject in their degree composition, it did not directly seem to affect the professional ambitions: the discussion about working life was heavily based on minor subjects. When asked what the participants would change in their degree composition or what they would study if they had similar knowledge of working life as they have now, none of them mentioned the studies in English, while other subjects were discussed. The minor subjects are discussed in more detail in section 6.2.

In terms of professional identity development, it was found that the participants did not have a set professional goal in mind when applying for English studies: they had a positive relationship and emotional attachment with the language and in some cases with certain English-speaking culture as well, which was combined into the motivation to gain a higher education degree. This was shown in the way the participants described their thought process for applying to higher education: most of them told that they did not *know* enough of their options regarding working life in the future, so they decided to apply to study something they *liked* and *were good at*. In addition, higher education studies seemed a self-evident choice for all of them: while other options were not discussed, they did not come up either while talking about the initial thought process of applying to university studies. The utility value of the language knowledge itself is also notable, as English skills are seen useful and "it cannot hurt to study English".

6.1.1 The University of Jyväskylä and the language specialist orientation

In this section, the early stages of the participants' higher education journey in the Department of Language and Communication Studies are discussed. If compared to

other possible fields in university studies, which either prepare students for a specific profession or have a close connection to working life, English language specialist students graduating at the University of Jyväskylä can be classified usually as generalists. The goal of this chapter is to explore at which point of the studies the participants started to develop their professional language specialist identities.

Whereas the language skills had been easy to acquire, and they may have functioned as a motivation to apply for studying English as a major subject, most of the participants had not had a clear idea of university studies before starting them. Miia had noted, based on the entrance exam materials, that studying English differs from upper secondary school English lessons, but she still felt "shocked" when the studies started:

> Miia: I don't really know if I had any expectations...when I started at the university, I didn't know anything else but what was in the entrance exam book, and that was a shock to me. I didn't realize that studying English means studying linguistics, and that you need to know stuff you had not even heard of in upper secondary school. (10)

> Tommi: I didn't have much expectations, I wasn't really familiar with what can even be studied at universities in general. In all honesty, I thought that when studying English, it's like studying English at school (*laughs*) (11)

In addition to Miia, also Tommi admits in the excerpt above that he did not have any expectations for the English studies, and he thought that it would be similar to studying English at upper secondary school. As discussed earlier, studying foreign languages at school differs greatly from the higher education language major studies. One possible implication seems to be that the participants had not developed clear ambitions and goals related to professional identity when applying for higher education: this notion goes hand in hand with the view of English as an easy route into the university, where there is room to learn and construct the professional identity as well.

In contrast to the notion that the participants do not seem to have developed their professional identities greatly before the studies, everyone stated that they did not

want to become teachers. This was also one of the criteria for the participant selection for this study. Joonas explains this further in the excerpt below:

> H: Why did you choose the so-called language specialist orientation?

> Joonas: Basically, I chose that I didn't want to be a teacher. I remember how people talked about teachers and not-teachers, and at that point, I was like "OK, I don't want to become a teacher so I must go this other way". At first, it was not clear what that other way was, and I defined it mostly based on what it wasn't. I didn't maybe see as much possibilities for any specific [profession], but it was just that "I don't want to go to that teaching route". (12)

When asked why he chose the language specialist orientation instead of teaching specialist, Joonas ponders that he actually chose *not* to become a teacher. This decision seems to be made before university studies: for the University of Jyväskylä, one can apply directly to study at the teaching specialist programme. When entering the studies, the students were categorized in his words as either "teachers" or "not-teachers". While the English syllabi of the time do refer to the "not-teachers" as language specialists, in the study orientation and peer discourse "teachers" seem to have such a strong role that the language specialist orientation is defined being "not that". This may have affected the participants' professional identity development; not necessarily negatively, but it may have delayed the development process compared to the teaching specialists.

By contrast, even though one could have chosen between programmes in the application process, Hanna had not realized that teaching could even be an option for her:

> Hanna: I didn't even know that English teachers come like that [from universities]. It was maybe the first day of the studies when we had some kind of group activities that I was like "what teaching studies": I just simply didn't know enough. (13)

In her interview, Hanna is the only one who expresses directly that at the time of applying to universities, she was mainly interested in studying general linguistics. As general linguistics is not one of the core research fields in the University of Jyväskylä, this raises the question of why to choose this university in the first place. In order to

explore this situation, the participants were asked why they chose to accept the study placement in the University of Jyväskylä. Based on the search through the websites of Finnish universities, it is found that English can be studied as a major subject in seven (7) universities in 2018: the universities of Jyväskylä, Helsinki, Tampere, Turku, Oulu, and Eastern Finland, and Åbo Akademi, the Swedish-speaking university also located in Turku. In early 2017, it was decided that the language education in the University of Vaasa is moved to the University of Jyväskylä; for the participants of this study, Vaasa could have been an option as well. Some of the participants had applied for multiple universities, others only for Jyväskylä. Most importantly, based on the participants' answers, there were no educational reasons for choosing Jyväskylä. For some, either Jyväskylä was a familiar city beforehand, or they had heard good things about it: therefore, it seems that the good reputation of the city, and perhaps the university as well, gained more emphasis in the decision process than the content of the English studies. For example, as discussed in the previous section, Hanna describes how the main goal was to be accepted into university in general, and Jyväskylä had the same entrance exam books to study with other universities, but only one instead of two:

> Hanna: I applied twice to the University of Tampere but the entrance exam was too difficult. I lived in (one of the university cities) at the time, and I applied there as well but I didn't get in. The same year I realized that (this city) and Jyväskylä had the same entrance exam books, but for Jyväskylä you had to study only one of them. (14)

As the universities have different profiles of research and education, the choice of a particular university may not always be the most beneficial in terms of one's career goals. Tommi realized this during his studies when he had started to direct his interests towards technical writing and translating, which are not the core subjects in the University of Jyväskylä either:

> Tommi: Well, it may be that when I was oriented into writing and translating, then maybe I should have had studied in a university that has focus on those things, such as Tampere. Then, it was possible to choose courses here that leaned into that even a little (…) I also understand that they are not core subjects in our university. (15)

Tommi states that he was not aware of the distinct differences between English studies in Finnish universities. The awareness of different university profiles is a complicated question: student counselling in upper secondary schools could have a crucial role in discussing that aspect of higher education. Nevertheless, neither of the participants who brought this up, Hanna and Tommi, showed discontent in English studies at Jyväskylä. Moreover, the participants were asked about their opinion of the English studies in general. This revealed that they were mostly happy with them, and the ideas for development of the studies revolved around the participants' own interests, not in the course topics or study contents. As the participants' views on the studies themselves were rather neutral, and the analysis did not offer significant results of how they had influenced the participants' language specialist identity development, they are not discussed further in this section.

6.2 The significance of minor subjects

Communicative language skills are in focus in language education during comprehensive and upper secondary schools; in Finland, the skill level in English among the population is especially high (see Leppänen et al. 2009). These skills can be highly beneficial in the global working life as well. However, studying also other subjects to complement English is crucial for language specialists. In this section, the participants' minor subject choices and their significance for their entrance into working life are explored.

The minor subjects and their substance value have a crucial role in the transition from studies to working life: it could be argued that "language specialist" in itself is not a commonly known professional concept. This is also acknowledged by the Department of Language and Communication Studies: on their website for university applicants, it is stated that "In addition to language studies, you choose studies from other fields as well, such as Business, Communications or Social Science, as those studies usually affect your future career development" (Kieliasiantuntijan kandidaatti- ja maisteriohjelma). In this study, the three fields mentioned were the most popular ones

within the participants' degree composition as well, as most of the participants have completed study modules at least one of these three subjects. In addition, the participants who had not studied any of these extensively recognized their value after spending some time in working life. When asked how the participants had decided their minor subjects, most of them hesitated with the answers. Overall, based on the data, the reasons for choosing particular minor subjects can be divided into three categories: 1) recommendation by university staff or peers, 2) recognized utility value for working life and 3) personal interests. For most of the participants, these categories overlapped in their reasoning. In contrast to the reasons for choosing English, minor subjects were selected mostly working life in mind, although personal interests were also present in the data.

When starting the university studies, none of the participants seemed to have explored their minor subject options beforehand. All participants started their minor studies either first or second year of studies, which is also recommended for all students. Out of all eight participants, Tommi seemed to have found his minor subjects the fastest; for him, talking to a staff member about his personal interests helped to choose the subjects:

> Tommi: When we had Staff Tutoring and I told about my interests, such as IT, I was told that I could become a technical writer or a translator, so I started focusing on that immediately. Then I took Mathematical Information Technology as a minor subject, but changed it later to Information Systems Science. (16)

Tommi explains that when he told a staff member about his affinity to IT at a yearlong course called Staff Tutoring, organized for all new students during the first year of studies including one-on-one guidance, he was told that becoming a technical writer or a translator could be suitable career choices for him. He states that it was the main reason he initially decided to take a minor subject in Mathematical Information Technology, and later continued to Information Systems Science. Of all participants, Tommi was the only one to mention tutoring, or any other type of official guidance, as a crucial factor influencing his choice of minor studies. For him, talking with a staff member may have directed him to choose something in which his language skills

would have a significant role. Overall, the participants did not discuss the role of English in their work; while it was asked explicitly, the data did not reveal specific details.

In addition to staff members, the peers were another group of people that was mentioned as affecting the minor subject choices. Riikka had gotten her initiative for looking into minor subjects through other students making choices before her:

> Riikka: I think that I was like "ok, my peers are doing minor studies, should I do them too" and that way realized that I probably need to start doing something. (17)

While Tommi had found his minor study path at the Staff Tutoring, Riikka seemed to have been influenced by her peers. Riikka does not specify which subjects she chose because of the peers, but they seemed have a role in the process nevertheless. Other participants mentioned peer support and recommendation as one of the key elements in study selection process and entering working life as well. The participants were also asked if they recall any other people or events affecting their thought process. This was done to find out what kind of guidance had helped them to make choices. Overall, the participants did not mention any other means of official guidance despite the example above.

