

Oral competence in upper secondary school teaching:  
Teachers and students' views

Master's thesis  
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää lukion englannin opettajien sekä opiskelijoiden näkemyksiä suullisesta kielitaidosta niin yleisellä tasolla kuin tarkemmin englannin opetuksessa. Ääntäminen valittiin erityisen tarkastelun kohteeksi, vaikka suullisen kielitaidon todettiin koostuvan monista tärkeistä osa-alueista. Lisäksi tarkoituksena oli selvittää opiskelijoiden ja opettajien välisiä mielipide-eroja.</p> <p>Aineisto kerättiin haastattelemalla neljää lukion opiskelijaa sekä neljää lukion opettajaa. Haastattelut toteutettiin nauhoitettuna teemahaastatteluina, jotka litteroitiin. Aineisto analysoitiin teemoittain ja lisäksi opettajien ja opiskelijoiden vastaukset analysoitiin omissa osioissaan vertailun mahdollistamiseksi.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittivat, että eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen painottama kommunikatiivinen kompetenssi koettiin tärkeäksi osaksi suullista kielitaitoa molemmissa ryhmissä. Kulttuuri- ja sosiaalisten käytänteiden tuntemus koettiin myös tärkeäksi. Ääntämisen roolin yleisen suullisen kielitaidon alueella puolestaan ei koettu olevan kovin tärkeä, joskin haastateltavat myönsivät ääntämisen vaikuttavan ymmärrettävyyteen. Muuten ääntämisen rooli nähtiin lähinnä esteettisenä tai sosiaalista merkitystä kantavana.</p> <p>Opettajien yleinen suullinen kielitaito koettiin myös tärkeäksi molemmissa ryhmissä. Vaikka ääntämisen rooli ei tässäkään tapauksessa ollut kovin suuri, haastateltavat olivat kuitenkin sitä mieltä, että opettajan ääntämyksen tuli olla esimerkillistä eikä opettaja saanut ääntää systemaattisesti väärin. Haastateltavia pyydettiin myös arvioimaan suullisen kielitaidon opetusta sekä arviointia lukiossa, ja kaikki kahdeksan vastaajaa olivat sitä mieltä, että suullinen osuus tulisi lisätä ylioppilaskokeeseen. Enimmäkseen opettajien ja opiskelijoiden mielipiteet eivät eronneet toisistaan. Suurin ero oli suhteessa suullisen kielitaidon opetukseen, sillä opettajien mielestä suullinen kielitaito on tarpeeksi esillä opetuksessa kun taas opiskelijat halusivat lisää harjoitusta kyseisellä alueella.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>, globalization has become the new way of the world – whether in business, education or the personal lives of people. Due to the increased amount of international contact the need for mastering foreign languages, especially English, has become highly important (Mäkelä 2005, 9). This sort of need can also be seen in the Finnish economical life, since an increased amount of employees is working for a multinational company or in a multilingual environment, meaning that many of them are expected to handle their tasks in English (Virkkula 2008, 382-383). As much of the communication can be expected to be handled orally, the need for direct communication increases and through it, the need for producing intelligible speech in the foreign language (Takala 1993).

Since the demands of the working life, as well as the government, are reflected in educational curricula, all these demands are bound to have an effect on how the curricula are modified and, in fact, an oral course has already been added in the upper secondary school curriculum. However, as the upper secondary school curriculum tends to prepare the students for the matriculation exam, which only has a voluntary oral competence test instead of a mandatory one, the washback effect is inevitable, meaning that oral skills remain in the shadow of those features that are tested in the exam. In the fall 2011 there was discussion in the media concerning the addition of an oral course in the matriculation examination. In an interview the president for The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland (SUKOL), Kari Jukarainen, expressed that it would be favorable to add this sort of exam, since it would provide oral competence with a more important status in teaching, which it deserves. Moreover, according to Jukarainen it is often the case that upper secondary school students are motivated by what is tested in the final examination. (Ahmed 2011.)

When it comes to *oral competence* another more general problem arises besides the lack of official assessment policy in Finland: a solid definition for the term itself does not exist. This does not only apply to Finland but is a problem among the wider linguistic community as well. Due to this shortcoming, individuals in general can have very different conceptions of what constitutes as oral competence – especially when the aspect of ‘sufficient’ oral competence is discussed. Since oral skills and oral competence are such complex matters, teachers and students can be expected to have



very different views about them. Moreover, a vast range of opinions can also be expected to exist within the respective groups themselves. There are, of course, some common guidelines, such as the Common European Framework of Reference, providing definitions and different levels for evaluating oral proficiency but I find that oral competence remains a complex issue. Besides the lack of common consensus, one of the problems seems to be that people appear to take it very personally when it comes to assessing their speaking skills and oral competence in general; they can become very self-conscious and defensive when being evaluated in such matters.

There is an indisputable need for further study when it comes to providing a widely accepted definition for oral competence. Many scholars and researchers have, obviously, provided their own definitions but there is need for mapping the opinions of people who are at the center of answering to the needs of the most current demands – in other words teachers and students. Moreover, there have been studies in the past evaluating the teaching of oral skills in upper secondary schools, but the aspect of oral competence in teaching itself has not been studied to a very large extent. In order to obtain an insight of this matter, I interviewed four upper secondary school teachers and four upper secondary school students about their opinions and views about the importance of oral competence in general and more specifically in teaching.

The aim of this study is to find answers to the questions presented above. I will start off by presenting different ideas about oral competence by various scholars, researchers and some general guidelines. Before doing this, however, there is a need for discussing language competence in more general terms. After having discussed these general aspects of knowing a language and the more detailed aspects of oral competence, I will discuss the state of oral competence in teaching. I am going to provide examples from educational curricula and some previous studies in order to accomplish this. I am then going to move on to the actual research part of the study and present the interviews I conducted in order to try to map teachers and students' opinions about oral competence and pronunciation in general and more specifically in teaching. The reason I have chosen pronunciation as the main focus of all the aspects associated with oral competence is that pronunciation can determine the whole course of the interaction, since it can affect the interlocutor's opinion of the speaker. Therefore, even though I acknowledge that oral competence is a very complex matter, which consists of many different areas of linguistic knowledge that cannot fully be distinguished from one another, the main emphasis in this study will be on pronunciation.

## 2 LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Before discussing oral competence in more detail, a couple of matters must be considered. As Iwashita, Brown, McNamara and O'Hagan (2008, 24) declare, second language competence is one of the most debated concepts in the field of applied linguistics, especially when it comes to the qualities it comprises. Besides the qualities, the different theories or models of second language competence and its development, such as the ones by Canale & Swain and Bachman, are also under debate and the discussion is seldom based on empirical data that would demonstrate second language competence on various levels of achievement (ibid.). It is safe to say, thus, that regardless of the variety of existing descriptions and models for *oral competence* and *general language competence*, a common and universal consensus still does not exist. One of the problems is that there are different terms that can be used to refer to the same phenomenon. *Fluency* and *proficiency*, for example, are often used to refer to the same aspects of knowing a language as *competence*. Moreover, it is a generally acknowledged fact that language is not an entity that consists of separate skills that exist independently from each other but rather it is a system that simultaneously exploits different aspects of linguistic knowledge. However, as many curricula and syllabi suggest, different linguistic skills can be distinguished and evaluated separately – at least that seems to be the assumption underlying language assessment in which many skills are often rated individually.

Hence, before we can fully understand what constitutes as oral competence, some general aspects must be discussed. In this chapter I will discuss what more there is to being competent in a language besides oral skills. However, before we can do that the terms and concepts that are relevant for this study, must be explained. Therefore, I will first provide some definitions for the term *competence* itself and then move on to discussing the multiple aspects and theories of that concept that have been provided in the past.

### 2.1 Some definitions of language competence

When going through previous studies or papers dealing with language competence, it becomes apparent that a variety of terms are being used to refer to the same phenomenon. Often the terms *proficiency*, *fluency* or *foreign language ability* are used and sometimes even the term *performance* is mentioned in the context (see e.g. Iwashita

et al. 2008; Chomsky 1965; Segalowitz 2010, Vollmer and Sang 1983). One of the problems is that the different terms are not used consistently in the literature and some of them are used as synonyms, making it difficult to obtain a coherent picture of the field. Moreover, it is not always clear what the different definitions entail and definitions can vary quite tremendously from researcher to researcher (Iwashita et al. 2008, 25). For example the term *proficiency* has known various definitions over the years, some of them having to do with the level of competence or knowledge of the rules, to mention a few (Vollmer and Sang 1983, 30). In this section I will look into some of the different definitions that have been suggested in the past and make explicit which definition is going to be used in the present study.

The *Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2006, 279) and the *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2009) define the term *competence* in much the same way: as the ability to do something well, successfully or effectively. This description seems to indicate that the term *proficiency* in itself entails quite a high level of language ability. *A Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms* (1998, 44) provides such words as *proficiency* and *capability* as synonyms for *competence*. However, the term *proficiency* as such did not appear in the above-mentioned dictionaries and *capability* can be said to have a slightly different tone to it: as in having the physical demands of completing a given task. The *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (1985, 52) defines competence largely by using Chomsky's *generative grammar*, which will later be explained in more detail, as a point of departure stating that *competence* is 'a person's ability to create and understand sentences, including sentences they have never heard before. It also includes a person's knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language' (*Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* 1985, 52). The dictionary also distinguishes between *competence* and *performance* and points out that often *competence* is used to refer to 'the ideal speaker/hearer, that is an idealized but not a real person who would have a complete knowledge of the whole language'. It also makes an interesting distinction between *language proficiency* and *language achievement*. *Language proficiency* refers to a person's proficiency of using that language for a specific purpose. In other words, it is 'the degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak, or understand language'. *Language achievement*, on the other hand, refers to a learners' proficiency that has been acquired as 'the result of what has been taught or learned after a period of instruction'. (ibid, 154, 159.) When measuring language proficiency we are

not, however, concerned with a particular curriculum but rather want to measure different degrees of knowing a language in general, i.e. to what extent and adequacy the learner can use the language in different settings (Vollmer and Sang 1983, 31). Hammerly (1991, 41), also makes a distinction between *second language (SL) competence* and *SL proficiency* by stating that these two aspects have a difference in emphasis, meaning that *competence* ‘focuses on the application of linguistic competence to communicative situations’ and *proficiency* ‘stresses survival in communicative situations, with lesser focus on the language as such’.

*Fluency* is another aspect that is often discussed in relation to *competence* and the *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2009) describes it as ‘the quality or condition of being fluent, in particular the ability to express oneself easily and accurately (especially in a foreign language)’. However, as was seen above, providing definitions is not always that simple and Segalowitz (2010, 2), who studied second language fluency in more detail, states that a generally accepted model or framework for a systematic description of fluency does not exist. He also points out that according to Kaponen and Riggensbach’s (2000, cited in Segalowitz 2010, 3) study, in many languages the word *fluency* itself means ‘language in motion’ – a description underlying much of the scientific research of fluency and is often used in similar meaning among laymen. Besides this generally accepted meaning, the term is often used when referring to some more specific action, such as the ability to speak with little or no accent in the L2 or to speak with few grammatical errors. For some it might mean the ability to give speeches or read poetry in the L2. From this it can be deduced that the term lacks a solid and coherent definition and for research purposes different aspects must be very clearly distinguished from each other. (Segalowitz 2010, 4.) Since *fluency* is often associated with speech it is going to be discussed further in the following sections, which deal with oral skills more specifically. However, it must be noted that sometimes the term is also discussed in relation to writing, which is a substantive point since some people are more fluent writers than others. However, there are quite a few different factors that are at play in the processes of writing and speech, so in this study I am going to discuss fluency in relation to speech and omit the aspect of writing. Moreover, the conceptions of *competence* and *performance* must be distinguished from each other and as Chomsky (1965, 4) states, performance does not reflect competence directly, thus making it difficult for us to measure oral competence in general. However, the difference between *performance* and *competence* will be discussed in more detail later on in the study.

Taking all these considerations into account I am going to be using the term *competence* as an umbrella term but also I am going to use the term *proficiency* as its synonym, since their meanings are closely related. I chose to use these two terms as I feel that they are the most descriptive and cover the majority of the aspects I am going to bring forward in this study. Moreover, I am going to use the *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* definitions provided for both *competence* and *language proficiency*, as the main points of reference for these two terms. I chose the *Longman* definitions as I feel that they are more open to various interpretations and hence better serve the aim of the present study, which, after all, was not to verify previous definitions but to find out how upper secondary school teachers and students define the terms without presupposition. As mentioned, the *Collins* and *Oxford* definitions seemed to entail quite a high level of language ability to begin with, therefore imposing too much presupposition.

## 2.2 General language competence

Now that the notion of *competence* has been clarified to some extent it is time to start considering what it actually means to *know* or *be competent* in a language. Firstly, we must consider which *skills* are the ones needed for effective language use. Secondly, are those skills distinguishable or do they function as a whole? Thirdly, since the concept of competence can mean different things to different people, as was seen above, can people have different ideas about which skills are more important for general language competence? This section of the paper will be dedicated to discussing different aspects of language competence and I will provide some definitions by different scholars and the Common European Framework of Reference.

Before the current trends and developments took place the field of linguistics had been affected by many different movements and theories. The *structuralist linguistic theory*, for example, had a strong influence and therefore for a long time knowing a language basically meant merely knowing the different elements and components of that language (Vollmer and Sang 1983, 33). Another influential theory was developed in the late 1950s by Noam Chomsky, who aimed at producing a particular type of grammar, which would portray an explicit system of rules that specify which combinations of basic elements would result in well-formed or grammatically correct sentences. This sort of grammar resembled mathematical rules, since it would form all the well-formed sentences and fail to form any ill-formed ones. The grammar would also have a finite

amount of rules but would be capable of producing an infinite amount of sentences. The word ‘would’ must be emphasized at this point, since such fully formed grammar does not yet exist, regardless of the attempts that have been made in order to form one. (Yule 1996, 101.) It must also be remembered that Chomsky’s grammar, as Kormos (2006, 91) points out, has to do with ‘the general principles that govern language’ instead of the psychological processes that are needed in language production. However, it must also be pointed out that much of Chomsky’s work underlies the theories and models that have emerged since the 1960s and as Pawley and Hodgetts Syder (1983, 193) point out, Chomsky’s *generative grammar* ‘is a part of what a person must know in order to be a competent user of any language’ and this is true for both learners and native speakers of any language. Hence, given the topic of this study, we must note the aspect of this grammar when discussing language competence.

Another famous model proposed by Carroll (1961, cited in de Jong 1991, 12-13) in the 1960s listed 10 aspects that should be considered when trying to specify what constitutes as language proficiency:

- 1) knowledge of structure;
- 2) knowledge of lexicon;
- 3) auditory discrimination of speech sounds;
- 4) oral production of speech sounds;
- 5) technical reading i.e. reading out loud;
- 6) technical writing i.e. transforming spoken discourse into written form;
- 7) rate and accuracy of listening comprehension;
- 8) rate and quality of speaking;
- 9) rate and accuracy of reading comprehension; and
- 10) rate and accuracy of written composition.

The model can be divided into three groups: 1) and 2) represent features of linguistic knowledge; 3) to 6) include aspects of ‘channel control with respect to each of the four modes of language use’; and 7) to 10), which combines the previous groups by integrating performance into these four modes of language use. Basically what Carroll intends to express, is that both linguistic knowledge and channel control can be distinguished in each of the integrated skills. His work in the field of psycholinguistics has provided significant contributions to the understanding of how human language functions. (de Jong 1991.) Another widely used model proposed by Canale & Swain in 1980 is based on an extensive analysis according to which language proficiency consists of *grammatical*, *textual*, *sociolinguistic* and (added by Canale in 1983) *strategic competencies*. Bachman later elaborated this model by adding the aspect of *functionality*. (Huhta 2010, 35.)

During the past few decades the understanding of what constitutes as *knowledge* or *competence* of foreign language has broadened immensely. After other models and the ones presented above, in the 1980s the direction was that language skills were considered an instrumental subject and in the 1990s a skills subject, whereas in the 2000s it is regarded in three ways: a skills, knowledge and cultural subject (Harjanne 2008, 112). De Jong and Verhoeven (1992, 3) follow these lines by stating that for many decades there has been an on-going debate on the number of factors that formulate language performance. This is partly due to the fact that language proficiency is not static, since the different factors are affected by different stages of development and individual differences, for example, and therefore it is difficult to determine the exact number of factors that contribute to it (de Jong 1991, 17). The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been marked by the existence of two major movements specifically that have to do with modeling language proficiency. The first movement has led to the definition of scales, which are used to evaluate the subject against an idealized model, in other words the native speaker. The second movement has aimed at combining the notion of *communicative competence* into the models of language proficiency. (de Jong & Verhoeven 1992, 4-5.) Saleva (1997, 15) agrees with de Jong and Verhoeven by stating that numerous attempts at forming a comprehensive theory of language proficiency have been made but none has yet succeeded in doing so. She also concurs that agreement has surfaced in the form of *communicative competence* having become the dominant feature in all language proficiency theories in the past twenty-five years. Especially two domains have proved to be difficult in defining language proficiency: the knowledge of the language and the interaction of the different elements that are at play in interactive situations.

Generally speaking, four major skills are usually discussed in reference to language testing and teaching: *listening*, *speaking*, *writing* and *reading*. As opposed to the latter ones, the first two represent oral skills. *Listening* and *reading*, on the other hand, stand for receptive skills, whereas *speaking* and *writing* can be considered productive skills. (de Jong 1991, 16.) However, according to Bachman & Palmer (1996, 75) it seems inadequate to restrict these channels only to those skills, since writing an e-mail, for example, often has more in common with oral communication than with reading a newspaper, even though both involve using the visual channel. The fact that language does not exist in a vacuum but is a more complex and context related phenomenon, also supports this view (ibid). Even though many theories support the fact that language is

not a set of independent skills but rather they form an overall proficiency, *listening*, *speaking*, *writing* and *reading* have traditionally been regarded as composing language ability. Therefore these skills will be focused in the present study as well. More specifically the main focus will be on *speaking*, as it is the most relevant for oral competence, but in the next section I am also going to discuss the other three skills briefly in order to provide a more comprehensive view of what constitutes as language competence (for more detailed description of the four skills see Carter and Nunan 2001).

In this paper I have chosen the Common European Framework of Reference [CEFR] as the main point of comparison for language competence, since it is the basis for all Finnish national curricula. In the next section I am going to present the different language proficiency levels presented by the CEFR and also discuss some of the general competencies.

### **2.3 The Common European Framework of Reference**

The Common European Framework of Reference is a guideline put together by the Council of Europe. It is used throughout Europe to form syllabi and curricula for different educational institutions and it describes different levels of achievement and provides guidelines for language teaching, learning and assessment. The Framework is commonly known as ‘CEFR’ or ‘CEF’ and I am going to use these two terms from now on when referring to it in the course of the study. The following definition is given in the CEFR itself:

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. The provision of objective criteria for describing language proficiency will facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications gained in different learning contexts, and accordingly will aid European mobility. (CEFR 2001, 1.)

The Common European Framework of Reference is divided into three consistent levels (proficient user, independent user and basic user) and each of these levels has been further divided into two categories (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), making up a total of six categories of different proficiency levels (CEFR 2001, 24). The detailed descriptions of the different levels and requirements can be found in Table 1 on the opposite page.



Table 1. Common European Framework of Reference Levels: global scale (CEFR 2001, 24)

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Besides these general levels presented in Table 1, other relevant aspects are the different features of language competence described by the Framework. Different skills have been divided into three main categories: *understanding*, *speaking* and *writing*. *Understanding* and *speaking* have been further divided into two subcategories: *listening* and *reading* under understanding and *spoken interaction* and *spoken production* under speaking. *Writing* stands as its own category. (CEFR 2001, 26.) Depending on the definition, language competence can be divided into more categories than the ones mentioned above and sometimes the levels described by the CEF have also been used to come up with versions that portray even more ‘steps’, such as the syllabi for teaching languages in Finland (Huhta 2010, 33). Again, however, I am going to choose the definition provided by CEFR as my main point of reference, since it has the most

relevance considering the topic of this study. I am mostly going to concentrate on the spoken aspects of the scale but it must be remembered that *general competence*, as well as *oral competence*, can never fully be separated from other linguistic aspects, such as context, language processes, strategies or tasks, which all have an effect on the output (CEFR 2001, 10). Moreover, in no way is oral competence to be considered more important than the other aspects of language competence. The Framework itself also emphasizes the significance of ‘partial competence’ meaning that it is not necessary to master the language perfectly nor is it required that all aspects of knowing a language should be equally strong. It is sometimes sufficient to just understand a little without being able to produce the language. (Huhta 2010, 33; CEFR 2001, 4-5.)

The Finnish National Board of Education [FNBE] has stated in the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary School that in the A-level English, in other words English studies that have started in elementary school, the target level to be reached in upper secondary school is B2.1 in all four skills (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet [LOPS] 2003, 100). This is an example of the use of a scale that has more ‘steps’ besides the six main ones, as was mentioned earlier. However, I am going to concentrate on the main categories and in this case B2.1 will be interpreted as B2. Besides acquiring B2.1 level proficiency, the students are also expected to learn to communicate in a manner specific to the target language and culture (LOPS 2003). These levels and targets will be the ones used as the main point of reference when talking about goals for learning English in upper secondary school. Obviously since this is the level expected from students no less can be expected from teachers and therefore, I am going to be using the higher level C1 as the minimum competence level when discussing teachers’ proficiency in English.

Since the roots of the CEFR lie in the beginning of the development of communicative language teaching, it is no wonder that the Framework portrays an idea of functional language in which the learners and language users are viewed as social players of a given community (Huhta 2010, 33). The Framework also emphasizes the notion of *communicative competence* as the most important goal of language learning and teaching, instead of stressing the practice of individual skills specifically (CEFR 2001, 9). However, the Framework does recognize these different skills and hence it views language use as something that consists of different actions that are performed by individuals who have developed a range of different competencies; in other words ‘competences are the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristic that allow a person to

perform actions' (ibid.). The CEFR (ibid.) also mentions that *general competencies* are not always specific to language, but are something that are needed for all sorts of actions, whereas *communicative competencies* are those which a person needs in order to function in linguistic situations. *General competencies* consist in particular of the different skills of the individual, such as their knowledge, existential competence and ability to learn (ibid, 11). While I acknowledge that these 'skills' have an inevitable effect on a person's linguistic abilities, in the scope of this study, however, the notion of *general language competencies* is going to be used to refer to different *linguistic skills*, such as the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, instead of personal ones. Even though it is a generally known fact that all individuals are different and results must be expected to vary due to these differences, the study of learners' individual differences is another scope of research and therefore I will not discuss the matter further in the present study. However, when making general assumptions and providing detailed goals for language learning, it is good to bear the idea of these differences in mind.

As Huhta (2010, 32) declares, one of the aims of the Council of Europe's language policy is the plurilingualism of its citizens, which, according to the CEFR (2001, 4) means the ability to exploit the knowledge of one's mother tongue and multiple foreign languages in one's communication. Segalowitz (2010, 161) also addresses this issue by saying that due to increased population movement and mixing of language groups, truly monolingual countries have become virtually nonexistent and those that still are, seem to be coming more linguistically diverse as well. Furthermore, as the tendency from the past few decades has shown, the amount of language contact can only be expected to increase in the future. Having skills in more than one L2 can no longer be considered merely a luxury that one might take up to enjoy travel, but rather it has become a social and economic necessity. However, as Segalowitz (2010, 2) states, no matter how many languages a person knows, he or she can rarely be expected to be able to use them as skillfully as they use their L1. Besides of their L2 knowledge being weaker, people are often less fluent in using the knowledge that they do have. Even though people often want to be more skilled in their L2 languages (meaning collectively all languages that are not their first language), it is unfortunate that apart from some exceptions, most only ever achieve limited fluency (ibid.). There are many factors, both external and internal, that can affect the way each of us learns or acquires a language. Due to the limitations of this study, however, individual differences are not going to be discussed further but, again, it is recommendable to keep them in mind when considering the results and when

discussing different proficiency levels. Not everyone can be expected to achieve the so-called highest level of proficiency that will later on be described in the paper.

The definitions given in the Common European Framework of Reference are not without problems. A common framework, for example, needs to be *context-free* and *context-relevant* simultaneously, meaning that the same framework must be suitable for describing both adults and children, for example. Moreover, the definitions must be based on actual theories of language competence, a task that proves to be difficult to achieve, since the available theory and research have been inadequate at the time. Theories must also be accessible and not too restricting, meaning that practitioners must be able to think further what competence means in their specific context. Obviously, the different levels and scales can also be controversial and some overlapping may occur between the wordings on the different levels. (CEFR 2001, 21.) However, the CEF is a great tool for aiding assessment in many ways even though it is not all embracing. By creating common definitions, the CEF has facilitated the debate that has been going when discussing language education but it will still take some time for it to become known among all language educationalists, let alone the wider public. However, the language competence portrayed by the CEF is very contemporary as it is based on an idea of a person who communicates in social situations. (Huhta 2010.)

At this point it must be pointed out that although the general aim of language learning and teaching described by the Framework is to develop general communication skills, at certain times it is necessary to stress performance in a particular domain. The claim ‘everything is connected’ does not, thus, mean that different linguistic domains cannot be focused on separately, making other domains irrelevant to the circumstances in question (CEFR 2001, 10). This enables us to teach, learn and assess performance in different linguistic domains. As for the skills, CEFR is based on the same traditional division of four but obviously it provides a very detailed description for each and each skill has been divided into further components (for further details see CEFR 2001). In Table 2 on the opposite page the general B2 level descriptions for *writing*, *reading* and *listening* have been provided. *Speaking*, which has been further divided into concepts of *spoken interaction* and *spoken production*, will be dealt with in more detail later on in the study.

Now that some of the underlying theories, concepts and models for *general language competence* have been presented, it is time to move on to dealing with the aspect of *oral*

Table 2. Common European Framework of Reference B2 level descriptions for reading, writing and listening. (CEFR 2001)

Listening	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand. Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers.
Reading	Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low frequency idioms.
Writing	Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interests, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.

*proficiency* more specifically. In the following chapters the aspects of *general oral competence* as well as *oral competence in teaching* will be discussed in more detail.

### 3 ORAL COMPETENCE – WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

In the previous chapter I described different skills that constitute language competence on a more general level. Keeping those skills in mind I am now going to discuss the aspect of *oral proficiency* more specifically. As was pointed out earlier oral competence can never be fully separated from the other areas of language but similarly to all those other domains, oral skills can also be evaluated separately. As with the skills that were presented in the previous chapter, oral skills are quite a complex phenomenon as well and they do not just have to do with speaking. Instead such aspects as *fluency*, *performance*, *pronunciation*, *communicative competence* etc. must be considered along with it. First I am going to discuss some general aspects associated with *oral skills* and then move on to discussing what constitutes *oral competence*, which will then be discussed in the light of *communicative competence* and *fluency* as well.

It is interesting that written language is still widely considered the prestigious form of language, even though speech is more widely used on a daily basis. Writing does have its benefits, since it is not limited by such factors as human memory and it is more permanent. However, spoken language does have its own strengths, since it has the capability to individualize speakers and promote social communication. (Thorne 2008, 214.) Before moving on to describing oral skills, I want to discuss some of the aspects

that make oral competence important in more detail. As was explained in the introduction, due to increased globalization, oral communication in a foreign language has increased its importance on many domains of life. Some specific types and levels of language fluency, for example, are part of the skills set for particular jobs, such as aviation or the health sector, both of which require a very specific set of skills. Business, education, law, government and politics are undoubtedly fields in which knowledge of an L2 is required as well. (Segalowitz 2010, 162.) Kormos (2006, xvii) also points out that conversation being the primary function of maintaining social relationships, it is undoubtedly the most common and important means of communication. Therefore, more often than not, the aim of second language learning is to be able to speak it, more than being capable of reading or writing in it (ibid.).

*Writing* and *speaking* must, hence, be considered separate modes of expression, both of which are used to accomplish different things. According to Thorne (2008, 220-221), for example, in spoken discourse the lexis is usually less formal, and conversational lexis and colloquial idioms are included besides clauses, such as ‘you know’ or ‘sort of’. The grammar of spoken discourse also tends to be looser, more inconsistent and marked by phrasal verbs, simple clauses and ‘informal “filler” verbs’, among other features. She also points out that spoken language tends to be more versatile than written one. Non-fluency is also a feature of spoken language in both formal and informal communication but it does present itself more in spontaneous speech. However, often this sort of errors that would not be accepted in written discourse, are somewhat expected in spoken context and they often go unnoticed. (Thorne 2008.)

There are, of course, different levels of proficiency and not all L2 speakers can be assumed to aspire to reach the highest levels of proficiency, in this case the CEF levels C2 and C1. Moreover, it is highly difficult for speakers to acquire a native-like or near-native-like level of speaking ability in any other language besides their mother tongue (Segalowitz 2010, 162). However, those people, for whom oral proficiency plays a more significant role, should take into consideration that an L2 user’s level can have different socioeconomic consequences, since, according to Segalowitz:

Listeners make inferences about speakers’ cognitive fluency and possibly use this as the basis for inferences about their general intellectual abilities, their identity, their relationships to the community in which they live, etc. In this way language takes on a special social significance, one in which listeners interpret fluency as reflecting much more than the speaker’s overall competence in using a language (even though some of these interpretations may be quite mistaken). (Segalowitz 2010, 162).

Segalowitz also refers to a definition by Chiswick and Miller (2007, cited in Segalowitz 2010, 162) according to whom language skills can be considered in terms of being economic human capital, since language skills are productive, meaning that they bring value to the person, and that they are acquired at a cost, meaning that often time, effort or money have been spent in order to acquire these skills.

*Speaking* has generally been studied from the point of view of two factors: 1) the internal conditions of speech, i.e. that speech takes place under the pressure of time, and 2) the dimension of interpersonal interaction (Saleva 1997, 21). Obviously speaking itself is a very complex phenomenon and can, in addition to these two conditions, be studied from the point of view of multiple different aspects, such as *speech acts*, *turn-taking* or *politeness*. Moreover, other aspects, such as *conditions for speech* and different *registers* need to be considered as well, since different weather conditions or interfering ambient noises, for example, can affect speech and communication (CEFR 2001, 46-47). For the present study specifically, however, it is not relevant to view these issues in more detail but rather the focus will be on the different *skills* that are needed for successful speech production and comprehension in general. In the next section some of the skills included in oral production will be discussed in more detail.

### **3.1 Different aspects of oral production**

When discussing different *skills* that are needed in oral production, many scholars appear to be of the opinion that speaking should not be described as a set of skills but rather through the language-using task in question. Bachman & Palmer (1996, 76) for example state that the abstract concept of ‘skill’ should, in fact, be considered a combination of language ability and what specific language use characteristics are required by the task in question. This refers to the aspect of speech registers that was briefly mentioned in the previous section and is also remarked in the CEF (2001, 58), which discusses oral production as speaking activities, such as public announcements, sales presentations etc. The Framework also provides an overall oral production scale, which is presented in Table 3 on the following page but besides that does not really provide any specific set of skills that would constitute the act of speaking. Bygate (2001, 16) also approaches speaking from the point of view of the act and refers to Levelt’s 1989 proposition of four processes that take place during speaking: *conceptualization*, *formulation*, *articulation* and *self-monitoring*. The CEF (2001, 91) only mentions the components of *formulation* and *articulation* as being part of the

Table 3. Overall oral production. (CEFR 2001, 58)

Proficient User	C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
	C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
Independent User	B2	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.
	B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
Basic User	A2	Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.
	A1	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.

production of an utterance but the processes included in them are the same as the ones included in Levelt's respective ones (for a detailed description of the four processes see Bygate 2001).

Other studies (see e.g. Thorne 2008; Paananen-Porkka 2007; Saleva 1997) have shown a few aspects that can be considered skills in language production. Such notions as *prosody*, *rhythm*, *stress*, *lexis*, *colloquial idioms* and *speech rate* came up in the reports. Saleva, for example, reports Anderson-Hsieh et al.'s (1992, cited in Saleva 1997, 47) study, which showed that *prosody* became the most important correlate of pronunciation when native speakers were asked to assess non-native speech. *Prosodic features* are different means of dividing spoken utterances into smaller units that facilitate the conveying of the message. These features include such qualities as intonation, pitch, stress, loudness and pace, pauses etc. (see e.g. Thorne 2008; Saleva 1997). Prosody, like so many others, is a dimension which consists of multiple other aspects, which all affect the general output. However, two aspects appear to be most difficult for Finns: *intonation* and *rhythm*. (Saleva 1997, 47-48.) According to Thorne (2008, 237-238) utterances can even be grammatically incomplete but intonation patterns guarantee that the message is still understandable and Paananen-Porkka (2007, 8) reports that prosodic errors are considered more crucial to communication than for example segmental errors. I also find prosodic features important in making speech sound authentic so even though pronunciation will be the one aspect concentrated on the most, of all the aspects



generally associated with oral skills, prosodic features will be in the center of attention as well. Therefore in the present study when the aspect of *pronunciation* is discussed, prosodic features will be considered as being part of the whole.

Besides prosodic features, *speech rhythm* seemed to be under discussion in some of the studies (e.g. Iwashita et al. 2008, Segalowitz 2010). One of them was conducted by Paananen-Porkka (2007), who studied the speech rhythm of Finnish comprehensive school pupils and also reported English native speakers' reactions to the two linguistic parameters in the adolescents' speech rhythm: 1) sentence stress and 2) speech rate and pausing. She discovered that native speakers gave lower intelligibility scores for those pupils who expressed more anomalous speech rhythm. The study also suggested that pausing seemed to be more important for English speech rhythm than sentence stress, for example. As Paananen-Porkka (ibid.) suggests, speech rhythm is an essential part of speech processing, and is the outcome of the workings of different linguistic and non-linguistic parameters, many of which have other functions in speech production as well. Rhythm, however, is especially important, since it organizes speech into coherent and cohesive units, especially putting emphasis on the more important information elements, thus facilitating the understanding of the utterance as a whole (ibid, 12-13). Often, speech rhythm is regarded as a product of sentence stress, which usually falls on content words, whereas grammatical words are unstressed (ibid, 16). Speech rhythm can be divided into three linguistic components: 1) *sentence stress*, 2) *speech rate and pausing*, and 3)  *juncture*. The first two components structure information into logical units and thus facilitate speech comprehension. Moreover, they affect the quality and duration of sounds. *Juncture*, on the other hand, deals with the aspects of linking, assimilation and elision of utterances. (ibid, 19.)

