

**THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTIONS ON WRITING
AN ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT
A study of upper secondary school students'
written performance in English**

Master's thesis

Venla Keskitalo

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
English
August 2014

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kielten laitos
Tekijä – Author Venla Keskitalo	
Työn nimi – Title THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTIONS ON WRITING AN ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT A study on upper secondary school students' written performance in English	
Oppiaine – Subject Englanti	Työn laji – Level Pro gradu -tutkielma
Aika – Month and year Elokuu 2014	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 61 + 9 liitettä
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tietoyhteiskunnan kehitys heijastuu tulevina vuosina myös ylioppilastutkintoihin, sillä vuodesta 2016 alkaen ensimmäiset ylioppilaskirjoitukset suoritetaan sähköisesti tietokoneita hyödyntäen. Myös englannin kielen opetukselle tekstinkäsittelyohjelmilla kirjoitettavat ylioppilasaineet asettavat haasteita ja mahdollisuuksia. Tässä tutkielmassa tarkasteltiin lukiolaisten englanninkielisen kantaan ottavan tekstin tuottamisen taitoja tekstinkäsittelyohjelmien asettamien mahdollisuuksien näkökulmasta.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, miten lukiolaiset muokkaavat tekstinkäsittelyohjelmaa hyödyntäen kirjoittamansa mielipidekirjoituksen argumentaatiota saatuaan lisäohjeistusta. Tutkimus on vertaileva tutkimus, jonka aineistona on yhden lukioluokan (20 opiskelijaa) kahdessa eri vaiheessa kirjoittamat mielipidekirjoitukset. Ensimmäisessä vaiheessa opiskelijat kirjoittivat mielipidekirjoituksen. Tämän jälkeen he saivat ohjeita mielipidekirjoituksen parantamiseksi, ja toisessa vaiheessa, ohjeiden jälkeen he muokkasivat kirjoituksiaan. Tekstien argumentaatiotekniikoita analysoitiin soveltaen Chaïm Perelmanin argumentaatioteoriaa tutkimuksen teoriapohjana.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että opiskelijat hyödynsivät Perelmanin argumentointitekniikoita mielipideteksteissään monipuolisesti. Eniten käytettiin lopetusta, seuraavaksi eniten syy- ja seurausargumentteja sekä esimerkkejä ja neljänneksi yleisimpiä olivat vertailut. Analyysi osoitti, että annettujen ohjeiden vaikutus opiskelijoiden jälkimmäisiin tekstiversioihin näytti olleen ilmeinen, koska kaikkien lisättyjen argumenttien tulkittiin kuuluvan ohjeissa ehdotettuihin luokkiin. Lisäksi voidaan todeta, että ohjeistus paransi mielipidetekstien argumentoinnin vakuuttavuutta. Tutkielman tulokset osoittivat, että argumentaatiotaitojen opettamista lisäämällä englannin kielessä opiskelijoiden tuotokset paranivat. Tutkimus antaakin yhden mallin, jolla mielipidekirjoitusten kirjoittamista on mahdollista kehittää. Argumentointi on tärkeä taito, jonka tutkimusta eri teksteissä ja konteksteissa onkin tarpeen jatkaa.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords argumentation, opinion pieces, genre, students	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository Kielten laitos	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	9
2 ARGUMENTATIVE GENRES	12
2.1 Genre theory.....	12
2.2 Genres expressing opinions in school context	14
2.3 Previous studies on students' argumentation	17
3 ARGUMENTATION THEORY	19
3.1 Perelman and the new rhetoric	19
3.2 Argumentation techniques	20
4 PRESENT STUDY	24
4.1 Research questions	24
4.2 Participants.....	24
4.3 Data collection	27
4.4 Method of analysis	31
5 ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS BY STUDENTS.....	33
5.1 General views on the texts	33
5.2 Changes in argumentation	36
5.2.1 Contradiction.....	39
5.2.2 Argument by comparison	40
5.2.3 Argument by causation	42
5.2.4 Argument by example	43
5.2.5 Closing	44
5.2.6 Summary of the added argumentation techniques	45
5.3 Linking words	46

6 DISCUSSION	49
6.1 Conclusions on the use of Perelman’s argumentation techniques	49
6.2 Teaching of argumentation	52
6.3 Views on the use of computers and electronic matriculation examinations	53
6.4 Suggestions for future research	55
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 57
 APPENDICES	 62

