LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS AT UPPER

SECONDARY SCHOOL:

The students' and the teachers' views

Master's Thesis

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LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS AT UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL: the students' and the teachers' views

Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Tämän päivän globaalissa maailmassa kommunikoiminen yli maantieteellisten rajojen on lähes osa arkipäivää. Suuri osa tästä kansanvälisestä vuorovaikutuksesta tapahtuu suullisesti englannin kielen ollessa maailmanlaajuisen kommunikoinnin lingua franca. Siksi englannin kielen suulliselle kielitaidolle on tarvetta, ja suullista kielitaitoa tulisikin opettaa koulussa.

Suomalaisen lukion päättökokeesta, ylioppilaskirjoituksista, puuttuu tällä hetkellä suullisen kielitaidon koe kaikissa vieraissa kielissä. Suullinen kielitaito on testauksen näkökulmasta aliarvostettu ja voin näin myös opetuksessa jäädä taka-alalle, sillä opetus ja harjoittelu vieraalla kielellä keskittyvät usein ensisijaisesti ylioppilaskirjoituksissa testattaviin osa-alueisiin. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää sekä oppilaiden että opettajien mielipiteitä englannin suullisen kielitaidon opiskelusta. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa selvitettiin, mitkä asiat osallistujien mielestä vaikuttavat suullisen kielitaidon oppimiseen ja opettamiseen lukiossa. Tutkimuksessa tarkasteltiin myös, onko englannin kielen opetuksessa eroa lukion alussa ja lopussa.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että sekä oppilailla että opettajilla on positiivinen kanta suullisen kielitaidon opettamiseen ja oppimiseen. Harjoitteluun liittyvät seikat kuitenkin paljastavat, että asia on monimutkaisempi kuin yleinen mielipide antaa olettaa. Osalle puhuminen vieraalla kielellä on haastavaa ja tulosten valossa erityisesti tytöt ovat poikia ujompia kielenkäyttäjiä. Suullisen kielitaidon opettamiseen vaikuttavat useat tekijät kuten ryhmäkoko, kulttuuriset seikat, sekä lukion rakenne; useat kokeet sekä ylioppilaskoe luovat paineita opettamiselle.

Säilytyspaikka – Depository

Muita tietoja – Additional information

To my dad, Pekka Ahola, 1962 – 2012

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1   INTRODUCTION

The discovery of the internet has changed the nature of interaction between people around the globe. In today's world, people are able to interact with one another effortlessly via different means, the location of the interlocutor having almost no significance. Furthermore, it is not only the communication of people via the Internet that has become more mundane but people also travel more and more and therefore meet in face to face situations. For example, in the European Union, the freedom of travelling from one union country to another has been consciously promoted by the union. Thus, there is a possibility for people to interact in another language than their mother tongue on an everyday basis. Interaction, as a matter of fact, can be considered to be the essence of languages; languages are learnt for the sake of communication. Today, English holds an especially strong position as a lingua franca, enabling the meeting of cultures and the interaction of people across geographical boundaries. Even though there are different ways of communicating, much of the cross-cultural interaction takes place in situations where oral communication in particular is needed. Thus, there is a clear need for having speaking skills.

Foreign language learning and teaching should take into consideration the teaching of oral language skills. In other words, learners should practice the production of speaking as well as the conventions of communication in other than their mother tongue. In Finland, the lingua franca position of English has been acknowledged as teaching English is virtually a part of training in every educational institution found in the country. In Finnish upper secondary schools in particular, English is widely taught. As speaking is a rather dominant way of conveying meaning, the skills for speaking should be taught at school. Second language learning and teaching has surely moved towards a more communicative aim in recent years. However, there is evidence that teaching in Finnish upper secondary schools tends focus on teaching written skills, which are tested in the national final exam. The debate about adding a speaking test into the matriculation exam has been ongoing for years (see, for example, Yli-Renko 1991, Savela 1997). A speaking

test in the examination would ensure that speaking skills are in practice taught as well as written skills. The lack of testing one of the areas of language knowledge has been noted by the Ministry of Education which set a working group in 2006 to examine the ways of testing and assessing speaking skills. The working group's latest suggestion is to have a national system for testing and assessing oral language skills in the upper secondary school which would also promoted teaching speaking skills. However, at the moment, the matriculation examination of English or any other foreign language does not include a speaking test.

Thus, the aim of the present study is to discover the opinions of teachers and students regarding speaking skills in the situation where the apparent undervaluation of speaking skills is indicated by the current structure in upper secondary school second language acquisition program. Hence, the focus is on finding out if speaking skills are valued in teaching even though the final exam does not test it. Additionally, the research takes into consideration whether teaching speaking skills differs from the beginning to the end of upper secondary school, when the final exams draw closer. Furthermore, the present study aims to find out what affects teaching and learning speaking skills. Consequently, the focus is on examining what for one hinders but for another facilitates teaching and learning speaking skills at school. Thus, the aim of this study is to develop quite an extensive overview of the opinions of each party, as well as the factors that affect the formation of these opinions, and the realities of teaching and learning this skill. The terms oral skills, speaking skills and oral language skills will be used interchangeably in this study.

In order to get an extensive view of the topic, the participants of this study include both teachers and students. There is not a wide body of research on this topic which would include the viewpoints of teachers and students. Neither is the topic studied actively in order for the information to stay up-to-date. One of the more recent studies in a Finnish context, which included both students' and teachers' opinions was conducted by Mäkelä (2005). Furthermore, many of the previous studies focus more on issues surrounding assessment of rather than aspects of teaching speaking skills. There are plenty of

materials on teaching speaking skills from the point of view of methodology which do not give insight into the reality of teaching. Yet, the speaking assessment studies include aspects of teaching speaking skills as teaching and testing are connected. Thus, these studies provide only narrow points of view on the topic. Testing and assessing speaking skills have been studied, for example, by Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006) and Saleva (1997) One of the earliest studies in Finland about speech communication skills in upper secondary school was conducted by Yli-Renko in 1991.

This topic has been of interest to me since my bachelor's thesis in 2009. As the debate of adding a speaking test is still ongoing, and therefore the position of speaking skills in upper secondary school is questionable, my attention was drawn to this topic again. Additionally, as a future teacher of English, I was interested in studying this topic as the knowledge about factors that affect teaching speaking skills give insight to teaching in practice. Thus, I hope that some of the notions in this study are useful for the purpose of actual teaching at school. I also wanted to see what aspects of language knowledge are valued by teachers and students and also if their opinions are similar.

In this study, I will first present theories on communicative competence and viewpoints about speech communication which give the theoretical background for speaking skills. I will then describe the previous findings of other research on students' and teachers' opinions about learning and teaching speaking skills. I will then move on to describe the present study: participants, data gathering and the method of analysis. The results of the study are presented next and discussed in the following section. This is finally followed by the conclusion of this study.

2   COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

For this study, I have chosen influential models which have each in their own way taken forward the ideas on communicative competence. Communicative competence and issues related to it have been theorized by many researchers. In fact, Noam Chomsky (1965) is seen as the pioneer for creating the term communicative competence and thus the present

study starts to examine the theoretical aspects of communication and speaking from his theorization. Chomsky's ideas give a basis for the theory of communicative competence but the term itself was introduced by Dell Hymes (1971) whose ideas the present will present next. Hymes' theorization is followed by Canale and Swain's (1980) thoughts which in the 1980's developed into a theory of communicative competence. The present study moves then onto Bachman and Palmer's (1996) work, which took the model of communication even further later in the 1980s and therefore their ideas are also introduced. The Common European Framework of Reference (2001) is presented last as it is a recent and a very influential model. The framework is used widely in Europe and in Finland it is used as a basis for creating skill- level requirements and criteria for assessment in the curriculum.

2.1   The early stages of the of communicative competence

From the 1970's onwards, communicative competence has become more and more the aim in foreign language teaching (Hughes 2002: 26). First, the term competence was introduced by Noam Chomsky (1965) and he also made a distinction between competence and performance. By *competence* he means the knowledge the speaker or the listener has about his or her language whereas *performance* is the actual use of language in real situations. In his linguistic theory, Chomsky argues that performance does not reflect competence as hesitation, grammatical errors and false starts are a part of natural, spontaneous speech. For Chomsky, linguistic knowledge denotes language competence because ideally a speaker or a listener is unaffected by memory limitation, distraction or attention defaults to which Chomsky refers as grammatically irrelevant conditions (Chomsky 1965: 3). In his opinion, competence should exclusively be associated with knowledge of grammar rules. As Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006: 5) appropriately note, in his theory Chomsky does not take into account that there are factors that influence the speaking situation, such as the setting or the participants, and therefore Chomsky's theory appears slightly simplified.

Still, Chomsky gave Hymes (1971) a starting point with the term **communicative competence.** By communicative competence, Hymes (ibid) means native speaker's skill to produce and understand sentences appropriate to the context in which they take place. According to Hymes, young speakers do not only learn grammatical rules but also social rules, that is, for example, with whom, when, where and how to speak. In other words, a speaker also learns the rules of appropriateness and appropriate language use. This competence of appropriateness is acquired in social interaction with other speakers. In short, Hymes argues that 'there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless' (Hymes 1971: 277-278). Unlike Chomsky (1965), Hymes takes into consideration in his notion of communicative competence the setting and surrounding in which the speak event occurs along with grammatical knowledge. Thus, communicative competence consists of grammatical competence but also contextual and sociolinguistic competence.

In the 1980s, Canale and Swain developed further the model of communicative competence and defined the concept in relation with second language teaching. According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence consists of three different components; grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. A fourth component, discourse competence, was later added by Canale (1983). **Grammatical competence**, which is also called linguistic competence, consists of phonological rules, morphological rules, syntactic rules, semantic rules and lexical items. In other words, it is the competence of vocabulary knowledge, sentence and word formation, pronunciation, spelling and understanding of meanings. **Sociolinguistic competence**, in turn, includes pragmatic aspects of speaking. That is the appropriateness of utterances is various different sociolinguistic contexts which depend on the participants status, gender, and age as well as other factors. **Strategic competence** addresses the verbal and non-verbal communication skills which speakers use in order to compensate their lack of grammatical or linguistic knowledge and to increase the effectiveness of communication. Finally, **discourse competence** describes the knowledge of cohesion and coherence. In short, it means combining grammatical forms and meanings in order to create consistent speech or writing in different genres (Canale and Swain 1980: 6-7, 11-10).

Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence is much more detailed than the model of, for example, Hymes (1971). What is more, Canale and Sawain (1980) examine the topic from the view point of second language teaching which is a significant difference to Hyme's model. This model already recognizes social nature of speaking and that learners need to have knowledge how to speak appropriately in social interaction. As this model takes into consideration a wide range of knowledge that speakers possess, it is usable for assessing learners' knowledge and skill-level in teaching contexts.

2.2   A model of communicative competence by Bachman and Palmer

The communicative approach to language learning became more insightful as Lyle Bachman and Adrian Palmer started to develop their model of communicative competence. It is a model adopted from the one originally proposed by Bachman only, which he published in 1990. Bachman and Palmer's framework is a more comprehensive model to Canale and Swain's (1980) description of communicative competence. The basis of Bachman and Palmer's framework was to create a model working for testing, however, it has also become an influential description of language ability. Bachman and Palmer (1996) developed their framework as they believed that in order to assess individuals' languages skills the correspondence of language skills in other situations than in the test itself need to be demonstrated. Thus, they designed a framework which describes the characteristics of language users and also the characteristics of language use tasks and test tasks. For Bachman and Palmer, the principal interest in language testing is language ability. Moreover, other characteristics that need to be taken into account are personal **characteristics, topical knowledge** and **affective schemata** because they are not only important for test performance but also for language use (Bachman and Palmer 1996: 61-62). Bachman and Palmer define language use to be

> the creation or interpretation of intended meanings in discourse by an individual or as the dynamic and interactive negotiation of intended meanings between two or more individuals in particular situation (Bachman and Palmer 1996: 61).

Language use involves several complex interactions among the language users' various individual characteristics. Due to the complexity of interaction, Bachman and Palmer (1996) believe that language ability must be considered within an interactional framework of language use. Their view about language focuses on interaction among areas of language ability which are **language knowledge**, **topical knowledge** (knowledge about the real world)**, personal characteristics** (e.g. age, sex, nationality and education) and **strategic competence**. Language knowledge and strategic competence, which is a set of metacognitive strategies such as planning, goal setting or assessment of communicative sources, are the two main components of the most crucial characteristic, language ability (Bachman and Palmer 1996: 62-66). Language knowledge is the term Bachman and Palmer use to refer to the concept of language competence which is further illustrated in figure 1.

LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE

ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE   PRAGMATIC KNOWLEDGE

GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE	TEXTUAL KNOWLEDGE	FUNCTIONAL KNOWLEDGE	SOCIOLINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE
Knowledge of Vocabulary	Knowledge of cohesion	Knowledge of ideational functions	Knowledge of dialects/ varieties
Knowledge of syntax	Knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization	Knowledge of manipulative functions	Knowledge of registers
Knowledge of phonology/ graphology		Knowledge of heuristic functions	Knowledge of natural or idiomatic expressions
			Knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech

Figure 1. Language knowledge model formulated by Bachman and Palmer (1996: 68)

In Bachman and Palmer's model, language knowledge is a domain of information which is stored in memory and accessed through metacognitive strategies when creating and interpreting discourse in language use (Bachman 1996: 67). Furthermore, as illustrated in figure 1, language knowledge consist of two main components; organizational and pragmatic knowledge which supplement each other when pursuing communicatively

effective language use. **Organizational knowledge** includes the ability to control the formal structures of language, i.e. grammatical and textual knowledge. *Grammatical knowledge* means understanding formal and correct utterances and sentences which include knowledge of lexicon, syntax, phonology and graphology. *Textual knowledge* is needed when producing or comprehending texts (either spoken or written). It consists of the knowledge of cohesion and the knowledge of rhetorical and conversational organization that are needed in order to form sentences or utterances into text (Bachman and Palmer 1996: 67-68).

Furthermore, **pragmatic knowledge** is composed of the ability to create or interpret discourse by relating utterances or sentences to their meanings, to the communicative goal the language user has and to the characteristics of the language use setting. Functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge are the two areas which comprise pragmatic knowledge. *Functional knowledge* refers to how utterances and sentences are in relation with the communicative goals the language users have. Functional knowledge is further divided into four categories of language functions: ideational, manipulative, heuristic and imaginative. The final component of Bachman and Palmer's framework, sociolinguistic knowledge consists of the rules of appropriateness in particular contexts of language use. It includes, for example, the knowledge of appropriate use of register, dialects or cultural references (Bachman and Palmer 1996: 69-70).

Bachman and Palmer's model of language knowledge is a vast and explanatory model about the different components of language knowledge. It is a more detailed model than the previous models. Bachman and Palmer have, for example, included subcategories of knowledge and thus more thoroughly explain the different aspects of language knowledge. It is important to note that current research on communicative competence is based on the Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) models, as well as the descriptions of the communicative language competence components found in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Accordingly, the concept of communicative competence will next be presented from the point of view of CEFR.

2.3 Communicative competence in the Common European Framework of Reference

One of the most influential views about language proficiency today is presented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which will be from now on referred to as CEFR. The CEFR was designed to support mobility in Europe, as well as to enhance international communication and promote co-operation between different educational institutions. CEFR is seen as the European guideline for teaching and evaluating proficiency in foreign languages even though it is not the only model of language proficiency. The CEFR has functioned as the main source for planning national curriculum in several European countries, Finland being one of them, which is an indication of the effectiveness of the framework.

The framework defines language users as members of society or 'social agents' who have specific tasks, which are not only language bound, to accomplish in certain circumstances. Speech acts occur within language activities but these other activities form a wider social context. In order to fulfill these tasks, individuals use their own specific competences to reach goals. Thus, also in language learning, individuals as social agents develop a range of competences; both general and also communicative language competences. Competences, according to CEFR (2001: 9), are the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform activities. Language learning is further explained in the framework as follows:

> ..They [individuals] draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various **conditions** and under various **constraints** to engage in **language activities** involving **language processes** to produce and/or receive **texts** in relation to **themes** in specific **domains**, activating those **strategies** which seem most appropriate for carrying out the **tasks** to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences (CEFR 2001: 9).