In Finnish the stress always falls on the first syllable of a word, whereas in English a complex set of rules dealing with the structure of the words are the ones that determine the word stress placement (Paananen-Porkka 2007, 20). This is just one of the differences between the two languages; others have to do with differences in such features as speech rate and pausing, for example, although both can also vary according to the speaker and the speech style. The only feature that seems to function in exactly the same way in both languages is sentence stress. (ibid, 61-64.) However, Finnish learners seem to have a lot of problems with the acoustic correlates of English stress, and, for example, instead of a high fall that would be correct for a given utterance,

Finnish speakers incorrectly produce a low fall (ibid, 65). Other problematic points appear to be junctures and consonant clusters (ibid, 70).

Producing speech is not a simple matter but many aspects are involved and need to be considered when assessing intelligibility and oral competence. Kormos (2006, xxvi) also highlights the difference of the L1 and L2 languages as generator of problems in the L2 production and she reminds that the learners' knowledge of the L2 is rarely complete, especially compared to their L1 knowledge, and the speakers must put much more conscious effort into overcoming problems in communication and language production in the target language. Besides the lack of lexical, syntactic and phonological knowledge, speakers often have difficulties with the time constraints that real-life communication places and cannot process or monitor their message as efficiently as in their L1. Moreover, problems might occur in the form of L1, or other languages the speaker knows, influencing the L2 production, which can manifest as code-switching or transfer, for example. (ibid, xxv.)

Besides the different processes and skills described in this section, closely related to the notion of *competence* are the notions of *fluency* and *performance*, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

### **3.2 From competence to fluent performance**

As with other aspects of general language competence, determining what constitutes oral competence is equally difficult. Even though the general agreement is that language proficiency can be said to consist of underlying abilities, knowledge systems and skills, there is less agreement when it comes to the content and boundaries of that underlying competence (Canale 1983b, 334). Oral production aside, such aspects as *fluency*, *performance* and *communicative competence* must be considered as well, since oral competence is never a mere set of productive skills. Another problem is that oral competence can be a rather abstract concept and have different representations in people's minds, which is especially problematic in the field of education where a common basis for assessment is needed. In order to provide a more consistent view of oral competence, besides the physical aspects of oral production, this section will deal with the aspects of *communicative competence* and *fluency*. I am also briefly going to discuss the aspect of *performance* in communicative competence.

Table 4. Overall spoken interaction. (CEFR 2001, 74)

Proficient User	C2	Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.
	C1	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.
Independent User	B2	Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.
	B1	Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field. Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music etc. Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
Basic User	A2	Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.
	A1	Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

Since the CEFR scales have been used as the main point of reference in this study when discussing general language competence, I want to introduce the CEFR scale for overall spoken interaction (see Table 4 above). As can be observed from the table, the term *fluency* is mentioned on two occasions when describing the B2 level proficiency and clearly *communication* plays a big role as well. Other aspects that are mentioned are *grammatical control*, *spontaneity* as well as the ability to talk about multiple different *topics* and *appropriateness* of the communication to the situation in question. Keeping

these requirements in mind I am now going to move on to discuss the aspect of *communicative competence* in more detail.

### 3.2.1 Communicative Competence

*Communicative competence* has increased its popularity ever since its introduction by Hymes in the mid-1960s and for a good reason: it was a welcome departure for viewing language as a mere grammar (Canale 1983a, 2). As was mentioned earlier, the Common European Framework of Reference emphasizes communicative competence as being the main goal for language learning and, in fact, ever since the 70s until this day it has been the predominant approach in language teaching (Airola 2000, 9). With regard to what has been mentioned earlier, the expanding number of international contacts will increase the need for different communicative oral practices and forcing even more Finns to acquire communicative skills in multiple foreign languages. Even though it can be assumed that our language education will meet this challenge, the obscurity of the definitions of such terms as *oral language proficiency* and *communicative oral practice* may lead to our language teaching being based on old images, since these concepts have not been developed sufficiently. (Harjanne 2008, 111.)

Canale (1983a) proposes a four-way division for communicative competence, which is an expanded version of Canale and Swain's model proposed in 1980, as was already mentioned earlier. The new model consists of four main areas of knowledge and skill: *grammatical competence*, *sociolinguistic competence*, *strategic competence* and *discourse competence*. *Grammatical competence* refers to the knowledge of the linguistic 'code' of the language, such as rules of morphology, syntax and pronunciation. *Sociolinguistic competence*, on the one hand, refers to the rules of language use in different social situations and *strategic competence*, on the other hand, has to do with the command of both linguistic and non-linguistic strategies of communication. *Discourse competence* is the newest addition to the model, referring to the cohesion and coherence of communication, and in this model Canale also distinguishes communication and capacities that underlie it, returning to Hymes' original definition of communicative competence which included both the different knowledges and the ability to use (Airola 2000, 10-11). These models have functioned as the basis for the development of many famous models and views, such as the one by Bachman-Palmer, which will later be discussed in more detail.

Table 5. The user/learner's competences: general linguistic range (CEFR 2001, 110).

Proficient User	C2	Can exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity -- No signs of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.
	C1	Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express him/herself clearly, without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.
Independent User	B2	Can express him/herself clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say. Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.
	B1	Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films. Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.
Basic User	A2	Has a repertoire of basic language which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words. Can produce brief everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type: personal details, daily routines, wants and needs, requests for information. Can use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about themselves and other people, what they do, places, possessions etc. Has a limited repertoire of short memorised phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in non-routine situations.
	A1	Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type.

The CEFR (2001) makes another kind of division by dividing communicative competence into three sections: *linguistic competence*, *sociolinguistic competence* and *pragmatic competence*. Even though 'no complete, exhaustive description of any language as a formal system for the expression of meaning has ever been produced' (ibid, 108), *linguistic competence* in this context is said to consist of: lexical competence, grammatical competence, semantic competence, phonological competence, orthographic competence and orthoepic competence (CEFR 2001, 109). *Sociolinguistic competence* is described by the CEF (2001, 118) as 'concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use'. This aspect has especially to do with the sociocultural aspect of language and includes features such as linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk-wisdom, register differences, and dialect and accent (ibid.). *Pragmatic competencies*, on the other hand, have to do with 'the user/learner's knowledge of the principles according to which messages are a) organised, structured and arranged; b) used to

perform communicative functions; c) sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata' (CEFR 2001, 123). In other terms these three aspects are known as *discourse competence*, *functional competence* and *design competence*, which can further be divided into categories, such as flexibility to circumstances, turn-taking and thematic development in the case of *discourse competence*, for example (ibid, 123-124). A more general description of a learner's competencies is presented in Table 5 on the previous page.

The CEF also provides other tables for multiple different communicative situations, such as conversation, informal discussion versus formal discussion, transactions, information exchange and interview situations. Since the functions of communicative competence can be so numerous, instead of developing an illustrative scale for each competence separately, the CEF (2001, 128) presents two generic qualitative factors, which can be used to determine the functional success of a learner – *fluency* and *propositional precision*. The notion of *fluency* is described in more detail in the following chapter but in this case it is described as 'the ability to articulate, to keep going, and to cope when one lands in a dead end' (CEFR 2001, 128). *Propositional precision*, on the other hand, is described as 'the ability to formulate thoughts and propositions so as to make one's meaning clear' (CEFR 2001, 128). More detailed descriptions of these two factors can be found in Tables 6 and 7 on the opposite page.

Even though all the different factors that have been mentioned in the chapter play a central role in communicative competence and cannot fully be separated from each other, communicative competence in itself is such a vast notion that it would take a whole other study to deal with it fully. Therefore, bearing all the mentioned aspects in mind, the notion of *fluency* is now going to be concentrated on more specifically, since, as was pointed out earlier, fluency is often discussed in relation to oral competence and therefore needs to be discussed in more detail.

### **3.2.2 Fluency**

As with so many other terms in relation to oral competence, the concept of *fluency* also lacks a solid definition and as Segalowitz (2010, 41) puts it, 'research to date has not revealed compelling, consistent patterns of oral production features that may be considered reliable markers of fluency'. Due to the incomplete definitions and information on the topic he also reports that there seems to be a tendency to 'shy away'

Table 6. Spoken fluency (CEFR 2001, 129).

Proficient User	C2	Can express him/herself at length with a natural, effortless, unhesitating flow. Pauses only to reflect on precisely the right words to express his/her thoughts or to find an appropriate example or explanation.
	C1	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.
Independent User	B2	Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of speech. Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party.
	B1	Can express him/herself with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and ‘cul-de-sacs’, he/she is able to keep going effectively without help. Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.
Basic User	A2	Can make him/herself understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident. Can construct phrases on familiar topics with sufficient ease to handle short exchanges, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts.
	A1	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.

Table 7. Propositional precision (CEFR 2001, 129).

Proficient User	C2	Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices (e.g. adverbs expressing degree, clauses expressing limitations). Can give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity.
	C1	Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/ uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc.
Independent User	B2	Can pass on detailed information reliably.
	B1	Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision. Can convey simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across which point he/she feels is most important. Can express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly.
Basic User	A2	Can communicate what he/she wants to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations he/she generally has to compromise the message.
	A1	<i>No description available.</i>

from using the term (ibid, 179-180). However, *fluency* is a highly relevant concept in the field of oral competence and Saleva (1997, 52), for example, provides an important argument by stating that ‘the non-native speaker’s fluency affects the native speakers’ willingness to seek interaction with him’. She refers to Albrechtsen, Henriksen and Faerch’s (1980, cited in Saleva 1997, 52) study, according to which native speakers

portrayed most negative reactions towards speakers whose speech was marked by hesitation and the use of communication strategies. According to Saleva, Fillmore (1979, cited in Saleva 1997, 52-53) also argues that it is natural for native speakers to seek contact with speakers with whom they feel that understanding is fairly easy. In addition to the aspects presented above, there is another argument, which Saleva (1997, 53) points out – one that I feel, is quite a significant one: the speaker's oral fluency also affects the interlocutor's judgment about his or her personality, attitude and intellectual capacity. Hence, even though described fluency can be tricky it is nonetheless worth the effort.

As communicative competence became the main goal of language teaching in the 1970s, the study of fluency became more dominant as well (Saleva 1997, 53). Charles Fillmore was one of the pioneers of this branch of study and he presented a broad view, which covered both quantity and quality and he described a fluent speaker as being able to speak for a long time using coherent and reasoned sentences which were appropriate to the context in addition to being creative and imaginative. Saleva (1997, 53) reports that according to Fillmore 'a fluent speaker had to be able to speak at length, use coherent and reasoned sentences, have appropriate things to say in different contexts, and even be creative and imaginative in his language use'. However, Saleva (1997, 53) also points out that Fillmore did not expect these four varieties to be combined in one person but rather treated them as separate abilities. More recent definitions that have been presented for *fluency* are, for example, Kormos' (2006 xxvi) view that most L2 learners' aim is to achieve a high level of fluency, which basically means 'to learn how to produce speech smoothly, efficiently, and within the time constraints of real-life communication'.

Kormos (2006, 154-155) also reports that *fluency* is often understood in two senses, either as *global oral proficiency*, which means that the speaker has high command of the language in general, or as being just *one component of oral proficiency*, something that is used as one of the aspects when assessing oral competence. Lennon (1990, 388) already presented this view in the early 90s by stating that within the EFL context, the term *fluency* seems to have two senses – a *broad one* and a *narrow one*. In the *broad sense* fluency seems to function as an umbrella term for oral proficiency in general, meaning that being fluent represents the highest point on such a scale that measures speaking skills in a foreign language. According to him there rarely exists a level beyond 'fluent', when for example measuring foreign language ability for employment



or study abroad purposes. Lennon (ibid, 389), however, also points out that ‘being fluent’ can mean very different things to different people and that the term itself tends to have a rather subjective presentation in people’s minds. The *narrow sense*, on the other hand, stands for any ‘presumably isolatable, component of oral proficiency’ (ibid, 389.) Such features are the ones that are often being specifically measured in some way, for example appropriateness, pronunciation or lexical range, among others. He provides two examples provided by teachers who evaluate their students as ‘fluent but grammatically inaccurate’ or speaking correctly but not very fluently (ibid, 390). Thus, *fluency* is used as one component of the measuring scale among other features of language proficiency. Even though the two senses are not unrelated it seems that the *narrow sense* is being used to cover other elements of oral proficiency and fluent delivery in performance is the ‘overriding determiner of perceived oral proficiency’ whereas other features seem to be of lesser importance (ibid, 391). Lennon (ibid, 391-392) also describes *fluency* as reflecting the speaker’s ability to present a finished message instead of ‘inviting the listener to focus on the working of the production mechanisms’ (p. 391). He furthermore proposes that fluent delivery might direct the listeners’ attention away from deficiencies in other areas, such as phonology, grammar or syntax (ibid.).

As for what *characteristics* fluency has, Paananen-Porkka (2007, 97) states the same as Segalowitz (2010) by saying that the concept can be hard to define unambiguously and it has received many definitions over the years. While Paananen-Porkka (2007, 97) refers to definitions given by dictionaries, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Collins English Dictionary*, she also points out that these definitions are quite vague, since they do not explain what linguistic phenomena underlies these attributes that are often associated with fluency (smooth, easy, quick etc.). She then moves on to pointing out that the *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* provides a slightly more detailed view with its two definitions of fluency, the first being a more general description and the second taking into account the aspect of second language acquisition:

1. The features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of PAUSING, RHYTHM, INTONATION, STRESS, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions.
2. In second and foreign language teaching, fluency describes a level of proficiency in communication, which includes:
  - a) The ability to produce written and/or spoken language with ease
  - b) The ability to speak with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar
  - c) The ability to communicate ideas effectively

- d) The ability to produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication.

It is sometimes contrasted with accuracy, which refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently. (Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics 1985, 107-108.)

Obviously, as Paananen-Porkka (2007, 98) points out, such notions as ‘with ease’ and ‘efficiently’ are left unexplained, which brings us back to the problem that was discussed earlier: due to a lack of solid definition, perceived fluency can often be a result of the hearer’s judgment. The simplest definitions describe fluency as ‘smooth, rapid and error-free flow of speech which is produced with ease’ (Paananen-Porkka 2007, 99-100). Moreover, Paananen-Porkka (ibid.) points out that these definitions associate fluency with speaker’s performance only. The more detailed definitions, on the other hand, include the *interactive aspect* of fluency and she suggests that interactivity should be considered a key concept because the situation and feedback that a speaker receives appear to have the most effect on their fluency.

Another aspect that should be considered in relation to that of fluency is *accuracy*. Whereas fluency in a communicative situation can be described as the sufficient flowing and effortlessness of speech, which is not interrupted by disturbing pauses or hesitations, *accuracy* refers to the perceived flawlessness of the utterance as well as the appropriateness to the context in question. The term *scope* is also added to this context and it refers to the versatility and content of the utterance. (Hildén 2000.) Hildén (2000) names these three aspects as the tripartite of speech communication and according to her it would be ideal if these three aspects would come true in a communicative situation. Often language learners tend to favor one of these aspects and the teachers’ task is to direct the learning into correct direction so that it serves the development of all aspects needed for successful communication (ibid.). Jaakkola (2000, 151) also mentions fluency in the context of FL teaching in which *fluency* is often emphasized in relation to communicative language teaching, whereas linguistic *accuracy* often depends largely on the situation in which the language is being used; in some work situations, for example, accurate speech might be necessary in order to give a proper impression but often being understood suffices. According to Jaakkola, in teaching, balance between fluency and accuracy would be an ideal goal, since it takes into account the needs of both the stronger and weaker learners.

### 3.2.3 The role of performance and assessment in oral fluency

Regardless of the vast number of definitions and the variation between the levels of specificity, all definitions of fluency are generally associated with ‘ideal or high-quality performance’ (Paananen-Porkka 2007, 100). *Performance* is a concept that one often encounters when familiarizing oneself with the concept of fluency. According to Lennon (1990, 391) fluency differs from other elements of oral proficiency in being purely a performance related phenomenon, which does not measure linguistic knowledge. It becomes especially relevant when dealing with the language teaching aspect, in which fluency is often being assessed and therefore can be affected by performance in the given situation. Already in the 1960s Chomsky (1965, 4) made a distinction between *competence* and *performance* by declaring that *competence* was ‘the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language’ and *performance* was ‘the actual use of language in correct situations’. In his view *performance* cannot be considered to directly reflect *competence*, since ‘numerous false starts, deviations from rules and changes of plan in the mid-course’, among others, can be detected from samples of natural speech. Paananen-Porkka (2007, 100) also refers to different studies that have pointed out that fluent performance can also include disfluencies, since there are correct and fluent ways to hesitate, correct or interrupt, for example. She makes a valid point by suggesting that fluency should consist of three elements: *ideal or high-quality performance*, *interactivity* and *disfluent fluencies*. I find this distinction the most useful one, since it takes into account many of the aspects that in my opinion are the most important ones for fluent performance and interaction. Paananen-Porkka furthermore refers to Lehtonen’s (1978, cited in Paananen-Porkka 2007, 100) study, which showed that sometimes pauses and slower speech rate, for example, are appropriate given the complexity and intention of a given text. Pausing can also result from other factors, such as the personality or the L1 of the speaker, different interfering forces of the environment or the situation or context itself (Saleva 1997, 58).

Generally speaking, *fluency* and *performance* are concepts that are influenced by a number of factors and can, therefore, be very vulnerable. This is an aspect that needs to be considered especially when *assessing* fluency, since the testing situation itself can have a tremendous effect on the performance and further on the fluency of the learner. This fact is also noted in the CEFR, in which it is stated that:

The ability of all speakers, especially learners, to put their language competence into action depends greatly on the physical conditions under which communication takes place. -- Teachers and testers need also to be aware of the effect of social conditions and time

pressures upon the processes of learning, classroom interaction and their effect upon a learner's competence and his or her ability to perform on a particular occasion. (CEFR 2001, 47)

Moreover, since communication is a need that arises from a particular situation, both 'the form as well as the content of the communication' can be considered 'a response to that situation' (CEFR 2001, 42). A testing situation, for example, carries a certain set of rules that differ from normal communicative situations and therefore must be noted in the assessment. We must also take into account that learners' competence might vary depending on the theme that has been chosen for the assessment task. However, since language proficiency should be a more general notion than just restricted to one area of expertise, we cannot always choose the one theme that best suits the person who is being tested at the moment. Nonetheless, it would be good that multiple options and variety of tasks were provided. When measuring oral competence we must also remember that the speaker must employ receptive strategies simultaneously with the production strategies. This might have an effect on the performance as well, since for example listening comprehension can be affected by different factors, such as background noise. Segalowitz (2010, 50-51) also points out that it is possible that speakers find it challenging to use communicatively accepted elements or meet certain norms of communication, such as speech registers or speaking at a certain rate, resulting in the fluency of their speech suffering. Hence, the context or the social dimensions of communication can never be completely disregarded and this factor should most definitely be accounted for in the testing situations. Moreover, in order to be able to make inferences about individuals' language ability, tests must be able to demonstrate that the language test is related to language use in other specific settings than the test itself (Bachman & Palmer 1996, 61).

Besides individual and contextual characteristics, the assessment scales themselves can be subject to evaluation. The validity of the assessment of oral proficiency in general is largely determined by the criteria given in that specific scale as well as by the tasks used in the test itself. It is important to take into account that different theories used to describe oral competence and speaking, cannot always be converted into assessment scales directly. Rather the descriptions generated by these theories can be used as a check-list of a sort, with which the test maker can see if all aspects have been taken into account in the test. The biggest problems that exist between theories and the actual assessment scales has to do with *sociolinguistic competence*, which is often not explicitly measured in the tests. (Huhta 2010, 37.) Moreover, as the term *fluency* had a

rather subjective representation in people's minds, the same can be expected to apply to the assessors, which might, then, affect the evaluation to some extent.

It was mentioned above that in addition to situational factors, the speaker's personality and L1 might also have an influence on the performance. Besides these two factors other individual characteristics, such as age, sex, affective schemata, topical knowledge etc, should also be considered due to their influence on both the language use as well as the test performance (Bachman & Palmer 1996, 61; 65). *Affective schemata*, for example, can either affect the topic of the task or the test taking situation, or the test itself and it can either facilitate or negatively influence a person's performance (ibid, 65). *Social factors*, such as attitudes and motivation, are also said to have an influence on L2 fluency (both oral and cognitive) and often these 'motivations' 'are founded on socially constructed beliefs and attitudes about identity' (Segalowitz 2010, 107, 120). I feel that in the case of social factors, the disfluencies can often be 'optional' or 'voluntary', especially when related to the aspect of identity. Another reason for 'optional disfluency' might be the L2 speaker's use of imperfect expressions to signal to the interlocutors that he or she has limited abilities when it comes to using the foreign language, especially when communicating with native speakers (Segalowitz 2010, 127). Sometimes the speakers' beliefs and attitudes about the language and the group speaking that language have an effect on the L2 performance as well (Segalowitz 2010, 120). Even though the influence of individual features and characteristics on L2 fluency and learning is indisputable, the topic itself is so vast that it cannot be discussed in more depth in this study. However, these aspects are useful to bear in mind when dealing with the language teaching and learning aspect in more detail in the following chapters.

The speakers' L1 was also said to have an effect on their L2 performance and it is true, as Raupach (1983, 207) reports, that often L2 learners do not master language-specific use of phenomena, such as draws, repetitions or non-verbal behavior, as can be observed in their L1. The distribution of some phenomena can also be learner-specific and exceptional for native speakers; among these are code-switching, word coinage, paraphrasing etc. This factor is also accounted for in the CEFR (2001, 43) in which it is stated that 'the learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture. Nor is the new competence kept entirely separate from the old. The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner becomes plurilingual and develops interculturality'. In this sense it is impossible for us to become

completely separated from our original linguistic and cultural conventions, which will undoubtedly affect the way we interact in the language that we are learning.

### 3.2.4 Pronunciation

Even though pronunciation is only one aspect of oral proficiency, it is nonetheless an important one. In Saleva's words (1997, 40): 'If a Finn had been taught written English but no pronunciation, the way he would decode English written text in speaking would be completely unintelligible to anyone except another Finn'. Similarly, faulty prosody, as discussed earlier, can also be a generator for crucial misunderstandings (ibid.). Obviously, the example given above is quite extreme but it cannot, however, be argued that pronunciation would not have a crucial role in the intelligibility and successfulness of speech communication. In this section I am going to discuss both the physical and social aspects of pronunciation in more detail as well as deal with the teaching of pronunciation to some extent.

From the physical point of view *pronunciation* can be considered one aspect of a language's phonetics and phonological system, which is made up of multiple different features that affect the outcome of the words and utterances we produce. Each language has its own set of rules that form the correct sounds of that language. Such rules include aspects such as *articulation* and *segmental aspects* in the form of assimilation, elision, liaison, reduction as well as *prosodic factors* such as intonation, rhythm and stress. (Thorne 2008.) Seidlhofer (2001, 56) also describes pronunciation as comprising of the production and perception of the *segmental sounds*, of *stressed and unstressed syllables* and *intonation* of a language. *Voice quality*, *speech rate* and *overall loudness* are also factors that affect the way sounds turn out.

The *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (1985) defines pronunciation simply as the way a specific sound or sounds are produced. However, the dictionary differentiates *articulation*, which refers to the actual production of speech sounds in the mouth. This aspect will be omitted from the present study, however, since the aim is not to further study the physical aspects of speaking but rather the social ones, which will be discussed shortly. The CEFR (2001, 116) describes phonological competence as 'knowledge of, and skill in the perception and production of':

- the sound-units (phonemes) of the language and their realisation in particular contexts (allophones)
- the phonetic features which distinguish phonemes (distinctive features, e.g. voicing, rounding, nasality, plosion)

- the phonetic composition of words (syllable structure, the sequence of phonemes, word stress, word tones)
- sentence phonetics (prosody)
- sentence stress and rhythm
- intonation
- phonetic reduction
  - vowel reduction
  - strong and weak forms
  - assimilation
  - elision.

(CEFR 2001, 116)

The CEF has also provided a scale for phonological control, which can be viewed in Table 8 on the following page.

As was mentioned above, pronunciation plays a crucial role in making speech intelligible. Besides the general intelligibility pronunciation can have an underlying social significance as well. According to de Jong (1991, 23) it is often the case that a layman's judgment of someone's general language proficiency is based firstly on the pronunciation and fluency of the speech, whereas the appropriateness of lexical and syntactic choices are secondary to the judgment. This issue is also addressed by Luoma (2004, 9) who states that people automatically pay attention to what their interlocutors sound like and subconsciously make judgments about them based on these impressions. The *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (1985) also mentions the speaker's background or social class, among others, as aspects that are inferable from a person's pronunciation or accent. Seidlhofer (2001, 56) also addresses the issue of pronunciation as a social factor by pointing out that because we project our identities through the way we speak, pronunciation plays a central role in our personal and social lives. She also notes that since pronunciation is inseparably bound up with a person's social and personal identity, the notion of 'correct pronunciation' becomes debatable. Pronunciation can, for example, manifest power and social status as well as individual identities. Therefore, some L2 speakers might, for example, bring some aspects of their L1 pronunciation to that of their L2, in order to reflect where they come from as individuals. (Seidlhofer 2001, 57-58.) This aspect was also pointed out by Segalowitz (2010) in regard to *fluency* in the previous section. Taking all this into consideration, however, there is no justification for *not* learning 'correct' or 'generally accepted' pronunciation, since it is also an inescapable fact that pronunciation does affect intelligibility. Moreover, poor pronunciation can also cause other socio-economic consequences that are not in favor of the speaker, as was referred to by Luoma above.

Table 8. Phonological control (CEFR 2001, 117).

Proficient User	C2	As C1
	C1	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.
Independent User	B2	Has acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation.
	B1	Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.
Basic User	A2	Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time.
	A1	Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group.

As is declared by de Jong (1991, 23), there is a general agreement that the 'correct pronunciation of phonemes, proper realization of intonation patterns, and fluency (interpreted as ease or smoothness of speech)' are integral parts of oral proficiency ratings. As for *intelligibility*, these aspects are often considered highly important for successful communication and are therefore often emphasized (ibid.) To address the issue of intelligibility in more detail, often in everyday encounters the purpose of foreign language use is to 'get the message across'. From the point of view of speaking and pronunciation this is done by arranging messages into meaningful chunks, or in other words 'tone units', which organize the message and facilitate its processing. *Intonation groups*, for example, signal which syllables are the most important ones and they can also signal social meanings or function as a turn-taking vehicle. (Seidlhofer 2001, 58.) The *stress patterns* of words are also crucial for intelligibility, since they can affect whether a word is perceived as a noun or a verb, e.g. *perMIT* (verb) and *PERmit* (noun) (ibid, 59). As has been mentioned earlier and as is stated by Seidlhofer (ibid, 61) as well, these aspects are otherwise known as the *prosodic features* and from now on will be considered as being part of the aspect of pronunciation as a whole, since, as Paananen-Porkka (2007, 8) declares, pronunciation is not a mere issue of producing vowel and consonant sounds correctly but instead has to do with many different factors, such as prosody in this case. According to her prosodic features contribute more significantly to the intelligibility of speech because they organize the speech flow, thus making them more influential. However, obviously the appearance of segmental errors can also severely affect speech comprehension. (ibid.). Other features that are important



for appropriate pronunciation are the correct realization of distinctive phonemes and allophones, for example. (Seidlhofer 2001, 59.)

Regardless of the importance of pronunciation there currently is very little understanding concerning the cognitive processes of L2 phonology acquisition and, in fact, no unitary theory of L2 phonology acquisition or encoding exists and more psychological research should be made in that field (Kormos 2006, 121). It is safe to say, however, that the learning and teaching of pronunciation are a much more complex phenomena than just the physical aspects mentioned earlier. Seidlhofer, for example, refers to learner variables presented by Celce-Murcia et al. (1996, cited in Seidlhofer 2001, 59) that affect the way a learner learns pronunciation. These features include 'exposure to the target language, amount and type of prior pronunciation instruction, aptitude, attitude and motivation, and the role of the learner's L1' (ibid.). Seidlhofer (ibid) points out that many of these features are dependent on the purpose of the learning as well as the environment or setting in which the learning takes place. The distinction between English as a second language [ESL] and English as a foreign language [EFL] learning becomes important at this point, since the learning aims can be quite different. In ESL the learners often aim at being intelligible for the native speakers around them and they most probably will want to integrate with the native speaker community at some point. In EFL, on the other hand, the learners may aim at using English as a lingua franca in contexts that might not include native speakers but other learners, making sounding like a native speaker rather irrelevant. (ibid.) Seidlhofer (ibid, 59-60) makes a good point by stating that teachers need to be aware of the increased number of models for L2 pronunciation learning as well as the difference between using a particular native speaker variety as a norm or a model. The 'norm' aspect has a strong connotation to correctness, whereas using a certain variety as a mere model makes the criterion of appropriateness more important than correctness. She also points out that this area is something in which learners can feel particularly vulnerable and insecure in and that the dependency between pronunciation and other areas of language use and learning, such as listening, speaking and grammar, must be accounted for (ibid.).

Most often the problems arise from differences between L1 and L2. In some cases the phonemes can be transferred between the two languages without further difficulties but sometimes there are noticeable differences and some of the L2 phonemes might not even exist in L1. The learning of pronunciation is further complicated by habituation,

which is strongest at the phonetic level. This is especially relevant when discussing the stage and age of the learning, since it might be easier to ‘unlearn the automatised behaviours’ in ‘the initial phase of learning, especially at an early age’. (CEFR 2001, 132) The negative transfer between L1 and L2 are the cause for many of the problems that Finns have with English, for example. A few examples are the tense-lax positioning of sounds (English /i:/, I/, Finnish /i:/, i) and the unfamiliar central vowels /ɜ:/ and /ə/ (‘schwa’). (Saleva 1997, 44-45.) Even though many more differences exist and it is important to be aware of those, it is not in the scope of this study to deal with this issue further (for more information see Saleva 1997). The National Board of Education provides the following guideline for teaching pronunciation for comprehensive schools:

Pronunciation is part of the foundation that forms oral proficiency. Intelligibility must be the minimum demand for pronunciation, since it can severely affect comprehension. The aim is that from the beginning the teacher enables the pupil to acquire the speech sounds, stress, rhythm and intonation as naturally and typical to the target language as possible. --- The practice of pronunciation must be continued throughout the studies, especially if the language in question differs to a great deal from the learner’s native tongue. In order for the learners to get as close to the target as possible, they must be exposed to the target language that is well pronounced, preferably by a native speaker. Later on in the studies, the learners should also get to know the regional variants of the target language’s pronunciation. However, in teaching one variant should be used consistently.  
(Peruskoulun englannin kielen oppimäärä ja oppimääräsuunnitelma [PEKOO] 1982, 9-10)

The guide to the teaching of foreign languages at Finnish comprehensive schools compiled by the National Board of Education (Peruskoulun kielenopetuksen opas 1983, 20) also emphasizes that the pronunciation models given in teaching should be authentic. In 1994 The Framework Curriculum for the Senior Secondary School (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet 1994, 71) did not provide such elaborate description but merely stated that the learner should be able to ‘actively participate in a dialogue using natural and fluent pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation’. However, since comprehensive school precedes upper secondary education it is safe to say that the guidelines provided for comprehensive school form the basis for upper secondary school as well.

Even though many of the descriptions provided above mention such words as ‘authentic’ or ‘natural’, it must be pointed out that English pronunciation has a great deal of social and geographical variants and is, hence, much less uniform than other

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Since 1994, instead of inflicting specific syllabuses on schools, the National Board of Education has moved to providing guidelines to them, according to which they can write their own syllabuses. However, those guidelines continue to emphasize the naturalness and fluency of pronunciation in the foreign languages. (Paananen-Porkka 2007, 103.)

aspects, such as syntax lexis (Saleva 1997, 43). There are hundreds of millions speakers of English, both native and non-native, a fact, that has questioned the notion of a commonly accepted ‘norm’ when it comes to pronunciation. Therefore the concepts of ‘authentic’ or ‘natural’ can be debatable to some extent. Moreover, as was the case with *fluency*, individuals can have quite different standards as for what constitutes as ‘appropriate’ or ‘sufficient’ pronunciation as well. The question remains: what is the proper starting point and what should be used as the point of comparison? In order to answer this question in the following section I am briefly going to discuss the status of English as a world language (EWL) from the point of view of different ‘native speaker varieties’ as well as English as a lingua franca (ELF). Moreover, I am going to present a few commonly accepted norms as for what constitutes as ‘good’ English.

### **3.3 English in the world – norms and standards**

Already in the 1980s Kachru (1985, 12) presented a model in which he described the speakers of English in the world in the form of the so-called *inner*, *outer* and *expanding circles*. The *inner circle* embodies those speakers who speak English as their mother tongue, in other words native speakers. The *outer circle* comprises those countries in which English is spoken as a second language, mainly countries that are historically or politically bound to English via colonization, for example. Often in these countries English has acquired a rather important role in the nation’s language policies. The *expanding circle* covers countries in which English is taught as a foreign language, such as Finland. Crystal’s (2003) adaptation of the circles is presented in Figure 1 on the following page. As can be observed, the amount of the outer circle speakers was already quite high at the time and since English continues to reinforce its relevance as a global language, the number of the outer circle speakers can be expected to be a lot higher by now. Moreover, the amount of native speakers who live in different regions is also quite high, resulting in a vast number of standard and equally accurate ‘Englishes’. The development of regional varieties of any language is inevitable but even more so with English, which is widely spoken in many countries by both native and non-native speakers. As Carter and Nunan (2001, 3) point out, these varieties are not marked in the written language but more so in speech. Moreover, the speakers of these varieties often identify with ‘their own’ variety and do not need to learn other ‘Englishes’, since their variety most likely does not result in communication difficulties in international settings. In written language the differences are only minimal. Besides the ‘official’



Figure 1. The ‘three’ circles of English. (Crystal 2003, 60)

regional varieties, non- native speaker varieties have also developed, especially in former colonial areas. Often such varieties exist on the side of an official *standard* variety, which is, for example, taught at schools. (ibid.). There are many reasons for why people choose to use a specific variety. For some it might be a way of identifying oneself with the larger population, whereas some might choose the standard variety, which often reflects the socio-economic power of the language. In international contexts, aside from purely personal reasons, the political and ideological baggage of a given variety might affect whether or not a speaker chooses it. (Carter and Nunan 2001, 3-4.)

