

**UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AS SPEAKERS OF
ENGLISH AND SWEDISH:**

Speaking outside the school and language self

Candidate's thesis

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Kandidaatin tutkielma

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Suullinen kielitaito on tärkeää nykypäivän kansainvälisessä maailmassa. Tämän kandidaatin tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää, miten abiturientit puhuvat englantia ja ruotsia koulun ulkopuolella, ja kuinka he näkevät itsensä näiden kielten puhujina. Tutkielman viitekehys muodostui hyvän suullisen kielitaidon määrittelystä kommunikatiivisen kompetenssin käsitteen avulla, kieliminä-käsitteen kuvailusta sekä aiemmista tutkimuksista, joissa on selvitty suomalaisten englannin ja ruotsin puhumista. Tutkimusaihe on ajankohtainen, koska lukioihin on tulossa uusi suullisen kielitaidon kurssi syksyllä 2010.

Aineisto kerättiin kyselylomakkeen avulla. Kyselyyn vastasi 30 abiturienttia jyvaskyläläisestä lukiosta. Kyselylomakkeessa oli suljettuja ja avoimia kysymyksiä sekä väittämiä, joihin abiturientit vastasivat Likertin asteikon mukaan. Vertailun mahdollistamiseksi englannin ja ruotsin puhumista koskevat kysymykset olivat keskenään samanlaisia. Kyselyn tulokset analysoitiin kvalitatiivisesti kuvailemalla vastauksia ja etsimällä niistä yhteisiä piirteitä, mutta analyysi sisälsi myös kvantitatiivisen analyysin piirteitä, kuten prosenttiosuuksien laskentaa. Pääpaino on englannin ja ruotsin vertailussa.

Abiturientit olivat puhuneet englantia useammin kuin ruotsia koulun ulkopuolella niin kotimaassa, ulkomailla kuin internetissäkin. Helpointa sekä englannin että ruotsin puhumisessa oli sanojen muistaminen ja vaikeinta oli englannissa ääntäminen ja ruotsissa kielioppi. Abiturientit luottivat itseensä enemmän englannin kuin ruotsin puhujina. Pojat luottivat itseensä selkeästi enemmän kuin tytöt. Tytöt myönsivät poikia useammin jännittävänsä puhumista ja pitivät itseään poikia harvemmin yhtä hyvinä puhujina kuin luokkakaverit. Vaikka abiturientit puhuvat englantia usein koulun ulkopuolella, kaipasivat he useammin lisää mahdollisuuksia puhua sitä kuin ruotsia. Tytöt olivat poikia innokkaampia saamaan lisää mahdollisuuksia puhua ruotsia. Sen sijaan pojat halusivat tyttöjä useammin saavuttaa englannin kielessä syntyperäisen puhujan kaltaisen ääntämyksen. Kokonaisuudessaan syntyperäisen puhujan kaltainen ääntämys oli tavoitellumpi englannissa kuin ruotsissa. Kun abiturientit ryhmiteltiin kieliminän mukaan, englannin puhumisen osalta suurin ryhmä oli selkeästi oppilaat, jotka pitivät kielen puhumisesta ja jotka myös luottivat itseensä sen puhujina. Ruotsin kielessä suurimmat ryhmät olivat kielen puhumisesta pitävät ja itseensä luottavat sekä opiskelijat, jotka eivät pitäneet puhumisesta, eivätkä luottaneet itseensä puhujina.

Asiasanat: englannin kieli, ruotsin kieli, suullinen kielitaito, minäkuva

Key words: English, Swedish, oral skills, self-concept, language self

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1 INTRODUCTION

In today's world people face foreign languages in their everyday lives, not only on their trips abroad, but in their home countries as well. Communication skills are thus important and their importance is also noted in the national core curricula. Finns, however, often seem to lack confidence in their oral skills or at least demand much from themselves, even though they can speak English very well compared, for example, to many other Europeans (Lapintie 2008). Communication is not only skills, but a person's whole personality is involved in it and therefore many factors, such as self-esteem, expectations and goals, need to be taken into account when discussing communicating in a foreign language.

Oral skills in English and Swedish, which is another of Finland's official languages, have been researched from many perspectives. For instance, one of the widest surveys on Finns' usage of English has been conducted by the Jyväskylä unit of Centre of Excellence for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English in cooperation with Statistics Finland (Kalaja et al. 2009). Among others, Yli-Renko (1992) has studied upper secondary school students' thoughts about oral skills. Furthermore, oral skills can be looked at from the perspective of a language self. In Finland, Laine and Pihko (1991) have examined the language self of 9th graders studying English in Finnish comprehensive schools.

The aim of my study is to describe students in the third year of their studies in a Finnish upper secondary school as speakers of English and Swedish. More precisely, the goal is to explore how the students in the third year of a Finnish upper secondary school use their oral skills in English and Swedish outside the school and how they see themselves as speakers of these two languages. As a future teacher of English and Swedish I think that it is useful to know about students' thoughts concerning speaking the languages in question, for example, about what they see as difficult and what as easy. Furthermore, comparison between English and Swedish provides a possibility to explore whether stereotypes about positive attitudes towards English and negative attitudes towards often discussed obligatory Swedish apply also for speaking. The theme is up-to-date as there will be a new course on oral skills in upper secondary schools in Finland in August 2010 (Opetushallitus 2009) and, for example, The Union of Finnish Upper Secondary School Students would like to include an examination in oral skills in the matriculation examination (Suomen lukiolaisten liitto 2005).

In the present paper, I will at first provide the theoretical background for my study by describing research made on language self and situations where Finns use English and Swedish. After that, I will introduce the research question, the data collection and the methods used in analysing the data. Then I will move on to introducing the results of the study and finally, in the conclusion, I will reflect on the findings of the study.

2 UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AS SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH AND SWEDISH

In this part of the paper I will review some ways in which upper secondary school students' perceptions of themselves as speakers of English and Swedish have been explored. At first, I will try to find out what it means to have good oral skills in a second language by referring to the concept of communicative competence. After that I will examine what language self is and at the end I will explore some studies on speaking English and Swedish in Finland.

2.1 Communicative competence

Having good oral skills in a second language means mastering a wide range of skills. In my opinion, communicative competence is a useful way to look at the several aspects that are necessary when speaking a second language. The term 'communicative competence' was originally introduced by Hymes in the mid-1960s. According to Hymes (1972:281, 283), communicative competence includes several factors and the grammatical aspect is only one of them. In addition to *grammaticality*, *acceptability* should be taken into account, that is, whether the form is formally *possible*, *feasible*, *appropriate* and whether it is actually *performed*.

The concept of communicative competence has since been developed further. Canale (1983:6-7, 9-11) describes the framework of communicative competence based on the research made by Canale and Swain in 1980. They divide communicative competence into four components. *Grammatical competence* includes features such as vocabulary, sentence and word formation, pronunciation, spelling and linguistic semantics. *Sociolinguistic competence* addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in various sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors, such as status of participants,

purposes of the interaction and conventions or norms of interaction. *Discourse competence* concerns mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings in order to achieve a unified piece of writing or speaking in different genres. Finally, there is *strategic competence*, which refers to the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication or to enhance the effectiveness of communication. As we can see, there are many components which together need to be taken into account when estimating a person's oral skills.

The idea of communicative competence is included in the national core curriculum in Finland. One of the aims of teaching foreign languages and Swedish in Finnish upper secondary schools is that students know how to communicate in a manner which is characteristic of the target language and its culture (National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2003:84, 102). Thus the concept of communicative competence should give guidelines for teaching.

2.2 Language self

As Laine and Pihko (1991:2), who have made research into language self in Finland, point out, personality is an element that is hard to define and measure, but which a student brings to a learning situation. Self-concept is often called “the nucleus of personality” and language self is an extremely important part of the affective field in language learning. In the following, I will examine language self more closely.

2.2.1 Language self as a part of the self-concept

According to Burns (1982:3-6, 8), self-concept can be defined as an evaluated set of beliefs about the individual. It consists of *the self-image* which includes what a person sees when he looks at him- or herself, of the *evaluation component*, or “self-esteem”, which reveals whether the person has a favourable or unfavourable opinion of various facets of the self-image and of the *behavioural tendency component* which describes what an individual is likely to do in response to his or her evaluation of him- or herself. Burns (1982:3) concludes that these three components are actually the same components as an attitude has, and thus the self-concept can be placed within the ambit of attitude study.

In addition to dividing the self-concept into components, it can be looked at as consisting of different layers. Laine and Pihko (1991:13-14, 25) state that self-concept can be examined at global, specific and task level. The highest in the hierarchy is the global or general level, which refers to a person's conception as a whole, whereas the specific level refers to different areas of life and the task level to different tasks. Laine and Pihko (1991:13-14, 25) suggest that a student's perception of him- or herself as a student should be seen as a general school / academic self, which is included in the general self-concept and when seen like this, the specific level refers to a person's perception of him- or herself as a learner of a second language and the task level, for instance, as a speaker of a second language.