The utility value for working life was strongly present in the data. As mentioned earlier, some minor subjects were popular among the participants, such as Business and Communications. A closer look at the participant profiles shows that there are notable similarities between Elina and Joonas. Both of them were interested in Communications:

> Elina: I knew that I wanted to study Communications, and it was maybe that I thought I'd like to work in Communications one day. When I looked into the options, Organizational Communication was the most fascinating to me. In retrospect, I could have chosen differently…then Basic Business Studies and Marketing came along when I realized I want to learn about business and that how I got into Marketing. I thought that it was a good combination; there could be many job opportunities. (18)

Elina states that she "*knew that she wanted to study Communications*", which led her to choose Organizational Communication & Public Relations (OCPR) as a minor subject. She was also interested in Business, which is why she completed Basic Business Studies. This choice eventually sparked her interest in Marketing, of which she completed the subject study module as well. Overall, it shows that Elina emphasizes the utility aspect of her minor studies for working life. However, she shows some discontent with her choices by stating, "*In retrospect, I could have chosen differently*". She does not continue to give any reasons for that, which leaves it unclear why she would be unsatisfied with her studies.

Joonas started composing his degree similarly to Elina by choosing subjects that he was interested in, such as Journalism. However, by the Master's degree studies, he had not completed any subject study modules. He discusses the choice of taking OCPR subject studies by contemplating working life:

> Joonas: At the end of the studies, it was in Master's degree studies, when I ended up with Organizational Communication. It was definitely because I was thinking "oh my god, what am I going to do with this degree, where do I find work". I had done only Basic study modules in Communication and Media and Intercultural studies, and it felt that if I had to tell some employer what I could do, I couldn't tell. (19)

Joonas notes that if he were to tell future employers about his skills, based on his basic studies in Communications, he could not describe them. This led him to complete the subject study module in Organizational Communication; he saw a strong utility aspect in concluding them. Describing and defining one's work skills is highly important when applying for work. It could be argued that knowing how to use language to present these skills can affect the professional identity development, especially when language skills are a part of one's personal identity as well.

Whereas Elina and Joonas had Communications as their core interest when selecting minor subjects, Miia, Juuso and Lauri state that pondering working life after studies veered them toward studies in Business and Marketing:

Miia: In the first years, I didn't really think about [the career] much. More at the end, and I think that the minor subject studies were the driving force behind starting to think career options; at that point, the Business studies and Marketing came into the mix. Otherwise, I thought that "I'm not going to do anything with this [degree] if I don't do something else that would enable for example a career in Administration or something like that". (20)

Juuso: I maybe started thinking what could be a good minor subject that when paired with English, it could help finding work somehow. Then I thought about Marketing; there must be [work in] international marketing, and it could mix well with English. I can't say which year it was but maybe around fourth year or so when I started thinking about these things more carefully. (21)

Lauri: It wasn't like I was interested in them but that they are probably useful. It was like "Business is always a good study choice, that must be easy to do with my background, so let's do it". (22)

In the first excerpt, Miia reflects on her thought process: she mentions the need for subjects that would enable a career for her in the first place; she mentions Administration as an example. Juuso shows more clearly him connecting English to his minor subject selection than Miia: International Marketing seemed a viable career option for him. As is the case with Miia and Juuso, also Lauri decided to take Business studies based on working life prospects. While Miia and Juuso do not discuss if they liked the studies or not, Lauri says that he was not very interested in the Business studies. As mentioned in the start of the section 6.1, seven out of eight participants came from the upper secondary school background. Conversely, Lauri had completed a secondary level degree in Business before applying for university, and he felt continuing in that field would be easy for him.

The participants were not asked directly if they liked their minor studies; nevertheless, compared to English studies, the utility aspect for working life is a notable reason for the subject choices. As Lauri stated above, he did not base the choice of doing Business studies on his personal interests: that choice was made purely on the utility value for working life. However, as a stark comparison to Lauri, Hanna did her choices *only* based on her personal interests:

Hanna: I chose the minor subjects based on my interests, and Art History was super interesting to me. (23)

While most of the other participants decided to study the subjects that were proven beneficial for language specialists in terms of working life, Hanna seemed not to be interested in that reasoning. She is unique within the group of participants in this sense: others seemed to show more concern of their future working life when still studying. Hanna based her choices solely on her personal interests at the time: however, she does recognize the value of both business and communication skills now at the working life, and during the interview, she shows signs of a slight regret in her choices at the studies. These notions are discussed further in the next section.

Interestingly, other foreign languages were mentioned scarcely in the participants' degree compositions as minor subjects. When considering other language subjects at the Department on Language and Communication Studies, it was possible to gain a right to study multiple languages even before starting the studies, which was the case with Elina:

> Elina: I started Swedish right away; I had applied for Swedish in the same time when I applied for English. I was accepted to both, so I got a right to study Swedish as a minor automatically. I started it at the same time with English. (24)

Elina had acquired a right to study Swedish as a minor subject through the application process: in the University of Jyväskylä, if a student applied for multiple languages at the joint application system, they had a possibility to gain eligibility for other languages as minor subjects when accepted to study at the university.[1] Other participants did not mention this route to minor subjects, but some of the participants had studied Swedish at the start of their university education as well. However, none of them mentioned it as a significant tool or an asset for working life. It seems that the foreign language knowledge was not seen as a useful skill in terms of working life, compared to widely recognized Business and Communications. This may derive from the lack of translation and interpretation studies in the degree, even though it can be

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[1] The selection process for studying languages at the University of Jyväskylä has since changed: this notion applies for the admission years 2008 and 2009.

assumed that all participants do see value in language skills, as they did graduate as language specialists.

6.3 Reflecting the university studies

During the first years, I didn't really think how I could find work with
these studies. (Juuso) (25)

At times, students may change their minds about their studies and chosen subjects while still at the university. In the previous section, the participants' reasoning for choosing minor subjects to complement English studies was discussed. In addition to describing the reasoning for their choices, they were asked if they had changed their mind later in studies or if they had found something else to study. Overall, the participants in this study were content with their studies at the University of Jyväskylä, and all of them expressed neutrality about studies in English. However, as minor subjects have a strong role in forming language specialists' future career paths, the discussion of revelations and regrets at the late stage of studies and after graduation revolved around them. Most of the participants stated that they started to think of their future career after completing Bachelor's Degree; when the end of the studies and the transition to working life approached, the participants had started to reflect on their choices more carefully.

Overall, only a handful of minor subjects were discussed in the interviews: Business, Marketing and Communication Studies. In addition, Psychology and Human Resources were mentioned a few times, either as something that had originally been thought of as a major subject option or as an otherwise interesting subject with the current working life knowledge. As discussed lastly in the previous section, none of the participants saw other foreign languages as a beneficial option as a minor subject. Elina seems even regretting the time she spent on studying Swedish at the beginning of her studies:

> Elina: Swedish was something that I thought that maybe I shouldn't have done it at all because I completed only Basic study module. I didn't continue when I realized that they are not useful for me because I'm not going to be a teacher. (26)

It is interesting how Elina rationalizes why she thought Swedish is not useful to her: she will not be a teacher; therefore, Swedish will not benefit her. It seems that Elina's professional identity had developed according to her minor subjects: in other words, her professional identity is strongly based on skills acquired from Communications, rather than on the foreign language knowledge. In addition, both the self-knowledge of herself as a professional entering the working life and discovering her professional interests did cause her to regret not applying for a right to study the subject study module of Organizational Communication & Public Relations earlier:

> Elina: I noticed that as the studies progressed and the closer the graduation got, I started to think what I could have done. Slowly you started to realize and learn, you get to know yourself a bit better and find out what really interests you and such. Then you start to think, "I could have done this or that". (...) In a hindsight, now that I'm really into Human Resources and I would like to work in that field more in the future, I would definitely have applied for Management and Leadership. I would have taken minor subjects at Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics. (27)

Elina uses words such as "*realize*" and "*learn*" when she is reflecting her studies; this suggests that she may not recognised her professional interests fully during them. Elina states also that now that she is in working life and she has found interest in Human Resources in her current job, the optimal minor subjects for her career development would have been under Jyväskylä School of Business and Economics (JSBE). Joonas has similar thoughts to Elina: he would also choose studies at JSBE if having a chance to go back in time with the current knowledge and self-awareness:

> Joonas: I've heard that Marketing could have been good, and it would have been a good pair with Communication and it would have brought some substance into it, as a language specialist focusing on communication. (…) I remember that I thought about Human Resources that "oh, there could be jobs in that field". I could have done them, but yeah. I think that once you don't study anymore, you find more options better what you could have studied and what sounds interesting. (28)

Joonas mention both Basic Business Studies and Human Resources as appealing minor subjects with the knowledge he has of the working life requirements now.

When comparing the degree compositions of Elina and Joonas, they have had similar interests during their studies: however, whereas Elina completed the subject studies in Marketing, Joonas completed subject studies in Organizational Communication. In addition, both of them mention each other's subject studies as something they think would have been beneficial for them as well. Nevertheless, it seems that despite the difference, both participants have acquired jobs in the same field, Communications, and both of them have developed an interest into Human Resources. It is interesting to see how Elina and Joonas have successfully entered working life in the field that interested them the most during their studies, but both of them seem to feel that their education is not sufficient.

In the previous section, Lauri and Hanna were discussed as divergent examples in reasoning the minor studies choices. Lauri based his minor studies on the utility value for working life, whereas Hanna followed her personal interests. In addition, Lauri's background as a vocational school Business student was discussed. While he stated that he was not interested in studying Business at the university, he eventually shows regret in not going in that direction anyway:

> Lauri: At one point, I thought that I should have taken this…Organizational Communication, because communication is needed everywhere. It was maybe during the last year when I thought that "damn, if only I had started that and left some of this nonsense out". Also in a hindsight, I probably should have continued from the Basic Business Studies, I would take Management and Leadership subject study module now. (29)

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> H: You said that you would make "more adult decisions". What would you do then?

> Hanna: I would think about what kind of work I'm going to do in the future, of course one can't see in the future, but I would have studied Marketing, I would have completed the subject study module of something (…) and I would have studied Communications. I would have applied for internships that would have supported them. Now I would have a ready-made plan, but then I didn't, I just really drifted there. (30)

Both Lauri and Hanna mention Communications as a subject they regret not studying at all. In addition, while Lauri would have studied Business further, also Hanna would

have taken Marketing as her minor subject. It seems that both of them have encountered situations in working life where these two subjects would have benefited them. They also describe their other studies in a slightly negative tone: Lauri uses the word "*nonsense*" to describe some of his studies, whereas Hanna says that she "*just really drifted in there*". It could be argued that their professional identity development is situated mostly in the working life as well; not being able to the beneficial choices at the studies concerning working life may have caused some resentment towards the time at the university.