Through the worldwide expansion of the English language criticism towards the idealized native speaker model has increased. It is true that over the years the native speaker has been portrayed as a model for language learning. In Chomsky’s words:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky 1965, 3.)

In other words this ‘ideal speaker-listener’ can be called a *native* or at least a *native-like speaker*. *Native-like speech* can have many descriptions, as can so many other concepts that have to do with spoken fluency. Pawley and Hodgetts Syder (1983, 191), for example, discuss the terms *native-like selection* and *native-like fluency* as the two components that describe native speech. The first one, according to them, is ‘the ability of the native speaker routinely to convey meaning by an expression that is not only grammatical but also nativelike’ (p. 191). They also report a problem with this view, however, which is how to choose a natural and idiomatic sentence from all the possible range of grammatically correct phrases, since only a small amount of all grammatically correct sentences sound natural or idiomatic to native speakers (ibid, 193). *Native-like fluency*, on the other hand, means ‘the native speaker’s ability to produce fluent stretches of spontaneous connected discourse’ (ibid, 191).

This view is, however, becoming old fashioned. Firstly, a native speaker can hardly be considered a perfect model and as Raupach (1983) points out, native speakers rarely manage to perform in a fluent manner at least in the ideal sense. Even those native speakers, who seem apparently fluent and grammatical, exhibit syntactical mistakes, false starts and incomplete utterances. Secondly, as Kuo (2006, 213-214) reports, there has been a growing tendency that ‘native speakers and their Englishes’ have become more irrelevant in the context of English as the language for international communication. She reports that today English is more often used by non-native speakers than native speakers, reducing the native speakers’ so called ‘ownership’ of the language. This realization has led to the thinking that ‘any personal or regional, linguistic or socio-cultural attachment to inner circle countries and their Englishes would appear highly politically incorrect’ (ibid. 214, see also Carter and Nunan 2001). Matsuda (2003, 719) also addresses this issue by stating that instead of teaching English according to the inner circle standards, the international agenda of the learners should be taken into account in the teaching. She suggests that rather than concentrating on the inner circle norms, teaching professionals should integrate the ‘World Englishes perspective’ in to their teaching, which would then transfer to the general public as well, making the English as an international language [EIL] perspective more known and accepted (ibid, 725-726). Cook (1999, 185) agrees with this point by suggesting that language teaching should concentrate more on the L2 speaker instead of the native speaker and that an L2 user model should be applied to teaching.

Similarly to the views presented by Kuo (2006), Jenkins (2002, 85) also points out that when English is used in an international setting, it no longer belongs to any specific native speaker community. In an EIL context there are no 'foreign' speakers of the language but rather international ones for whom the only requirement is that their speech be acceptable and intelligible for the international community. Since the other participants are often other non-native speakers of English as well, the speech should rather be intelligible for them instead of the native speakers. However, Jenkins (ibid, 86) goes on to emphasize that when it comes to accents in the EIL setting, it is not the case that anything would be acceptable. In fact, she cites Trudgill (1998, cited in Jenkins 2002) who points out that especially in the case of English, which is so widely spoken around the world and by so many people (from different backgrounds and mother tongues), the language might break up into multiple different dialects that are mutually unintelligible. Moreover, as pronunciation is already the aspect that appears to have the most divergence in the non-native varieties compared to other linguistic aspects, Trudgill suggests that phonological variations accepted in EIL settings could, in fact, complicate international communication instead of facilitating it. Even though I acknowledge that in many contexts the pronunciation of English is not the most important aspect and sometimes the bare rudiments will suffice, I must agree with Trudgill's point of view. I find that in the end it is not beneficial for anyone, least for the people who interact in the EIL context, if incomplete and inaccurate language is consistently used in such a wide setting by millions of people, let alone taught in that form intentionally. This view is also supported by Kuo (2006, 215-216), who remarks that in the EIL setting, English has become a mere instrument of communication. In other words this means that when a language is used as a lingua franca some aspects such as 'literacy, register, style, and various aesthetic concerns' as well as the language's social functions, such as politeness factors, will become overlooked making that form of language insufficient in the wider scope.

Even though Cook (1999) and Matsuda (2003) suggested that EIL should be more present in language teaching, I find that due to the reasons presented above, this matter should be approached quite carefully. Even though in some contexts it might be acceptable to use a certain incomplete variety of English, I feel that in teaching all aspects should be considered and English should not be taught as a mere instrument for accomplishing something else. Moreover, even though it is true that native speakers are not perfect examples and do not necessarily know their mother tongue thoroughly, they

do have a wider experience in the language, which is likely to result in them having a better or more ‘idiomatic’ command of it compared to L2 speakers (Huhta 1993, 126, 129) and therefore they present quite a good model to begin with, nonetheless. However, I do think that it is a valid point that L2 speakers’ goals should be perhaps more accounted for in language teaching and as Kuo (2006, 219) suggests, ‘an appropriate pedagogical model has to be able to satisfy demands ranging from minimum intelligibility, through general accuracy and fluency, up to comparable proficiency to that of a native speaker, rather than drawing exclusively or even primarily on the notion of international intelligibility.’ This view is also partly supported by the CEFR in the quotation below:

The aims and objectives of language learning and teaching should be based on an appreciation of needs of learners and of society, on the tasks, activities and processes that the learners need to carry out in order to satisfy those needs, and on the competences and strategies they need to develop/build up in order to do so. (CEFR 2001, 131)

Since it is extremely difficult to establish a common ground for which variety of English should be used as norm, especially in education, I am going to present Thorne’s (2008, 97) view of what constitutes as a starting point for English that is generally considered ‘good’: the Standard English (SE) form. In order to be able to discuss even to the slightest extent the ‘correctness’ of a language, a common reference point must be established and for that I find that the general notion of SE provides a valid foundation.

In Thorne’s words:

Standard English (SE) is a form of English which has been accepted as a norm. It is the variety with which other forms of English are compared. Sometimes it is called a *dialect*, although it is not linked to a specific region and has no regionally distinctive words or grammatical structures---Linguists are interested in the varieties of English we use and in order to describe them they use Standard English as a point of comparison. Any variety which does not use the same vocabulary or grammar as Standard English is called non-standard English. By using this term, linguists can avoid value judgements – non-standard varieties of English are not wrong, but different. (Thorne 2008, 97.)

Whenever we want to talk about more specific variants used in different English speaking countries or areas, we can talk more specifically about Standard American English, for example (Yule 1996, 227). Different forms of SE exist as well – spoken and written; formal and informal; personal and impersonal – because language is always adapted to fit the audience and the communicative situation in question. Moreover, people often speak ‘either a regional variety of English or a mixture of Standard English and regional forms’ meaning that SE is usually the variant being used on news broadcasts or other official contexts; in writing SE often appears in formal documents. Due to its formal nature, SE is often considered the ‘good’ or ‘correct’ variant of the English language. (Thorne 2008, 97.) As can be read from the citation above, SE has to

do with the vocabulary and grammar of English but as we know, language is not restricted to those two aspects. Therefore, spoken forms, and in this case more specifically pronunciation, have similar standard forms and in the UK, for example, the standard form is known as ‘Received Pronunciation’ (RP) and in the US ‘General American’ etc. These spoken standards do not have regional boundaries but they can be spoken more generally in certain areas of the nation. Traditionally RP has been the widely accepted standard throughout the world but the Finnish upper secondary school curriculum does not define which variety should be the dominant one in education. According to Saleva (1997, 43), commonly either the RP or General American with their close variants, have been used but in fact, the majority of the provided teaching materials tend to be based on RP.

In this chapter I have discussed the concept of *oral competence* in more detail by describing different elements and aspects that are generally associated with it. Moreover, of all the aspects the emphasis has been on *fluency* and *pronunciation* specifically. I have also discussed the wide scope English has in the world and the way it affects the way we view it. The issues discussed here are beneficial to bear in mind when we move on to discussing the role of English in education more specifically in the following chapter.

#### **4 ORAL COMPETENCE IN FINLAND**

As has been made clear in the course of this paper, the status of English as a world language is indisputable and its role has become increasingly significant especially in the course of the past couple of decades. As this development has taken place, education has followed its lead and according to Lintunen (2004, 2) English is the most popular and common foreign language taught in Finnish schools. It can be said, thus, that all young Finns know English at least to some extent due to their education as well as the exposure to the English-dominated media. In this chapter I am going to discuss the role of English in Finland and more specifically in education.

In 2007 Leppänen et al. (2009) conducted a study, which charted Finns’ experience and opinions about English in Finland. The study was executed in collaboration with the Central Statistical Office of Finland and the data was collected using a survey that was sent out to the participants. In total there were 1,495 participants and they were chosen with a partly systematic sampling from all Finnish citizens, excluding Åland, between



ages 15 to 79. In the study they used the participants' living area, gender and educational background as distinguishing factors and the age groups were divided between 15-24, 25-44, 45-64 and 65-79. The study showed, for example, that 80% of all the participants reported hearing and seeing English in their surroundings. The figure rises up to 89% when those participants who did not report hearing or seeing *any* foreign languages in their surroundings, are excluded. Moreover, 40,5% reported using English at work and 64,2% used English when traveling. As mentioned, the study also charted Finns' opinions about the English language for example 80% of the youngest group of participants was of the opinion that English was 'quite important' to say the least (ibid, 49). Of all the participants over 50% agreed with this statement (ibid, 73). Moreover, according to 97% of all the participants young people should know English and according to 80% those who are of working age must know English as well. 69% also thought that people who travel abroad should know English (ibid. 76). The young group agreed with almost a 100% with the first statement, which indicates that English has quite a central role in their lives. They were also of the opinion that all Finns should know English. (ibid.)

Mäkelä (2005) investigated the role of oral practice and oral exercises in the Finnish upper secondary school by mapping the opinions of 233 Finnish English teachers and 375 upper secondary school students all over Finland. His study confirms some of Leppänen et al.'s (2009) findings, since it also showed that upper secondary school students found the learning of English rather favorable: they considered the status of learning English to be quite high and according to them it was an important and pleasant subject. The students seemed to have an especially positive view towards oral language practice and wanted to have more fluency practice in their studies. According to them, the most important skill was to learn to *speak*, and the second most important skill was to learn to *understand* spoken English.

Leppänen et al.'s (2009) study also dealt with different English accents and the participants were asked which accents they found the most likeable out of the total of seven options. As expected, the American and British varieties were chosen the most pleasant, possibly due to their familiarity to the Finnish people through media and formal school teaching, which highlights the two (ibid, 55, 74). Especially the two youngest groups found American English the most pleasant variety, which can, in part, be due to the influence of popular culture (ibid. 56). Interestingly Indian English was considered the most unpleasant cross age groups and Finnish English was considered

the second most unpleasant variety. When asked of their opinions about a famous Finn who speaks English a) by stumbling over one's words, or b) fluently with a Finnish accent or c) in a native-like manner, the youngest group felt *amusement* and *shame* for the Finnish people in the case of A, even though generally speaking *compassion* was the most common emotion. Interestingly, *compassion* was clearly experienced the least among the youngest group. This seems to imply that the younger generation takes knowing English more for granted and in their opinion a person who speaks publicly should know English quite well. (ibid. 62). In the case of option B *admiration* and *pride* for being Finnish were experienced the most but again among the youngest group *amusement* was present as well. 'No feelings' was also a common answer. (ibid. 63.) If a person spoke in a native-like manner *admiration* for the speaker was clearly the most experienced emotion cross age groups after which became *pride*. The results are relatable to Luoma's (2004, 9) statement discussed earlier, according to which people automatically make judgments according to the way their interlocutors speak. From the results it was deduced that in Finns' minds Finnish people should speak English similarly to native speakers, since stumbling over one's words was received with *amusement*, *irritation* or *compassion*. The younger groups were clearly more demanding than the older ones. (Leppänen et al. 2009, 76.) Since the aim of this study is to find out what opinions teachers and students, both of whom are largely part of the younger control groups, have about English in teaching, these results provide quite an interesting point of comparison.

Another interesting aspect was that even though it has been previously established that English is well present in the Finnish society, most of the participants in Leppänen et al.'s study (2009, 88) reported having had learned English mostly from English lessons or equally from lessons and elsewhere. The youngest control group reported having had learned English mostly from English lessons. The researchers said this to be due to Finnish people continuing to consider English as a language that is formally learned in classrooms. Personally, I find this interesting considering that English is so widely present in our society. This finding, however, supports the fact that English is still largely learned in the classroom and therefore I feel that it is highly important that students are provided appropriate models in the classroom, the teacher being one of them. Lintunen (2004, 58), in fact, points out that while at the lower levels it is not beneficial to teach the finer nuances of pronunciation, the correct models should always

be present in teaching so that students who have good receptive skills can acquire them from the teacher's model.

Another aspect that can be raised is that if young people truly have such high standards and expectations for people who speak in public, at least so that the way they speak does not cause *irritation, amusement or shame*, I wonder if this opinion extends to teachers as well. They are, after all, speaking in public and on top of that are English language professionals who should be highly proficient in as many areas as possible. I also find that even though students most likely have multiple models outside the classroom, in a way the teacher sets a standard or an objective for language learning. Should a teacher have a poor proficiency in some area of language, the students can hardly be expected to acquire a better proficiency than an expert of that language. Moreover, since speaking is any teacher's medium of working and especially that of a language teacher, it is possible that people make assumptions about their expertise from the way they speak. This idea of first impressions and professional image becomes especially relevant when discussing the effect teachers might have on the students' motivation and attitude towards learning in general. For example, should the students feel that their teacher is unskilled, it could affect their motivation to learn English. Hence, oral competence becomes an even greater issue in the field of education than merely that of a subject matter that should be taught in classrooms.

In the next section I am going to discuss the teaching of English in Finland in more detail. Different aspects of EFL teaching in Finland will be dealt with from the point of view of different curricula and syllabi, such as the CEFR and the guidelines provided by the FNBE for upper secondary schools, but I am also going to provide a few examples from Finnish universities' curricula. Moreover, the upper secondary school matriculation examination is going to be discussed, as well as the authenticity of the material used in the classroom and the non-native speaker status of teachers.

#### **4.1 Teaching English in Finnish upper secondary schools**

Before discussing the teaching of English in upper secondary schools a couple of earlier points should be reminded of: firstly, the Finnish upper secondary school curriculum is largely based on the objectives provided by the Common European Framework of Reference. The ideas and objectives of the Framework were presented in the earlier chapters and more specifically on Table 1 on page 17. Secondly, it should also be

remembered that the target level for the A-level English teaching is B2.1, in this case interpreted as level B2. Moreover, since this was the target of language teaching in Finnish upper secondary schools, I decided to use the level C1 as the minimum competence requirement for teachers. Thirdly, even though it has been established that language proficiency is not a mere issue of speaking, in this study the different aspects of *oral competence* are concentrated on and on Tables 3, 6 & 8 the descriptions for B2-level *overall oral production*, *spoken fluency* and *phonological control* were provided.

According to the Central Statistical Office of Finland, in spring 2011, 99.6 per cent of graduating seniors had studied English at some point during their upper secondary school careers. Most of them (30,591 out of 30,621) had studied English as an A-level language, meaning that they had studied it for approximately 10 years by the time of finishing their upper secondary school studies. Ten years of language training can be expected to result in quite a high proficiency in the foreign language, at least on most students' part, and therefore I find it reasonable to state that more emphasis should be put on the so-called 'fine-tuning' of the students' language skills towards the end of the studies. By 'fine-tuning' I mean the *pragmatic* and *sociocultural aspects* of language, which, according to Pietilä (1999, 5), are the ones that differentiate students more than grammatical errors, for example. I also find that *oral skills* can, to some extent, be included in the 'fine-tuning' part as in his study Mäkelä (2005, 159) found that those upper secondary school students, who had good grades, seemed to favor oral exercises that practiced vocabulary and fluency, whereas weaker students seemed to value group work. This view is also supported by de Jong who refers to Higgs and Clifford's (1982, cited in de Jong 1991, 24) Relative Contribution Model in which *vocabulary* and *grammar* are considered the most important factors throughout all levels of proficiency, except for the most advanced ones in which their importance diminishes and the aspects of *pronunciation*, *fluency* and *sociolinguistic performance* gain ground. Learners can, hence, be expected to show variance between these aspects as their mastery of the language increases – especially *pronunciation* and *fluency* will become more dominant in their speech (ibid.). It cannot be expected that all learners reach the most advanced levels of knowing a language but language experts and other advanced users of the given language, such as teachers, should already portray this sort of change in their linguistic performance. It can be, thus, argued that foreign language teachers' level of pronunciation and the relative fluency of their speech should be quite high.

Even though oral practice could be emphasized in upper secondary school teaching, it seems to be the case that it has to fight for its position instead. At the end of the 1990s, Saleva (1997, 11) reported that on multiple occasions learners had expressed a wish to have more oral skills instruction and practice in teaching. Even though the situation has surely improved in the past fifteen years, a more recent study conducted by Mäkelä (2005, 158) also showed that upper secondary school students would have preferred more oral practice to be done in the classroom. According to the study the students felt the need for more meaningful contact with the target language and they wanted to increase different task types, especially those practicing oral fluency (ibid, 162). The reason for the lack of practicing oral skills in the upper secondary schools is said to be due to the washback effect of the current matriculation examination (see e.g. Mäkelä 2005), which to this day does not have a compulsory oral exam even though, according to Saleva (1997), already in the 1980s a report by the Council of Europe suggested that all major language examinations should include a part that tests speaking. In many European countries, in fact, an oral test is a part of national examinations. Saleva (ibid.) also reports that the issue had been brought up as early as 1958 and again in the 1980s by the National Board of General Education, as well. Given that the issue has been brought up on multiple occasions and as early as the 1950s, it is surprising that the situation still has not changed to a very drastic extent. The general argument is that teachers must prepare the students for the final examination and therefore the practicing of oral skills is often belittled (Saleva 1997, 11). The washback effect is also at least partly responsible for an interesting finding made by Mäkelä (2005, 158) according to whom students who had passed fewer courses preferred oral fluency practice, listening comprehension tasks and authentic exercises, whereas students who were at the final stages of their studies did not consider these aspects as important. It seems that towards the end the students want to receive more practice in the areas that are tested in the final exam.

It is interesting, however, that according to Mäkelä's (2005, 158) study 60% of the participants expressed a neutral or positive opinion when asked about the arrangement of an oral test in the matriculation examination. The objection does not, hence, seem to be too vigorous. However, in the participants' view a couple of issues should be considered before the addition of an oral test and one of the topics was that there is a need for finding ways that reduce students' performance anxiety which, according to the students, may interfere with the performance (ibid, 161). Oral work should also be a

natural part of every-day tasks in the English class, in order for the students to get used to it. Some of the opinions also stated that students need to overcome their low self-esteem in oral lessons, which could be done through pair and group work, both of which can help the students to become more aware of their personal worth in expressing their own views. (ibid.) Moreover, even though teachers were in favor of the use of oral test in the matriculation examination, several aspects, such as having enough resources, worried them (ibid, 164).

Nonetheless, the addition of an oral test would have many benefits, since it would possibly bring more interactive, authentic and open practice to the English classes and furthermore, it would bring fairness to the examination, since it would better take into account students' different skills. Another justification is that since oral skills are taught at school, it would be sensible to test them. (ibid, 163.) Mäkelä (ibid, 164) also points out a further justification by noting that different national exams should be comparable throughout Europe and, as was mentioned above, in most European countries oral skills are tested in national examinations. Luckily a few years ago a couple of advances were made in this regard; firstly, an optional oral course was added into the upper secondary school syllabus and secondly, the students were offered the opportunity to receive a grade for their oral skills that was included in their school-leaving certificate. However, the position of oral skills in upper secondary school teaching could be better and again we encounter the issue of attempting to define the nature of oral proficiency, since in order to come up with a valid test, a proper definition of both language and language proficiency must be provided (Saleva 1997). Mäkelä (2005, 164) also points out that more research is needed in the area of oral practice in Finnish schools and he states that it would also be useful to know more about what kind of oral practice the students find interesting.

Even though the main focus in this study is on upper secondary level teaching, it is also necessary to discuss the aspect of teaching English at university level, since that is where teacher education takes place. The next chapter will briefly discuss this aspect after which the results of the present study will be presented.

## **4.2 Teaching English at university level**

As is the case with upper secondary level education, the aim for university level education is to answer the needs of the students and society by preparing teachers for

teaching and assessing oral proficiency but also to enhance their own level of oral competence. However, after familiarizing myself with some of the Finnish universities English departments' curricula, I noticed that there are differences between the number of courses provided for oral proficiency practice. Moreover, quite little oral proficiency teaching is provided compared to other courses. Oral skills are surely practiced to some extent on a daily basis in other courses but it is not self-evident that the speaking rules of English come naturally to everybody and would not, therefore, need more formal instruction. In fact, Lintunen (2004, 215, 220) observed that most students who were at the beginning of their English studies at the university, continued to have difficulties with their English pronunciation, even though during the primary and secondary education they had been among the top pupils. According to the findings approximately two thirds consistently mispronounced one phoneme each time it occurred in the test and one third mispronounced at least two phonemes at every occurrence. This was interpreted as most students having severe gaps in their skills and knowledge of the English phonological system leading the researchers to think that pronunciation was not emphasized sufficiently at school. Moreover, it was argued that the CEFR goal, in which it is implied that mispronunciation should not occur after upper secondary school, is unrealistic (Lintunen 2004, 215-216). Lintunen (ibid, 216) argues that by the time of reaching the level which is required of university students of English, each learner should be aware of the phonemes of the target language and it seems that the students had not been offered enough explicit pronunciation teaching. Lintunen (ibid, 219) reports that similar findings have been made before and according to him it was interesting that there has not been that much improvement. However, Lintunen (ibid, 220) also wants to point out that several aspects were also correct in the students' performances and some were able to speak English very fluently and accurately.

In order to get a glimpse as to what extent oral skills are taught at Finnish universities I chose to view the curricula and course descriptions of the English departments of both the University of Jyväskylä and the University of Tampere. The syllabi are obviously very broad and include multiple different courses but I chose the ones that have to do with oral skills or oral competence specifically. In the syllabus for the English department of the University of Jyväskylä for the years 2009-2012 (Englannin kieli opetussuunnitelma 2009-2012), it was stated that at the master's level and after the advanced studies the students are expected to have acquired both oral and writing skills required in specialist duties and that they are able to use English correctly and

appropriately in various contexts that can differ quite greatly from one another. I find these descriptions to be quite generally applicable and I did not find any detailed description that would have to do with speaking skills specifically. Moreover, in the section for *subject knowledge* there were no specific requirements for oral skills. Only two courses were provided throughout the curriculum that had to do with the practicing of oral skills specifically: 'Phonetics' and 'Pronunciation'. Oral communication courses, on the other hand, were provided in both subject and advanced studies (one each) and an optional 'Conversation and interpersonal communication' course was offered in the subject studies. However, both 'Phonetics' and 'Pronunciation' courses are only worth one study point (ECTS) and both oral communication courses are worth two study points each. Moreover, from personal experience I can say that the oral communication courses, as can be deduced from the name, have to do with communication rather than oral language skills. In that sense, thus, the only courses that practice oral skills are principally the first two ones, both of which are quite narrow in their scope as far as the credits go.

In the syllabus for the English department of the University of Tampere (English Philology Curriculum 2009-2012) I did not find any requirements for oral skills either but I did find out that they had more courses that had to do with oral skills instruction. At the basic level a course worth of three study points called 'Phonetics and Pronunciation' was offered and the students were required a minimum grade of three in order to receive a collective grade three of their basic studies. The 'Pronunciation' course at the University of Jyväskylä was only graded pass/fail and no further requirements were provided. However, the 'pass' grade equals three or higher. At the intermediate level at the University of Tampere there was a 'Pronunciation and Intonation' course worth two study points. I am not going to deal with the course descriptions in more detail, since I do not feel that it is beneficial for the present study but it should be pointed out explicitly that both courses presented here are most definitely skills courses instead of communicative ones. On the other hand, an advanced level optional course called 'Working with the spoken language' is the only one offered in oral communication. However, there is one more course, which practices communicative skills and that is the 'Experience in an English-speaking country' course during which students are required to spend the minimum of four weeks in an English-speaking country. This was not required from students at the English department at the University of Jyväskylä but it is strongly recommended nonetheless. Since Huhta (1993,



129) declares that idiomatic features, which of course include other aspects than speaking as well, can largely be acquired only by familiarizing oneself with the target language and culture for an extended period of time, I do not find this a bad option for oral communication practice. This view is also supported by Harjanne who cites a study by Sheen (1994, cited in Harjanne 2008, 126), which showed that it was practically impossible to achieve high-quality grammatical and sociolinguistic competence even with the help of thousands of language lessons.

In relation to this issue, Nikula (2008, 66) reports that a general concern in the discussion about the teaching of English in Finland is the quality of the language used in the classroom due to the second or foreign language speaker status of both the teacher and the students. This discussion traces back to the time when native speakers were considered the proper point of comparison in language teaching and moreover, when language learning was regarded merely model-based learning, in which the teacher's example was the focal point. Luckily this is no longer the case, even though the debate concerning native and non-native teachers goes on. Carter and Nunan (2001, 4) provide a few points concerning this issue by asking whether a native speaker's understanding of the culture of the target language is better than that of a non-native teacher, or whether a non-native speaker has a better understanding of the learners' mother tongue, which possibly aids him or her in passing the information onwards in a more efficient manner. One view that supports the non-native speaker status of teachers is that a good learner can have a better command of a given language than a native speaker does, especially in the areas of reading and writing. This is due to the fact that native speakers are not a homogenous group but rather some have a very high proficiency in their mother tongue, whereas some can have a rather poor proficiency, which is especially the case in writing. (Huhta 1993, 128.) Moreover, it is also the case that some might find authentic materials too difficult (Peacock 1997, 144) meaning that listening to a teacher who is a native speaker or speaks in a native-like manner could be too difficult for those students who have poorer skills in English. However, language teaching is expected to prepare students for real-life communication, which includes communication with native speakers and I find that it is the teacher's job to make authentic materials, including his or her own speech, comprehensible for those who are not as proficient. Hammerly (1991, 48), who mostly deals with bilingual settings of SL learning, states that an ideal situation would be that SL teachers were either native or

native-like speakers, readers and writers of both languages in addition to knowing what and how to teach.

At this point it is also beneficial to consider the matter of supplementary education and in order for teachers to keep up their oral proficiency teaching and assessment skills as well as their own oral competence, it is important that supplementary education is provided after graduation (Lukiokoulutuksen suullisen kielitaidon arviointiryhmän muistio [LSKAM] 2006, 28). Paananen-Porkka (2007, 355), for example, suggests that in order to be able to analyze and correct their pupils' errors in pronunciation, language teachers themselves should be offered further training in phonetics. Harjanne (2008, 112) also reports that the more experienced teachers especially seem to rely on their old principles and beliefs concerning teaching but at the same time become more unaware of doing so. This statement is also supported by Mäkelä (2005, 160) whose study showed that those teachers, who had completed their pedagogical studies more recently had more modern views of language learning and teaching, than those who had been working for more than 11 years, for example. This tendency can be partly avoided with the help of supplementary education, which should, as is suggested by the Ministry of Education, form a consistent continuum with the basic level university education (LSKAM 2006, 28).

In this chapter I have discussed the status of English and English oral competence in Finland and more specifically in the Finnish educational system. Before that I discussed the aspect of oral competence in more detail and pointed out its role in general language competence. In the next chapters I will present the findings that I made in regard to all these issues.

## **5 THE PRESENT STUDY**

In this study my aim is to find out more about the role of oral competence in the teaching of English in Finland, more specifically teachers and students' opinions on it. Due to the increased relevance of oral competence in contemporary society it is important to try to find out something about the level of competence of the people who teach it. Even though this is an important aspect it has not, however, been studied to a very large extent, but rather the previous studies have concentrated on finding out *how* oral competence is taught at school and there is, therefore, need for further study. I also find it important that the opinions of both teachers and students be mapped out, since in

his study Mäkelä (2005, 160) found a couple of differences between what teachers and students regarded as important. One difference, for example, seemed to be that teachers valued more pair work, whereas students valued teacher-centered work. Moreover, teachers seemed to find the oral exercises more interesting and challenging than the students. Even though Mäkelä's study dealt with oral exercises specifically, these findings suggest that teachers and students can have very differing views about language learning and therefore can also be expected to have different views when it comes to their opinions about what constitutes oral competence as well. I believe this to have an effect on the motivation and learning of students and therefore this aspect needs to be studied in more detail. Moreover, the matter is very timely as the aspect of teaching oral competence has been well present in the media lately.

Here are the specific research questions that were used to conduct the study:

- 1) How do teachers and students define oral competence?
- 2) What, in their view, is the role of pronunciation in general oral competence and teaching?
- 3) How do teachers and students experience the role of oral competence in teaching?

Before discussing the findings based on these questions I will shortly explain what data gathering methods was used and who took part in the study. At this point, however, it should be reminded that the reason I chose to emphasize *pronunciation* instead of some other aspect associated with oral competence is the social significance it carries. As de Jong (1991, 23) and Luoma (2004, 9) point out, interlocutors can make subconscious judgments about a person's general language competence based on their pronunciation and fluency of speech. These judgments about general language or oral competence can lead to further assumptions about the speaker's intellectual ability and identity, as Segalowitz (2010, 162) points out. Moreover, *prosodic features*, which were included in the aspect of pronunciation, were said to be occasionally more crucial for intelligibility than some segmental errors, for example (see Thorne 2008 and Paananen-Porkka 2007). It should also be mentioned that the role of pronunciation in teaching has not been studied very extensively and with this study I hope to offer some basis for further study.

## 5.1 Interview

Because the present study was a qualitative one, I chose to use interview as the data gathering method. First of all, I chose to conduct a qualitative study because I felt that it would best serve the purpose of this study, since one of the main aims of a qualitative study is to *provide a description of reality* (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 152). This is exactly what ‘mapping’ does, since it aims at *finding new perspectives, explaining phenomena that is not widely known and forming hypotheses* (ibid, 128). Moreover, a qualitative method often aims at *finding facts* instead of *proving* them (ibid.) and since the status of oral competence in the teaching of English has not been studied to a very large extent this is one of the aspects that I wanted to accomplish with this study. It must be remembered, however, that qualitative studies tend to lack in objectivity to some extent, since the results are often interpreted from the subjective viewpoints of the researcher (Dufva 2011, 133-134). Keeping this aspect in mind, I still find that a qualitative method best serves the present study.

I chose interview as a method of data gathering, mainly because I wanted to obtain in depth answers that could be elaborated when necessary. As Dufva (2011, 131-132) points out, often an interview allows the interviewees to better express their personal opinions and generate information through interaction with the interviewer. Moreover, since oral competence in teaching has not been studied very widely, not all viewpoints or aspects can be predetermined but new ones are bound to emerge. An interview, in this sense, is a more flexible approach and allows a wider scope of topics as well as provides more control over the situation and results. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 192). Another possibility would have been to conduct a survey, which is a more efficient method of data gathering as it allows a larger number of participants. Due to the larger amount of participants as well as the nature of surveys, mainly the fact that all participants must answer the same questions and the amount of possible answers is somewhat restricted, they tend to provide more objective results. In an interview, since the amount of answers is rather small, the answers must be regarded as subjective opinions of the participants and generalizations cannot be made to the same extent. However, control over the situation and participants is often diminished in the case of surveys and the researcher can never be sure whether the questions have been understood correctly or taken seriously, for example. Moreover, the range of participants can be so wide that it is difficult to determine the level of preexisting knowledge that the participants have of the topic in question. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997,

182.) This would have been problematic in the case of the present study, as I wanted a very specific group of participants. Using an interview as a method of data gathering has its problems, of course, and a typical one is that the interview is strongly tied to the context and situation at hand. Some participants might, for example, experience the situation threatening and therefore answer differently. Moreover, subjects tend to provide ‘socially accepted’ answers in interview situations, which can affect their reliability (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 193-194). These aspects are good to bear in mind when making generalizations and assumptions about the results.

The interview used in the present study was a theme-based interview, meaning that the topics and themes of the interview were predetermined but the exact form and order of the questions was flexible. Before conducting the interview I piloted it with two persons; one was a recently graduated young teacher (Pentti) who has been working on different school levels for a couple of years. For the past six months he has been working in a middle-sized upper secondary school in Central Finland teaching both English and German. The other person was a fourth-year upper secondary school student (Ville) from the capital area who has studied English for 10 years in total. Both participants were male. After piloting the interview I made a few changes to the questions that mostly had to do with making the questions more explicit and targeting them even further. I also added a few questions and changed the structure of the interview so that different themes would exist in their own sections. I used a different set of questions for teachers and students and the question sheets can be found in Appendices I and II. Moreover, I added a sheet that portrays the CEFR levels for speaking and spoken interaction (see Appendix III) in order to remind the subjects of the nature of oral competence highlighting the description provided for B2 level. I believed this to be especially useful with the upper secondary school participants who might not have as clear an image of oral skills as the teachers can be expected to have. I also explained to all participants that prosodic features were included in the notion of pronunciation in the interview. Even though I made some changes to the structure and questions of the interview the topics remained largely the same and therefore I will be using some of the pilot interview answers as data in the present study.