2.2.2 Structure of language self

Much research is done on self-concept, but there are not as many studies on language self. In Finland, Laine and Pihko (1991:15, 22, 40) have researched the language self of 9th graders studying English in Finnish comprehensive schools. They define language self as the self concept which students connect to foreign language learning. It includes all the knowledge, perceptions, expectations and estimations students have of themselves as learners of a second language. To sum up, it answers to questions such as "What am I like as a language learner?", "What would I like to be like?", "What should I be like?" and "What am I worth as a language learner?"

As the self-concept, language self can be seen from different perspectives. Laine and Pihko (1991: 17-18) point out that *the real, actual self* refers to a learner's subjective perceptions and beliefs about what he or she really is like as a language learner. In addition, a learner has *an ideal self* which includes a learner's hopes, dreams and demands concerning language learning. However, Laine and Pihko (1991:18) think that the most important factor in estimating one's language self as a whole is his or her *self-esteem*. A student who has good self-esteem concerning language self, sees him- or herself as valuable and qualified. A student of this kind thinks that "I am able to learn languages just like everybody else", whereas a student with low self-esteem may feel that "I am poor as a language learner and it is no use trying to learn". I agree with Laine and Pihko in their view, because self-esteem affects both the real and ideal self and is therefore significant in forming one's language self.

Dörnyei (2005:93) is known as a researcher of motivation, but he has also made one of the latest contributions in the area of the self-concept. He believes that a foreign language is an important part of the individual's identity. Dörnyei (2005:105) divides his L2 motivational self system into three parts. *The ideal self* refers to the L2 specific facet of one's ideal self. *The ought to L2 self* refers to the attributes one believes one ought to possess (e.g. duties, obligations or responsibilities) for avoiding possible negative outcomes. Dörnyei (2009:32) also states that these attributes are imposed on the person by friends, parents and other authoritative figures. In addition, Dörnyei (2005:105) points out that there are *situation-specific motives* which are related to the immediate learning environment. As we can see, this theory is a combination of motivational theory and earlier theories on L2 self.

According to Laine and Pihko (1991:15-16), language self is quite stable, but still it changes gradually while one is learning languages. The most important factors in shaping language self are different learning experiences. The feedback from teachers and other learners, both direct and indirect, plays an important role in all this. Parents and idols are also significant others who affect the development of language self.

2.2.3 Significance of language self

Many researchers agree on that language self has significant consequences for language learning. Pihko (2007:35) states that a positive and strong language self supports the learner in many ways in the learning process. Oxford and Ehrman (1993:194-195) support this as well by saying that unsuccessful L2 learners have lower self-esteem than those who are successful in learning L2. Kristiansen (1992: 38) admits that a student may easily develop a poor self image when trying to learn a foreign language without success.

However, despite its powerfulness, it is not clear in which way language self and achievement interact. Kristiansen (1992:38) concludes that research on self-esteem and learning fails to answer a crucial question of which comes first, success in learning or self-esteem,. However, Laine and Pihko (1991:95) describe this process in the following way: Language self directly affects language attitudes and motivation. Motivation has an effect on achievements and this, in turn, has consequences for language self. Thus, there is an ongoing circle. In my opinion,

thinking of the relationship between achievements and language self as a circle seems sensible; there is a mutual influence.

2.2.4 Language self and speaking a second language

As pointed out earlier, speaking a second language belongs to the task level of language self. According to Laine and Pihko (1991:33), a learner's perceptions of him- or herself may also vary considerably in different areas of language skills. What this means in practice is that a student may think that he or she is a good writer, but not as good at speaking.

Furthermore, inhibitions are a significant factor in speaking. Laine and Pihko (1991:19-20) state that language self also includes inhibitions, which work at different levels of language self. At the task level, a student may suffer from the limitations of his or her language skills when trying to express him- or herself. These reflections may even lead to avoiding communication.

As research on the language self is relatively restricted in scale, there are not many studies conducted directly on the relationship between language self and oral skills. However, Heyde (1977:232) found out in a pilot study of his research on the relationship between global (general) and specific self-esteem and the oral production that there may be a tendency for specific self-esteem to be more closely related to oral production than global self-esteem. Furthermore, students with high self esteem received higher oral production ratings from themselves and their teachers than students with low self esteem.

Pollari and Westerholm (1991:60, 66-67, 69-70) have looked at the foreign language self-concept of adult learners of English. They found out that the majority of the respondents had a positive attitude towards their general ability to learn a new foreign language. Interestingly, a slight majority had weak self-esteem in the area of speaking English. When asked to react to a statement "Considering the length of my studies, I speak English well", 41 % of the respondents disagreed. However, 52 % did not admit feeling ridiculous or uncomfortable when speaking English, but 62 % were familiar with the feeling of embarrassment resulting from not finding the right words. Pronunciation seemed to be the most difficult aspect in English, 59 % agreeing with this, but this does not necessarily affect studying, because overall

Pollari and Westerholm (1991) state that pronunciation is too difficult only for a minority. Based on this research, it would seem that Finns do not trust their oral skills in English, but as we will see later in connection with VARIENG-research, this is not always so straightforward.

2.3 Speaking English and Swedish in Finland

Many studies have been conducted on how and when Finns speak English. As far as Swedish is concerned, studies often seem to be related to attitudes towards the language. Next, I will look at the speaking of these two languages more closely.

2.3.1 Situations where Finns use English

One way to look at where Finns use English is to divide those situations into three groups. According to Leppänen and Nikula (2008:23-24), firstly, there are situations which are conducted entirely or mainly in English and English is the only common language for participants. Finns may talk with native speakers of the language, or with non-natives (English as a lingua franca). Secondly, there are bilingual situations where participants use both English and Finnish. The third group is situations which are conducted mostly in Finnish, but also include elements of English. English elements are primarily single words or sentences, either in their original form or adjusted to Finnish morphology or phonology. As we can see, Finns do not speak English only with foreigners, but also among themselves.

The most extensive study on where Finns use English is the “English in Finland – a national survey on Finns’ uses of and attitudes to English” conducted by the Jyväskylä unit of Centre of Excellence for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English in cooperation with Statistics Finland in the autumn of 2007. The study had about 1,500 respondents aged between 15-74. (Kalaja et al. 2009:22.) Among others, the respondents’ views on oral skills were examined. When asked to evaluate their oral skills in English, 46 per cent of the respondents said that they speak English relatively well or quite fluently, and nine per cent fluently. What this means is that over half of the Finns think they speak English at least relatively well. (VARIENG 2009.) In addition, it is important for Finns to sound fluent: about 54 per cent of them want to seem fluent when they are using English. It seems that Finns trust

their skills, but maybe demand much from themselves. In addition, language mixing seems to be extremely common, because 26 per cent of the respondents reported mixing English and Finnish often when speaking and 35 per cent of the respondents stated that they mix them sometimes. (Kalaja et al. 2009:107, 119.) This confirms the fact that has been stated by Pahta and Nurmi (2004:128, 130): code-switching has become common for all age groups.

2.3.2 Students in upper secondary school as speakers of English and Swedish

Students in upper secondary schools have been the focus of many studies on speaking English and Swedish. One of the issues that has been looked at is students' confidence in their oral skills. Yli-Renko (1992:95, 96) found that students who estimated their oral communication skills at the highest level (4 or 5 of 5) thought they were eager and open as speakers of foreign languages and mother tongue. Half of the students who estimated their skills at level 3 or below were shy as speakers of foreign languages. At the beginning of the term (the study was conducted during a term), ten out of 18 respondents said that they are sometimes shy about speaking English, but this was much more common in speaking Swedish: 20 out of 26 thought this. Hollmén (2007:52, 62-63, 66) got even more negative results in her study on speaking Swedish: none of the students in the study perceived their oral skills as good, and some of them could not evaluate their oral skills. In addition, all students had communication apprehension. Despite all this, none of the students interviewed had a negative attitude towards Swedish either and most of them thought that they will need Swedish in the future.

Furthermore, Oksanen (2005:68) has looked at students' beliefs about themselves as users of Finnish, English and Swedish through the analysis of metaphorical constructions. The study took into account both reading and writing. When referring to Swedish, students used described language users with metaphors "out of one's element", "incomplete" and "sufferer" the most. As far as English is concerned, the most common ones were "in one's element", "incomplete" and "child". Overall, as users of Swedish the students trusted themselves more as speakers than as writers. As users of English they trusted themselves more as writers than as speakers, but the evidence was not clear. The girls trusted themselves more than the boys as users of Swedish, whereas the opposite was true of English. To sum up, it seems that students trust their skills much less in Swedish than in English.

Students have also been asked whether they have been given enough practice and feedback on oral skills. In Yli-Renko' study (1992:99), students were asked whether they had been given enough chances to learn speaking in the lessons and 12 of 18 respondents totally agreed in the case of English, but only three of 27 in the case of Swedish, 11 agreed to some extent and 11 disagreed to some extent. Hollmén (2007:58) found that students felt that they did not receive enough feedback on their communicative skills in Swedish in the classroom. Based on these studies it seems that more practice in oral skills, particularly in Swedish, is needed.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

In this part of the paper I will introduce how I conducted my study. First I will look at the research question. After that I will describe how the data was collected and how the results were analysed.