LISTS OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Perelman's argumentation techniques.....	23
Figure 2. Students' skills in using word processors	25
Figure 3. Students' skills in writing on a computer keyboard	26
Figure 4. The number of words in text versions 1 and 2	35
Figure 5. Classification of argumentation techniques	37
Figure 6. Summary of the added argumentation techniques	46
Figure 7. Added linking words	47
Table 1. Changes in argumentation	38

1 INTRODUCTION

Argumentation is an important skill in today's information society. Expressing opinions either orally or literally, justifying arguments and assessing the arguments of others can be considered basic skills. For this reason, in many countries argumentation is taught in schools in different levels and with different methods. In Finland, writing an opinion piece is a genre upper secondary school students are familiar with from school language courses especially in their mother tongue. An argumentative essay is also one of the exam types in the matriculation examinations for both mother tongue and for foreign languages such as English.

The development of the information society will reflect on the Finnish matriculation examinations in the near future, as 2016 will be the first year in which the matriculation examinations will be taken electronically, with computers, for the first time. Many students use computers and word processing software on a daily basis, but not necessarily all students do this. The new matriculation examinations also present challenges and opportunities for English language teaching. One of the goals of this study is to examine the English writing skills of upper secondary school students from the perspective of the possibilities provided by word processors.

The purpose of this study is to examine the English writing skills of upper secondary school students in argumentative texts. The main focus of the study is to find out how upper secondary school students revise their argumentation of an opinion piece after receiving additional instructions. This study is a comparative study; the material consists of opinion pieces written in two separate stages by the students of one upper secondary school class (20 students). In the first stage, the students wrote the opinion pieces. After the first stage, they received instructions on how to improve the text, and in the second stage, after receiving the instructions, they edited their opinion pieces. The editing was made possible with word processors.

This study is also useful in the sense that argumentation skills of students have received relatively little attention from researchers, particularly with regard to the abilities of students of English in upper secondary schools.

An argument is a combination of a claim, reasons and a warrant (Kakkuri-Knuuttila and Halonen 1998: 63). A text can include several claims, each with its own reasons, and each claim can also have its own warrant (Kakkuri-Knuuttila and Halonen 1998: 68–69). Alternatively, texts can be viewed as a whole, and the shared warrants of a text or texts can be interpreted (see Mikkonen 2010). In this study, an argument stands for a totality that is formed by the claim, reasons and warrant of one text. One of these claims can be interpreted as the thesis of the text (Kakkuri-Knuuttila and Halonen 1998: 101–102). While the analysis of arguments focuses on the content of the text (what is claimed about something), rhetoric focuses on the form of an argument and the way it is presented. For example, the location of arguments within a text, the techniques of argumentation used to present them and the linguistic devices used to support them can all be examined from the perspective of rhetoric. The examination of the argument's location concerns the examination of the rhetorical structure (Kakkuri-Knuuttila 1998: 234–238). Techniques of argumentation refer to the methods introduced in Perelman's (1996) theory and linguistic devices may refer to repetition and intensifiers. In this study, I will analyse the argumentation techniques in a text as part of the text's rhetorical structure by applying Perelman's (1996) theory. That is, I will examine the argumentation techniques that the students employ in their opinion pieces.

This study aims to reach its objectives by answering the following research questions:

- How does the argumentation of an opinion piece change after instructions are given?
- Are the changes in argumentation reflected by the instructions or are there other changes?
- What argumentation techniques do the students employ?
- How does the text change quantitatively?

The instructions given between the two writing stages are specifically related to the topics of the above-mentioned research questions. Therefore, the assumption of this study is that the opinion pieces will change considerably. Following this assumption, the study will likely demonstrate that the instructions improve the quality of the opinion pieces and that the students know how to utilise the opportunities presented by the word processors in a guided situation.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Chaïm Perelman's argumentation theory. Perelman's argumentation theory is the theory of New Rhetoric, which introduces the idea that it is not only speeches that are rhetorical; written text can be too (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971, Perelman 1996). The theory section provides a description of texts, argumentation, audience and the connection between argumentation and audience. In addition, the theory section describes argumentation techniques by Perelman's (1996) classification, that is, quasi-logical arguments, arguments based on the structure of reality and arguments establishing the structure of reality. Perelman's argumentation techniques serve as methods for the study.