## **5.2 Participants and data**

I chose upper secondary school as my target level mainly because I found upper secondary school students the most adequate participants for this study, as they have

already had approximately nine to twelve years of formal school teaching and are, therefore, likely to have the most experience about different teachers as well as learning English in general. Moreover, as the target of upper secondary school teaching is B2, their level of proficiency can already be expected to be quite high and therefore they will most likely be able to evaluate different aspects of language better than younger students. Since I wanted to have adequate comparisons between the teachers and the students' opinions, I chose to interview upper secondary school teachers rather than teachers of other levels.

I conducted all the interviews in November-December 2011 and each took approximately thirty to forty-five minutes. All the students were interviewed in casual environments either at a café or at their respective homes, whereas the teachers were mostly interviewed at their respective workplaces except for one who was interviewed at home. I used a recorder to store the interviews and afterwards transcribed them. All interviews were conducted in Finnish, as that was the mother tongue of all participants. Moreover, I did not want them to feel any apprehension for using English in the interview. The interviewees were randomly selected; the only criteria being that the teachers needed to be teaching English as one of their languages and they needed to have experience from upper secondary school, preferably so that they worked on that level at the time of the interview. As for the students, they needed to be in their sophomore year the minimum so that each of them would have already some experience from learning English at upper secondary level.

Besides Ville and Pentti who I piloted the interview with, I interviewed three upper secondary school students and three upper secondary school teachers. Of the students two were male (Oula and Joonas) and one was female (Liisa). Both Joonas and Liisa were third-year students and Oula was a fourth-year student. Liisa and Oula had been studying English for 11 years, as Liisa had started studying English already on the second grade, and Joonas had been studying English for 10 years. Liisa and Oula had also been studying English abroad to some extent as Oula had spent one year as an exchange student in the United States and Liisa had been to a three-week summer language course in Malta. All the participants, including Ville, went to rather large upper secondary schools in the capital area and all of them had been studying other languages besides English, mainly Swedish but also French and Italian. Of the teachers Pentti was the only one that was male and the rest (Tanja, Meri and Marianna) were female. All of them were currently upper secondary school teachers of which Tanja and

Meri were working at large upper secondary schools in the capital area and Pentti and Marianna were working at middle-sized upper secondary schools in Central Finland. Tanja had worked 19 years at her current job and before that she had worked at elementary and comprehensive schools for about ten years. Besides English she taught French. Marianna also taught both English and French and she had been working for 16 years at her current job before which she had worked at a comprehensive school for three years. Meri was the only one who did not teach any other language besides English and throughout her career she had been working at upper secondary schools, which she had been doing for 15 years. At her current job she had been for 12 years. All the names used in the study are pseudonyms in order to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

## **6 ORAL COMPETENCE IN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' VIEWS**

In this section the results from the interviews will be reported so that the answers of the teachers and students have been divided into two separate sections. I chose to use this division, as one of the aims of this study is to compare the opinions of teachers and students. Moreover, instead of dealing with each question individually, the analysis will be theme-based as, regardless of the predetermined questions, the interviews themselves had a fairly lax structure and different topics were discussed as they appeared in the conversation. Moreover, some of the questions were intertwined resulting in some of the answers being elaborated later on in the interview and I have, hence, divided the themes into three sections based on the research questions: the participants' definitions of oral competence; their views on the role of pronunciation in oral competence more specifically; and how they experience the role of oral competence in teaching. The results are illustrated with direct translations from the interviews and the original Finnish quotations are provided in Appendix IV. At this point it is valid to pay attention to a couple of things: firstly, in the English translations I have randomly used the pronouns 'he' and 'she' in reference to the teachers as in most of the Finnish answers there is no real-life reference to the teachers' gender due to the use of Finnish third person singular pronouns 'hän' and 'se', both of which do not carry any gender reference. Secondly, the square brackets '[ ]' used in the translations are words added by myself in order to make the answers more comprehensible for the reader. I chose to do so, as some of the words used by the interviewees are only understandable with the

correct deixis and context of the interview and some of the words have been omitted in the flow of speech. However, I have been very careful not to use words or expressions that would alter the answers in any way and therefore the use of these alternative words should not be considered to affect the reliability of the study.

## 6.1 Oral competence – students’ opinions

In this section the students’ answers will be presented. First, I am going to deal with the aspect of oral competence in general and describe how the students defined oral competence. Second, I am going to view the aspects of pronunciation in the field of oral competence more specifically, after which I am going to present the students’ opinions on oral competence in teaching.

### 6.1.1 Defining oral competence

As has become clear in the course of this study, coming up with a solid definition of oral competence has proven to be quite challenging. This was also the case when the students were asked to provide a definition for oral competence in their own words. Many of them jokingly said that it was a ‘tricky’ question and took their time to come up with different aspects they considered to be part of oral competence. Interestingly, their answers were quite varied and only a couple of aspects were mentioned more than once. *Communication* or *getting one’s message across* were the two aspects that were most present in the definitions as three of the students (Ville, Joonas & Liisa) mentioned one or both of these aspects as being what oral competence was all about.

<sup>1)</sup> What comes to mind is being able to communicate in certain situations, with a specific language or local language. (Ville Q1)

Since *communicative competence* is one of the main goals in foreign language teaching, the predominance of communicative competence in the answers comes as no surprise, but at least in that sense the CEFR goals reflect the students’ views of what is relevant in oral competence. Ville and Oula also mentioned *fluency*, in other words being able to express oneself rather directly and without using too many communication strategies (Ville) as well as not ‘freezing’ in a communicative situation (Oula).

<sup>2)</sup> So that you won’t have to beat around the bush but you know how to say it rather directly so that it’s clear and, vocabulary is part of it too. (Ville Q3)

<sup>3)</sup> At least being able to maintain conversation; I think that’s pretty important; so that you won’t get stuck or freeze. (Oula Q1)



However, later on in the interview Ville mentioned that one of the good qualities about his own language skills was the ability to get around difficult expressions, creating a slight contradiction to his statement above. On another occasion he also said that using communication strategies was part of being fluent, leading us to a conclusion that the occasional use of communication strategies is, in fact, a part of *fluency*. This is what the CEFR (2001, 128) also states as it described *fluency* as ‘the ability to articulate, to keep going, and to cope when one lands in a dead end’. Perhaps the notion of *propositional precision* (CEFR 2001, 128) could be used as a basis for Ville’s first statement, since it had to do with clarity more specifically.

Oula also mentioned *pronunciation* as being a part of oral competence as well as Liisa, who also mentioned *versatility*, as in being able to use language in a versatile way, an aspect that, according to Thorne (2008, 220-221) was part of spoken language specifically. She also said that *understanding* was important, an aspect that Ville and Joonas also mentioned at some point during the interview. I found this an interesting point as *understanding* can hardly be considered a productive skill like speaking, but it supports the findings made by Leppänen et al. (2009) according to whom the most important skill for students learning English was to learn to *speak*, and the second most important skill was to learn to *understand* spoken English. This aspect was also recognized by the CEFR (2001, 26), in which the different skills had been divided into three main categories, two of which have directly been represented in the participants’ answers: *understanding*, *speaking* and writing.

The students’ answers were as varied when asked what aspects of oral competence, in their opinion, were the most relevant in *getting the message across*. Ville mentioned such aspects as *intonation*, *vocabulary*, *nonverbal communication* and *clarity*. He also mentioned *fluency* again, as did Oula and Liisa later on in the interview. Even though Ville’s view of fluency and the use of communication strategies were not clear at first, it was concluded that the use of communication strategies was a part of fluent communication. Oula also mentioned that it was important to be able to use communication strategies in order to avoid ‘freezing’ in a communicative situation.

<sup>4)</sup> I guess fluency is pretty important and finding your way around [difficult] expressions is as well. (Oula Q3)

Similarly to Ville, Liisa also mentioned *nonverbal communication* as being important for getting the message across, whereas Joonas mentioned that it was important to

master the conventions of *spoken language*. Joonas also provided a couple of interesting aspects by mentioning the role of *general interactive skills* and knowledge of *cultural conventions* as being a part of oral competence. Interestingly, with the exception of *spoken language* perhaps, all aspects are part of the *sociolinguistic competence* aspect of general communicative competence, which was described as ‘concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use’ and more specifically had to do with the *sociocultural aspects* of language use, such as politeness conventions and register differences (CEFR 2001, 118).

<sup>5)</sup> Cultural [aspects], for example the English word ‘what’; I, at least, am under the impression that it is rude to say ‘what’ to someone you don’t know when you didn’t hear what they said; instead you should know the culture and say ‘excuse me’ or something. --- And somehow you have to have general interactive skills, otherwise you won’t be able to talk to anybody; or somehow a tact of a sort. (Joonas Q2)

This was not the only occasion during the interview when Joonas mentioned the importance of being in command of cultural conventions and spoken language and in fact, I noticed that most of the students seemed to have a ‘pet peeve’ of a sort; something they deemed important throughout the interview and often it was a feature that the others did not mention at all. For example Liisa mentioned *versatility* more often than once but the others did not mention that aspect at all. Joonas, as was shown above, clearly emphasized *spoken language* and *cultural aspects*, whereas *nonverbal communication* seemed to be important for Ville on multiple occasions. Oula, on the other hand, mentioned ‘being stuck’ or ‘freezing’ during conversation a couple of times. I find this an interesting tendency, which shows how differently people firstly, define oral competence and secondly, emphasize different aspects they deem important.

When the students were asked to define *good* oral competence they mentioned *being able to use the language in everyday situations* (Joonas) or merely *being able to express oneself* (Oula). Using proper *stress* and *voice* to control the sentence (Oula) were also mentioned, as were *vocabulary* and *grammar* (Liisa).

<sup>6)</sup> To master all the above and additionally if you’re good you might know how to emphasize certain sentences and use your voice to control them; and then being able to better express what you think. (Oula Q4)

<sup>7)</sup> Well it is part of good oral competence to be in command of the vocabulary and grammar. ---Also, being able to say everything so that you wouldn’t have to go around too many expressions because that’s when misunderstandings usually take place. (Liisa Q4)

In contrast, Ville defined *weak* oral competence as *faltering*, *passive* and having a lot of *pauses* and lacking in *intonation*. Liisa also mentioned that ‘not even trying’ was typical of weak oral competence and Joonas said that *failure to communicate* what one wants to

say is representative of weak oral competence. Oula also mentioned the speaker's L1 as a possible reason for weak oral competence, which refers to what Kormos (2006, xxvi) said about the speaker not being able to process and monitor their message as efficiently as in their L1.

<sup>8)</sup> Well if you're not able to produce speech so that you get easily mixed up and keep forgetting words and you have to think through your own language; that can be distracting occasionally. (Oula Q5)

As for whether or not the students had any specific *standard* they used as a point of comparison for assessing oral competence, or pronunciation for that matter, most of them did not have any. However, Ville, for example, commented that he did notice if the English he was hearing was either 'good or bad'. I did not ask him to define the two concepts in more depth but he said that basically the language was bad if it sounded like 'Finglish' or it did not sound anything like the target language, meaning in a way he did compare it to the target language but not to any specific variety.

<sup>9)</sup> Well I don't compare it to anything but I can tell when it's good or bad English. ---If we're talking about 'Finglish' and you hear Olli Rehn speaking English I compare it immediately. ---I do compare it to the target language. It is the original version after all. ---Of course it's in your head and you somehow compare it; even though you speak with someone who speaks really well but then there's the 'official' accent native speakers have so subconsciously you compare it. (Ville Q8 & Q9)

Oula also said that he used native speakers as a point of comparison, especially after spending so much time in the States.

<sup>10)</sup> Well since I've been to the States so often I compare [the accent] to that of theirs quite a lot. (Oula Q9)

Joonas, on the other hand, mentioned the British accent as the one he had a 'fixation' towards, even though he did not have a specific point of comparison either. With other students I also noticed that if they had a personal interest towards or were familiar with some specific variety or accent of English, they tended to favor or pay more attention to that accent.

<sup>11)</sup> Well I don't think I compare that much but maybe if someone speaks in a British accent I have a fixation that I like to compare people to this sort of high society Brit or so... I might pay more attention. (Joonas Q8 & Q9)

Liisa said that she used the language she heard from TV as a model, basically meaning that she also used native speech as the point of comparison. Even though all the students seemed to use the native speaker as a model to some extent, none of the students required that L2 English speakers, including teachers, use any specific regional accent of English when speaking. This reflects the general change that has been taking place

among the larger English speaking community, indicating that the idealized native speaker model is, in fact, losing its status as a norm.

I also asked the students to evaluate their own oral skills and pronunciation. Three of the students (Ville, Oula & Liisa) were content with their oral skills and all four said they were happy with their pronunciation, although Ville and Joonas did say that there was always room for improvement. Joonas commented that the r-sound was especially difficult for him and he would have wanted more practice in that. Moreover, he speculated that with pronunciation the need for practice might have something to do with having the courage to use the language as one has not used the language so much. Some of the opinions brought forward in Mäkelä's study (2005, 161) also stated that the students needed to overcome their low self-esteem in oral lessons.

<sup>12)</sup> I notice that if there's a lot of r-sound it becomes this /rawrawraw/ mumbling and that is something I'd like to improve. ---And more generally pronunciation as well; that might have something to do with having the courage to use the language because I haven't been using it so much. And also because the situations are often very spontaneous you don't stop to think how you say everything and you just say it the way it comes to your mind. (Joonas Q15)

Joonas also wanted to improve his knowledge and practice of *cultural conventions*, especially in the case of using the 'what' word when asking the interlocutor to repeat what they said. Oula, on the one hand, wanted to improve his *vocabulary*, whereas Liisa, on the other hand, wanted to use the language in a more *versatile* way. As Joonas in the example above, she also mentioned that she wanted to gain more practice in case of *spontaneous situations*.

<sup>13)</sup> And with fluency; sometimes it's really fluent but if someone suddenly asks something I might get completely stuck; but for example when we were in Barcelona for a week so that I was forced to speak or when I was in Malta living in a [local] family; so basically when you must speak it you just speak. (Liisa Q15).

In reference to this answer I asked her if she felt nervous about using English and she said that was not the case but rather the situation might take her by surprise so that she has not been prepared to use the language. The fact that the situation and context of the interaction can have quite a lot of influence on a person's fluency was also acknowledged by multiple different scholars (see e.g. CEFR 2001; Paananen-Porkka 2007; Chomsky 1965; Segalowitz 2010; Bachman & Palmer 1996) and it is an aspect that should be acknowledged in testing situations especially.

As for what the best way to *learn oral skills* was, all four students mentioned *authentic material* or *environment* in one way or another. Some mentioned being in contact with

native speakers and listening to the language spoken in its original form on TV, for example.

<sup>14)</sup> By listening to everything; for me it's all sorts of things – TV, music, video games, movies; from all that you can learn. ---At least I have learned the most [from authentic material] and another way is to listen when others speak; at least for me as I have been traveling a lot so you hear people speak and you learn quite well. ---Mostly with native speakers, for example if you're in the States some English is forced to get caught in you're head. (Oula Q19)

This finding is in slight contradiction with Lehtonen et al's (2009) findings according to which the youngest control group reported having learned English mostly in English lessons. However, it should be noted that the aspect of oral competence was not specified in the case of Lehtonen et al's study so the results are not directly comparable but provide an interesting viewpoint, nonetheless.

I also asked a couple of the students (Ville, Liisa, Oula) whether it took a certain level of interest to learn a language or its pronunciation properly and two of them (Ville & Liisa) said that it was, in fact, the case, although Liisa also mentioned that it could be possible to learn it without an incentive.

<sup>15)</sup> I think it could be possible [to learn it without any specific interest], but I think it requires a certain level of interest. (Liisa Q20)

At the end of each interview I asked the interviewees to choose whichever they thought was the 'more acceptable' of two alternatives. The alternatives were:

- A) A person, whose pronunciation, intonation and word stress resemble the target language, but who has occasional grammatical mistakes and pauses in his/her speech.
- B) A person, whose grammar is flawless and who speaks fluently without pauses, but whose pronunciation does not resemble the target language.

The examples were rather crude and I noticed that for many it was difficult to pick one, especially with the word 'occasional' in option A being so vague. However, with such a strict definition it was interesting to see their justifications for some of the choices. Liisa and Ville ended up choosing alternative A and Oula and Joonas ended up choosing alternative B. Oula explained that in his opinion oral competence was more important than pronunciation.

<sup>16)</sup> I would say that option B is better, maybe, because I think oral competence is more important than pronunciation. ---If you think from a native's perspective like if you're talking to an English person, for example, it is probably easier to understand if all the words are correct and there are no grammatical mistakes; but if you don't really know how to pronounce correctly and sometimes there are other small mistakes then I think it is easier to understand someone who speaks like that. (Oula Q29)

Liisa, on the other hand, said the opposite but besides saying that it would be more difficult to understand someone who spoke with faulty pronunciation, she said that it was also *distracting* to talk to someone whose pronunciation was off.

<sup>17)</sup> Well I maybe paid [attention] to the word ‘occasional’; if you don’t make mistakes all the time; everybody makes mistakes occasionally. ---It’s more distracting for me if someone has bad intonation all the time; or if someone pronounces so that you don’t necessarily even understand. (Liisa Q29)

Ville also paid attention to the occasional nature of the mistakes in option A but did not emphasize the understanding factor, but rather said that he thought option B described a ‘passive speaker’. He also emphasized the role of *pausing* and *intonation* over the role of some grammatical features, which reflects the views of Paananen-Porkka (2007, 8) and Thorne (2008, 237-238), according to whom prosodic errors are considered more crucial for communication than segmental errors, for example.

<sup>18)</sup> Yeah I think [A] is better; it doesn’t matter so much if you mix up ‘have’ and ‘has’ as the message, in my opinion, gets through better when you speak clearly; pauses and intonation are in place so it’s clearer. B seems like a passive speaker; not using any intonation so you won’t know in which mood he’s in. (Ville Q29)

In this section I have shown some of the definitions and general opinions the students had of oral competence. Although I have done partial analysis of the answers in this section as well, a more detailed analysis of all the answers will be provided in Chapter 7. In the following section the concentration will be on the role of pronunciation in the field of general oral competence.

### **6.1.2 The role of pronunciation in the field of oral competence**

Even though *general oral competence* and *pronunciation* were mainly dealt with separately in the interview, occasionally I got the impression that quite many of the interviewees seemed to consider pronunciation to be the same as general oral competence and in fact, when asked if pronunciation was important in teaching, one of the students explicitly said that in a way he considered pronunciation to be the same as oral competence.

<sup>19)</sup> In my opinion pronunciation is somehow the same as oral competence. (Ville Q17)

However, most of the answers were examples of either oral competence or pronunciation and when asked what the role of pronunciation in the range of oral competence was, most students, in fact, stated that it was not that important. Joonas, for example, said that pronunciation was mainly an aesthetic matter rather than a necessity.

<sup>20)</sup> [The role] is not that great, in my opinion. ---Yeah, it's more of an aesthetic [aspect]. --- When you look at politicians they don't have a good [pronunciation], and they still, most likely, will get their message across even though it sounds awful (laughs) (Joonas Q6 & Q7)

Ville also said that he did not regard pronunciation as affecting understanding too much and even though Oula, on the other hand, said that pronunciation was 'quite important' he also thought that it did not matter too much if one was not in command of those features.

<sup>21)</sup> Well they are pretty important but if you don't necessarily master them you'll still manage; but they are useful nonetheless. (Oula Q6)

These views are interesting, since they challenge what multiple scholars said earlier about pronunciation and prosodic features affecting intelligibility, sometimes even more than some segmental errors (see e.g. Paananen-Porkka 2007; Thorne 2008; Seidlhofer 2001). Moreover, these answers seem to suggest that unlike native speakers, who according to Paananen-Porkka's (2007) study gave lower intelligibility scores for the pupils who expressed more anomalous speech rhythm, non-native speakers do not seem to feel that to be the case.

Unlike the others, Liisa thought the role of pronunciation to be important and especially that of *intonation*, as in her opinion it was crucial for the correct conveying of the words. Her answer was the only one that directly reflected the views of Paananen-Porkka (2007), Thorne (2008) and Seidlhofer (2001).

<sup>22)</sup> [It is] important, in my opinion, because I think intonation is crucial; especially in English they have completely different intonation or the way they use high pitch or low pitch compared to Finnish. I think it's really important. ---Basically the meaning [of the word] can change immediately, right; something we don't have in Finnish, for instance. (Liisa Q7)

At this point it is good to recall that all the interviewees were told that in this study *prosodic elements*, such as intonation and word stress, were included in the general aspect of pronunciation and many of the subject did not even know what prosodic elements were, until I explained it to them. Following the lines of what Liisa said, Ville also mentioned something about prosodic elements used to 'underline the correct words' so that the message is conveyed correctly. He also pointed out that they can be used to pique interest in the hearer. Even though earlier he did not think pronunciation to be too important this answer seems to indicate that he, in fact, agrees with the argument about prosodic features contributing to the intelligibility of speech.

<sup>23)</sup> Well they are important. With that you pique interest. Also it helps you to convey the message correctly, underlying correct words. (Ville Q6)

Besides piquing interest in the interlocutors, Ville also thought that good pronunciation was a way for the speaker to show interest towards the language in question. This aspect was also mentioned by Cheswick & Miller (2007, cited in Segalowitz 2010, 162), who described language skills as economic human capital that has been acquired at a cost.

<sup>24)</sup> Pronunciation kind of shows your interest towards the language. ---That you've wanted to learn it or so. (Ville Q6)

This aspect also came up later in the interview when discussing teachers' oral skills and will be dealt with in more detail in reference to that.

As with oral proficiency, I also asked the students how they would describe or define *good* pronunciation. 'Natural' and 'not pronouncing the word as it was written' were both characteristics that were mentioned by more than one student. Ville, for example, explained 'natural' to mean believable instead of trying to sound something that does not come naturally.

<sup>25)</sup> Clear, believable. ---Believable in a way that you don't try to force a British accent or if you try to speak that way it must come naturally, I think. (Ville Q7)

I asked whether this applied to all non-native speakers who tried to speak with some native English accent and he said that was not the case but if the accent were not exaggerated, it would be acceptable. Joonas also considered 'sounding natural' as characteristic of good pronunciation and similarly to Ville, Liisa also said that she found it disturbing if someone tried too hard to use a certain accent but did not sound natural.

<sup>26)</sup> Well one [teacher] tries to speak with a British accent and then it just doesn't [sound like it]. ---[She] tries. It's the same if in Swedish someone tries to speak with a real Swedish accent; it bothers me really much or the most. ---[It would be better], exactly, if they didn't have an accent at all. It's good that they teach different accents at school; but if it's not how it should be then I think; or I'm not going to use it as a model. (Liisa)

Another aspect that Liisa deemed important was that pronunciation should be so that the meaning of the words does not change. She was also one of the students who said that it was important not to pronounce the words as they were written, a feature that sometimes occurs with Finns, as in Finnish all words are pronounced as they are written. Joonas and Oula also said that this characteristic was reflective of *weak* pronunciation, specifically.

<sup>27)</sup> So that the meaning stays the same and you don't pronounce [the words] as they are written. (Liisa Q7)

<sup>28)</sup> To be in control of the basic [pronunciation] rules of English and to know that even though the words are written in a certain way they are not pronounced like that. (Oula Q7)



Question eight, which dealt with different standards that the students might have had when evaluating oral competence, was one of the questions in which the students mentioned aspects of pronunciation even though there was a separate question for pronunciation specifically. In example <sup>(9)</sup> earlier, Ville, for example, said that he did not have a standard but he heard if the English he was hearing was either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and characterized ‘Finglish’ as bad sounding English. Finnish English was also considered one of the most unpleasant varieties in Leppänen et al’s study (2009).

Many of the other students also said that subconsciously, they did use the native speaker model as a basis for comparison to some extent. However, interestingly enough, all four students were of the opinion that L2 speakers’ English did not have to resemble any regional native English variety but it was ‘enough’ if it was pronounced correctly and resembled the original word.

<sup>29)</sup> It doesn’t matter what the accent is as long as it resembles [the original language]. (Ville Q9)

<sup>30)</sup> As long as you just open your mouth; I mean it’s cool if you have [an accent]. (Liisa)

As can be seen from example <sup>(30)</sup> above, for some speaking with a regional variety was merely a plus. However, there was also some discussion that occasionally having a regional variety might cause some problems, especially in teaching and when in contact with other nonnative speakers of English, since not everybody is fluent in English, in which case it could be too difficult to understand.

<sup>31)</sup> If you think about pronunciation and accents, for example when British people go to Asia and speak with this kind of strong British twang it might be hard [for the Asians] to understand even though [the Brits] consider it English. In some situations if you speak with a weaker accent it is easier for someone else who also speaks with a weaker accent to understand. (Ville Q6)

This reflects Peacock’s (1997, 144) view according to which authentic materials can be too difficult for some learners. This can also be related to Cook’s (1999, 185) argument about language teaching needing to concentrate on the L2 model instead of a native one. Kuo (2006) and Jenkins’s (2002) also pointed out that the speech be acceptable and intelligible in an international community, where the interlocutors are often non-native speakers of English. The students’ views also back up what was said above about non-native speakers not finding prosodic features or pronunciation affecting intelligibility to the same extent as native speakers.

When I asked the students to provide *real-life examples* of people who, in their opinion, had good/bad pronunciation or good/bad oral competence both Ville and Joonas

mentioned Olli Rehn, a Finnish politician currently serving as European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro, as an example of a person who has *weak* pronunciation. Both of them also said that they viewed Rehn as a representative of Finns in general and thought the way he spoke conveyed a negative image of how Finns spoke in general.

<sup>32)</sup> During all these years [Rehn] has not even tried to improve it. ---I think it's a question of image as well, he's representing our nation. In a way since he's representing us in there he conveys an image that we only know how to speak like that. (Ville Q10)

This reflects Leppänen et al.'s (2009) findings that showed that the younger control group showed least compassion, took knowing English more for granted and furthermore found that a public person should know English quite well. Even though Joonas thought that the way Rehn spoke conveyed a negative image of Finns' oral skills in general, he also thought that Rehn's political merits forgave him for his lack of pronunciation skills.

<sup>33)</sup> But with Rehn it doesn't matter so much that he doesn't speak English so well as he's a rock solid politician. ---He know's what he's doing so it doesn't matter so much. ---On the other hand if you think that he's representing Finland in there which might bring negative publicity, but I don't think it affects the way he does his job. (Joonas Q10)

In Joonas's opinion Alexander Stubb, on the other hand, was a good example of a *good* language user who had good language skills but who also was a good speaker.

<sup>34)</sup> I like to observe politicians and for example how Alexander Stubb speaks English I think that is an example of good language competence and generally speaking he's a good speaker. ---[He has] good pronunciation and it sounds natural. ---He conveys a presentable image of himself. (Joonas Q10)

Basically all of the students said that *imitation* was one of the *best ways to learn pronunciation* and Oula, for example, pointed out that he did not understand the phonetic transcriptions that were provided in dictionaries implying that as with oral skills in general, listening was important when learning pronunciation as well.

<sup>35)</sup> Well I think with pronunciation the best way is to just try to pronounce [the words] and listening is good as well. With me, if I have a word and the pronunciation rule [in the book], I understand almost nothing about it. (Oula Q20)

Generally speaking I noticed that it was occasionally difficult for the students to specifically define why something in their ears sounded bad and something sounded good but rather they could just tell by ear, so to speak. This is exactly what makes pronunciation a difficult subject to study as it is often very subjective and can depend on the ears of the beholder. This was also the case with general *fluency* as was pointed out by Lennon (1990, 389). In the next section I am going to move on to presenting the

students' opinions about oral competence and pronunciation in *teaching*. At this point I want to clarify that I chose to use the word 'teaching' instead of 'education' as the study concentrates on *how English is used* in the classroom by the teachers, in other words their oral competence instead of how it is taught, although that aspect will be discussed to some extent as well.

### 6.1.3 Oral competence in teaching

When asked to compare teachers and students' oral competence, almost all of the students (Ville, Liisa & Oula) said that it should be *higher* than what is required of the students, meaning that the level of oral competence should be no less than B2.1. Oula was of the opinion that the level of the teacher's oral competence should be higher than that of the best student. For some reason this aspect was not discussed with Joonas so his answer cannot be taken into consideration.

<sup>36)</sup> It should be at least as good as that of the best student almost. ---I would say that it should be C1 in that case; basically it should be so that if something is not understood by a student the teacher should be able to answer it or at least find an answer to it; just saying 'I don't know' is not acceptable. (Oula Q21)

Even though Liisa also said that the teacher's oral proficiency should be higher than that of the students, when I asked whether it could also be on the same level she said yes, which was slightly contradictive to her earlier statement. She explained that because the teacher should make everything so that the students are able to follow, it could be the same.

<sup>37)</sup> Yes, it can [be the same]. Because the teacher must make it comprehensible for us, so it can be the same. (Liisa Q21)

Other aspects that she mentioned were that the teacher's oral competence should be *easy or natural, versatile and comprehensible*.

<sup>38)</sup> Well, natural sounding, versatility again but not too much; or you know, something that is easy to understand – comprehensibly versatile (laughs) (Liisa Q21).

As with other English L2 speakers, the students did not expect the teacher to have a regional accent either, but rather they considered it a plus if the teacher had one. Despite the teacher not having to have a regional accent three (Ville, Oula & Liisa) of the students, nonetheless, said that one of the most important aspects of oral competence for a teacher was *pronunciation*.

<sup>39)</sup> [The teacher's pronunciation should be] believable, good. You can't say perfect because we're not native speakers. ---But I think it's a plus [if the teacher pronounces] in a way that

is intriguing. ---Make the students get used to listening to authentic sounding English.  
(Ville Q22)

Joonas also said that the teacher should choose to use either British or American variety when speaking, not so much accent-wise, but so that the vocabulary she teaches is cohesive. He also thought that the teacher should make the difference between spoken and written language when speaking.

<sup>40)</sup> The teacher should choose to use either American or British English. Of course there are other [accents], like Australian English but they are a bit... I mean, I would be surprised if I heard a teacher speak [with that kind of accent]. ---Some historian said a couple of decades ago that soon we'll start talking about British English and American English separately. I mean they have different words for a word like 'bill', for example. ---So basically the teacher should stick to one variety but then you know the difference between how someone else might say it. ---And the teacher should make a clear difference between spoken and written varieties as well. (Joonas Q12)

Even though he emphasized the cohesion of the variety in the vocabulary the teacher was using, he also did say that to some extent the teacher's accent should be in cohesion with the rest of the speech. Even though the Finnish National Board of Education did not specify which variety should be used in teaching, it did emphasize that the chosen variety should be used consistently (PEKOO 1982, 9-10). However, Joonas did not emphasize the role of a regional variety any further but rather he said that the accent the teacher was using should be easily comprehensible and used Scottish accent as an example of a difficult one.

<sup>41)</sup> Well Australian English is rather easy still but if [a teacher] would have a Scottish accent that might make no sense! (laughs) (Joonas Q12)

*Comprehensibility* was also mentioned by some of the other students (Joonas, Liisa & Oula) and as can be seen in citation <sup>(42)</sup> below, Oula's answer indicates that the teacher's pronunciation should be the one taught in the books because the way the teacher speaks should prepare the students for the matriculation examination.

<sup>42)</sup> [It should be] rather clear; it shouldn't be too difficult to understand and it should follow what is taught in the school books because whatever you encounter in the matriculation exams should be something that has been taught in class. (Oula Q22)

Since British English is the variety largely used in the Finnish schoolbooks, this answer seems to imply that all teachers should use the British dialect. However, when asked whether or not the teacher should have a regional variety, Oula said that it was not necessary to have a regional variety nowadays but that it was up to the teacher which variety he or she would use. However, he did say that British English seemed to be the one variety that was mostly used in teaching. Liisa agreed with this point by saying that the students could not require the teacher to use any specific variety but also that the

teacher could not require them to use any specific variety either. This can be related to Seidlhofer's (2001, 56) statement about a speaker's pronunciation being inseparably bound to his or her identity, making the notion of 'correct pronunciation', thus, debatable. However, Liisa did also say that the teacher should speak in a way that 'fits everybody' and when talking about this matter Liisa kept referring to the same teacher that was mentioned in citation <sup>(26)</sup>, who in her opinion, tried to speak with a British accent but did not succeed very well.

<sup>43)</sup> [The teacher's pronunciation] should be something that fits everybody. It shouldn't be something that only she finds pleasing. ---For example if she's teaching British English she can't expect the students to use the British variety; for example when we have these oral courses and she teaches it in British English she can't expect for the rest of us to use it. ---Pronunciation is your own and no one can say that you have to speak in a certain way and that's why I can't tell the teacher either that I don't want you to teach us that kind of English. (Liisa Q22)

When asked if the teacher's oral competence was important in teaching all four students said that it was.

<sup>44)</sup> It's pretty important because the teacher is teaching and speaking all the time.--- He should know what he's talking about; if there is someone who just reads directly from a book and doesn't know how to explain; or he knows how to teach the matter or knows how it goes but doesn't know how to explain it in English then he is not a teacher who has that much authority [in the classroom]. (Oula Q16)

However, as can be seen in Oula's answer above and as was the case with many of the others' answers as well, they seem to refer to the teaching of oral skills rather than the teacher's oral competence. In fact, I noticed that this was one of the issues that was difficult for the students to answer strictly from the point of view of oral competence and their answers were much more elaborate when discussing the matter from the point of view of the *teacher's pronunciation*. Before moving on to dealing with that matter further, I also want to take a moment to view Oula's answer in more detail, since it is interesting that he should mention *authoritative position* in this context and that it directly has to do with how the teacher speaks or explains different things in English. I later asked him to elaborate what he meant by this and he said that it had to do with the teacher having confidence in his own skills and showing it.

