

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

**STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT THEMSELVES AS USERS OF FINNISH,
SWEDISH AND ENGLISH**

Analysis of metaphorical constructions

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

by

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**STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT THEMSELVES AS USERS OF FINNISH, SWEDISH
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Englannin kielen rooli maailmankielenä on tullut yhä tärkeämmäksi. Myös Suomessa englannin kielen käyttö eri yhteyksissä on yleistynyt. Suurin osa suomalaisista lukiolaisista kuulee tai käyttää englantia jossain muodossa joka päivä. Toisaalta heidän virallinen toinen kielensä on ruotsi, jonka opiskelu on pakollista, mutta jota he todennäköisesti käyttävät vähemmän kuin englantia. Opettajien ja oppilaiden käsitysten tutkiminen on lisääntynyt viimeaikoina huomattavasti, mutta suomalaisten oppilaiden käsityksiä näistä kahdesta kielestä sekä heidän äidinkielestään ei ole aiemmin tutkittu. Tässä tutkielmassa selvitetään opiskelijoiden käsityksiä itsestään suomen, ruotsin ja englannin käyttäjinä. Vastauksia etsitään kysymyksiin: 1) Miten lukiolaiset näkevät itsensä suomen, ruotsin ja englannin kirjoittajina ja puhujina? ja 2) Millaisia eroja tyttöjen ja poikien välillä ilmenee?

Oppijan käsityksiä itsestään ja oppimisesta on perinteisesti tutkittu pysyvinä ideoina tai mielipiteinä ja tutkimusaineistoa on kerätty esimerkiksi kyselylomakkeilla ja haastatteluilla. Viime vuosina on kuitenkin alettu painottaa lähestymistapaa, jossa käsitykset nähdään aina tietyssä kontekstissa. Ne ovat osa sitä kulttuuria ja yhteiskuntaa, jossa esiintyvät ja muuttuvat ajan ja tilanteen mukaan. Metafora-analyysiä on käytetty yhtenä tutkimusmetodinä, koska on todettu, että metaforat ovat luonnollinen tapa ilmaista ajatuksia, jotka saattavat olla jopa oppijalle itselleen tiedostamattomia.

Tutkittavaan ryhmään kuului 71 lukiolaista, joista 40 oli poikia ja 31 tyttöä. He kaikki puhuivat suomea äidinkielenään. Aineisto kerättiin tehtävällä, jossa opiskelijat täydensivät lauseita heitä itseään kuvaavilla metaforilla. Lauseet jaettiin kahteen eri tyyppiin: kielenkäyttäjä puhujana ja kielenkäyttäjä kirjoittajana. Vastausten käsittelyssä käytettiin metafora-analyysiä, jossa vastaukset ryhmiteltiin eri kategorioihin metaforien aiheen, rakenteen ja mahdollisten merkitysten mukaan. Kategorioita muodostui yhteensä 15. Eniten käytettyjä näistä olivat VIERAASSA ELEMENTISSÄ, EPÄTÄYDELLINEN, OMASSA ELEMENTISSÄ ja KÄRSIJÄ. Positiivisia metaforia, kuten OMASSA ELEMENTISSÄ ja TÄYDELLINEN käytettiin selvästi eniten suomen kielestä. Metaforia VIERAASSA ELEMENTISSÄ, EPÄTÄYDELLINEN ja KÄRSIJÄ taas käytettiin eniten ruotsista. Englanti sijoittui yleisesti näiden kahden välimaastoon. Suomen ja ruotsin kielen käyttäjinä opiskelijat näkivät itsensä positiivisemmin puhujina kuin kirjoittajina. Englannissa erot eivät olleet yhtä selkeitä, mutta jotkut metaforista viittasivat siihen, että englannin kielen kirjoittaminen olisi opiskelijoille luontevampaa kuin puhuminen. Tytöt osoittivat hieman enemmän itsevarmuutta suomen ja ruotsin käyttäjinä, kun taas englannin kielen käytössä tytöt olivat selvästi kriittisempiä itseään kohtaan kuin pojat.

Sekä opiskelijoiden itsensä että opettajien olisi hyvä tiedostaa, millaisia käsityksiä opiskelijoilla on itsestään eri kielten käyttäjinä. Näin mahdolliset epävarmuudet ja negatiiviset mielikuvat saadaan esille ja niihin voidaan tarttua. Metaforat saattavat paljastaa myös mahdollisia syitä oppijan haluttomuuteen käyttää vierasta kieltä tai motivaation puutteeseen.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Finland has two official languages: Finnish as a majority language and Swedish as a minority language. Swedish is a compulsory subject for all Finnish-speaking students, although the prevailing system has recently been under discussion. However, it could be argued that most of the people who live in Finnish-speaking areas of the country, speak English more fluently than Swedish. For a few decades our education has been organized so that English is the first foreign language taught in schools and Swedish as a second language comes later.

The number of people who speak English as a second or foreign language is growing world wide. The status of English as a *lingua franca* is becoming increasingly important and it is frequently referred to as “a global language” (e.g. Phillipson 1992, Graddol 1999). The influences are seen in Finland as well. There are even implications that English is shifting from a foreign language to a second language (Phillipson 1992). Today it is not uncommon to hear or see English all around us; on TV, in advertising, names of products and companies or even in some terms of spoken language. In many trades, it is a necessary professional skill. The result is that Finns use an increasing amount of English in their everyday lives. Some even see it as a threat to our mother tongue. Swedish, in contrast, is used regularly only in Swedish-speaking parts of the country. All this must have an impact on how students relate themselves to these two languages in comparison to their mother tongue. A possible assumption is that the everyday presence of English results in a more comfortable feeling when using English than when using Swedish. This is an aspect that makes it interesting to look at the beliefs students have about the three languages: Finnish, English and Swedish.

As a teacher student I am interested in the learning process from the learner's perspective. In addition to teaching methods and other factors, the learner's inner motives, attitudes and beliefs have a crucial effect on learning. From these three factors, beliefs are the least studied. Thus, in this study, the goal is to find out how Finnish students see themselves as users of Finnish, Swedish and English. In other words, it will compare the differences in beliefs about mother tongue, official second language and foreign language.

A broad definition of beliefs about SLA is that they are opinions and ideas a learner has about language learning (Kalaja and Barcelos 2003:1). Research on this area began in the 1980s and since then there has been an increasing number of studies. It has been noted that beliefs have an important role in the learning process and that learners' inner beliefs often influence their behaviour in the classroom or their choice of learning strategies. In applied linguistics, metaphors have been used as a data collection method from the 1990s. A metaphor can be seen as an umbrella term for all expressions that cannot be taken literally and, traditionally, they have been seen as purely decorative devices in language. A new view on metaphors was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) as they suggested that metaphors are linked to the way our thought processes work and they are actually used frequently as a part of our natural discourse. Therefore, by verbalizing these inner metaphors, we can reveal a great deal of our mental constructions of the world. Based on these ideas, metaphors have been used as a tool to study teachers' and students' beliefs.

In this study, 71 Finnish upper secondary general school ('lukio') students are asked to write down their metaphors about themselves as language users. A completion task is used to collect the responses and they are analysed by detecting similarities in structure and meaning. The frequency of different metaphor types is used as criteria for conclusions. Two types of metaphors are recognised: those that describe the subject as a speaker and those that describe him or her as a writer. The differences in metaphors about Finnish, Swedish and English are compared as well as those in metaphors produced by boys and girls.

The report begins by an outlining of the background of the study. In chapter 2, the study of beliefs is discussed; how beliefs influence learning and what approaches have been used to study them. Chapter 3 will look into the theories of metaphor and how metaphor analysis can be used as a tool to reveal students' beliefs. Chapter 4 illustrates the previous studies conducted on beliefs about language learning and teaching and reports the relevant findings. The next chapter focuses on the present study: the research questions, data collection procedure, choice of subjects and data analysis method are explained. In chapter 6 the results of the study are reported. First, the establishment of the main metaphors is explained, then it is discussed how the metaphors were used regarding the three languages: Finnish, English and

Swedish and finally, gender differences in the findings are reported. In the conclusion chapter, the findings are looked into once again, they are compared with those of previous studies and the whole process of this study is evaluated.

2 BELIEFS ABOUT SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In recent years, researchers in applied linguistics have increasingly emphasised the importance of the learner's role as an active participant in learning activities (Horwitz 1999, Wenden 1998, 1999). Learner autonomy and learning strategies have been key concepts in these studies. This has prompted an interest in beliefs and metacognitive knowledge, which means the knowledge that learners have about their own learning and that of others (Wenden 1998, 1999). When the learner's metacognitive knowledge improves, he or she is more able to take responsibility for his or her own learning. The possible result of this is better learning outcomes (Victori and Lockhart 1995, Wenden 1998). Other possible outcomes of enhancing metacognitive knowledge include increased motivation, greater tolerance of changing learning contexts and improved self-esteem as a learner (Victori and Lockhart 1995).

2.1 The role of beliefs in the language classroom

The influence of beliefs is often evident in classrooms (Wenden 1999, Barcelos 2003b). For example, strong resistance from a student to a certain method used by the teacher shows that the method does not represent the student's own beliefs about appropriate ways of learning. Horwitz (1987) has pointed out that students often base their expectations for good language lessons on the beliefs they have about language learning. If the teaching method does not meet these expectations, they may lose confidence in the teacher and the way they are instructed. This may lead to limitations in their achievement in language learning.

Some claim that learners' beliefs influence the learning strategies they choose to use, while learning strategies have a clear impact on learning outcomes (e.g. Horwitz 1987). "What students think about language learning can affect how they go about doing it" (Horwitz 1987:121). Victori and Lochart (1995:225) state that some studies indicate differences in the beliefs of successful and poor learners. Successful learners develop insightful beliefs about learning, their own abilities and their learning strategies (Anstey 1988 as quoted by Victori and Lockhart 1995:225), whereas poor

learners have negative or false beliefs about their capacities to perform tasks and the learning strategies they could use to help them overcome difficulties in language learning. These reasons indicate a need to investigate beliefs about SLA as well as learning strategies and metacognitive knowledge.

2.2 Approaches to the study of beliefs

In applied linguistics, beliefs have been studied from the 1980s (Wenden 1998, Kalaja and Barcelos 2003). Over the past few years the number of studies has been increasing. Beliefs about SLA can be broadly defined as the learner's ideas or opinions about second or foreign language learning (Kalaja and Barcelos 2003:1). However, the definitions vary quite a lot according to the approach the researcher has chosen.

2.2.1 The mainstream approach and the discursive approach

Kalaja (1995, 2003) has suggested two research approaches: the mainstream (or current) approach, which focuses on describing beliefs as cognitive entities in learner's mind and an alternative, discursive approach, which takes into account the functions of beliefs and investigates them in talk and writing. The discursive approach originates from social psychology and the reason for introducing it to research on beliefs about SLA was the need to reconsider both the traditional definitions and research methods of the field (Kalaja 2003). The mainstream approach describes beliefs as stable, stable and fallible, while the discursive approach sees them as socially constructed and variable. Variability here means that beliefs may vary from one person to another as well as from one context to another and even within the same place and time. Kalaja (1995) adds that while mainstream studies are based on the idea that beliefs influence language learning, the discursive approach does not make this assumption, but sees beliefs as non-cognitive.

Kalaja (1995:197) also points out differences in the research methods used in the two approaches: the mainstream studies have most commonly used questionnaires or interviews analysed by applying content analysis, whereas discourse analysis on naturalistic data that is either written or spoken is most suitable for the discursive

approach. The discursive approach offers data where subjects get to express their ideas important to them freely, without being restricted too much by the researcher. Therefore, the data represents a personal perspective of the individual. However, it has to be noted that the results are always interpretations by the researcher and may therefore vary (Kalaja 2003:94). Although research within the discursive approach has only began, many of the new views it provides for beliefs have been supported by studies. For example, studies over long periods of time have shown that beliefs change over time due to new experiences rather than remain stable (e.g. Bullough 1991, Katz 1996).

2.2.2 The normative approach, the metacognitive approach and the contextual approach

Barcelos (2003a) divides the approaches into three: the normative approach, the metacognitive approach and the contextual approach. The first two include studies which by Kalaja's (1995, 2003) criteria would be grouped into the mainstream approach while the last resembles Kalaja's discursive approach. The normative approach views beliefs as preconceived ideas, misconceptions or opinions. Likert-type questionnaires are commonly used as a method in normative studies. The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) developed by Horwitz (1987, 1999) is the most widely used version. Horwitz designed the BALLI as a tool for teachers and researchers to investigate beliefs of groups of language learners. It consists of 34 items all rated on five-point Likert scales. Some researchers have used the questionnaire as such while others (e.g. Mantle-Bromley 1995) have designed their own versions of the BALLI. However, there is an apparent shift in the research methods. Likert-scale questionnaires are not used as much anymore, since the normative approach has received some criticism recently (e.g. Kalaja 1995, Kalaja and Barcelos 2003).

Barcelos (2003a:15) remarks that this approach seems to carry the implicit assumption that learners' beliefs are erroneous and can be compared to the *ideal* beliefs that are right and true leading to the best learning outcomes. The criticism toward this approach has grown mainly out of the fact that it does not take into account the context where beliefs emerge and does not consider their function or

meaning (Kalaja 1995, Barcelos 2003a). Barcelos argues that the use of questionnaires causes a few difficulties. First, the alternatives for answers are always predetermined and do not necessarily allow the subject to answer according to his or her individual views. Second, the subject might interpret the items in the questionnaire differently from the researcher. On the other hand, Barcelos (2003a:27) mentions the benefits of this approach: for instance, questionnaires produce precise and clear results and they make it possible to include large numbers of subjects.

The metacognitive approach equates beliefs with metacognitive knowledge, which means the knowledge learners have about learning (Wenden 1998, Barcelos 2003a). This knowledge is described sometimes liable to errors. Wenden (1998:516, 1999:435-436) defines metacognitive knowledge as relatively stable, acquired information about our own learning and that of others. She points out however, that metacognitive knowledge can change over time and it can be acquired either consciously or unconsciously. Although beliefs about SLA and metacognitive knowledge are terms often used together, there is an important distinction. Knowledge can be described as factual and objective while beliefs are often subjective, value related and held more tenaciously than metacognitive knowledge (e.g. Kalaja 1995, Wenden 1998, 1999). Quoting Kalaja (1995:192-193):

Believing is a matter of degree, whereas knowing is not... It is possible to measure beliefs with Likert-type statements and response alternatives ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, but it is impossible to measure knowledge this way.

Barcelos (2003a:16-17) notes that most studies within the metacognitive approach gather data with interviews and self-reports. Some studies have employed questionnaires as well, but in those cases the researchers have designed their own questionnaires instead of the BALLI. This approach is criticised by Barcelos (2003a:19) for not connecting beliefs to context. In addition, she points out that beliefs should be concluded also from actions, not only learners' statements. However, Barcelos also sees a few benefits to the metacognitive approach. For example, interviews give subjects an opportunity to express their views and ideas freely in their own words.