The role of other people was discussed also in this context. Below Juuso discusses what he thinks that could have helped him in his professional development during the studies:

> Juuso: Yeah, we have talked a lot in my group of friends that what you can do with this degree and what [positions] we can apply for. Many other have also said that they would have wanted more guidance about finding work. And now when I see what kinds of positions some of my friends have, I have thought that "why didn't I study something like that as a minor subject", such as Communications. That I have regretted that I didn't study Communications more, it would surely have been nice and useful subject. (33)

Juuso tells that he has discussed the future a lot with his peers from the university: what kind of work is available for them with the degrees they have. He mentions that there is a unified opinion that they would have benefited from guidance concerning employment after studies. Based on notions of Lauri and Hanna earlier, they could have benefited from guidance as well. It cannot be said what kind of guidance was available at that time for the language specialists. However, it can be argued that guidance is important especially for generalists, who may not know enough about the specific job titles they can apply for with their degree composition.

Overall, the participants emphasized the similar fields that the Department of Languages and Communication Studies guide language specialists to choose, especially Business and Communication. Those two fields are heavily presented in this study: almost all participants had taken studies in them, and they were the ones they would add to their degrees now in retrospect, with the working life knowledge

they have acquired. Some regrets and resentment towards the studies at the university were present; however, these expressions were rather mild in nature, and no other general conclusions despite the importance of guidance can be derived from them. In There was no discussion of how the participants saw the connection between their minor studies and English, although they were seen complementary in general. However, most of the participants mentioned that they would want to use their knowledge of English more in their work. It seems that the attachment of English as a key skill in professional environments has not been easy, and the participants may have benefited with tools for recognizing how they can use their English skills as an asset for employment when entering working life.

6.4 Is "language specialist" a profession?

"Profession is like a piece of play dough that is moulded in different ways
and it goes to different directions". (Hanna) (34)

In the previous chapters, the studies in English and the other study choices at the university were discussed. As the participants have since moved onto working life, the demands and views of possibilities available for a language specialist graduate have assumedly become clearer than during the studies. In order to explore the participants' professional identity development further, they were directly asked if they think language specialist is a profession. The findings regarding this question are discussed next.

All participants were asked how they understand the terms "profession" and "professional identity". This resulted to discovering a few ways to describe "profession". One common starting point for the deduction process was to state well-known and established professions and vocations. This method was used for example by Lauri, Elina and Riikka:

> Lauri: Like teacher, that is so clear. About profession, it brings to mind more traditional ones such as teacher, doctor, lawyer…language specialist doesn't make me think that "oh, it's a profession". (35)

> Elina: I think that "profession" is something like, you've got a profession in something specific…electrician, plumber, chef. Those are professions. (36)

> Riikka: First thing that comes to mind about the word "profession" is that it means work that is easily defined, such as doctor, police or fireman. (37)

This type of deduction process includes a presumption that there is a selection of commonly known professions, which share a clear understanding of the demanded skills and traits one needs to have. As seen above, a few participants listed professions that they think fulfil the *demand of collective understanding*. Overall, professions are described as "clear", "specific" and "easily defined". However, it could be argued that while all the professions mentioned in the excerpts are well known and established, the job descriptions may not be easily defined at all by people not having the work experience in the field.

In addition to giving explicit examples or work descriptions, professions were also described as a *collection of personal skills and traits*. Some clues of that are seen in Tommi's answer, as he offers a view that professions are gained either through education or through work experience:

> H: What do you think the word "profession" means? What kind of meanings does the word "profession" have?

> Tommi: Well, profession is, it is not just the work what you do, but it's maybe a job that you have education for or a job that you have done so long that you can call it your profession. (38)

Tommi views "profession" in two ways. First, he implicitly states that it as something that is based on the acts one performs, saying that it is "*not just the work you do*". It could be argued that the acts are usually based on one's skills. Secondly, he says it is something that one states oneself to be. As discussed earlier, in some cases education qualifies one with a profession automatically. It seems that when a profession is learned through work experience, one must define it at some point as a part of their

professional identity and commit to it. This is shown when Tommi uses the expression "*call it your profession*". It would be interesting to explore when and how professions are "claimed"; that could be done in another study.

As seen above, there seems to be an element of personal commitment connected to the professional identity development. Hanna and Juuso both explore that aspect:

> Hanna: For some it is something that they have studied, so they graduate as professionals of something. It's probably something they have strived for and what they wanted, they have had a clear goal to have a certain profession. It is probably something that they want to be and what they can proudly state being. (39)

> Juuso: Profession is maybe a bit more than just what you do for work and get paid for. For example, because I'm not currently that committed with my job, I wouldn't say that being [a job title] is my profession. I don't see it something that I'd like to do for decades. (40)

Hanna describes how professions are something that includes goals, motivation and something that one "*can proudly state being*". Interestingly, she does not use herself as an example: this is shown with the word choice of "for some". This may imply that Hanna have not developed a strong connection between her personal and professional identities at this point. Juuso shows same in a more overt manner: he uses himself as an example saying that he would not say his job title is his profession, as he is not "*committed with his job*". In his interview, he does not discuss further what profession would be suitable for him.

The discussion of professions and professional identity included both personal and social identity related viewpoints. When exploring the question if language specialist was a profession, the reasoning was strongly based on the social one. There seemed to be a disparity between language specialists and "others" in terms of understanding the role of language expertise in working life context. Therefore, the participants were reluctant to use "language specialist" as their professional title. A typical way to explore the definition and explain the reasoning was to construct a hypothetical conversation between the participant and someone else. This was the case for example with Juuso:

> Juuso: If I say to someone that my profession is language specialist, it wouldn't say to them what I do for work. If I'd say that I'm a language specialist, and then someone would ask what I do, I would say that I work at the [workplace]. (41)

Juuso starts by stating that if he were to tell someone he was a language specialist, the term would not be descriptive enough about what he actually does. Interestingly, he continues by saying that if some asks him what he does for work, he would say *where* he works, not what he *does*. It can be argued that doing this, he tries to avoid the conversation where he should describe his work tasks more closely, as they may not include the linguistic tasks that the other may expect. He may hope that the working environment would reveal enough information about his job. Miia also describes a hypothetical conversation in which she should define her profession to someone:

> Miia: If you ask someone, "What do you do?" "I'm a fireman", then you know exactly what his work tasks are. If you ask someone and they are like "yeah I'm a language specialist", then there will ALWAYS be a follow-up question of what do you do. (42)

As seen before, the participants give examples of professions they view as easy to describe. Miia bases her reasoning to this presumption, mentioning that "*everybody knows what a firefighter does*". She continues that if she says she is a language specialist, there will "*always be a follow-up question of what you do*". In other words, also for Miia, language specialist does not belong to this category because there is not collective understanding of it. She uses *ad populum* to support her reasoning: the use pronoun "*everybody*" to emphasize the aspect of common knowledge among the general population.

Accordingly, Elina notes that "language specialist" is rather a rather abstract concept. Both Joonas and Elina explore the possibility of language specialist being a profession by discussing the meaning of language in the context:

> Elina: It's more like an umbrella term. (…) language specialist, what language are you specialized in and what does it mean. I don't see it as a profession. (43)

> Joonas: I think that "language specialist" is so restricted to working only with languages even though it isn't just that, but I just see it that way. If I told to people that I'm a language specialist

so then I should be working at…a translation firm, or at some office providing language services. (44)

As discussed briefly in the previous chapter, language education has different goals and contents in schools and higher education: therefore, it may be difficult to understand what it means to specialize in linguistics if one is not familiar with the higher education definition. Joonas elaborates that "*being a language specialist has the connotation that one works directly with languages*", mentioning translating as an example. As this is not the case in his situation, he wants to avoid the use of "language specialist" as his profession, such as Juuso did earlier. This claim is also supported by Riikka:

> Riikka: It depends who is asking. To you, I could say that I'm a language specialist and [a job title], and you would know [what it means]. To someone else who doesn't have the same education…
>
> H: Like your own mother.
>
> Riikka: Yeah. To her, I would say that I work at the university. (45)

Riikka explains further that between us, the interviewer and her, she could use the term "language specialist" or her current job title as her profession, but for her mother she would tell that she "works at the university". By stating this, she also implies that for people outside the language specialist community, the concept of "a language specialist" is unclear and demands explanation.

Tommi differs from others in his reflection: while other participants use "others" as a means of describing the language specialists' professional identity, he is the only one who uses himself as an example. In addition, he mentions how he has pondered the question, and has concluded that language specialist can function as a self-appointed profession, and others are not needed in the description process:

> Tommi: I could think that someone could call oneself as a language specialist in a way that I call myself a technical translator, even though my education doesn't formally state that. I have done enough translating, and I have oriented into it enough in my studies so that I have the

guts to call myself a technical translator. I also think I'm a language specialist, but it's more like a broader description of my profession. (46)

Of all the participants, it can be argued that Tommi has developed the strongest language professional identity, which shows also in the excerpt above. He mentions how he has enough both experience and education to "*have the guts to call himself a technical translator*". Tommi differs from others also in his work description: his job as a technical translator seems to fill the requirements the participants collectively have for "the others' " view of language professionals. Therefore, it may have been easier for Tommi to develop a strong bond between his language specialist and professional identities. Overall, it seems that his language specialist identity acts as a macro-level concept in relation to his professional identity: he states that "language specialist" is "*a broader description of his profession*". Based on the word choice, it seems that he is open to consider language specialist as a profession.

The findings showed that most of the participants do not define "language specialist" as a profession. The reasoning was based mostly on the notion of collective understanding: as language specialist is not an established profession in working life, it has not claimed the status of being a profession. When discussing the definition of "language specialist", it was seen as either an umbrella term or a job title. Overall, as language specialists are generalists with a variety of skills and knowledge, the definition process is naturally complicated. To shed light on this, the skills language specialists have acquired in their studies are discussed further next.