<sup>45)</sup> Well if the teacher knows better then he is bound to be more confident and knows his own strengths. ---If the teacher is a bit unsecure about his English then he concentrates too much on producing speech and is not able to control the class so well. ---When the information is sort of automatic in the head it is possible [for the teacher] to concentrate on other things, such as teaching. (Oula Q16)

Even though English is well present in the Finnish society and can be heard in its original form through many channels, all four students seemed to think, nonetheless,

that *the teacher too should act as a model for pronunciation*, mostly because otherwise the students might learn to pronounce the words incorrectly.

<sup>46)</sup> Because the students also take their cue from the teacher. If they hear a word for the first time then they will use it as he taught it. They can learn it wrong. It's important that the teacher teaches it correctly. (Ville Q17)

The point was also raised by Lintunen (2004, 58), according to whom the correct models should always be present in teaching, since students who, possess good receptive skills, can acquire the models from the teacher. The FNBE (Peruskoulun kielenopetuksen opas 1983, 20) also declared that the pronunciation models given in teaching should be authentic and that the learners should be 'exposed to the target language that is well pronounced, preferably by a native speaker' (PEKOO 1982, 9-10).

Even though Liisa agreed that the teacher should act as a model, she also said that she did not take too much after the models provided at school as she felt that they had not been good or proper enough. However, she and Ville also said that it was okay for the teachers to use a variety of their own choosing as long as it sounded credible and natural and this was also one of the reasons why Liisa said that she did not imitate the accents taught at schools too much, again referring to the personal identity factor of pronunciation.

<sup>47)</sup> I guess I take more after TV shows, as I don't think there are any teachers at our school that have good pronunciation. ---Also because then I can choose for myself which variety I want to use because there are different teachers who have their own varieties that they use. (Liisa Q18)

Earlier Oula had said that when speaking, the teacher should use a variety that was used in the schoolbooks and this is an aspect he brought up in this context as well, though his answer had more generally to do with oral competence in general rather than pronunciation.

<sup>48)</sup> Yes, she should [act as a model] since in the matriculation exam there's quite a lot of school English, so to speak; in this year's matriculation exams I, for example, had a couple of mishaps when I used my 'own English' so it wasn't necessarily correct since it was supposed to more like something that had been taught at school. (Oula Q18)

I also found it relevant to ask the students about their opinions on the *teaching of oral skills* at school in general, as well as their thoughts on the *addition of an oral test* to the matriculation examinations. Similarly to Mäkelä's (2005, 158) findings all four students thought that the teaching of oral skills was *not emphasized* enough, although Joonas also said that it depended on the teacher. Leppänen et al (2009) also discovered that

upper secondary school students seemed to have an especially positive view towards oral language practice and thought there should be more of it.

<sup>49)</sup> Not enough. ---Every lesson they try to make us talk but it is not given as big a role as written competence. (Liisa Q25)

<sup>50)</sup> One oral course is not enough and we just read newspapers in there anyway. (Oula)

Ville said that often the exercises used to train oral skills were inauthentic and hence not motivating enough, a view that is also present in Oula's statement above. The students in Mäkelä's study (2005, 162) also expressed the need for more meaningful contact in the target language.

<sup>51)</sup> Inauthentic. They just put the sentences in your mouth; so that you have to translate verbatim into Finnish and then if you don't manage to do it word for word then you get the feeling that you don't know anything even though what you said might have been correct anyway. So it's not wrong but it's still somehow depressing. ---Rather there should be more speaking exercises where you're supposed to only 'express' something in a certain way. (Ville Q25)

Ville also said, however, that it was close to impossible to simulate a truly authentic language use situation in the classroom.

<sup>52)</sup> Although it's practically impossible to simulate an authentic situation in the classroom. (Ville Q25)

Liisa said that at school one learns 'tons of fancy words' but other skills, such as *fluency*, are learned outside the classroom.

<sup>53)</sup> Fluency and talking about basic stuff you maybe learn outside the classroom; in school you learn tons of fancy words that you don't even have to use necessarily. (Liisa Q19).

When I asked Liisa why she thought oral competence was not given as much emphasis as written competence she mentioned the matriculation examination as the culprit.

<sup>54)</sup> Well because the matriculation exams are in writing; so we don't have, well actually on the oral course we have an exam but that doesn't mean anything basically.--- I mean [the matriculation exams] do measure skills, but it feels like rocket science nowadays; or I mean that it's way overrated. (Liisa Q25)

In fact, all four students thought that a part that tests oral skills *should be added* to the matriculation examination, though in Joonas's opinion it could be optional. This reflects the findings in Mäkelä's (2005, 158) study according to which 60% of the participants expressed a natural or positive opinion when asked about the addition of an oral test. Ville, moreover, said that right now the matriculation does not give a comprehensive image of how language is used.

<sup>55)</sup> [It should be added] because I don't think it gives a comprehensive image of how language is used. It gives one perspective but not the whole truth. (Ville Q25)

Oula and Liisa also thought that the matriculation examination was not completely exhaustive, as in their opinion, oral skills were often more important than writing skills. This backs up Kormos's (2006, xvii) view about language most often being learned in order to be able to speak it instead of writing or reading in it. Moreover, the students felt that adding an oral test would give the students a chance to compensate written skills in the exam. Mäkelä (2005, 164) also raised this point by saying that adding an oral test would bring fairness to the examination by better accounting for the students' different skills.

<sup>56)</sup> In Finland it's a bit dumb that we don't have a mandatory oral test in the matriculation exams even though I think oral competence is even more important than written competence. --- In the exams I was one point short of a *Laudatur*; the oral exam would have compensated my total score. (Oula Q25).

However, even though Liisa also felt that oral skills should be tested in the matriculation examinations as she felt that it would compensate her other skills, contrary to Mäkelä's argument above, she did not consider it unfair that this was not the case as she acknowledges that she also needed to know how to write and read in English.

<sup>57)</sup> It's not unfair; I mean I do have to know how to read so I'm not saying that I've been mistreated because [the oral skills part] doesn't exist; I'm definitely not saying that it wouldn't be important. (Liisa Q25)

Joonas also thought oral skills to be generally more important than writing skills, but he also indicated that the closer the date of the matriculation examinations came, the more emphasis he put on written language. This tendency was also reported in Mäkelä's (2005, 158) study which showed that towards the end of their studies the students wanted to receive more practice in the areas tested in the final examinations.

<sup>58)</sup> I would say oral skills [are more important generally speaking]. Well now of course written skills are important because the matriculation exams are coming up in which it is really important what you write; but if you think of life in general, then speech is definitely [more important]. (Joonas Q25)

I also asked the students whether or not the teacher's oral skills had an effect on how *pleasant* they found the English lessons to which three of the students said that it did, in fact, have an effect, although Joonas had to base his answer to guessing as he said he had never had a teacher that would not have spoken well.

<sup>59)</sup> I, at least, like those classes better where the teacher knows how to pronounce and with whom you can discuss more naturally. ---It has to do with general oral competence and also the teacher's pronunciation; it's easier to communicate with a teacher like that. ---It is an advantage if the teacher has good pronunciation. (Oula Q23)



This aspect of pleasantness, however, had not merely to do with the way the teacher spoke but rather it was the combination of the teacher's *speaking, personality* and *teaching methods* that made the classes interesting.

<sup>60)</sup> I guess it's the combination of all those features because the teacher's personality does have a tremendous effect on everybody. Everybody keeps saying that back then I had a teacher who could not interest me in the subject. ---If someone would be really good, meaning that they would have a really nice personality and provide the students with nice exercises then you probably wouldn't think about the pronunciation so much because the teacher would be so nice otherwise, then I guess it wouldn't matter as much. (Joonas Q23)

This aspect had also come up earlier with Liisa when I asked her to evaluate her own English to which she said that even though she thought her English was good enough, she was 'bummed' that it was not as strong as she would hope. When asked why she thought that was, one of the reasons she mentioned was the teacher.

<sup>61)</sup> I like English but I'm bummed that it's not as strong as it could be.--- Well I don't know because I always thought of myself as being really good at English but then when I started high school it somehow vanished. But it could also be that in middle school I had a great teacher and then I really liked English and gave it my best; but now in high school I feel like we have one good teacher and I've never gotten her classes, except for once during senior year. (Liisa Q20).

I asked what it was that made this one teacher better than the four other English teachers they had and she said that the teacher in question 'made it more interesting'. When asked what this meant she explained that it had to do with *the way she taught* as well as her *personality*. However, she also mentioned that language skills were important and used the so-called 'British teacher' as an example again.

<sup>62)</sup> First of all she has a very interesting way of teaching; she's not doing it just for the job but she's doing it so that we would really like it.--- The personality is important but at the same time they are also really good teachers; somehow they just know a lot and know [how to teach]; and they're not trying too hard like this one teacher who is so hard trying to speak with a British accent. (Liisa Q20)

She also mentioned that the 'good' teacher was also very supportive. I asked if that particular teacher had any special merits at her oral skills and Liisa just said that she was 'very natural' and did not try to teach a specific accent but just sounded natural.

<sup>63)</sup> Basically she's not trying to teach a specific accent or something; it's just really natural [sounding] and it's a good model to learn from. (Liisa Q20)

Ville also said that if he feels he is not learning properly he opts for a self-study course instead or if he has decided to take part in the course he might have more absences. Earlier it was speculated whether or not the impression the students get of the teacher has the possibility to affect their motivation to learn English and this, at least partly, seems to indicate that. Moreover, as it is often possible for Finnish upper secondary

school students to choose their own courses, Ville said that he, for example, often tries to choose the courses according to the teacher he feels he likes or learns the best with.

<sup>64)</sup> I opt for a self-study course. I know when I'm learning the best. Or then I might just skip classes quite often because when you're 18 you just manage your own absences.--- You also aim at choosing the right teachers at Wilma when you're planning your schedule. (Ville Q24)

Liisa was the only one who directly said that the teacher's oral competence did not have too much effect on how pleasant she found the classes but rather it was an extra merit.

<sup>65)</sup> The effect is not too great; but of course you'd rather listen to good English than bad English. (Liisa Q23)

I asked her to think about the situation with reference to the 'British teacher' she had referred to occasionally during the interview and she said that even with her the interest was more dependable on the teaching methods.

<sup>66)</sup> Teaching methods mostly because we always keep laughing at that teacher, so basically the way she speaks also makes it entertaining since she sounds funny; but mostly what makes it interesting is the way things are taught. (Liisa Q23)

Earlier I reported that the students mentioned politicians, such as Olli Rehn and Alexander Stubb, as examples of people who had good and bad oral skills. In reference to this I asked the students to evaluate how teachers' oral skills should be when compared to representatives of some other professions. As points of comparison I chose to use *a politician*, *a dentist* and *a biology teacher*. All four students said that English teachers should have a *higher* oral proficiency than the representatives of those three professions, as, according to one student, even Olli Rehn did not have to know English as well as the English teacher, since that was not his area of expertise.

<sup>67)</sup> Yes, she must be better because she's done the required studies. ---[Olli Rehn] is in no way an expert in the matter. (Ville Q26)

<sup>68)</sup> Well an English teacher should be a nit-picker; he should know the language so well and be above other professionals in knowing English. (Joonas Q26)

I also discussed the aspect of *first impressions* with the students and all of them seemed to think that at least to some extent the way a teacher speaks and pronounces affects the first impression they get of him. The aspect of the L2 user's level carrying socioeconomic consequences was earlier discussed by Luoma (2004, 9) and Segalowitz (2010, 162), among others, who argued that based on the way a person speaks, listeners can make inferences about his or her intellectual abilities, personality and their identity, among other aspects.

<sup>69)</sup> If the teacher speaks well you get the feeling that he knows what he's doing. (Joonas Q27)

<sup>70)</sup> Well if she's good then you get an impression that you can rely on the teacher so that if you have a question you can ask and most probably will get an answer. If she's bad, then you kind of start to doubt whether or not she knows what she's talking about. ---You start to wonder whether or not she has studied properly. (Oula Q27)

When I asked Oula to elaborate on the matter, specifically from the point of view of *pronunciation*, he said that it did not have as big of an effect as oral competence in general.

<sup>71)</sup> Well pronunciation is not necessarily as eminent but *if* the teacher has good pronunciation you get a better feeling about him but then if he's not that good it's not that bad if he speaks well otherwise. (Oula Q28)

Liisa also said that the way the teacher speaks might not affect the way she views the teacher as a professional but it does affect the first impression in a negative way.

<sup>72)</sup> [You get the impression] that she's probably not a very good teacher; or my first thought was that why have they hired a teacher like that to teach us (referring to the 'British teacher'). ---If she begins the lesson by speaking and it's horrible then [you get a bad first impression]. ---But she might be really good at other things. (Liisa Q27)

Unlike Oula and Liisa, Ville explicitly said that pronunciation affects the way he views the teacher as a professional.

<sup>73)</sup> Of course you judge people by the first impression so you immediately think that that teacher doesn't necessarily know as much as the other teacher who has good pronunciation. (Ville Q28)

He also said that based on the way the teacher speaks the students can tell whether or not he has personal interest towards the language or has motivation to teach it. The aspect that was also mentioned by Liisa in citation <sup>(62)</sup> and was discussed in relation to Chiswick & Miller's (2007, cited in Segalowitz 2010, 162) notion of economic human capital earlier.

<sup>74)</sup> Well good [oral skills] give an impression that the teacher is personally interested in the language and wants to teach it and is motivated. ---Otherwise you get the impression that he has just tricked the job for himself and only does it for the money. (Ville Q27)

In this chapter I have shown the results of the interviews conducted with the students. I divided the topics according to the research questions and dealt with them in that given order. In the next chapter I am going to do the same but this time I will look into the teachers' answers.

## 6.2 Oral competence – teachers' opinions

In this section I am going to concentrate on the teachers' thoughts on general oral competence and how it shows in teaching. As in the section dealing with the students' answers, I have also divided this section into three parts according to the research questions and will, hence, first present the teachers' thoughts on *oral competence* in general and then move on to the topic of *pronunciation* more specifically. Finally, I will deal with the aspect of *oral competence in teaching*. Before moving on, however, I would want to point out that unlike the students, with whom it was fairly easy to discuss each subject and question separately, with the teachers the answers were much more meandering. This is to say that the teachers' answers were not always that clear-cut between oral competence and pronunciation, for example, and there was much more overlap with the topics in general. This is an indicator that the questions should have been made narrower and simpler, perhaps, so that it would not have been possible for them to give such broad answers per question. I have, however, tried to dissect the answers to their separate sections according to topic as much as possible and hence, some of the answers have been divided into more than one part and the numbers of the questions do not flow as steadily as in the students' section. Moreover, occasionally there will be references to answers on more than one occasion.

### 6.2.1 Defining oral competence

As in the students' answers, *communicative competence* was also strongly present in the teachers' answers as three of the teachers explicitly mentioned communication or the ability to get one's message across as focal points in comprising oral competence. One of the teachers (Marianna) said that oral competence, in her view, covered all language in its spoken form, including both productive and comprehensive aspects. However, later on in the interview she specified that being able to communicate one's message was one of the most important aspects of oral communication, leading to a conclusion that all teachers found *communicative competence* as one of the most important aspects of oral competence.

<sup>75)</sup> Well, of course it is the ability to express oneself in the target language so that the message gets delivered. (Meri Q1)

Even though all four teachers agreed that *communicative competence* was the focal point of oral competence, they did, however, emphasize different aspects and elements that, in their view, either deterred or facilitated communication. Some of the aspects

mentioned were *general interactive skills*, *familiarity with cultural conventions*, *nonverbal communication* and *understanding*. All of these aspects were also mentioned by some of the students and *sociolinguistic competence* was also highly present in the teachers' answers, as in example <sup>(76)</sup> below.

<sup>76)</sup> It is the ability to communicate – communicate orally as well as understanding what is being said and how the other person communicates and acts in the situation. ---I'm thinking of the sort of knowledge of cultural conventions, relating to different habits and conventions that each country and culture has. ---Also different gestures and body language. (Tanja Q1 & Q2)

Many of the teachers moved on to explain how often the communication breakdowns that have to do with cultural conventions arise from the different ways of communicating between two languages and cultures. *Active listening* and *small talk*, for example, were mentioned as differences between Finnish and English.

<sup>77)</sup> One thing that is really difficult for Finns, even though one should give it a try, is active listening; as I've told my students that it might feel fake to try to make sounds while someone else is speaking but at least with some facial expressions or gestures you should try to show interest in [what the other person is saying] but it is really hard for us; but when you go out to the world you should know how to show interest in what the other person [is saying]. (Marianna Q11)

<sup>78)</sup> If you've had a lot of practice in oral communication it shows in the way you communicate; that you know about rules and regularity that exists between different languages. Whether it is small talk or opening or closing the conversation. ---Those small words are all part of the conversation. ---A typical mistake that Finns make is that when they ask a question they do not use a rising intonation at the end. That also is part of oral competence that you don't speak in such a monotone voice as Finns usually do. (Pentti Q4, Q3 & Q11)

With Tanja and Meri there was also some discussion about *interactive skills* and *personality* and how communication might not be a question of mere language competence but a sort of a facility for interaction is also needed. This view was also recognized in the CEFR (2001, 9) and by Hammerly (1991, 41) who made a distinction between *SL competence* and *SL proficiency*, the latter having to do with general survival in communicative situations with less focus on the linguistic traits. This, of course, raises a question whether or not a facility of the sort can be taught or whether it is strictly a personality trait.

<sup>79)</sup> We can't judge someone's personality but when we send these kids out to the world and if you're really shy and quiet and not an active listener who can take the floor; if you're just waiting for someone to give you your turn you might end up waiting forever. (Meri Q5)

<sup>80)</sup> I would say that the readiness to function in different situations; you need a lot of attitude and it is typical of someone with good oral skills to be able to function on different levels and in different situations; basically that you take into account the context and the audience. (Tanja Q4)

In the latter citation Tanja mentions that the speaker should take into account the context and audience in which the interaction takes place, by thus referring to a use of different *registers*, which was also acknowledged in the CEFR (2001, 58) as well as by Bachman & Palmer (1996, 76) according to whom speaking should be described though the language using task in question instead of a set of skills required. Tanja also mentioned them on other occasions in the course of the interview, as did Marianna.

At this point it should be mentioned that similarly to the students, the teachers also seemed to have ‘pet peeves’ of a sort and the correct use of *register* and *cultural conventions*, for example, were those to Tanja. Meri, on the other hand seemed to concentrate a lot on *pronunciation*, whereas Marianna referred to *genuine interaction* on multiple occasions and Pentti talked about *idiomatic speech*. Other aspects that were mentioned as being part of both oral and communicative competence were *pronunciation* (Pentti, Tanja & Meri), the use of *communication strategies* (Meri & Marianna) and *vocabulary* (Pentti & Meri).

<sup>81)</sup> Pronunciation in a way that it helps you to get your message across more easily. ---But also you will better understand how the language is structured as well as what is being said, if you know how to pronounce (Pentti Q1 & Q2)

<sup>82)</sup> Well everything is based on vocabulary; if you don’t have the words to express yourself then... ---And of course it is good to be in command of different communication strategies. (Meri Q2)

For Pentti, *pronunciation* was an aspect that seemed to be characteristic of speakers that had *good* oral skills. Tanja was of the same opinion but also said that the ability to function on different levels and in different contexts was key (see citation <sup>(80)</sup>).

<sup>83)</sup> If we’re specifically talking about good oral competence, then pronunciation and conversation strategies are the two aspects that differentiate a good language user from a weaker language user. ---The role of pronunciation should be especially emphasized for those who are gifted. ---Not everybody can obtain a high level of conversation [in a foreign language]. (Pentti Q4)

<sup>84)</sup> When we start to sort out good speakers from the mass then the more idiomatic and authentic pronunciation comes into play. (Tanja Q8 & Q9)

Marianna, on the other hand, pointed out that often written and oral competencies did not go hand in hand but some students who had good writing skills were not as competent orally and vice versa.

<sup>85)</sup> We have a lot of students who are really good writers and they write good papers, but then their oral [skills] are not as good; it doesn’t always go hand in hand but instead there can be those who don’t write as well but then they express themselves very well orally even though they might hesitate or use compensations strategies or what not. (Marianna Q4)

Characteristic of *weak* oral competence were said to be *vague pronunciation* and *not getting one's message across*, often due to lack of social skills (see also citation <sup>(79)</sup>) or general lack of language competence.

<sup>86)</sup> If for one reason or another you are just not able to get your message across. This could be due to weak general language ability that you simply cannot; try to say something but it's not understood. ---It can also be that one might be really good in writing, all papers can be fine, but then social skills or whatever the reason, you are not able to express yourself well or clearly; and sometimes it can be due to faulty register; someone might use a wrong register given the situation. (Marianna Q5)

As for whether or not the teachers had any *standard* that they used as a point of comparison when assessing oral competence, Meri was the only one that said that she used a native speaker as a point of comparison for her own speech. With her students, however, she did not have any standard and if a student spoke with a native-like manner that was merely a plus.

<sup>87)</sup> Not really; but how I myself am speaking, that I do compare to a native speaker. --- Myself, not the students, or them only in a good way. Every year we have students that one way or another have acquired a great oral competence; some come from international schools and some have lived abroad in their childhood and I think it's really cool; but not everyone has the chance so I don't want to compare them [to a native speaker] or can't even. (Meri Q8)

She also said that in a way good oral competence might be an indicator of interest towards the language, an aspect that was also mentioned by some of the students. However, she acknowledged that sometimes a native-like accent could also be a result of environmental factors.

<sup>88)</sup> Yes, yes it does [indicate an interest towards the language]. Of course it can also be the case that the poor child has been dragged to Edinburgh for the first five years of his life and that's where the accent comes from but it also indicates an interest towards the language. (Meri Q8)

Marianna also mentioned that language teachers sometimes have a 'native complex' but at present it was not as strict as it used to be. This, again, reflects the general change that has taken place among the larger linguistic community, as was mentioned in the case of the students as well.

<sup>89)</sup> They used to say that all language teachers have a 'native complex' and so they always compare [what they hear] to a native speaker and a highly educated native speaker at that. Luckily those days are behind us and now it's a bit more lax. If you think about the tests they have the European [Framework of Reference] so it is clear that those need to be assessed using that. But if you think about oral competence during a course then maybe you do compare to a native speaker in a way but I would definitely say that a more 'relaxed native'; unlike before when the ideal was a British professor, that is no longer the case. (Marianna Q8 & Q9)

Even though the native speaker model was no longer the target, I asked Marianna whether or not the language should, nonetheless, resemble the target language and she

said that in case I meant Finnish not shining through when speaking English, that was, in fact, the case.

<sup>90)</sup> I guess so. In case you mean Finnish not shining through English? ---Yes, I would say that's pretty close. (Marianna Q8)

For Tanja, a general standard was that the L2 speaker's accent should be *comprehensible for a native speaker*. It must be remembered, however, that occasionally some native accents, such as the Scottish accent, can be difficult for other native speakers to understand and in that sense it might be difficult to establish a standard based on this argument.

<sup>91)</sup> Well I would say that a criterion could be that native speakers understand; even though they might understand some of the accent they shouldn't need to constantly ponder what the other person is saying. ---The pronunciation should be at least passable. (Tanja Q8 & Q9)

I also asked the teachers their opinions about their *own oral skills*: what they were content about and what they'd want to improve. This was one of the topics in which the teachers seemed to emphasize those aspects that were especially important for them, the so-called 'pet peeves', that might not be as important for others. Tanja, for example, mentioned that she would want to improve her use of *register* and *cultural conventions* in the classroom. Pentti and Meri, on the other had, mentioned *pronunciation* among others.

<sup>92)</sup> Well I would say that I could brush up on the use of different registers, it's such a vast and interesting area in English. ---Also the cultural conventions, phraseology, pronunciation and body language. (Tanja Q15)

<sup>93)</sup> My strong suit is definitely oral expression. ---My pronunciation I would also place at the higher end of the scale; although everyone makes mistakes and we always encounter words and expressions... I always remind the students that even in our mother tongue we make mistakes. (Meri Q13 & Q14)

Marianna and Meri also discussed the importance of maintaining one's oral skills as teaching on different levels can affect one's language competence in different ways. According to Meri some of her colleagues who taught at elementary schools, felt that their language competence had declined over the years, whereas Marianna also said that she had noticed a difference between teaching at the IB (International Baccalaureate) school and general upper secondary school. The importance of supplementary education was also stressed by the Ministry of Education (LSKAM 2006, 28).

<sup>94)</sup> I would like to be even better at teaching oral skills, that's an area where there's always room for improvement. ---I wish that every year I had the chance to take part in some training where I could practice my own language competence. I believe that high school is



challenging enough and I don't feel like my own language competence has declined but some colleagues who teach in elementary school feel that theirs has. (Meri Q15)

As for what the best way to *learn oral competence* was, almost all teachers agreed that just *using* English and being in *contact* with other English speakers were the best ways. These answers largely correlate with the answers provided by the students as they also mentioned *authentic settings* and *being in contact with other speakers*. Pentti also said that the teacher's guidance was important when learning oral skills, an aspect that was also mentioned by Hildén (2000) who stressed that the teacher's task was to direct the learning into correct direction so that all aspects of oral competence would be accounted for in the learning process.

<sup>95)</sup> Also pure exposure and hearing the language a lot. However, exposure alone is not enough, the teacher must explicitly say what features should be paid attention to.--- Also just repetition, repetition, repetition. (Pentti Q19)

As with the students, at the end of each interview I also asked the teachers to choose the 'more acceptable' one of two alternatives (see page 69). Unlike the students, with whom the division was 50/50 all four teachers chose option A as the more acceptable one. They did ponder over the alternatives, however, so the result cannot be considered completely clear-cut as many of them said that they would prefer grammar and vocabulary to be in place as well.

<sup>96)</sup> Well if I must choose, I'd rather favor both; grammar must also be in place. ---But if you think about the first impression when you hear someone speak Finnish with a foreign accent it does affect how you understand what is being said. Some of the conjugations might be off but if the pronunciation is proper I would say it's a really important part of it all. ---I definitely wouldn't want it to be either or but if I must choose of the two then pronunciation; especially in an everyday conversation and interaction, which is the main objective of language learning. (Pentti Q30)

As has been said on multiple occasions during the study the division between oral competence and pronunciation has not always been clearly separable and therefore many of the answers provided in this section can be interpreted from the point of view of pronunciation as well. In the next chapter, however, I will deal with those answers that have more strictly to do with the aspect of pronunciation, though some overlap may, again, occur. Moreover, whether or not the teachers had any standard for pronunciation, for example, was already largely dealt with in the present section in reference to any standards they might have with oral competence in general (citations <sup>(84)</sup>, <sup>(89)</sup> & <sup>(91)</sup>, for example). The next section will, hence, be somewhat shorter than that of

the students and there will be more overlap with the answers of this chapter and the ones already provided in the present one.

### 6.2.2 The role of pronunciation in the field of oral competence

When I asked what the role of *pronunciation* and *prosodic elements* in the field of general oral competence was, the teachers' answers were quite varied but similarly to the students, they did not emphasize their role too much either. For example Tanja said that *passable pronunciation* was sufficient and Marianna also emphasized that the main objective was to *get the message across* and that *intonation* and *stress* were more important than single speech sounds.

<sup>97)</sup> Passable pronunciation is important; it doesn't have to be prime but it's important that it were passable. (Tanja Q6)

<sup>98)</sup> I guess intonation and stress are more important; bigger things than when it comes to single sounds.--- And what I've understood nowadays it is not as important whether the speech sounds are exactly correct, as long as the message gets delivered. Context also aids in the comprehension process. (Marianna Q6)

Meri was the only one who explicitly said that pronunciation and prosodic features were important and even further, might have an effect on how hearers perceived the speaker. Luoma (2004, 9) also raised this point by saying that people make subconscious judgments about their interlocutors based on the way they speak. Meri also said that she was quite quick to judge the pronunciation of people who appeared in public and used them as examples for the students. She did not give Olli Rehn as an example, but her answer is relatable to the students' answers as well as Leppänen et al's (2009, 76) findings that had to do with the younger generations being more demanding when it came to Finns speaking English in public.

<sup>99)</sup> I think it has an important role. It affects how I perceive the speaker's credibility, reliability and professional expertise, even though it shouldn't be the case, of course; the message is the most important thing but the first impression I get; I must say I highly appreciate if someone has truly polished and invested in his pronunciation and its different aspects. (Meri Q6)

When asked what the characteristics of *good* pronunciation were, the teachers' answers were not as explicit as the students' and Tanja's answer was, in fact, provided already in citation <sup>(84)</sup>. Pentti, on the other hand, answered the question more from the point of view of the *teacher's* pronunciation and his answer will, hence, be dealt with in the next section. Meri's answer was the most descriptive and she also attended to the question earlier on in the interview by saying that on higher levels the pronunciation should be 'vivacious and vibrant'. She also mentioned that *intonation* and *word stress* should be

emphasized at upper secondary school level and towards the end she hoped that the interaction with the students would take a direction towards more authentic.

<sup>100)</sup> General fluency, yes, but of course you also have to put some effort into the single sounds. At the moment what I try to highlight even more to my students is *stress*, since a native speaker, even though you would try to say that /biology, biology/ is what you're studying, the message might not get through; questions can become statements because our mother tongue is so monotone on both word and sentence level. ---Little by little [I also hope] that we could move towards more authentic expression with the students. (Meri Q7)

This is relatable to an earlier statement that was made about the so-called 'fine-tuning' of students' language skills on upper secondary school level. The 'fine-tuning' referred to the *pragmatic* and *sociocultural aspects* that, according to Pietilä (1999, 5) differentiated students more than grammatical errors, for example. According to Higgs and Clifford's (1982, cited in de Jong 1991, 24) Relative Contribution Model as well, *pronunciation*, *fluency* and *sociolinguistic performance* were the aspects that became more important on the more advanced levels.

Earlier in citation <sup>(78)</sup> Pentti also mentioned that the lack of proper intonation might cause communication breakdowns, referring to the same problem as Meri above. Meri's statement could also be connected with some of the students' answers as they also mentioned that 'not pronouncing the word as it was written' was important. As with general oral competence, Marianna emphasized the aspect of getting one's message across in the case of pronunciation too.

<sup>101)</sup> It needs to be clear so that your message is understood. But nowadays it doesn't have to be that fancy anymore; nowadays we have all the accents in the study material, it doesn't have to be just one; earlier it was really important whether you were British or American, now it's sort of mixed. ---You don't have to have [a regional accent anymore]. (Marianna Q7)

When asked what the best ways to *learn pronunciation* were, *listening* to the language, *imitation* and *practice* were mentioned. Marianna, for example, said that after being on a leave for three years she practiced her pronunciation by listening to a lot of TV and repeating what she heard. Pentti also mentioned that a good way for the students to learn pronunciation was at the school's language studio where they could record their own speech and then listen to it and analyze what was different compared to the original recording.

<sup>102)</sup> When I came back from the three-year leave I was in a panic about going back to work; I would listen to all sorts of programs and repeat after them like a parrot and I read things out loud but nothing really compares to real contact with people. (Marianna Q20)

<sup>103)</sup> Best way to learn oral skills is the 'parrot method': listening to a sentence, repeating it and recording it. After that the students listen to it and can reflect why they sound similar or different to the native speaker. (Pentti Q20)

Earlier when asked what the best way to learn oral competence was, Pentti said that formal instruction and guidance by the teacher were important so that the students would know to pay attention to the right things (see citation <sup>95</sup>). In a way his answer in this case can be related to that and Meri and Tanja also mentioned this aspect in their answers as Meri said that she would correct her students with their pronunciation whenever necessary and Tanja mentioned that special attention to English pronunciation should be paid whenever necessary. As an example she said that she urges her students to do their English homework out loud.

<sup>104</sup>) You have to hear the language extensively. ---Not necessarily [different variants]; in English there are so many variants that it might get a little confusing even, but if you just listened to one variant a lot, a common one preferably. ---And in English you must be constantly vigilant, sort of compare how something is written and said whenever you get the chance. ---I always tell the students to do their [English] language homework out loud; it is oral practice even when it's not so communicative in nature. (Tanja Q20)

In this section I have dealt with the teachers' answers concerning pronunciation in the field of general oral competence. In the next section I am partially returning to the subject of general oral competence, as I will be dealing with the teachers' opinions about the role of *oral competence* and *pronunciation in teaching*.

### 6.2.3 Oral competence in teaching

Oral competence in teaching was the aspect that the teachers had the most to say about without a doubt. When asked what the teachers' oral competence should be like in the classroom in general and compared to the students, three teachers (Pentti, Tanja & Meri) said that it should be B2.1 or higher. Other qualities that should be present were the use of *idiomatic speech*, *cultural conventions* and general *comprehensibility*, among others.

<sup>105</sup>) Well my opinion is that it should be, well next to perfect; but of course none of us is perfect even though we would have family in an English speaking region, but it should be aimed at. ---Well the teacher's oral proficiency should be higher than what is required of the students. So essentially it would be the level C. (Meri Q21)

<sup>106</sup>) It is always the goal that the students would be exposed to the language and the more idiomatic it is, the better. The most important aspect is that everybody understands and everything else comes second. ---[Ensuring understanding] is done by correct choice of words and speaking slowly enough; unfortunately that is often done at the expense of idiomatic speech. ---The teacher's [speech] should be at least on the same level or higher. (Pentti Q21)

Similarly to Pentti, Marianna also discussed the *comprehensibility* of the teacher's speech and she further mentioned the so-called *polarization* of the teacher's speech, meaning that often the teacher cannot make use of her full language potential as she

must ensure that the students follow what she is saying. The same argument can be seen in Pentti's answer above and this matter was also discussed with Tanja and Meri at one point during the interview. According to Jaakkola (2000, 151) the ideal situation would be that *fluency* and *accuracy* in regard to the *situation* would be in balance, which would take into account both the weaker and the stronger learners.