This study is divided into six sections as follows: after the introduction, the argumentative genres in society are discussed in section 2. Next, section 3 describes the theoretical framework of the study by presenting the argumentation theory. The research questions and the methods of analysis, as well as the data collection process, are explained in section 4, while the results of the analysis of students' texts are examined in detail in section 5. Finally, section 6 concludes the study with a discussion of the results of the study.

In this study, opinion pieces will also be referred as 'texts' and upper secondary students as 'students'. All the details related to the identity of the participants, such as first names and surnames, have been removed and replaced with pseudonyms (see more details in Corti, Day and Backhouse 2000).

2 ARGUMENTATIVE GENRES

In this section I will first explain what the term ‘genre’ means. Secondly, I will explain the skills and directions attached to writing opinion pieces in school context and thirdly I will describe previous studies connected to argumentative writing by students.

Expressing opinions is a key linguistic competence. We begin to develop the skills of argumentation when we are children. Argumentation skills can be consciously developed in education when children are in primary school (Rojas-Drummond and Zapata 2004). Expressing one’s opinions is also a rhetorical device that was considered significant in Ancient Greece, where fine speeches could be used to achieve one’s goals (Kakkuri-Knuuttila 1998: 235; Puro 1998: 82). Likewise, opinion pieces can be examined as genres or established styles of writing (Swales 1990; Bhatia 2004). For example, letters to the editor are expected to follow a certain manner of expressing opinions, as the style has been established. The writer should also be able to respond to the reader’s expectations. Reading, interpreting, and analysing of established genres brings forth what the genres are, enabling them to be taught in schools. As opinion pieces are argumentative genres, the genre is also associated with expectations of how the argumentation is carried out. (Bhatia 2004: 20–23; Katajamäki 2004)

2.1 Genre theory

Swales’ (1990: 45) definition of a genre is well established and without dispute. He defines the genre firstly as a class of communicative events. The word ‘communication’ suggests that linguistic activity is relevant and inseparable in the event. ‘Class’ means that the event has to be sufficiently public in order for a class to exist. The communicative event includes the text and the participants, the roles of production and reception, the historical and cultural associations. (Swales 1990: 45–46)

Secondly, the genre must have a shared set of communicative purposes. These purposes are a genre’s most important quality. Genres are thus communicative vehicles used to achieve

goals. The communicative purposes of genres can be difficult to define and discover. Therefore, one has to be particularly careful not to define the purposes using the common means of categorising stylistic traits or based on inherited beliefs. (Swales 1990: 46, 52)

Thirdly, the texts and excerpts belonging to a genre vary in their prototypicality. In these cases, the most typical text belonging to a genre is a prototype. (Swales 1990: 49–52)

Fourthly, the rationale behind a genre establishes restrictions on acceptable contributions in terms of content, structure and form. The rationale is formed of the communicative purposes of the genre, which the discourse community that uses the genre at least partially recognises. (Swales 1990: 52–53) But as Katajamäki (2004: 24) argues, merely recognising the genre is not enough; complying with the genre's conventions is only possible when the purposes of the genre are recognised. The members of the discourse community recognise some of the purposes, while others remain unrecognised. The best-equipped members to recognise the purposes are experts, whereas novices recognise fewer and non-members even fewer. (Swales 1990: 52–53)

Fifthly, a discourse community's classification for genres is an important source of insight. The users of the text give the genre its name. The experts in the discourse community know more about the conventions of a genre than those who only occasionally use the genre. As such, the members of the discourse community have a lot of knowledge of a genre that helps them understand its use. (Swales 1990: 54–55)

Bhatia bases his perceptions of a genre on Swales despite concentrating on professional and legal texts, whereas Swales has developed a genre theory for educational texts. According to Bhatia (2004: 23), studying the academic or professional use of language by the means of genre analysis leads to the genre commonly being defined as follows:

- 1) Genres are recognisable communicative events, which have shared communicative purposes within the community.
- 2) Genres are very formal and established structures, even in the terms of linguistic resources that can be used in them.
- 3) Expert members have more genre knowledge than novices.

- 4) Despite the establishment, experts use genres creatively to realise both their own and the organisation's intentions.
- 5) Genres reflect the professional and organisational cultures of each field.
- 6) The genres of all the branches of science and professional fields are distinct, and are recognised based on textual, discursive, and contextual factors. (Bhatia 2004, 23.) Koskela and Katajamäki (2012: 461) point out that assumptions of a genre also affect the analysis.