6.5 The language specialist skill set

When graduating, the university alumni have gathered different sets of skills regarding what they have studied during their time at the university. All participants are assumed to acquire a selection of general working life skills that are discussed in chapter 3. In addition, they have acquired theoretical knowledge in both linguistics and their minor subjects. In this chapter, the participants' views on language specialists' skill set regarding working life is examined. The perceived skills of

language specialists were implicitly asked with the interview questions such as "*What can a language specialist do for work?*" and "*What skills or traits do you think language specialists should have?*". The answers did vary while staying at a general level; however, nearly all participants stated some unique traits or skills to be important regarding working life. All mentions were in line with the previously discussed general working life skills.

The data shows that the participants' description of language specialists' skill set was strongly influenced by their minor subject composition, while reflecting their personal interests as well. It could be argued that the participants explored both their personal identity and professional identity contents when answering the question. For example, Elina emphasizes communicative skills:

> Elina: For me, verbal communication is important and that you can express yourself in speech, presentation skills, that's what I think is valuable […] there are people whose job is to code and they are the best in the world at it, but when you see how they communicate with a client, you see how lost they are. That has made me realize how important it is to be able to have good oral communication skills. You see so clearly how your communication differs from the others in the firm. However, I don't know if it's because of my studies or my personality. (47)

Overall, social skills and communication skills were seen very important among the participants. As seen previously, Elina has studied Communications extensively in her degree. She states that in a multisectoral working environment where she works, she has noticed the importance of oral communication. She especially mentions how she has noted the difference between her and others, mainly IT professionals', communicative repertoire. However, she also mentions how she is not sure if she has learnt those skills at the university, or are they a part of her personality. In this notion, Elina seems to treat her professional identity and personal identity as complementing each other. However, this seems to make it difficult for her to verbalize the benefits of the language specialist education for working life.

Joonas continues by mentioning how good communication skills seem to be "*required everywhere even if it wasn't a communication job*":

> Joonas: Perhaps the ability to learn and adapt to new situations have become clear now at the first steps on my career. It seems that good communication skills are required everywhere even if it wasn't a communication job, meaning that they want someone who gets along with other, who have social skills and who can write, speak, has both online and face-to-face social skills. Communication skills are emphasized everywhere. (48)

In his answers, Joonas emphasized the importance of good social skills and the ability to become a part of existing work groups, while simultaneously learning tasks that were not explicitly taught during the studies. In relation to Elina, also Joonas has communication as his career focus point, and it seems that he links the communication skills as a part of his professional identity. It is unclear whether he thinks communication skills are a part of his language specialist education, i.e. derived from English studies, or whether he thinks he has acquired them from his minor studies in Organizational Communication. This is also the case with Elina: while she does use English daily in her working life, Joonas worked in a Finnish organization at the time of the interviews. Overall, the participants did not separate the communication skills based on the language: it seems that English and Finnish were equal to them in this aspect.

In the language education, the emphasis is on the social nature of language use; therefore, it is natural to study foreign languages in small groups where one can also rehearse the oral skills. This method is used extensively in English studies at the University of Jyväskylä. In general, teamwork skills are seen as an important quality in both good employees and managers. Juuso is the only participant who explicitly mentions teamwork skills:

> Juuso: Well, I don't know if these are clichés, but teamwork skills are always important, that you consider also others in the working environment and not be like "only I know how things are done right". (49)

While others may refer to this by using the general term of "*social skills*", "*teamwork skills*" has a slightly different connotation. As the term include the word "work", it implies that those skills are used in order to complete a task together with others. Nevertheless, good teamwork skills can be argued to include good social skills as well.

Compared to Elina and Joonas, Juuso has not studied Communications: this may have affected how he sees social skills compared to Elina and Joonas.

While social and communication skills were seen important for language specialists, language use itself gained only few mentions. In addition to agreeing with the others about the importance of communication and project management skills, Lauri mentions language expertise itself as a core skill:

> Lauri: [language specialist is] someone who can consult and comment language-related matters. (50)

Only half of the participants discussed the foreign language skills as a part of the core language specialist skill set in some way. Lauri has maybe the most practical view considering working life in Finland: he states that language specialists are able to consult and comment language related matters. Once again, it is not clear if he means only English or also Finnish; nevertheless, language competency is an important skill to him. Moreover, for Hanna, excellent command of English is necessary as she lived and worked in an English-speaking country at the time of the interview:

> H: Now that you've been a while in working life, what skills do you think are the most essential? You are the only participant who works abroad.
>
> Hanna: Well, you have to use English efficiently, and know quite stiff and complicated vocabulary. I don't have to know anything about the field. (51)

At the time of the interview, Hanna worked as an office assistant who handles the working life documents needed in a specific field of work. As a curiosity, Hanna states that efficiency and knowing difficult vocabulary are the most important skills for her, while she does not need substance knowledge of the field she works at, as her position does not require that in order for her to succeed at her job. Of all the participants, Hanna is the only one who worked in a fully English-speaking environment. It is quite natural that the foreign language skills have an important role in his key skills, while others emphasize general working life skills.

Another theme that was widely present in the data was project management. At the time, most participants worked in positions that included some type of project work. Based on his work history, Lauri emphasizes business skills and EU-related project work skills as key skills every language specialist should acquire:

> Lauri: Project management skills, business skills […] if you apply for any kind of project work, you'll always need some business and economic knowledge, especially about EU projects. Also customer service skills. Yeah, organizing, coordinating, project management, scheduling, planning you own work and whatnot. (52)

In this excerpt, Lauri's inclination to the world of business and project is clear: in another part of the interview, he even suggests that there should be compulsory courses included in language specialist studies on these matters. As mentioned previously, the participants were asked if they were happy with English studies. At that point, it was mentioned that the improvements they suggested were related to their own interests: in Lauri's case, he would add business skills to them.

University studies include project work as well, as can be seen in Miia's answer:

> Miia: I've seen that the perseverance and capability to follow through projects is important. That I can take responsibility in a project. (53)

In her answer, Miia uses the master thesis process as an example of perseverance in project work. This was also mentioned in Carver's (2006) study, although the views between university representatives and working life representatives contradicted. In addition, the thesis process can be viewed as many ways as there are students doing it: using it as an asset in working life would probably require similar views of the process. In addition, Miia emphasizes "*responsibility*": this suggests that being independent and having good self-regulation skills in terms of work are also important. Both Riikka and Tommi discuss these aspects as well:

> Riikka: Maybe time management skills. Yeah, those probably develop also in studies, but that you learn how to handle pressure and hurry and that you have many tasks to do. I think that in all workplaces, you are always busy. (54)

> Tommi: I'd like to say speed, because I'm quite slow and my projects drag on. It would be important to be quick, but on the other hand being diligent is as important. It depends on the employer if they want whatever quality done quickly or good quality in a bit slower pace. (55)

In the excerpts, Riikka and Tommi see time management as one of the key skills for language specialists. Riikka's compares implicitly her views of the university education and working life: for her, they key difference seem to be that in working life, one has to work in quicker pace and handle more tasks simultaneously compared to the university studies. This notion goes hand in hand with Carver's (2006) study: working life demands are different from university studies in terms of time management and responsibility. Tommi seems to feel the stress of working life demands in that sense: for him, the speed rate of completing translation tasks he does for a living is an on-going issue.

In this section, the participants' views on the skills that language specialists should have when entering working life were explored. The skills that were mentioned were in line with the skills that have been studied to be important for the students graduating in generalist humanities degrees. The most interesting aspect of this section was how all eight participants mentioned different skills to be important. In some cases, such as social skills, there were multiple mentions, but overall, the variety was notable. In terms of the scope of this study, focusing on graduates of English, it was also interesting to note how few mentions the English language had in the answers. However, it is difficult to draw implications on this, as the working environments were not discussed deeper.

6.6 Views on language specialists' employability

When studying English or other foreign languages as a major subject at the university without a career in teaching in mind, the options are wide open from the start. In this chapter, the participants' views on entering working life as language specialists with different degree compositions are explored. It was found that the language specialists' employability was discussed in three ways: in terms of job titles, work tasks or skills and the working environment.

In order to explore the employability as language specialists, all participants were asked to take a role of "a brand ambassador" for the Department of Language and Communication Studies and tell what language specialists can do for work. Some similarities were found in the responses: most participants started their answer by noting that a language specialist can do "*nearly everything*". This echoes the view of "language specialist" not being a well-known profession that has an established skill set. However, most participants had trouble clarifying their answer as there was notable hesitation: some participants either laughed after stating that "*language specialists can do anything*", or they repeated the question before continuing. Both Miia and Joonas serve as an example for this:

> H: What can a language specialist do for a living?

> Miia: (laughs) this is difficult, because…if you don't think about becoming a researcher. Maybe something like…a publicist could be something that one can do. You don't really study Journalism there but a publicist could be one. What else… (56)

> */// */

> Joonas: But yeah, it's interesting how people become for example translator even though there isn't much translating in the language specialist studies. But, from translator to communications or some assistant position… getting the ball moving is always the most difficult part. (57)

Miia mentions "a publicist" as a possible job title, while noting simultaneously that there are no studies in Journalism included in the English studies. However, as Miia has not completed studies in Journalism or Communications, this indicates that she does not see the degree composition as a defining factor in transition from studies to working life. Joonas has made a similar observation: even though translating is not included as a taught subject in language specialist studies at JYU, some graduated students work as translators nevertheless. This suggests that at the stage of entering working life, other factors may affect finding employment more than the degree itself.

For example, Hanna mentions that the degree itself is not necessarily a sought-after attribution in the job market, but the most important asset is to be able to present what one can do:

> Hanna: I feel like the degree isn't really too important in the job market, no one is like "she's a recently graduated English student, we want her to work for us". I think that they look more at the CV and what you have really done and what you can do. (58)

> Riikka: Consulting and coordinating (laughs) they can do nearly anything, I would say so. Maybe it's more that how well you can present yourself to different workplaces. (59)

For Hanna and Riikka, the work history and skill set are more important than the university degree certificate. Riikka agrees with the others by stating that "a *language specialist can do whatever*", while using words "*consulting and coordinating*" as the key concepts.