3.1 Research question

The aim of my study is to describe 3rd-year students in a Finnish upper secondary school as speakers of English and Swedish. The main research questions are the following:

1. How do 3rd-year students in a Finnish upper secondary school use their oral skills in English and Swedish outside the school?
2. How do they see themselves as speakers of these languages?

The purpose is thus to find out in what kinds of situations they have spoken these languages, how often and with whom. Furthermore, the purpose is to describe their language self concerning speaking the languages in question and their beliefs about speaking them. In addition, they will be asked about their willingness to communicate and communication apprehension. Surveying how they see themselves as speakers of English and Swedish concerns also speaking these languages at school, in addition to speaking outside the class. In this way, all students, also those who have not spoken these languages outside the classroom, are given a chance to describe their thoughts.

It was expected that there are great differences between where the students have spoken English and Swedish and how they see themselves as speakers of these languages. For instance, it was expected that the students have spoken English outside the class more often than Swedish, because English is often used as a lingua franca. Because of this, the students are also likely to feel more comfortable as speakers of English than as speakers of Swedish. In addition, they probably like speaking English more than speaking Swedish. To sum up, it is likely that the students are more comfortable with their oral skills in English than in Swedish.

3.2 Collection of data

The data was collected by a questionnaire in an upper secondary school in Jyväskylä. A questionnaire was chosen as a method because views of many people can easily be collected with it. The questionnaire consisted of both open and closed questions. According to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:201), open questions give respondents a chance to express themselves with their own words and show what is central in their thinking. Open questions, therefore, suit the questionnaire in the present study well, because the aim is to hear the students' own voice as much as possible. This way the method is suitable for a qualitative study, because as Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:164) point out, methods of collecting data that bring out the respondents' voice and points of view are favoured in qualitative research.

However, closed questions, which include multiple choice questions, are also necessary in the present study. Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:201) point out that multiple choice questions make it possible to compare the responses in a sensible way and produce less varying results than open questions. Multiple choice questions are also easier for respondents to answer, because they help the respondent to identify his or her choice, instead of needing to remember it. In the present study, in closed questions, students will, for example, be asked about their language self with the help of Likert scales. Likert scales consist of a series of statements and respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with these items by marking one of the responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (Dörnyei 2003:37).

The present study is mostly a qualitative study. However, because of using a questionnaire form with also multiple choice items, the method of collecting data has features of a

quantitative study (Heikkilä 2004:16). As Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:137, 164) point out, a qualitative study and a quantitative study can complement each other and it can even be difficult to distinguish them from one another.

The questionnaire form was divided into three parts. In part A, students were asked background information: gender and when they had begun studying English and Swedish. In part B, students were given questions concerning speaking Swedish and in part C questions concerning speaking English. The questions about speaking these two languages were the same, which enables comparison of the results between two languages.

The questionnaire was tested by a pilot study. A girl who had finished the upper secondary school one year ago was asked to fill in the questionnaire. It took about 20 minutes to finish the questions and thus could be answered at the beginning or at the end of a lesson, and that the questions were easy to understand.

Third-year upper secondary school students were asked to fill in the questionnaire, because it is useful to see how students see themselves as speakers of English and Swedish at the end of the upper secondary school after many years of studying the languages. At this age, students may also have had many chances to use the languages outside school and they have developed their own views on the issues.

Altogether 30 third-year students answered the questionnaire on two separate occasions. Early December 2009, altogether ten boys and 20 girls answered the questionnaire. Most of the respondents had begun studying English in the third grade of the elementary school, but two of them had begun in the first grade, one before starting school and one in the fifth grade. All the students except one, who had started in the 5th grade, had begun studying Swedish in the 7th grade. They were all attending a non-compulsory course in Swedish. The students were asked to fill in the questionnaire during their Swedish lessons.

3.3 Method of analysis

The answers of the questionnaire were analysed by qualitative methods but the analysis also included features of a quantitative study. Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:224) divide ways of analysing the results into two: 1) ways that aim at explaining, where a statistical analysis is often used and 2) ways that aim at understanding, where a qualitative analysis is used. In the present study, percentages of students who have, for instance, used English on average once a week were counted and this resembled the methods of a quantitative study. However, because the study is mostly a qualitative one, the main purpose was to describe the data that the answers provide. The open questions, in particular, provide possibilities for a qualitative analysis. The aim was both at explaining and understanding.

An important part of analysing the results was comparing the answers concerning English and Swedish with each other. At the beginning I considered each question individually and collected the answers in an Excel table and contrasted the answers concerning English and Swedish to see similarities and differences. I began the analysis by examining the students' definitions of good oral skills in English and Swedish and described the common features in them. After that I looked at the situations where the students had spoken English and Swedish outside the school in Finland, abroad and on the Internet and highlighted the common features here as well. To describe the language self of the students I divided the questions and statements into three categories: the actual self, the self-esteem and the ideal self. Finally, I combined answers from different questions and statements to create portraits of the students. The focus was mostly on comparing speaking English and Swedish, but the differences between the boys and the girls were highlighted as well when interesting differences appeared.

4 STUDENTS' DEFINITIONS OF GOOD ORAL SKILLS, SPEAKING ENGLISH AND SWEDISH OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL AND LANGUAGE SELF

In this chapter I will introduce the results of the present study. Firstly, I will look at the students' descriptions of good oral skills in English and Swedish. Secondly, I will describe the situations where the respondents have spoken English and Swedish outside the school. After that I will take a closer look at the learners' language self concerning speaking, which includes describing the students' actual self, self-esteem and ideal self. Finally, I will present portraits of the students as speakers of English and Swedish. In the examples, the boys have been given the identification code "M" and the girls the identification code "F".

4.1 Students' definitions of good oral skills in English and Swedish

There was great variety in the students' definitions of good oral skills in English. However, the boys could be roughly divided into two groups. The first group was the boys who defined good oral skills more moderately, for example, as being able to manage in everyday life in English, whereas the second group had higher targets: fluent speaking and knowing "all". Here are examples (M6, represents the former group, M2, M3 and M4 the latter one):

(1) M2: Sujuva puhuminen, ymmärtäminen, kaikki. [Fluent speaking, understanding, everything.]

(2) M3: Laaja sanasto, hyvä ääntäminen ja lauserakenteiden osaaminen. [A wide vocabulary, good pronunciation and knowing clause structures.]

(3) M4: Osaa kaikki asiat monipuolisesti. [Knows all things widely.]

(4) M6: Että osaa toimia jokapäiväisessä elämässä englanniksi. [That one can act in every day life in English.]

In the girls' answers being able to communicate in an *understandable* way was the most important criterion in defining good oral skills. Many girls mentioned that it is important that one can express him- or herself so that the counterpart understands the message. Other criteria mentioned were speaking fluently, pronouncing correctly, a wide vocabulary, and being able to talk and be relaxed at the same time. Some girls also specified more precisely that good oral skills mean being able to communicate with native speakers or being able to manage in English abroad.

The definitions of good oral skills in Swedish were mostly similar to those of English. However, two of the boys defined that good oral skills mean more advanced skills in English than in Swedish. Maybe that reveals something about their goals and expectations connected to speaking these languages. This distinction can be seen when comparing the boys' definitions of good oral skills in Swedish to their definitions connected with English (above):

(5) M2: Pystyy kommunikoidaan kielen avulla, vaikka kielioppi ei olisikaan täysin oikein. [One is able to communicate through the language, even though the grammar wasn't exactly correct.]

(6) M3: Osaa perusasiat: lauserakenteet ja sanasto. Osaa myöskin ääntää suunnilleen oikein. [Knowing the basics: clause structures and vocabulary. Pronouncing roughly correctly.]

In all, the students' definitions of good oral skills included elements from all the areas of communicative competence. Many students mentioned elements of the grammatical competence, such as vocabulary, but most students used broader definitions, for example, being able to communicate through the language. Thus, it seems that they understand that good oral skills mean skills in many different areas. Some of them mentioned speaking with native speakers, which takes the sociolinguistic competence into account. However, only one of them mentioned skills connected with strategic competence:

(7) F10: Osaa ääntää sanat kutakuinkin oikein sekä jos vaikka sattuu ettei muista jotain sanaa niin osaa käyttää synonyymeja/selityksiä niin ettei keskustelu tyssää. [One can pronounce words roughly correctly and if it happens that one doesn't remember a word, one is able to use synonyms/explanations so that the conversation won't freeze.]

It could therefore be induced that although the students understand that communication is more than merely words and vocabulary, they are not always aware of strategic skills. Maybe the fact that strategic skills also belong to the communicative competence should be highlighted more at school.

4.2 Speaking English and Swedish outside the school

In this part, I will describe how the respondents have spoken English and Swedish outside the school. The respondents were asked if they had spoken English and Swedish outside the school in Finland, abroad and on the internet. They also described the situations in their own

words. Furthermore, the students were asked whether they had spoken with native or non-native speakers and how many times they had spoken the languages in question outside the school during the last 12 months.