Genres are social formations because they do not regulate a person's behaviour in a way that norms and rules do; instead, they create the conditions and expectations for behaviour (Mauranen 1993: 15). The criteria of a genre are met when there is a communicative event recognised in a community that has shared communicative purposes and the linguistic and discursive traits characteristic to it (see Bhatia 2004). According to this definition, texts such as auditor's reports (Koskela and Katajamäki 2012) and leading articles (Katajamäki 2003, 2004) are genres.

But Mikkonen (2010), for example, applies the genre theory to argumentative texts of upper secondary school students. Internationally, the genre theory has often been applied to developing education, thereby to texts written by students (see Shore and Rapatti 2014). The use of language that has been established in professional circles and the norms of argumentative writing give readers directions on opinion writing, such as to students who read opinion pieces. By both reading and teaching the norms of opinion writing, the culture is conveyed to those outside the professional circles (Koskela and Katajamäki 2012: 458). This enables students' genre writing to take root and they become able to compose more articulate and structured texts with more convincing argumentation.

2.2 Genres expressing opinions in school context

In our everyday lives, we frequently encounter newspaper texts, which often include good examples of argumentative texts. Newspaper texts can be divided into informative texts and opinion pieces. Opinion pieces include editorials and letters to the editor. Pak and Acevedo

(2008: 134) divide leading articles into informative and argumentative ones, where an informative leading article is one that has no main argument and an argumentative leading article is one that has. While the author of a leading article is usually an experienced editor (Katajamäki 2003), anyone may write letters to the editor, including upper secondary school students. A letter to the editor may be seen as a genre that is taught in schools. One could assume that at the same time, the student also learns the skills of expressing an opinion in writing on a more general level.

According to Mikkonen (2010: 19), writing an opinion piece is something upper secondary school students are familiar with from language courses in their mother tongue (Finnish or Swedish). Argumentation is the main topic of the fourth course in Finnish or Swedish as a mother tongue. The general goals of teaching reading and writing of the mother tongue in upper secondary school emphasise command of the relevant, goal-oriented communication and textual skills, command of rhetorical methods and argumentation, command of the norms of written language, the retrieval of information and critical evaluation of information (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2003: 32–36).

Opinion writing is a focus area of students' mother tongue textbooks, which present the classification of opinion pieces and set out the structure that opinion pieces are expected to have. In upper secondary school Finnish and Swedish textbooks, opinion pieces are divided into leading articles, columns, letters to the editor, replies and reviews, similar to newspaper opinion pieces (Mikkonen 2010: 21). Upper secondary school students are taught to build their opinion piece from a heading, opening paragraph, body paragraphs and a closing paragraph. This is also the structure outlined in various writing manuals. The same structure is commonly used in articles published in newspapers and magazines (Mikkonen 2010:78).

An argumentative essay is also one of the essay types in the matriculation examinations for advanced-level English. The essay-writing part of matriculation examinations included opinion pieces in spring 2011, autumn 2011, spring 2012 and spring 2013 on the topics *Climate change – reality or myth?*, *Chalk and Talk or More Modern Technology?*, *Does Finland need more nuclear power?* and *Shopping on Sundays* (Abitreenit YLE). The student was instructed to express an opinion on the given topic, outline potential

advantages and disadvantages and to provide reasons for their opinion. The opinion piece in matriculation examinations is often meant to be written as a letter to the editor or as a speech. The length of the essay should be between 150 and 250 words. The maximum score for the essay in the examinations is 99 points out of a maximum of 209 for the entire written part of the examination, so almost one half of the full score for the written part consists of the essay.

However, topics related to opinion pieces or argumentation do not play a significant part in the upper secondary school English language syllabus or teaching materials. The upper secondary school syllabus for English does not actually mention teaching argumentative skills, but on course no. 4, *Society and the surrounding world*, written expression is practiced by writing texts for different purposes (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2003: 89). Advice for writing an opinion piece is listed in a chapter called “Argumentatiivinen kirjoitustehtävä” [Argumentative writing assignment] in the 4th course textbook in the *Open Road* series (Karapalo et al. 2009: 120). Some of the advice mentioned in this textbook chapter was included in the instructions given to the students (see section 4.3), since the book was used in the school of the students who participated in the study.