<sup>107)</sup> Well the teacher's speech is sort of polarized in a way; on the one hand you should be the model for natural and fluent use of the language, which includes you making errors and not taking them too seriously and self-correcting them; so it should be authentic and natural in a way; but then on the other hand there are weaker students and we have to get the message through to them as well, so in a way you must use forced 'classroom language'---explain in words of one syllable, which does not resemble natural language at all. (Marianna Q12)

Another aspect, which, according to Pentti, was affected by the classroom setting was the use of *informal speech* or *spoken language*, a feature that Joonas hoped would be more present in the classroom. According to Pentti the target language used in the classroom should be 'pure'. Earlier Thorne (2008, 220-221) had described spoken language to be less formal, colloquial and displaying looser grammar among other features that can indeed be described as less 'pure'. However, spoken language was also said to have benefits, such as the capability to individualize speakers and promote social communication (ibid, 214). Other teachers, however, did not comment on this aspect so it is rather a marginal result.

<sup>108)</sup> Well the use of spoken language forms diminishes; you aim at using the target language in its purest form. (Pentti Q12)

When it came to discussing pronunciation specifically Pentti, however, said that the 'classroom talk' should not affect pronunciation but it was possible to speak with a good accent even when speaking more slowly.

<sup>109)</sup> It's not at the expense of pronunciation; you are able to speak and even choose your words better and enunciate them better when you speak more slowly; so it doesn't take place at the expense of pronunciation. (Pentti Q22)

He went on to explain in detail how a teacher's pronunciation should be and said that its main goal should be to prepare the students for *real-life situations* and it should be 'as fluent and good as possible'. Meri's answer, concerning pronunciation, followed the same lines and she even mentioned that it would be nice if the teacher had a *regional accent*. Both views are largely on the same lines with the guidelines provided by the National Board of Education (see PEKOO 1982; Peruskoulun kielenopetuksen opas 1983).

<sup>110</sup> It would be desirable for [pronunciation] as well to be on a higher level than the students'. ---I wouldn't mind if a teacher had a regional accent. ---I'm wondering what it would be if it weren't regional, I think it would be nice if it stood out, otherwise I think it nears a Finnish accent. (Meri Q22)

Generally speaking the teachers did not think that other teachers should have a regional variety, and as was seen in citation <sup>(87)</sup>, Meri was the only one who compare herself to a native speaker. She also commented that at times she had had students who came from other schools who had been taught the British variety and questioned her speaking in American English. Liisa also talked about this earlier when she said that neither the teacher nor the students could ask the other to speak in a certain way, but rather pronunciation was 'everyone's own', a point that was also raised by Seidlhofer (2001, 56).

<sup>111</sup> A couple of times I've been offended that students who come from other schools judge whether American English is as good as British English since that's the one they've been taught and told is the right one. (Meri Q22)

Even though it was not necessary for the teachers to pursue native-like pronunciation or oral competence, for that matter, quite many of the teachers said that it was important, nonetheless, for the teacher's oral competence and pronunciation to *set an example* although they did emphasize that the model provided by the teacher was no longer the overriding one but rather it was one of the models among many.

<sup>112</sup> Definitely it is not the only model; but a teacher should [be a model], and I think the students would agree; even though English can be constantly heard in movies, music and TV the teacher is in such close proximity in the learning situation itself that it counts. (Meri Q18)

Tanja discussed the matter from a wider point of view by saying that the teacher should set an example for the language use and learning more generally. By this she refers to making mistakes, for example, and not taking them too seriously, an aspect that Marianna also discussed earlier in citation <sup>(107)</sup>.

<sup>113</sup> Well the teacher is one of the models; of course they have a lot of other models as well. ---The teacher doesn't have to be a native-like model with a regional accent, native speakers are from somewhere and set a different example but what I feel is that the teacher should set an example of the attitude in a way. ---Teacher is the one who sets the example for using, learning and making errors and all that; no one else necessarily sets an example for those. (Tanja Q18)

Pentti agreed that the teacher was no longer the primary example nor the primary information provider, for that matter, but rather the teacher's job was to provide guidance for the students, an aspect that he also mentioned earlier a couple of times. He emphasized, moreover, that since there is such a multitude of examples in today's

world, the teacher's guidance has become ever more important and that the amount of examples should not exempt the teacher from setting an example as well, quite the opposite, in fact.

<sup>114)</sup> A teacher must primarily set an example. Of course the teacher is not the overriding model anymore, especially in English, but rather the models are taken from the Internet and the media.--- Nowadays I would say that the teacher's role as an information provider is not as great as it used to be but rather through his example he can guide the students to the right direction.--- Quite the opposite, nowadays as there is so much offering and the students are much more exposed to the target language it is part of one's professional expertise and, I don't know, authority to be able to answer the present day demands. Basically if you are more exposed to the authentic language you should be able to improve your own skills as well. (Pentti Q18)

Earlier it was discussed how teaching on different grades has the ability to either enhance or weaken one's oral competence, momentarily at least, and how teachers should maintain their oral skills. The latter aspect was also discussed with Pentti, as is seen in the citation above, but other teachers mentioned this as well and also discussed how the *amount* and *nature of language contact* can have an equally enhancing or weakening effect on one's oral skills. Marianna, for example, said that the more contact she had with native speakers or in an authentic environment, the better she felt her pronunciation became. To some extent this can be related to Sheen's (1994, cited in Harjanne 2008, 126) study, which showed that high-quality grammatical and sociolinguistic competence could not be acquired properly even with the help of thousands of language lessons, indicating that formal teaching could not provide a complete language learning environment.

<sup>115)</sup> I was in London for a week during fall break and I could immediately tell that my accent had improved. But alas after being back home for a while you notice that it starts to flatten again. But well, such is life. (Marianna Q14)

Tanja also discussed this aspect by saying that a 'proper' interlocutor had a more positive effect on the development of one's own language competence and I feel that her comment especially, is relevant when discussing the aspect of the teacher setting an example, since, as it seems, the better the model provided by the interlocutor, in this case the teacher, the better the results with the L2 speakers, in this case the students.

<sup>116)</sup> If you think about yourself when you've been in contact with speakers of English whose English is on different levels, sometimes on a higher level and sometimes on a more basic level, it is much more efficient for the development of your own language competence if the interlocutor is 'proper'. In the situation, even before you've learned anything from the example, the communication is different and you're better at it; similarly I feel in the classroom with the teacher, it is easier for the students to act different [if the teacher is proper]. (Tanja Q18)

Quite expectedly the teachers thought that oral competence was important in teaching, mainly because oral competence had become more important generally speaking as well. According to Tanja, in order for the interaction to be as easy and natural as possible in the classroom, the teacher's oral competence needed to be *effortless* and *fluent* as well.

<sup>117)</sup> In order for the interaction to be as easy as possible in the classroom, the teacher must be fluent and natural in using the language as well, so it's really important. (Tanja Q16)

Many of them also thought that it was important for the teacher to use the target language as much as possible. Marianna, for example, said that oral skills should be practiced at school, whereas written skills could be practiced at home.

<sup>118)</sup> Nowadays oral competence is so important in general; we have the principle [at our school] that you speak in class and write at home; but of course you also write some in class as well. (Marianna Q16)

Earlier Oula had expressed that the teacher's authority in the students' eyes might be affected by the way he speaks, mainly because it was an indicator of how confident the teacher was when it came to his language skills (citations <sup>(44)</sup> & <sup>(45)</sup>). Meri addressed this matter as well by saying that the teacher's oral competence was important and that it would be rather odd if the teacher were nervous about being able to set an example and that it was part of one's professional expertise to have confidence in one's language skills.

<sup>119)</sup> I think [oral skills] are important in teaching and it would be strange if the teacher were worried or nervous about being able to set the example. ---Yes, [the teacher should be confident in using the language] and have confidence in her expertise. (Meri Q16)

As for pronunciation, the teachers said that it was important not to teach the students wrong, a concern expressed by the students as well, since it was impossible to know what the students might seize on. Lintunen (2004, 58) also pointed this out earlier.

<sup>120)</sup> You never know what the students seize on; so essentially, no one is perfect, but it's the same as with other language errors that you should try to make as little mistakes as possible because you never know where the students get their examples. (Tanja Q17)

Marianna also remarked that the teacher's pronunciation might factor into the students' view of the teacher's expertise and how they felt about English lessons, as it did not serve any purpose if the students' energy went to concentrating on the errors the teacher made.

<sup>121)</sup> At worst the students might just laugh at the teacher, as they themselves are so proficient nowadays; you're not credible unless the pronunciation is correct; but of course it doesn't have to be nit-picked on. And of course it must be comprehensible. ---But since we



also do have really proficient students I'm sure they're irritated if the teacher claims to be an expert but then systematically has faulty pronunciation; though everybody pronounces wrong occasionally.--- It really doesn't serve any purpose if the students energy goes into keeping a tally of errors. (Marianna Q17 & Q23)

This is relatable to Leppänen et al's (2009) deductions according to which Finnish people were expected to know English quite well as stumbling was received with *amusement*, *irritation* and *compassion*. Moreover, Ville's (see citation <sup>(64)</sup>) comment about him opting for a self-study course should be considered in relation to this matter as well as some of the students feeling that the teacher's pronunciation affected the way they viewed the teacher as a professional (see e.g. citation <sup>(73)</sup>).

The other teachers also thought that the way the teacher spoke had an effect on how *pleasant* the students found English lessons and for all of them it was also a means of bringing some authenticity to the classroom, thus indicating that the pronunciation guidelines provided by the National Board of Education have been registered (see PEKOO 1982, 9-10; Peruskoulun kielenopetuksen opas 1983, 20).

<sup>122)</sup> I would say that the students motivation and enthusiasm to learn are affected by the teacher's example. ---I'm not sure if [pronunciation] directly correlates with motivation but it always brings authenticity if you hear the foreign language being spoken in a fluent, lively and fresh way. It's always nice and isn't that why we're learning different languages, so that we'd learn to communicate with them. Primarily speak than write. The situations in which language is used are mainly oral compared to written assignments and gap-fill exercises. (Pentti Q23)

Tanja further remarked that students did react to whether the language sounded 'beautiful' or not and quite easily expressed their views about it too. As an example she used her own daughter, who had had a negative experience with a teacher who spoke 'ugly German'.

<sup>123)</sup> Students do react to whether or not the language is beautiful--- they mention it too.--- At some point my daughter had a German teacher in middle school who, according to her, spoke 'ugly German'; and it wasn't about the teacher pronouncing the words wrong but it just sounded 'ugly' and my daughter was a bit disgruntled by this so in that sense it does affect the attitude and motivation [to learn]. (Tanja Q24)

This anecdote resembles Liisa's example of the teacher who spoke with the British accent, whom she felt sort of resentful towards.

As with the students, I also asked the teachers about their opinions on the *teaching of oral skills* at school in general, as well as their thoughts on the addition of an *oral test* to the matriculation examination. Unlike the students, the teachers were of the opposite opinion as three of them thought that the practice of oral skills was sufficiently present in the curriculum for upper secondary education. Pentti was the only one that clearly thought that oral skills were not given enough emphasis.

<sup>124)</sup> I'd say that teaching the readiness to speak is in its infancy in Finland; grammar is taught really thoroughly, which is good, of course, but there should also be more practice of opening one's mouth and tolerate some chaos and uncertainty. (Pentti Q25)

Many of the teachers, however, said that the problem with language teaching in upper secondary school was the way the skills were tested, mainly because of the matriculation examinations. According to the teachers the addition of an oral test would increase the teaching of oral skills in general as well as change the way course exams are conducted.

<sup>125)</sup> I think it's well [presented] in the upper secondary school curriculum; on the other courses oral competence is well present and individual schools can enhance its position even further; and if you think of the themes of first-year English classes it's largely to do with oral competence; so there's really nothing wrong with the curriculum. Instead, the problem with upper secondary school is the grading system and how the matriculation exam measures oral skills. ---I actually was of the opinion that an oral exam should be added to the exam, which would have increased the amount of oral testing on other courses as well; students do have motivation to study oral skills but the closer we get to the exams, the more weight is put on the matriculation exams. ---Whenever there's shortage on time [oral skills] tend to get less attention because another type of exam, which also takes a lot of work, is coming up. (Tanja Q25)

This point was also raised by Mäkelä (2005, 163), according to whom the addition of an oral test would bring more *interactive*, *authentic* and *open practice* to English lessons. Moreover, he said that since oral skills are taught, it would be sensible to test them as well. As is noted in the example above, one of the issues seems to be that the closer the dates of the exams get, the less oral skills are practiced due to the pressure of the exams, a point that Saleva (1997, 11) also raised. Meri also thought that the currently optional oral course should be made mandatory and that adding an oral test would also motivate the teachers to improve their own language skills.

<sup>126)</sup> In my opinion, [it is sufficiently present]. ---I wish the next curriculum, which will take effect in the next five years, had a mandatory oral course, though, and [that it would be scheduled] for the first study year. Now some of the students don't choose the course for many reasons: some have a really full senior year and they can't fit it in, some are a bit scared and worried because suddenly they're expected to talk; but it should be a mandatory course. ---There could be more but what we constantly [aim at] are the matriculation exams. ---I think [the exams] are okay as they are but I really do hope that before I retire, which is still far away in the future, an oral [part] would be added. It is ridiculous that Finland is practically the only country in Europe that doesn't have an oral exam. ---It would further motivate us teachers to improve our skills and official instances to direct [the development]. (Meri Q25)

Of all the teachers Meri had had slightly more experience in the field of assessing oral skills, as she had attended refresher courses arranged by the National Board of Education. As has been established on multiple occasions during the study, defining oral competence can be a difficult and subjective matter. Therefore, assessing oral competence can only be expected to be that much more difficult and Meri followed the

lines of what was said by the Ministry of Education (LSKAM 2006) by saying that all teachers should attend these courses as it would make the assessment of oral competence slightly more uniform.

<sup>127)</sup> I think they should be for everybody.--- Well most of the courses have had to do with assessment so that everyone would do it in the same way; but I've also gotten some good teaching and exercise tips. (Meri)

I also asked the teachers to discuss their views on what an English teacher's oral skills should be like when compared to the representatives of three other professions: a dentist, a biology teacher and a politician. Similarly to the students, the teachers also thought that an English teacher's proficiency should be higher than that of the representatives of the three mentioned professions.

<sup>128)</sup> A teacher's pronunciation should be exemplary. I do believe that it's part of the authority and professional expertise. (Pentti Q26)

<sup>129)</sup> If you think of yourself as a student you go to a lecture or a course expecting the professor to be an expert; and of course oral proficiency and pronunciation are part of that expertise; but of course there are other things as well. (Marianna Q26)

As for possible *first impressions* that might arise from the teacher's way of speaking, all four teachers thought that it affected the way students and other hearers judged the teacher. Meri also discussed the aspect of pronunciation being a part of the speaker's persona, thus making it a more personal feature than the rest of what is included in oral competence. This point was also attended to by Seidlhofer (2001, 59-60), according to whom pronunciation was the aspect that speakers felt particularly vulnerable and insecure about.

<sup>130)</sup> Unfortunately I do believe it affects the students. ---Especially with pronunciation; they know that you master grammar just fine if you're a trained teacher; and it's part of your persona too, so that I can imagine that getting criticism for one's pronunciation can be quite devastating. (Meri Q27 & Q28)

<sup>131)</sup> Well it's a question of credibility; people tend to listen with a certain frame of mind when they know you're a teacher and if there are a lot of mistakes then the credibility [might suffer]. ---The students are not too strict anymore so that they would expect perfection but other things matter as well;--- So you don't have to be perfect but sufficient, that's important for credibility. (Tanja Q28 & Q29)

With Meri there was also some discussion about whether or not it was, perhaps, possible to disguise something with good pronunciation or oral skills, a matter that had been under discussion in regard to supplementary education as well.

<sup>132)</sup> We've talked about this at the courses: as assessors are be dazzled if the child is fluent, lively, sprightly and social and on the other hand do we think that the other person is a bit

quiet and avoiding eye contact and so on; what we value so to speak. It is bad enough that we're judging but then there are these questions of different values. (Meri Q29)

This matter can be related to her comment earlier on whether or not we judge a person's personality based on their fluency and the way they spoke (see citation <sup>(79)</sup>). Lennon (1990, 391) also discussed the aspect of fluent delivery possibly being the 'overriding determiner of perceived oral proficiency', which also had the possibility to direct listeners' attention away from deficiencies in other areas. This factor was also recognized by de Jong (1991, 23), who reported that a layman's judgment of someone's general language proficiency was firstly based on the pronunciation and fluency of the speech, whereas other features were secondary to the judgment.

In this chapter I have presented the results of the interviews conducted with the teachers. Even though I have occasionally made some comparison between the answers given by the teachers and the students, the in depth comparative analysis of the answers will be presented in the following chapter.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

In this part of the study I will take a closer look at the implications of the results and compare the findings to some of the studies and concepts presented earlier. Moreover, since one of the aims of the study was to find out how teachers and students' views of oral competence differed from one another, this aspect will also be under discussion. Following the division of the chapter dealing with the results, I will also start this chapter by looking into the different definitions provided by the participants. Afterwards I will deal with the aspect of pronunciation in more detail and finally discuss the aspect of oral proficiency in teaching. I have also included a separate section for comparing the teachers and students' answers.

### **7.1 Defining oral competence**

As has been shown on multiple occasions in the course of the present study, numerous different sources (see e.g. Iwashita et al. 2008, Segalowitz 2010, Saleva 1997, Paananen-Porkka 2007) have declared that both *general language competence* and *oral competence* are difficult entities to define and people can have very subjective representations of them in their minds. Somewhat expectedly, this was exactly the case with the participants of the present study as well, since there was remarkable difference

even within the respective groups of the teachers and students. However, there were a couple of features that showed significant unity, perhaps not so much within the respective groups as between the two separate groups. The most noteworthy feature was that of *communicative competence*, as all eight participants mentioned it in one way or another. As has been established earlier in the study, ever since the 1970s one of the main goals of language learning and teaching has been *communicative competence*, which is also the main objective of the CEFR (2001). The participants' answers clearly reflect this view, as well as the change that has taken place in the 2000s, mainly that language is viewed in three ways, *a skills, knowledge and cultural subject*, instead of a mere skills or instrumental subject (Harjanne 2008, 112).

Earlier it was stated that instead of consisting of different skills, *communicative competence* was said to comprise of different *competencies*, such as *linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence* (CEFR 2001, 108). Of the three competencies *sociolinguistic competence* figured the most prominently in the answers as both the teachers and the students mentioned *general interactive skills, nonverbal communication and familiarity with cultural conventions* as being part of oral competence. Moreover, many of the teachers said that often communication breakdowns arise from different ways of communicating between two languages and cultures. The CEF (2001, 118) defined *sociolinguistic competence* as 'concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use'. The 'social dimension of language use' can be interpreted to mean either *general interactive skills* or the ability to communicate in a manner *specific to the target language and culture*, or both. *Nonverbal communication and familiarity with cultural conventions* can, without a doubt, be included in the latter category, which was also mentioned in the curriculum for upper secondary education as a requirement besides the acquirement of general B2.1 level language proficiency (LOPS 2003, 100). *General interactive skills*, on the other hand, can be interpreted as dealing with the speaker's individual characteristics. This view was, in fact, discussed with a couple of the teachers (Meri & Tanja), and it is an aspect that was also recognized in the CEFR (2001, 9) and by Hammerly (1991, 41). Even though we should be careful not to judge a learner's personality, as Meri brought to attention, this does, however, offer an interesting point of view and a possibility for further study: since language teaching is mainly the teaching of communication, as can be deduced from the answers as well, and because communication has to do with more than the mere possession of certain linguistic skills,

it brings to attention whether social skills could, and should, be taught alongside with them. Moreover, if so, how can they be properly tested?

Besides *communicative competence* and *sociolinguistic competence*, *understanding* was an aspect that was mentioned by both the teachers as well as the students. This was an interesting notion as *understanding* can hardly be considered a productive skill. However, as was mentioned in the results section, this finding supports what Leppänen et al. (2009) found in their study and it is also recognized in the CEFR (2001). It further supports the view that *communicative competence* is the main focus of language learning rather than a set of different skills, as without *understanding* there is no successful interaction. *Pronunciation* was also mentioned by quite many of the participants as factoring in oral competence but this aspect will be discussed in more detail in the following section dealing with pronunciation specifically.

As for any *standards* that the participants might have had, none of them seemed to have any particular one. Even though Meri said that she compared her own speech to that of a native speaker and the students said that they did use a native speaker as a point of comparison to some degree, none of them required that L2 speakers, including teachers, pursued any particular one. As Chomsky (1965, 3) and Marianna pointed out, over the years it has been the case that the native speaker has been considered the model for language learning. However, the worldwide expansion of the English language has increased the criticism towards the idealized native speaker model and as Kuo (2006, 213-214) pointed out at present English is more often used by non-native speakers, thus reducing the native speakers' so-called 'ownership' of the language. The participants' answers clearly reflect this view, indicating that English is, indeed, regarded an international language that is spoken in many different ways around the world meaning that the number of 'accurate Englishes' has also increased.

The rest of the features that came up did not have as much uniformity between the teachers and students and some of them had rather marginal representations within the respective groups as well. The use of *registers*, for example, was a feature only discussed with the teachers, except for Joonas who mentioned the use of *spoken language forms*, which can be included in the category of speech registers. He did not, however, emphasize the use of any other register, unlike the teachers who discussed the matter from a more diverse point of view. *Fluency*, on the other hand, was a feature that was mentioned by three of the students but only discussed with one teacher, Meri, and

with her it was not discussed from the point of view of defining fluency but rather the discussion had to do with fluent speech having the capability to override or disguise other aspects of oral competence. The students, however, defined fluency through the use of *communication strategies*, which is interesting as fluency was largely defined similarly in the CEFR (2001, 128). This indicates that the goals and definitions of the CEFR are, in fact, quite often acknowledged by the students, as was the case with *communicative competence* as well.

Generally speaking, however, the aspect or term *fluency* was not that present in the answers and it is an aspect that could have been dealt with more explicitly. However, the aim was to see if the participants mentioned the aspect without it being brought up by the interviewer, and since it was not discussed to a very large extent, it appears not to be of too much importance in defining oral competence. I believe one of the reasons for it not being mentioned to be the general discrepancy between the two senses of fluency, the *broad* and the *narrow* view, discussed by Kormos (2006, 154-155) and Lennon (1990, 388). It seems that the students treated the term mostly in the narrow sense, whereas Meri treated it in the broader sense. It might, hence, be the case that the rest of the teachers also regarded it a synonym for global oral competence, and therefore did not explicitly mention the term *fluency* itself. All of this is speculation, however, and no extensive implications can be made. *Fluency* is, nevertheless, an aspect that should be studied more, since there is a need for a solid definition of the term, which still does not exist.

It was also largely agreed on by all the participants that the best way to learn oral competence was to have contact in English as much as possible, preferably in an authentic setting. However, as mentioned, according to Leppänen et al's (2009) study the youngest control group reported having learned English mostly at school. This is an interesting finding since English can be expected to be quite present in the lives of young people outside the classroom as well.

In this section I have discussed the different definitions of *oral competence* provided by the teachers and the students. Even though there was difference between the definitions within both groups there was also significant unity when it came to the aspect of *communication*. Moreover, it can be deduced that the teachers and students' views of oral competence did not differ to a very great extent, contrary to what could have been expected. Since *communicative competence* is highly emphasized in the CEFR, the

general agreement on the importance of *communicative competence* indicates that the goals of the CEFR are well recognized and shared by the participants. Other aspects and definitions, such as those of *fluency*, *understanding* and *registers*, also consolidated the view that the CEFR definitions are well understood within the two groups, which provides a good starting point for the development of future educational curricula. In fact, perhaps it would be advisable to candidly discuss the different definitions and aspects of oral competence with the student, as well as show them different criteria of assessment. This would presumably result in the views concerning oral competence becoming more unified but also make explicit what social aspects must be taken into consideration in order for communication to be successful. After all, *sociolinguistic competence* was perceived highly important for overall communication and differences between cultural conventions were said to result in communication breakdowns even. However, in order to make this explicit for the students, more research is needed in the field of oral competence and especially in defining the terms.

## 7.2 The role of pronunciation in the field of oral competence

It seemed that in the field of general oral competence pronunciation *was not considered too crucial* but other aspects were perceived more important for communication. Rather pronunciation was regarded an *aesthetic* and *socioeconomic* matter or a possible indicator of some *individual characteristics*. Some, for example, stated that pronunciation or general fluency were possible indicators of personal interest towards the language in question, a factor that was also acknowledged by Cheswick & Miller (2007, cited in Segalowitz 2010, 162) who posed the view of language as *economic human capital*. However, mostly it seemed to be the case that if a speaker's pronunciation was faulty it was more *distracting* and *annoying* in the participants' view, but did not affect the conveying of the message any further. Moreover, pronunciation had the possibility to affect how the participants viewed the speaker and Meri, for example, said that she was quite quick to judge public speakers' pronunciation and the way a person spoke affected how she viewed the speaker's *credibility*, *reliability* and *professional expertise*. The students also said that faulty pronunciation conveyed a negative image of the speaker and in the case of Olli Rehn, whom they set as an example, they felt that he had not put enough effort into learning English pronunciation properly even though he was a public figure. These findings correlated with those of Leppänen et al.'s (2009) study, according to which knowing English was rather self-evident for the younger control groups and Finnish English was found the second most



unpleasant variety after Indian English. However, unlike with Meri, one of the students pointed out that Rehn's pronunciation did not make him any less of an expert in his area of expertise, thus indicating that pronunciation was, indeed, an aesthetic matter rather than a necessity.

Even though pronunciation was generally not considered as crucial for communication and L2 speakers were not expected to acquire a native-like accent, the participants did acknowledge that the realization of proper *intonation* and *stress patterns* were important for overall comprehension. Earlier it was reported that even grammatically incomplete utterances were understandable if the intonation patterns were in place (see e.g. Paananen-Porkka 2007; Thorne 2008) and this is what some of the participants seemed to think as well. However, generally speaking, pronunciation was not considered such an important aspect of oral competence but rather good pronunciation was considered an extra merit. Moreover, some of the students were of the opinion that using a regional variety in pronunciation might occasionally cause problems, especially in teaching and in international settings, where most speakers did not speak English as their mother tongue. This argument supports Cook's (1999, 185) view of language teaching needing to concentrate on the L2 model instead of a native one. In a way it can also be applied to Peacock's (1997, 144) reasoning according to which some learners might find authentic materials too difficult as, in a way, speech can also be considered 'authentic material'. The aspect of pronunciation could, hence, be considered to even hinder communication in some cases.

As for best way to learn pronunciation, *imitation* and *listening* to the language came up in both groups. Even though it was argued above that authentic materials might be too difficult for some learners, in this case real-life situations and authentic materials seemed to be of importance, as TV, for example, was mentioned on a couple of occasions. However, it must be remembered that outside the formal setting of the classroom, the learning is voluntary and has to do with acquiring rather than learning, whereas in the classroom the weaker students who might not have such good receptive skills must also be acknowledged.

This section has dealt with the participants' views of *pronunciation* in the general field of oral competence. Even though pronunciation was regarded one aspect of oral competence, as was pointed out in the previous section, it was not given a very crucial role when it came to communication being successful. Rather it was considered an

*aesthetic matter* that was a possible source of *negative first impressions* and for some it was *an extra merit* if a speaker had good pronunciation. In some settings pronunciation was considered to hinder communication even. In the next section the role of oral competence and pronunciation in teaching will be discussed in more detail.

### 7.3 Oral competence and pronunciation in teaching

When it came to the teacher's oral proficiency all participants, not surprisingly perhaps, were of the opinion that it should be higher, or at least on the same level as what was required of the students, in this case B2.1. Most of them said that it should be *higher*, except for Liisa who said that it could also be the same. However, she explained that it had more to do with the teacher being on the same level with the students in order for the teaching to be comprehensible. This is an interesting view and can be related to what was discussed earlier about native speakers and authentic materials (see Cook 1999 and Peacock 1997 above) being too difficult. However, Liisa also said that more has to be required of the teachers and as all other participants agreed, it can be concluded that teachers' oral competence should be higher than that of their students.

In regard to the issue of the teacher making everything comprehensible for the students, Marianna discussed the aspect of *polarization* of the teacher's speech. By this she meant the double role of the teacher's speech on the one hand needing to function as a model of natural language use and oral competence, but on the other hand also taking into account the weaker learners. This aspect was also discussed with the other teachers and many of the students, besides Liisa, also mentioned that it was important for the teacher's speech to be *comprehensible* and, as mentioned above, thought that occasionally pronunciation, for example, might even hinder understanding. All of the participants, however, also thought that a teacher *should act as a model* for pronunciation, although none of them expected the teacher to use any regional variety necessarily, but rather it was an extra merit, as was the case with pronunciation overall. The view of teachers providing a model was also supported by Lintunen (2004, 58), as well as the guidelines drawn up by the National Board of Education (Peruskoulun kielenopetuksen opas 1983, 20) but it must also be remembered that the teacher was no longer perceived the overriding model but one among many. Moreover, the students in the present study did not seem to take too much after the teachers' models but reported having acquired them elsewhere. It can be deduced, hence, that a balance between *general fluency*, *accuracy* and *pronunciation* should be found in order to satisfy the

needs of all learners. Earlier Jaakkola (2000, 151) was cited to say that an ideal situation would be that *fluency* and *accuracy* were in balance in the teaching event. Kuo (2006, 219) also addressed this issue by saying that ‘an appropriate pedagogical model has to be able to satisfy demands ranging from minimum intelligibility, though general accuracy and fluency, up to comparable proficiency to that of a native speaker, rather than drawing exclusively or even primarily on the notion of international intelligibility’. Even though all of this is a lot to account for in teaching, I find Kuo’s view very comprehensive and I feel that it could be exploited more to form a good basis for defining some educational requirements. However, I also believe that unlike is suggested here, international intelligibility should also be accounted for, as international use of the English language can only be expected to increase in the future.

In the previous section, some of the *social implications* of a speaker’s pronunciation were discussed. Even though the participants did not expect the teachers to have any regional variety or did not consider pronunciation the overriding aspect of oral competence, pronunciation did seem to have some social implications in the case of the teachers as well. All participants, for example, felt that the teacher’s pronunciation had an impact on the hearers’ *first impression* of him and Marianna and Ville, furthermore, expressed that a teacher’s pronunciation might affect how the students viewed the teacher as a *professional*. Oula and Liisa, however, said that they did not judge the teacher’s expertise based on pronunciation, thus making it impossible to make further implications on this. Ville also made an interesting remark by expressing that in case the teacher had *good* pronunciation, he got the impression that the teacher was *interested* in the language and *motivated* to teach. Liisa also expressed that it was important that the teacher *showed interest* towards the job and the language. The teachers also discussed the possibility of the teacher’s pronunciation affecting how *pleasant* the students found English lessons and even though the students did have some examples of teachers that they were mocking due to their pronunciation they did, however, express that the teacher’s *personality* and *teaching methods* were important than their pronunciation. It could be deduced, thus, that good pronunciation does have an affect on the first impression students get of the teacher but in the end, other aspects are the ones that matter the most indicating, again, that pronunciation was not considered too important in the general field of oral competence.

However, since teachers are required to act as one example, the matter of *supplementary education* becomes relevant, as in order to provide a model, the teacher’s own language

skills must be maintained. In fact, quite many of the teachers provided examples of their own careers or the careers of their colleagues in which the language skills of a teacher had either decreased or improved, for some reason. Often the reasons were circumstantial and having to do with the amount of *contact* the teachers had had with native speakers, as well as the *grade* the teachers were teaching. The teachers must, of course, take some responsibility for maintaining their own oral skills but as educational curricula and demands keep changing, the need for supplementary education cannot be disregarded. Meri, for example, explicitly expressed that it was desirable that every year there would be further training or a course where she could practice her own oral competence. This aspect was also acknowledged in the guidelines given by the Ministry of Education (LSKAM 2006, 28). Besides maintaining one's own oral skills, supplementary education was also said to be necessary in order for the teachers to keep up their teaching and assessment skills (*ibid.*). This aspect was also emphasized by Meri, according to whom all teachers should take part in the refresher courses arranged by the National Board of Education. Even though the matter was not discussed further with the other teachers, the fact that oral competence had such varied representation in the participants' minds, suggests that there is need for establishing more common ground. However, before this to happen, more research and attempts at defining oral competence are needed in the general field as well.

Even though the aim of this study was not to deal with the aspect of *teaching of oral competence* to a very large extent, the participants appeared to have quite a lot to say about it and it is, therefore, necessary to deal with those aspects as well. In fact, the teachers and students' opinions differed to some extent in the matter, as the majority of the teachers seemed to think that oral skills were *sufficiently present* in the upper secondary school curriculum and thus well present in the courses as well, whereas the students wanted *more practice* in the area. Moreover, some of the students found the exercises *inauthentic* and *not motivating* enough. These findings follow Mäkelä's (2005, 160) discoveries according to which the teachers seemed to find oral exercises more interesting and challenging than the students, who expressed a need for more meaningful contact in the target language. Moreover, the majority of students in Mäkelä's study also indicated the need for more oral practice in class.

Even though there was some disagreement between the two groups when it came to the teaching of oral skills, they all agreed that the matriculation examination had a negative effect on the teaching of oral skills, especially towards the end, and that an oral part

should be added to the tests. Both views also support Mäkelä's (2005) findings as most participants in his study were also in favor of the addition of an oral exam and reported a washback effect the closer the examination dates came. The participants in this study reported that adding an oral test would *increase* the teaching of oral skills in general, a point also acknowledged by Mäkelä (ibid.), *motivate* teachers to practice their own oral skills and give the students a chance to *compensate* their other skills that were not as strong, necessarily. Mäkelä (2005, 164) also pointed out that it would make the different examinations throughout Europe comparable – an aspect that I personally find important as well, since mobility between countries will only be expected to increase in the future, thus bringing need for comparative assessment. Before an oral test is added, however, a couple of aspect should be considered: *assessment criteria* should be made explicit and *supplementary education* should be provided, for example. Moreover, the aspect of *performance anxiety* and its' effects on fluency should be studied further and the students should receive more explicit guidance in oral competence. This aspect was also acknowledged by the CEFR (2001, 47) as well as some scholars (see e.g. Segalowitz 2010; Bachman & Palmer 1996). Taking all these considerations into account, however, there is definite need for the addition of an oral test in order for the examinations to fulfill modern and international standards of language learning. After all, Finnish education is world-renowned but in this matter it seems to be lagging behind.