The assumption that beliefs are stable mental opinions or attitudes that can be articulated with the help of certain methods has been questioned by some researchers (e.g. Kalaja 1995, 2003, Barcelos 2003a, Kramsch 2003). This has prompted a search for alternative approaches and research methods for the study of beliefs about SLA. The contextual approach, introduced by Barcelos (2003a), offers a new perspective on researching beliefs and so far, a few studies have made use of this approach. The contextual approach sees beliefs as part of the culture and society in which they occur. In other words, context is seen crucial in investigating beliefs.

The methods used in the contextual approach vary quite a lot. Barcelos (2003a:21) mentions that the studies that have been carried out so far have made use of observation, interviews, diaries, case studies and metaphor analysis. The contextual approach suits best for small samples and the methods require quite a lot of time, but an advantage is that it investigates beliefs that are presented in learners' own words and context is always taken into account. Barcelos (2003a:25) also points out that studies within this approach aim to understand beliefs better, rather than make generalisations about them.

2.2.3 Contextual approaches

As Kalaja and Barcelos (2003) suggest, the contextual approach could rather be called 'approaches' since there is a great deal of diversity in the frameworks and methodologies of the studies within this group. I will briefly view three of these approaches introduced by a few individual researchers. Each of these are categorised within the contextual approach by Barcelos (2003a). However, they introduce new and interesting views, definitions and methods to the study of beliefs. I will refer to these approaches as the Vygotskian approach, the Bakhtinian approach and the Deweyan approach. As the names reveal, these approaches apply ideas from individual philosophers and psychologists that have influenced the fields of language or education: Mikhail Bakhtin, Lev Semjonovits Vygotsky, and John Dewey.

Bakhtinian ideas have inspired Dufva (2003), Hosenfeld (2003) and Alanen (2003) in their research on beliefs about SLA. An essential term for this approach is *voice*, which is borrowed from Bakhtin. This term encompasses the notion that what the

subject says is not only language, but it reflects the speaker's personality and world view (Dufva 2003:133). Dufva (2003:133) has used interviews, group discussions and written narratives to capture subjects' voices and to investigate beliefs about language through them. Another notion adopted from Bakhtin is the function of dialogic speech and writing in constructing our experiences (Alanen 2003, Dufva 2003, Hosenfeld 2003). Dufva (2003:133) has used this notion by making the data collection situation as authentic as possible, although to some extent the topics and questions are always designed by the researcher. Authenticity here means that, for example, the interview technique can be compared to a negotiation. The intention is to make the situation more like a conversation and not like an interrogation. In addition to the subject, the interviewer is encouraged to express his or her own views. This makes the data collection dialogic in nature. Both the researcher's and the subject's voices are present in the data and both are accounted for in the analysis. This gives the researcher the role of a participant. Researchers applying the Bakhtinian approach view beliefs as subjective experiences. They are characterised as something that result from interaction and as dynamic in the sense that they can change due to context or lapse of time (Dufva 2003:136). Since we acquire a large part of our knowledge through discourse, our knowledge means partly repeating words and thoughts formulated by others (Dufva 2003:137, Alanen 2003:59). Thus, beliefs reflect personal views, but at the same time they are shared and connected to society.

Alanen (2003) has adopted a neo-Vygotskian sociocultural approach. This type of framework has been used before in the study of self-regulation and construction of knowledge, but Alanen is the first to apply it to the study of beliefs about SLA. Vygotsky was much interested in self-regulation, which means the learner's planning, monitoring and evaluation of his or her own learning (Alanen 2003:56). Much of Vygotsky's ideas could be linked to the study of metacognition. However, as Alanen (2003:56) points out, this issue has been under debate and discussion: some researchers would like to reapply Vygotsky's notions wider, others refuse to do so. Alanen (2003:59) describes the situation in the following way "... from a Vygotskian perspective, metacognitive knowledge about second language learning and self-regulation of that learning are the two sides of the same coin". She adds that these two concepts are connected by the important role of speech. In Vygotskian

thinking speaking is not only putting the already existing thoughts into words. Instead, we construct our ideas and knowledge while we are speaking or writing (Alanen 2003:58).

The Vygotskian perspective defines beliefs as something that are constructed in interaction, but at the same time they are individual and mental (Alanen 2003:67). These beliefs are constructed and internalised through mediated action, such as speech. Therefore they are both variable and stable, because they develop in a given context of social interaction and then become part of the individual's store of knowledge. Research aims to investigate, for instance, how beliefs emerge, how they are constructed and how they regulate learning (Alanen 2003:67–68). The methods Alanen (2003:68) recommends for this approach are ethnography, discourse analysis, conversation analysis and other qualitative methods.

Deweyan ideas have been employed by Barcelos (2003b) and Hosenfeld (2003). Barcelos (2003b:174) has adopted three ideas from Dewey for her research on teachers' and students' beliefs about SLA. These ideas concern experience, the paradoxical nature of beliefs and identity. In Dewey's philosophy, experience is an essential concept (Barcelos 2003b:174, Hosenfeld 2003:40). Experiences are always connected to our past and future (Barcelos 2003b:174). What we have experienced in the past affect our experiences in the future. Another important characteristic of experience according to Dewey is that our experience is influenced by our environment (Barcelos 2003b:174). Therefore, an individual changes and is changed by interaction with others and with the environment. Dewey (1933) describes beliefs as paradoxical in nature since "believing" often means "not knowing for sure", but at the same time we are confident to act upon our beliefs. On the other hand, beliefs are something we accept as truth now, but which may be questioned later. Thus, the Deweyan approach sees beliefs as something that promote and hinder knowledge at the same time. Beliefs make us doubt the information we gain from our environment and doubting makes us think reflectively, which enhances knowledge (Barcelos 2003b:176). The third idea Barcelos (2003b:177) adopts from Dewey's philosophy is the notion that beliefs are connected to identity. This notion is threefold (Dewey 1938): first, our experiences are shaped by our relationship with the environment. Therefore, we form our ideas and self-image in terms of environment and the people

in it. Second, beliefs are tightly connected to learning and identity. Barcelos (2003b:177) explains that when we learn, we construct our identities and, at the same time, beliefs. Third, our identity is influenced by different groups we belong to, such as men and women or groups that come with, for instance, our occupation, socio-economic levels or marital status.

Based on these ideas and the research goals, Barcelos (2003b:178) sees ethnography as the most appropriate method for investigating beliefs from a Deweyan perspective. Her own study made use of observation, semi-structured interviews, conversations with students and teachers and their comments about a video of one of their classes. Hosenfeld (2003:42) linked Deweyan ideas to those of Bakhtin and used journals to collect her data. Based on her experiences and results of her study, Barcelos (2003b:194) suggests that the Deweyan framework emphasises the important role of context in studies about teachers' and students' beliefs. These beliefs both shape the context and are shaped by it.

Consequently, it can be said that although the study of beliefs about SLA is a reasonably new area of research, there are already several approaches to it. The frameworks and methods vary greatly and the definition of belief is under an ongoing development. In the next chapter I will proceed by discussing metaphor, which is one of the tools that have been used to grasp teachers' and students' beliefs.

3 METAPHOR AND THE STUDY OF BELIEFS

To define metaphor has not been a simple task for researchers. Traditional definitions include, for example, "seeing something in terms of something else" (Kramsch 2003:111), "to say one thing and mean another" (e.g. Black 1979:22) or "understanding one domain of experience [...] in terms of a very different domain" (Lakoff 1990 as quoted by Nikanne 1992:61). What the definitions usually share is the idea that a metaphor consists of two levels: what is actually said and what is meant by it. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:5) add a new view to these definitions by suggesting that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and *experiencing* something in terms of something else".

3.1 Theories of metaphor

In the twentieth century, researchers have developed three theories of metaphor (see for example, (Black 1962, Miller 1979, Cameron 2003). Although some views have changed since, these theories are still influential today and affect the way metaphors are defined (Cameron 2003). These theories include substitution theory, comparison theory and interactional theory. The fourth theory, cognitive theory, is the most recent one and it is grounded on the ideas introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

3.1.1 Substitution theory and comparison theory

Substitution theory suggests that in metaphor one term is substituted with another and the meaning of the metaphor can be discovered by replacing the literal term (Black 1962). Therefore, it views metaphor as a mere decorative device. Comparison theory also contains substitution and can therefore be considered a special case of substitution theory (Miller 1979). Comparison theory sees metaphor as something that reflects a comparison or similarity with its literal equivalent. In other words, metaphor can be characterised as a reduced simile (e.g. Miller 1979, Cameron 2003). Cameron (2003) argues that neither substitution theory nor comparison theory can be

applied to all metaphors, since they suggest that to every metaphor there exists a literal equivalent. However, this is the case only with the most obvious metaphors. Goatly (1997) adds that the substitution theory does not account for the multiple interpretations of metaphorical expressions.

3.1.2 Interactional theory

Black (1962) has developed an alternative theory of metaphors called interactional theory, where the problem of non-existing literal equivalent has been taken into account. Accordingly, metaphors consist of two thoughts that interact with each other and produce a new meaning that cannot be equated with any literal substitute. Black (1962:38) gives an example of this type of metaphor: “The poor are the negroes of Europe”. Referring to the ideas of Richards (*The philosophy of rhetoric*) Black (1962:39) explains that in this context the word *negroes* obtains a different meaning than the one used in a literal sense. In fact this meaning has no literal substitute at all. “The new context imposes extension of meaning upon the word” (Black 1962:39). Cameron (2003) points out that while metaphors used to be viewed as linguistic decorations, interactional theory emphasised their cognitive role and inspired the idea that metaphors are entities where ideas, knowledge and beliefs interact.

Goatly (1997) suggests a different approach to metaphor. While some have characterised comparison theory as a modification of substitution theory, Goatly (1997:118) claims that comparison theory is more compatible with interactional theory. The reason for this is that interactional theory also describes the interaction between the two levels of meaning in metaphor as a process of comparison. Although interactional theory has been considered the view that encompasses the widest range of metaphors, Goatly (1997:118) favours another view, which he calls the extended comparison view. This view combines characteristics of interactional theory and comparison theory. By modifying the theories this way, Goatly (1997:118) argues that the extended comparison view is able to account for all varieties of metaphor. However, it is interactional theory introduced by Black (1962) that has brought emphasis on the cognitive role of metaphors, to be discussed below.

3.1.3 Cognitive theory

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have caused a major change in the way researchers view metaphors by suggesting that metaphor is not only a decorative characteristic of language. They argue that human thought processes are metaphorical in nature and metaphors are linked to the way our whole conceptual system is structured. Therefore, metaphors make it possible for us to verbalise our mental constructions of the world. These thoughts might be difficult to describe in other terms because metaphorical thinking is something we mostly do unconsciously (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:5-6). This view, now known as cognitive theory of metaphor, presents metaphors as not only an important aspect of language, but human cognition as well, and it has raised an interest in linguistics to study metaphors from a new perspective.

The cognitive perspective characterises metaphor as a cognitive mechanism where one experiential domain (the target) is projected onto a different experiential domain (the source). Consequently, the second domain is understood in terms of the first one (Barcelona 2000:3). In this context the process of “projecting” is commonly called “mapping” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Barcelona 2000). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors are not just tools that we use to get the right message through or to make our language more powerful and decorative. We actually conceive things in terms of the metaphors we use about them and act accordingly. One of Lakoff’s and Johnson’s (1980:7-9) examples of this is the metaphor TIME IS MONEY. This concept is reflected in the way we talk about time, for instance, in the verbs we use:

To waste time
 To save time
 To give time to someone
 To cost someone time
 To have time to spare
 To be worth someone’s while
 To run out of time

Lakoff and Johnson (1980:8) continue that particularly in our modern western culture time is often quantified. Our wages are calculated based on the hours we spend working, hotel rooms are paid according to the time we spend there and loan interest grow as time passes. When we lose time we feel like we lose something valuable that is of limited resource, just like money. This is how time is conceptualised and we

live accordingly. Moreover it is tied to our culture. However, most metaphors are only partial (Barcelona 2000, Lakoff and Johnson 1980). For example, we do not see time as something we can get back the same way as money. If someone gives you time, you can give the same amount of time back on some other occasion, but you cannot give back the very same hours or minutes the other person spent on you. If you give someone back money, however, you can give the exact same coins or bills you received before (an example borrowed from Barcelona 2000:4). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980:193) explain it “Metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally”. They introduce several other metaphors that have a similar effect on us. For example, ARGUMENT IS WAR. These types of metaphors are referred to as conventional metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

In addition to metaphors, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:37) offer an example of metonymic concepts (see section 3.2) that are linked to our actions in addition to thoughts and words. A common metonymy in our culture is THE FACE FOR THE PERSON. This example represents a very common type of a part-for-whole metonymy. For example, “I need to see some new faces” or “She’s not just a pretty face”. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:37) explain:

The tradition of portraits, in both paintings and photography, is based on it. If you ask me to show you a picture of my son and I show you a picture of his face, you will be satisfied...But if I show you a picture of his body without his face, you will consider it strange and will not be satisfied.

Consequently, the person is perceived in terms of his face. These examples of metaphor and metonymy indicate that Lakoff’s and Johnson’s arguments are well-grounded. Metaphoric concepts affect not only our language, but our thoughts and actions as well. In fact, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:56) suggest that “most of our conceptual system is metaphorically structured”. Their ideas have also been supported by other researchers. For instance, Goatly (1997:79) has claimed: “undoubtedly our cognitive structure is determined by conventional metaphors, and evidence for this can be seen in the lexicon of English”. Some critical comments have also been offered. For instance Gibbs (1999:43) disagrees with the assumption that our whole conceptual system is fundamentally metaphoric in nature by arguing that

[...] the analysis of linguistic expressions by itself does not imply that all concepts are metaphorical (a claim falsely attributed to Lakoff and Johnson 1980), or even that any particular concept is comprehended via metaphor to some degree.

3.2 Metonymy

Metonymy is a concept related to metaphor. It includes a reference to an object with another expression (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:35). While metaphors encompass conceiving one thing in terms of another, metonymy does not. It only refers to the object. For instance, “the fur boots is looking at you” (a person in fur boots). Here we do not think that the person shares qualities with fur boots, but the fur boots simply stand for the person because they are a very easily noticeable, salient part of the person. While metaphor in cognitive perspective is seen as mapping of a source domain onto a target domain, metonymy is mapping within the same conceptual domain (Lakoff and Turner 1989:103-104). Barcelona (2000:4) points out that metonymy is probably even more basic to language and cognition than metaphor, although it has received less attention. However, in recent years, interest in metonymy has increased and its importance beside metaphor has been recognised (Feyaerts 2000:59). Feyaerts (2000:64-65) mentions a characteristic that separates metonymies from metaphors: in metaphors the relationship between the two domains can be described in terms of similarity, whereas metonymy involves a contiguity relationship. Ruiz de Mendoza (2000:113) provides a list of other such characteristics, adopted from Lakoff and Johnson (1980:36) and Lakoff and Turner (1989:103). First, metaphors involve two conceptual domains while metonymies involve only one. Second, the primary function of metaphor is understanding; metonymies are mainly used for reference and third, metaphors include an “is-a” kind of relationship between the target and the source, but in metonymies there is a “stand-for” relationship. A useful means for making the distinction is offered by Gibbs (1999:36):

A conventional way of distinguishing the two kinds of figurative trope is to apply the ‘*is like*’ test. Figurative statements of the *X is like Y* form are most meaningful when X and Y represent terms from different conceptual domains. If a non-literal comparison between two things is

meaningful when seen in an *X is like Y* statement, then it is metaphorical; otherwise it is metonymic.