In other words, learners make use of their previous experiences in order to take part in language activities that involve language processes. As language processes are about producing or receiving a text which is related to specific themes and domains, learners activate the strategies they need for accomplishing their tasks. By monitoring these

actions, learners' competences are being reinforced and modified. Hence, communicative language competence enables one to function through languages (CEFR 2001: 9, Hildén 2000: 169).

Thus, for successful linguistic interaction, both general competence and communicative language competence are needed. **General competences**, that is, the combination of different skills, abilities and characteristics, are not bound to any language but are called upon for all different actions, language activities being one of them. General competence also includes the individual's ability to learn. **Communicative competence**, furthermore, consists of three components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic. *Linguistic competences* include knowledge about the language as a system that is, knowledge about the lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competences. *Lexical competence* refers knowledge of and ability to use the vocabulary of a language. It also includes lexical elements and grammatical elements. Lexical elements comprise of fixed expressions, such as phrasal verbs, and single word forms where a certain word can have several different meanings, whereas grammatical elements include, for example, articles and quantifiers. *Grammatical competence* is composed of the knowledge and the ability use grammatical features of a language. In short, it is the ability to form understandable phrases or sentences and express meaning according to specific grammatical rules. *Semantic competence* is the awareness and organization of meaning over which the learner has control. *Phonological competence* is knowledge and skill, for example, about the production and perception of sound- units (phonemes), phonetic composition of words and sentence phonetics (prosody). The ability to perceive and to produce written symbols which compose written text is known as *orthographic competence.* On the contrary, *orthoepic competence* includes the skill to pronounce text correctly when encountering it first in written form (CEFR 2001: 109-118).

The social dimension of language use is considered, similarly to Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman and Palmer (1996), as ***sociolinguistic competence.*** This competence is a set social relation such as conventions about politeness, expressions of folk-wisdom, register differences, as well as dialect and accent. Finally, ***pragmatic competence***

comprises of three principles according to which messages are 1) organized, structured and arranged, known as 'discourse competence' 2) used to carry out communicative functions, i.e. 'functional competence' and 3) arranged in accordance with interactional and transactional schemata which can be referred to as 'design competence'. (CEFR 2001 118-123)

The concept of communicative competence is defined in Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in great detail. However, it does not define the concept of strategic competence as Bachman and Palmer did. The framework is clearly also aimed to be a concrete tool for language learning and testing as the framework includes advice for teaching the knowledge areas of communicative competence. Additionally, the sill-level description in the framework is very influential and the basis of the criteria used in Finnish schools. The level of specificity is the greatest in CEFR compared to other frameworks introduced in the present study. Hence, in this study different aspects of communicative competence are understood similarly to the description of CEFR. Common to all the definitions about communicative competence presented in this study is that language competence is not only the knowledge about the language but also ability or the skill to use language in communicative situations.

2.4   Speech communication and oral language skills

After defining the idea of communication and communicative competence, speech communication and oral language skills are examined next. The ideas of speech communication and oral language skills are defined in the following chapters as they give further knowledge about what speaking skills consist of. Thus, this section explores the content of teaching speaking from a theoretical perspective.

According to Hildén (2000: 172), all communicative language functions are speech communication in one way or another. Speech communication takes place in interaction where the speaker and the listener are simultaneously in connection with each other.

However, face-to-face participation is not required as taking part in the same speech act on different occasions is considered as speech communication. Thus, transimitting, receiving and replying a voice mail fulfill the requirements of speech communication. Yet, speech communication requires **speech communication skills** which consist of *linguistic skills*, *functional skills* and *strategic skills*. Linguistic skills comprise from the ability to choose grammatically and phonetically correct forms as well as governing the rules of nonverbal communication. The knowledge of applying linguistic competence contents in speech in order to create hypertext is called functional skill which corresponds to pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences described previously in connection with the CEFR. Strategic skills are the skills needed for planning and controlling the interaction process and also for utilizing one's own skills in speech acts to achieve the communicative goal (Hildén 2000: 172-173).

Accordingly, **oral language skills** are part of speech communication skills. Oral language skills denote the knowledge and skill to manage in different communicative language functions where spoken text is produced in interaction and transmissions are taking place in the target language. In these linguistic functions, the sociolinguistic, pragmatic and the linguistic competence as well as the strategic skills to use them, are needed. An individual, according to Hildén (2000: 173), can have oral skills in several different languages and the combination of these oral skills contributes to the individual's speech communication skills. Additionally, improving the oral skills of one language improves speech communication skills as a whole. However, Hildén (ibid) argues that oral language skills are language specific such as, oral skills of Swedish, English or German. I disagree with Hildén and claim that the oral skills of one language contribute to the speaking skills of another language. As oral skills are the ability to function successfully in linguistic situations, for example, stress and phonetic features affect successful interaction. Thus, mastering these skills in one language surely contributes to learning the skills in a language convergent in these features. Languages are known to derive from linguistic families and thus similarities in language systems are known. Figure 1 illustrates oral skills in connection with communicative competence.

General competences:
- declarative knowledge
  - o knowledge about the world
  - o sociocultural knowledge
- o intercultural knowledge
- o awareness of language and communication
- skills and know-how
  - o practical skills and know-how
  - o intercultural skills and know-how
- existential competence
- ability to learn
  - o general phonetic awareness
    and phonetic skills
  - o learning skills
  - o heuristic skills

Sociolinguistic competence:
 - conventions about politeness
 - differences between registers
 - dialects and accents

Pragmatic competences:
- discourse competence
- functional competence
- design competence

Oral skills
(for example English)

Linguistic competences:
- lexical
- grammatical
- semantic
- phonological

Strategies:
- reception
- production
- interaction
- transmission

Figure 1. Foreign language skills in the domain of competences adapted from Hildén (2000: 174).

In order to speak in a foreign language, one has to have a certain amount of knowledge about grammar and vocabulary (Bygate, 1987: 3). Thus, learning these areas of language contributes to learning speaking, but learning speaking is not merely about the knowledge of these two areas of language. One has to, for example, govern the rules of pronunciation and take into account non-verbal communication as well as gestures which have a significant role in speech acts. Bygate (1987:3) distinguishes the *knowledge* about a language from the *skill* of using it with speaking practice. Thus, in order to speak it is not enough to know how sentences are assembled but to have the skill to produce and adapt them according to the circumstances. In short, knowledge about pronunciation,

grammar and vocabulary are needed along with the knowledge how they are used. Moreover, the skill to use this knowledge correctly in right circumstances is vital.

Bygate (1987: 5) further divides skill into two categories; motor-perceptive skills and interaction skills. **Motor-perceptive skills** refer to perceiving, recalling and articulating sounds and structures of a language correctly. In short, these skills relate mainly to language production and perception. **Interaction skills** are about the skill to use knowledge and basic motor-perception skills to communicate. Interaction skills include making decisions about communication, such as the content of the speech act and the way it is done in a specific communication situation. All this is affected by the communication acts that have taken place before and in which contexts communication has happened.

The first internal factor that affects communication is called *processing conditions*, time being one of the most influential ones. In spoken interaction, the pressure of time can have noticeable effects and speech fluency is created with the mastery of processing conditions. Hence, a speaker is able to produce speech at a normal speed regardless of the pressure of time. The second, *reciprocity condition,* describes the human nature of communication as it happens in interaction between one or more speakers as there is a speaker producing speech and a listener receiving the message. Thus, the speaker does not act independently but has to take the counterpart into consideration for example by modifying vocabulary decisions (Bygate 1987 :7-8).

Language skill has now been distinguished from language knowledge, the latter meaning the rules of language rules, i.e. rules of grammar or pronunciation, and also the knowledge to apply these rules. The former is about the ability use the knowledge. Bygate (1987) further notes that speech differs from written language as production skills, that is facilitation and compensation devices, are needed. Thus, speaking does not equal written language in a spoken form. Managing communication problems is also a feature of speaking as is negotiation of meaning. Finally, managing the turn-taking and the agenda are a part of managing the interaction itself (Bygate 1987: 49). The skills a

speaker has rely on a source of knowledge. These skills include mastering the different known ways of communicating particular meanings. The more the skill is practiced, the more knowledge about it is stored, thus learning how to structure sentences can be memorized. All this knowledge is shaped and used in different contexts with the help of skills. Furthermore, the skills are in connection with one another. In other words, skills include making decisions about important messages, how these messages are formed and said while monitoring the entire communication situation. Speaking skills then include having the knowledge for example from message planning to accuracy skills. Mastering just one of skill areas is not enough. The nature of speaking and the relation of knowledge and skills are presented in the following figure adapted from Bygate (1987).

Hildén (2000) describes the competence and knowledge of speaking skills in a similar way the CEFR (2001) does. Bygate (1987) clearly distinguishes knowledge from skills instead of using a competence based structure in describing speaking skills. Together the theorization of these two creates the viewpoint the present study has. The role of time in speaking, which Bygate mentions, is a significant part of speaking. Hildén, on the other hand, gives an extensive definition of speech communication which is closely related to speaking skills. Additionally, the array of competences presented by Hildén includes, for example, the skills for learning which are significant also in learning speaking.

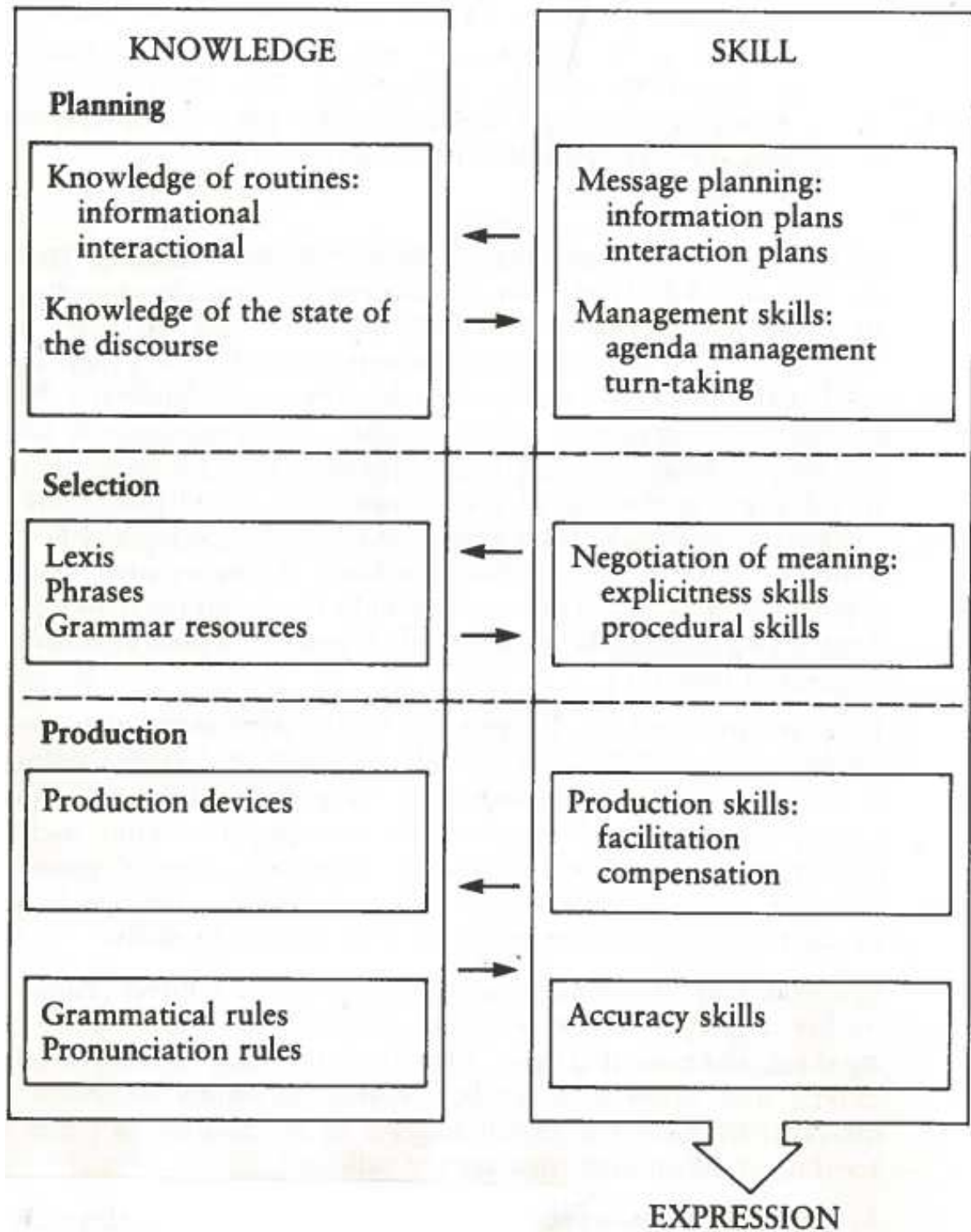| KNOWLEDGE	SKILL
Planning	
Knowledge of routines: informational interactional Knowledge of the state of the discourse	Message planning: information plans interaction plans Management skills: agenda management turn-taking
Selection	
Lexis Phrases Grammar resources	Negotiation of meaning: explicitness skills procedural skills
Production	
Production devices Grammatical rules Pronunciation rules	Production skills: facilitation compensation Accuracy skills

EXPRESSION

Figure 2. A model of oral language skills (Bygate 1987: 50)

3   TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS

3.1   A historical view on second language learning and teaching

Second language learning (SLL) and acquisition (SLA) have been influenced by several views and theories. Different aspects of language knowledge have been in focus in teaching as the changes in research have had an impact on language pedagogy. Accordingly, there have been eras when certain ways of practicing languages as well as certain areas of language knowledge have been at focus. The ideas about learning started to evolve in the 1950's and quite soon also the phenomenon of foreign language learning gained attention. In time, theorists have been trying to create a model which would explain and give further information about how language learning happens and what affects it. Hence, I next present views of SLL and how emphasis has shifted from behaviorism being at reign into current theories of communicative language teaching.

In the 1950s and 1960s a behaviorist view was the most influential theory. In this approach, learning happens when stimulus is received by the learner and the learner responds accordingly to it. Thus, a repeated reinforcement will create correct behavior, which will eventually become a habit. For learning speaking this means extensive target language usage as learning happens by imitating and repeating correct communication patterns for different situations and substituting the language patterns that have already been learnt in the mother tongue (Mitchell and Myles 2004:30-31). This approach was criticized and therefore more focus was put into examining first language acquisition, which was believed to explain also foreign language learning. It was found in the 1970s that learning in all languages goes through similar stages. Thus, for example an order of acquisition was found for English language and it was realized that first and foreign language learning have similarities in many ways (Mitchell and Myles 2004:34).

At the end of the decade, Stephen Krashen introduced his monitor model which is divided into five basic hypotheses. In these hypotheses, Krashen defined learning from acquisition, the first being a conscious process where learners know about language and

the latter unconsciously acquiring language skills like in first language acquisition. He also described learners to have a monitor which monitors language use to be grammatically correct. Thus, students who do not produce fluent and continuous speech are in fact using their monitor too much whereas speakers who make several errors do not use their monitor as they value fluent and fast speech more. Krashen also suggests that language rules are acquired in certain order which can be predicted beforehand. He continues that learner development is connected with comprehensible input by which he means language that is syntactically right above learner's current language competence. However, in Krashen's opinion comprehensible input is not enough but students need to be responsive for the input (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 44- 48).

Krashen's hypothesis provoked discussion on the role of interaction in learning. Interaction hypothesis sees the quality of input having an effect on learning. Thus, the more input changes, the more it is recycled and put into other words in order to make it more understandable, the more useful it is for the learner. Output hypothesis also challenged Krashen's views as not only receiving comprehensible input was enough for language development but also language production is needed. Output really develops second language syntax and morphology knowledge as language production forces learners really to do grammatical processing (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 160). Krashen's input hypothesis does, however, state language acquisition to happen when the learner understands messages and also when the learner receives input that is understandable (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 165).

One of the most influential models of second language learning is Noam Chomsky's universal grammar approach which has had much influence on second language learning research. This approach suggests that all humans have a built-in set of principles and parameters that determine the form human language can take. Because of this structure-dependency, language learning is a constrained process. In other words, language organization is quite strictly a result of the relationship different sentence elements, such as words or morphemes, have. Thus, the basis of language, the units is created when words are rearranged into higher-level structures. This makes second language learning

easier as the built-in knowledge helps to know in advance the ways language works. (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 52-55, 62).