This section dealt with the participants' views of oral competence and pronunciation in teaching and the participants unanimously agreed that the oral competence of a teacher should be *higher* than that of the students. As for pronunciation, even though it did not have any overriding importance in teaching, it was nevertheless implied that the teacher's pronunciation needed to *set an example* while being *comprehensible*. As was the case with pronunciation in general, in the case of teachers it was also a possible carrier of social implications. First impressions, for example, were largely based on the teacher's pronunciation but other factors, such as the teacher's personality and teaching methods, also influenced the general image of the teacher. The need for *supplementary education* was also indicated, as was the need for an addition of an *oral test* in the matriculation examination. In the next section I am briefly going to discuss the similarities and differences of the views the teachers and students had.

#### 7.4 Teachers and students' views: differences and similarities

Contrary to what could have been expected, perhaps, the teachers and students' answers showed significant unity in their views about both *oral competence* and *pronunciation*. They all agreed, for example, that *communicative competence* was the most important aspect of general oral competence and that *pronunciation* was not that important in the general field. They did acknowledge the significance of *prosodic elements* to intelligibility but it was not the overriding factor of successful communication. The teachers and students also agreed that pronunciation had *social significance* as it affected the *first impressions* and *subconscious judgments* about the speaker. In fact, the only difference between the two groups seemed to relate to the aspect of *teaching* oral competence at school. As was presented above, the teachers, for example, thought that oral skills were *sufficiently present* in the upper secondary school curriculum and thus well present in the courses as well, whereas the students wanted *more practice* in the area. Moreover, some of the students found the exercises *inauthentic* and *not motivating* enough. These findings followed Mäkelä's (2005, 160) discoveries according to which the teachers seemed to find oral exercises more interesting and challenging than the students, who expressed a need for more meaningful contact in the target language.

However, both groups again agreed that the problem with English teaching in upper secondary school was the *washback effect* of the matriculation examination, which did not test oral skills. All participants were of the opinion that an oral part *should be added* to the test, although one student said that it could be optional. Since the views of the teachers and students show such notable unity, perhaps this aspect could be more accounted for in the future when developing educational curricula. Especially as both parties seem to agree that an oral part should be added to the matriculation examination, I see no objection for its addition. Other factors, such as resources, need to be considered, of course, but as was stated in the CEFR (2001, 131) the objectives of language learning and teaching should be based on the needs of learners and society.

The aim of this study was to find out firstly, how upper secondary school students defined *oral competence* and secondly, how they perceived the *role of pronunciation* in the general field of oral competence. The third objective of the study was to see how the participants viewed *oral competence in teaching* and they were also asked to provide their opinions on the *teaching* of oral skills, although that was not one of the main objectives of the study. Besides these three goals one of the aims was to *compare* the answers provided by the two groups and see if there were any correlations or

differences. From the results it can be deduced that even though the definitions were otherwise quite varied, *communicative competence* was considered the most important aspect of oral competence in both groups, whereas pronunciation was not considered to have too much importance for successful communication. It was also revealed that oral competence and the teaching of oral skills were considered important in teaching and education but pronunciation, again, was not of too much importance but rather an extra merit. Finally, it was interesting to see that there was quite a lot of unity between the teachers and the students' opinions, indicating that the educational goals are largely shared by the two groups, which should facilitate the development of educational curricula in the future. It must be remembered, however, that this study was rather restricted as there were only eight participants, meaning that generalizations should be made with caution. Moreover, using an interview as a method of data gathering inflicts its own problems, some of which were discussed in Chapter 5. However, this study provides some interesting viewpoints for further research, such as whether or not general interactive skills should be taught as well. If so, how? Furthermore, it would be interesting to conduct a comparative study in which the teachers and students were asked to listen to different samples of pronunciation and oral interaction after which they would report their first impressions as well as any social presumptions they made of the speakers based on the samples. This sort of study would give further insight into how hearers make subconscious judgments about speakers and it would also be interesting to see if the teachers and students' answers showed as much correlation as in this study.

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## APPENDIX I Interview questions: Teachers

HAASTATTELU / / 2011

Opettaja:

Milloin valmistuit?

Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt opettajana? Millä asteilla?

Mitä kieliä opetat?

Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt nykyisessä työpaikassasi?

- 1) Mitä mielestäsi on suullinen kielitaito?
- 2) Mitä osa-alueita siihen kuuluu?
- 3) Mitkä niistä ovat mielestäsi tärkeitä viestin perille saamisen kannalta?
- 4) Mitä mielestäsi on *hyvä* suullinen kielitaito?
- 5) Vastaavasti millaista on *heikko* suullinen kielitaito?
- 6) Mikä on mielestäsi ääntämisen/prosodisten elementtien rooli suullisessa kielitaidossa?
- 7) Mitä on mielestäsi *hyvä* ääntäminen?
- 8) Mihin standardiin itse vertaat suullista kielitaitoa?
- 9) Entä ääntämistä?
- 10) Muistuuiko mieleesi mitään esimerkkejä *hyvästä/heikosta* suullisesta kielitaidosta/ääntämisestä?
- 11) Mitkä ovat mielestäsi kolme tärkeintä suullisen kielitaidon piirrettä?
- 12) Mitkä mielestäsi ovat tärkeimpiä suullisen kielitaidon osa-alueita opettajana?
- 13) Kuinka arvioisit omaa suullista kielitaitoasi? Esimerkiksi kolmella aiemmin mainitsemaasi osa-alueella?
- 14) Entä ääntämystäsi?
- 15) Yleisiä vahvuuksia/jotain mitä haluaisit parantaa?
- 16) Onko opettajan suullinen kielitaito tärkeää opetuksen kannalta? Miksi?

- 17) Entä ääntämys? Miksi?
- 18) Tuleeko opettajan toimia esimerkkinä ko. alueilla vai saavatko opiskelijat tarpeeksi malleja muualta?
- 19) Mikä on paras tapa oppia suullista kielitaitoa?
- 20) Entä ääntämystä?
- 21) Millainen suullinen kielitaito mielestäsi englannin opettajalla tulee olla?
- 22) Entä ääntämys?
- 23) Uskotko, että opettajan suullisella kielitaidolla on merkitystä englannin tuntien viihtyisyyden kannalta? Miten?
- 24) Entä ääntämyksellä? Miten?
- 25) Onko suullinen kielitaito tarpeeksi esillä opetussuunnitelmassa ja oppitunneilla?
- 26) Millainen englannin opettajan suullinen kielitaito/ääntämys tulee olla verrattuna muiden alojen asiantuntijoihin? Miksi?
- 27) Millaisen mielikuvan opettajan hyvä/heikko suullinen kielitaito mielestäsi antaa?
- 28) Entä ääntämys?
- 29) Uskotko, sen vaikuttavan opiskelijoihin?
- 30) Kumpi seuraavista vaihtoehdoista on mielestäsi parempi:
  - A) henkilö, jonka ääntämys, intonaatio sekä äänenpaino ovat kohdekielen ominaisia, mutta jonka puheessa ilmenee satunnaisia kielioppivirheitä sekä taukoja
  - B) henkilö, jonka kieliopissa ei ole virheitä ja joka puhuu sujuvasti ilman taukoja, mutta jonka ääntämys sekä muut prosodiset piirteet eivät ole kohdekielen ominaisia

## APPENDIX II Interview questions: Students

HAASTATTELU / /2011

Opiskelija:

Monennen vuosiasteen opiskelija olet?

Kuinka kauan olet opiskellut englantia?

Opiskeletko muita kieliä?

Oletko joskus opiskellut englantia muualla? Eri maassa, kielikurssilla jne.

- 1) Mitä mielestäsi on suullinen kielitaito?
- 2) Mitä osa-alueita siihen kuuluu?
- 3) Mitkä niistä ovat mielestäsi tärkeitä viestin perille saamisen kannalta?
- 4) Mitä mielestäsi on *hyvä* suullinen kielitaito?
- 5) Vastaavasti millaista on *heikko* suullinen kielitaito?
- 6) Mikä on mielestäsi ääntämisen/prosodisten elementtien rooli suullisessa kielitaidossa?
- 7) Mitä on mielestäsi *hyvä* ääntäminen?
- 8) Mihin standardiin itse vertaat suullista kielitaitoa?
- 9) Entä ääntämistä?
- 10) Muistuu mieleesi mitään esimerkkejä *hyvästä/heikosta* suullisesta kielitaidosta/ääntämisestä?
- 11) Mitkä ovat mielestäsi kolme tärkeintä suullisen kielitaidon piirrettä?
- 12) Mitkä mielestäsi ovat tärkeimpiä suullisen kielitaidon osa-alueita opettajalle?
- 13) Kuinka arvioisit omaa suullista kielitaitoasi? Esimerkiksi kolmella aiemmin mainitsemallasi osa-alueella?

- 14) Entä ääntämystäsi?
- 15) Yleisiä vahvuuksia/jotain mitä haluaisit parantaa?
- 16) Onko opettajan suullinen kielitaito tärkeää opetuksen kannalta? Miksi?
- 17) Entä ääntämys? Miksi?
- 18) Tuleeko opettajan toimia esimerkkinä ko. alueilla vai saatko tarpeeksi esimerkkejä muualta?
- 19) Mikä on paras tapa oppia suullista kielitaitoa?
- 20) Entä ääntämystä?
- 21) Millainen suullinen kielitaito mielestäsi englannin opettajalla tulee olla?
- 22) Entä ääntämys?
- 23) Onko opettajan suullisella kielitaidolla on merkitystä englannin tuntien viihtyisyyden kannalta? Miten?
- 24) Entä ääntämyksellä? Miten?
- 25) Onko suullinen kielitaito tarpeeksi esillä oppitunneilla ja lukio-opetuksessa yleensä?
- 26) Millainen englannin opettajan suullinen kielitaito/ääntämys tulee olla verrattuna muiden alojen asiantuntijoihin? Miksi?
- 27) Millaisen mielikuvan opettajan hyvä/heikko suullinen kielitaito mielestäsi antaa?
- 28) Entä ääntämys?
- 29) Kumpi seuraavista vaihtoehdoista on mielestäsi parempi:
  - A) henkilö, jonka ääntämys, intonaatio sekä äänenpaino ovat kohdekielen omaisia, mutta jonka puheessa ilmenee satunnaisia kielioppivirheitä sekä taukoja
  - B) henkilö, jonka kieliopissa ei ole virheitä ja joka puhuu sujuvasti ilman taukoja, mutta jonka ääntämys sekä muut prosodiset piirteet eivät ole kohdekielen omaisia

## APPENDIX III Common European Framework of Reference scales for speaking and spoken interaction

Suullinen vuorovaikutus (Eurooppalainen viitekehys 2003)

Taitava kielenkäyttäjä	C2	Pystyn ottamaan vaivatta osaa asioiden käsittelyyn ja kaikkiin keskusteluihin. Tunnen hyvin kielelle tyypilliset, idiomaattiset ilmaukset ja puhekieliset ilmaukset. Pystyn tuomaan esille ajatuksiani sujuvasti ja välittämään täsmällisesti hienojakin merkitys-vivahteita. Osaan peräännyä ja kiertää mahdolliset ongelmat niin sujuvasti, että muut tuskin havaitsevat ollenkaan ongelmia.
	C1	Pystyn ilmaisemaan ajatuksiani sujuvasti ja spontaanisti ilman että minun juurikaan tarvitsee hakea ilmauksia. Osaan käyttää kieltä joustavasti ja tehokkaasti sosiaaliin ja ammatillisiin tarkoituksiin. Osaan muotoilla ajatuksia ja mielipiteitä täsmällisesti ja liittää oman puheenvuoroni taitavasti muiden puhujien puheenvuoroihin.
Itsenäinen kielenkäyttäjä	B2	Pystyn viestimään niin sujuvasti ja spontaanisti, että säännöllinen yhteydenpito syntyperäisten puhujien kanssa on mahdollista ilman että kumpikaan osapuoli kokee sen hankalaksi. Pystyn osallistumaan aktiivisesti tutuista aihepiireistä käytävään keskusteluun, esittämään näkemyksiäni ja puolustamaan niitä.
	B1	Selviydyn useimmista tilanteista, joita syntyy kohdekielisellä alueilla matkustettaessa. Pystyn osallistumaan valmistautumatta keskusteluun aiheista, jotka ovat tuttuja, itseäni kiinnostavia tai jotka liittyvät arkielämään, esimerkiksi perheeseen, harrastuksiin, työhön, matkustamiseen ja ajankohtaisiin asioihin.
Perustason kielenkäyttäjä	A2	Pystyn kommunikoidaan yksinkertaisissa ja rutiinomaisissa tehtävissä, jotka edellyttävät yksinkertaista ja suoraa tiedonvaihtoa tutuista aiheista ja toiminnoista. Selviydyn hyvin lyhyistä keskusteluista, mutta ymmärrän harvoin kylliksi pitääkseni keskustelua itse yllä.
	A1	Selviydyn kaikkein yksinkertaisimmista keskusteluista, jos puhekumppanini on valmis toistamaan sanottavansa tai ilmaisemaan asian toisin, puhumaan tavallista hitaammin ja auttamaan minua muotoilemaan sen, mitä yritän sanoa. Pystyn esittämään yksinkertaisia kysymyksiä ja vastaamaan sellaisiin arkisia tarpeita tai hyvin tuttuja aiheita käsittelevissä keskusteluissa.

Puheen tuottaminen (Eurooppalainen viitekehys 2003)

Taitava kielenkäyttäjä	C2	Pystyn esittämään selkeän ja sujuvan kuvauksen tai perustelun asiayhteyteen sopivalla tyyllillä. Esityksessäni on tehokas looginen rakenne, joka auttaa vastaanottajaa havaitsemaan ja muistamaan tärkeitä seikkoja.
	C1	Pystyn esittämään selkeitä ja yksityiskohtaisia kuvauksia monipolvisista aiheista ja kehittämään keskeisiä näkökohtia sekä päättämään esitykseni sopivaan lopetukseen.
Itsenäinen kielenkäyttäjä	B2	Pystyn esittämään selkeitä, yksityiskohtaisia kuvauksia hyvinkin erilaisista minua kiinnostavista aiheista. Pystyn selittämään näkökantani johonkin ajankohtaiseen kysymykseen ja esittämään eri vaihtoehtojen edut ja haitat.
	B1	Osaan liittää yhteen ilmauksia yksinkertaisella tavalla kuvatakseni kokemuksia ja tapahtumia, unelmiani, toiveitani ja pyrkimyksikäni. Pystyn perustelemaan ja selittämään lyhyesti mielipiteitäni ja suunnitelmiani. Pystyn kertomaan tarinan tai selittämään kirjan tai elokuvan juonen sekä kuvailemaan omia reaktioitani.
Perustason kielenkäyttäjä	A2	Pystyn kuvaamaan perhettäni ja muita ihmisiä, elinolojani, koulutustaustani ja nykyistä tai edellistä työpaikkaani käyttäen, usein luettelomaisesti, aivan yksinkertaisia ilmauksia ja lauseita.
	A1	Osaan käyttää yksinkertaisia sanontoja ja lauseita kuvaamaan, missä asun ja keitä tunnen.

## APPENDIX IV Original Finnish transcriptions of interviews

- 1) Mul tulee vaan mieleen siit semmonen et osaa kommunikoida tietyissä tilanteissa, tietyllä kielellä tai paikallisella kielellä.
- 2) Et ei joudu liikaa kaartelee että osaa sanoa sen asian suht suoraan sillee että se on selkee, just se sanasto kuuluu siihen.
- 3) Ainakin semmonen et pystyy pitämään keskustelua yllä; se on aika tärkee mun mielestä; ja sillee ettei pahemmin jää jumiin tai jäädy.
- 4) Varmaan se sujuvuus on aika tärkee ja sit just et osaa käyttää siit kiertoilmaisuja ni se on kans.
- 5) Tollaset kulttuurilliset, niinku englannin joku what-sana; tai se on mun käsityksen mukaan aika röyhkeet sanoo jollekin jota sä et oikeestaan tunne et sä sanot what, ku sä et kuullu jotain ni pitää tuntee sitä kulttuuriin vaan pitää sanoo 'excuse me', tai jotain.
- 6) Et hallitsee kaikki noi hyvin ja sit siihen lisäksi viel et jos on hyvä ni ehkä osaa painottaa tiettyjä lauseita ja äänellä hallita niitä lauseita ja sitten just et pystyy paremmin ilmasemaan mitä ite on mieltä.
- 7) No onhan siis hyvä suullinen kielitaito et on ne sanat hallussa ja on kielioppi hallussa.--- Saa kaiken esille ettei tulis niitä kiertoilmaisuja, koska silloinhan yleensä tulee väärinkäsityksiä.
- 8) No jos ei pysty tuottaa puhetta, et menee tosi helposti sekasin ja unohetelee sanoja ja sit pitää miettii oman kielen kauttani se vähän haittaa välillä.
- 9) No joo mä en vertaa sitä mihinkään mut osaan mä sanoo mikä on huonoo englantia ja mikä on hyvää englantia.--- No jos puhutaan jostain finglishistä ja kuulee ku Olli Rehn puhuu englantia ni kyl sitä nyt vertaa heti.--- Se on kuitenkin se alkuperäinen.--- Totta kai se säilyy vaan päässä aina se et sä jollain tavalla vertaat sitä sillee; Vaikka sä puhut jonkun kaa joka puhuu tosi hyvin mut sellanen virallinen aksentti mitä ne natiivit puhuu ni silti se pysyy jollain tavalla päässä jotenkin alitajuisesti että sä niinku vertaat sitä.
- 10) No siel Amerikassa kun on käyny aika paljon ni kyl niihin sit vertaa aika helposti.
- 11) No en mä varmaan hirveesti vertaa mut kyl ehkä jos joku puhuu sellasel brittienglannilla ni mul on aina sellanen fiksaatio et mä tykkään vertaa jengii sellaseen hienostobrittiin... Saatan ehkä kiinnittää huomioo.
- 12) Mä huomaan itelläni et jos on paljon r:ää ni mul tulee sellasta /rawrawraw/ sössötystä vaan siit kielestä et sitä mä haluaisin ainakin saada paremmaks. ---Ja yleensäkin ääntäminen koska se voi liittyä ehkä johonkin sellaseen uskallukseen et sitä kieltä ei oo käyttäny niin paljon. Ja sit muutenkin ku ne tilanteet on hyvin usein spontaaneja ni ei sit ala miettimään et miten sä sanot jotain vaan sä vaan sanot sen miten sä sanot.
- 13) Ja sujuvuuskin on sillee; et se aina välil on tosi sujuvaa; mut et jos tulee yhtäkkiä joku kysyy ni mä saatan mennä ihan lukkoon, mut esimerkiksi ku me oltiin Barceloonassa viikko et oli periaattees pakko puhuu tai ku mä olin Maltalla ja mä asuin perheessä; et siin ku periaateessa saa sen päälle sen et on pakko puhuu englantia ni sit se sujuu.
- 14) Kuunnella kaikkee; mul on ainakin kaiken maailman telkkari ja musiikki ja videopelit ja elokuvat ja kaikki periaattees opettaa hyvin. --- [Autenttisesta materiaalista] mä oon ainakin varmaan eniten oppinu ja sit toinen on se kun kuuntelee ku ihmiset puhuu, tai kun mäkin oon ainakin matkustellu paljon ni sielläkin kun kuuntelee vaan ihmisiä ni siitä oppii aika helposti.--- Yleensä natiivien kanssa, et jos vaik kävelee jossain Jenkeissä ni väkisinkin tarttuu jotain englantia päähän.



- 15) Kyl se voi tulla varmasti joo; mut kyl ne vaatii mun mielestä kiinnostusta.
- 16) Kyl mä sanoisin, et toi B on ehkä sillee parempi koska se on se suullinen taito mun mielest tärkeempi ku se ääntäminen.--- Jos miettii jonkun natiivin kannalta et jos sä puhut jollekin englantilaiselle ni kyl sitä on varmaan helpompi ymmärtää jos sanat on oikein ja kielioppivirheitä ei oo; mut sit jos on vähän sillee et ei oikeen osaa ääntää ja välillä tulee semmosii muita pieniä virheitä ni kyl mä luulen et on helpompi ymmärtää sellasta henkilöä.
- 17) No mä ehkä kiinnitin [huomiota] tohon satunnaisia; että jos sieltä ei tuu koko ajan virheitä; että kaikilla tulee virheitä välillä.--- Et enemmän mua häiritsee ittee et jos on koko ajan huono intonaatio; tai et ääntämys on sillee et siitä ei välttämättä ees ymmärrä.
- 18) Niin on se mun mielest kyl parempi että ei se haittaa okei jos has ja have menee välillä sekasin mut kunhan se viesti tulee mun mielest paremmin perille kun sä esität sen selkeesti taukoja ja inonaatioonkin on kohdallaan ni se on selkeempi. Tost B:stä tulee mieleen sellanen passiivinen puhuja. Just ei käytä intonaatioita ni sä et tiedä millä mielialalla se ehkä puhuu.
- 19) Must ääntäminen on jotenkin niin sama ku suullinen kielitaito.
- 20) Se ei oo niin suuri mun mielestä.--- Se on enemmän esteettinen, joo.--- Ku kattoo noit poliitikkojakin ni eihän niil oo mikään hyvä, ja ne todennäköisesti saa asiansa selitetyks vaik se kuulostaaki ihan hirveeltä (nauraa)
- 21) No kyl ne on aika tärkeitä mut jos niit ei välttämät ihan hallitse ni kyl pärjää, mut kyl niist on paljon hyötyä.
- 22) Tärkee mun mielestä koska mun mielestä intonaatiollahan on hirveen tärkee merkitys; varsinkin englannissa niilhän on ihan eri se intonaatio tai se mihin ne päättää et nouseeks ääni vai laskeeks ääni ku mitä esim suomessa. Mun mielest se on tosi tärkee.--- Eiks se periaatteessa se merkitys voi muuttuu saman tien; mitä just esim suomes ei oo.
- 23) No onhan ne tärkeitä. Sillä just herätetään kiinnostus mun mielestä, sit saa sen asian oikeella tavalla perille, alleviivaa just oikeita sanoja.
- 24) Miltä se kuulostaa ääntäminen siis, ni se osottaa ehkä sun kiinnostusta sitä kieltä kohtaan.--- Et sä oot viittiny opiskella sitä tai tälle.
- 25) Selkeä, uskottava.--- Uskottava sillee et sä et yritä vääntämällä vääntää sitä brittiaksenttia. Pitää tulla luonnostaan mun mielestä.
- 26) No yks yrittää puhuu brittienglantii ja sit ku se ei kumminkaan oo.--- Yrittää. Et se on ihan sama jos ruotsis yrittää puhuu riikinruotsii; mun mielestä; ni se häiritsee mua tosi paljon tai eniten.--- Nimenomaan et ei ois aksenttia ollenkaan. Se on hyvä et koulus opetetaan eri aksentteja; opetellaan eri aksentit mut sit jos ei se oikeesti oo sitä mitä se on ni ei se sit mun mielest; tai en ota mallia siitä.
- 27) Nii et merkitys pysyy ja sitten ettei äännä sillee miten se kirjoitetaan.
- 28) Hallitsee semmoset [ääntämisen] perussäännöt mitä englannissa on ja tietää, että vaikka kirjoitetaan jollakin tavalla ni sitä ei välttämättä äännetä niin.
- 29) Ihan sama periaatteessa mikä aksentti mut kunhan se muistuttaa ees jotain.
- 30) Kunhan puhuu; et onhan se hienoo jos on joku.
- 31) Ääntämisel taas jos miettii aksenttien puolesta ku brittiläiset menee esimerkiks jonnekin Aasiaan ja puhuu siellä sellasel hirveel vääntelyaksentilla ni sit niiten on ehkä vaikee ymmärtää sitä vaikka niiten mielestä se on englantia; joissain tilanteissa jos sä puhut huonommalla aksentilla ni se on helpompi ymmärtää jonkun toisen joka puhuu kans huonommalla aksentilla.

- 32) Se ei oo näitten vuosien aikana millään tasolla yrittäny opetella ees sitä.--- Se on semmonen imago kanssa, se edustaa kansaa. Tai se edustaa meit siellä ni se jotenkin antaa meist sellasen kuvan et sit me osataan vaan puhua sillee.
- 33) Mut kyl se Rehnki on sellanen et se ei haittaa et se ei puhu niin hyvää englantii ku se on niin kiven kova poliitikko.--- Ja se muuten vaan osaa sen homman. Se ei vaan vaikuta siihen niin hirveesti.--- Toisaalta sitähan voi miettii myös, et se edustaa niinku Suomea siellä, mikä saattaa vähän tuoda negatiivist julkisuutta, mut eihän se niinku henkilökohtasesti sen Rehnin työhön varmaan vaikuta.
- 34) Tykkään jotenkin näin poliitikkoii seuraa ni esim Alexander Stubb miten se puhuu englantii ni siin on mun mielest hyvää kielitaitoo, muutenkin hän on hyvä puhuja.--- Hyvä ääntäminen ja sit se tulee sillee luontevasti.--- Antaa edustavan kuvan ittestään.
- 35) No kyl mun mielest ääntämistäkin parhaiten sillee et yrittää vaan lausuu niitä [sanoja] ja kuuntelu on kans hyvä. En mä ainakaan, et jos mul on joku sana ja sit se ääntämys sääntö siinä [kirjassa] ni en mä siitä ymmärrä melkeen mitään.
- 36) Kyl sen pitäis olla vähintään yhtään hyvä ku parhaan oppilaan melkeen. ---Kyl mä sanoisin et sen pitäis sit olla sit C1 tasoo; et sen pitäis olla sillee, että jos jollekin jää epäselväks jotain ni kyl opettajan pitäis osata vastata siihen tai ainakin sillee, et pystyy löytää siihen vastauksen eikä opettaja oo sillee vaan et en mä tiä ni ei se sit oikeen käy.
- 37) Voi. Koska opettajanhan täytyy tehdä siit meille ymmärrettäväks se, et voi olla sama.
- 38) No se luonteva; no kyl taas se monipuolisuus mut ei liian; tai semmonen et se on ymmärrettävä – ymmärrettävän monipuolinen (naurahataa).
- 39) [Opettajan ääntämisen pitäis olla] uskottava, hyvä. Koskaan ei voi sanoo täydellinen koska me ei olla natiiveja.--- Mut totta kai se on mun mielestä plussaa, herättää kiinnostusta.--- Saa tottumaan sen oppilaitten korvan siihen oikeen kuuloseen englantiiin sillee.
- 40) Opettajalla pitää olla valittuna jompikumpi, et se vetää joko jenkki englantii tai sitten britti englantii. Tietyisti onhan niit kaikkee aussie-englantii ja nää, mut ne on vähän sillee... Oisin yllätynyt jos kuulisin jonkun opettajan puhuvan.--- Joku historioitsija sano muutama kymmen vuot sit et aletaan koht puhumaan jenkki-englannist tai brittienglannist erikseen. Et onhan niil kaikkii, et joku seteli, silhän on eri sanat.--- Et tavallaan maikan pitäis pysyy jossain mut sit tietää nää erot miten toiset sit sanoo.--- Ja sit et tekee sen puhutun kielen ja kirjakielen eron selväks, pitää ne erossa.
- 41) No aussie-englanti se on viel aika helppo mut sit jos tulee joku skotti ni saattaa olla vähän et ei siin oo mitään järkee (nauraa).
- 42) No aika selkee, et ei voi olla liian vaikee ja sillee just et ku opetetaan siel kirjassa ni sen mukaan sen pitäis olla; koska sit tulee ylppäreissä vastaan jotain ni sen pitäis olla miten on opetettu.
- 43) Semmonen mikä periaatteessa sopii kaikille. Et se oo vaan semmonen ääntämys mikä on hänen mielestä kiva.--- Esimerkiksi jos hän opettaa brittienglantia ni se ei voi vaatia et me sit käytetään sitä brittienglantia; et esimerkiks kun on näitä suullisia kurseja ni jos hän opettaa sen brittienglanniks ni mun mielest hän ei voi vaatia sitä, et sit me myös käytetään sitä.--- Ääntämyshän on omaa, ei sitä voi kukaan muu tulla sanomaan et sun täytyy nyt puhua tällä tavalla enkä mä sen takii vois sille opettajallekaan sanoo, et mä en nyt haluu et sä opetat mulle tollasta englantia.
- 44) Ni kyl se on aika tärkeet koska se opettaja siel kuitenkin puhuu. ---Kyl sen pitäis tietää mistä se puhuu; jos sinne menee vaan joku joka lukee suoraan kirjasta ja sit ei osakaan kertoa; tai et osaa opettaa sen asian tai tietää miten se menee mut ei osaa selittää sitä englanniks ni sit se on ehkä sellanen ei niin auktoriteettinen opettaja

- 45) No jos opettaja on sillee, et se osaa paremmin ni sit se on varmaan itsevarmempi ja tietää omat taitonsa ja pystyy sitä kautta; jos on vähän sellanen epävarma opettaja joka on epävarma omasta englannin käytöstään ni sit se keskittyy liikaa siihen omaan puheen tuottamiseen eikä pysty hallitsemaan luokkaa niin hyvin. --- Kyl se ku sit se on vähän automaattinen se tieto siel päässä ni pystyy keskittymään muihin asioihin kuten siihen opettamiseen.
- 46) Koska oppilaat ottaa kans mallii opettajalta. Jos ne kuulee jonkun sanan ekaa kertaa ni ne käyttää sitä sen miten se sanoo sen. Se on tärkeää et se opettaa sen oikein.
- 47) Mä luulen et tv-ohjelmista tulee eniten sitä et mun mielest esimerkiks meidän koulussa ei oo opettajia, joilla ois oikeesti hyvä ääntäminen.--- Niin ja koska sit saa just ite periaattees päättää mikä se on se oma malli koska opettajii on erilaisia ja niil on omat mallinsa.
- 48) Kyl sen pitäis [toimia mallina] ku ainakin ylioppilaskokeessa on aika paljon sellasta koulu-englantia, et mullakin kävi pari hassua tän vuoden ylppäreissä kun käytti sellasta 'omaa englantii' ni sit se ei välttämättä ollukaan oikein ni sen piti olla sellast mitä koulussa on käyty.
- 49) Ei tarpeeks.--- Kyl joka tunti ne pyrkii siihen et puhuttais mut se ei oo niin suures merkityksessä kun se kirjallinen.
- 50) Yks suullinen kurssi ei oo tarpeeks ja sielläki me luettiin vaan jotain sanomalehtii.
- 51) Epäaitoja. Ne tyrkkää ne lauseet sun suuhun et sun pitää sanasta sanaan se suomentaa ja sit jos sä et saa sanast sanaan sitä käännettyä ni siit tulee semmonen fiilis vitsi mä en osannu vaik se ehkä on oikein miten sä sanot sen. Et se ei oo mitenkään väärin mut sit se masentaa jotenkin sillee.--- Ja mun mielestä pitäis olla ehkä enemmän sellasii puhetehtäviä et siin pitää ilmaista tämä asia näin ja...
- 52) Vaik ei sitä millään saa periaattees luokkahuonees tapahtumaan et se ois todellinen tilanne ni pystyis jotenkin jäljitellee.
- 53) Ehkä semmost perusasioiden puhumista ja sujuvuutta oppii luokkahuoneen ulkopuolella; et kouluissahan opetetaan hirveesti kaikkii hienoja sanoja, joita ei välttämättä tarvii edes käyttää.
- 54) No just sen takii et ylioppilaskirjotukset on kirjallisia; et ei meil oo; no suullisel kurssil on suullinen koe, mut se ei periaattees merkitse mitään.--- Kyllähän siin mitataan taitoo mut mun mielest se on nykyään menny ihan ihme tähtitieteeseen; tai siit on mun mielest tehty vähän liian yliarvostettuu juttu.
- 55) Pitäs. Koska se ei anna mun mielestä oikeeta kuvaa et miten sä käytät sitä kieltä. Siis se antaa yhden näkökulman siihen mut se ei anna koko kuvaa.
- 56) Suomes on vähän tyhmä mun mielest toi koulusysteemi ku ylppäreis just ei oo sitä pakollista suullista koetta vaik se suullinen taito ois mun mielestä ehkä jopa tärkeempi ku se kirjallinen. ---Nyt yo:ssa mulla jäi yks piste L:stä et kyl se suullinen koe olis kompensoinu.
- 57) Ei se oo epäreilua; kylhän täytyy osaa myös lukee ja osata myös se luetunymmärtäminen et en mä sitä sano et mua on nyt kohdeltu väärin ku sitä ei oo; mä en todellakaan sano et se ei ois tärkeää.
- 58) Kyl mä sanoisin et puhuttu. No nyt tietty kirjotettu on tärkeä koska tulee ylppärit ja kaikki et siel on ihan luonnostaan se on tärkeä et mitä sä kirjotat mut elämän kannalta ehdottomasti kyl puhe [on tärkeempää].
- 59) Kyl mä ainakin viihdyn paremmin semmosen opettajan tunneilla joka osaa lausuu ja jonka kaa pystyy keskustelemaan luontevammin.--- Yleinen suullinen kielitaito; ja sit nii se et

miten osaa ääntää yleensäkin ni kyl mun ainakin on paljon helpompi kommunikoida semmosen opettajan kanssa. ---Kyl se hyödyttää jos on hyvä ääntämys.