4.2.1. Speaking English and Swedish outside the school in Finland

Altogether 90 per cent (27/30) of the students had spoken English in Finland outside the class. There was a slight difference between the girls and the boys. Eight out of the ten boys (80 %) reported speaking English in Finland, whereas 19 out of the 20 girls (95 %) replied the same.

Six main types of situations where the students had spoken English outside the school in Finland could be separated from the students' answers. The most common situation was helping tourists, more precisely, giving street directions. Eleven students reported this. The second most common situations were speaking with friends, which likely includes both Finnish and foreign friends, and speaking English at work, in many cases more precisely a summer job. Both of these situations were reported by eight students. Furthermore, five students simply reported that they had spoken English when being in town or that they had spoken English with new people. In addition, three students said that they had spoken English in their hobbies and two of the students said that they had spoken English with an exchange student. In addition to these main types, one student reported having spoken English when travelling to Southern Finland and one replied that she had spoken English almost everywhere. All this shows the variety of situations where English is spoken outside the classroom in Finland.

Whereas most students had spoken English outside the school in Finland, only 45 per cent (13/29) had spoken Swedish outside the class. One student did not reply to this question. The difference between the girls and the boys was larger than in the case of English: 55 percent of the girls (11/20) had spoken Swedish outside the school, but the corresponding percentage for the boys was 22 per cent (2/9).

Six different types of situations where the students had spoken Swedish outside the class in Finland could be identified in the answers, and it was easy to make comparisons between the girls and the boys, since there were only two boys who had spoken Swedish. Both boys

reported that they had spoken Swedish when giving directions to a tourist in town and these were the only situations where they had spoken Swedish outside the school. One of the boys replied also that he had spoken Swedish on an oral course in Swedish. Altogether three students reported that they had spoken Swedish in Finland when giving directions. However, this was only the second most common answer. The most common situation was speaking with friends, mentioned by five of the girls, and it seems to be with Finnish-speaking friends. The following examples from the girls' answers illustrate this:

(8) F4: En ehkä näin "virallisesti", mutta kavereitten kesken puhutaan tosi usein "läpällä". [Maybe not so "officially", but with friends we often speak Swedish a little bit as "a joke".]

(9) F8: Puhun kaverin kanssa joskus huvikseni ruotsia. [Sometimes I speak Swedish with my friend just for fun.]

The students had also spoken Swedish with relatives (2/29), in town or when they had spoken with a Swedish person (2/29), in connection with their hobbies (1/29) and at work (1/29).

4.2.2 Speaking English and Swedish abroad

Most students, 90 per cent (27/30) had spoken English abroad. As in the case of speaking English in Finland, the differences between the girls and the boys were not significant: 95 per cent of the girls (19/20) and 80 per cent of the boys (8/10) had spoken English abroad. The situations where the students had spoken English abroad were mostly everyday situations. They had spoken English in shops, restaurants and when travelling by public transport or asking for advice, or just in general when speaking with people or as small talk. They had mostly spoken English on holiday trips, but some also mentioned a youth conference or a school field trip. In addition, one student had lived in Ireland and one had spent a month in the USA visiting acquaintances.

There was a large variety of countries where the students had spoken English. The countries that were mentioned the most often were the USA and Germany (4/30). The second most common countries were the United Kingdom, Turkey, Italy and Greece (3/30). Other countries mentioned were Sweden (2/30) and Spain, Ireland, The Czech Republic and Estonia (1/30).

Fewer students had spoken Swedish than English abroad, that is, 63 per cent (19/30). The difference between the girls and the boys was not as significant as in the case of speaking Swedish in Finland and now the boys had spoken more than the girls: 70 per cent of the boys (7/10) and 60 per cent (12/20) of the girls had spoken Swedish abroad. The situations where the respondents had spoken Swedish were mostly everyday situations, but the answers were really varying, from ordering in a restaurant to asking for directions. The following examples highlight this variety:

(10) M3: Ruotsissa hampurilaisateriaa tilattaessa. [In Sweden when ordering a hamburger meal.]

(11) F19: Kysyin Tukholmassa paljonko kengät maksavat ja onko heillä kokoa 39. [I asked in Stockholm how much the shoes cost and if they have size 39.]

(12) F20: Ruotsissa ja Rodoksella. Humalassa baarissa Rodoksella. Ruotsissa kysyin tietä ja asioin kaupassa. [In Sweden and in Rhodes. Drunk in a bar in Rhodes. In Sweden I asked for the way and went to a shop.]

The usual situations were thus shopping and ordering a hamburger meal. In addition, other situations mentioned were a school field trip to Sweden, living in a Swedish family there, being on a course in or visiting relatives in Sweden.

The students had almost without an exception spoken Swedish in Sweden. Other places were a ferry bound for Sweden, Rhodes which was also mentioned in the examples above and one student had tried to speak Swedish in Norway, because she could not speak Norwegian.

4.2.3 Speaking English and Swedish on the Internet

The concept of “speaking” English and Swedish on the Internet can be understood in many different ways. In the present study, speaking includes also written communication in the Messenger, for instance, because it can be understood to involve instant communication similar to speaking, even though one does not need to take, for example, pronunciation into account.

Most students, 70 per cent (21/30), had spoken English on the Internet. It was slightly more common among the boys than among the girls, because 80 per cent of the boys (8/10) and 65 per cent of the girls (13/20) replied that they had spoken English on the Internet. This was mostly in conversations with friends, in Facebook or in the Messenger. Some also mentioned

e-mail, chats and discussion forums. Two of the boys and one of the girls mentioned playing games.

Speaking Swedish on the Internet was not as common as speaking English: 33 per cent (10/30) of the respondents had spoken Swedish on the Internet. As in the case of speaking English, it was slightly more common among the boys to speak Swedish on the Internet, because 40 per cent of the boys (4/10) and 30 per cent of the girls (6/20) had spoken Swedish on the Internet. Two of the boys mentioned Messenger, one chatting and one playing a game. Two of the girls said that they had spoken Swedish with a friend, one had spoken in Facebook with her relatives, one had spoken with her friends who live in Sweden in Messenger and e-mailed them, one had spoken in the chat with a friend met on the Internet and one had talked with a girl from her host family before a school trip to Sweden.

4.2.4 Speaking English and Swedish during the last twelve months and whether the students had spoken with native or non-native interlocutors

When the students were asked about how often they had spoken English and Swedish during the last twelve months, differences between these two languages appeared. As we can see from Figure 1, all students had spoken English at least a few times a year, but there were seven students who had not spoken Swedish at all during the last twelve months. Over half of the students had spoken Swedish only a few times a year, whereas once a month was the most common answer to this question as far as English is concerned. This confirms the fact that students have more chances to use English than Swedish. Some of the students had spoken English even every day or many times a week outside the school, which further describes how common speaking English outside the school actually is for the students.

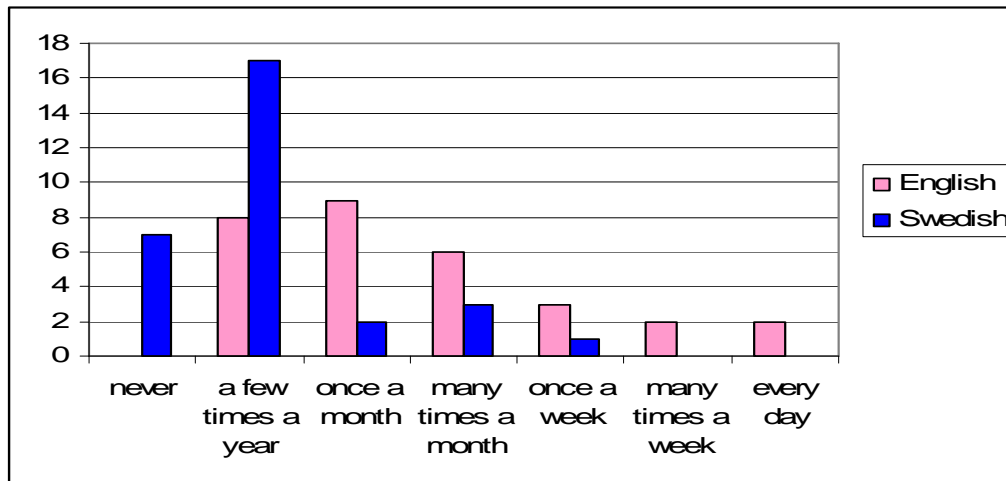


Figure 1. The frequency of speaking English and Swedish outside the school during the last twelve months

The students were also asked whether they had spoken English and Swedish with native or with non-native speakers. There were differences between English and Swedish. The vast majority of the students, that is, 73 per cent (22/30) had spoken English with both native and non-native speakers and the rest had spoken English with non-native speakers. As far as Swedish was concerned, five of the students had not spoken Swedish outside the school and 36 per cent (9/25) of the respondents had spoken with both natives and non-natives, 32 per cent of the students (8/25) had spoken only with natives and correspondingly 32 per cent (8/25) only with non-natives. This highlights the fact that English is used much as a lingua franca, whereas Swedish is often used only with native speakers.