From the cognitive approaches to language learning the processing approach focuses on the processing mechanisms brains use in second language. Information processing model studies the how learner's short term memory and long term memory affect language learning (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 99). Processability theory is interested in the way learners process linguistic input and the factors which have an effect on the process. Learners have linguistic knowledge which they use through computational mechanisms. Language acquisition itself is seen as a process of getting computational mechanisms which as procedural skills are vital for processing language. Processability theory tries to explanation for the above (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 111).

The way learners' interlanguage develops is the focus of functional perspective on second language learning. The research examines how learners reach the goals of communication. In focus are also the speech acts that the learner tries to make and also the means of making use of the physical, social and discourse context in meaning making. The attempts to make meaning are seen as an essential part of ongoing language development which is connected to the development of formal systems of grammar (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 131-132).

Socio-cultural perspectives on language learning rise interaction as the key aspect of language learning. In this view, language learning is seen as social action instead of an individual process. Language, moreover, is seen as a means for thinking and making meaning. When the learner is in contact with others, an opportunity for creating new language tools for meaning making arises (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 193, 200).

Today foreign language teaching follows the ideas of communicative approaches were languages are used in meaningful context, the communication is interesting and all this happens in situations which resemble real communicative settings. The Common

European Framework of Reference, for example, offers a theory of language learning from a communicative perspective (Hughes 2002: 26).

3.2   Teaching the spoken language at upper secondary school in Finland

The national curriculum sets the guidelines for organizing education in upper secondary schools in Finland. Each school is responsible for compiling a plan of education as they are responsible for the execution of teaching in practice (LOPS 2003: 8). Furthermore, the curriculum gives the instructions for the content of teaching each subject and additionally sets the goals for learning. Consequently, the content of foreign language teaching as well as its assessment is defined in the curriculum. I will now view the aims and content instructions from the point of view of teaching speaking skills.

The teaching of foreign languages, in this case the teaching of English, aims mainly to give students skills to communicate across cultural boundaries. The students are expected to learn to communicate in the specific way communication is done in English and within in Anglophone culture. Thus, the curriculum clearly sets a communicative aim in English teaching. Each of the courses has its own emphasis in the form of a topic, related vocabulary and sometimes in the form of practicing certain skills, such as stating an opinion. However, the curriculum notes that in spite of the emphasis on each course, the students should have opportunities for practicing all the skills, that is skills of reading, writing, listening and also speaking in English (LOPS 2003: 100).

The assessment scale in the curriculum has been applied from the skills level description presented in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (LOPS 2003: 230). According to the skill level scale, in learning English the students are to reach the skill level of B2.1 in the end of upper secondary school. This applies to all four skills, speaking included. In this level, the students are to have speaking skills which enable them to present their ideas on topics that are in their range of experiences and to express the meaning of these to themselves. Thus, in teaching this involves covering vocabulary in different topics and learning methods, for example phrases and sentences structures, for expressing opinion and point of view. Further on, the student should be able for

communication which does not appear either amusing or irritating to the interlocutor. Hence, the teaching should take into account idiomatic expressions and make the students aware that expressions cannot always be translated straight from Finnish into English. What is more, the production of speech should be continuous with few longer pauses. Teaching should give the learners a stock of phrases which gain time for answering and skill to use other linguistic signals which hold the turn to speak when formulating what to say. Additionally students should face tasks which give freedom of speech and thus develop their fluency.

According to the criteria in the curriculum, pronunciation and intonation are clear and natural sounding at skill-level B2.1. Thus, teaching should involve the practice production and recognition of sound units and intonation. Especially the English phonemes that are missing from the Finnish language, and are therefore more challenging to learn, should gain focus. Phonetic drilling is mentioned in the CEFR as a way of practicing pronunciation. Intonations along with word and syllable stress are also factors that differ between Finnish and English. They affect greatly on speaker's fluency and understandability and are therefore important aspects to practice. Stress is a more significant part of English than it is other languages to which Finnish is not an exception. As a matter of fact Finnish is constructed more around syllables and their duration in pronunciation. Additionally, the word stress is basically always on the first syllable (Alho et al. VISK 2008: §13). Hence, for Finns, the word stress of English is particularly difficult to learn which should be taken into consideration in teaching. It also needs to be noted that grammar has a central role in intelligible speaking. Thus, teaching speaking is in relation with teaching grammatical aspects. In the curriculum criteria description, grammatical inaccuracies are acceptable to the point they significantly hinder understanding. (LOPS 2003: 242, CEFR 2001: 35,152; Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 184-189)

In order for the students to meet the described requirements of successful communication in English, the interactive nature of speaking should be rehearsed in pair and group work. It is important that students speak in face to face situations with different people and use

language in meaningful ways, for example in answers in exercise questions. It also needs to be noted that the tasks and topics should be of interest to the students. It is also in my opinion important that the teacher sets an example of English being used in the class as the mean of communication. The CEFR stresses the importance of the teacher as a speaker models but also as a model of attitude and ability to use a foreign language.

3.3   The current situation of teaching oral skills at upper secondary school

As I have introduced principles of teaching English at school, I will now present the current situation of learning English in Finland. In the following section, I will describe teaching speaking skills at upper secondary school in connection with testing as study results show teaching and assessment to be intertwined. The connection between assessment and teaching is also presented by the representatives of student and teacher interest groups in this section. I also believe that both students and teachers value the language skills that are assessed slightly more than the skills that are not assessed. Thus, this section gives a historical background to promoting a speaking test as a part of the matriculation examination and thus shifting speaking from the secondary position to an equal place with other areas of language knowledge.

In Finland, English is widely taught at different levels of education. As a matter of fact, English is the most popular foreign language as 90.5% of the elementary level students choose English to be their first foreign language to study. This means that for the majority of Finnish students learning English starts at the age of nine. Thus, in Finland more time is used to learn English than any other foreign language. Because of the several proceeding years of English studies, learning English follows an advanced syllabus at upper secondary school.

There has been plenty of talk about adding a speaking test in the foreign language matriculation exams in Finland already in the end of the 1980s and in the beginning of 1990s (see, for example, Yli-Renko 1991). Already in 1988 the Ministry of Education set a working group which aimed to find out how a speaking test could be implemented in

the matriculation examination (Lukiokoulutuksen suullisen kielitaidon arviointityöryhmän muistio 2006: 8). Another working group was set by the ministry in 2005 with the same task, however, still at the present a speaking test is not a part of the examination, even though the working group proposed one.

The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland (SUKOL) supports having a speaking test in the examination. The chair of the federation sees speaking test as a motivating factor for the students to learn speaking skills. Students are in his opinion usually motivated to learn what they are tested on. Furthermore, he thinks that speaking skills and their teaching would gain the value and the position it deserves if a test is added (Hameed 2011). The National Union of Finnish general upper secondary students also stated in 2005 that a speaking test should be added to the matriculation examination. The Chair at the time stated that the lack of a speaking results less teaching of speaking skills during upper secondary school (STT 2005).

In the Finnish curriculum, where the aims and content of teaching are set, speaking is acknowledged as one of the skills of language use. According to the curriculum, the aim is to develop students' ability to *communicate* with people from different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, students should have equal opportunities to practice all areas of language knowledge, speaking included, in all of the language courses. Similarly, students' skills should be assessed in all of the areas. The assessment scale in the curriculum, on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference, gives a description of the skill level students should reach during upper secondary school. In short, according to the skill level requirements the student are expected to have quite fluent speaking skills, the ability convey meaning without having to struggle greatly even though some grammatical inaccuracies may happen. (LOPS 2003: 100, 230, 240)

In addition to having a speaking test, the working group set by the Ministry of Education in 2005 also suggested one of the advanced language courses in curriculum to be changed to a mere speaking course. This proposition lead to change in the national curriculum and from 2010 onwards Finnish upper secondary school students have been able to complete

a speaking course where speaking skills are also tested in the end of the course with a test provided by the National Board of Education. The course is voluntary and thus a separate certificate is given to the students at graduation as an indication of taking part in the speaking course and in the following test. For the language teachers, the change gave additional training funded by government. The training focused on improving the teachers' ability to teach and assess speaking skills (Vieraiden kielten ja toisen kotimaisen kielen suullisen kielitaidon arviointi lukiossa 2010: 1-2).

In my opinion, having a speaking course in upper secondary school is a positive change. Students have an opportunity to improve the skill that is easily set aside as it is not tested in the national exam. Especially at the end of upper secondary school when the matriculation examination draw closer, there is a great possibility that little speaking practice is done. However, the voluntary nature of the course leads to the fact that not all students receive speaking training albeit it is the students' own choice. Then again, the students who participate in the course are most likely motivated learners which affect learning positively.

4   STUDIES ABOUT STUDENTS' VIEWS ON LEARNING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

The previous sections described the theoretical concepts and terminology. This section focuses on studies about learning English speaking skills from the students' perspective. Most of the research on this field is done more from the view point of assessment or the actual teaching of speaking. There is not a wide body of research about the learners' opinions nor are the factors that affect teaching and learning speaking skills examined from the students' point of view. However, in the Asian context some research is found on students' opinions on learning speaking skills. Furthermore, a few studies also present students' and teachers' views simultaneously. A study by Khamkhien (2001) and another by Mäkelä (2005) included both the students' and the teachers' viewpoint in the research. Even though the number of research is not overwhelming, an interest in studying different aspects related to learning speaking skills are seen early on. One of the earliest

studies on learning speaking skills is Yli-Renko's research from the beginning of the 1990s.

Khamkhien (2001) conducted a study where he surveyed 327 Thai learners' motivation to study English skills. He also studied the students' personality, their attitudes towards English teachers, classroom environment and instructional media and finally the students' attitudes towards English language. The participants of this study were university students aged between 18 to 20 years, which is roughly the same age group that took part in the present study. Furthermore, all the participants of Khamkhien's study considered teacher's model of speaking important and they clearly stated the willingness to speak like the teacher. The participants also indicated a desire to speak like a native speaker of English. It has to be noted, though, that in Thailand fluent English speaking skills indicate wealth and better social position which must contribute to learners willingness to speak native like (Khamkhien 2001: 100).

Khamkhien (2001: 95-96) found that the participants of his study had a high motivation for learning English as they saw English skills useful in the future, in further studies or in professional life. However, the majority was afraid of making mistakes and nervous about speaking in English in front of other people. Khamkhien (ibid) interviewed the students and found out that they were reluctant to speak if they were unsure of the answer or if they were afraid of the teacher correcting them. Al-Zedjali's study (2009: 127) of thirty-one Omani girls' beliefs about learning English showed that the participants were worried about making mistakes and thus they contributed less to oral activities. However, the students also found the teacher's corrections as positive. As Al-Zedjali (2009: 127) this indicates that the way correction is done has much influence on students' courage to speak. Thus, teacher's role as a courage giver clearly emerges. In the Thai schooling system, the conventions of teaching speaking and correcting errors may differ and thus the students might experience feelings of intimidation. In the Finnish teacher education practice, correcting individual students' pronunciation or other aspect of speaking is advised to do subtly as students may easily be discouraged to speak.

Similarly to Khamkhien (2001), de Saint Léger and Storch's (2009) study, where thirty-two students self-assessed their French speaking skills in an Australian university, showed lack of confidence as one of their biggest concerns in the beginning of the language course. Generally, the participants had studied French for eight years, six in secondary schools and two at university and they were studying an advanced language course at undergraduate level, and yet they experienced shyness to speak. The feeling of intimidation was connected with language proficiency level as less proficient students felt intimidated to speak with more skilled peers (de Saint Léger and Storch 2009: 278). The role of courage in speaking is emphasized when ten students actually named confidence as their strength in connection with oral skills. Furthermore the researchers' thought it be interesting that students did not find learning grammar or pronunciation as difficult. This, in my opinion, could be an indication of getting enough practice in learning these areas of language knowledge and thus there is less intimidation involved in learning them However, it was also found that over time the students gained more self-confidence and were thus also more willing to speak in the second language in class (de Saint Léger and Storch 2009: 269, 275). Generally, the students preferred small group discussions over to whole group discussions even though this was not unproblematic. For some, small group discussions were challenging too. Yet, for others small group discussions were opportunities to speak more without the pressure of a big group (de Saint Léger and Storch 2009: 277-278).

Mäkelä (2005) conducted a quite vast study where he studied 734 English text books and also the opinions of 233 teachers and 375 students on oral practice at senior secondary school in Finland. Mäkelä (2005: 109) found also the students to view learning to speak in English important. Sixty-eight per cent of the students in this study reported speaking to be the most important skill to learn. The students also found learning English pleasant and not too difficult compared to learning other subjects (Mäkelä 2005: 113-114). The students also felt that they did not get enough oral practice as they were willing to increase oral work. Mäkelä (2005: 158) argues the practice done at schools is not meaningful enough and offers the explanation for this lack of meaningfulness to be teacher-centered class room work. Unlike de Saint Léger and Storch's study (2009), the

students in this study saw teacher led work to be most important and indicated low importance for group work (Mäkelä 2005: 111). However, it is also pointed out that the weaker students thought group work to be important presumably because of the support working in groups offer. Mäkelä also found a difference between girls and boys. Boys favored group work and having an oral test in the matriculation examination whereas girls had more negative attitudes. Girls found learning English more difficult than boys did. In Mäkelä's opinion, girls experience more shyness to speak which could give explanation to these differences in gender (Mäkelä 2005: 159).

The results of a study conducted by Yli-Renko (1991) in Finland show that already in the early 90's there was growing interest in researching learning speaking and also examining students' opinions. Yli-Renko's quantitative study had 236 participants from central and southern Finland. The results of this study do not differ from the results of the studies described above as students were found to experience shyness to speak. What is more, Yli-Renko (1991: 60) found girls to be more timid speakers than boys (Yli-Renko 1991:60). Further results of girls being more shy speakers were also found by Ahola (2009:20) in a study of forty Finnish upper secondary school students. The reason for the shyness of speaking was in both studies noted to be the lack of time used for practicing speaking (Ahola 2009, Yli-Renko 1991). Furthermore, Khamkhien's (2001: 99) study results also showed that there is not enough time to learn speaking and the student felt that the teacher did not have time to talk and listen to the students speak. Additionally, some of the Thai students remarked that the course books were too grammar oriented. Khamkhien (2001: 101) points out that class size is high in Thailand with an average of 45 students per class which could explain the students feeling of not getting enough attention from the teacher when learning speaking. In Finland, the average group size in upper secondary school varies at times greatly due to the course based system (Jääskeläinen and Kauppinen 2005: 31). Thus, the number of students might differ greatly from one course to another. In grades 7 to 9 in the Finnish comprehensive school, the average class size is twenty pupils (OPM 2008).

5 STUDIES ABOUT TEACHERS' VIEWS ON TEACHING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

As the students opinions about learning speaking skills were presented in the section above, I will now move on to the studies that cover the topic from the teachers' perspective. Two of the studies, those of Khamkhien and Mäkelä, presented above included both students and teachers. Thus, these two studies are presented in this section two yet from another point of view. A study by Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006) gives a vast sampling about the teachers' opinions as together with Tattari (2001) these two studies include a large part of Finland geographically. Henderson et al (2012) conducted a very recent Europe-wide study which included teachers' ideas about pronunciation teaching. As teaching pronunciation is a part of teaching speaking, this study gives current information about the topic.

A Turkish study interviewed 18 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers who were teaching according to the language teaching system given by the CEFR in a private university (İnceçay and İnceçay 2010: 318). The results show that a half of the participants in the study considered all the skill areas of language knowledge equally important. However, another half considered speaking skills as least important skill to teach in a language course (İnceçay and İnceçay 2010: 319). The teachers stated that the school program, which affects teaching greatly, conveyed the impression that teaching speaking is secondary. The teachers further continued that the lack of oral materials, the loaded program as well as large class size led to use of Turkish in the classes. The use of Turkish was seen to have a negative effect on learning speaking skills. (İnceçay and İnceçay 2010: 321)

Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006: 65) also surveyed teachers' opinions about teaching, practicing and assessing oral skill in Finnish upper secondary schools. Together with Tattari (2001), who studied teachers' opinions about speaking skills too, they geographically covered the whole of Finland. Both studies found the teachers to view speaking skills as an important part of language knowledge. According to Tattari (2001:

84) the teachers felt that speaking skills could actually gain a little emphasis. However, the studies found also factors that hindered teaching speaking. The lack of time was the most common reason hindering teaching speaking in teachers' opinion (Huuskonen and Kähkönen 2006: 78, Tattari 2001: 56). The lack of time was connected to large group size. The lack of time was also mentioned as a significant hindrance in the results of Ahola (2009) and it was connected with the loaded content of teaching. Oral language skills are not the only area of language skills to teach.