According to Marttunen and Laurinen (2004: 160), relatively little attention is paid in Finnish upper secondary schools to teaching and practising argumentation, and Finnish argumentation culture may be considered underdeveloped compared to other countries in Western Europe. In British and French schools, for example, written and oral argumentation exercises have long traditions. Teaching argumentation skills is also important because, despite success in the PISA assessment, the argumentation skills of Finnish students have been found weak and lacking (Mikkonen 2010: 12). Upper secondary school students themselves also value the importance of argumentation skills and would like to learn more about them. This was discovered in a questionnaire in the *Kielitaidon kirjo* [Spectrum of language skills] project, which surveyed Finnish- and Swedish-speaking upper secondary school students’ attitudes, opinions and wishes regarding their mother tongue, as well as recreational reading (Kauppinen 2011). It can therefore be concluded that the teaching of argumentation, particularly convincing argumentation, should be increased and developed as part of Finnish teaching, as well as English teaching.

2.3 Previous studies on students' argumentation

One of the few studies on the argumentation of upper secondary school students published in Finland is Inka Mikkonen's (2010) doctoral dissertation, where Mikkonen studied the structures and argumentation in texts written by students as letters to the editor. Besides argumentation, Mikkonen looks at the genre of opinion pieces from the point of view of structure and functional sequences. Mikkonen's research material consisted of letters to the editor (89 texts) written by upper secondary school students by commenting on the original writing. The aim of her study was to determine a general structure of the texts and to identify the prototypical features of the texts, such as argumentation techniques. Based on her argumentation analysis, Mikkonen categorises texts into groups according to their view of the main argument of the source text. The most frequently used argumentation techniques were arguments based on the structure of the real, the second most common were the relations establishing the structure of reality and the third most common was quasi-logical argumentation. In her study, Mikkonen came to a conclusion that the students were generally able to express their opinions; their texts included a main argument and they took advantage of several argumentation techniques. In her study, Mikkonen utilises Perelman's and Olbrechts-Tyteca's argumentation theory, which is also the theoretical framework of this study. I will utilise Mikkonen's study as the background of the instructions of my test situation, which I will discuss in more detail in section 4.3.

In addition to Inka Mikkonen's dissertation, argumentation in texts written in school has been studied by Marttunen and Laurinen (2004), who reported on the argumentation skills of upper secondary school students and how they correspond to a student's gender, age, school grades and the school's geographical location. There were 326 upper secondary school students who took part in the study. The research material consisted of four written assignments, which included text analysis, text production, a commentary exercise and an evaluation. The results connected to argumentative skills indicated that that 60% of the upper secondary school students were capable of making a claim and 68% gave relevant reasons to support it, but analytical and critical reading of the text was successful for only 12% of the students.

Of Master's theses dealing with the argumentation skills of upper secondary school students, the most noteworthy are the study by Lehmusvaara (2012), which looks at upper secondary school students' textual skill answers and argumentation, and the study by Kaurala (2002) that looks at the argumentative and dialogical features of an argumentative essay in Matriculation examinations. Perelman's argumentation theory was also utilised in several Master's theses in the fields of Finnish language and social sciences. In Sweden, upper secondary school students' argumentative texts have been studied by Catharina Nyström (2003).

There have also been studies of the links between writing and the development of information technology. For example, De Rycker and Ponnudurai (2011) look at how texts read by students on the Internet are reflected in the argumentation of their own essays. Their study showed that interactive online engagement with words and images leads to desirable outcomes and motivates students through meaningful and active learning.

Despite the aforementioned studies, students' argumentation skills have received relatively little attention from researchers in Finland, particularly as regards written performance in English. This study is important as it examines the English argumentation skills of upper secondary school students. The approach of this study is most similar to Mikkonen's study as she also analysed the argumentation skills of upper secondary school students utilising Perelman's theory.

3 ARGUMENTATION THEORY

This section introduces the theoretical framework of this study by presenting Perelman's argumentation theory. In section 3.1 Perelman's main ideas are discussed in the light of new rhetoric and section 3.2 describes argumentation theory and the argumentation techniques applied in this study.

3.1 Perelman and the new rhetoric

Chaïm Perelman (1912-1984) was a Belgian philosopher of law, whose chief work is the *Traité de l'argumentation: La nouvelle rhétorique*, [*The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*], which he wrote together with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca in 1958. Perelman continued to develop his ideas about argumentation for his work *L'empire rhétorique*, [*The Realm of Rhetoric*] published in 1977. (Summa 1996: 62)

Perelman is considered to be one of the central theoreticians of 'new rhetoric', which emerged in the 1950s. The essential difference between classical and new rhetoric is that the classical rhetoric is mainly normative, whereas new rhetoric is more descriptive and its typical features are a collective perspective and inspection of the interaction (Kakkuri-Knuuttila 1998: 241).