4.3 The language self of the students concerning speaking English and Swedish

In this chapter I will describe the language self of the respondents concerning speaking. I will look at the different parts of the language self, which are the actual self, the self-esteem and the ideal self. Finally, I will introduce portraits of the students as speakers of English and Swedish.

4.3.1 Actual self

The students' actual self as a language speaker was measured by asking them about their attitudes towards speaking English and Swedish. Firstly, the students were asked whether they think that it is nice to speak English and Swedish and secondly, whether they add expressions in English and Swedish into their Finnish speech. The results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Statements and answers concerning the actual self of the students

		strongly disagree	disagree somewhat	undecided	agree somewhat	strongly agree
I think that it is nice to speak English.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	3 % (1/30) 5 % (1/20)	3 % (1/30) 5 % (1/20)	10% (3/30) 10 % (2/20) 10 % (1/10)	43 % (13/30) 40 % (8/20) 50 % (5/10)	40 % (12/30) 40 % (8/20) 40 % (1/10)
I think that it is nice to speak Swedish.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	3 % (1/30) 5 % (1/20)	17 % (5/30) 10 % (2/20) 30 % (3/10)	43 % (13/30) 45 % (9/20) 40 % (4/10)	30 % (9/30) 30 % (6/20) 30 % (3/10)	7 % (2/30) 10 % (2/20)
I often add expressions in English into my Finnish speech.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	17 % (5/30) 25 % (5/20)	13 % (4/30) 15 % (3/20) 10 % (1/10)	23 % (7/30) 25 % (5/20) 20 % (2/10)	37 % (11/30) 30 % (6/20) 50 % (5/10)	10 % (3/30) 5 % (1/20) 20% (2/10)
I often add expressions in Swedish into my Finnish speech.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	47 % (14/30) 50 % (10/20) 40 % (4/10)	13 % (4/30) 15 % (3/20) 10% (1/10)	10 % (3/30) 5 % (1/20) 20 % (2/10)	20 % (6/30) 15 % (3/20) 30 % (3/10)	10 % (3/30) 15 % (3/20)

There was a significant difference between English and Swedish when the students were asked about whether they like speaking these two languages. The great majority of the students, that is, 83 per cent (25/30), agreed somewhat or strongly with the statement “I think that it is nice to speak English”. The boys were slightly more positive than the girls. As far as Swedish was concerned, only 37 per cent (11/30) of the respondents agreed strongly or somewhat with the statement that it is nice to speak Swedish. Also worth noticing is that 40 per cent of the students (12/30) strongly agreed that it is nice to speak English, whereas only 7 per cent of the students (2/30) answered the same about Swedish. One clear difference is also that almost half of the students, 43 per cent (13/30), answered “undecided” to this question as far as Swedish was concerned as opposed to 10 per cent (3/30) in English. It may be that the pressure from the peers and general attitudes towards studying obligatory Swedish, which are often discussed in the media as well, may have made them not to want to express their real thoughts, whereas they can express their thoughts about English more freely, because there is not similar discussion on it.

In addition, it was more common among the students to add English elements into their Finnish speech than Swedish elements. Almost half of the students agreed somewhat or strongly with the statement “I often add expressions in English into my Finnish speech”, whereas 60 per cent (18/30) of them disagreed somewhat or strongly when the same was

asked about Swedish and only 30 per cent (9/30) agreed. It was much more common for the boys than for the girls to add English expressions into their Finnish speech, because 70 % (7/10) of the boys agreed with the statement, whereas only 35 % (7/20) of the girls agreed. In adding Swedish expressions, the difference was not as clear, but none of the boys agreed strongly with the statement, whereas three of the girls did. These results are understandable, because the students come across numerous English expressions in their everyday environment, for example, in games, the Internet and movies, and thus it is natural that they also enter their Finnish speech.

Furthermore, to find out about their actual selves as speakers of English and Swedish, the students were asked with open questions about what they find difficult and what they find easy in speaking the two languages. As far English was concerned, the easiest part of speaking was finding the words, which was mentioned by ten of the students (Example 14). Pronunciation was also mentioned by three boys and one girl as being easy. In addition to these most prominent ones, many other areas were mentioned as well, for instance, understanding what the interlocutor is saying, maintaining conversation and the fact that speaking feels natural for them (Example 19). Some differences appeared between the girls and the boys. The following examples illustrate these differences.

(13) M3: Kaikki. Aina ollut lahjakas englannissa. [Everything (is easy). I have always been talented in English.]

(14) M10: Osaan melko paljon sanoja, joten se helpottaa puhumista. [I know quite many words and that makes speaking easier.]

(15) M5: Yleisesti luonteva jutustelu. [In general, speaking that is natural.]

(16) F4: Ei ole helppoa, olen huono. [It's not easy, I'm bad.]

(17) F5: Puhua yksittäisiä sanoja ja yleinen moikkaaminen ja itsestä kertominen. [Speaking individual words, saying "hello" and introducing oneself.]

(18) F12: Kaikki on vaikeaa! [Everything is difficult!]

(19) F19: Luonnollisuus, oppii uusia ilmauksia varsinkin tv:stä. [Naturality, I learn new expressions especially from TV.]

(20) F20: Sitä on helppo ja mukava puhua. [It's easy and nice to speak.]

Thus, in general, the boys seemed to find speaking English generally easier than the girls, although, of course, there were girls who also found speaking easy (Example 20). However, some girls seemed to find speaking really challenging (Examples 16 and 18), whereas two

boys were really positive about their skills (for instance, Example 13)). This is connected with the self-esteem that will be discussed in the next chapter. Female speakers also seem to be more conservative in the language forms they use than male speakers, as noted above in the case of code-switching and therefore possibly demand more from themselves.

When asked about what is difficult in speaking English, some of the issues mentioned by some to be easy were difficult according to others. Pronunciation, which by some was said to be easy, was clearly the most difficult part of speaking English, which can be seen in Examples 21 and 23. It was the most difficult aspect of speaking also in the study of Pollari and Westerholm (1991). The second most difficult one was remembering words, particularly more formal words and speaking about other issues than everyday issues. In addition, issues related to grammar, fluency and understanding different accents were mentioned. One of the girls also mentioned that it is difficult to form sentences when one is nervous. Naturally, similar differences between the boys and girls could be seen in responses to this question as in the responses to the question of what is easy. For example, as can be seen from Example 22, one of the boys said that nothing is difficult, whereas one of the girls (Example 23) had a negative picture of her skills. Here are some examples from the answers:

(21) M10: Joitakin sanoja on vaikea ääntää oikein. [Some words are difficult to pronounce correctly.]

(22) M3: No vaikeaa ei varsinaisesti mikään, mutta syntyperäisen englantilaisen tavoin olisi kiva osata puhua. [Well, nothing is difficult, but it would be nice to be able to speak in the same way as a native English speaker.]

(23) F5: En osaa riittävästi sanastoa, enkä ääntää sanoja oikein. [I don't have enough vocabulary and I can't pronounce words correctly.]

When the same questions were asked about Swedish, similar results were gained. The easiest part of speaking Swedish for ten of the students was remembering words. One student (Example 27) said that one reason for the ease of remembering Swedish vocabulary is that Swedish is close to English and Finnish. She thus makes use of positive transfer. Nine of the students mentioned pronunciation as the easiest part. Furthermore, the students often mentioned that it is easy to talk about easy, "basic" issues, as can be seen from Examples 24 and 25. One student (Example 26) mentioned that speaking with a friend is easy, because then one does not need to feel nervous. The student thus seems to stress about speaking with new people. The following answers of the students highlight the easy parts of speaking Swedish:

(24) M3: Perusasioista puhuminen perussanastoa käyttämällä. [Talking about basic issues by using basic vocabulary.]

(25) F5: Jos saa vähän apua ja puhua helppoja juttuja. [If I get a little help and a chance to speak about easy things.]

(26) F8: Kaverin kanssa se on kaikinpuolin helppoa, kun ei tarvitse jännittää. [With a friend it is easy in general, because then I don't need to feel nervous.]

(27) F13: Ääntäminen, muistuttaa englantia ja suomea: helppo "hakea" sanoja päästä. [Pronunciation, has similar features with English and Finnish: easy to "fetch" words from the head.]

The most difficult issues in speaking were related to grammar, especially the word order (Examples 28 and 29). Also pronunciation and finding the words were seen as difficult (Examples 30). The girls, again, seemed to trust their skills less than the boys., which can be seen, for instance, as one of the girls mentioned that the most difficult issue in speaking is finding the courage to speak Swedish (Example 20). Thus, the students, particularly girls, may not consider finding the right words or having a command of grammar as complicated, but what they lack is actually courage to use the language. This apparently is often the problem, because if a student has studied the language for years, he or she knows much, but if there has not been enough practice in real situations, the student may not have enough courage to speak and it causes anxiety. Here are some examples from the answers:

(28) M10: Kielioppisääntöjen muistaminen. [Remembering grammar rules.]

(29) F12: Sanajärjestys ja kaikki pikkusanat: att, sin... [The word order and all the little words: att, sin...]

(30) F14: Jos sanoja ei tule mieleen, vaikea puhua. Välillä ei muista kuinka sanat äännetään. [If the words don't come to one's mind, it's difficult to speak. Sometimes I don't remember how the words are pronounced.]