Further on, according to Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006:83-84) the Finnish Matriculation Examination, which at the present measures only written skills, creates a wash-back effect where teaching focuses only on skills that are needed in the test itself. Ahola (2009: 25) also reported about teacher experience of language teaching being exam focused in courses and as a whole teaching aims for the matriculation examination. Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006: 84) also reported student related factors such as shyness to speak and the lack of motivation as factors complicating teaching speaking. Additionally the students lack of confidence in their own abilities to speak made teaching in the teachers' opinion more difficult. Thus, there are indications that teachers not only teach the theoretical knowledge of how to speak in English and provide tasks for practicing but also support students' confidence building and courage students to speak.

While naming hindering factors, the teachers also mentioned facilitators of teaching speaking skills in the study of Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006). The teachers' referred to students' motivation to learn and realizing the importance of speaking skills as favoring teaching speaking. Furthermore, the study results of Ahola about facilitators of speaking (2009) show findings alike. Huuskonen and Kähkönen (ibid) report that teachers were able to recognize the students' motivation to learn English for the purposes of the future, be it for future studies or work. They continue that for some teachers the course materials, that is the course book and their exercises, provide support for teaching oral skills. The same remark was made in the study of Ahola (ibid) where teachers stated that suitable materials enable the teacher to focus on teaching instead of using resources for finding materials.

Nonetheless, Huuskonen and Kähkönen (ibid) found teachers to state their own attitude to be a significant promoter of teaching oral language skills. Having a positive attitude and a method of practicing any language area orally were mentioned by the teachers. (Huuskonen and Kähkönen 2006: 85-86, Ahola 2009: 25)

The study of Mäkelä (2005) demonstrates how teachers' opinions can be inconsistent. The results of his study show Finnish teachers to have a positive view on practicing oral skills and teachers reported to do plenty of oral practice in classes. However, the written tasks, such as essay writing and grammar tasks were in the teachers' view the most useful. In my opinion, this contradiction questions the amount of speaking practice the participants of this study do in class in reality. Thus, the results give indication that teachers' are not fully aware themselves what they value in teaching and learning or does their teaching really implement the matters that they consider to be important. In the opinon of Mäkelä (ibid), which I agree, the appreciation of written tasks is an effect of the matriculation exams. Accurately, the vast majority of the test is compiled of written tasks. Moreover, the results of this study show a difference of opinion between the more experienced and recently graduated teachers. Young teachers seemed to value more pair work and oral exercises than their older colleagues did (Mäkelä 2005: 146).

Henderson et al. (2012) did a very recent study about English pronunciation teaching practices from the teachers' point of view in seven European countries including Finland, France, Germany, Macedonia, Poland, Spain and Switzerland. The researchers found that the teachers felt they had an insufficient amount of training or no training at all to teach pronunciation (Henderson et al. 2012: 5). Pronunciation practice does not cover teaching speaking as a whole but it is a significant part of the ability to speak and thus this finding is notable in the present study. Only in Finland the teachers found the quality of pronunciation training to be above the average. However, the Finns also stated that they had received practice on pronunciation but were not given the tools to teach it (Henderson et al. 2012: 13).

When the teachers were asked to rate the importance of English and pronunciation in relation with other languages, the results show high very appreciation in all countries, Finland being no exception. (Henderson et al. 2012: 9). The results in Macedonia show teachers to value pronunciation but they prioritize communication over the skill of pronunciation. Communication, moreover, is what teaching is aiming to achieve in their opinion. However, in Spain the participants felt that enough is not spent on practicing pronunciation. The skill is felt as a difficult one to learn by the students and the teachers yet the students would need practice on it. Nevertheless, the teachers state that more time is used for learning the skills needed in the written exam at the end of the year which is in accordance with Huuskonen and Kähkönen's (2006) previously described findings in Finland. In Spain too, the end of the year test lacks a speaking test and thus teaching speaking skill is secondary (Henderson et al. 2012: 10).

The teachers were also asked about how aware they are on their learners' motivation to learn, their learning goals and desires. The Finnish participants recognized the students' skills more than their goals. Further questioning about the Finnish teachers' awareness on their learners' skills resulted the teachers mentioning the shortage of time and large group sizes as reasons for not being accounted for this matters (Henderson 2012: 16). Yet, the teachers thought their students to have a high motivation to learn, however, variation is also found. A similar finding was done also by Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006: 85). Thus, the heterogenic nature of language learners, difference in motivation and also the different skill level the learners are at must affect teaching. The teachers also stated that the Finnish students most often aim for understandable communication instead of native like pronunciation as the role model set by known Finns abroad show that there is no need for flawless pronunciation (Henderson 2012: 18).

6   THE PRESENT STUDY

Speaking has arguably gained more attention in foreign language teaching. In the past other areas of language proficiency gained more attention in teaching but now speech communication, that is conveying a message in social interaction, has gained more value.

At the moment teaching oral skills is a very current topic in the field foreign language learning and teaching and the change in curriculum in the Finnish National Curriculum has inspired the discussion even more. However, the topic is not unproblematic. There has been an attempt to include a speaking test to the matriculation exam for almost two decades now (see, for example, Romo (1991)) without any success. This topic has not been widely researched and the studies rarely include the point of view of both parties; students and teachers. Additionally, the studies mostly concentrate on the teachers' perception on teaching oral skills. The research questions of the present study are the following:

1. What are the students' and the teachers' opinions about learning and teaching oral language skills?
2. What affects learning and teaching speaking skills at school?
3. Is learning and teaching speaking skills different in the beginning and in the end of upper secondary school?
4. Have the students' and the teachers' opinions about learning and teaching speaking skills changed during the last two years?

On the whole, I expect that the students have gained more confidence to speak as they are now older, have more training and experience in speaking. Then again, based on my previous study results and the results of others, I still expect boys to be more confident speakers than girls.

7   METHODS

7.1   Participants

The participants of this study were students and teachers of two different upper secondary schools in Finland. School 1 was located in a middle-sized city in central Finland whereas school 2 was located in a small town in northern Ostrobothnia. There were forty five participants altogether and I aimed to have a close number from both schools to take

part. However, due to practical issues at the school in central Finland, there were thirteen participants from this school and thirty-two from Northern Ostrobothnia. What is more, the answers of one student in central Finland needed to be eliminated as half of the questions were left unanswered. Thus, the quantitative data consist of forty-four students' answers altogether. Twenty of the respondents were boys and twenty-three girls as one respondent had not answered the question about gender. At this stage of upper secondary school, at the end, the students were aged between eighteen and nineteen years. The vast majority of the students aimed to graduate in the spring of 2011. I chose the third year upper secondary school students as the participants of this study because one of the aims of the present study is to see is there any difference on the students' perceptions on oral skills in the beginning of upper secondary school and at the end. In addition to compiling the data from the students in the form of a questionnaire, four students were also interviewed. Three of the interviewees were female and one male. Interviewees A and B were both girls from school 1 and they had studied English since third grade in elementary school. Interviewees C, a boy, and D, a girl, were from school 2. Interviewee C had started to study English already from grade two as this had been an opportunity in their elementary school.

In addition to the students, two teachers took part in this study and they were teaching the students taking part in this study. Teacher A was a female teaching the students in central Finland. Teacher B was a male teacher teaching in northern Ostrobothnia. Teacher A worked in a school where many other English language teachers worked too whereas teacher B was the only English language teacher in the upper secondary school. Accordingly, teacher B had been teaching the students for three years that being from the beginning to the end of upper secondary school. Teacher A, on the other hand, had taught some of the students before but some were taking a course taught be her for the first time. Both had several years of teaching experience and they had also taken part in the additional training provided by the Ministry of Education in order to teach students in the new speaking course. The following table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the interviewed participants.

Table 1. A summary of interviewees' background information

Participant	School	Gender	the beginning of English studies
Teacher A	1	female	-
Teacher B	2	male	-
Student A	1	female	grade 3
Student B	1	female	grade 3
Student C	2	male	grade 2
Student D	2	female	grade 3

7.2   Data gathering

From the students, the data was gathered via a questionnaire. I wanted to get a vast sampling from the students as the previous studies on this topic have concentrated more on teachers' point of view. Thus, a questionnaire, which efficient use with larger groups of participants, suited the purposes of the present study the best (see, for example, Alanen (2001)). The data was gathered in February 20011 which was the last month when the students were attending school. The students were soon to go for a reading break and get prepared for the matriculation exams. The Likert- scale questionnaire included 23 statements and three open-ended questions. The questionnaire was compiled in Finnish as I thought that the students' native language would give them freedom of expression, it would prevent misunderstandings and assure that everyone understand the statements.

There were very few alterations done to the questionnaire in order for the results of this study and the previous study to be comparable. Thus, the questionnaire in the present study is similar to the one I used in my study for my bachelors' degree. Nevertheless, a few word choices were altered and a few questions were added to questionnaire. Additionally, based on my peer feedback I tried to make the questionnaire as clear as possible and thus I paid more attention to the overall layout and correct spelling. To get a more in depth view of the students' perceptions on learning oral skills, I also interviewed four students. They were recruited volunteers from the groups which filled in the questionnaire

As a questionnaire sets some limitations to the form of questions and answers, I decided to interview the teachers. The teachers make most of the decisions which concern classroom situations, for example time managements and task choices, and thus I expected interviews to give me more in-depth information about teaching and practicing oral skills. For similar reasons, I also interviewed students. I wanted to strengthen the students' point of view on this topic in this study in general. As the questionnaire focused more on finding out about the students' opinion and attitudes, the interviews gave a better opportunity to examine the factors that affect teaching and learning speaking skills from the students' point of view. The interview questions for students and teachers as well as the questionnaire are found in the appendix.

 The interviews were semi-structured which enable the questions to be planned beforehand. Semi-structured interviews do not set any limitations to wording or the order the questions are asked in each interview but instead they give the participant a freedom of speech (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 75). Interviewing was also included as a means of collecting the data due to its flexible nature in general. Interviewing enables clarifying questions, repetition and confirming understanding (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 73). Similarly, the participants did not have restrictions on reflecting their own opinions or telling about their view with their own words.

The interviews were audio taped on the participants' permission and later transcribed. Teacher A from central Finland and the students from both locations were interviewed in Finnish as it was their native language and thus gave them a relaxed and free way of expressing their opinions. Teacher B, on the other hand, is a native speaker of German. As there was not an opportunity to use German as the language, he preferred English as the language choice. As a non-native speaker of Finnish, he felt that his English skills are more adequate and give him freedom of speech and a more relaxed atmosphere to express his opinions.

7.3   The method of analysis

The main purpose of this study was to find out what students' and teachers' think about learning and teaching speaking skills and what affects this process. This objective was kept in when compiling the questionnaire and planning the interview questions. The design of the questionnaire in this study is almost without exception similar to one used by Ahola (2009). The basis for the questionnaire came from Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006). For the present study, I reviewed the questionnaire of Ahola (2009) by clarifying the spelling and rewording of some statements. Based on my previous experience with this specific questionnaire, I also excluded and added statements which suited the present study better. For example *I learn foreign languages the best when I get to speak as much as possible* was excluded and *At upper secondary school, plenty of time is used for learning grammar* was added.

Despite all the revision and proof reading, there was an error in the questionnaire as statement number 23 *Speaking in English is easy for me* was also mentioned in connection with statement number *20 In my opinon, enough speaking tasks are done in classes*. Thus, statement number 20 is slightly problematic and the results for that individual statement are not completely reliable. In addition to reporting the main findings of my study, I will also pay attention to statistically significant differences between genders. When planning the present study, I aimed also to compare the differences between schools. However, the differences will not be reported as the number of participants is relatively low from central Finland and thus statistical differences are not to be seen and their reliability could be questioned.

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed statistically by using a T-test. The open questions, however, were analyzed qualitatively. Similarly qualitative analysis was done to the interview data by transcribing it. The transcription did not include pauses, false starts or hesitation as this study does not do conversational analysis. Instead the analysis was done on the content of the interviews. In other words, different themes and connecting opinions and ideas were searched for (Dufva 2011 : 139).

In the questionnaire, the students were also asked to indicate whether they had participated in the study I conducted for my bachelors' degree (Ahola 2009) as it was before known that several would have. However, the majority of the students, that is 68. 2 per cent, did not recall whether they had participated in the previous study or not. Thus, the aspect of having a sampling of participants taking part in the both studies was excluded from the analysis in this study.

8   RESULTS

The aim of this study was to discover the opinions of students and teachers on the matter of learning and teaching speaking skills. I was also interested to find out how the opinions of these two sides meet and has the participants' perception on the matter changed in time. In addition to finding out the attitudes towards practicing speaking skills, I also focused on examining the factors that affect teaching and learning oral language skills. In each section, the results are reported from the view point of the students first which are then followed by the teachers' view on the matter.

As this study is not focusing on seeking differences between genders, I will report such differences only when they have statistical significance. Additionally, the questionnaire data is not analyzed from the point of view of differences between schools as the groups of participants are uneven. There is a smaller group of participants from school 1 than from school 2 and thus statistically significant differences are rare, consequently almost unfeasible to arise and therefore not reported. The difference between variables is statistically significant when the value of p is less than 0.05, which is also signaled with a single asterisk in this study. A double asterisk is used when the difference is significant, that is $p < 0.01$. A very significant difference is found when $p < 0.001$ and indicated with three asterisks. Finally, when p value is greater than 0.05 there is no statistical difference.

The questionnaire has five different sub-classes which measure students' general attitude on learning English, their courage to speak, view on practicing speaking skills, opinions

about the use of time and the role of a teacher and finally the role of free time. There are more questions focusing on students' view on practicing speaking skills and teacher related factors, that is, time usage and speaker model, than in other sub-classes. Hence, emphasis is slightly more on these aspects, however, the other sub-classes are equally important. The results of each subclass are demonstrated in the following table which presents the mean of each subclass.

Figure 3. Students' opinions about learning speaking skills; the mean of different questionnaire subclasses

8.1   The reliability of the questionnaire

The questionnaire questions were designed in categories and the reliability of each category was tested by using Cronbach Alpha which calculates the alpha coefficient if a particular item would be deleted from a category. Thus, the figure indicates which item reduces the internal consistency of the overall category and therefore the omission of this item should be considered. The Cronbach Alpha measures internal consistency reliability of the items by giving a figure between zero and plus one. When the test indicates a

result of p > .7 in a study where each category consists of less than 10 items, the reliability is good and the statements correlate well (Dörnyei 2009: 95). In the fourth category, which measured teacher related issues, statement number *12 In my opinion, too much time is used to learning speaking skills* prove to be problematic. Thus, the statement had to be deleted on the account of reliability. The results of each topic were the following:

1. Students' general view on learning speaking skills
Cronbach's alpha: .650
2. The confidence to speak
Cronbach's alpha: .778
3. Students opinions about practicing English speaking skills
Cronbach's alpha: .796
4. Teacher's influence on learning oral language skills
Cronbach's alpha: .705
5. The influence of free time on oral language learning
Cronbach's alpha: .643

The reliability is very good on three of the sub-classes but slightly under the limiting value in two categories. However, the value is very close to the required value and thus the categorization is applicable and the data reliable. Still, the present study will put slightly more emphasis on the categories that correlate the best.

The questionnaire comprised of twenty-five Likert-scale questions and three open questions where the students could express more freely their ideas on set questions. The students were also asked to indicate their gender and which school they were representing, however, any other personal information was not gathered for the sake of anonymity. The Likert- scale questions had five answer options which are the following:

    1. I strongly disagree
    2. I disagree to some extent

3. I don't have an opinion

4. I agree to some extent

5. I strongly agree

8.2 Students' and teachers' opinions about learning and teaching speaking skills

In general, the students had a positive view on learning to speak in English as the sub-class mean for this section was 4.1, which is also the highest mean of all the subclasses. Furthermore, the positive attitude is reflected by 59.1 per cent of the respondents strongly agreeing and the rest, 40. 9 per cent, agreeing to some extend with the statement 3 *Learning and practicing English speaking skills is, in my opinion, an important part of language proficiency.* The results of statement number 5 *Teaching speaking skills at upper secondary school is important* give further indication of positive views as forty-one out of forty-three participants, who had answered the question, either strongly agreed or agreed to some extend with the statement. The sub-class that measured students' general opinion received a high mean among both boys and girls. The results are illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. Boys' and girls' general view on learning speaking skills

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Students general view on speaking	1 Boy	20	4.0750	.49404	.11047
	2 Girl	23	4.1087	.52671	.10983

In the interviews, the students were asked whether learning speaking is important. All the interviewees had a positive stand on English speaking skills being taught at upper secondary school. Student D stated that speaking might be the most important skill you need and student A said that oral communication is often the means of interaction between people. Student C also reasoned the learning of speaking skills to be significant as English, a global language, has an important role in work life as well as in free time.