The new rhetoric researchers, Perelman, Stephen Toulmin, and Kenneth Burke, questioned the contemporary attitude on rhetoric and published their own works related to the subject at approximately the same time, yet without relation to one another. Perelman, like Toulmin, was particularly interested in argumentation and wanted to create a comprehensive theory for analysing argumentative text or speech. (Summa 1996: 52) Perelman's goal was to study natural argumentation as it was when exercised in various life situations. In his opinion, consensus is born from values through argumentation (claims, counter-claims and reasoning). (Summa 1996: 63)

For a sociologist of the 21st century, Perelman's thoughts arouse interest, especially in regards to the inspection of rhetoric as an argument and descriptions of a framework for the factors that comprise the credibility of an argumentative text. From Perelman's point of view, shape and content are entwined elements of deduction and convincing. Such elements, thought to be external forms of the use of language, such as metaphors, the order in which things are presented, or highlights, prove to be internal factors of the arguments, means of convincing. (Summa 1996: 65)

Mikkonen (2010: 56) summarises argumentation according to Perelman as being composed of influential communication in a natural language, oral or written, with the aim of reinforcing or altering a listener's or reader's relation to a subject, person, or phenomenon. It is a complex process where statements are presented and then backed up using various justifications and where interpretation is never absent.

Perelman himself points out that the object of his new rhetoric is "the study of the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the theses presented for its assent" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 4).

3.2 Argumentation techniques

Perelman's (see, e.g., Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971, Perelman 1996) theory of argumentation can be divided into three sectors:

- 1) Conceptions of the audience (forms the framework of argumentation)
- 2) Premises of argumentation
- 3) Argumentation techniques.

Emphasising the significance of the audience is a central theme in Perelman's theory of argumentation. Argumentation is directed communication, which always involves a certain level of awareness of the audience. The successfulness of argumentation depends on the audience, because argumentation is successful if the audience accepts the argument. As such, the orator or writer is to put the argumentation into perspective in relation to the

audience. (Perelman 1996: 16–20) Perelman divides the definition of ‘audience’ into a ‘universal audience’ and a ‘particular audience’. The meaning of universal audience includes the entire human population, anyone capable of judgement, whereas particular audience consists of a smaller group determined by certain criteria. (Perelman 1996: 21)

The premises of argumentation form a basis for argumentation upon which the text is built. The baseline for argumentation rests upon the fact that there are some presuppositions that are assumed to be acceptable. Premises are these very presuppositions. Argumentation centres on gaining the audience’s approval of the premises so that they are also able to identify with the conclusions. The premises of argumentation are closely related to the audience because they are adapted to each new audience. (Perelman 1996: 28)

The orator or writer attempts to gain support and credibility for his argument through various techniques of argumentation. The argument’s convincingness is not formed by its logical structure, but how credible the audience finds the cause-and-effect relationships, examples, appositions, metaphors or confrontations the communicator has selected for the presentation. (Summa 1996: 70–71) Perelman divides the argumentation techniques into connective (associative) and separative (dissociative) techniques. Associative argumentation means connecting various things together. As for dissociative argumentation, things formerly thought to be connected are separated. These opposite processes are not mutually exclusive; instead, they can complement each other. (Perelman 1996: 57–58) In this study the focus is on associative techniques, which are presented in the following section.

Associative techniques are divided into **quasi-logical arguments, arguments based on the structure of reality** and **arguments establishing the structure of reality**. *Quasi-logical arguments* are often seen parallel to logical or mathematical thinking, but the logic behind the techniques is not completely solid as opposed to formal logic. (Perelman 1996: 62) According to Kuusisto’s view (1996: 280), quasi-logical argumentation can be the comparison of two separate events and the insistence of uniform treatment based on it, or an attempt at evaluating the probability of a singular event that is dependent on human factors. Quasi-logical argumentation techniques are categorised according to the varieties

of formal deduction. Incompatibility, sameness, reciprocity, probability and comparison, amongst others, are quasi-logical arguments (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 195–260).