(31) F20: Etsiä rohkeus käyttää sitä. [To find the courage to use it (Swedish).]

It was interesting that the grammar was mentioned often with Swedish, but only a few times with English. One reason behind this may be that the students get much English input in their environment every day and in this way they get acquainted with the forms of English more easily than with the forms of Swedish. In addition, several aspects of the Swedish grammar seem to be problematic and new for Finns, particularly the word order in subordinated clauses, but, of course, also English grammar includes similarly difficult issues: use of articles and prepositions, for instance, are not easy for Finns, neither in Swedish nor in English. Possibly difficulty of grammar is stereotypically linked with Swedish. Hopefully, the students, however, do not make grammar the obstacle for their speaking. What is important is

that the interlocutor understands what one is saying, not that everything is completely correct. We make mistakes even when speaking our native language. Fortunately, some of the students seemed to have realised this, which can be seen in the following example:

(32) F8: Se, että meneekö oikein. Pääasia kuitenkin, että toinen ymmärtää. [Whether it goes correctly. The main thing, however, is that the other one understands.]

4.3.2 Self-esteem

The respondents have more confidence in themselves as speakers of English than as speakers of Swedish. When asked to react to the statement “I have confidence in myself as a speaker of English”, 60 per cent (18/30) of the students responded that they agree (see Table 2). The boys have slightly more confidence in themselves than the girls: 70 per cent of the boys (7/10) agreed, whereas the corresponding percentage for the girls was 55 per cent (11/20). When the same was asked about Swedish, only 20 % (6/30) of the students agreed and about half of the students disagreed somewhat. The difference between the boys and the girls was rather similar as in English: 15 per cent of the girls (3/20) and 30 per cent of the boys (3/19) agreed. However, it was only one girl who strongly agreed with the statement.

When the students were asked whether they get nervous when speaking English and Swedish, the assumptions that the students trust themselves more as speakers English than Swedish and that boys trust themselves more were confirmed. Altogether 60 per cent (18/30) of the students agreed with the statement that they get nervous when speaking Swedish, but only 20 per cent (6/30) agreed that they get nervous when speaking English. None of the boys admitted that they get nervous when speaking English, but 30 per cent (6/20) of the girls did. However, it is difficult to draw any conclusions, because 50 per cent (5/10) of the boys answered “undecided”. As far as Swedish is concerned, the difference between the girls and the boys is obvious, although 40 per cent (4/10) of the boys answered “undecided”. Most girls, that is, 75 % (15/20) agreed that they get nervous when speaking English, but only 30 per cent of the boys (3/10) agreed with the statement. It can be speculated why the boys have often answered “undecided”. It can be because they do not want to admit that they feel nervous, or they simply trust themselves more.

When the students were asked to compare themselves to their classmates, over half of the students thought that they were as good as their classmates in speaking English, but only

about one third of them thought the same about Swedish. Actually the students may have found it difficult to compare themselves to others, because 43 % (13/30) of them answered “undecided”. The boys more often than the girls thought that they are equally good speakers in English and Swedish, which again further confirms their better self-esteem.

Table 2. Statements and answers concerning the self-esteem of the students

		strongly disagree	disagree somewhat	undecided	agree somewhat	strongly agree
I have confidence in myself as a speaker of English.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	10 % (3/30) 15 % (3/20)	10 % (3/30) 15 % (3/20)	20 % (6/30) 15 % (3/20) 30 % (3/10)	40 % (12/30) 40 % (8/20) 40 % (4/10)	20 % (6/30) 15 % (3/20) 30 % (3/10)
I have confidence in myself as a speaker of Swedish.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	17 % (5/30) 20 % (4/20) 10 % (1/10)	47 % (14/30) 45 % (9/20) 50 % (5/10)	17 % (5/30) 20 % (4/20) 10 % (1/10)	17 % (5/30) 10 % (2/20) 30 % (3/10)	3 % (1/30) 5 % (1/20)
I get nervous when I am speaking English.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	17 % (5/30) 15 % (3/20) 20 % (2/10)	27 % (8/30) 25 % (5/20) 30 % (3/10)	37 % (11/30) 30 % (6/20) 50 % (5/10)	13 % (4/30) 20 % (4/20)	7 % (2/30) 10 % (2/20)
I get nervous when I am speaking Swedish.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	3 % (1/30) 10 % (1/10)	13 % (4/30) 10 % (2/20) 20 % (2/10)	23 % (7/30) 15 % (3/20) 40 % (4/10)	43 % (13/30) 55 % (11/20) 20 % (2/10)	17 % (5/30) 20 % (4/20) 10 % (1/10)
I think I am as good as my classmates in speaking English.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	3 % (1/30) 5 % (1/20)	23 % (7/30) 25 % (5/20) 20 % (2/10)	20 % (6/30) 30 % (6/20)	27 % (8/30) 25 % (5/20) 30 % (3/10)	27 % (8/30) 15 % (3/20) 50 % (5/10)
I think I am as good as my classmates in speaking Swedish.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	13 % (4/30) 20 % (N=4)	13 % (4/30) 10 % (2/20) 20 % (2/10)	43 % (13/30) 45 % (9/20) 40 % (4/10)	17 % (5/30) 15 % (3/20) 20 % (2/10)	13 % (4/30) 10 % (2/20) 20 % (2/10)
I have been given enough practice in speaking English at school.	total (N=29) girls (N=19) boys (N=10)	3 % (1/29) 5 % (1/19)	10 % (3/29) 11 % (2/19) 10 % (1/10)	17 % (5/29) 21 % (4/19) 10 % (1/10)	55 % (16/29) 58 % (11/19) 50 % (5/10)	14 % (4/29) 5 % (1/19) 30 % (3/10)
I have been given enough practice in speaking Swedish at school.	total (N=30) girls (N=20) boys (N=10)	3 % (1/30) 5 % (1/20)	30 % (9/30) 30 % (6/20) 30 % (3/10)	30 % (9/30) 25 % (5/20) 40 % (4/10)	37 % (11/30) 40 % (8/20) 30 % (3/10)	

When the students were asked if they think that they have been given enough practice at school in speaking the two languages in question, the students were more content with

English than with Swedish. None of the students agreed strongly with the statement "I have been given enough practice in speaking Swedish at school". The boys felt more often than the girls that they had been given enough practice in oral skills English at school. When asked whether they had been given enough practice in oral skills in English, 30 per cent of them (3/10) agreed strongly, whereas the corresponding percentage for girls was 5 per cent (1/19). As far as Swedish was concerned differences were minor. The finding that the students were more content with the practice in oral skills in English than in Swedish was similar to the results in the study of Yli-Renko (1992).

4.3.3 Ideal self

In connection with the ideal self, the students were asked if they would like to have more opportunities to speak English and Swedish (See Table 3). The great majority of the students, that is, 77 per cent (N=23) agreed that they would like to have more opportunities to speak English. Only two girls disagreed with this statement. When the same was asked about Swedish, half of the students agreed that they would like to have more opportunities to speak it. The difference between the boys and the girls was significant: 70 percent of the girls (N=14) agreed with the statement somewhat or strongly, whereas only one of the boys agreed somewhat and most disagreed with the statement. Thus, it can be said that the students are more willing to speak English than Swedish and would like to have more opportunities to speak it, although they already have more chances to speak English. It can also be speculated why the girls are more willing to have more opportunities to speak Swedish than the boys. One explanation could be that the boys are ashamed to admit their positive attitudes towards speaking Swedish.

Furthermore, the students were asked about their expectations concerning speaking the languages in question (see Table 3). The students were more willing to achieve a native-like pronunciation in English than in Swedish. The boys, in particular, were eager to achieve a native-like pronunciation, as 70 percent (N=7) of them agreed strongly with the statement "I would like to learn to pronounce English in the same way as a native speaker". Objection was found only among the girls. When Swedish was concerned, the girls were slightly more eager than the boys to achieve a native-like pronunciation. However, it must be taken into account

that only one of the boys disagreed with the statement and 30 per cent of the boys (N=3) answered undecided and thus it cannot be said what kinds of thoughts they had.