The criteria mentioned above apply to most metonymies. However, there are some cases where it is difficult to tell whether a given sentence is metaphoric or metonymic. Many metaphors seem to be grounded in metonymy. Radden (2000:93) offers an example: “suddenly the pilot comes over the intercom”. This sentence is metonymic, because it can be interpreted so that it is actually the pilot’s voice coming over the intercom, and it is metaphoric because the phrase “comes over” here means that the pilot announces something. Radden (2000:93) remarks that some sentences may have to be analysed both metaphoric and metonymic and introduces the term metonymy-based metaphor. He thereby suggests that the traditional distinction between metonymy and metaphor can no longer be maintained, but instead we should see both categories as end points on a continuum. The range in between metaphors and metonymies consists of metonymy-based metaphors.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:37), metonymy, similarly to metaphor, is not something that is only used to create a colourful or poetic effect and it is also not only a matter of language. The distinction is that metonymy makes us focus on a particular part or aspect of the object that is referred to. Metonyms also exist in our everyday conversations and in the way we think. An interesting character of metaphors and metonymies, provided by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:156-158) is that they can be expressed not only by words but by gestures and other non-verbal means. Moreover, they are not always communicated at all, but simply reflect themselves in our behaviour.

3.3 Comparisons, similes and analogies

As my study concentrates on comparison statements, it is useful to look at this type of metaphors in more detail. Miller (1979) distinguishes three types of comparison statements: literal comparisons, similes and analogies. In literal comparisons the two things are compared simply because they share the same features. For example, “John’s wife is like his mother” (an example provided by Miller 1979:218). In similes the grounds for comparison are less obvious: “John’s wife is like his

umbrella” (another example by Miller). Accordingly similes contain a copula of similitude, such as *like, is like, as, resembles* and *is the same as*.

An analogy in its broadest definition can mean any expression of resemblance (Miller 1979:218). In a more precise definition analogies can be stated between four terms. A simple example (Miller 1979:218) “the toes are to the foot as the fingers are to the hand”. Goatly (1997) defines analogy in a different way. He explains that analogies compare only the relationship between the two parts. For example “the hydrogen atom is a miniature solar system” (Goatly 1997:122). Here the similarity is not emphasised in the two parts: the sun and the nucleus atom, but rather the relationship between them: the sun is bigger than planets, the nucleus is bigger than electrons and the sun attracts planets in the same way the nucleus attracts electrons. Goatly (1997:119) continues that the terms similarity and analogy are essential to metaphor since they distinguish it from other concepts such as irony.

3.4 Metaphors in SLA research

Cameron (2003:4) characterises metaphor as a phrase that is somehow incongruous in the context where it is used. She emphasises that both in theory and metaphor analysis, the context has to be considered and not only the linguistic context but also the physical, social, interactional and conceptual context. Therefore, in addition to the metaphor itself, one has to consider where the metaphor is used, with whom, what has happened before and what will happen after the occasion, what has been said before and what is said after and the participants conceptions of the matter that is discussed. Referring to this idea, Cameron (2003) describes a view in which metaphor is always unique and linked to the very moment it is used and to the specific communicative needs of the participants in the discourse. This view is called the prosaic approach.

To quote Ellis (2001:66), the interest in SLA research has been on “how the study of metaphor can serve as a tool for investigating the way we construct reality”. Describing the development of applying metaphor in linguistic research, Ellis (2001) sums up that while the concept of metaphor has undergone what could be called a

revolution, metaphor analysis has become an excepted method in educational and applied linguistics. He remarks that the learners' orientation toward language learning can be seen in the metaphors they use to talk about it. In a broad sense the purpose of investigating metaphors is to better understand how people perceive the world around them, how they think and how they communicate (Cameron 2003:2).

Thus, metaphor analysis has proved to be a useful tool in investigating beliefs and other aspects of SLA. Metaphors have the potential of revealing a great deal of the students' thoughts, conceptions and orientations. In the next chapter I will describe in more detail the ways metaphor analysis has been used before in SLA research.

4 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON BELIEFS ABOUT SLA USING METAPHOR ANALYSIS

In applied linguistics, metaphor analysis has been used as a research method from the 1990s (Turunen 2003, Turunen and Kalaja 2004). The first studies concerned mostly teachers and teaching, but recently the focus has shifted to learners. In this chapter I will outline 12 studies that have employed metaphor in investigating teacher and student beliefs. These are divided into three groups depending on what the metaphors concern: teachers, learners or teaching and learning. In addition to short summaries of the studies, tables of the main points are provided.

4.1 Metaphors about teachers

Conceptions about teachers are the most widely studied area of studies on beliefs in applied linguistics using metaphor analysis. Seven studies are included in this group: Bullough (1991), Marchant (1992), Katz (1996), Oxford (1998), Oxford et al. (1998), de Guerrero and Villamil (1999) and Turunen (2003). The methodologies of these studies have varied, as can be noted from table 1. In some of the studies the aim has been to investigate the usefulness of metaphor analysis and its methods (Bullough 1991, Marchant 1992). Others have concentrated on revealing the underlying metaphors of teachers.

According to these studies, the most common metaphors of teachers have to do with nurturing (EARTH MOTHER, CAREGIVER), authority (GATEKEEPER, LEADER, REFEREE), democracy (PROMOTER OF DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRATIC/PARTICIPATORY TEACHER), or change (SOMEONE WHO MOULDS THE STUDENTS, AGENT OF CHANGE). The results are not easy to compare since the methods and research problems have been quite different. For instance, Bullough (1991) looked into the development of a few teachers' metaphors and investigated the changes that occurred while they gained more experience as teachers. Katz (1996) also collected data of four individual teachers over time,

Table 1. Studies on teacher metaphors.

Study	Subjects	Method	Main results
Bullough 1991	Teacher students	Life histories, discussions	Generally representative examples of metaphors: HUSBANDMAN OF THE YOUNG, DEVIL'S ADVOCATE and BUTTERFLY. Metaphor analysis was considered valuable to the students' development as teachers. During the year, metaphors remained intact, but intensified or became elaborated.
Marchant 1992	Undergraduate and graduate teacher students	Simile lists, completion task	The metaphors chosen from simile lists reflected the same metaphors produced by the students themselves. Most frequent metaphors were teacher as AN AUTHORITY, A CAREGIVER, A PRODUCER, A CAPTIVE, A PARTY HOST, A REFEREE OR AN ADVOCATE OF CHANGE
Katz 1996	Teachers	Interview, observation	Teachers saw themselves as CHOREOGRAPHER, EARTH MOTHER, ENTERTAINER or PROFESSOR
Oxford 1998	Current and former language students	Narrative case studies	Three teacher types were recognised: the AUTODRATIC TEACHER (e.g. manufacturer, tyrant), the DEMACRATIC or PARTICIPATORY TEACHER (e.g. family member, force of nature) and the LAIZZES-FAIRE TEACHER (e.g. blind eye, sleep inducer).
Oxford et al. 1998	Teachers, students, researchers	Written narratives, interviews, textbooks on teaching	Metaphors reflected control and power. The teacher was viewed as GATEKEEPER (Cultural Transmission), GARDENER (Learner-centred Growth), someone who MOULDS the students (Social Order) or someone who promotes DEMOCRACY in classrooms (Social Reform).
De Guerrero & Villamil 2000	ESL teachers	Completion task	Metaphors reflected conventional teacher roles: LEADER, PROVIDER OF KNOWLEDGE, NURTURER and AGENT OF CHANGE.
Turunen 2003	University students of English	Autobiographies	Most frequent teacher metaphors were teacher as MOTIVATOR, TRIER TO PATIENCE and MANUFACTURER.

formed metaphors to describe their teaching styles and attempted to provide information about the subjects' specific instructional decisions in class. Other studies collected metaphors from a larger group and categorized them by detecting similarities. Oxford participated in two quite large scale studies in 1998. In Oxford et al. (1998) the data consisted of 250 written narratives and about twenty theory books on teaching. The metaphors that emerged were categorized from the perspective of four educational philosophies: Social Order, Cultural Transmission, Learner-centred Growth and Social Reform. In Oxford (1998), 473 narratives written by students, teaching candidates and language teachers were analysed. The metaphors were classified under three teaching approaches, of which the democratic or participatory approach was the most frequent. The subject group included people of different ethnicities and Oxford found lots of variety in the metaphors of these groups. She suggests that these can be explained by differences in the characteristics that are expected or respected in a teacher in different cultures. A common conclusion in these studies has been that identifying metaphors from teachers' talk and writing helps teachers to recognise their unconscious thoughts of teaching, therefore supporting their development as teachers.

4.2 Metaphors about learners

Compared to teachers, learners have received much less attention in research. Only three studies conducted by Marchant (1992), Ellis (2001) and Turunen (2003) have investigated metaphors about learners. These studies resemble the present study the most although their subjects have been slightly older. In addition, the research questions differ from the present study: I investigate students' metaphors of themselves as language users, while Marchant, Ellis and Turunen studied how students see themselves as learners. Marchant's study compares well to the present study because it made use of a completion task. Turunen's study, on the other hand, is the only one, in addition to the previous study, that has focused on Finnish subjects. The main points of these studies are illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. Studies on learner metaphors.

Study	Subjects	Method	Main results
Marchant 1992	Undergraduate and graduate students	List of similes, completion task	The metaphors chosen from simile lists reflected same metaphors produced by the students themselves. Examples of learner metaphors: ENEMY, DAUGHTER/SON, PRISONER, OBSTACLE, WORKER, AN OBJECT OF CHANGE.
Ellis 2001	Adult students, researchers	Diaries, research articles	Dominant metaphors used by researchers: learner as CONTAINER or MACHINE. Metaphors used by learners: learner as SUFFERER, PROBLEM-SOLVER or TRAVELLER.
Turunen 2003	University students of English	Autobiographies	The most frequent learner metaphors were learner as PERFECTIONIST and NATURAL TALENT

Marchant (1992) used factor analysis to compare the results of a sentence completion task and a task where subjects chose predetermined metaphors from a list of similes. The conclusion was that there were no major differences between these two sets of findings: they both reflected the same “main metaphors”. Examples of the most common learner metaphors included ENEMY, DAGHTER/SON, PRISONER, OBSTACLE, WORKER and OBJECT OF CHANGE. Marchant’s study is also included in the first category, since his study covered metaphors about teachers, students and classrooms. Ellis (2001) compared the metaphors of researchers to those of students. He found that researchers view the L2 learner as something unemotional and mechanical, such as MACHINE or CONTAINER while metaphors of L2 students revealed quite a lot of feelings (e.g. SUFFERER, STRUGGLER and WORKER). The common metaphors for students and researchers were PROBLEM-SOLVER and STRUGGLER. Turunen (2003) investigated how Finnish students of English as L2 describe themselves as learners in autobiographies and found the most frequent metaphors to be PERFECTIONIST, NATURAL TALENT and LOVER. Turunen also studied metaphors about teachers which were summarized in section 4.1.

Comparing to the research on teacher metaphors the scope of these studies is rather limited. In addition to the researchers in Ellis' study, only students have been used as subjects and they have all been either adult learners or learners at university level. Thus, there still remains the question, if students can benefit from recognising their unconscious metaphors the way teachers are claimed to.

4.3 Metaphors about teaching and learning

The third category of metaphors involves teaching and learning. I have chosen four recent studies to review: Thornbury (1991), Liskin-Gasparro (1998), Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Kramsch (2003). As the results on table 3 indicate, there are similarities between metaphors of different categories. For example, learning has been viewed as PUZZLE SOLVING, A MECHANICAL PROCESS and A JOURNEY, while learners have been seen as PROBLEM SOLVERS, MACHINES and TRAVELLERS. Thus, the same conventional metaphors are reflected in several studies despite the research question.

Table 3. Studies on teaching and learning metaphors.

Study	Subjects	Method	Results
Thornbury 1991	EFL teachers	Discussions	Learning was most often described as a JOURNEY, as MECHANICAL or COMPUTATIONAL PROCESS and as PUZZLE SOLVING.
Liskin-Gasparro 1998	College students	Discussions, journals	Metaphors reflected uncertainty and lack of confidence in language use. Love-hate relationship with formal instruction and fluency equated with automaticity.
Cortazzi & Jin 1999	Teachers, students from universities in UK and several other cultures	Interview, completion task	Learning was viewed as A CLICK, LIGHT or MOVEMENT. Common metaphors of teaching were teaching as A JOURNEY, FOOD/DRINK/COOKING and PLANT GROWTH/CULTIVATION. Dominant cross-cultural metaphors of a good teacher were FRIEND or PARENT
Kramsch 2003	Undergraduate language students	Completion task, essays	Language learning was described as ENGAGING AN ARTISTIC PROCESS, LEARNING A PHYSICAL SKILL, GETTING TO KNOW ANOTHER CULTURE or LEARNING A COGNITIVE SKILL.

Thornbury, Liskin-Gasparro and Kramsch limited their studies on language learning and teaching while Cortazzi and Jin investigated these in general. Thornbury and Liskin-Gasparro studied metaphors in informal discussions with the subjects. Thornbury (1991) collected comments of a group of EFL teachers viewing a video of their first Japanese lesson. The most common comments on learning reflected the metaphor of JOURNEY, MECHANICAL PROCESS and PUZZLE SOLVING. Thornbury (1991:196) suggests that some of these comments perhaps reveal more of the subjects' personal teaching styles than of their learning styles. Liskin-Gasparro (1998) explored the conceptions of seven subjects from both informal oral data and formal written reports. The subjects were attending a Spanish immersion program in the U.S. Fluency was viewed for instance as GEESE IN FLIGHT or CAR GLIDING ON ICE. Metaphors reflecting smoothness were expressed when things went well, whereas in difficult situations the metaphors indicated struggle. The data showed that although the subjects were advanced learners, they felt insecure as language users and had ambiguous opinions of formal instruction in class.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Kramsch (2003) used a completion task for data collection. However, they differ from the present study because they were both conducted on a much larger scale. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) had 868 subjects. The total group consisted of undergraduate and postgraduate students from the UK and a cross-cultural group of university students. Thus, this study also compared different cultural views on learning and teaching. In addition to the completion task, interviews were used to reveal metaphors. The dominant learning metaphors were learning as CLICK (something that just suddenly happens), LIGHT and MOVEMENT. The cross-cultural group generated a variety of metaphors. However, consistencies were found. Some common elements occurred in several metaphors and the metaphors of teacher as FRIEND or PARENT were found in most ethnic groups. Kramsch (2003) collected a total of 1496 metaphors from undergraduate students of 14 different languages. The most frequent metaphors were *learning is like* ENGAGING IN AN ARTISTIC PROCESS, LEARNING A PHYSICAL SKILL or GETTING TO KNOW ANOTHER CULTURE. In addition, the students were asked to write essays about what it meant to be multicultural. Kramsch combined these

with autobiographies written by the students earlier and personal interviews to describe the subjects' metaphorical processing.