Example 1

> Onhan se tulossa koko ajan tärkeemmäksi ja tärkeemmäksi. Varsinkin englannissa että kun se englannin kieli yleistyy joka maassa niin paljon että. Sehän on työelämässä ja joka paikassa mihin matkustaa. Nykyään matkustaminenkin yleistyy niin paljon. Sillä [englannin taidolla] pärjää sitten tuolla ympäri maailmaa. (Student C)

> It is becoming all the time more and more important. Especially in English, as English language becomes more common in every country. It is in working life and everywhere you travel. Nowadays travelling too becomes so much. You survive with it [English skills] all over the world.

When asked to estimate their peers' attitudes on speaking skills, the interviewees stated that there is variation between individuals. The difficulty or easiness of learning English seemed to have a significant effect on the attitude on learning speaking skills. Student A mentioned that some students are shyer and they therefore have trouble with speaking whereas others do not let the mistakes they make to affect speaking. Student B stated that the ones who have realized the importance of speaking skills have a more positive attitude. Student D thought that quite a few do not value the new speaking course or do not think speaking skills as important. She connected this with the general lack of interest towards foreign language learning.

Example 2

> Se [asenne] vaihtelee hirveesti ihmisestä riippuen. Jotkut on sellaisia tosi arkoja, että ei uskalla lähteä tunnilla mukaan ja sitten siinä on tosi vaikee mitään keskustelua luodakaan. Jotkut taas on paljon rohkeampia ja sitten tulee sitä puhetta vaikkei sitten ihan oikeen meniskään niin se ei haittaa niitä. Tosiaan riippuu tosi paljon henkilöstä. (Student A)

> It [attitude] varies a lot from one person to another. Others are really sensitive so that they don't have the courage to participate in class and then it is really difficult to create any kind of conversation. Others again are much more bold and then speech comes even it does not go as it is supposed to, it doesn't matter. It really depends on the person.

Example 3

> Sitten sellaset jotka on huomannu sen, että se on tärkeetä ostata puhua myös. Ne on sitten helpommin siinä hommassa. (Student B)

> The the ones who have noticed that it is important to know how to speak. They are more easily on the thing.

The teachers shared the students' positive view on learning speaking. Both teachers thought that learning speaking skills is important and they had the impression that the

majority of the students have a positive attitude too. Teacher A stated that languages are learnt for the sake of using them and that a large part of the language people use is in a spoken form. Teacher B also mentioned that oral skills are a skill needed later in life but at times students do not understand that they have a chance to practice the skill at school. Yet, the new speaking course that was recently added to curriculum divided the teachers' opinions. Teacher A was very critical towards the reformation and she had been in touch with the Ministry of Education in order to change the coming legislation change. She argued that the change would create the different areas of language to be separated.

Example 4

> Se [uusi puhumisen kurssi] pahimmillaan johtaa siihen että kohta meillä on kirjottamisen kurssi, lukemisen kurssi. Kielitaito jos mikä olis semmonen, jota pitäis monipuolisesti ja semmosena pitkänä jatkumona ajatella. Että ei kauheen semmosia pitkiä jaksoja jossa sä et käytä kieltä eikä myöskään eriyttää yhtä kielitaidon osa-aluetta omaksi kurssikseen. (Teacher A)

> It [the new speaking course] at its worst leads to having a course for writing, for reading. Language skills if anything are the ones that should be practiced in varied ways and should be considered as a long continuum. So that there wouldn't be long periods of time where you don't use the language nor should a single area of language knowledge be separated to its own course.

Teacher B, on the other hand, viewed the change as very positive, working for improving speaking skills. However, he thought that the course was insufficient as it was not compulsory for all students. In his experience, the already skilled speakers were the ones taking part in the course and the students who had problems with their skills, and thus in his opinion should attend the course, did not. The following example is an illustration of his opinions.

Example 5

> I think maybe it is not enough. Because it is not a compulsory course it is anyway optional. And maybe there is a difference depending if you teach in a bigger town or in a small town like I do. In a bigger town maybe the run on these kinds of course might be quite big. So many applicants may be there. Here in this small town, I have made the experience that the students who want to take part in this oral course already have quite good, have quite good oral skills. (Teacher B)

8.3 Students' and teachers' opinions about practicing speaking skills at school

The majority of the students had a rather positive view on practicing English and speaking it as the sub-class mean for this item was 3.6. Statement number 13 *It is nice to speak in English* received the partial or total agreement from 59.1 per cent of the students. The positive attitude reflected also in statement 8 *I would like to learn to speak like a native speaker* as the results show 34.1 per cent to agree partially and 27.3 per cent to agree completely with the statement. However, this statement had also been a difficult one because almost a third, 27.3 per cent, did not state their opinion.

Practicing speaking skills, however, did not receive merely positive results. Statement 7 *Learning speaking skills is in my opinion difficult* and statement 23, which measured the same topic rephrased, gave indications that students have difficulties in learning speaking. The results of statement 7 show deviation in opinions as 34.1 per cent of the students agreed to some extent with the statement but an equal percentage somewhat disagreed. Furthermore, equally three respondents totally agreed and disagreed with the statement and thus combined the results indicate the majority of the respondents to have opposing views. When the results of statement 23 *Speaking in English is easy for me* are examined from the view point of gender, a statistically almost significant difference indicates boys to find speaking easier than girls do. Table 2 illustrates the results of statement 7 and table 3 the difference of opinion between boys and girls on the easiness of learning oral language skills.

Table 3 Students' experience on the difficulty of speaking English

Q7 Speaking in English is difficult	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 I strongly disagree	*3*	*6.8*	*6.8*	*6.8*
2 I partially disagree	*15*	*34.1*	*34.1*	*40.9*
3 I do not have an opinion	*8*	*18.2*	*18.2*	*59.1*
4 I partially agree	*15*	*34.1*	*34.1*	*93.2*
5 I strongly agree	*3*	*6.8*	*6.8*	*100.0*
Total	*44*	*100.0*	*100.0*	

Table 4. The difference between genders on the easiness of speaking English

Q23 Speaking in English is easy for me	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	P-value
1Boy	19	3.58	1.071	.246	.021(*)
2 Girl	22	2.77	1.066	.227	

The teachers saw practicing speaking skills as important. Teacher A stated that input has a clear role in learning speaking and that language skills should be used in classes. Thus, the decisions about the usage of time teachers make have a role in learning speaking skills. Teacher B thought that several students were motivated to learn which is seen by the willingness to use the language both in and outside classes. The following example reflects the teachers' opinions.

Example 6

> Sellanen kielen tunti on aika huono tunti, jossa oppilaat eivät ole keskustelleet, käyttäneet ite sitä vierasta kieltä. Se ajan käyttö siellä tunnilla. (Teacher A)

> A such language lesson were students haven't discussed, used the foreign language is a quite bad one. It is the use of time in class.

Example 7

> many students have positive attitude like I said before these are the ones who are active in the lessons as well so they really even try to speak English in the classroom from time to time they even speak English outside the classroom. (Teacher B)

The teachers aimed to teach speaking skills by making the students to practice the skill in various different tasks and methods. Pair work, games, dialogues and group discussions were mentioned by teacher A whereas teacher B also remarked small talk, cultural knowledge and revising phrases and situated language. Teacher A also said that with upper secondary school students she probably trusted too much on the previous knowledge the students have and did not do as much preparatory work before letting the students do the actual speaking practice. Teacher A also stated that it is acceptable to use Finnish in her classes and she used it herself too. Teacher B had a different stand on the language usage in class. He aimed to use English only for teaching, including teaching grammar. He had, however, been asked to use less English, which he did not find to be beneficial for the students' learning.

Example 8

> Totta kai mä puhun ja mä puhun vierasta kieltä niin paljon kun mahollista. Mutta on ihan
> ok myöskin puhua suomea. Ja oppilashan puhuu sitä kieltä, millä hän pystyy viestimään.
> (Teacher A)

> Of course I speak and I speak the foreign language as much as possible. But it is also ok
> to speak Finnish. And the student speaks the language he/she is able to communicate with.

Example 9

> I have been asked also not use as much English in the classroom as I do because the
> weaker students they won't follow […] but now I have really also found myself
> explaining things in Finnish, using Finnish in the classroom because I don't want to
> frustrate the weaker students. But anyway, I doubt it would be good in the long run.
> (Teacher B)

Teacher A continued that for the students practicing speaking skills might not appear obvious. The tasks that are done in classes do not always appear to students as tasks that rehearse speaking skills. Thus, sometimes students do not even realize that they are practicing oral language skills. Example 10 illustrates the opinion of teacher A.

Example 10

> Monta kertaa huomaa että kun he tekevät jotain juttua että he opettelevat itse asiassa sitä
> suullista kielitaitoa. Oppilaalle se näyttäytyy eihän me tehä mitään. Me istutaan ja
> puhutaan täällä, me vaan istutaan ja pelataan täällä. (Teacher A)

> Many times you notice that when they do something that they actually practice speaking
> skills. To the student it seems like we are not doing anything. We are sitting and speaking
> here, we are just sitting and playing games here.

8.4   Students' opinions about the use of time and teacher's role in learning

The questionnaire also measured students' opinions about time usage and teachers' role as a speaker model. The subclass on this matter received a mean of 3.4. The time related questions were difficult ones for the students to answer as a high proportion did not have an opinion. *I do not know* was chosen as the answer in statement *9 Enough time is used to teaching speaking skills* and statement 20 *In my opinion, enough of speaking tasks is done during classes* by 40.9 and 36.4 per cent of the students respectively. However, when asked about whether too much time is used in upper secondary school for practicing grammar or not, the students indicated a clearer opinion of having a considerable amount of grammar

practice. Thus, 59.1 per cent somewhat agreed or agreed completely with statement 25 *In upper secondary school, a plenty of time is used for practicing grammar* although 36.4 per cent had the trouble of stating an opinion. For twenty-seven out of forty-two answers the teacher model for practicing speaking and pronunciation was important. 40.9 per cent also used teacher produced speech as a model for their own speaking. However, another 30.8 per cent partially or strongly disagreed with statement 18 *I use teacher's speech/ pronunciation as a model for my own speech/ pronunciation.* This statement also had one of the highest deviations in the whole study.

In the interviews all of the students were of the opinion that speaking skills had not been practiced enough. Student A firmly stated that enough time had not been used and continued that she could not recall too many times when speaking skills would have been practiced. She pointed out that often tasks are given in class without preparatory work or the theoretical knowledge of how the task should be done. She was also of the opinion that there was a lack of instruction. This was a common feature in all the interviewees' answers; they all stated that speaking skills are learnt in the side of other aspects of language knowledge. Student D said that the focus had been more on grammar and that the question of having enough practice varies from one teacher to another. Only in the speaking course, learning speaking skills gained a central role in learning. Student C noted that if the teacher does take into consideration the quiet students, the practice for them is almost non-existent.

Example 11

> Ehkä ei. Joillakin se tulee siinä tunnilla se, jotka on aktiivisia. Siinä saa sitä harjotusta mutta sitten jos opettaja ei ota ite huomioon näitä hiljasempia. Niillähän se jää nyt aika olemattomaksi. (Student C)

> Maybe not. For some it comes during classes, those who are active. There you get the practice but if the teacher doesn't take into account the quiet ones. For those it really is pretty non-existent.

Example 12

> Se varmaan riippuu vähän koulustakin, opettajasta. Mutta ei siihen aivan älyttömästi kyllä muuten käytetä [aikaa] kun siellä puhekurssilla. Se paino on siinä kieliopissa kyllä, mutta tietenkin se siinä ohessa tulee kun niitä täytyy, englanniksi keskustellaan opettajan kanssa koko ajan. Kyllä sitä ehkä vähän sais lisätä. (Student D)

> It probably dependens on the school too, on the teacher. But it's not really used oodles of [time] other than in the speaking course. The emphasis is really on the grammar, but of

course in the side it comes when you need to speak in English with the teacher all the time. Surely it could maybe be added a bit.

8.5   The role of courage in learning speaking skills

The subclass that measured students' courage to speak received the lowest mean of 3.3 in this study. The results of statement 4 *I have courage to speak in English in classes* had a high deviation of 1. 253. The results show an equal percentage of 31.8 to partially agree but also to disagree with the statement. The results of statement 17 *I have courage to speak in English outside of school*, on the other hand, show that 65.9 per cent of the respondents shared the opinion completely or partially. The difference in confidence between genders is not statistically significant when the results of the whole subclass are examined. However, a gender difference that is almost statistically significant is found when both statements 4 and 17 are contemplated separately from the entity. The results show girls to have a lower mean than boys in both statements.

Table 4. Students' confidence to speak in English at school

Q4 I have the courage to speak in English in classes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	P-value
1Boy	20	3.75	1.070	.239	.017(*)
2 Girl	23	2.87	1.254	.262	

Table 5. Students' confidence to speak in English outside of school

Q17 I have the courage to speak in English outside of school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	P-value
1 Boy	20	4.10	.718	.161	0.24(*)
2 Girl	23	3.43	1.121	.234	

In the interviews, student A and B described themselves as shy speakers. Student A felt that it was difficult to speak in English and practice it in the classroom with her peers hearing. One of the reasons for that was the lack of speaking practice at school, in her opinion. She had, however, gained more confidence to speak from free time activities but she stressed that school had not contributed to the increase of courage. Student B had a

similar experience of getting more courage from an outside of school. She had been an exchange student which had affected to her confidence to speak.

Example 12

> Koulussa vaikeeta. Mä oon silleen melko ujo kummiski. Niin sitten se tuntuu jotenkin hirveen hankalalta että uskaltais lähtee puhumaan siellä luokassa englantia kun kaikki kuuntelee ja ei sitä kun, sitä koulussa harjoteltiin tosi vähäsen. Mun mielestä ainakin. Niin ei siihen tullu semmosta rohkeutta. Niin sitten jos jostain sanan ääntämisestä ei ollu varma yleensä meni siihen ettei yrittänykään ääntää sitä, vaan silleen kirjaimella, miten se kirjotetaan silleen luki sen siitä. (Student A)

> At school difficult. I am kind of shy after all. It felt somehow really hard that you would have the courage to speak English in the class when everyone is listening and it' not, it's practiced very little at school. In my opinion at least. So it didn't get that kind of courage. So when you were unsure of pronouncing a word, usually it went to the point that you don't even try to pronounce it but letter by letter, the way it's written, that's how you say it.

All the interviewees agreed with the idea that teachers could courage students to speak. Both student B and D mentioned the way a teacher reacts and manages the errors students make in classes to be an influential factor to students' courage building. Further on, student D said reactions on errors to have an effect on the atmosphere in the class. Student C noted that students easily choose to use Finnish in classes and thus teachers could remind them to speak in English. He also mentioned the role of feedback from the teacher; teachers could give praise to the student for using English. Student A thought that students should also do other forms of work than only pair work. Pair work was also acknowledged in the open questions in the questionnaire. A respondent from school 1 stated the importance of getting to choose the person to work with.

Example 13

> En tiedä, mutta mielestäni oppilaiden on saatava itse päättää kenen kanssa suullisia harjoituksia tekee. Opettaja ei saisi yhdistellä ujoille oppilaille täysin vierasta partneria suullisiin harjoituksiin. (Questionnaire 1)

> I don't know but in my opinion students' should get to choose with whom they do oral practice. The teacher shouldn't connect shy students with a completely strange partner in speaking practice.