Table 3. Statements and answers concerning the ideal self of the students

		strongly disagree	disagree somewhat	undecided	agree somewhat	strongly agree
I would like to have more opportunities to speak English.	total (N=30) boys (N=10) girls (N=20)		7 % (2/30) 10 % (2/20)	17 % (5/30) 20 % (2/10) 15 % (3/20)	50 % (15/30) 50 % (5/10) 50 % (10/20)	27 % (8/30) 30 % (3/10) 25 % (5/20)
I would like to have more opportunities to speak Swedish.	total (N=30) boys (N=10) girls (N=20)	7 % (2/30) 20 % (2/10)	20 % (6/30) 40 % (4/10)	23 % (7/30) 30 % (3/10) 20 % (4/20)	43 % (13/30) 10 % (1/10) 60 % (12/20)	7 % (2/30) 10 % (2/20)
I would like to learn to pronounce English in the same way as a native speaker.	total (N=30) boys (N=10) girls (N=20)		3 % (1/30) 5 % (1/20)	7 % (2/30) 10 % (2/20)	37 % (11/30) 30 % (3/10) 40 % (8/20)	53 % (16/30) 70 % (7/10) 45 % (9/20)
I would like to learn to pronounce Swedish in the same way as a native speaker.	total (N=30) boys (N=10) girls (N=20)	3 % (1/30) 10 % (1/10)	7 % (2/30) 10 % (2/20)	17 % (5/30) 30 % (3/10) 10 % (2/20)	37 % (11/30) 40 % (4/10) 35 % (7/20)	37 % (11/30) 20 % (2/10) 45 % (9/20)
I will need oral skills in English in the future.	total (N=30) boys (N=10) girls (N=20)			7 % (2/30) 10 % (2/20)	33 % (10/30) 50 % (5/10) 25 % (5/20)	60 % (18/30) 50 % (5/10) 65 % (13/20)
I will need oral skills in Swedish in the future.	total (N=30) boys (N=10) girls (N=20)	3 % (1/30) 5 % (1/20)	10 % (3/30) 15 % (3/20)	33 % (10/30) 70 % (7/10) 15 % (3/20)	43 % (13/30) 20 % (2/10) 55 % (11/20)	10 % (3/30) 10 % (1/10) 10 % (2)

When the students were asked whether they think that they will need oral skills in the two languages in question, the difference between English and Swedish was significant. None of the students disagreed with the statement “I will need oral skills in English in the future”. Over half of the students agreed strongly with this statement. In the case of Swedish, over half of the students agreed with the statement, but only 10 per cent of them (N=3) strongly. Four of the girls thought that they will not need oral skills in Swedish in the future. Interestingly, most boys answered “undecided”. Maybe they do not know yet. In Central Finland, the need for skills in Swedish is not as clear as in Southern Finland, for example. The need for English, in turn, seems to be self-evident.

4.4 Portraits of the students as speakers of English and Swedish

In this chapter I will combine different components of language self to create portraits of the students as speakers of English and Swedish.

4.4.1 Speakers of English

As far as speaking English was concerned, the clearly largest group was students who thought that it is nice to speak English and most of these students also had confidence in themselves. Nearly all of them would also like to learn to pronounce in the same way as a native speaker. Furthermore, they also thought that they will need English skills in the future. To sum up, these were **the students with positive attitudes and good self-esteem.**

In addition to the largest group, two minor groups could be separated. Three of the students agreed somewhat with the statement “I think that it is nice to speak English”, but they did not have confidence in themselves as speakers of it. However, all three would like to get a native-like pronunciation in the future and two of them strongly agreed that they will need oral skills in English in the future and one did not take a stand on this issue. This could thus be the group of **students with positive attitudes, but poor self-esteem.**

The second minor group was formed by the two girls who disagreed with the statement that English is nice to speak and they also strongly disagreed with having confidence in themselves as speakers of it. One of them expressed her feelings also in the open questions by stating that everything is difficult in speaking English. However, she disagreed strongly that she would be nervous when speaking English. The other agreed that she feels nervous. Despite their negative feelings, the girls would like to get a native-like pronunciation and they also thought that they will need oral skills in English in the future. In all, these girls could be defined as having **negative attitudes and poor self-esteem.**

4.4.2 Speakers of Swedish

Because many students answered “undecided” particularly to the question whether they think it is nice to speak Swedish, it was not possible to draw any far-reaching conclusions about the students as speakers of Swedish. In this description of the students as speakers of Swedish I have excluded the students who answered “undecided” to the statements “I think that it is nice to speak Swedish.” and “I have confidence in myself as a speaker of Swedish.” However, three main groups could be separated.

The first group was the five students who thought that it is nice to speak Swedish and who also had confidence in themselves as speakers of it. All except one would also like to reach a native-like pronunciation. This same one also thought that she will not need oral skills in Swedish in the future, whereas three of them thought they will need them and one answered “undecided”. Altogether, this group seemed to be **the students with positive attitudes and good self-esteem.**

The second group, which as well consisted of five students, was **the students who had negative attitudes and poor self-esteem.** Three of them also admitted that they feel nervous when speaking Swedish, one disagreed and one did not take a stand. The same was true about whether they would like to reach a native-like pronunciation. Two of them did not take a stand on whether they will need oral skills in Swedish in the future and one disagreed somewhat, but one agreed somewhat.

The third group included **three students, who had positive attitudes, but poor self-esteem.** Two of them also agreed that they feel nervous when speaking Swedish. However, all of them would like to learn to pronounce Swedish in the same way as a native speaker and they also think that they will need oral skills in Swedish in the future. They like speaking, but seem to lack confidence.

In addition to these three main groups, **one student had a negative attitude, but he had good self-esteem.** He also disagreed that he would feel nervous when speaking Swedish. He strongly disagreed that he would like to get a native-like pronunciation, but thought that he will need oral skills in Swedish in the future. This speaker thus seems to trust his skills, even though he does not like speaking much.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of my study was to describe how third-year students in a Finnish upper secondary school speak English and Swedish outside the school and how they see themselves as speakers of these two languages. Nearly all students had spoken English outside the classroom in Finland, whereas only about half of the students had spoken Swedish. This can be partly explained by the fact that the students were from Central Finland, where the need for speaking Swedish is smaller than, for example, in Southern Finland. The most common situations where the students had spoken English in Finland were helping tourists, speaking with friends, at work, in town when meeting foreigners and in connection to their hobbies. Similar situations were mentioned for Swedish as well, but the most common situation, however, was speaking with Finnish friends. This seemed to be a way of having fun among the girls.

The students had also talked English more than Swedish abroad, which is understandable because of the fact that English can be used almost anywhere. These were usually situations that a tourist faces. Speaking English was also more common than speaking Swedish on the Internet. English seems to be used as a lingua franca, whereas Swedish is often used with native speakers. There were students who spoke English outside the school every day and most students spoke it at least once a month. All this shows that English has really become a part of the students' everyday lives, whereas speaking Swedish is connected with trips to Sweden and communicating with friends, especially Swedish-speaking, but as was popular in the respondent group, also with Finnish-speaking friends.

The students' language self was looked at from the perspectives of the actual self, the self-esteem and the ideal self. The students' actual self was clearly more positive towards speaking English than speaking Swedish. Interestingly, almost half of the students did not express whether it is nice to speak Swedish. They clearly did not want to express their real opinion: maybe they feel pressure from the peers to be against obligatory Swedish or then they did not want to hurt anybody's feelings. The boys were slightly more positive than the girls towards speaking English and they also add English expressions to their speech more often. Altogether, almost half of the students often add English expressions into their speech, which confirms that code-switching has become common (Pahta and Nurmi 2004). The easiest part of speaking both English and Swedish was remembering words, whereas in

speaking English the most difficult part was pronunciation and in Swedish the grammar. In English pronunciation, in particular, the students expect much from themselves. When the students were asked a definition of good oral skills, only one of them mentioned strategic skills. Perhaps the students should be told more about strategic skills, because they help when there are problems in communication.

The students had clearly better self-esteem in speaking English than speaking Swedish and the boys trusted themselves more than the girls. The girls more often admitted that they get nervous when speaking the languages in question and did not think as often as boys that they were equal to their classmates in speaking. Also Oksanen (2005) has found out that boys trust themselves more than girls as users of English. She has also observed that the girls trust themselves more than the boys as users of Swedish, but in my study the difference between the girls and boys there was not significant. It can be speculated why the boys have more confidence in themselves. It may be because they often play computer games with English vocabulary. Furthermore, it may be because they do not want to admit that they feel nervous. Boys may also be encouraged in a different way or, simply, it can be typical of girls to be modest about their skills or demand much from themselves.

The differences in attitudes towards English and Swedish could be seen in the ideal selves of the students as well. The students more often wanted to have more opportunities to speak English than Swedish. The girls were clearly more willing to get more chances to speak Swedish than the boys and they also were slightly more willing to achieve native-like pronunciation skills in it. The boys, in turn, were more willing to get native-like pronunciation skills in English and thus seem to set their goals higher in English than in Swedish, which could also be seen in their definitions of good oral skill in these two languages, where good skills in English were more demanding than those in Swedish. Furthermore, most of the boys do not yet know if they will need oral skills in the future. It can be difficult for a student to see where Swedish is really needed if he or she lives in a Finnish-speaking area. It creates a teacher the challenge of how to motivate the students.

When looking at the portraits of the students as speakers of these languages, it becomes clear that the students trust themselves more as speakers of English and also have more often positive attitudes towards it. The largest group in English was the students who like speaking and also have confidence in themselves. In Swedish, this group had as many members as a

group with the students who did not think that speaking is nice and who did not trust themselves either. These results have some same features as the metaphors of Oksanen (2005), which describe the users of Swedish as “out of one’s element” and the users of English as “in one’s element”. This has implications for teaching: how to get the students to trust themselves more as speakers of Swedish. Of course, practice helps in this. Maybe more practice in oral skills in Swedish is needed at school as well, because the students were more content with English than with Swedish as far as practicing oral skills at school was concerned.