Some of the studies reviewed above were on quite a large scale, utilizing multiple methods and hundreds, some even thousands, of metaphors produced by the subjects, while in others the number of metaphors was less than 30. On the other hand, restricting the study to a narrow scope allows the researcher to take a deeper look into the metaphors of a few individuals and therefore gain different, but equally valuable information on beliefs than the large scale studies produce. The selection of subjects in all the previous studies is interesting. In addition to researchers and teachers, the youngest subjects have been high school students. The reason for leaving younger students out of scope has often been left unexplained. Perhaps metaphor analysis is either considered unsuitable for studying young learners or a sufficient way of revealing their metaphors has not yet been discovered. In any case, it can be assumed that the 16 to 20 years old students of the present study are probably among the youngest ever investigated and there is a huge group of students whose conceptions have not been accounted for.

5 PRESENT STUDY

So far, we have looked into previous research on beliefs about SLA. In addition, we have examined theories of metaphor and how metaphor serves as a tool that helps reveal students' conceptions of learning. Next, I will outline the present study, by first explaining my research questions, then introducing the data collection method and finally offering reasons for my choice of subjects and data analysis method.

5.1 Research questions

Previous studies have investigated teachers' and learners' metaphors about teachers, teaching, learners and learning. Learners have been asked how they see themselves as learners (Ellis 2001, Turunen 2003) and how they comprehend learning (Liskin-Gasparro 1998, Cortazzi and Jin 1999, Kramsch 2003), but learners' beliefs about themselves as users of language have received less attention. Moreover, the studies conducted before have concentrated on learner beliefs about second or foreign language learning and teaching: they have not been examined in comparison to other languages or mother tongue. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out how Finnish students see themselves as users of Finnish, English and Swedish. In other words, my goal is to compare the differences in beliefs about mother tongue, second language and foreign language. My research questions are:

- 1) What kind of metaphors do Finnish upper secondary general school students use of themselves as users of Finnish, English and Swedish?
- 2) Are there any significant differences between boys and girls?

The subjects of this study are Finnish upper secondary general school ('lukio') students. They produced metaphors of all the three languages in a completion task and the data is analysed with metaphor analysis.

5.2 Designing the completion task

As discussed in section 2.2, earlier research approaches to the study of beliefs have been heavily criticised. Especially the research methods, such as questionnaires have been the object of this criticism, because they do not give subjects freedom to express their personal beliefs freely and aim to make generalisations instead of trying to understand the beliefs (Barcelos 2003a:15). Therefore, I wanted to use a method where subjects would not have to choose their beliefs out of a few alternatives, but could use their own words to describe them in a personal way. Researchers within the contextual approach, which represents my perspective and was introduced by Barcelos (2003a:19-29), have used varying methods such as observation, interviews, diaries, case studies and metaphor analysis. To me, metaphor analysis is the most intriguing of these since it has been argued that our conceptual system is structured metaphorically and therefore metaphors enable us to verbalise our unconscious thoughts (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), such as beliefs that might be difficult to express in literal form. Quoting Ellis (2001:67): "... it [metaphor analysis] can assist in the process of demythologising SLA by revealing what has become hidden as metaphors are literalised". The character of metaphors was discussed in more detail in chapter 3. The data for the present study was collected by asking the participants to complete six sentences with metaphors.

Instead of a completion task, metaphors could have been collected from interviews or written narratives. The advantage of these methods is that they enable subjects to explain their views freely. We usually use metaphors frequently in our speech and writing (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980) without even realising it ourselves and this makes the data naturalistic. However, designing a writing task or discussion topic that would assure specific answers to my research questions might have been problematic. Moreover, it is difficult to make sure that the participants actually produce enough metaphors for research, and the outcome could have been a great amount of irrelevant data. In addition, many metaphors we use in naturalistic language are not easily detectable. According to Ellis (2001:84), a key problem in metaphor analysis is that one cannot assure that the researcher is able to identify metaphorical expressions in a text accurately. Thus, there are several benefits to a

completion task as a method. First, a completion task produces similes that are all in a similar form and there is no difficulty in recognising which phrases are metaphoric, as is the case with narratives and interviews. Second, it assures a suitable quantity of metaphors and third, although the task is planned by the researcher to serve the purpose of a study, the participants do have a possibility to produce sentences in their own words and from their own perspectives.

5.3 Subjects

The subjects consisted of 71 Finnish upper secondary general school students, their age ranging from 16 to 20. The majority of the students were 16, 17 or 18 years old. Of the group 40 were male and 31 female. They had been studying English for at least seven and a half years and Swedish for at least three and a half. All of them speak Finnish as their mother tongue. They currently live in central Finland where it is probable that they rarely communicate with the Swedish speaking population.

The reason for choosing this group of subjects is that the concept of metaphor might be problematic for younger students and therefore constructing one's ideas in that form could cause difficulties. Although metaphors are present even in little children's speech, it does require some cognitive skills to be able to describe exactly what one means in a form that cannot be interpreted literally. In addition, the participants need to have a sufficient amount of studies completed in each of the languages to be able to construct an image of themselves as users of the languages. On the other hand, as a future school teacher, I was personally not as interested in studying the beliefs of adult learners.

5.4 Data collection

The completion task (see appendix A) consists of six open-ended sentences which the students completed with metaphors that described them as speakers and writers of Finnish as their mother tongue, Swedish as their official second language and English as their foreign language. The sentences were in the following form, "As a

speaker of English I am (like)...”, “As a writer of Finnish I am (like)...” or “As a writer of Swedish I am (like)...” A similar task has been used by Marchant (1992), de Guerrero and Villamil (1999), Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Kramsch (2003). Although in each of these studies the sentences were formed in a slightly different way, depending on the research questions.

The sentences were placed on the answer sheet in a random order to avoid dullness and keep the task motivating. The metaphors can be divided into two: learners as speakers of the given language and learners as writers of that language. I chose these two types, because writing and speaking are quite different types of skills and therefore learners might see themselves differently as speakers and writers. For example, some find it difficult to have a fluent conversation in a foreign language even though they can write the language quite accurately. Thus, they might see themselves as quite confident writers, but not as skilled speakers of that language. Learners as listeners or readers were left out because I wanted to concentrate on the processes where the learners’ are active and get to express themselves. I also assume that learners have a clearer view of themselves as speakers or writers than as listeners or readers.

The task was handed out in January 2005 to the students of a small upper secondary general school in central Finland. The subjects were instructed to write one or several metaphors to complete each sentence and they were given a sufficient amount of time to work on the task. The subjects were also given a chance to explain their metaphors if they wanted to. In addition, as background information, their age, sex and recent grades in Finnish, English and Swedish were inquired (see appendix A).

5.5 Data analysis

Not all subjects used metaphors or similes in their answers to the completion task and these answers were not included in the data of the study. In several cases one or more sentences were left incomplete. Others wrote several metaphors to some of the

sentences and therefore the number of metaphors does not match the number of subjects. The total number of metaphors produced was 342.

The metaphors were categorised according to my own interpretation based on their content, similarities with other metaphors and possible explanations by the subjects. In formulating the categories I applied ideas from categories in other studies such as Ellis (2001), Kramsch (2003) and Turunen (2003). Steps in analysis outlined by Koch and Deetz (1981 as cited by Ellis 2001:70) were also partly used. As this methodology includes identifying metaphors from corpora of texts, some of the steps were not applicable to my analysis. Therefore the analysis proceeded in the following steps:

- 1) List the metaphors produced by subjects.
- 2) Decide which metaphors are worth analysing in accordance with the research purpose.
- 3) Reduce the metaphorical expressions to the metaphors they display by identifying the source and target domains.
- 4) Sort these metaphors into coherent groups thereby establishing the “main metaphors”.
- 5) Consider possible entailments of the main metaphors.

A minimum of five tokens was considered necessary to form a category. After the main metaphors had been established, the metaphors were once again grouped according to the three languages and the subjects' sex. Next these groups were compared and if some differences occurred, the possible meanings of these differences were considered. The process of categorizing expressions was not always easy. Some metaphors required more consideration than others. The constructs were sometimes complex and could fit more than one category. In these cases, a predominant feature from the expression was distinguished to determine the most representative category. For example, one problematic metaphor was *fish on dry land*, because it could be linked to both SUFFERER and OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT. This metaphor occurred in the data numerous times and was finally grouped in the category OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT. The explanation for this is that

most of the subjects used this metaphor clearly to express the opposite to the metaphor *fish in water*. This metaphor is naturally linked to the category IN ONE'S ELEMENT and the opposite of this category is more naturally OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT than SUFFERER. Thus, although it is clear that a fish suffers a great deal when on dry land, the subjects probably meant to emphasize other aspects of the metaphor. Similarly, *fish without water* was categorized in INCOMPLETE. Although the meaning of the metaphor is almost identical to *fish on dry land*, the structure stresses the idea of missing something essential, which was the main criterion for the first category. As the minimum amount of metaphors to form a category was five, some metaphors were left out of the categories. The words used in these metaphors or the possible implications of them could not be linked to the minimum of four other expressions in the data. As the categorizing process was occasionally quite complex, statistical procedures were not used. The comparison of categories was carried out by simply counting out the number of metaphors and then providing percentages for each category.

6 RESULTS

A total of fifteen categories were identified based on similarities in and entailments of the metaphors collected from upper secondary general school students. I will first give a qualitative account of the categories, illustrating each with relevant examples (see appendix B for translations). After this I will attempt to give answers to my research questions; first by looking at how the subjects see themselves as users of Finnish, Swedish and English and then by comparing the metaphors used by boys and girls.

6.1 Categories of language users

The categories, listed from the most frequent to the least frequent, are:

LANGUAGE USER AS

1. OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT,
2. INCOMPLETE,
3. IN ONE'S ELEMENT,
4. SUFFERER,
5. ANIMAL,
6. STRANGER,
7. CHILD,
8. ORDINARY,
9. PUBLIC FIGURE,
10. PERFECT,
11. BLABBER MOUTH,
12. LOST,
13. SLOW MOVER,
14. NATURAL PHENOMENON and
15. DRUNK

1. LANGUAGE USER AS OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT. This category contains metaphors that reflect feelings of being somewhere one does not belong to or doing something one is not suited to do. The most typical of these metaphors was *kala kuivalla maalla* ('a fish on dry land'). Consider the following examples:

- (1) Kirjoittajana olen kuin jääkarhu Saharassa (M/S)¹
- (2) Puhujana olen kuin hai kasvissyöjänä (F/F)

¹ The examples are marked either as (F) for female or (M) for male. The following letter marks the language: (F) for Finnish, (S) for Swedish and (E) for English.

(3) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *lumiukko saunassa* (F/E)

In addition, this category includes metaphors where the subject compared him- or herself to a person using another foreign language. The idea is that when using a foreign language, a person is not in one's own element, which one would be, if one were using a native language:

(4) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *ruotsalainen kirjoittamassa suomea* (M/S)

(5) Puhujana olen kuin *virolainen puhumassa suomea* (F/S)

2. LANGUAGE USER AS INCOMPLETE. This category includes metaphors describing the language user as missing something, such as a characteristic, tool or mean essential for successful functioning. Almost all of these metaphors shared the same structure: X without Y, as in (6), (7) and (8):

(6) Puhujana olen kuin *hai ilman hampaita* (M/E)

(7) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *leipä ilman voita* (M/F)

(8) Puhujana olen kuin *kiikarit ilman linssejä* (M/E)

Other structures occurred also:

(9) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *orava oksattomassa puussa* (M/E)

Some of the metaphors reflected complete inability to function because of the incompleteness. A few implied physical deficiencies, which gives the impression that success in language use is out of the students' hands and due to the deficiency they feel like they cannot but fail. Consider examples (10), (11) and (12):

(10) Puhujana olen kuin *sokea tarkka-ampuja* (M/S)

(11) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *auto ilman moottoria* (M/S)

(12) Puhujana olen kuin *mykkä stand-up koomikko* (M/S)

Others indicated only a slight inconvenience in language use. That is, the subjects believe they have problems in language use, but are not totally incapable:

(13) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *koira ilman luuta* (M/S)

(14) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *jauhelihakastike ilman mausteita* (F/E)

A possible interpretation of these metaphors is that these language users feel that they have the potential of being good writers or speakers, but they lack the means to achieve it. One of the metaphors conveyed this idea quite clearly:

(15) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *rakennusmies, jolla on taitoa, mutta ei välineitä* (M/E)

3. LANGUAGE USER AS IN ONE'S ELEMENT. This category is in sharp contrast with the previous one. The metaphors suggest that the subject is in a comfortable place when using a language. In other words, being somewhere one feels like one belongs to or doing something one is made for. The possible suggestion of these metaphors is that these subjects feel that they are doing something they are good at, which means that they are quite confident as language users and trust their skills to be good. The most frequent metaphor in this group was *kala vedessä* ('fish in water'). Other expressions included animals in their natural environment, too:

(16) Puhujana olen kuin *norppa Saimaassa* (M/E)

(17) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *mato maan mullassa* (M/E)

(18) Puhujana olen kuin *karhu metsässä* (M/F)

In addition, other constructions were used:

(19) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *bakteeri optimilämpötilassa* (F/F)

(20) Puhujana olen *elementissäni, kuin siihen olisin tehtykin* (F/F)

Comparisons with foreign language users were discussed in the first category, LANGUAGE USER AS OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT. A comparable metaphor would be one where the subject describes oneself as a writer or speaker of a native language. However, metaphors of this type were not found in the data. Metaphors such as *suomen kielen puhujana olen tavallinen suomalainen* ('as a speaker of Finnish I am an ordinary Finn') were found, but they were not placed in this category, since they did not contain any indication of being comfortable or, in other words, "in the perfect place". The category that these metaphors were included instead was LANGUAGE USER AS ORDINARY, which is discussed later in this section.

4. LANGUAGE USER AS SUFFERER. As the name suggests, this category represents a negative view on language use. The metaphors describe someone or something in a painful, dangerous or difficult situation. In other words, the subjects feel that they have to struggle or suffer when using a particular language.

(21) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *kala verkossa* (M/F)

(22) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *lintu öljyssä* (F/S)

(23) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *talonmies jäisellä katolla* (M/S)

There were some overlapping in the metaphors in this group and the categories described above. The distinction that was made between the metaphor OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT and SUFFERER was that the SUFFERER metaphor includes a notion of pain and danger, while OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT suggests more the feeling of being in an unsuitable environment. Therefore, although *jääkarhu Saharassa* ('a polar bear in Sahara') might indicate some suffering, it was categorized under OUT OF ONE'S OWN ELEMENT.