Naming possible positions or job titles seemed to be challenging for the participants. This is seen for example above, as Miia pondered "*what else*" language specialists could do, after stating only one job title. In contrast to looking for possible job titles, Tommi answers the question based on the work tasks language specialists may have after graduating:

> Tommi: Well for me, things that come to mind first are writing, translating, interpreting, but also proofreading, producing texts, and copywriting for example…those come to mind first. (60)

For Tommi, a good command of oral and written communication, translating, interpretation, proofreading, copywriting and content writing form a basis for employment for language specialists. As mentioned previously, Tommi has a built his language specialist role around the language as a key tool in working life. While English studies did not get much attention from others, minor subjects had a strong presence in the participants' answers overall. Elina reflects how a language specialist with "*the right minor subject combination*" may be seen as a sought-after employee in many work environments:

Elina: If you have the right minor study combination, a language specialist can be a very good asset in many firms. One can do communication, marketing, customer service; you can become CEO, anything. Except of course something that requires specific education (laughs) (…) anything that requires information seeking skills and good general knowledge. (61)

Elina states that language specialists could work in positions where there are no specific competencies needed, but the good command of information search tools and general knowledge are important as themselves. Whereas Tommi had a list of language-related tasks in mind, Elina seems not to have developed a view of work opportunities with language as a key tool for employment: for her, the minor subjects override the importance of language competency. Joonas agrees with Elina: the language specialist education is general in nature, and the "*focus comes from minor subjects*":

Joonas: I feel like language specialist studies have prepared me well, like you've done a little bit of research and you can sum up complicated matters, you have good theoretical thinking. I think that minor subjects then define a lot the degree in language specialist education, the focus where you start orienting towards comes from them. (62)

As noted before, Elina and Joonas have rather similar language specialist identity profiles: both of them have a strong background and working life experience in Communications.

It could be argued that the participants have quite a positive view on the language specialists' job opportunities, as also Juuso states that he has used the "*almost anything*" as a regular answer for people asking about his future work opportunities. However, behind the possible freedom to "*choose anything*", he has not been sure of his goals. One notion he makes is that the questions about entering working life have arisen during the studies, but he has not gotten clear answers to them:

Juuso: My regular answer was "well, almost anything" (laughs)

H: That is quite a positive way to look at it.

Juuso: Yeah, maybe when you think about it, some relatives may think that "cool, you have all doors open now". In reality, it isn't like that. But yeah, that has been my answer because I didn't know what else to say. (…) it's maybe something that I would have liked find a good answer

> during the studies. Because I feel that if or when this question has been handled in some general info sessions, the answer has always been like "anything, all doors are open, you can be oriented into anything with minor subjects". (63)

In his answer above, Juuso seems to be uncertain of his working life opportunities. He does admit that he "*didn't know what else to say*" when he was asked about his future as a language specialist. It can be implied that Juuso did not acquire the skills to recognize and verbalize his professional skills during studies. One of the aspects of this study was the guidance for working life in language specialist education. However, when the participants were asked if they remember any type of guidance during their studies, most of the participants had difficulties. As suggested before, guidance could be beneficial for language specialists' in terms of employability; it could have helped Juuso is his situation as well.

While others discussed the job titles or work tasks, Hanna gave examples of possible work environments:

> Hanna: Many things, it varies a lot, depends on the individual. All language specialists have similar types of jobs at the entry-level, something to do with communication. I could work for example in organizations or universities. (64)

As seen in the excerpt above, Hanna mentions different places where a language specialist could work at, such as organizations, governments and universities. She bases this with the notion that even though everyone has individual paths, "*all language specialists have similar types of jobs at the entry-level, something to do with communication*". The fields in which strong foreign language knowledge, i.e. language as key tool at work, is explicitly used are usually either translating or interpretation. As the University of Jyväskylä does not offer studies that directly accredit one as a professional translator or interpreter, these are not usually emphasized as career options for language specialist students, although they are also a possibility, as seen in this study. Therefore, good communication skills seem to override the language knowledge, as seen in Hanna's answer.

Based on the answers concerning employability and finding work after graduation, it could be argued that while language specialists have a possibility to mould their degrees as they want, there is a strong responsibility to make independent choices that help the transition to working life. Overall, it seems that constructing a language specialist identity for working life purposes is not easy, and the process is not similar to all students. Minor subjects affect the language specialist identity development greatly, while the studies in English seem to have mostly personal value to the participants. One implication is that language specialists could benefit in working life by being able to express clearly about their studies, degree and working life knowledge.

7 Conclusion

This study aimed to provide information of graduated language specialists' views on their studies at the University of Jyväskylä and working life matters, such as necessary skills in order to find employment. All this was discussed in the light of professional identity and growth. As stated previously, the findings of this study may not be generalized to represent the whole language specialist alumni body; nevertheless, it offers an insight of one specific group of graduated students have experienced their path to working life.

One of the themes in this study was the studies at the University of Jyväskylä: how and why did the participants choose to study English as a major subject, and how the minor subjects have affected their professional identity development and current working life situation. The findings showed rather clearly that English was chosen as a major subject for personal reasons: the participants had created a strong, positive connection to the language and the culture at some point of their education and life in general. In addition, they felt that due to the strong skills in the language, it could serve as an easy gateway to the university studies. At the time of applying for university studies, the participants did not have a clear view of their professional ambitions or future. Only one professional decision was made beforehand: none of

them wanted to become English teachers. In the light of professional identity and working life, English was not discussed as a part of language specialist skill set, nor was it mentioned in the working life context otherwise.

While the reasons for choosing English can be argued to derive from personal identity, the choice of minor subjects was strongly based on the concern of future employment. The route to finding suitable minor subjects varied: either they were suggested by staff or peers, the utility value for working life was recognized or they derived from personal interests. Most of the participants studied subjects that also the Department of Languages (now Department of Language and Communication Studies) recommended to be beneficial for language specialists, such as Business and Communication. These choices seem to have worked for the participants, as most of them have found employment in those fields, even them who did not study the subjects at all. The participants also reflected their university studies. While most of them expressed neutrality towards studies in English, most of them discussed how they would either study something else, or more of their minor studies if they had a chance to return. Overall, the participants showed some regret in their choices at the university. The findings showed that they did not recall having official guidance as a part of their studies: however, the current situation may differ from the time they have completed their degrees.

To explore the participants' views on professionalism as language specialists and their professional identity, the term "profession" was discussed in the interviews. The aim was to find how they view "language specialist" as a part of their identity after studies: had it become a part of their professional identity, or did it stay still as something more connected to their personal identity. It was universally agreed that "language specialist" does not fill the requirements the participants had for professions. In their answers, "profession" has to be specific and easily defined; "language specialist" was not seen as either. As professional identity has characteristics of both personal and social identity, the reasons for it not being a profession were justified by stating that the majority of people would not understand what it means if someone would tell

them that they are language specialists. Hypothetical conversations were used to exemplify the situation: this discursive method suggest the strong impact of others as well. Overall, "profession" was viewed in two lights: it was based either on one's personal view of themselves as professionals, or the collection of skills one uses at working life.

In addition to defining "profession" and discussing if language specialist can be defined as such, one of the aims was to find what skills the participants seemed necessary or useful for them in order to find employment. As the participants can be defined to be generalists in humanities, the skills they discussed were in line with previous research on the generalists' working life skills. As mentioned, most of the participants had studied either Business or Communication as their minor subjects: these two were discussed the most in the answers. Both oral and written communication skills were mentioned several times. However, the participants could not recognize if they had developed these skills in their language studies or their minor studies. In some cases, they had also difficulties to separate their personal traits in terms of social skills. Business knowledge, project management and time management were also discussed.

To deepen the participants' view on language specialists' professionalism, they were asked questions concerning employability. For most, defining the working life possibilities for graduated language specialists seemed to be difficult: while all participants noted that there are many options available, they had problems giving specific answers what language specialists can do for work. The question was approached through job titles, job tasks, acquired skills, degree composition and work environments. The variety of different approaches and the notable hesitation suggests that "language specialist" as a professional category is not easily defined or clear for the language specialists themselves either; after all, every student has completed different studies and gained different work experience during their time at the university. It could be argued that creating a strong professional identity as language specialist could help finding employment. However, as all students are individual and

they make choices based on different criteria, it is difficult to state what kind of means would help them to strengthen their professional identity. The role of guidance in the studies concerning working life was also present; it could benefit language specialists in their professional identity development as well in recognizing and verbalizing their skills for employment purposes.

This study attempted to participate in the discussion of language specialists, and generalists in humanities, in current working life environments. All participants in this study have found employment, and they seemed to have been able to put their higher education experiences into good use. Their views on studies, work and professionalism were attempted to present in a manner that would give a good overview of possible problems in terms of employment. Some critiques can be made about the current study as well. First, the sampling is rather small; no generalizations at any directions can be made. Secondly, some of the themes were analysed rather superficially. For example, there was only a little discussion of the role of English in the participants' life and work; that could be studied further especially in the light of employment. While the sample was chosen so that the participants had had time to move onto working life, the world has changed rapidly: for example, in 2009, social media was still called Web 2.0, and it was not utilised as widely in the employment processes as today. Assumedly, the current language specialist students may have a different view of employment and skills to acquire it. Overall, there are many interesting and open study topics concerning language specialists and working life; hopefully, this thesis can inspire the future language specialists and thesis writers to study the topic further as well.

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Appendix 1: Interview structure

Background information: age when starting studies, years of studies, minor subjects

TEEMA: ENGLANNIN KIELIASIANTUNTIJAOPINNOT

Theme: Studies in English, language specialist orientation

- Miten ja miksi päädyit opiskelemaan englantia?

  How and why did you end up studying English?

- Miksi valitsit kieliasiantuntijan suuntauksen englannin opinnoissasi?

  Why did you choose language specialist orientation in your studies?

- Miten valitsit opiskeltavat kurssit aine- ja syventävissä opinnoissa? Kuinka ajattelit valitsemiesi opintojen vaikuttavan tulevaan uraasi ja ammattiisi?

  How did you choose the courses in English subject and advanced study modules? How did you think these choices would affect your future career and profession?

- Missä vaiheessa opintoja aloitit sivuaineopintosi? Mihin pohjasit valintasi? Muuttuivatko ajatuksesi sivuaineiden suhteen opintojesi edetessä?