Example 14

> Kyllähän se [opettaja] voi siinä, ihan niin kun siinä perustuntikäyttäytymisellä, että miten suhtautuu siihen jos oppilas vaikka lausuu väärin tai näin. Kyllähän se luo tietynlaisen ilmapiirin siihen luokkaa, että uskaltaa puhua. (Student D)

> Really the teacher can just there, like just with the basic behavior in class, that how reacts if a student for example pronounces wrong or like that. It really creates a certain kind of atmosphere to the class, that you have the courage to speak.

The teachers were also asked if they aimed to courage students to speak in English and how they do it. Both teachers reported that they promoted speaking in English and tried to courage the students to speak as much English as possible in classes, for example in the situations of revising homework together. Teacher A wanted to lower the threshold for speaking in English by making the students to work in pairs or groups. In addition, in her classes using Finnish is acceptable when the students are giving answers and they do not know how to give it in English. Furthermore, if a student did not know the answer in English, she asked the whole class for help instead of putting pressure on the individual student. Teacher B was slightly more critical about the students using Finnish. He urged the students to use English when they were giving answers in Finnish. Speaking English at home was also something that teacher A told the students to do for getting more courage. She suggested the students to speak by themselves if they were worried about someone at home hearing them speak. Additionally she also mentioned internal language, speaking and pronouncing words silently as a way of getting more courage for speaking with others.

Example 15

> Niin, no tunnilla se nyt on itsestään selvyys, […] jos sä et tiedä sitä vastausta englanniksi niin totta kai sä saat sanoa sen suomeksi. Just sellanen kuka tahansa sitten, voidaan kysyä, joo meillä on nyt tämmönen ongelma tätä ei osaa. Pekka ei osaa tätä, muistaisko joku. Onko se suullisen kielitaidon rohkasemista? Musta se ainakin. He tarkistaa kotitehtävät pääsääntösesti niin että he joutuvat kerro parille, näytä parille, puhu parin kanssa. (Teacher A)

> Well, yes in class it is obvious […] if you don't know the answer in English then of course you are allowed to say it in Finnish. Just like any one then, it can be asked, yeah, we have this kind of problem here, doesn't know this. Pekka doesn't know this, does anyone remember. Is that encouraging speaking skills? In my opinion it is. As a rule they check their homework so that they have to tell their partner, show to the partner, speak with the partner.

> Yes, I do it as often as possible. When I ask them a question in English and they answer in Finnish, I always encourage them to use English. (Teacher B)

8.6   The role of free time in learning speaking skills

In addition to the aspects described above, the questionnaire also measured the role of free time in learning speaking skills. The mean for this sub-class was 3.6, indicating that the time outside of school has an impact on learning speaking. Statement 10 was a question about practicing speaking skills outside of class time and it received the highest deviation of 1. 285 in this study. A total of 43.1 per cent of the respondents indicated that they do not practice speaking skills in their free time by either completely or partially disagreeing with the statement. On the other hand, a close number, namely 50.0 per cent, either completely or partially agreed with the statement. The reason for the polarization of opinions is found when the statement 10 is viewed from the perspective of gender. The results show a statistically significant difference of boys practicing speaking skills in their free time more than girls do.

Table 6 Gender division on practicing speaking skills outside of school

Q10 I practice speaking skills in my free time	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
1 Boy	*20*	*3.55*	*1.146*	*.007(**)*
2 Girl	*23*	*2.52*	*1.238*	

The majority of the students felt that the instruction given at school gave them the skills to communicate in English as 61.4 per cent indicated agreement with statement 11 *I am able to communicate in English based on the skills I have learnt at school*. Moreover, boys were found to agree with this statement more often than girls and statistically the difference is almost significant as the p value is 0.028. In addition to that, the statement 22 *I need English skills in my free time e.g. when I travel* measured the need for English skills. By agreeing with statement thirty-two students, that is 72.7 per cent, signaled English to be useful in their free time.

From the interviewees, students A and D mentioned Internet as a place for needing English skills. Student A also mentioned watching movies and student B a close equivalent, watching TV, as an activity where English skills are needed. Both student A and D also noted that they did not have the experience of getting to use English in Finland much. Student C, however,

had experiences of using English in his home town despite of it being a smaller one in a remote location. In his summer jobs he had encountered foreigners and had had the need for English speaking skills in the form of small talk. Student B had also made acquaintances during her year abroad with whom she needed English.

Example 16

> …Pitää töissä sitten vähän rupatella siinä. Kyllä se on, että täälläkin sitä [englannin suullista kielitaitoa] tarvii. Vaikka näin pohjosessa ja korvessa ollaankin. Kyllä se tännekin asti vaan tulee. (Student C)

> I then need to chat at work. It really is that it [English speaking skills] is needed here too. Even though we are so up north and in the woods. It really comes all the way here.

8.7   Factors affecting teaching and learning speaking skills at school

Both students from central Finland, that is A and B, stated the influence of the group as a factor affecting learning speaking. Student A said that the reactions of peers, for example laughing albeit harmless, create inhabitations for speaking so that the whole group is listening. The atmosphere in class, which is created by the entire group, affected students' participation and the way tasks are done. In addition to that, the attitude of the person one is working with has a role too as pair work is a common form of rehearsing speaking skills.

Example 17

> Sitten se kuinka hyvin muutkin lähtee siihen mukaan vai onko ne niin, että ei vois vähempää kiinnostaa. Koska se tuntuu tosi tyhmältä, jos siellä sanotaan että lue nauhan perässä ja siellä itekseen rupee selittää, niin äkkiä se tyrehtyy siihen. Sitten voi olla myös se, minkälainen työrauha siellä luokassa on. (Student A)

> Then how well others go along with it or is like that I couldn't care less. Because it feel really stupid if it says repeat after the tape and then you start to explain all by yourself, it really quickly dries up right there. Then it can also be, the kind of peace and quiet there is for studying in the classroom.

Example 18

> Se on aika paljon kyllä ehkä se ryhmähenki. Että jos sulla on semmonen pari jonka kanssa sä voit keskustella, tai jos siis molemmat ihmiset lähtee siihen keskusteluun mukaan, niin sitten sitä pystyy harjottelemaan sitä suullista kielitaitoo. Mutta sitten taas jos on sellanen tosi hiljanen ryhmä, se on tosi vaikeeta sitten. […] Siis se miten paljon sitä saa käytettyä. Kyllä se ryhmä on vaan avaintekijä siinä rohkaistuuko ihmiset puhumaan. (Student B)

It really is a lot maybe the group atmosphere. If you have a partner whom you can talk with, or if both people go along with the conversation, then you are able to practice speaking skills. Then if the group is a really quiet one, it is really difficult then. So how much you are able to use it. The group really is a key factor in whether people get encouraged to speak or not.

Student C emphasized the role of different task types and hearing spoken English. Additionally, he thought that it is important that the tools for speaking are given through the actual teaching of the basics of speaking. With the knowledge of how to speak in English the practice of speaking skills can then begin. Student D shared his view on the significance of hearing English but added that also the role of free time matters. In her opinion, the amount of listening that is done outside of school in addition to one's own activity have an effect. Both students were taught by teacher B, who used nearly always English in teaching, which student C and D showed to appreciate in their statements. Student A also mentioned the way speaking is taught. She valued teacher given speech examples over recorded speech.

Example 19

ainakin oon saanu paljon semmosta hyvää esimerkkiä ja semmosta, että kun on vaan kuullu sen että miten se oikeesti menee. Ja sitten kun opettaa ne perusasiat, ne perusteet, niin sitä pystyy ite sitten rakentamaan semmosen. Että sitten välillä pystyy ite antamaankin ulos semmosia, ihan oikeita lauseita välilläkin. (Student C)

Example 20

Noh, se vaikuttaa ainakin aika paljon, että miten, miten vapaa-ajaalla kuulee sitä puhetta. Itellä tulee paljon siitä että sitä kielitaitoa että on kuullu jossakin[…] Että se vapaa-ajan aktiivisuus vaikuttaa siellä tunnillakin tosi paljon. Jos ei oo vapaa-ajalla yhtään kiinnostunut eikä paina mieleen, mitä kuulee on se sitten vähäsen vaikeempaa tunnilla. (Student D)

The students were also asked whether having one or more teachers affected learning speaking skills. In the opinion of student A, it is positive to have more than just one teacher as the teaching style of one might be more suitable for learning than that of another teacher. Student B, C and D thought that it was good to have a familiar teacher. Student C found it useful to be familiar with the teachers' style of teaching as frequently changing teachers might confuse. Student C noted that when the teacher is unfamiliar, in the beginning students hesitate in speaking. She continued that having a familiar teacher creates a certain kind of atmosphere where students have the courage to speak. Student D mentioned also that when the teacher does not change too often, the teacher knows the students better and is then able to help them in learning.

When the students were questioned more specifically what favors learning speaking skills, they consistently mentioned the different tasks done at school. Student B mentioned discussions in pairs and the importance of having a vast vocabulary. She also noted that memorizing things, such as common phrases works only in the beginning. Student C highlighted giving presentations as a task type that had worked for him. He said that in presentations he really knew when he succeeded but also the points that needed more practice became clear. Student A made the reference of an interesting topic as a motivator for doing speaking practice. She also thought that the topic should not be too challenging lexicon-wise as for example the requirement of knowing too challenging vocabulary, for example scientific, might put an end to the conversation. Student D emphasized students own contribution in and outside class but also noted that the structure of the lesson has an impact on how many opportunities for speaking there are.

Example 21

> Jos viittaa aina ja sitten tietystihän se riippuu siitä tunnin rakenteestakin, kuinka paljon siellä yleensä ylipäätään puhutaan. Kyllä se oma aktiivisuus. Ei siihen varmaan mitään semmosia hirmu kikkoja oo. Se on vaan se oma aktiivisuus siellä tunnilla ja myös vapaa-ajalla. (Student D)

> If you always raise your hand for answering and then of course it depends on the structure of the class, how much speaking is done there. It really really yourself being active. There aren't probably any tricks to it. It just is you being active in class and also in your free time.

For hindering factors the students mentioned several different aspects. The role of the group was repeated in the statement of student A. The reactions of peers, in the opinion of student A, influenced the confidence to speak. Student D mentioned the role of courage too but in a more general way as she though the lack of courage to speak to be a hindrance for learning speaking. Furthermore, student B thought that it was disruptive how much Finnish is used in classes by the teachers and then also by the students. Student D, on the other hand, recognized how English only teaching caused difficulties in learning for the weaker students. He said that the basics are not mastered by the weaker ones and thus, teaching in English does not benefit them at all.

Example 22

> Se jos siellä on tosi huono ryhmähenki ja jos siellä on jotain semmosia, jotka tai ei välttämättä tarkotuksella sitä tee, mutta sitten saattaa ruveta nauramaan. Jotain tämmöstä. Se syö tosi pajon itsetuntoa, ei sitten uskalla lähteä mukaan semmoseen. (Student A)

> If there is a really bad group atmosphere and if there are some people who don't necessarily do it on purpose, but they might start laughing. Something like this. It really eats up your self-confidence, then you don't have courage to go along with things like that

Example 23

> Ainakin jos pelkää sitä, että ei uskalla puhua ja ei uskalla vastata sitten. Niin pelkää sitä, että sanoo väärin. Että ei edes yritä, niin sillon ei. (Student D)

> At least if you are afraid of it that you don't have the courage to speak or you don't have the courage to answer. So you are afraid of saying it wrong. So that you don't even try then, so then no.

For teachers, the hindering factors were related to the settings of teaching. Group size one the things that in the opinion of teacher A could both promote teaching speaking but also impede it. She stressed that in addition to having a group too big, it is also important that group sizes are not too small. In small groups teaching becomes, in her experience, too intensive and interaction lacks variety. An ideal group size varies between sixteen and under thirty students. Additionally teacher A noted that realizing all the matters that can be done orally instead of a written form contributes to teaching speaking skills. Having enough time for teaching speaking was in her opinion as important as group size. Teacher A had also the view point that the new speaking course, which substituted one of the advanced courses in the curriculum, creates a pressure of time in the other courses.

Example 24

> Ehkä se, että opettaja oivaltais, mitä kaikkea voi tehdä suullisesti. Että sitä ei oo pakko välttämättä kirjottaa tai jos sen ensin sanoo niin sen kirjottaa tai päinvastoin. […] No nythän tästä opetussuunnitelman uudistuksesta oli seurauksena se kerran jos sitten yks tämmönen suht tiivisasiasisältöinen kurssi muutettiin suullisen kielitaidon kurssiksi. Sehän lisää paineita sille muille kursseilla käsiteltävälle ainekselle. Oppilaat kuitenkin haluaa hyviä arvosanoja sitten loppu kokeesta. Eli aika on ihan yhtä tärkee kun se opetusryhmän koko. (Teacher A)

> Maybe that the teacher would realize what can be done orally. It's not necessary to write, or if it said first then it is written or vice versa […] Well, now this renewing of the curriculum has resulted that if one of quite content compact courses was changed into a speaking course. It adds up the pressure on the material covered in the other courses. Students want after all good grades from the final test. So time is as important as group size.

Teacher B approached the subject from the view point of factors that hinder teaching. Thus, by changing the aspects that hinder, teaching speaking is promoted. Teacher B criticized teaching to be too matriculation exam oriented and to lack room for spontaneity. He thought that the main aim in teaching should be in creating opportunities for freer communication without the pressure of the matriculation examination or the course exams. Hence, the main focus should be in practicing the language skills in different contexts instead of practicing for a test. He also felt that the multiple tests that students face and the demand of passing them along with grammar create pressure in learning and teaching and sometimes even put it to a secondary position. The course based system was a factor that enables this situation to happen. That is, in a larger scale the aim that is always in mind and which teaching is the task of passing matriculation examination.

Example 25

> So there should be really more chances also to communicate freely without having this pressure all the time in your neck about all kinds of things. […] Also taking maybe the pressure from the students away that they have to work more their vocabulary test, the course test, they have to know this and that grammar. Of course grammar is very important but very often this kind of technical teaching or these kind of technical aims like passing the test, passing the examines in the end may be put the necessity to practice the language itself a bit on the background. (Teacher B)

Furthermore, the role of the Finnish language was also mentioned as a hindering factor by teacher B. In his experience, many of the students are not used to talking in English and neither are they used to their teacher teaching in English. When teaching English in Germany, he had the experience that the students had found the teaching in the target language to be very rewarding and they did not ask for it to take place in the native language as he had been asked to do in Finland. He felt that for the students it was more a matter of motivation than having the skill to understand English. He felt that the standard and demands for teaching in upper secondary school should be high and thus he should be able to use the target language for teaching. Another hindrance caused by the Finnish language in his view was the difficulty students had in pronunciation and the way they learnt words.

Example 26

> Their [students] native language itself might be a bit in the way of practicing English because they have difficulties in pronouncing particular words correctly, and they very often even when they learn vocabulary they really pronounce the words like they read them even they have been told the correct sample for many, many times. […] it takes sometimes some time also to tell them or to teach them or to make them to understand that is not the way to practice English in a natural way. (Teacher B)

Teacher A was reluctant to emphasize the individual student's attitude as a hindering factor as she noted the entire group to have an impact. One group could in her words be a very quiet one, where much enthusiasm for doing tasks is not found whereas another could be almost too loquacious. The teacher's task is in these situations to choose tasks that are suitable for each group. As a clear hindrance she stated the language spoken in classes to be written language, not genuinely spoken language.

Example 27

> Mehän puhutaan kirjotettua kieltä. Me ei lähetä oikeesti kovinkaan monessa tilanteessa opettamaan, siis harjottelemaan oppilaiden kanssa semmosta oikeeta, puhutta kieltä. Hirveen monet jutut pohjautuu siihen, että se on sitä kirjotettua tekstiä. (Teacher A)

> We speak written language. We don't really start in many situations to teach, to practice that kind of real, spoken language with the students. Many things are based on that there is written language.

The teachers' opinion about the course based system was also asked in the interview. Teacher B thought the course based system to promote speaking skills as the topics and themes change from one course to another and provoke students into practicing speaking. Hence the variety gives students many opportunities for practicing speaking skills. Teacher A brought forward another point of view as she mentioned the course bases system to have negative characteristics in a large sized school. The teachers might teach individual students only in one course during the three years of upper secondary school which she found to be difficult both for the student and for herself as a teacher. As a teacher, she found it challenging to get a full understanding of the students' skills and familiarity about the students takes time. For the students, it takes time to find the peers they find comfortable working with and finding their own place in the group.