5. LANGUAGE USER AS ANIMAL. This category contains a varied group of animal metaphors that could not be categorized under any other main metaphor. There are however a few themes that could be recognized. The first one was "the excited animal". This means a creature that greatly enjoys what it is doing, as examples (24) and (25) illustrate:

(24) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *nälkäinen kärppä, joka innostuu hyvästä tekstistä ja haluaa lisää.* (M/F)

(25) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *yli-innostunut jänis keväällä tai varsa kesälaitumella, välillä ampuu yli.* (F/E)

Another theme was being prey and surviving under a threat, as in (26) and (27):

(26) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *pakon alla pakoon loikkiva sammakko.* (M/S)

(27) Puhujana olen kuin *pinteestä selvinnyt jänis* (F/E)

In some metaphors the subject compared his or her characteristics to those associated with a particular animal, as in examples (28), (29) and (30):

(28) Kirjoittajana olen *taitava ja monipuolinen kuin muurahainen pesänrakennuspuuhissa.* (F/F)

(29) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *jääräpäinen aasi, jota piiskataan menemään eteenpäin.* (F/S)

(30) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *ekstraväsynyt laiskainen.* (F/S)

Some of these expressions showed highly detailed and clear descriptions of the subjects' skills and characteristics. It could therefore be said that the students who wrote these metaphors had quite clear knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses as language users.

6. LANGUAGE USER AS STRANGER. Some of the metaphors involved being in a strange place among people whom one does not belong or has nothing in common with. These reflected the main metaphor of STRANGER. There were at least three themes that could be identified in the metaphors. The first was being among the enemy:

- (31) Puhujana olen kuin *kommunisti demokraattisessa puolueessa* (M/R)
- (32) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *Juutalainen natsi* (M/E)

The second theme was being among others who are considered better than oneself:

- (33) Puhujana olen kuin *Saab Ferrareiden rinnalla* (M/E)
- (34) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *tavallinen ihminen kuninkaallisten joukossa* (M/S)

The opposite was also suggested:

- (35) Puhujana olen kuin *Shakespeare Korkeasaaren asujaimiston joukossa* (M/S)

The third theme was being a foreigner in a strange country:

- (36) Puhujana olen kuin *suomalainen Indokiinassa* (F/S)
- (37) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *pakolainen uudessa maassa* (F/S)

The idea that comes through these expressions is that the student's performance as a speaker or writer is hindered by others around. The reason may be that the subject either feels or actually is utterly unlike or somehow disconnected from the majority.

7. LANGUAGE USER AS CHILD. Returning to a childhood state was another re-occurring theme in the data. These metaphors reflected two quite different beliefs. Some of them described childish enthusiasm. These students enjoy their skills and see speaking and writing as something new and exciting, as in (38), (39) and (40):

- (38) Puhujana olen kuin *lapsi karkkikaupassa* (M/E)
- (39) Puhujana olen *innostuneena kuin pieni lapsi uusien lelujen kimpussa* (F/E)
- (40) Puhujana olen kuin *innostunut pieni, joka tykkää osaamisesta* (M/E)

Others described the subject as someone on the skill level of a child:

- (41) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *vauva, joka ei osaa pitää kynää kädessä* (F/S)
- (42) Puhujana olen kuin *yksivuotias, joka ei ymmärrä* (M/S)

(43) Puhujana olen kuin *6-vuotias, paitsi että teen enemmän virheitä*
(F/E)

Here it is implied that the subjects find themselves often confused or making a lot of mistakes as a small child does when learning something new.

8. LANGUAGE USER AS ORDINARY. Some of the language users described themselves as being normal, average or just one among others alike. They could not or did not want to tell themselves apart from other language users and used metaphors such as:

(44) Puhujana olen kuin *tavallinen suomalainen nuori* (F/F)

(45) Puhujana olen kuin *keskiverto tallaaja* (M/E)

(46) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *silli muun parven joukossa* (M/F)

(47) Puhujana olen kuin *risu risuaidassa* (M/E)

One reason for describing oneself as normal or similar to others might be that the student does not have a clear view of his or her skills or weaknesses. Another could be that the subjects are revealing how they feel in a classroom. It is easy to see oneself just as part of the mass, especially if the classroom is very crowded and the teacher has no time to treat each student as an individual.

9. LANGUAGE USER AS PUBLIC FIGURE. This category consists of interesting types of metaphors. The subjects compared their own characteristics as language speakers and writers to other people they know, in other words, people that are well-known to either most Finns or at least most young people in central Finland:

(48) Puhujana olen kuin *Mika Häkkinen* (M/E)

(49) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *Lisa Marklund* (M/S)

(50) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *Mikael Agricola* (F/F)

The subjects who used these metaphors are almost impossible to characterize in any way, since one cannot be sure of the subject's opinion of the particular public figure or for what reason they compare themselves to these people. The underlying idea might be that "I am as talented a writer as person x" or that "I am as untalented in pronunciation as person X" or one might only be emphasizing one characteristic that one shares with person X. Some of the subjects gave explanations to what they wanted to tell with the metaphors. Consider example 51:

(51) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *Marko Ahonen, osaan kirjoittaa vain arvosteluja elokuvista.* (M/F)

10. LANGUAGE USER AS PERFECT. There were a few subjects who expressed total satisfaction with their skills as writers or speakers of a language. They produced metaphors where they described themselves as a master, talent or simply perfect:

(52) Puhujana olen kuin *lahjakkuus* (F/F)

(53) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *tikka keskellä taulua* (M/E)

(54) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *nero sulkakynän kanssa* (F/E)

The metaphors indicate confidence and contentment. Accordingly, the students either believe their skills to be very high or they feel that their current skill level is good enough and there is no reason for further improvement.

11. LANGUAGE USER AS BLABBER MOUTH. This category includes only metaphors about speaking skills and for some reason all of them were written by girls. They described themselves as someone or something that is never quiet and enjoys talking:

(55) Puhujana olen kuin *rikkinäinen cd-soitin, joka on jäänyt junnaamaan, koska juttua todellakin riittää* (F/F)

(56) Puhujana olen kuin *papupata*. Papatan loputtomasti (F/F)

(57) Puhujana olen kuin *papukaija* (F/F)

These types of metaphors could imply that the subjects see themselves as fluent and talented speakers. On the other hand, they might simply possess more courage to talk than others, which can also be considered a valuable language skill.

12. LANGUAGE USER AS LOST. There were instances in the data where the metaphors reflected a feeling of being lost, trying to find a way to get somewhere or looking desperately for something. Consider (58) and (59):

(58) Puhujana olen kuin *eksynyt turisti* (F/E)

(59) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *pimeydessä oleva vanhus, joka etsii valonkatkaisijaa* (M/S)

The feeling that is implied in the metaphors is insecurity. They reflect an image where the student is lost alone in the middle of all the unknown structures and rules of a language and is hopelessly trying to find a way back on track.

13. LANGUAGE USER AS SLOW MOVER. The metaphors in this category represented the ideas of being slow, stiff or having trouble getting started, as in examples (60) and (61):

(60) Puhujana olen *kuin käynnistysvaikeuksista kärsivä etana* (F/S)

(61) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *tervasuksinen veteraaniihtäjä* (M/S)

The subjects perhaps feel that they are not as fluent as others or that they do not proceed by the standards of their own or those of others. The “ideal pace” might be set by the teacher, other students or by the subjects themselves.

14. LANGUAGE USER AS NATURAL PHENOMENON. In this category the metaphors included terms related to weather or nature. This is one of the smallest groups and the metaphors had to do, for example, with something flowing effortlessly, as in (62) and (63):

(62) Puhujana olen kuin *soljuva joki* (M/E)

(63) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *vesiputous* (F/F)

Metaphor (64) referred to a sudden event:

(64) Puhujana olen kuin *salama kirkkaalta taivaalta* (M/F)

The rest of the metaphors reflected instability:

(65) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *pyörremyrsky* (F/S)

(66) Kirjoittajana olen kuin *epävaka sää* (F/S)

15. LANGUAGE USER AS DRUNK. This category includes a small and peculiar group of metaphors describing the language user as someone under the influence of alcohol. See examples (67) and (68):

(67) Puhujana olen sekava kuin *humalainen* (M/E)

(68) Puhujana olen kuin *perussuomalainen juoppo* (F/S)

These metaphors may refer to problems in pronunciation when written about speakers. The idea is to describe one’s talk as unclear or blurred. Similarly, when linked to writing, this metaphor could indicate a tendency to unclearness, obscurity or muddled texts.

6.2 Metaphors by language

The first research question for this study was what kind of metaphors do Finnish upper secondary general school students use of themselves as users of Finnish, English and Swedish? In this section, the students' responses regarding this question will be reported one language at a time.

6.2.1 Metaphors about users of Finnish

I will begin by reporting how the subjects responded to the two triggers about their mother tongue: “as a speaker of Finnish I am (like)...” and “as a writer of Finnish I am (like)...” The categories in table four are listed from the most frequent to the least frequent by the total number of speaker and writer metaphors combined.

Table 4. Main metaphors about users of Finnish

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. In one's element	14	28.0	10	20.8	24	24.5
2. Incomplete	3	6.0	9	18.8	12	12.2
3. Animal	6	12.0	5	10.4	11	11.2
4. Out of one's element	4	8.0	3	6.3	7	7.1
5. Sufferer	2	4.0	5	10.4	7	7.1
6. Ordinary	3	6.0	4	8.3	7	7.1
7. Perfect	5	10.0	2	4.2	7	7.1
8. Public figure	3	6.0	3	6.3	6	6.1
9. Blabber mouth	6	12.0	0	0	6	6.1
10. Stranger	2	4.0	3	6.3	5	5.1
11. Natural phenomenon	1	2.0	1	2.1	2	2.0
12. Child	0	0	1	2.1	1	1.0
13. Slow mover	0	0	1	2.1	1	1.0
14. Lost	1	2.0	0	0	1	1.0
15. Drunk	0	0	1	2.1	1	1.0
Total	50	100	48	100	98	100

The data contained 98 metaphors about the learner as a writer or speaker of Finnish (see table 4). This was the largest number any of the three language groups had. The range of metaphors was also wide: all 15 main metaphors used. Clearly, the most frequent metaphor was IN ONE'S ELEMENT, with 24 instances in total. A few more of these were about the subject as a speaker than as a writer of Finnish. This metaphor indicates that the majority of the target group students felt confident and natural when using their mother tongue, especially when speaking it.

The contrast between speaking and writing can be seen in the second most frequent metaphor, which was INCOMPLETE. This metaphor occurred in the data 12 times. Nine of these had to do with writing Finnish and only three with speaking it. Thus, although as speakers the subjects felt like they were in their own element, as writers they could see flaws in their performance.

The third largest metaphor group, ANIMAL, was more difficult to characterize for the scattered expressions it contained. This metaphor had 11 instances in the data with little difference between speakers (6) and writers (5). Many of these animal metaphors belonged to the theme "exited animal", described in section 6.1. The rest compared the subject to characteristics of a particular animal. Most of these were positive, rather than negative, comparisons.

The next four metaphors each received seven tokens. These were OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT, SUFFERER, ORDINARY and PERFECT. In OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT and ORDINARY the numbers of writer and speaker metaphors were quite equal, with only the difference of one metaphor between them. However, there was a clear difference of writer and speaker metaphors in the other two categories, SUFFERER and PERFECT. Again, the subjects saw themselves more positively as speakers of Finnish than as writes of Finnish. There were five instances of the learner as a writer within the metaphor SUFFERER and only two as a speaker. With the metaphor PERFECT, the numbers were reverse: two as a writer and five as a speaker.

Following these were the metaphors PUBLIC FIGURE and BLABBER MOUTH with six tokens each. The numbers of speaker and writer metaphors were equal in

PUBLIC FIGURE, while in BLABBER MOUTH all of the expressions naturally had to do with speaking. The PUBLIC FIGURE metaphors were mostly comparisons to well-known and appreciated Finnish figures such as Runeberg, Agricola or our president Tarja Halonen.

The STRANGER category includes five metaphors about users of Finnish, with only one instance more about writers than speakers. These metaphors described mostly the feeling of being among others that are better than oneself. It is natural to feel that when using the mother tongue one should be skilful. However, when in school, others are considered to be more successful at it; possibly creating a feeling of inferiority.

The least frequent metaphors were NATURAL PHENOMENON with two instances and CHILD, SLOW MOVER, LOST and DRUNK each with one instance. Some quite distinct differences could be seen in the frequency of certain main metaphors in comparison with the next group of metaphors: those about learner as user of Swedish.

6.2.2 Metaphors about users of Swedish

This section describes how the subjects saw themselves as speakers and writers of Swedish, the second official language in Finland. Of the total number of fifteen main metaphors, thirteen were used about the use of this language.

This group contained fewer metaphors than the previous one. The total number was 94 of which 44 were metaphors about speakers and 50 about writers (see table 5). Again, there was one metaphor that emerged clearly as the most frequent. This time it was the metaphor OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT. All in all, there were 25 tokens. Evidently, the subjects felt more out of place when writing this language than when speaking it, since the learner as a writer was used 15 times while the learner as a speaker was found ten times in the data.

Table 5. Main metaphors about users of Swedish

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Out of one's element	10	22.7	15	30.0	25	26.6
2. Incomplete	7	15.9	10	20.0	17	18.1
3. Sufferer	8	18.2	6	12.0	14	14.9
4. Stranger	7	16.9	3	6.0	10	10.6
5. Animal	2	4.5	6	12.0	8	8.5
6. Lost	1	2.3	3	6.0	4	4.3
7. Slow mover	3	6.8	1	2.0	4	4.3
8. Child	2	4.5	1	2.0	3	3.2
9. Drunk	2	4.5	1	2.0	3	3.2
10. Natural phenomenon	0	0	2	4.0	2	2.1
11. In one's element	1	2.3	1	2.0	2	2.1
12. Public figure	0	0	1	2.0	1	1.1
13. Ordinary	1	2.3	0	0	1	1.1
14. Blabber mouth	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Perfect	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	44	100	50	100	94	100

The same tendency can be seen in the next category, that is, INCOMPLETE. There were 17 instances of this type of expression and ten of these had to do with writing the language. The third metaphor used about Swedish was SUFFERER, which occurred 14 times. The subjects did not see themselves much differently as speakers or writers in this case: there were only two more instances of speakers as SUFFERERS than of writers. In the next category, however, there was a clear distinction.

The STRANGER metaphor emerged in the data ten times of which seven had to do with speaking the language. Several of these metaphors described the language user as a foreigner. This is interesting, since the official status of Swedish is supposed to be a second language, not a foreign one. Evidently, the learners feel differently.