  At what point of studies did you start your minor subjects? What did you based your choices on? Did your thoughts about minor subjects change while your studies progressed?

- Vastasivatko englannin kieliasiantuntijaopinnot odotuksiasi? Millaisia odotuksia sinulla oli?

  Did the language specialist studies in English match your expectations? What kind of expectations you had?

- Olisitko halunnut englannin opinnoiltasi jotain erilaista? Jos, niin mitä ja miksi?

  Would you like to have gained something different from your English studies? If so, what would it be and why?

TEEMA: NÄKEMYKSIÄ KIELIASIANTUNTIJAN TYÖSTÄ OPINTOJEN AIKANA

Theme: Perceptions of language specialists' working life during studies

- Mitä kieliasiantuntija voi tehdä työkseen?

  What kind of work can language specialists do?

- Missä vaiheessa opintoja päätit, millaista uraa tavoittelet? Mitkä asiat vaikuttivat päätökseen?

  At what point of studies did you decide what kind of career you are pursuing? What things affected your decision?

- Oliko sinulla uraan liittyviä toiveita, joiden vuoksi halusit opiskella juuri englantia? Millaisia?

  Did you have any dreams or wishes concerning your career that made you to choose English especially? If so, what were they?

- Saitko työkokemusta opintojasi vastaavalta alalta jo opintojen aikana? Entä muilta aloilta? Jos sait, kuinka työkokemus vaikutti ajatuksiisi tulevasta työstäsi kieliasiantuntijana?

  Did you get any relevant work experience in your field during your studies? How about other fields? If so, how did the work experience affect your thoughts about your future working life as language specialist?

- Millaista ohjausta sait opintojen aikana työelämään liittyen? Kuinka ohjaus vaikutti ajatuksiisi tulevaisuudesta kieliasiantuntijana?

  What kind of guidance did you get during your studies concerning working life? How did the guidance affect your thoughts about future as language specialist?

TEEMA: NÄKEMYKSIÄ KIELIASIANTUNTIJASTA AMMATTINA

Theme: Perceptions of language specialist as a profession

- Mitä mielestäsi "ammatti" tarkoittaa? Entä "ammatti-identiteetti"?

  What do you think the word "profession" mean? How about "professional identity"?

- Mikä on sinun ammattisi? Millaisia ammatteja muistat pohtineesi opintojesi aikana?

  What is your profession? What kind of professions did you remember thinking about during your studies?

- Millainen on kieliasiantuntija?

  How would you describe "language specialist"?

- Pidätkö itseäsi kieliasiantuntijana? Miksi / miksi et?

  Are you language specialist? Why so / why not?

- Kuinka päädyit nykyiseen työhösi? Kuinka nykyinen työsi vastaa opintojasi ja ammatti-identiteettiäsi?

  How did you end up in you current work? How does it match your studies and professional identity?

- Millaisena näet englannin kielen aseman työssäsi?

  How do you see the role of English in your work?

- Millaiset taidot ja ominaisuudet ovat mielestäsi tärkeitä työelämää ajatellen?

  What kind of skills and traits are important considering working life in your opinion?

- Mitä vahvuuksia ja/tai heikkouksia sinulla on kieliasiantuntijan työtä ajatellen?

  What kinds of strengths and/or weaknesses do you have considering your work as language specialist?

- Millaisia toiveita sinulla on tulevalle työurallesi? Missä olet 10 vuoden kuluttua?

  What kinds of wishes do you have for you future career? Where are you in ten years?

- Millaisia terveisiä nykyisille kieliasiantuntijaopiskelijoille?

  What would you say to current language specialist students?

Appendix 2: Original data excerpts in Finnish

(1) No sit se englanti oikeastaan valikoitu sillä et se on ollu koulussa lempiaine, on siinä aina ollu ihan hyvä. (Juuso)

(2) H: Miten ja miksi päädyit opiskelemaan englantia?

Hanna: Englantia? No sehän on hyvä kysymys. Näin jälkeenpäin vois sanoa et mä en oikeestaan ees tienny muista vaihtoehdoista tarpeeks, tai ees ajatellu. Mä olin vaan päättäny et englanti on se asia mikä mua kiinnostaa, missä mä oon hyvä ja mitä mä osasin. Yliopistoon meneminen oli silleen itsestäänselvyys mulle, en mä oikein tiedä muuta mä oisin voinu tai mihin oisin hakenu.

(3) Juuso: Pidin tosissaan sen välivuoden, ja sit sen jälkeen tuli sellanen olo et nyt on pakko lähtee johonkin opiskelemaan, et mä haluun jotakin opiskelemaan.

(4) Lauri: Tuntu et monilla oli se et brittienglanti on ainoa oikea englanti. Mulla oli enemmän sellanen et tykkäsin siitä jenkkimeiningistä, vaikka en oo ikinä siellä edes käynytkään. Mut jotenkin se kulttuuri kiehtoi enemmän [kuin englantilainen kulttuuri].

(5) Miia: Sitten siihen ajo myös se et mä olin ollu au pairina siellä kaks kesää Englannissa ja sit siitä kielestä oli tullu mulle tosi läheinen ja mä halusin tehä sillä jotain.

(6) Elina: No sit aloin miettimään et "no kunhan mä pääsisin sisään yliopistoon nii sitten jos keksin jossain vaiheessa [mitä haluan tehdä], niin siellä sisällä on helpompi vaihtaa, toivon mukaan". Sit aattelin et ku englanti on ollu sellanen mikä kuitenkin vähän kiinnostaa ja oon ollu siinä hyvä nii voisin sillä päästä. (...) aattelin et se ois kuitenki sellane yleishyödyllinen aine, et vaikka nyt ei ollu mitään sellasta selkeetä mielessä että mitä minusta tulee nii ainaki aattelin et siitä ei voi olla muuta ku hyötyä.

(7) Miia: Kun mä olin lukiossa niin mua ei kauheesti kiinnostanut muut ku kielet, ehkä vähän psykologia kiinnosti mut se on sit taas tosi vaikee, ois ollu päästä sinne.

(8) Lauri: Ajattelin että haluaisin työskennellä jotenkin kansainvälisissä tehtävissä. Tai itse asiassa, nyt kun mietin niin varmaan jossain vaiheessa mietin että haluaisin kääntäjäksi. Joo, itse asiassa tää oli unohtunu jo tämä fakta, se oli varmaan se alun perin [syy hakea opiskelemaan englantia].

(9) Joonas: Meillä lukiossa opinto-ohjaus sellasta et katottiin todistuksesta et "sulla on kymppi tosta hae sinne". Eikä sinänsä et mä oisin miettiny sitä siltä kannalta et mihi ammattiin mä haluaisin tai ei siin – se oli vaan et mitä mä tykkään opiskella ja missä mä oon hyvä.

(10) Miia: En mä oikein tiiä oliko mulla hirveesti ennakko-odotuksia… kun mä tulin yliopistoon niin en tienny ku sen mitä oli joutunu pääsykoekirjaa lukee, ja sehän oli mun mielestä, se oli ihan shokki. Enhän mä tajunnu et englantia opiskellaan siellä…tai siis kielitieteitä, et sun pitää tietää semmosia asioita mistä mä en oo ikinä lukiossa kuullukaan.

(11) Tommi: Mulla ei ollu hirveesti odotuksia, mä en ollu perehtyny silleen siihen että mitä yleensäkään yliopistoissa opiskellaan. Mä ihan rehellisesti sanottuna aattelin että ku opiskellaan englantia niin sit opiskellaan englantia vähän niinku lukiossa tai peruskoulussa (naurua)

(12) H: Miksi valitsit niin kutsutun kieliasiantuntijan suuntauksen?

Joonas: No periaatteessa mä valitsin sen et mä en halunnu opettajaks. Muistan et puhuttiin niinku opettajista ja ei-opettajista ja sit siinä vaiheessa mä olin et no joo, opettajaks mä en ainakaan halua et se on sit luonnollisesti tää toinen linja mihin mä meen. Mutta ei se alussa varsinkaan ollu yhtään selkeetä millanen se toinen linja on, et mä määrittelin sen tosi paljon sen pohjalta mitä se ei oo enkä sen kautta mitä se on. Mä en ehkä nähny siinä niin paljon sellasia mahollisuuksia että se tarjoais valmiudet johonkin tiettyyn [ammattiin], mut se oli se et ei opettajaks et en mee sinne.

(13) Hanna: No mä en ees tienny et on olemassa opettajalinja, et enkun opettajat tulee silleen[yliopistosta]. Se oli tyyliin vasta ekana yliopistopäivänä ku tehtiin jotain ryhmäkekkulointia, et mikä opelinja: mä en kertakaikkisesti vaan tienny tarpeeks.

(14) Hanna: Mä hain pari vuotta Tampereelle mut totesin et se koe on ihan liian vaikee. Mä asuin sillon (yhdessä yliopistokaupungeista), ja hain pääasiallisesti (sinne) mut en päässy sinnekään. Samana vuonna tajusin et Jyväskylään oli samat pääsykoekirjat ku (sinne) , tai piti lukee vaan toinen niistä.

(15) Tommi: No ehkä tietysti se että kun mä suuntauduin siihen kirjottamiseen ja kääntämiseen niin oon miettiny myöhemmin et oli kannattanu ehkä mennä yliopistoon joka on enemmän keskittyny siihen, esimerkiks Tampereelle. Mut sitten, kun täälläkin oli mahdollista silleen kuiteski valita niitä kursseja jotka vähän ees orientoi siihen (...) mä ymmärrän myös et se ei oo meiän yliopiston keskittymisosa-alue silleen.

(16) Tommi: Kun meillä oli noita staff tutoring –juttuja, niin mulle sieltä suositeltiin, tai kun mä kerroin kiinnostuksiani, esimerkiks tietotekniikan, niin mulle sieltä sanottiin et voisit ryhtyä tekniseks kirjoittajaks tai tekniseks kääntäjäks, niin mä rupesin heti vähän orientoitumaan siihen. Et sit mä otin alun perin tietotekniikan sivuaineeks, mut sitten mä muutin sen myöhemmin tietojärjestelmätieteeksi.

(17) Riikka: Luulen et se on tullu ympäriltä et on tajunnu et ahaa, opiskelukaverit tekee jotain sivuaineopintoja ja miettii niitä et pitäiskö täs itekin alkaa pohtii, ja sitä kautta sit valaistunu et jotain tarttis ehkä tehdä.