The present study has its limitations. The sample was limited in scale, because there were only 30 respondents, and thus the results cannot be generalised. There were fewer boys (10/30) than girls (20/30) and therefore the comparisons between them are not necessarily representative. Using the Likert scale from 1-5 also brought some problems in analysing the results, since students often chose number 3 (undecided) on the scale, particularly in the questions concerning Swedish and it is difficult to interpret what the respondents mean by it: whether they do not want to express their real opinions. The respondents may also interpret the scale differently. Some of the questions and statements were also really personal and the students necessarily do not want to express their own thoughts, and furthermore, it can be difficult to evaluate oneself as a speaker. In addition, all students were in a voluntary course in Swedish and are going to take Swedish in their matriculation examination, which may also have an effect on the results. However, the study succeeded in giving insights into the students’ thinking and in this way it can help, for example, future teachers to understand how the students use oral skills outside the school and how they see themselves as speakers of these languages. This helps in planning how to teach oral skills.

There is need for further research in this area. In my study, I did not take into account the connection between the language self and the reached level in oral skills. This connection could be examined, as well as the connection between different parts of the language self could be looked at more deeply. One possibility could be to make a similar study and interpret the results by focusing on different portraits of the speakers in detail. Furthermore, some of the findings of the present study open up possibilities for further research. For example, the difference between girls and boys in self-esteem in speaking foreign languages could be studied more in depth. Also a longitudinal study could be done in order to see how the language self develops as a learner proceeds in his or her language studies.

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APPENDIX

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO KIELTEN LAITOS

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Kyselylomake
Syksy 2009

TUTKIMUS: MITEN ABITURIENTIT NÄKEVÄT ITSENSÄ ENGLANNIN JA RUOTSIN PUHUIJINA

Hyvä abiturientti!

Opiskelen englannin- ja ruotsinopettajaksi Jyväskylän yliopistossa. Teen parhaillaan tutkimusta, jossa selvitetään miten lukion kolmannen vuosikurssin opiskelijat näkevät itsensä ruotsin ja englannin kielten puhujina. Tätä varten pyydän Sinua vastaamaan tämän kyselylomakkeen kysymyksiin.

Kaikki vastauksesi käsitellään luottamuksellisesti. Sinun ei tarvitse kirjoittaa mihinkään nimeäsi, eikä opettajasi tule näkemään vastauksiasi. Jos Sinulla on kysyttävää, vastaan mielelläni.

Kiitos yhteistyöstä!

Tarja Fagerlund

A. TAUSTATIEDOT

1. Sukupuolesi (ympyröi oikea) tyttö poika .
2. Monennella luokalla olet aloittanut ruotsin opiskelun? _____
3. Monennella luokalla olet aloittanut englannin opiskelun? _____

B. RUOTSIN KIELEN PUHUMINEN

Seuraavat kysymykset koskevat kokemuksiasi ruotsin puhumisesta koulun ulkopuolella. Vastaa ympyröimällä sopiva vaihtoehto ja kirjoittamalla vastaukset annettuun tilaan.

1. Oletko puhunut ruotsia Suomessa koulun ulkopuolella?
 - a) kyllä
 - b) ei

Jos vastasit kyllä, kuvaile omin sanoin lyhyesti millaisissa tilanteissa olet puhunut ruotsia. (esim. harrastusten parissa / kesätoissa / kaupungilla tien neuvomiseen...)

2. Oletko puhunut ruotsia ulkomailla?
 - a) kyllä
 - b) ei

Jos vastasit kyllä, kuvaile omin sanoin lyhyesti millaisissa tilanteissa ja missä maissa.

3. Oletko puhunut ruotsia internetissä?
 - a) kyllä
 - b) ei

Jos vastasit kyllä, kuvaile omin sanoin lyhyesti millaisissa tilanteissa.

4. Kuinka usein olet viimeisen vuoden aikana puhunut ruotsia koulun ulkopuolella?

- a) joka päivä
- b) kerran viikossa
- c) monta kertaa viikossa
- d) useita kertoja kuukaudessa
- e) kerran kuukaudessa
- f) muutamia yksittäisiä kertoja vuoden aikana
- g) en kertaakaan

5. Kenen kanssa olet puhunut ruotsia koulun ulkopuolella?

- a) syntyperäisten puhujien kanssa
- b) ei-syntyperäisten puhujien kanssa
- c) sekä syntyperäisten että ei-syntyperäisten puhujien kanssa

Seuraavaksi Sinulle esitetään väitteitä koskien ruotsin puhumista niin koulussa kuin koulun ulkopuolella. Valitse se vaihtoehto, joka kuvaa mielipidettäsi parhaiten. Valitse vain yksi vaihtoehto. (1=olen täysin eri mieltä, 2 = olen jonkin verran eri mieltä, 3 = en ole asiasta varsinaisesti mitään mieltä, 4 = olen jonkin verran samaa mieltä, 5=olen täysin samaa mieltä)

1. Minusta on mukavaa puhua ruotsia.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Luotan itseeni ruotsin puhujana.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Jännitän puhuessani ruotsia.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Lisään usein ruotsinkielisiä ilmauksia suomenkieliseen puheeseeni.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Koen olevani yhtä hyvä ruotsin puhuja kuin luokkatoverini.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Olen saanut koulussa riittävästi harjoitusta ruotsin puhumiseen	1	2	3	4	5
7. Haluaisin, että minulla olisi enemmän mahdollisuuksia puhua ruotsia.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Haluaisin oppia ääntämään ruotsia syntyperäisen puhujan tavoin.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Tarvitsen tulevaisuudessa ruotsin suullista kielitaitoa.	1	2	3	4	5

Vastaa vapaasti seuraaviin kysymyksiin.

1. Mikä Sinulle on helpointa ruotsin puhumisessa?

2. Mikä Sinulle on vaikeinta ruotsin puhumisessa?

3. Mitä mielestäsi tarkoittaa hyvä ruotsin suullinen kielitaito?

C. ENGLANNIN KIELEN PUHUMINEN

Seuraavat kysymykset koskevat kokemuksiasi englannin puhumisesta koulun ulkopuolella. Vastaa ympyröimällä sopiva vaihtoehto ja kirjoittamalla vastaukset annettuun tilaan.

1. Oletko puhunut englantia Suomessa koulun ulkopuolella?

- a) kyllä
- b) ei

Jos vastasit kyllä, kuvaile omin sanoin lyhyesti millaisissa tilanteissa olet puhunut englantia (esim. harrastusten parissa / kesätoissa /kaupungilla tien neuvomiseen...)

2. Oletko puhunut englantia ulkomailla?

- a) kyllä
- b) ei

Jos vastasit kyllä, kuvaile omin sanoin lyhyesti millaisissa tilanteissa ja missä maissa

3. Oletko puhunut englantia internetissä?

- a) kyllä
- b) ei

Jos vastasit kyllä, kuvaile omin sanoin lyhyesti millaisissa tilanteissa.

4. Kuinka usein olet viimeisen vuoden aikana puhunut englantia koulun ulkopuolella?

- a) joka päivä
- b) kerran viikossa
- c) monta kertaa viikossa
- d) useita kertoja kuukaudessa
- e) kerran kuukaudessa
- f) muutamia yksittäisiä kertoja vuoden aikana
- g) en kertaakaan

5. Kenen kanssa olet puhunut englantia koulun ulkopuolella?

- a) syntyperäisten puhujien kanssa
- b) ei-syntyperäisten puhujien kanssa
- c) sekä syntyperäisten että ei-syntyperäisten puhujien kanssa

Seuraavaksi Sinulle esitetään väitteitä koskien englannin puhumista niin koulussa kuin koulun ulkopuolella. Valitse se vaihtoehto, joka kuvaa mielipidettäsi parhaiten. Valitse vain yksi vaihtoehto. (1=olen täysin eri mieltä, 2 = olen jonkin verran eri mieltä, 3 = en ole asiasta varsinaisesti mitään mieltä, 4 = olen jonkin verran samaa mieltä, 5=olen täysin samaa mieltä)

1. Minusta on mukavaa puhua englantia	1	2	3	4	5
2. Luotan itseeni englannin puhujana	1	2	3	4	5 3.
3. Jännitän puhuessani englantia.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Lisään usein englanninkielisiä ilmauksia suomenkieliseen puheeseeni.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Haluaisin, että minulla olisi enemmän mahdollisuuksia puhua englantia.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Koen olevani yhtä hyvä englannin puhuja kuin luokkatoverini.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Olen saanut koulussa riittävästi harjoitusta englannin puhumiseen.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Haluaisin oppia ääntämään englantia syntyperäisen puhujan tavoin.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Tarvitsen tulevaisuudessa englannin suullista kielitaitoa.	1	2	3	4	5

Vastaa vapaasti seuraaviin kysymyksiin.

1. Mikä Sinulle on helpointa englannin puhumisessa?

2. Mikä Sinulle on vaikeinta englannin puhumisessa?

3. Mitä mielestäsi tarkoittaa hyvä englannin suullinen kielitaito?

KIITOS VASTAUKSISTASI!