The fifth metaphor was ANIMAL with eight instances. The majority (6) of these were about the subject as a writer of the language. Only one of the ANIMAL metaphors represented the theme “excited animal”. The majority of the comparisons were somewhat negative: the subjects described themselves as *jääräpäinen aasi* (F/S) (‘a stubborn donkey’) or *evoluutiossa jälkeenjäänyt apina* (M/S) (‘an ape that has not been able to keep up with evolution’), for example.

The next two metaphors both occurred four times, but had the opposite distributions between speakers and writers. Three of the expressions included in the category LOST were about the language user as a writer, while the same number of the SLOW MOVER metaphors was about speakers.

The metaphors of CHILD and DRUNK both had three tokens with one more about speakers than writers. All of the metaphors describing the user of Swedish as a CHILD referred to that person being as disabled as a child using the language, rather than having “childish enthusiasm”, which was the other theme occurring in this category.

The last four metaphors were NATURAL PHENOMENON, IN ONE’S ELEMENT, PUBLIC FIGURE and ORDINARY: the first two with two tokens and the last two with one. Finally, there were two metaphors that did not appear in the data at all: BLABBER MOUTH and PERFECT. All in all, it seems that many of the subjects had a fairly negative image of themselves as users of Swedish. At least there was a distinction in comparison to the image they had of themselves as users of Finnish.

6.2.3 Metaphors about users of English

Finally, we will look into the metaphors written about using English, which is the subjects’ first foreign language. In this group, all fifteen main metaphors could be found.

The total number (89) of metaphors about users of English was slightly smaller than that of the other two language groups and the total amounts of speaker and writer

metaphors were quite uneven. There were 52 metaphors about speaking English and only 37 about writing it (see table 6).

The most frequent metaphor was IN ONE’S ELEMENT with twelve instances. Five of these were about writers and seven about speakers. This metaphor indicates that the subjects felt comfortable when using English and the same metaphor was on the top of the list when they wrote of themselves as users of Finnish.

Table 6. Main metaphors about users of English

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. In one’s element	7	13.5	5	13.5	12	13.5
2. Incomplete	7	13.5	5	13.5	12	13.5
3. Child	8	15.4	4	10.8	12	13.5
4. Out of one’s element	4	7.7	6	16.2	10	11.2
5. Sufferer	6	11.5	4	10.8	10	11.2
6. Animal	3	5.8	4	10.8	7	7.9
7. Ordinary	4	7.7	2	5.4	6	6.7
8. Public figure	5	9.6	1	2.7	6	6.7
9. Stranger	2	3.8	3	8.1	5	5.6
10. Perfect	1	1.9	2	5.4	3	3.4
11. Lost	2	3.8	0	0	2	2.2
12. Blabber mouth	1	1.9	0	0	1	1.1
13. Slow mover	0	0	1	2.7	1	1.1
14. Natural phenomenon	1	1.9	0	0	1	1.1
15. Drunk	1	1.9	0	0	1	1.1
Total	52	100	37	100	89	100

The difference to the next two metaphors is not significant as INCOMPLETE and CHILD both occurred twelve times. There were two metaphors more about the user being incomplete when speaking the language than when writing it. Within the CHILD metaphor most of the expressions were about speaking (8). Six of the metaphors implied the theme “childish enthusiasm” but as many had to do with weak language skills.

The next metaphors were OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT and SUFFERER, which were both represented in the data ten times. A small majority of the OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT metaphors were about the language user as a writer while in the SUFFERER metaphors the writer expressions were a minority.

The ANIMAL metaphor could be found seven times, with no major difference between speaker and writer descriptions. One of these metaphors expressed enthusiasm and the rest were comparisons reflecting both negative and positive feelings toward using the language.

ORDINARY and PUBLIC FIGURE were both used six times. Four of the ORDINARY metaphors were about speakers and two about writers. The difference was more distinctive in PUBLIC FIGURE: five expressions were about speaking and only one about writing. The subjects compared themselves, for example, to Sean Connor and Mozart. When describing themselves as speakers they mentioned Tommi Mäkinen and Mika Häkkinen, whose English pronunciation has been publicly criticized as sounding too "Finnish".

The STRANGER metaphor was used five times. Three of these were about writing and two about speaking the language. The themes were quite varied in this group. The language user was described as a foreigner, among enemies and as being inferior in comparison to others.

PERFECT could be found three times and two of these are writer metaphors. The last five metaphors were LOST with two tokens and BLABBER MOUTH, SLOW MOVER, NATURAL PHENOMENON and DRUNK each with one token. All of these, except the slow move metaphor described the language user as a speaker.

6.2.4 A comparison of metaphors about Finnish, English and Swedish

The largest number of metaphors was used within the group in which the subjects describe themselves as users of Finnish. The range of categories was also wide. Swedish language was represented by thirteen categories and the second largest

number of individual metaphors. English users were described with the smallest number of metaphors, but similarly to Finnish, all fifteen categories were used.

Perhaps the most distinct difference between metaphors about the three target languages could be seen in the use of the three largest categories: OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT, INCOMPLETE and IN ONE'S ELEMENT. When the subjects use the first of these three, it indicates that they do not feel natural or comfortable when using the particular language. IN ONE'S ELEMENT suggests the complete opposite of this and INCOMPLETE means that they might feel successful in some areas of language use, but still lack something essential.

When describing themselves as users of Finnish, the majority of the subjects' sentences reflected the idea of being IN ONE'S ELEMENT. The percentage out of all metaphors used was 24.5. When describing them as users of English 13.5 % fell into this category and when writing about Swedish the number was only 2.1 %. The order changes when we look at how the subjects used the metaphors INCOMPLETE and OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT. The proportion of INCOMPLETE was 18.1% when used about Swedish, 13.5% when used about English and 12.2% about Finnish. Similarly, OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT was used most about users of Swedish. It was by far the most popular category with 26.6% out of all metaphors. When referring to users of English this category covered 11.2% whereas the proportion of Finnish users described this way was only 7.1%. This suggests that the subjects have a tendency to see themselves much more positively when using Finnish than when using Swedish. English is left in the middle and not as strong tendencies can be detected in it.

To make the point even clearer we can look at two other categories, which are quite easy to analyse as either positive or negative images. SUFFERER has clearly negative implications and it was found most frequently in metaphors about users of Swedish (14.9%). Within expressions about users of English it covered 11.2% and in metaphors about Finnish 7.1%. PERFECT, in contrast, indicates positive images and it was used most when the subjects wrote about their mother tongue (7.1%). When they described themselves as users of English, the percentage dropped to 3.4 and within metaphors about users of Swedish it was not used at all.

The relationship between speaker and writer metaphors depends somewhat on the target language as well. When writing about Finnish, more self-confidence and positive views could be detected in speaker rather than writer metaphors. This was indicated within the categories IN ONE'S ELEMENT, INCOMPLETE, SUFFERER and PERFECT. The same could be seen in metaphors about users of Swedish. In OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT, INCOMPLETE, ANIMAL and LOST the numbers of speaker and writer metaphors implied more self-confidence in speaking than in writing. Within metaphors about users of English the distinctions between speaker and writer metaphors were not as clear, but there were slight indications that the subjects saw themselves as better writers than speakers. The reason for this difference between the languages could be that English pronunciation is found more difficult than Swedish pronunciation. As spoken English is heard almost daily through television and other media, Finnish people are quite conscious of how we "should" sound when using English and this might cause us to be highly critical of ourselves. On the other hand, English syntax is quite simple for a learner, which makes writing easier, whereas Swedish syntax might cause more problems, since it is more complex and differs from Finnish syntax.

6.3 Metaphors by gender

In this section, I will attempt to give answers to the second research question: are there any significant differences between boys and girls? I will first discuss responses given by girls, then report those by boys and finally compare the metaphors of these two groups.

6.3.1 Metaphors used by girls

There were 31 girls in the subject group and they produced 132 metaphors about themselves as users of Finnish, Swedish and English. There were 69 speaker metaphors and 63 writer metaphors in total. The girls' responses are discussed one language at a time, starting with Finnish and finishing with English.

Girls as users of Finnish. The girls in the subject group wrote 45 metaphors about themselves as users of Finnish (see table 7). Of these, 24 described them as speakers of Finnish and 21 as writers of Finnish. Only two of the categories were not represented at all within this group.

The main metaphor that was used the most frequently was IN ONE'S ELEMENT. The difference between speaker and writer metaphors was marked by only one token. IN ONE'S ELEMENT was also the most frequent metaphor within the answers of the whole subject group.

Table 7. Main metaphors about users of Finnish used by girls

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. In one's element	6	25.0	5	23.8	11	24.4
2. Blabber mouth	6	25.0	0	0	6	13.3
3. Animal	2	8.3	3	14.3	5	11.1
4. Perfect	4	16.7	1	4.8	5	11.1
5. Out of one's element	2	8.3	2	9.5	4	8.9
6. Incomplete	1	4.2	2	9.5	3	6.7
7. Sufferer	1	4.2	2	9.5	3	6.7
8. Ordinary	2	8.3	1	4.8	3	6.7
9. Stranger	0	0	1	4.8	1	2.2
10. Public figure	0	0	1	4.8	1	2.2
11. Natural phenomenon	0	0	1	4.8	1	2.2
12. Child	0	0	1	4.8	1	2.2
13. Drunk	0	0	1	4.8	1	2.2
14. Lost	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Slow mover	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	24	100	21	100	45	100

The next metaphor, BLABBER MOUTH, however, offers a special feature for this particular subgroup. This metaphor was found in the data seven times in total and six of these were used by the girls about themselves when speaking Finnish. In fact, the

seventh metaphor was also written by a girl, but about herself as a speaker of English.

ANIMAL and PERFECT were both used five times in this group. Two of the ANIMAL metaphors described an animal doing something enthusiastically and the rest were mostly positive comparisons, for example, describing the subject as skilful (see example 27). The girls' confidence as speakers of Finnish, in addition to the BLABBER MOUTH metaphor, was reinforced by the metaphor PERFECT in which four expressions out of five were about speaking the language.

The next category, OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT brings a more negative perspective to this group of expressions. It emerged four times with an equal amount of speaker and writer metaphors. INCOMPLETE, SUFFERER and ORDINARY came next, each occurring three times. All of these had only the difference of one token between speaker and writer metaphors. Two out of three of the INCOMPLETE metaphors implied that the incompleteness totally prevents using the language. Each of the ORDINARY metaphors described the subject as an ordinary, young Finnish person.

The rest of the categories were represented once and they included only writer metaphors. These categories were STRANGER, PUBLIC FIGURE, NATURAL PHENOMENON, CHILD and DRUNK. The STRANGER metaphors referred to a person who stands out in a group as slightly less skilful than others, PUBLIC FIGURE was a comparison to Mikael Agricola, NATURAL PHENOMENON was a comparison to waterfall and finally, the CHILD metaphor described a child playing fun games. The categories not occurring at all within this subgroup were LOST and SLOW MOVER.

Girls as users of Swedish. Out of all fifteen categories, twelve were used by the girls when describing themselves as users of Swedish. The total number of metaphors in this group was 44 (see table 8). The amounts of speaker and writer metaphors were exactly the same: 22 of each.

Table 8. Main metaphors about users of Swedish used by girls.

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Out of one's element	5	22.7	7	31.8	12	27.3
2. Sufferer	4	18.2	3	13.6	7	15.9
3. Incomplete	3	13.6	2	9.1	5	11.4
4. Animal	1	4.5	3	13.6	4	9.1
5. Stranger	3	13.6	1	4.5	4	9.1
6. Natural phenomenon	0	0	2	9.1	2	4.5
7. Child	1	4.5	1	4.5	2	4.5
8. Drunk	1	4.5	1	4.5	2	4.5
9. In one's element	1	4.5	1	4.5	2	4.5
10. Lost	1	4.5	1	4.5	2	4.5
11. Ordinary	1	4.5	0	0	1	2.3
12. Slow mover	1	4.5	0	0	1	2.3
13. Perfect	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Blabber mouth	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Public figure	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	22	100	22	100	44	100

The metaphor that was found most often was OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT. These expressions described mostly animals in situations they are not suited for. The total amount was 12, including seven writer metaphors and five speaker metaphors.

The second most frequent category was SUFFERER, which occurred seven times. Speaker metaphors had one instance more than writer metaphors. These were also all metaphors of animals, this time in dangerous or painful situations. INCOMPLETE could be found five times. Two of these referred to total inability to use the language and the rest implied only inconvenience. As in the previous category, there was one metaphor more about speaking the language than about writing it.

ANIMAL and STRANGER metaphors had both four instances. Most (3) of the ANIMAL metaphors were about writing. One of them indicated excitement, two were negative comparisons to animals and one was a positive comparison. Of the

STRANGER metaphors, three were about speaking. A distinctive character of these expressions was that they all described a foreigner in a strange country.

The next five categories were all found twice. These were: NATURAL PHENOMENON, CHILD, DRUNK, IN ONE'S ELEMENT, and LOST. Both of the NATURAL PHENOMENON metaphors were about writing. One referred to unstable weather, the other to whirlwind. The rest of the categories each had one speaker and one writer metaphor. The CHILD metaphors both implied childish inability in using the language.

Finally, there were ORDINARY and SLOW MOVER with one instance both. These were all speaker metaphors. Three of the categories were not used at all: PERFECT, BLABBER MOUTH and PUBLIC FIGURE.

Girls as users of English. The girls used eleven of the main metaphors to describe themselves as users of English. As the numbers on table 9 illustrate, this subgroup included 43 metaphors of which 23 were about speaking English and 20 about writing it. Differences between categories were small and a single metaphor that would be distinctly favoured by the girls did not exist.

This was the only group in which CHILD emerged as the most frequent metaphor. This expression appeared eight times: five times as a speaker metaphor and three times as a writer metaphor. Some insecurity was reflected in these expressions, since six out of eight described a child that is not able to do something or makes lots of mistakes. The two that described an enthusiastic child were both speaker metaphors.

OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT was used seven times, which was much more than the boys used it when responding to triggers about English language. Three of these were speaker metaphors and four about writing. The next category was SUFFERER. It had six instances in the data and both speaker and writer metaphors were used three times.

Table 9. Main metaphors about users of English used by girls

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Child	5	21.7	3	15.0	8	18.6
2. Out of one's element	3	13.0	4	20.0	7	16.3
3. Sufferer	3	13.0	3	15.0	6	14.0
4. Animal	1	4.3	4	20.0	5	11.6
5. In one's element	3	13.0	1	5.0	4	9.3
6. Incomplete	2	8.7	2	10.0	4	9.3
7. Ordinary	2	8.7	1	5.0	3	7.0
8. Perfect	1	4.3	1	5.0	2	4.7
9. Stranger	1	4.3	1	5.0	2	4.7
10. Lost	1	4.3	0	0	1	2.3
11. Blabber mouth	1	4.3	0	0	1	2.3
12. Slow mover	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. Drunk	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Public figure	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Natural phenomenon	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	23	100	20	100	43	100

The fourth category was ANIMAL with five instances. Most (4) of these were writer metaphors. Only one expressed the theme “excitement” and the rest mostly described animals trying to survive under a threat (see example 26).