(18) Elina: Tiesin et jotain viestintää haluun ja se varmaan siinä vaiheessa tuntu silleen et jonain päivänä ehkä haluaisin työskennellä ehkä jotenki viestinnän tehtävissä. Sit ku tutkin niitä vaihtoehtoja mitä siellä oli, nii niistä se yhteisöviestintä oli kaikkein vetoavin. Nyt jälkikäteen mietittynä olisin voinu valita toisin…no sit ne Basic Business Studies ja markkinointi tuli sitä myötä et tajusin et haluun vähä myös oppii sitä liiketaloutta ja liiketoimintaosaamista ja markkinointi alko hiljalleen kiinnostamaan. Mietin et ne on combona aika hyvä, et ne vois mahdollistaa aika paljon erilaisia juttuja.

(19) Joonas: Loppuvaiheessa, oli se aika lailla maisterivaihetta, ku mä päädyin yhteisöviestintään. Se oli ehottomasti se kun mä mietin et apua, mitä mä teen tällä tutkinnolla, mihin mä meen töihin. Olin käyny vaan viestinnän ja median perusopinnot ja kulttuurinvälisten viestinnän perusopinnot, et tuntu niinku et jos mun pitäis kertoo jollekin työnantajalle mitä mä osaan, nii en osais sanoo.

(20) Miia: No en varmaan ainakaan siinä alkuvaiheessa miettiny [uraa] kovin pitkälle. Lopussa sit enemmän, ja sit musta enemmän ne sivuaineopinnot ajo sitä et jotenki alko miettii sitä uraakin niin sit siinä tuli just se business studies ja markkinointi siihen kuvioon. Koska muuten mä aattelin et ”enhän mä tällä nyt mitään tuu tekemään jos mä en tee jotain muutakin joka sit tukis jotain hallintouraa tai muuta”.

(21) Juuso: Rupesin ehkä ajattelemaan et mikä vois olla hyvä sivuaine englannin pariks millä sit mahollisesti vois työllistyäkin jotenkin, niin sitä sit aatteli silleen et markkinointi, et siinä on kansainvälistä markkinointia ja tämmöstä et siinä sit yhdistyy se oma pääaine ja näin. Vuosista en nyt osaa sanoo et missä vaiheessa mut se on varmaan ollu siinä neljännen vuoden tienoilla kun tällasia rupes vähän tarkemmin miettimään.

(22) Lauri: Se oli ehkä semmonen et mua ei niinkään kiinnostanu ne, vaan et näistä on varmaan hyötyä. Se oli että kannattaa aina jotain tämmöstä liiketaloutta. Et se oli että ”nää on varmaan helppo tehä kun oli sitä taustaa niin tehdäänpä nyt sitten nämä”.

(23) Hanna: Mä valitsin sivuaineet ehkä sen mukaan mikä mua kiinnostaa, ja mua kiinnosti taidehistoria tosi paljon.

(24) Elina: Ruotsin aloitin saman tien, et mä olin hakenu sillon kun olin hakenu enkkuun niin hain myös samalla ruotsia pääainehaussa. Pääsin molempiin, nii sain ruotsiin siitä automaattisesti sivuaineoikeuden, niin aloitin sen sit samaan aikaan ku aloitin enkun.

(25) Juuso: Et ei tosiaan tullu sillon alkuvuosina hirveesti mietittyä sitä et mihin sitä sit lähtis työllistymään näillä opinnoilla.

(26) Elina: Ruotsi oli semmonen et mietin et sitä ei ois ehkä tarvinu tehä ollenkaan koska mä tein siitä vaan ne perusopinnot. Lopetin ne ku tajusin et siitä ei oo mulle mitään hyötyä ku musta ei oo tulossa opettajaa.

(27) Elina: Kyllä siinä selkeesti huomas et mitä pitemmälle opinnot meni ja mitä lähemmäs valmistuminen tuli niin huomas et ois voinu tehä kaikenlaisi. Alko hiljalleen tajuamaan ja oppimaan, oppi tuntemaan itseään vähä paremmin ja oppi tuntemaan sitä et mikä oikeestaan kiinnostais enemmän ja näin niin selkeesti alko miettiä että ois voinu sitä ja ois voinu tätä tehä. (…) Jälkikäteen ajateltuna, ku oon kiinnostunu tosi paljon tota henkilöstöpuolen asioista ja haluisin niihin enemmän mennä jatkossa, nii oisin ehottomasti hakenu johtamista ja henkilöstöjohtamista, et ottanu sit kuitenkin sieltä kauppakorkeen puolelta lähinnä ne sivuaineet.

(28) Joonas: Oon kuullu just markkinointi, se ois voinu olla iha hyvä, viestinnän kans ois ollu aika hyvä pari ja varmasti ois tuonu vähä lisää substanssia siihen et ois tarkemmin fokusoitunut just viestintään kieltenopiskelija. (…) Jotain hr-opintoja muistan joskus harkinneeni et "aa, vois olla töitä tollakin alalla". Et ois voinu käydä ne, mutta. Mut tuntuu et sit ku niitä ei enää opiskele, et sit niitä löytyy eniten niitä eri aineita mitä ois voinu opiskella ja mitkä kuulostaa hyödyllisiltä.

(29) Lauri: Jossain vaiheessa aattelin et ois pitäny ottaa tätä…yhteisöviestintää, kun viestintää tarvitaan joka paikassa. Se oli ehkä viimesenä vuonna, et "hitsi kun olis alottanut yhteisöviestinnän ja jättäny nämä muut höpöhöpöt täältä". Ja nyt jälkikäteen ajatelleena, mun olis ehkä kuitenkin kannattanu jatkaa sitä Basic Business Studiesista eteenpäin, mä oisin ottanu johtamista nyt.

(30) H: Sanoit että tekisit aikuisempia ratkaisuja tai jotain muuta, niin mitä sä tekisit?
Hanna: Mä miettisin ehkä sitä niinku että minkälaista työtä mä tuun tekemään tulevaisuudessa, sitä nyt tietty ei voi ennustaa, mut silleen mä oisin ehkä lukenu just sitä markkinointia, mä oisin tehny ihan aineopintoihin asti jostain (…) ja niinku viestintää oisin lukenu. Ja sit oisin hakenu sellasiin työharjotteluihin jotka ois tukenu sitä. Nyt mulla ois sellanen valmis suunnitelma mut sillon ei ollu, sillon vaan vähän haahuili.

(31) H: Olitsä tyytyväinen sun valintaan näitten sivuaineiden osalta?
Riikka: Joo, oon ollu kyllä tyytyväinen. Ehkä näin jälkikäteen mietittynä ois voinu olla sillä tavalla pitkäjänteisempi et ois tehny jotain vielä lisääkin, et tosiaan sanoinkin aikasemmin et tein vähän sieltä täältä.

(32) Tommi: Mä olin aika koko ajan orientoitunu siihen kääntämiseen ja tälleen. Sitten mulle tuli ikään ku vahingossa, mulle tuli paljon työkokemusta liittyen lehden julkasutyöhön, (…) Mä kävin sellasella sivupolulla liittyen julkasualaan. Tietyllä tavalla vois ajatella, et mä oon vähän orientoitunu opintojen edetessä, tai oikeestaan työkokemuksen kautta sinne julkasupuolelle.

(33) Juuso: Joo, no onhan sitä paljon tullu keskusteltuu kaveriporukassa et mitä tällä tutkinnolla tekee ja mitä me voidaan hakee. Monet muutkin on sanonu et olis kaivannu enemmän sellasta ohjausta työnhaun kannalta. Ja kun näkee esimerkiks et minkälaisiin erilaisiin paikkoihin osa kavereista on menny niin sit tulee itelle et "miks mä en opiskellu jotain tommosta sivuaineena", niinku vaikka viestintää. se on viime aikoina harmittanu et mä en opiskellu just vaikka viestintää enemmän, et se olis ollu varmasti kiva ja hyödyllinen.

(34) "Ammatti on sellanen muovailuvahaköntti mitä ite tökkii eri suuntiin ja se vaihtaa vähän muotoaan välillä." (Hanna)

(35) Lauri: Vaikka joku opettaja, se on niin selkeä. Että ammatti, siitä tulee ehkä mieleen enemmän nää perinteiset opettaja, lääkäri, juristi…et kieliasiantuntija, siitä mulle ei tule niinkään mieleen et tämä on ammatti.

(36) Elina: Mä nään ammatin semmosena et sä oot saanu ammatin jostain tietystä spesifistä…sähkömies, putkimies, kokki. Ne on ammatteja.

(37) Riikka: No ensimmäisenä mulle tulee mieleen sanasta ammatti että "ammatti" tarkottaa jotain sellasta helposti määriteltävää työtä, niinku vaikka lääkäri, poliisi, palomies.

(38) H: Mitä sun mielestä tarkoittaa ammatti? Minkälaisia merkityksiä on sanalla ammatti?

Tommi: No ammatti on, se ei ole vaan se työ mitä sä teet, vaan ehkä se on joko sellanen työ mihin sä oot kouluttautunu, tai sit semmonen työ mitä sä oot tehny tarpeeks pitkään et sä voit sanoo sitä ammatikseks.

(39) Hanna: Joillekin se on se mitä ne on opiskellu eli ne valmistuu johonkin ammattiin. Se on varmaan sellanen asia mihin ne on pyrkineet ja mitä ne on halunneet, niillä on joku tavoite johonkin tiettyyn ammattiin. Ehkä se on kans se mitä haluaa olla, et se ois sellanen mitä voi ylpeydellä kertoa olevansa.

(40) Juuso: Ammatti on ehkä vähän enemmän kuin se et sä teet jotain työkses ja saat siitä rahaa. Esimerkiks, koska en ite oo tällä hetkellä hirveen sitoutunut tohon nykyiseen työhöni, niin en mä sanois et jos joku kysyis nyt et "mikä sun ammatti on", et mä oon (työnimike) koska mä en koe sitä semmoseks et mä haluaisin tehä sitä sitten monta kymmentä vuotta.