8.8   Teaching speaking in the end and in the beginning of upper secondary school

Students A and C, D had the view that learning speaking skills is more challenging in the end of upper secondary school than in the beginning. Student C noted that vocabulary and the language structures had become more difficult in the last year. Students A and D stated that students were expected to produce their own speech without getting much support from materials. Furthermore, student D specified that in the beginning learning speaking skills had been more about learning to pronounce the individual words and reading aloud texts. Student A brought the view point that all do not reach the skill level that is required, however, in teaching it is assumed that the students are more skilled than they actually are. Student B had similar ideas about the beginning as the other interviewees had, but made the notion about the end being more matriculation exam focused. Speaking was in her opinion left slightly on the background. Two respondents had made a similar remark in the questionnaire by answering the open questions. One of them signaled that it was obvious that less attention was paid on speaking skills because of the forthcoming matriculation exam.

Example 28

> … nykyään oletetaan että se tulee meiltä itsestään se englanti, että meillä ei oo mitään ongelmaa. Pitäis olla siinä että ruvetaan puhumaan, annetaan aihe ja sen pitäis lähtee tosta noin vaan sekunnissa. Ja sillon lukion alussa se oli enempi semmosta, että just ohjattiin että mistä esim. annettiin vaikka aihe ja sitten siihen annettiin alaviitteitä että näistä esim. voitte puhua ja tällästä. Että nyt saatetaan olettaa jopa että me osataan liikaa tai kaikki ei välttämättä oo sillä tasolla, millä meidän oletetaan olevan. (Student A)

> Today it is assumed that it comes automatically that English, that we don't have any kinds of problems. You should be there to start speaking, the subject is given and should get started just like that in a second. And in the beginning of upper secondary school it was more the kind that you were guided where for example the except topic was given and then it was given footnotes that you can e.g. speak about this and like that. Now it may be assumed that we are able to do too much or that not everyone is necessarily on the level we are assumed to be.

Example 29

> Lopussa ei tietenkään tehty niin paljon suullisia harjoituksia, kun keskitytään yo-kokeessa tarvittaviin asioihin. (Questionnaire 2)

> Of course as much speaking tasks weren't done in the end when the things needed in the matriculation exams are in focus.

Teacher B felt that the most significant change that takes place between the first and the last year of upper secondary school is students' familiarity with teaching methods. The unfamiliarity of having a communicative approach to teaching in English was in the view point of teacher B was clear in the beginning and as time passed teaching becomes easier for him as does learning for the students. Thus, he felt that there is a development on the students' behalf on using the language in class. However, some students also have problems with their attitude towards learning English.

Example 30

> At the beginning it could be with some students at least, quite difficult to warm them up for using the language as often as possible, to warm them up for even developing a positive attitude towards the language. If you don't have that in a way so you don't have any interest in developing your skills or oral skills whatever. (Teacher B)

Teacher A saw a difference in the students' attitude and confidence about their skills in comparison with others. She noted that the school she works has a high average requirement set for entering. Thus, at the beginning students are accustomed to being very skilled but in comparison with others shape their view about the language skills they have. In the end, these students might become rather quiet and only willing to work with familiar peers. Hence, students' own conception about language skills has an effect on how they receive information and how they act during oral practice. Teacher A described it a phenomenon of polarization to be evident in the end where the weaker and the more skilled students are easily detected.

Example 31

> … ne jotka on huomanneet ettei he siinä ryhmässä ookkaan siinä kärkipäässä, niin heistä saattaa tulla aika hiljaisia. He mieluummin, he valitsee aika tarkkaan sen työparin ja puhuu vaan sille. Eikä juurikaan vastaa yleisesti luokassa. [..] Joo eli myöhempinä vuosina, siis kolmannen vuoden kursseilla selkeesti jo näkee, että se oppilaan käsitys siitä omasta kielitaidosta vaikuttaa siihen, että miten hän ottaa vastaan tai miten hän käyttäytyy siellä suullisissa osioissa. (Teacher A)

> Those who have noticed that they are not in the top of the group, those might become quite quiet. They prefer, they choose quite carefully their partner to work with and only speak to that. Don't really answer generally in the class. Yeah, in the later years, in the third year courses then it is clearly seen that the student's own perception about the language skills affect how he/she takes in or how he/she behaves in the oral

The students' and teachers' opinions about learning and teaching speaking skills have been studied by Ahola (2009) with similar methods than in the present study. A questionnaire was conducted for students and the teachers were interviewed. When the questionnaire results between the previous study and the present study are examined, there are not great differences. However, the results of the present study show a smaller mean for each of the questionnaire subclasses, students view on practicing speaking skills being the only exception.
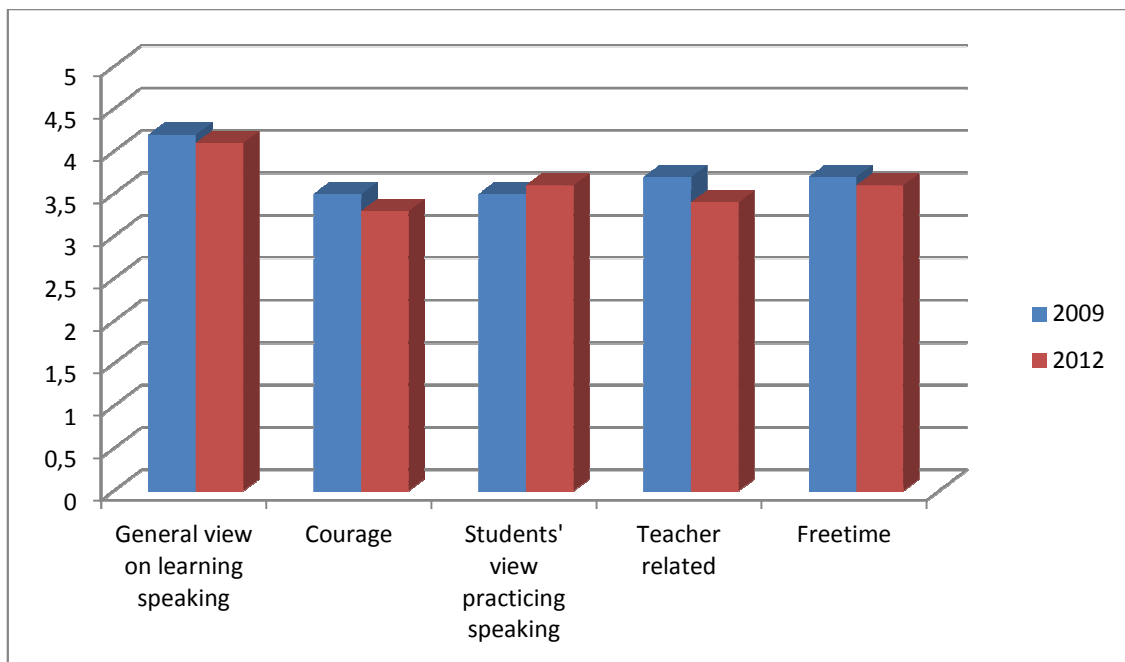

Figure 4. The mean values of students' opinions about different aspects on learning speaking skills in 2009 and 2012

9   DISCUSSION

The studies of Khamkhien (2001), Mäkelä (2005) as well as one from Kähkönen and Huuskonen (2006) demonstrate students in general to have a high motivation to learn English. A similar finding is made in this study as the results show students to have a very high motivation to learn English. This was clearly indicated in the results by 72.2 per cent of the students who signaled to have a need for English skills in their free time. Thus, for the students learning English has a clear purpose and English skills are seen to

be purposeful. In addition to that, the sub-class that measured students' general attitude towards learning speaking skills received the highest mean in this study. When the opinions of both, students and teachers, are examined on the importance of learning speaking skills, the opinions were convergent. The teachers had positive views about the role of speaking skills in language teaching. The communicative goal in learning was recognized by both teachers and the same idea was reflected also by students in the interviews. A European study also shows teachers to think that students have a high motivation to learn English (Henderson et al. 2013). The teachers in the present study were found to have comparable ideas. The results of these two studies give an indication that the lingua franca position and the importance of knowing English have been internalized which shows in the high motivation to learn the skills for communication for the learners' part. In the present study, the usefulness of English was clearly stated in the interviews by student C and also by teacher B, who saw the students were learning skills that are needed in life. It is an example of students' and the teachers' opinions being alike.

However, the results of the section which measured students' attitudes towards practicing speaking skills showed the topic to be complex. Even though the majority of the students have a positive view on learning speaking skills, the attitude can vary from one individual to another. The results show that it is for one part the experience of difficulty or easiness of learning speaking that affects the view but for another the student's experiences of shyness to speak to have a great impact on learning. The questions that measured the level of difficulty experienced by the students on learning speaking skills had a great standard deviation, which shows the heterogenic nature of learners. The students' might think it is important and useful to learn speaking skills but their attitude to practicing it differs as for some learning speaking is easy whereas for others it is difficult.

One of the matters creating challenge to learning English speaking is pronunciation. In the interviews, this was mentioned by both a student and a teacher. Student A told that students have a tendency of pronouncing English words according to the phonetic rules of Finnish instead of applying the pronunciation practices of English. She did not explicitly say this to be a challenger in learning but her answers signal to me it to be one.

Perhaps there is not enough pronunciation practice at schools, as in the study of Henderson et al. (2013) teachers stated to aim more to the overall skills of communication. Furthermore, the same remark about answering and pronouncing was made by teacher B who noted the application of Finnish phonetic rules to be an approach or method that the students applied in their learning of English words. Instead of seeing this merely as a way for learning adopted by the students like teacher B did, I also see it to be a matter of courage. I believe that students do not feel confident enough for trying to pronounce English words. In addition to needing pronunciation practice, the students need to be encouraged into trying to pronounce vocabulary accordingly.

Thus, pronunciation sets some challenges for speaking but more importantly the students seemed to lack the confidence for speaking as a whole and speaking in front of others. In this study, the role of confidence in speaking arises into central position which is in connection with the results of de Saint Léger and Storch (2009), where students named the confidence to speak as one of their assets in learning speaking. In the present study, the students reported a lesser contribution in practicing speaking skills, be it pair or group work, if they felt shyness to speak. Further on, the interviewed students were of the opinion that teachers could courage students to speak in different ways, one of the ways being the teachers' reactions to errors. It is important that teachers give corrections, as Al-Zedjali's (2009) study results also show, but the students' comments give the notion of a teacher to be an important courage giver. The teachers indicated to recognize a connection between speaking and courage as they were able to name ways of encouraging students to speak. However, they did not emphasize the role of courage in teaching even though the results from the student in this study indicate this to be a much more important matter than teachers seem to perceive.

The confidence to speak proves to have a central role in practicing speaking skills and using the skill itself. A Finnish study by Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006) and another by Yli-Renko already in 1991 made the notion of students' shyness to speak affect teaching speaking. The studies of Khamkhien (2001), Al-Zedjali (2009) as wells the study results of de Saint Léger and Storch (2009) in non-Finnish settings show courage to be a shared

issue of students from different backgrounds. In Finland, the Finns' shyness to speak is thought to be a specific feature of the people, however, in my opinion, it is more a unifying character of all foreign language learners. What is more, like the study results of Yli-Renko (1991), the results of the present study give indication for girls being more shy speakers than boys. This is further supported by a study finding made in 2009 about the courage difference between boys and girls (Ahola 2009). Further on, also Mäkelä (2005) gave boys' courage for speaking as an explanation for boys finding authentic tasks easier than girls also and for boys' more positive attitude towards a speaking test in the matriculation examination. It has to be noted that the difference in courage between genders was statistically almost significant in the present study.

Another factor that affects practicing speaking significantly is the role of the group. This was mentioned by the students and also by teacher A. Students told the atmosphere of the group have an effect on doing speaking practice. They are worried about making mistakes in front of their peers as they worry about the reactions of others. Even though I did not analyze the data for differences between schools, I think it is noteworthy to say that the students who were attending school 1, a big school when the number of pupils is taken into consideration, were also the ones stressing the role of the group. Additionally, in the open questions a respondent from school 1 made the remark that shy people should not be forced to work with people they are not familiar with. The role of the group or the partner was not stressed by the students from school 2, a small school. Student D from school 2 mentioned teachers' reaction to errors to create a certain atmosphere, however, the role of peers was not emphasized. Thus, I believe that the students in a small school know each other better and usually work with the same people form one course to another. Hence, they do not experience similar situations of having to work with unfamiliar people and having to create a completely new atmosphere from one course to another as students in a larger school have. Group and pair work are often favored in teaching but the results show that these methods of working are not problematic from the view point of speaking. In these methods of working, it is important the partner or the other members of the group are actively participating. Teacher A described role of the group from the point of view of a teacher. In her experience some groups are by nature

quieter ones than others which affected to her teaching styles and material choices. I think the nature of the group surely forms from the individual students' characteristics but I also see a connection with the social dimension of learning which I have already described. Thus, some groups might become quieter because the group atmosphere or the peer reactions do not reinforce speaking.

In the teachers' opinion, group size and time resources have an effect on teaching speaking. The significance of group size was noted also in the results of Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006) where large groups were found to hinder teaching speaking. The same was found in the preset study, but in addition to that, a group too small was noted to hamper learning. Thus, when planning the execution of foreign language teaching, it is important to take into account the social nature of learning and remember that small groups are not automatically the best promoters of learning speaking. Time was also mentioned as an important aspect of learning oral language skills as had been mentioned in the study of Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006) and Ahola (2009). The results of the present study are in accordance with these studies as both of teachers felt the pressure of time. Teacher A signaled the teachers' responsibility about the use of time and yielding time for practicing speaking skills. Teacher B experienced pressure of having to teach several things tested in tests. Thus, in my opinion he was pressurized to use the time in other ways he would at times have wanted.

The students had varied opinions about the use of time. The questionnaire results do not give a clear signal of students having enough speaking practice. However, the results show the majority of the students to think that plenty of time is used for learning grammar related issues. The student interviews also let to presume that more time is used for teaching grammar than speaking skills which I believe to be a demonstration of speaking skills being in subordinate position to the skills which are measured in the matriculation exam. The evaluation of using enough time for practicing speaking skills is challenging to do as the assessment of getting enough practice varies from one individual to another. What is enough for one student might not in the experience of another be insufficient.

The wash-back effect of the matriculation exam and the artificial nature of spoken language that is used for teaching speaking were other influential factors. The matriculation examination is a force in teaching speaking which is also noted by Huuskonen and Kähkönen (ibid). In the present study, especially teacher B referred to the structure of upper secondary school, where subjects are taught in courses which have several tests, and to the significant final test which tends to become the focus in teaching. This was also noted by the Spanish teachers in the study of Henderson et al (2013). The aim of teaching and learning is then to pass the matriculation exam and thus the students' learn skills needed in the test which teacher B criticized. Teacher B felt that it is especially this setting that takes the communicative goal away from teaching. Speaking is left to a secondary position as it lacks from the examination as I have argued earlier on in this study. Spanish teachers reported in the study of Henderson et al (2013) that the focus in teaching is on the matters tested in the final exam. A student made the same reference in the open questions of the questionnaire and interestingly noted that *of course* speaking is not rehearsed as much as the focus is on the final exam as if it was obvious. I think this aspect was mentioned by teacher B in particular as with his foreign background he views the Finnish system differently. Teacher B took part in my bachelor's study and he made the same remark of teaching being matriculation exam centered (Ahola 2009). The Finns, however, socialized into the system, might accept this easier and think it to be self-evident feature of teaching and our upper secondary school system. Finally teacher A brought forward the fact that teaching speaking is done on the basis of teaching written language. Thus, the issues of authenticity in teaching should be viewed from this perspective as well.

In addition to factors that hinder teaching speaking, the results also show factors that enable teaching speaking skills. For the teachers, the most significant promoter was the realization of doing different language practice orally even though the materials offer a written task for rehearsal. This is also in my opinion one of the most influential factors as the teacher's role as a decision maker is undoubtedly significant in teaching. The students recognized this as well by stating that there is variation between teachers on how

speaking skills are practiced and how much time is used for it. Hence, the teacher can do plenty by supplying speaking practice in multiple ways. Teachers need proper education in order to feel comfortable to teach speaking. Therefore, the additional training given to teachers in connection with the new speaking course was adequate and it should be continued to supply in the future too. Furthermore, in the training the teachers should be given the tools to teach speaking as was noted by Henderson et al. (2013). In their very recent study, the teachers noted that they had learnt pronunciation but were lacking the methods for teaching pronunciation, a major part of speaking. The results of the present study showed also the connection between students' lack of courage to speak when they were experiencing uncertainty about pronunciation and thus pronunciation practice is important.