IN ONE'S ELEMENT was the first category on this list to clearly show confidence in the subjects and to offer a positive view on language use. It occurred four times, of which three were speaker metaphors. The tendency to insecurity was continued in the category INCOMPLETE which was also represented four times. Both speaker and writer metaphors had two instances. Half of the expressions described total inability to use the language, while the other half indicated only some difficulty to it.

Three metaphors in this group reflected the feeling of being the same as everybody else. ORDINARY was used two times as a speaker metaphor and once as writer. PERFECT and STRANGER were both used twice with equal amounts of writer and

speaker metaphors. One of the STRANGER metaphors described a foreigner, the other a stranger among others that are considered above him.

The last categories were LOST and BLABBER MOUTH, both occurring once and representing speaker metaphors. SLOW MOVER, DRUNK, PUBLIC FIGURE and NATURAL PHENOMENON were not used at all in this subgroup.

6.3.2 Metaphors used by boys

The boys formed a majority in the subject group. There were 40 of them in total and together they produced 149 metaphors. Of these, 77 were speaker metaphors, while the number of writer metaphors was 72.

Boys as users of Finnish. The boys in the subject group wrote 53 sentences about themselves as speakers and writers of Finnish (see table 10). The amounts of speaker and writer metaphors were quite equal: 26 and 27. Twelve of the categories were used within this group.

Similarly to the girls, the first category on this list was IN ONE'S ELEMENT. With 13 instances it covered 24.5 percent of all the expressions in this subgroup. Eight of these were speaker metaphors and five about writing. This metaphor expresses a natural and confident feeling when using Finnish.

The next category was INCOMPLETE. It was used especially when the subjects described themselves as writers as the amount of these expressions was seven out of the total nine. This was 25.9 percent of all the writer metaphors in this group.

ANIMAL metaphor had six instances with four speaker and two writer metaphors. Three of these expressions described an animal enjoying one's skill and the rest three described an alligator, a pike and an ape.

Table 10. Main metaphors about users of Finnish used by boys

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. In one's element	8	30.8	5	18.5	13	24.5
2. Incomplete	2	7.7	7	25.9	9	17.0
3. Animal	4	15.4	2	7.4	6	11.3
4. Public figure	3	11.5	2	7.4	5	9.4
5. Stranger	2	7.7	2	7.4	4	7.5
6. Sufferer	1	3.8	3	11.1	4	7.5
7. Ordinary	1	3.8	3	11.1	4	7.5
8. Out of one's element	2	7.7	1	3.7	3	5.7
9. Perfect	1	3.8	1	3.7	2	3.8
10. Lost	1	3.8	0	0	1	1.9
11. Natural phenomenon	1	3.8	0	0	1	1.9
12. Slow mover	0	0	1	3.7	1	1.9
13. Drunk	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Child	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Blabber mouth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	26	100	27	100	53	100

The fourth category was PUBLIC FIGURE with five instances: three speaker metaphors and two writer metaphors. The truth depends on the writer's personal view of course, but I would consider all of these as comparisons to the figure's positive characteristics. As a speaker, the subjects compared themselves to Tarja Halonen, J.L. Runeberg, and Uno Turhapuro. The last case is probably the most conspicuous, but this character is after all known for his special skill to talk himself out of any difficult situation. As writers, the comparisons were to Plato and Marko Ahonen (a local film critic).

The next categories were STRANGER, SUFFERER and ORDINARY. Each of them could be found four times. The STRANGER included an equal amount of speaker and writer metaphors. There were two expressions about the subject as inferior in comparison to others, one that expressed the opposite to those and one in which the subject saw himself as among the enemy. SUFFERER and ORDINARY both

included one speaker and three writer metaphors. In the ORDINARY metaphors the subjects referred to themselves as *normaali suomalainen* (M/F) ('normal Finns') and as *silli muun parven joukossa* (M/F) ('one fish in a shoal').

The last four occurring categories were PERFECT, LOST, NATURAL PHENOMENON and SLOW MOVER. PERFECT was found twice, with one of each sentence type and the rest occurred once. LOST and NATURAL PHENOMENON were speaker metaphors while SLOW MOVER was about writing. DRUNK, CHILD and BLABBER MOUTH were not found in this group of expressions.

Boys as users of Swedish. Compared to English, this group contained more metaphors in total (50), but the amount of categories represented was far fewer: the boys as English users had fourteen categories, while this group has ten (see table 11). The majority of the metaphors were found within the first two categories. Speaker metaphors were used 22 times in total, writer metaphors 28 times.

The first category was OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT with 13 instances. It includes 26 per cent of all the expressions that the boys used about Swedish. Writer metaphors formed the majority with eight tokens, while speaker metaphors were found five times. The images within this category indicate that the subjects do not feel natural or comfortable when using Swedish.

Discomfort and incapability were shown also in the next category, which was INCOMPLETE. The difference to the first category was only that of one metaphor and the percentage of INCOMPLETE metaphors was 24. Again, writer metaphors formed the majority with eight tokens, while speaker metaphors were used four times. The majority of these described a scene in which it is actually impossible to operate because of the incompleteness.

Table 11. Main metaphors about users of Swedish used by boys

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Out of one's element	5	22.7	8	28.6	13	26.0
2. Incomplete	4	18.2	8	28.6	12	24.0
3. Sufferer	4	18.2	3	10.7	7	14.0
4. Stranger	4	18.2	2	7.1	6	12.0
5. Animal	1	4.5	3	10.7	4	8.0
6. Slow mover	2	9.1	1	3.6	3	6.0
7. Lost	0	0	2	7.1	2	4.0
8. Child	1	4.5	0	0	1	2.0
9. Drunk	1	4.5	0	0	1	2.0
10. Public figure	0	0	1	3.6	1	2.0
11. Natural phenomenon	0	0	0	0	0	0
12. In one's element	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. Ordinary	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Blabber mouth	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Perfect	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	22	100	28	100	50	100

SUFFERER was the third category and it occurred seven times. The percentage was much less than with the first two categories and the relationship between speaker and writer metaphors was quite equal: only one token more within speaker metaphors.

STRANGER occurred six times including four speaker and two writer metaphors. Four of the metaphors described either a foreigner or someone who speaks a peculiar dialect. The other two implied a feeling of being surrounded by others who are much more skilful than oneself.

The next metaphor was ANIMAL. It emerged four times, including one speaker and three writer metaphors. These metaphors implied, for instance, stupidity, surviving under a threat and not being able to keep up with others. Clearly positive images were not used.

SLOW MOVER was used three times, which was half of all the SLOW MOVER metaphors in the data. Speaker metaphors formed the majority with one expression more than was included in writer metaphors.

The last categories were LOST with two tokens and CHILD, DRUNK, and PUBLIC FIGURE with one token each. The LOST and PUBLIC FIGURE metaphors were about writing, while CHILD and DRUNK were speaker metaphors.

Boys as users of English. A total of 46 metaphors about English users were produced by the boys (see table 12). The language user as a speaker was found 29 times and that as a writer only 17 times. Unlike most of the other groups of metaphors, this one did not have a category that clearly stood out as number one. However, only one of the categories was not represented.

Table 12. Main metaphors about users of English used by boys

Metaphor	As speaker		As writer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. In one's element	4	13.8	4	23.5	8	17.4
2. Incomplete	5	17.2	3	17.6	8	17.4
3. Public figure	5	17.2	1	5.9	6	13.0
4. Child	3	10.3	1	5.9	4	8.7
5. Sufferer	3	10.3	1	5.9	4	8.7
6. Ordinary	2	6.9	1	5.9	3	6.5
7. Stranger	1	3.4	2	11.8	3	6.5
8. Out of one's element	1	3.4	2	11.8	3	6.5
9. Animal	2	6.9	0	0	2	4.3
10. Slow mover	0	0	1	5.9	1	2.2
11. Perfect	0	0	1	5.9	1	2.2
12. Drunk	1	3.4	0	0	1	2.2
13. Natural phenomenon	1	3.4	0	0	1	2.2
14. Lost	1	3.4	0	0	1	2.2
15. Blabber mouth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	29	100	17	100	46	100

The first place on the metaphor list was shared by IN ONE'S ELEMENT and INCOMPLETE. These both occurred eight times. The same two categories came first when the boys wrote about themselves as users of Finnish. IN ONE'S ELEMENT was used four times both as speaker and as writer metaphor. INCOMPLETE had five instances of speaker metaphors and three of writers.

PUBLIC FIGURE could be found six times. Only one of these was a writer metaphor. It compared the subject to Mozart. In the speaker metaphors the subjects referred to, for instance, Tony Halme, Mika Häkkinen, Tommi Mäkinen and the rap artist Pikku G. The second and third probably implied poor pronunciation but the rest were more difficult to analyze. A comparison to Pikku G, for instance, could indicate fluent and creative language skills, but on the other hand, the writer might have thought that Pikku G is a terribly untalented rap artist. In this case the actual meaning of the metaphor might be quite different.

CHILD and SUFFERER were used four times. Both of these included three speaker metaphors and one expression about writing. All of the CHILD metaphors that boys wrote about the use of English described an excited child doing something pleasant. The girls answered the same question quite differently, as they mostly used the child metaphor to convey the idea that they can do as little as a child.

The next categories were ORDINARY, STRANGER and OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT with three tokens each. The subjects wrote one more ORDINARY metaphor about themselves as speakers than writers while in STRANGER and OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT the majority was writer metaphors. The writer metaphors in STRANGER category described a foreigner and someone among the enemy. The speaker metaphor described a Saab next to Ferraris.

ANIMAL metaphor was used twice and both of these were about speaking the language. They described an animal under some kind of a threat. The last five metaphors all occurred once. These were SLOW MOVER, PERFECT, DRUNK, NATURAL PHENOMENON, and LOST. The first two were writer metaphors and the rest about speaking. The only category not represented in this subgroup was BLABBER MOUTH.

6.3.3 A comparison of gender differences

Gender differences are discussed separately in relation to the three languages. First, the most salient differences regarding Finnish are summarized. The most frequent expression in the list of metaphors about users of Finnish for both the boys and the girls was IN ONE'S ELEMENT (see tables 7 and 10). The percentage was around 24.5 in both groups. The only difference was that the boys use this expression slightly more frequently as a speaker than writer metaphor.

The categories in which significant differences could be seen were INCOMPLETE, PUBLIC FIGURE, STRANGER, OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT, PERFECT and BLABBER MOUTH. BLABBER MOUTH was second on the girls' list with 13.3 % out of all the metaphors. The boys did not use this metaphor at all. Instead, the second category on the boys' list was INCOMPLETE, which can be considered more negative than BLABBER MOUTH. The boys used this metaphor nine times, which is 17 % out of all the expressions. For the girls the number was only 6.7 %. The boys also used this metaphor much more when describing themselves as writers than as speakers, but with the girls there was no clear distinction between speaker and writer metaphors. PUBLIC FIGURE was also much more popular among the boys than the girls. The percentage with the boys was 9.4 and with the girls only 2.2 %. This indicates that the boys see themselves as somehow different from others, when using their mother tongue, more than the girls. On the other hand, the girls seem to feel more out of place than the boys, since 8.9 % of their responses represented the category OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT, whereas the percentage with the boys was 5.7. While the boys used frequently the metaphor INCOMPLETE, the girls were confident enough to describe themselves PERFECT. The percentage of this expression with the girls was 11.1 and with the boys only 3.8.

Thus, although in some ways the girls' image of themselves as users of Finnish seems more self-confident, the boys show positive feelings as well by, for instance, comparing themselves to highly appreciated public characters and not using OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT as much as the girls. It could be that when attempting to convey their inner thoughts, the boys simply favour certain structures more than the girls and vice versa.

Next, the metaphors that the girls and the boys used about themselves as users of Swedish are compared. Similarly to Finnish, the most frequent metaphor was the same for both the boys and the girls and it showed no difference in numbers. The first metaphor was OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT (see tables 9 and 11). There were four categories in this group where clear differences could be detected. These were INCOMPLETE, STRANGER, NATURAL PHENOMENON and IN ONE'S ELEMENT. The boys used INCOMPLETE (24 %) almost as much as OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT (26 %). They also clearly used INCOMPLETE more when describing themselves as writers than speakers. With the girls the percentage of this expression was 11.4 and there was no clear difference between speaker and writer metaphors. Based on this information, it can therefore be said that the boys saw more flaws in their writing skills than the girls when using Swedish. The STRANGER metaphor was also used slightly more by the boys than the girls. The percentage with the boys was 12 and with the girls 9.1. They both used it a bit more as a speaker than writer metaphor. A large part of the stranger metaphor described foreigners when used about Swedish. It is therefore evident that the boys see Swedish rather as a foreign language than as their second native language, since speaking Swedish makes them feel foreign. Both NATURAL PHENOMENON and IN ONE'S ELEMENT were not used by the boys at all, but had the percentage of 4.5 with the girls. The NATURAL PHENOMENON metaphors in this group suggested confusion and instability, but the lack of IN ONE'S ELEMENT metaphors highlights that the boys' image of themselves as users of Swedish was slightly more negative than that of the girls.

The metaphors about English suggested plenty of differences between the boys and the girls, since the categories were placed in very unlike orders on the two lists of most frequent metaphors (see tables 8 and 12). The first two categories on the boys' list were IN ONE'S ELEMENT and INCOMPLETE, both with 17.4 % out of all metaphors. The girls did not feel as strongly natural as their proportion of IN ONE'S ELEMENT metaphors is only 9.3 %. On the other hand, the girls were not as eager to see flaws in their performance, since the same percentage (9.3) occurred with INCOMPLETE. PUBLIC FIGURE was once again favoured by the boys. It covered 13 % of all the metaphors while the girls did not use this expression at all. CHILD was the most frequent metaphor that the girls used and its percentage was 18.6. With

the boys the number was 8.7. Both used CHILD most as a speaker metaphor, but what distinguishes the two genders is that the girls used the CHILD metaphor mostly to describe a child that is not able to do something or makes lots of mistakes, whereas the boys described more the theme of “childish enthusiasm”. Thus, the boys used this expression less, but used it to express more positive feelings toward the language than the girls. Another metaphor suggesting that the girls have a greater tendency to negative feelings toward the use of English was OUT OF ONE’S ELEMENT. The proportion of this expression with the girls was 16.3 %, but with the boys only 6.5 %. No significant difference between speaker and writer metaphors could be detected in either group. The next example highlights the same claim, although the difference between genders was not as great with this metaphor as with OUT OF ONE’S ELEMENT. SUFFERER was used more frequently by the girls (14 %) than by the boys (8.7 %). This would imply that using English is a more painstaking experience for the girls than the boys. Finally, the proportion of ANIMAL metaphors was 11.6 % with the girls and 4.3 % with the boys. The boys used it only as a speaker metaphor, whereas with the girls the majority was writer metaphors. Both the boys and the girls use this expression mostly to reflect the feeling of being under a threat. To sum up, these examples suggest that the girls’ view on themselves as users of English was quite critical, whereas the boys were not as hard on themselves. Moreover, the boys had the confidence to consider themselves as in their own element when using English, but the girls would rather suggest the complete opposite and more frequently use OUT OF ONE’S ELEMENT.