(41) Juuso: Jos mä sanon jollekin et mä oon ammatiltani kieliasiantuntija, niin ei se oikeestaan kerro niille et mitä sä sitten teet. Tai jos mä nyt niinku sanosin et mä oon kieliasiantuntija, ja sit joku kysyy et mitä sä teet, ja sanon et oon töissä [työpaikka].

(42) Miia: Jos sä kysyt joltain et "mitä sä teet?" "mä oon palomies", sit sä tiiät tasan tarkkaan mitä sen työtehtäviin kuuluu. Mut jos sä kysyt joltain, ja "joo mä oon kieliasiantuntija", niin siinä AINA varmasti tulee jatkokysymys et "okei, mitä se tekee?". Kieliasiantuntija ei mun mielestä ihan riitä sillä tavalla. Se on titteli mut se ei oo ammatti.

(43) Elina: Se on enemmän semmonen niinku kattava käsite ehkä. (...) kieliasiantuntija, minkä kielen asiantuntija sä oot ja mitä se pitää sisällään, et en koe et se on ammatti.

(44) Joonas: Mä jotenki miellän sen et kieliasiantuntija ois tosi rajattu siihen et vois vaan kielen kans tekemisissä vaik se ei oikeesti ees oo sitä, mut mulle vaan tulee itelleni sellanen mielikuva. Et sit jos mä sanoisin ihmisille olevani kieliasiantuntija nii sit mun pitäis olla jossain…käännösfirmassa, tai jossain kielipalvelutoimistossa töissä.

(45) Riikka: Riippuu varmaan myös kenelle vastais siihen kysymykseen. Sulle mä voisin vastata että mä olen kieliasiantuntija ja [työnimike], ja sä tietäisit [mitä se tarkoittaa]. Jos jollekin muulle, joka ei oo vaikka opiskellu samaa mitä itse…
H: Vaikka omalle äidille.
Riikka: Nii. Sille mä sanoisin et mä oon yliopistolla töissä.

(46) Tommi: Mä voisin kuvitella, että joku nimittää itseään kieliasiantuntijaksi samalla tavalla kun mä nimitän itseäni tekniseksi kääntäjäksi vaikka se ei virallisesti mun koulutuksen puolesta ole mun ammatti, mutta mä oon tehny sitä tarpeeks paljon, ja mä oon suuntautunu tarpeeks paljon mun opinnoissa että mä kehtaan sanoa itteäni tekniseks kääntäjäks. Ja mä koen olevani samalla kieliasiantuntija, mut se on vähän sellanen laajempi kuvaus silleen mun ammatista.

(47) Elina: No itse pidän tärkeenä sellasta verbaalista viestintää ja sitä et osaa ilmaista itseään suullisesti, esiintymistä joo ja ne on semmosia mitä mä arvostan [...] siellä on koodareita jotka on maailman parhaita niiden töissä, mut sitten ku kattoo kun ne kommunikoi jonkun asiakkaan kanssa, niin nehän onki sit ihan hukassa. Nii sit on tajunnu et ei vitsi, kuinka tärkeetä se on et osaa ilmaista itseään silleen suullisesti. Huomaa selkeesti miten erilainen tyyli on itellä kommunikoida ku monella muulla meidän firmassa. En en tiiä onko se sit opintojen ansiota vai oman persoonallisuuden ansiota et sitä en voi erottaa.

(48) Joonas: No mikä nyt on ehkä eniten tullu täs oman uran alussa nii on ollu sellanen oppimis- ja sopeutumiskyky (...) joka paikassa tunnutaan kaipaavan just hyviä viestintätaitoja vaikkei se ois viestinnän hommakaan, et halutaan joku ihminen joka tulee toisten kans toimeen, joka osaa olla muitten kans tekemisissä ja joka osaa kirjottaa, osaa puhuu, osaa toimia verkossa, osaa toimii naamakkain. Et aika paljon niitä viestintätaitoja tunnutaan korostavan aika lailla joka paikassa.

(49) Juuso: Nooh, en nyt tiiä onks nää kliseitä ja silleen tosi perus, mut ryhmätyötaidot on aina tärkeitä, et osaa ottaa muutkin huomioon siinä työympäristössäkin eikä oo vaan silleen et "minä vain tiedän miten kaikki tehdään oikein".

(50) Lauri: [kieliasiantuntija on] Semmonen joka osaa konsultoida ja kommentoida kieleen liittyvissä asioissa.

(51) H: No nytku sä oot siellä työelämässä ollu, nii mitkä sä koet et on sellasia olennaisimpia taitoja et sä pärjäät työelämässä? Sä oot mun haastateltavista ainoo joka on päätyny ulkomaille.

Hanna: No kyl siinä englannin kielessä pitää olla melko tehokas, aika sellasta jäykkää ja monimutkasta sanastoo osata. Ei mun tarvi tietää (*ammatti*) mitään tai (*ammatti*)alasta.

(52) Lauri: Projektinhallintataidot, talousosaaminen [...] koska siis jos hakee mihin tahansa projektitöihin, niin aina siinä tarvitaan talousosaamista, siis varsinkin kaikki EU- ja hankeosaaminen. Asiakaspalveluosaaminen myöskin. Kyllä, et sellanen organisointi-, koordinointi-, projektinhallintataidot, kaikki aikataulutus ja oman työn suunnittelu ja mitä näitä onkaan.

(53) Miia:No kyllä mä oon siis huomannu et mitä monilla tulee esmes graduvaiheessa semmonen sinnikkyys ja projektien läpivieminen, niin se on aika tärkee et mä pystyn ottaa vastuuta jostain projektista.

(54) Riikka: Ehkä ajankäyttö ja sen hallintaan liittyvät taidot. No joo, varmaan myös monella kyllä opintojen aikana kehittyy, mut et oppii käsittelee sitä että on kiire ja paljon tekemistä. Mä luulen että ihan työpaikka ku työpaikka niin on kiire.

(55) Tommi: Jotenkin tekee mieli sanoa että nopeus, koska mä oon ite hitaanpuoleinen ja projektit venyy, niin sitten tota tuntuu että olis tärkee olla suhteessa nopee, mut toisaalta on ihan yhtä tärkee on huolellisuus, että se työnantajasta riippuu et haluuks ne nopeesti ihan mitä vaan laatua vai haluuks ne niinku tosi hyvää laatua vähän hitaammin.

(56) H: Mitä kieliasiantuntija voi tehdä työkseen?

Miia: (naurua) Joo, tää on kyl paha, koska siis jos ei ajatella sitä tutkijan uraa. No ehkä jotain…tiedottajan työ vois olla sellainen mitä vois tehä. Varsinaisesti siellä ei mitää journalistiikkaa opiskella mut tiedottaja vois olla yks sellanen. Mitähän muuta…

(57) Joonas: Mut niin, on se jännä et ihmisii menee ihan vaikka kääntäjäks vaikka kieliasiantuntijaopinnoissa ei oo kääntämistä paljon mitään, mut kääntäjästä just johonki viestintään tai assariks tai ihan niin… yleensä se pallon liikkeelle saattaminen on aina vähän se hankalin osuus.

(58) Hanna: Must tuntuu et se tutkinto ei oo mitään kuumaa kamaa tuolla työmarkkinoilla, kukaan ei oo silleen et vastavalmistunut maisteri enkun laitokselta, toi me halutaan. Must tuntuu et ne enemmän kattoo sitä CV:tä et mitä toi on oikeesti tehny ja mitä se oikeesti osaa.

(59) Riikka: Konsultoida ja koordinoida (naurua) sehän voi tehä vaikka mitä, itse näkisin ainakin niin. Ehkä ennemmin kyse on siitä että miten hyvin osaa itseään markkinoida eri työpaikkoihin.

(60) Tommi: No mulle tulee ekana mieleen tietysti kirjottaminen, kääntäminen, tulkkaus, mut myös niinku oikolukeminen, ja tekstin tuottaminen, esimerkiks copywriting, ja ja…no siinä on ne mitkä tulee ekana mieleen.

(61) Elina: Varmasti jos on vielä oikee sivuainekombo niin kieliasiantuntija voi olla hyvinki haluttu assetti moneen firmaan. Voi tehä viestintää, voi tehä markkinointii, voi olla kaikenlaisissa asiakaspalveluhommissa, voi olla toimitusjohtaja, ihan mitä vaan. Paitsi toki semmosta mihin vaaditaan joku tietty koulutus (naurua) (…) mis vaaditaan tiedonhaun osaamista ja laajaa yleistietoo ja tämmöstä niin melkeinpä mitä vaan.

(62) Joonas: Tuntuu et kieliasiantuntijaopinnot antaa tosi hyvät valmiudet siihen et on niinku, sitä tehny vähän tutkimusta ja osaa tiivistää hankalia kokonaisuuksia, on vähä semmost teoreettisempaa ajattelukykyä. Mä oon kokenu et ne sivuaineet taas määrittää tosi paljon varsinki siinä kieliasiantuntijalinjassa, et sit se kärki tulee siit sivuaineesta et mihin loppujen lopuks sit suuntautuu.

(63) Juuso: Mun vakiovastaus on kyl ollu et no, melkein mitä vaan (naurua)

H: Se on kauheen positiivista.

Juuso: Joo, se on tolleen ajatuksen tasolla varmaan kauheen positiivista, kuulostaa silleen joillekin sukulaisille siltä et siistii, sulla on kaikki ovet avoinna. Mut sit todellisuudessa se ei ehkä mee ihan niin. Mut joo, että tota se on ollu mun sellanen vakiovastaus kun en oo osannu

vastata mitään muutakaan. (…) se ois ollu ehkä sitä mihin ois opintojen aikana kaivannu parempaa vastausta. Koska musta tuntuu et jos on opintojen aikana jossain tätä kysymystä yleisinfoissa käsitelty niin se vastauskin on ollu et no ihan mitä vaan, et kaikki ovet on avoinna, sivuaineilla voit ohjata mihin suuntaan vaan.

(64) Hanna: Kaikenlaista, hyvin vaihtelevaa työtä, se on yksilökohtaista. Et kaikki kieliasiantuntijat ketkä on työuransa alkuvaiheilla tekee jollain tavalla aika samankaltasta työtä, et viestintätyyppistä. Voin mennä esimerkiks johonkin järjestöön, järjestöihin töihin, tai yliopistoihin.