The students highlighted the role of different task types as a favoring factor of speaking skills. However, from the teachers view point, it was noted that students do not necessarily recognize the tasks to rehearse speaking skills. This could give explanation to the questionnaire results showing students to be unsure whether they have had enough practice for learning speaking skills. Thus, in teaching, the teachers should use various different methods and tasks for learning but also make the students aware what part of speaking skills they are practicing. In addition to the tasks, the students emphasized individual's own participation in class. Active participation favored learning speaking skills. The role of the teacher was, however, once again mentioned as teachers were expected in teaching to take into consideration the quiet students too. Further on, the students put emphasis on using English outside of school and having an interest to develop speaking skills during free time. The reality is that the time resources are limited at school and in order to achieve a high skill level, an interest to learn speaking outside of school seems to be needed in the students' opinion. The results show a statistical significant difference of boys practicing speaking skills more during their free time than girls do. Additionally in the light of the results, boys have more confidence as speakers than girls. Consequently, it could be argued that it is the additional practice that boys seem to do that contributes to their confidence to speak. It could be one of the reasons that create the difference in confidence to speak between the two genders.

In the end of upper secondary school the students felt that learning speaking skills had changed to be a more challenging matter. They felt expectations of being skilled at the end but not necessarily meeting the expectations. Teacher A acknowledged it from her own teaching too as she reported to do oral practice with lesser preparatory work with the third year students because she expected the students to manage with a simplified introduction. However, individualized teaching should not be forgotten in the later years of upper secondary school education as the skill level expectations might now meet with the students actual skills.

I expected the students to be more confident speakers in the end of upper secondary school as they are more skilled and experienced speakers. My hypothesis seems to be inaccurate as the results show the mean for the sub-class that measured courage to be lower now than in a previous study where the participants were first year students (Ahola 2009). The age of the learners or several years of learning the same subject does not seem to directly increase learners' courage even though the results of de Saint Léger and Storch (2009) support this view. They results show students to gain more confidence as their studies proceeded. Furthermore, neither do several years of learning the same language necessarily contribute to the students' courage to speak which the results of the present study show. This can also be seen from the de Saint Léger and Storch's study (ibid) as the students of that study had been learning the target language for several years but still experienced shyness at university. In the end, a more influential factor seems to be the students' self-perception of themselves as a learner as teacher A mentioned. As learners mature, they create an image of themselves as learners which has an impact on learning in the latter years of upper secondary school. In the study of Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006), the teachers had named the students own belief in their abilities to speak bring difficulty to teaching speaking. Teacher B noted that in the beginning of upper secondary school studies, he has to warm up the students for the English only teaching approach and to English being used as the means of communication in class.

The opinions of teachers and students were similar at many instances and generally they share a positive stand on learning and teaching speaking skills. They mentioned different aspects for example when asked what hinders learning speaking skills, which is expected as they present their opinions from different points of view. The opinions of teachers differed significantly only on the matter of using Finnish in classes. Teacher A was of the opinion that Finnish is accepted in her classes and that students can use is too. Teacher B, on the other hand, preferred to use only English in his teaching. Having to start using Finnish in teaching was in his opinion a negative change which would not contribute to their learning of English. He had a previous experience of using English fully in teaching where the students had found the target language teaching rewarding and thus he wanted continue using the same approach. In my opinion, using as much of target language in class is advisable, however, teaching grammar in the target language might be too challenging for the weaker students and thus the mother tongue could be used.

10 CONCLUSION

Teachers and students have very positive views about learning English skills and speaking in general, however, the reality of practicing the skills shows the construction of opinions and attitudes to be more complex. The present study demonstrates the role of courage in foreign language learning to be in key position. The study results give, in my opinion, indication that teachers should pay more attention to the ways they could courage students to speak. Thus, it is not enough to give the theoretical knowledge about speaking and then practice the skill but also actively courage students in different ways. More specifically, the present study also gives yet another indication of girls being more shy speakers than boys and boys to practice speaking in the free time more than girls do. Hence, in teaching explicit ways of encouraging students to speak, not merely practicing the skill, should be in focus more.

In addition to the above mentioned factors, the social nature of learning speaking also has a great impact on learning the skill. In pair and group work, it is important that all the members actively engage doing the tasks or otherwise the practice is unsuccessful and

can create negative experiences for some learners. The group atmosphere can either courage or discourage learning speaking which highlights the role of peers and the contribution of all to learning. Even though the group atmosphere is for the most part created by the students, the teacher can affect it and try to create a more tolerant learning environment. One of the clear teacher contributions is teacher's reaction to students' errors. Additionally some groups and some students are quieter by nature, which the teacher should take in the account in teaching.

The students highlighted active participation during classes as well as being interested enough in learning speaking to rehearse the skill outside of school as favoring factors for learning speaking. Thus, they recognized that learners also have their own responsibilities in learning. Boys also seemed to use more of their free time for learning speaking. The results show a statistically significant difference of boys practicing speaking more outside of school than girls do. Over all, the students found learning speaking skills meaningful for the purposes of free time and work life in the future. This is could be the influential factor behind students' high motivation to learn English which was found in the present study.

The teaching of speaking is promoted when teachers realize the possibilities of teaching speaking skills; written tasks can be converted into oral ones. Additionally, the group size can either be a hindrance or an advantage in teaching oral language skills. The results of other studies show teachers to find a large group hindering teaching speaking. The results of this study also remind that equally important is a group size, which should not too small for versatile interaction. Teacher B in the present study saw cultural factors as hindering teaching speaking skills. The students were unused to communicate in English and to have teaching in English. Additionally, they applied the Finnish phonetic rules to vocabulary learning, which was a hindrance in the opinion of teacher B. Teacher A, on the other hand, raised an issue about the naturalness of the spoken language taught at school. The language used for teaching speaking is actually written language in a spoken form. Teaching speaking skills would be promoted if there would be less of a demand for testing and teaching aspects that are tested. Additionally the matriculation exam seems to

affect teaching and as a speaking test is not included in the examination, there is some decline of teaching speaking at least in the end of upper secondary school. This is not the experience of the participants of the present study, but also an experience of Spanish teachers who teach in a system where the final exam lacks a speaking test. Thus adding a speaking test into the matriculation exam would make oral language skills fully equal to other skill areas for which I strongly argue.

Decisions about the use of time are important for the teachers' part in order for speaking skills to be rehearsed. This was noted by both parties in the present study. Students experienced that plenty of grammar practice is done at school, however the majority was little unsure whether there is too little speaking practice or not. This is partially explained by the fact that students do not always realize that they are practicing speaking skills and thus teachers should make the rehearsing of different skills more transparent to learners. The teachers felt a pressure time in the lack of spontaneity. As the programs are loaded, there is little room for a more free communication. Additionally, the course based system was criticized to create a wash back effect that affects to the content of teaching. Thus, teaching in upper secondary school has a tendency of focusing in the matriculation examination at least in the latter year of upper secondary school in the experience of the participants.

Teacher B makes a valid point about the course based structure in upper secondary school in this study. The course based system has its strengths and weaknesses one of the latter being the multiple tests the system provides; word test, end of the course tests and the matriculation examinations that are considered to be very important in Finland. These create a pile of tests which should not become the focus in teaching. As the current matriculation exam lacks a speaking test, teaching and learning speaking suffers in the end. Henderson et al (2013) noted this to happen in Spanish setting where the situation with the final exam is equivalent. Thus, I support adding a speaking test into the English matriculation examination which would arise oral language skills into equal position with other areas of language knowledge.

The group of participants was relatively narrow in this study, and therefore it is difficult to make any generalizations about the results. However, for example the gender difference between boys and girls in courage to speak seems to be a repeated finding of different studies but it should be studied further on. In future research, the participant group should be larger and geographically spread for generalizations. Additionally the reasons for girls being more timid speakers should be investigated. The future research could for example examine are boys and girls treated significantly differently in the education system for a gender difference of courage to happen. Within the topic, there is also an opportunity for interdisciplinary research as gender studies give insight into research in the discourse of gender. Additionally, the present study did not aim to find out how the students practice speaking skills outside of school, which would be an opportunity for further research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 The interview questions for teachers

1. What kind of education have you had and how long have you been working as a teacher?

2. In your experience, has the emphasis in teaching foreign languages changed? How?

3. How long have you been teaching the students taking part in this study?

4. Does the course based system in upper secondary school, in your opinion, have an effect on teaching speaking skills?

5. Do teachers get in your opinion enough training for teaching speaking skills?

6. What is your opinion about the latest change in the curriculum, the adding of a new speaking course?

7. In connection with the change in the curriculum content, teachers were given additional training. Did you take part in the training and did it give you tools to teach speaking skills?

8. How important do you consider teaching speaking skills to be in upper secondary school?

9. How do you try to teach speaking skills?

10. In your opinion, which factors favor teaching speaking skills?

11. In your opinion, which factors hinder teaching speaking skills?

12. What is in your opinion the students' attitude towards learning speaking skills?

13. Do you aim to courage students to use speaking skills in class and outside of class time? How?

14. Is teaching speaking skills different in the beginning of upper secondary school than it is in the end?

15. Would you like to comment learning and teaching speaking skills in any way?
      questions for students

APPENDIX 2 The interview questions for the students

1. How long have you been learning English?
2. What is your experience about learning English?
3. What is your experience about learning English speaking skills?
4. How important do you consider teaching speaking skills to be in upper secondary school?
5. What is in your opinion you peers' attitude towards learning speaking skills?
6. In your opinion, can a teacher somehow courage into speaking in English?
7. Where do you need English skills?
8. Which factors affect learning speaking skills in class?
9. In your opinion, which factors favor learning speaking skills?
10. In your opinion, which factors hinder learning speaking skills?
11. Is teaching speaking skills in your opinion different in the beginning than in the end of upper secondary school?
12. Should teachers in your opinion take in to account speaking skills in assessment?
13. Is it in your opinion significant that speaking as a skill has its own course?
14. Has enough time been used for teaching speaking skills in upper secondary school?
15. Does having either one or more teachers an effect on learning speaking skills?
16. Would you like to comment learning and teaching speaking skills in any way?

APPENDIX 3 Questionnaire for the students

Hyvä vastaaja!
Tämä kysely on osa Jyväskylän yliopistossa tekemääni englannin kielen pro gradu-tutkielmaa.
Tutkielmani aiheena on englannin suullisen kielitaidon opettaminen lukiossa. Vastaa alla oleviin
väittämiin asteikolla 1-5 (1= täysin **eri** mieltä, 5= täysin **samaa** mieltä) ympyröimällä mielipidettäsi
lähinnä oleva väittämä tai kirjoita vastauksesi sille varattuun tilaan. Kyselyn vastaamiseen on aikaa
10 minuuttia.

1. Olen   a) mies b) nainen
2. Olen vastannut samanlaiseen kyselyyn ensimmäisenä opiskeluvuotenani   a) kyllä   b) ei   c) en
muista

	Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei mielipidettä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
3. Englannin suullisen kielitaidon oppiminen ja harjoittelu on mielestäni tärkeä osa kielitaitoa.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Uskallan käyttää englannin kieltä oppitunneilla.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Englannin suullisen kielitaidon opettaminen on lukiossa tärkeää.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Haluan oppia ääntämään englannin kielen sanastoa.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Suullisen kielitaidon oppiminen on mielestäni vaikeaa.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Haluaisin oppia puhumaan englantia syntyperäisen puhujan tavoin.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Oppitunneilla käytetään mielestäni riittävästi aikaa englannin suullisen kielitaidon opettamiseen.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Harjoittelen suullista kielitaitoa myös vapaa-ajallani.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Pystyn kommunikoimaan englannin kielellä koulussa oppimieni tietojen ja taitojen avulla.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Oppitunneilla käytetään mielestäni liikaa aikaa suullisen kielitaidon opiskeluun.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Englannin kielellä puhuminen on mielestäni mukavaa.	1	2	3	4	5

14. Pyrin käyttämään englannin kieltä oppitunneilla.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Kirjallisten taitojen oppiminen on mielestäni tärkeämpää kuin suullisen kielitaidon oppiminen	1	2	3	4	5
16. Otan mallia puheeseeni englanninkielisistä televisio-ohjelmista tai elokuvista.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Uskallan puhua englannin kielellä koulun ulkopuolella.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Otan mallia opettajan puheesta/ääntämisestä oman puheeseeni/ ääntämiseeni.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Mielestäni on tärkeää, että opettaja käyttää oppitunneilla englannin kieltä, jotta saan mallia omaan puheeseeni.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Oppitunneilla tehdään mielestäni riittävästi suullisia tehtäviä. Englannin kielellä puhuminen on minulle helppoa.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Opettajani rohkaisee minua puhumaan englannin kielellä niin tunnilla kuin vapaa-ajalla.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Tarvitsen englannin kieltä vapaa-ajallani esimerkiksi matkustellessa.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Englannin kielellä puhuminen on minulle helppoa.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Puhuminen/ suulliset harjoitukset auttavat minua oppimaan vierasta kieltä	1	2	3	4	5
25. Lukiossa on käytetty englannin tunneilla paljon aikaa kieliopin opetukseen.	1	2	3	4	5

26. Kerro lyhyesti millaisten opetustapojen ja tehtävien uskot omasta mielestäsi olevan kaikkein hyödyllisimpiä englannin suullisen kielitaidon oppimisessa? Millaista suullisen kielitaidon opetusta olisit toivonut englannin tunneille?_____

_____

_____

27. Mieti englannin suullisen kielitaidon opetusta lukio opintojesi alussa ja lopussa. Onko englannin suullisen kielitaidon opetuksessa mielestäsi jonkinlainen ero, kun mietit lukio opintojen alkua ja loppua? Millainen?

_____
_____
_____
_____

28. Vapaa sana! Voit vapaasti kommentoida englannin suullisen kielitaidon opettamista ja oppimistalukiossa._____
_____
_____
_____

KIITOS OSALLISTUMISESTASI!

APPENDIX 4 The descriptive statistics of the questionnaire

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q3 Learning and practicing speaking skills is, in my opinion, an important part of language proficiency	42	4	5	4.59	497
Q4 I have courage to use English in classes	44	1	5	3.32	1.253
Q5 Learning speaking skills at upper secondary school is in my opinion important	44	3	5	4.40	.583
Q6 I want to learn to pronounce English words	43	3	5	4.34	.608
Q7 Learning speaking skills is in my opinion difficult	44	1	5	3.00	1.121
Q8 I would like to learn to speak English like a native speaker	44	1	5	3.68	1.116
Q9 Enough time is in my opinion used for teaching speaking skills	44	1	5	3.14	1.069
Q10 I practice speaking skills also in my free time	44	1	5	3.02	1.285
Q11 I am able to communicate in English on the basis of the knowledge and skills learnt at school	44	2	5	3.70	.930
Q12 In my opinion, too much time is used to learn speaking skills in class	44	1	5	1.93	.759
Q13 Speaking in English is in my opinion nice	44	1	5	3.57	1.149
Q14 I aim to use English during classes	44	1	5	3.25	1.102
Q15 Learning written skills is in my opinion more important than learning speaking skills	44	1	5	2.57	.846
Q16 I use English speaking TV- programs or movies as a model for my own speaking	44	1	5	3.89	.920
Q17 I have courage to speak in English outside of school	44	1	5	3.77	1.008
Q18 I use teacher's speech/pronunciation as model for my own speech/pronunciation	44	1	5	3.05	1.257
Q19 In my opinion, it is important that the teacher uses in English in class so that I get a model for my own speaking	42	1	5	3.71	1.111
Q20 In my opinion, enough speaking tasks is done during classes. Speaking in English is easy for me	43	1	5	3.19	1.052
Q21 My teacher encourages me to speak in English both in class and outside classes	43	2	5	2.74	1.071
Q22 I need English skills in my free time e.g. when I travel	44	2	5	3.95	.939
Q23 Speaking in English is easy for me	42	1	5	3.19	1.153
Q24 Speaking / oral practice helps me to learn foreign languages	44	2	5	4.00	.889
Q25 In upper secondary school, plenty of time is used for learning grammar	44	1	5	3.68	.857