7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to find out what kinds of self-images Finnish students have of themselves as writers and speakers of the three influential languages in their lives: Finnish, Swedish and English. The question was approached with metaphor analysis and the metaphors were collected with a completion task from upper secondary general school students. Fifteen different types of metaphors were found, the most frequent being LANGUAGE USER AS OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT, INCOMPLETE, IN ONE'S ELEMENT, SUFFERER and ANIMAL. In connection to Finnish, the most popular metaphors were IN ONE'S ELEMENT, INCOMPLETE and ANIMAL. When referring to Swedish, the subjects used OUT OF ONE'S ELEMENT, INCOMPLETE and SUFFERER the most and the most frequent metaphors about English were IN ONE'S ELEMENT, INCOMPLETE and CHILD. The girls in the subject group showed more confidence as users of Finnish and Swedish, but as users of English they were much more critical toward themselves than boys.

There are not many previous studies that can be directly compared to the present study, since the aspect of "language user" has not been investigated before through metaphor analysis. In addition a similar comparison between different languages has not been done and, moreover, the significance of mother tongue has not been studied. Comparing to previous research discussed in chapter 4, the present study resembles most that of Kramsch (2003) in terms of data collection and analysis and Turunen (2003) in terms of the subject group.

In addition to written essays, Kramsch (2003) used a completion task in which the subjects added a metaphor to the phrase "learning a language is like...", "speaking this language is like..." or "writing this language is like..." The trigger was very similar to the one used in the present study, although mine includes the aspect of language user, while Kramsch' had to do with language learning. Kramsch elicited a few metaphors that were similar to those in the present study. For instance, "returning to a childhood state" can be compared to the CHILD metaphor in my study, "incurring physical danger" has same indications as SUFFERER and "being in

a new place” can be linked to STRANGER. The category SUFFERER was also used in the study by Ellis (2001).

Turunen (2003) used autobiographies to study English language students metaphors of themselves and their English teachers. As in the present study, the subject group consisted of Finnish students. The difference is that in Turunen’s study the participants were on university level and had chosen to study English, which means that they were all quite skilful and perhaps more likely to have positive experiences of using and learning English. The subject group in the present study was more heterogeneous in terms of their language skills, which has an impact on the results. Although in Turunen’s study the focus was on how students describe themselves as learners, rather than users of English, there were similarities in the results. As learners of English, university students saw themselves most frequently as PERFECTIONISTS or NATURAL TALENTS. These categories are quite similar to the PERFECT category in the present study. PERFECT was, however, not used as frequently as the corresponding metaphors in Turunen’s study, perhaps because of the differences in subject groups mentioned above. In addition, the SUFFERER category occurred in this study as well as the present one. Referring to other research, it is interesting that studies by Marchant (1992), Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and de Guerrero and Villamil (2000) all show that teachers are frequently described as the caregiver, nurturer or parent. Learners’ constructions of themselves are consistent with teacher metaphors, since in both Kramsch’ study and the present study, learners describe themselves as children. In Marchant’s study (1992) teachers also described their students as daughters or sons. Finally, the data in the present study includes some unique themes that to my knowledge have not been recognized before. These are PUBLIC FIGURE and DRUNK. Either it is a Finnish peculiarity to describe oneself with these images or the themes have simply not been recognized before because the triggers in the previous studies have been structured differently.

Categorizing the metaphors into coherent groups was not an easy task. There were some expressions that could have been placed in several categories and their final position depended on one person’s interpretation. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) have pointed out that to make interpretations convincing to the reader, the data has to be read and reread and a lot of examples of raw data have to be offered. The frequency

of the same or similar metaphors and an adequate number of participants serves as evidence of validity. Although the classification was a result of a thorough and lengthy consideration, another person could have finally classified the expressions differently. Therefore, it is possible that another researcher could reach different conclusions based on the same data. To make the analysis more reliable it would be useful to consult the opinions of one or several other persons when classifying the metaphors.

To help the subjects with the task and ensure that they understand the concept of metaphor correctly, three example sentences were given in the instruction sheet. Despite the examples the subjects used a wide variety of structures in the metaphors and an example was used directly only once. Therefore, my impression is that the examples did not intervene too much with the subjects' own thought processes.

It could be debated how much the metaphors actually reveal about the subject and how reliable they are in describing the subject's true thoughts. Expressing one's ideas and feelings through metaphors might come naturally to some, but be very difficult to others. If the subjects felt that the completion task was too troublesome some of them might have lost motivation to complete it properly and wrote down anything whether it matched their true thoughts or not. The researcher cannot actually be assured if the responses are truly genuine. However, to minimize this problem, the completion task was kept very simple and quite short so that any difficulty and dullness could be prevented. Another aspect worth considering is the choice of data collection method. The metaphors for this study were constructed specifically at the researcher's request. An interview or a written narrative where the subject is not particularly asked to use metaphors but to speak or write freely of a specific subject would produce more spontaneous metaphors. It has to be acknowledged that expressions elicited this way might represent more reliably the subject's actual conceptualizations. It may also be that in reality the subjects possess multiple roles or images of themselves as language users, but here only reveal one. However, the data collection method in the present study consisted of open-ended questions, which give the subject an opportunity to express their thought freely and a completion task assures that the metaphors elicited are easy to identify accurately, which is not the case with naturalistic data material.

The present study as well as most of the previous research has concentrated on the ideas and opinions that metaphors reveal in students. In the future it would be interesting to find out if students' elicited metaphors can be seen in classroom behaviour or in learning in general. Moreover, if some beliefs have negative impacts on behaviour, more research is needed to determine how these thoughts might be changed into more beneficial ones. It would also be useful to examine what kinds of external factors influence our beliefs about languages and learning. For instance, do teachers, teaching methods, peers or previous grades affect the beliefs a person has about oneself? As discussed above, confirming the relevance of metaphors is sometimes problematic. A possible solution to this problem would be to continue to study the metaphors of a similar subject group, but by using multiple data sources. For example, interviews or written narratives could be added to find out if the metaphors remain consistent and this way the reliability of the metaphors could be enhanced. The present study investigated the metaphors of Finnish speaking Finns in an environment where they rarely have to use Swedish. An intriguing research object would be to study metaphors about the same languages used by Swedish speaking Finns or simply students from very different parts of the country. Studies like these could contribute in providing information about the factors that influence our conceptions.

I believe that the greatest contribution of the present study is the information it offers about the beliefs that language learners have about themselves rather than about school or learning. Also the information about beliefs connected to students' mother tongue is something that has not been considered before. The research procedure is tightly connected to the specific context of Finnish society and the languages that are most in use in our country. Therefore the purpose is not to make any generalizations beyond the subject group. Perhaps the most important task was to show language teachers once again that student beliefs are worth noticing. In the classroom a teacher could employ metaphors by giving students a simple writing task, completion task or have short discussions or interviews with the students. In these tasks students have to verbalize their inner metaphors and thus they will become conscious of them. Later, it could be useful to discuss what kinds of thoughts the metaphors reveal and how they affect learning. When the teacher is aware of students' beliefs, it is possible to start considering modifications in the classroom to encourage students to form

more positive images of themselves as language users. Metaphors about the student as a language user might offer explanations, for example, to the question why some otherwise successful and skilful students are sometimes very reluctant to speak a foreign language. Similarly, some solutions for problems of writing could be gained.

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Appendix A: The completion task

MILLAINEN OLET KIELENKÄYTTÄJÄNÄ?

Olen Johanna Oksanen ja opiskelen opettajaksi Jyväskylän yliopistossa. Teen päättötyötäni siitä, millaisia käsityksiä oppijoilla on itsestään kielenkäyttäjinä. Oppijoiden käsitykset antavat tärkeää tietoa siitä, millaisia vaikutuksia opetuksella on ja miten sitä pitäisi kehittää.

Työtäni varten tarvitsen oppijoiden vastauksia oheiseen tehtävään. Tehtävään ei ole olemassa oikeita tai väriä vastauksia. Toivon, että vastaat jokaiseen kohtaan omien käsitystesi mukaisesti ja mahdollisimman rehellisesti.

Varsinaisessa tehtävässä pyydän sinua täydentämään kuusi lausetta, omaa näkemystäsi vastaavalla tavalla. Vastauksessasi toivon sinun käyttävän vertauskuvaa (metaforaa) tai muuta sopivaa ilmaisua. Yritä löytää ilmaisu, joka kuvastaa mielestäsi sinua parhaiten.

Muista täyttää myös ennen varsinaista tehtävää pyydettävät taustatiedot. Kyselyyn vastataan nimettömästi ja antamiasi tietoja käytetään ainoastaan tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksiin.

Esim. "Suomen kielen kirjoittajana olen kuin uimataidoton, joka on heitetty keskelle valtamerta."

"Ruotsin kielen puhujana olen kuin taitava muusikko."

"Englannin kielen kirjoittajana olen kuin vuorikiipeilijä korkokengissä."

Kiitos arvokkaasta avustasi!

Lisätietoja tutkimuksesta saa tarvittaessa sähköpostilla osoitteesta jtoksane@cc.jyu.fi

Taustatiedot

Olen tyttö/poika

ikä: ____

Viimeisin kurssiarvosanani englannissa: ____

Viimeisin kurssiarvosanani ruotsissa: ____

Viimeisin kurssiarvosanani äidinkielessä: ____

Täydennä seuraavat lauseet niin, että ne kuvaavat omaa näkemystäsi mahdollisimman tarkasti. Halutessasi voit myös selittää lauseesi merkitystä tai kirjoittaa useamman kuin yhden vertauskuvan.
Jos tila ei riitä, voit jatkaa lomakkeen kääntöpuolelle.

Englannin kielen **puhujana** olen (kuin) _____

Ruotsin kielen **puhujana** olen (kuin) _____

Suomen kielen **puhujana** olen (kuin) _____

Englannin kielen **kirjoittajana** olen (kuin) _____

Ruotsin kielen **kirjoittajana** olen (kuin) _____

Suomen kielen **kirjoittajana** olen (kuin) _____

Appendix B: Rough translations of example metaphors

- (1) As a writer I am like a polar bear in Sahara (M/S)
- (2) As a speaker I am like a shark as a vegetarian (F/F)
- (3) As a writer I am like a snowman in sauna (F/E)
- (4) As a writer I am like a Swede writing Finnish (M/S)
- (5) As a speaker I am like an Estonian speaking Finnish (F/S)
- (6) As a speaker I am like a shark without teeth (M/E)
- (7) As a writer I am like bread without butter (M/F)
- (8) As a speaker I am like binoculars without lenses (M/E)
- (9) As a writer I am like a squirrel in a tree without branches (M/E)
- (10) As a speaker I am like a blind sharpshooter (M/S)
- (11) As a writer I am like a car without motor (M/S)
- (12) As a speaker I am like a dumb stand-up comedian (M/S)
- (13) As a writer I am like a dog without a bone (M/S)
- (14) As a writer I am like spaghetti sauce without seasoning (F/E)
- (15) As a writer I am like a builder with skills but no equipment (M/E)
- (16) As a speaker I am like a ringed seal in Saimaa (M/E)
- (17) As a writer I am like a worm in the soil (M/E)
- (18) As a speaker I am like a bear in the forest (M/F)
- (19) As a writer I am like a bacterium in optimum temperature (F/F)
- (20) As a speaker I am in my own element, as I was made for it (F/F)
- (21) As a writer I am like a fish in a net (M/F)
- (22) As a writer I am like a bird in oil (F/S)
- (23) As a writer I am like a janitor on an icy roof (M/S)
- (24) As a writer I am like a hungry ermine that gets enthusiastic about good writing and wants more (M/F)
- (25) As a writer I am like an over-excited rabbit in the spring or a foal on its summer stamping ground, sometimes I overshoot (F/E)
- (26) As a writer I am like a frog bounding to escape under compulsion (M/S)
- (27) As a speaker I am like a rabbit surviving out of a fix (F/E)
- (28) As a speaker I am skilful and versatile as an ant building a nest (F/F)
- (29) As a writer I am like a stubborn donkey that is whipped to go forward (F/S)
- (30) As a writer I am like an extra tired sloth (F/S)
- (31) As a speaker I am like a communist in a democratic party (M/R)
- (32) As a writer I am like a Jewish Nazi (M/E)
- (33) As a speaker I am like a Saab next to Ferraris (M/E)
- (34) As a writer I am like a common person among royalty (M/S)
- (35) As a speaker I am like Shakespeare among the inhabitants of Korkeasaari (M/S)
- (36) As a speaker I am like a Finn in Indochina (F/S)
- (37) As a writer I am like a refugee in a new country (F/S)
- (38) As a speaker I am like a kid in a candy store (M/E)
- (39) As a speaker I am as enthusiastic as a small child with new toys (F/E)
- (40) As a speaker I am like an enthusiastic child that enjoys his new skills (M/E)
- (41) As a writer I am like a baby that does not know how to hold a pencil (F/S)
- (42) As a speaker I am like a one-year-old that does not understand (M/S)
- (43) As a speaker I am like a six-year-old, except I make more mistakes (F/E)
- (44) As a speaker I am like a normal young Finn (F/F)
- (45) As a speaker I am like an average John Doe (M/E)

- (46) As a writer I am like a herring among the rest of the shoal (M/F)
- (47) As a speaker I am like one twig in a fence of brushwood (M/E)
- (48) As a speaker I am like Mika Häkkinen (M/E)
- (49) As a writer I am like Lisa Marklund (M/S)
- (50) As a writer I am like Mikael Agricola (F/F)
- (51) As a writer I am like Marko Ahonen, I can only write film reviews (M/F)
- (52) As a speaker I am like a talent (F/F)
- (53) As a writer I am like a dart in bull's eye (M/E)
- (54) As a writer I am like a genius with a quill (F/E)
- (55) As a speaker I am like a broken CD, because I really talk a lot (F/F)
- (56) As a speaker I am like a blabber mouth. I never stop chattering (F/F)
- (57) As a speaker I am like a parrot (F/F)
- (58) As a speaker I am like a lost tourist (F/E)
- (59) As a writer I am like an old man in the dark looking for a light switch (M/S)
- (60) As a speaker I am like a snail that has trouble getting started (F/S)
- (61) As a writer I am like a veteran skier with tarry skis (M/S)
- (62) As a speaker I am like a flowing river (M/E)
- (63) As a writer I am like a waterfall (F/F)
- (64) As a speaker I am like a lightning from the clear sky (M/F)
- (65) As a writer I am like a whirlwind (F/S)
- (66) As a writer I am like unstable weather (F/S)
- (67) As a speaker I am confused as a drunk (M/E)
- (68) As a speaker I am a standard Finnish drunk (F/S)