- 60) Se on varmaan noitten kaikkien kombinaatio koska se persoonaki vaikuttaa loppujen lopuks ihan hirveesti kaikkiin. Kaikkihan sanoo sillee et mul oli silloin ja silloin semmonen maikka ja sit se ei saanu mua innostuu siit aiheest. --- Jos ois tosi hyvä, niinku tosi kiva tyyppi ja antais tosi kivoi tehtävii ni sit sitä ei kelais sitä sen ääntämystä vaan se ois ihan sama ku se on niin kiva et sil on niin kivoi tehtävii ja kaikkee ni must tuntuu et ei sil oo niin paljoo välii sitte
- 61) Mä kyl pidän englannista ja mua itteeni harmittaa et se ei oo niin vahva ku mitä se vois olla.--- No mä en tiedä ku mä aina pidin itteeni hirveen hyvänä enkus mut sit mä tulin lukioon ni sit se jotenkin katos. Mut se voi olla ehkä sekin, et mul oli yläasteella hirveen hyvä opettaja ja silloin mä pidin tosi paljon englannista ja mä panostin siihen; mut sit nyt lukiossa meil on yks hyvä enkun opettaja mun mielestä ja mä en ikinä saanu sitä paitsi nyt abivuotena kerran.
- 62) Ensinnäkin se opettaa hirveen kiinnostavalla tavalla, et se ei tee sitä vaan ns. työkseen; et se tekee sitä sen takii et me oikeesti pidettäis siitä.--- On se persoona tärkeä mut sit ne on myös hirveen hyvii opettajia; et ne jotenkin tietää paljon ja osaa; ja ne ei yritä mitä tää yks opettaja yrittää puhua sillee brittiaksentilla.
- 63) Se ei periaatteessa opeta jotain tiettyä aksenttia tai tiettyä jotain; se on hirveen luonteva, siit on hyvä oppia.
- 64) Otan itsenäiseks kurssin. Kyllä mä tiedän et millon mä opin ite periaattees parhaiten. Tai sit helposti se menee kans siihen et lintsaa koska se on aika helppoo 18-vuotiaana vaan laittaa poissaolo sieltä. --- Opettajii kans pyrkii valitsemaan aina Wilmastakin sillee.
- 65) No ei sil mikään suuri merkitys oo siihen viihtyisyyteen; mut totta kai mielummin kuuntelee hyvää englantia kun huonoo englantia.
- 66) Opetustavassa ennemmin koska mehän aina nauretaan sille brittiopettajalle, et kyl sekin periaatteessa tekee siitä ihan viihtyisän ku se on hauskan kuulonen, mut ei se nyt sillä tavalla et kyl enemmän tekee sen kiinnostavuuden se miten opettaa.
- 67) [Kyl sen täytyy olla] parempi. Koska hän on käynyt kyseiset opinnot ja se edellyttää sitä.- -- No eihän [Olli Rehn] oo millään tasolla asiantuntija.
- 68) No englannin opettajan pitää olla semmonen et se voi nillittää ja valittaa, sen pitää niinku tuntee se kieli hyvin ja tavallaan olla muitten ammattien yläpuolella tos englannin kielen osaamisessa.
- 69) Kylhän jos on hyvä puhuu tai puhuu hyvin englantii ni kyllähän se antaa sellasen kuvan et opettaja osaa hommansa.
- 70) Jos on hyvä ni sitten on semmonen luotettava ja jos on jotain kysyttävää ni pystyy helposti kysymään ja saa vastauksenki varmaan; jos on vähän sellanen huono ni jää vähän semmonen et tietääkö toi nyt oikeen mistään, tai mistä se puhuu. ---Siit vähän tulee semmonen ”onks toi opiskellu kunnolla”.
- 71) No ääntäminen ei ehkä oo niin vahva mut sit jos on hyvä ääntäminen ni kyl siit jää semmonen parempi fiilis siit opettajast mut sit jos on vähän semmonen huono ni ei se nyt oo niin justiinsa jos se suullinen kielitaito on muuten ihan hyvä.
- 72) Semmosen et ei oo varmaan hirveen hyvä opettaja; tai mulle tuli saman tien et miks on otettu tollanen opettaja tänne opettamaan meitä.--- Niin jos se alottaa sen puhumalla ja se on ihan kauheeta ni joo. Mut toikin on vähän sama et sit se voi olla hirveen hyvä muussa.
- 73) Totta kai sä tuomitset ihmiset; se ensivaikutelma antaa heti jo semmosen että toi ei välttämättä tiedä niin hyvin ku toi toinen ope joka ääntää paremmin.

- 74) No hyvä siinä, että se antaa siit sen kuvan et se on myös itse kiinnostunut ja on kiinnostunut opettamaan sitä kieltä ja on motivoitunut.--- Päinvastoin sit et huijataan vaan duuni ja hoidetaan homma et saadaan rahaa.
- 75) No, totta kai se on sitä, että pystyy ilmaisemaan itseään tällä kohdekielellä että se viesti välittyy.
- 76) Se on sellasta vuorovaikutustaitoo, niinku suullista vuorovaikutustaitoo nimen omaan että siinä on kysymys sitten yhtäläillä sitten siitä, että ymmärtää sitä mitä kuulee ja toisen vuorovaikutusta ja käyttäytymistä siinä tilanteessa. ---Siinä tulee sitten mieleen lähinnä tää tämmönen kulttuurintuntemus, mitä liittyy sitten ihan tapakulttuuriin ja tämmöisiin konventioihin, tosiaan mitä on kussakin maassa ja kulttuurissa. --- Sitten tosiaan tää elekieli ja kehon kieli tällai laajemmin.
- 77) Ja sitten toinenhan on se mikä on meille suomalaisille hirveen vaikeeta, mutta kyllähän sitä pitää yrittää, ni se osallistuva kuunteleminen; niinku mä oon sanonu opiskelijoille at onhan se meidän keinotekosta äännellä jotakin epämäärästä ynähdellä meidän sinne väliin kun toinen puhuu, mutta edes jotenkin ilmeillä ja sillä tavalla, et osoittais kiinnostusta [toisen sanomisia kohtaan] kun sehän on meille sillä tavalla hirveen vaikeeta; mut nyt kun tonne maailmalle mennään ni kyllähän siellä pitäis osata olla kiinnostunut siitä mitä toinen [sanoo].
- 78) Just semmonen harjaantunu suullisen kielitaidon osaaaja ni se näkyy just näissä kommunikointistrategioissa et oot perillä tietysti tämmösistä säännöistä ja lainalaisuuksista mitä kuuluu keskusteluun eri maan kielillä. Onko ne sitten small talkia tai tosiaan nää keskustelun avaukset ja päättämiset. ---Sellaset pikkusanat ne on kaikki osa sitä keskustelua. --- Tyypillinen suomalaisten virhe ulkomailla et jos esitetään kysymys ni siinä ei oo sitä kohoavaa intonaatiota siinä lopussa. Et sekin on osa semmosta suullista kielitaitoa että ei puhu niinku suomalaiset semmosesti monotonisesti yhtä makkaranpötköä.
- 79) Mehän ei voida arvioida persoonaa mut se et kun me lähetetään nää nuoret sitten maailmalle, et jos on kovin ujo ja kovin hiljainen ja ei oo semmonen 'active listener' eikä pysty sitä omaa puheenvuoroa ottamaan; jos jää odottamaan et kaikki muut on hiljaa ni kyllä voi olla että jää odottamaan.
- 80) Mä sanoisin että se semmonen valmius toimia suullisesti semmosissa erityyppisissä tilanteissa et se on hirveen paljon et siihen tarvitaan tätä asennetta kanssa ja siihen tosiaan hyvälle kielitaidolle on tyypillistä et se toimii eri tasoilla ja erityyppisissä tilanteissa. Et siinä on sujuvaa se tilanteen huomioon otto ja se yleisö ja missä kontekstissa ollaan ja mille yleisölle puhutaan ja näin.
- 81) Ääntäminen myös sitä kautta että paitsi että saat viestis selkeämmin perille--- Mutta mun mielestä ainakin ymmärrät paremmin niitä eri kielen rakenteita ja ymmärrät kuulemaaskin paremmin jos osaat ääntää.
- 82) Niin no kyllähän kaikki tietysti perustuu sanastoon; et jos sulla ei oo sanastoa millä sä ilmaiset niitä asioita niin... ---Ja tietysti on hyvä olla kompensatiostrategioita käytössä
- 83) Jos oli kyse nimenomaan hyvästä suullisesta ulosannista niin kyllä se ääntäminen ja keskustelustrategiat on ne kaks millä erottaa hyvän heikommasta. ---Ja tota erityisesti näille hyvälle ja lahjakkaille ni heille erityisesti tätä lausumista pitää korostaa--- Et ei kaikki voi saavuttaa millään lailla korkeeta tasoo [vieraan kielen] keskustelussa.
- 84) Sitten kun lähdetään katsomaan et kuka oikein hyvin puhuu ni sit tulee tää idiomaattisempi tai täämmönen aidompi ääntämys tulee sitten peliin mukaan.
- 85) Paljonhan meillä on näitä opiskelijoita edelleenkin joilla on hirveen hyvä tää kirjallinen kielitaito et ne kirjottaa hyviä aineita, mutta sitten suullinen [kielitaito] ei välttämättä oo niin hyvä, et ei se aina mee yks yhteen et sen sijaan voi sit olla vähän heikommin kirjottavia ja ne saa sitten hirveen hyvin puhuttua asiansa vaikka ne joutuu käyttää kiertoilmaisuja ja epäröi ja mitä kaikkia näitä nyt onkaan.

- 86) Jos syystä tai toisesta ei saa sitä viestiään välitettyä. Eli se syyhän voi nyt olla tietysti se, että se kielitaito on ylipäätään niin heikko että se ei kartakaikkiaan onnistu ja yrittää jotain sanoa, mutta sitä ei ymmärretä. ---On esimerkiksi näitä, joilla on hirveen hyvä kielitaito noin kirjallisesti, vaikka aineet voi olla tosi hyviä; mutta sitten sosiaaliset taidot tai mitä siellä nyt sitten onkaan; et ei saa tavallaan ulos kuitenkaan sillä tavalla hyvin tai selkeesti; ja sitten ehkä nää rekisterihommatkin, et joillakin voi olla vähän vääränlainen rekisteri siinä käytössä siihen tilanteeseen nähden.
- 87) Ei mulla oikeestaan; se miten mä koen että mä itse tästä suoriudun ni mä vertaan itseäni natiivipuhujaan. --- Itseäni, en mä opiskelijoita, toki tietysti hyvässä mielessä; meil on joka vuosi useita, useita opiskelijoita jotka tavalla tai toisella ovat poimineet erinomaisen suullisen kielitaidon; osa tulee tietysti kansainvälisistä kouluista, osalla on lapsuudesta, nuoruudesta taustaa et ovat asuneet ulkomailla ja se on musta tosi mageeta; mut kaikilla ei oo siihen mahdollisuutta ollut eli en mä sillä tavalla opiskelijoita halua tai voikaan verrata.
- 88) Kyllä. Kyllä se kertoo [kiinnostuksesta kieltä kohtaan]. Se voi toki kertoa siitä, että lapsi parka on raahattu viideks ensimmäiseks elinvuodekseen Edinburghiin asumaan et sieltä se on perintöä sit se aksentti mut onhan se kiinnostusta kieltä kohtaan myös.
- 89) Sillon aikanaan sitä puhuttiin, että kaikilla kieltenopettajilla on natiivikompleksi, että aina verrataan natiiviin ja nimenomaan korkeasti koulutettuun natiiviin. No ne ajat on onneks ollu ja menny ja eletty ja nykyään on tosiaan vapaampaa. Jos näitä kokeita nyt miettii ni niihinhan on ihan tää eurooppalainen [viitekehys], et sehän on ihan selvä et ne pitää arvioida sillä; mutta jos ajattelee muuten esim kurssilla vaikka suullista kielitaitoo, ni kyllä sitä ehkä kuitenkin jollakin tavalla siihen natiiviin vertaa, mutta ehkä sellaseen, miten mä nyt sanoisin, sellaseen rentoutuneempaan natiiviin; et kun aikanaan ajateltiin et se ihanne on tämmönen brittiprofessori tai mikä lienee, ni ei se nyt enää ole se mitä pitää niin kuin ihanteena.
- 90) Kyllä varmaan joo. Jos nyt tarkoitat vaikka, että suomen kieli ei kuulla sieltä läpi? --- Kyllä se ois aika lähellä sitten.
- 91) No mä pitäsin sellasena kriteerinä sitä, että sitä syntyperänen ymmärtää vaikka hän tajuaiskin sen vieraan aksentin mut et hän ei sillä tavalla joudu miettimään koko ajan et mitä se tarkoittaa. ---Semmonen kohtalainen ääntäminen pitäis olla.
- 92) Mä voisin niinku petrata näiden eri rekisterien hallinnassa käytännössä, että se on semmonen hirveen iso ja mielenkiintonen alue englannissakin justuinsa. ---Sit muuten ihan tätä tapakulttuuriin liittyvää puolta ja fraseologiaa ja ääntämistä ja tätä kehon kieltäkin.
- 93) Se missä mä oon parhiammillani ni se on suullinen ilmaisu. ---Kyl mä sijoittaisin itseni ihan sinne asteikon yläpäähän ääntämyksessä; varmasti virheitähän tulee jokaiselle ja aina me törmätään sellasiin sanoihin ja ilmauksiin... Siihen mä aina opiskelijoiden kanssa vetoankin, et hei eihän me nyt kukaan äidinkieltäkään osata ihan täydellisesti.
- 94) Se mitä mä haluisin osata vielä paremmin olis osata opettaa paremmin tätä suullista kielitaitoo; koska se on semmonen et siinä voi aina kehittyä. ---Kyl mä toivon et mulla olis mahdollisuus joka vuosi käydä jossain koulutuksessa ja harjoittaa sitä omaakin kielitaitoo. Koska, no näin lukiossa tuntuu, et sitä haastetta on kyllä, et en mä koe et mun kielitaito taantusi, mut mul on entisiä kollegoita jotka esimerkiksi opettaa alakoulussa ja heidän mielestään heidän kielitaito niinku taantuu.
- 95) Ja sit semmonen puhdas altistuminen et se ku sie kuulet sitä kieltä paljon, et näin. Mut ei se pelkkä kielelle altistuminenkaan auta, kyllä se pitää opettajalta tulla se, että opettajan pitää kertoa et mihin pitää kiinnittää huomioo. ---Ja sit semmonen ihan puhdas toisto toisto toisto.
- 96) Jos noista on pakko valita, tietysti molempia suosisin, että kielioppia sen takia pitäis olla. ---Mut jos miettii sitä ite niin kuin ensimmäistä vaikutelmaa vaikka että jos kuulet suomea puhuttavan jonkun ulkomaalaisen suulla niin kyllä tietysti jos se ääntäminen on

kunnossa niin kyllä se vaikuttaa siihen ymmärtämiseen huomattavasti. Ja päätteet voi olla vähän väärin sieltä täältä mutta jos ääntäminen on kunnossa ni kyllä sanoisin et se ääntäminen on niin tärkeä osa kuitenkin sitä. --- En missään nimessä halua sanoa, että tää pitäis olla joko tai mutta jos näistä kahdesta pitäis valita ni kyllä se ääntäminen; niinku varsinkin tällasessa arkipäivän keskustelussa ja kanssakäymisessä tärkeemmäksi mikä onkin se pääääntönen tavoite mitä pyritään saavuttamaan.

- 97) Sellanen kohtuullisen hyvä ääntäminen on tärkeä et sen ei tarvitse olla sellanen priima mut tarpeeks hyvä et on niinku hirveen tärkeä.
- 98) No niistä varmaan se intonaatio ja painotukset on tärkeempiä, eli sellasia isompia asioita ja sitten taas mitä tulee yksittäisiin äänteisiin. ---Ja mikäli mä oon ymmärtänyt niin nykyään ollaan enemmän sitä mieltä että jos se viesti menee perille niin sillä ei todellakaan oo niin paljon väliä, että onko se äänne sitten oikein vai väärin vai mitä. Et sen asiayhteydestä tai kontekstista ymmärtää sitten kuitenkin.
- 99) Minun mielestä se on tärkeä. Se, että miten uskottavaksi, miten luotettavaksi, miten asiantuntevaksi minä tulkiten puhujan, niin vaikka näin ei sais tehdä tietenkään; se asiahan on se tärkein, mutta millanen mielikuva mulle tulee ni kyllä mä arvostan sitä kovinkin korkealle, että ääntämiseen ja sen eri osa-alueisiin olisi sitten panostettu ja niit ois hiottu.
- 100) No totta kai yleissujuvuus kyllä, mutta se, että yksittäiset äänteet, kyllä niihinkin täytyy panostaa, mutta opiskelijoille mä tällä hetkellä korostan ehkä jopa enemmän tota 'stress'asiaa; koska natiivi puhuja; vaikka sä kuinka yrität selostaa sitä [biology, biology] että tätä sä nyt opiskelet, ni se voi olla et se ei sitten mee perille; kysymykset voivatkin jäädä toteamuksiksi tai väitteiksi nimenomaan koska meidän äidinkielessä on niin kovin tasaista tämä asia. Sanatasolla ja lausetasolla. --- Pikkuhiljaa [toivon että] pystyttäis etenemään opiskelijoiden kanssa sitten kohti semmosta aidompaa ja aidompaa ilmaisua.
- 101) No selkeetä, eli jälleen kerran se, että tulee ymmärrettyks. Et eihän sen nykypäivänä tartte enää olla niin hienoo ja nykyäänhän meillä on oppimateriaaleissakin kaikenmaailman aksentit ja jos ajattelee siltäkin kannalta, et ei oo enää mitään tiettyjä; et ennen vanhaanhan oli hirveen tärkeetä, et oliko britti tai amerikkalainen, nykyäänhän niitä sekotetaan. ---Ei tarvii [olla alueellinen variaatti enää].
- 102) Sillon ku mä olin sen kolme vuotta pois ni sitten oli ihan hirvee paniikki kun piti lähtee töihin ni kyllähän mä sit kuuntelin kaiken maailman ohjelmia ja toistelin perässä kun papukaija ja luin kaikenlaista ääneen mut eihän se silti korvaa kontakteja elävien ihmisten kanssa.
- 103) Paras suullisen kielitaidon oppiminen on tietysti tällanen papukaijamenetelmä et kuunnellaan lause kerrallaan ja toistetaan perässä ja se nauhotetaan. Ja oppilaat kuuntelee sen jälkeen et miten se menee ja saavat reflektoida mielessään, että minkä takia mä kuulostan samalta ku tuo natiivi tai miks en kuulosta samalta ku tuo natiivi.
- 104) Pitää ennen kaikkea kuulla kauhean paljon sitä kieltä. --- No ei nyt välttämättä [eri variaatteja], et englannissakin niit on kauheen paljon et se mun mielestä sotkeekin jos on kauheen paljon kaikkia erilaisia et ei nyt välttämättä kunhan nyt jotain varianttia kuulis oikein paljon ja jotakin sellasta mitä nyt paljon käytetään kuitenkin. --- Ja englannissa sellanen tarkka, et pitää koko ajan olla vähän skarppina sen kanssa et pitää sitä pientä vertailua siinä niinku koko ajan et miten nyt joku kirjoitettiin ja miten se sit äännetään aina kun tilaisuus sitten vaan tulee. ---Mä opiskelijoille aina puhun siitä että kielen läksyjä pitäis tavallaan aina vähän niinku tehdä ääneen. Että se on suullista sillonkin kun se ei oo niin kauheen kommunikatiivista se sen kielen kanssa tekeminen.
- 105) No minun mielipiteeni on et sen pitäis olla, well next to perfect, mut eihän meistä kukaan ole tietenkään täydellinen vaikka meil ois sukujuuriakin kielialueella; mut kyl siihen ois tietysti hyvä pyrkiä. ---Opettajan on sijoituttava ylemmäksi kuin se vaadittava taitotaso. Että kyllä siinä mielessä ollaan tuolla C:ssä.

- 106) Kyllähän aina pyritään siihen, et oppilaat altistuu sille kielelle ja mitä idiomaattisempaa se on ni sen parempi. Tärkeintä tietysti on aina se että kaikki ymmärtää ja toisena tietysti tulee vasta nää muut seikat. --- [Viestin perille saaminen varmistetaan] sanavalinnoilla ja tarpeeks hitaalla puhumisella ja se valitettavasti on monesti sen idiomaattisuuden kustannuksella. --- Opettajalla pitää olla tää sama [puheen] taso tai korkeempi.
- 107) Se opettajan puhe on kahtia jakautunutta tietyllä lailla; eli toisaalta pitäis olla se malli sellasesta luontevasta ja sujuvasta kielen käytöstä, johon liittyy sitä, että tekee itsekin virheitä ja naursekelee niille ja korjaa itteensä; et se pitäis olla semmosta luonetvaa ja autenttista ja mitä lienee; mutta sit toisaalta kun meillä on heikkojakin opiskelijoita ni kyllä ne perusasiat pitää saada tietenkäin menemään perille ja näin ollen joutuu käyttämään tietyllä tavalla epäluontevaa luokkakieltä--- liiankin selkeesti toistaa samaa asiaa muutaman kerran ja rautalangasta vääntää; ni se ei taas oo luontevan kielenkäytön mallia ollenkaan.
- 108) No tietysti sitä puhekielisyyttä paljon pois; sitä pyrkii olemaan mahdollisimman puhdasta kohdekieltä käyttämään.
- 109) Ei se ääntämiseltä pois oo että hitaasti pystyy kyllä puhumaan ja pystyy sanansa valitsemaan helpomminkin ja samalla ääntää hyvin, että se ei siitä ääntämisestä oo pois.
- 110) No kyllä senkin olis toivottavaa olla siellä opiskelijoitten yläpuolella. --- En mä sitä ainakaan paheksu jos [alueellinen variaatti] on. ---Niin, mikä se olis sitten se et jos ei se ole jollain tavalla regional; kyllä musta olis kiva että se erottuis, jos ei se erotu ni sit se ehkä menee vähän sinne suomalaisen puolella.
- 111) Siitä mä oon pahastunu monta kertaa et tulee opiskelijoita jotka tulee muista kouluista ja sitten niin, että onko se nyt sitten yhtä hyvä toi amerikanenglanti kun brittienglanti kun meille on aina sanottu, että sen pitää olla brittienglanti.
- 112) Joo tosiaan ei oo ainoo malli; mutta kyllä opettajan [tulee toimia mallina]; ja mä melkeen luulen että opiskelijat on tästä samaa mieltä; että vaikka he kuulee elokuvista ja musiikista ja telkkarista koko ajan ni se opettaja on kuitenkin siinä oppimistilanteessa niin lähellä, et silläkin on merkitystä.
- 113) Opettaja on sit se yks malli. Niin et totta kai niil on paljon muita malleja. --- Opettajan ei tarvi olla tietty alueellinen, et sillä tavalla tietysti et natiivit puhujat ovat aina jostakin ja se heijastuu heidän puheessaan, mutta musta tuntuu, et opettaja on sit erityisesti malli vielä siitä asenteesta jotenkin. --- Että opettaja saa siihen kieleen sen käyttämiseen ja oppimiseen ja virheiden tekemiseen ja kaikkeen ni kukaan muu ei oo antamassa sitä mallia sitten, ainakaan välttämättä.
- 114) Opettajan pitää olla esimerkki ensisijaisesti. Mutta tietysti eihän nykysin ainakaan englannissa opettaja oo enää se ensisijainen malli et se tulee niinku netistä ja mediasta. --- Opettaja ei oo tiedon tarjoaja nykysin enää eikä ehkä niinkään tärkeä esimerkikään mut ohjaa oikeeseen suntaan. --- Mä nään ton asian ihan toisin päin että nykysin kun sitä tarjontaa on enemmän ja oppilaat altistuu sille kohdekiellelle enemmän ja enemmän toivottavasti niin kyllähän se tietysti osa ammattitaitoa ja en mä tiedä ehkä auktoriteettiakin et pystyt vastaamaan niihin nykyajan haasteisiin. Että jos autenttista kieltä kuulee enemmän ni sun pitäis ehkä sit itekkin pystyy kehittymään sen mukana.
- 115) Sysylomalla Lontoossa kävin noin viikon verran, et kyl sen kuuli heti omasa puheesta, että nyt on parempi aksentti. Mutta annas olla kun taas täällä jonkun aikaa oot ni sitten huomaa, että rupee latistumaan; mut en mä tiedä, elämähän se on kaikki.
- 116) Jos ajattelee itseensä kun on ollut tekemisissä englannin puhujien kanssa ja sit toisaalta puhunu englantia sitten kaikenlaisten muitten ulkomaalaisten kanssa jotka osaa sitä eri tavoilla ja välillä sitten vähän heikommin ja välillä paremmin niin se on paljon tehokkaampaa oman kielitaidon kehittymisen kannalta jos siinä on tällöinen kunnollinen vastapuoli ja sit siinä tilanteessa jo ennen ku sä varsinaisesti oppinut siltä mallilta mitään ni se kommunikointi on eri tavalla sellasta, siinä on parempi itsekin heti



jo ja ihan samallailla musta luokassa opettajan kanssa sitten oppilaille siihen on helpompi mennä mukaan oikealla tavalla [jos opettajan malli on kunnollinen].

- 117) Että se voi olla luontevaa se vuorovaikutus siellä luokahuoneessa ylipäättänsä ni sit se pitäis olla semmonen luonteva ja sujuva sitten sen opettajankin kielitaidon, että, ja tuota et kyllähän se on tosi tärkeitä.
- 118) Ylipäättään suullinen kielitaito on nykyään niin tärkeä; ja paljonhan meilläkin on täällä tää [koulussa] periaate et tunnilla puhutaan ja kotona kirjoitetaan; okei no siis kirjoitetaan tunnillakin totta kai jonkin verran.
- 119) [Suulliset taidot] on tärkeitä ja se ois tosi kummallinen tilanne, jos opettaja jotenkin pelkäis tai olis huolissaan siitä, et kykeneks mä antamaan sen mallin. --- Kyllä [opettajan pitäisi olla varma kielenkäyttäj], se semmonen varmuus omasta ammattitaidosta.
- 120) Ei sitä koskaan tiedä, et mikä oppilaan korvaan tarttuu et kyllä se periaate, et kukaan ei oo koskaan virheetön, mut se on sama ku muiden kielivirheitte osalta et siihen virheettömyyteen pitää pyrkiä koska koska ei tiedä mikä oppilaitten korvaan jää sitten mallina.
- 121) Et pahimmassa tapauksessahan opiskelijat nauraa nykypäivänä kun ne ite osaa kuitenkin aika hyvin monet; ethän sä oo uskottava, ellei se ääntäminen ole kohdallaan; mutta eihän sen nyt tartte ihan olla sitä viimeisen päälle hienosäätöä siinäkään. Ja taaskin sitten se ymmärretyks tuleminen. ---Mut meilläkin on niitä ihan hirveen hyviäkin opiskelijoita; et kyllä niitä varmaan ärsyttää jos opettaja esittää olevansa se alan asiantuntija ja sitten ääntää systemaattisesti ihan pieleen; totta kai jokainen joskus ääntää pieleen. --- Et jos aika menee siihen, että tukkimiehen kirjanpidolla pitää kirjaa virheistä niin ehkä se ei palvele tarkoitusta.
- 122) Kyllä mie näkisin et se oppilaiden oppimismotivaatio ja innostukseen vaikuttaa se et jos opettaja ite toimii hyvänä mallina. ---En tiedä korreloiko se suoraan opiskelumotivaation kanssa, mut kyllähän se on aina vähän niinku tuulahdus jostain ulkomailta jos kuulet raikkaasti ja pirteesti puhuttavaa, sujuvaa hienosti lausuttua ulkomaankieltä. Kyllähän se aina on kiva ja eiks sitä niinku senkin takia opita kieliä et me osattais niitä puhua nimenomaan. Ensisijaisesti puhua eikä kirjoittaa. Kielenkäyttötilanteet on pääsääntöisesti kyllä puhumista mun mielestä eikä niinkään kirjoittamista tai aukkotehtävien tekemistä.
- 123) Oppilaathan kyllä reagoi sellaseen et onko kieli kaunista--- että ne ihan sanookin sen. --- Mun tyttärelläni oli jossain vaiheessa yläasteella sellanen saksan opettaja joka sano et ku se puhu niin rumaa saksaa ja se ei sanonu et se ois ääntäny väärin mut se puhu rumaa saksaa ja se oli tästä niinku närkästyne, että tällasilla asioilla on merkitystä just sen semmosen asennoitumisen kannalta ja motivaation kannalta siinä mielessä.
- 124) Et kyllä sanoisin itse asiassa et tuo on aika lapsen kengissä nykysin suomalaisessa kielenopetuksessa tuo puoli että tota ei harjotella mun mielestä tarpeeks sitä puhevalmiutta että voidaan harjotella ne kieliopit tosi perusteellisesti niinku pitääkin se on hyvä mutta kyllä mun mielestä pitäis harjotella sitäkin että sietää vähän sitä kaaosta ja epävarmuutta ja uskaltaa avata suunsa.
- 125) Kyllä jos lukion opetussuunnitelmaa ajatellaan ni ihan hirveen hyvin on mielestäni [esillä]--- ihan niillä muillakin kurseilla paljon suullinen kielitaito esillä ja sitä koulukohtaisesti voidaan vielä niinku vahvistaa sen asemaa siinä opetussuunnitelmassa -- -jos ajattelee ihan ensimmäisen vuoden enkun kurssienkin teemoja ni sehän nimenomaan on sitä suullista kielitaitoa valtavan pitkälle et ei opetussuunnitelmassa oo niinku vikaa. Et se mikä lukiossa sitten tuppaa olemaan se ongelma aina on se että millä tavalla sitten kurssiarvosanoja annetaan ja millä tavalla ylioppilastutkinnossa mitataan suullista kielitaitoa. ---Mä olin itse asiassa sitä mieltä et ylioppilastutkintoon olis pitänyt saada tää suullinen kielitaito ja se olis itsestään kurssikokeisiin tuonu suullisia osioita; oppilaille on kyllä hyvä motivaatio suulliseen kielitaitoon mut mitä lähemmäs mennään sitten sitä lukion loppua ni sitä enemmän se alkaa siellä painamaan se ylioppilastutkinto. ---Sitten just ajan puutteessa jää vähän heikompaan asemaan kun siinä on sitten tulossa se toisen tyyppinen ylioppilaskoe joka kans vaatii töitä paljon

- 126) No mun mielestä kyllä [suullinen kielitaito on tarpeeksi esillä]. --- Toivon, että siinä seuraavassa oikeassa opetussuunnitelman muutoksessa, joka tulee nyt varmaan viiden vuoden sisällä että siinä ois yks pakollinen kurssi. [Ja se vois olla] ehkä heti siellä ykkös vuonna. ---Nyt osa ei valitse, on monia syitä, osalla on abivuosi niin täynnä, et sinne ei mahdu; osaa se vähän pelottaa ja huolestuttaa kun nyt pitäiskin ihan oikeesti sitten puhua ja näin. Mutta se kuuluis kyllä sinne pakollisiin. --- Niin mut et voishan sitä olla enemmänkin, mut se mihin me kokoajan [tähdätään] ni se on se yo, yo, yo. ---Niin no kyl [se koe] on toimiva tollasena kun se on; mutta kyl mä vielä toivon että ennen kun mä pääsen eläkkeelle, kun siihen on vielä niin pitkä aika, niin että siinä olis suullinen osuus. Onhan se nyt suorastaan hassua, että Suomi on suurin piirtein ainoa maa Euroopassa jossa ei ole minkäänlaista suullista [osuutta]. --- Se ehkä vielä kannustais eteenpäin kehittämään meitä opettajia ja myöskin noita virallisia instansseja suuntaamaan [kehitystä].
- 127) Se pitäis olla kaikille. ---Useimmat näistä koulutuksista on nimenomaan ollu sitä arvioimista ja sen sillä tavalla, että kaikki tekisivät sen samalla tavalla; mutta kyl siellä tosi hyviä vinkkejä on tullu myös kursseihin ja minkälaisia tehtävätyyppejä siellä ois.
- 128) Opettajan ääntäminen pitäis olla esimerkillistä. Kyllä mä uskon, et se on osa sitä auktoriteettiä ja ammatillista osaamista, ammattitaitoa.
- 129) Jos ajattelee itseensä opiskelijana, niin kyllähän sitä tulee johonkin kurssille tai luennolle sillä ajatuksella, että se luennoitsija tai opettaja on sen alan asiantuntija. Ja kyllä mun mielestä suullinen kielitaito ja ääntäminen ja kaikki tää liittyy siihen asiantuntijuuteen; tokihan siinä on sitten muutakin.
- 130) No valitettavasti se varmaankin se vaikuttaa opiskelijoihin. ---Erityisesti ääntäminen; ne kyllä tietää, että kielioppi lähtee kyllä varmasti jokaiselta joka on koulutettu opettaja; ja se on tietyllä tavalla niin osa persoonaa myöskin, että voin kuvitella, että jos saa kritiikkiä nimenomaan ääntämiseen liittyen niin se kyllä todella pahalta sitten tuntuu.
- 131) No se on sellanen uskottavuus kysymys, sillai. Et jos se on semmosta et on paljon virheitä ni ihmiset kuuntelee sillä korvalla sitten vähäsen ku ne tietää että on opettaja ni uskottavuus, semmonene vähän niinku ammatillinen uskottavuus [kärsii]. ---Ei ne sillä tavalla ankaria opiskelijat ole, että ne jotenkin edellyttäs täydellisyyttä siinä ja sitten niinku muilla asioilla ei olis väliä, et niil on tosi paljon niin kuin monilla muillakin asioilla on väliä. --- Et siin ei oo ongelmaa sillä tavalla et pitäis olla mitenkään täydellinen, mut semmonen riittävä pitää olla, ni se on tärkeä uskottavuuskysymys.
- 132) Tästä on ollut puhetta siellä koulutuksessakin, että häikäistytäänkö me arvioitsijoina siitä, että se lapsukainen siinä onkin todella sujuva ja on sellainen valoisa ja reipas ja sosiaalinen ja näin; ja sitten ajatellaanko me, että toi on vähän tollanen hiljanen ja ei nyt oikeen ota katsekontaktia ja muuta, että miten me arvotetaan. Se on jo riittävän paha, et me arvioidaan saati arvostellaan, mut sit tulee tällasia arvottamiskysymyksiä vielä.