The impressiveness of an *argument based on the structure of reality* is based on how it can be confirmed that it is in correlation to a formerly accepted fact or judgement. The correlation between elements can be formed by pointing out their sequential occurrence (causality), such as arguing on the grounds of causation. In addition to sequentiality, the correlation can be formed by indicating the adjacent appearance of elements, such as when connecting together a person and a review based on his/her actions, an entirety and its parts, or a group and the individuals that form it. (Summa 1989: 107–108) According to Perelman (1996: 107–108), arguments from authority are one of the above-mentioned manifestations of adjacent occurrence, where a person is coupled with one of his/her actions. In an argument from authority, approval of a certain claim is sought from the appreciation enjoyed by a person or a group, because embracing the opinions and behaviour of a person considered to be remarkable can be thought of as typical behaviour for a human.

The third and final group of associate argumentation techniques, *arguments establishing the structure of reality*, progress through a particular case or analogy. A particular case can have various roles in argumentation: it can be an example, a demonstrator or a model. According to Perelman (1996: 120–141), examples are used for presenting generalisations, and approved generalisations are demonstrated through individual cases. Providing or pointing out a model strives to accomplish activity conformable to the model, whereas using an anti-model strives to accomplish unwanted courses of action (Kuusisto 1996: 284). One of the manifestations of analogical deduction is the metaphor. A metaphor is one of the rhetoric figures that use analogy. According to Summa (1989: 108–109), it is perhaps the commonly used and, in the case of rhetoric literature, the most analysed phenomenon.

To summarise the concepts presented above and to give a clear picture of Perelman's theory, Perelman's argumentation techniques are illustrated in Figure 1.

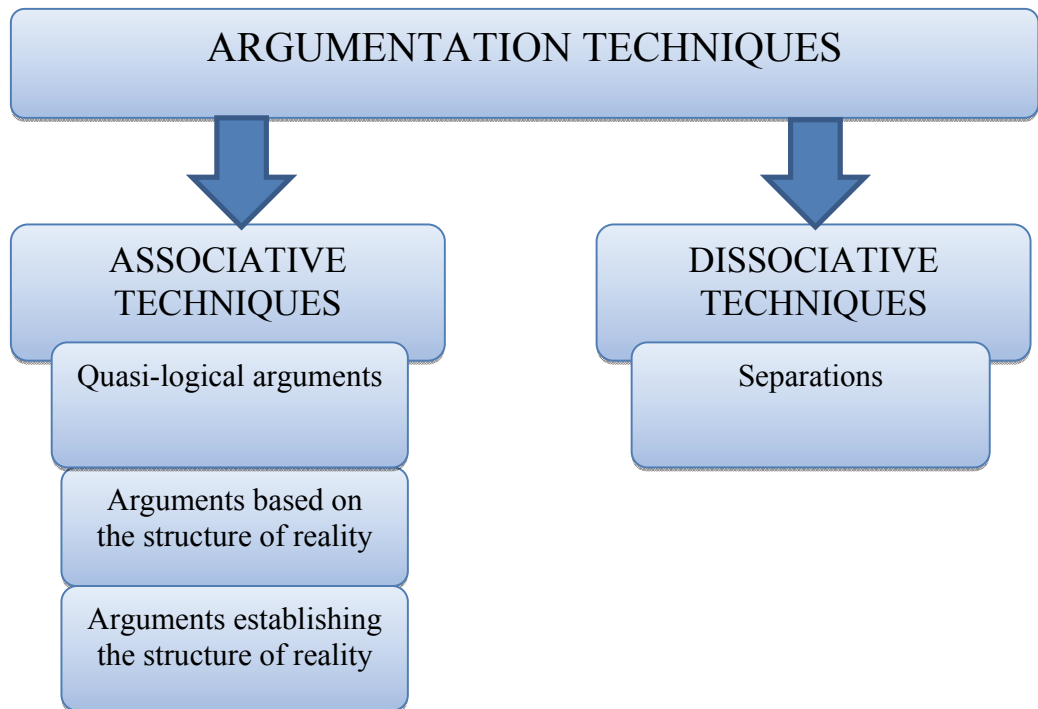


Figure 1. Perelman's argumentation techniques (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971)

Perelman's theory is applicable to the analysis of school writing and opinion pieces precisely because of its versatility. The notion of the audience is central in school writing because the audience of these texts is a unique and complex construction. The theory has been applied to school texts also before: Inka Mikkonen (2010) used Perelman's theory to study the letters to the editor written by upper secondary school students in her dissertation research.

As Koistinen (1999: 46) states, Perelman's argumentation techniques are not without gaps and it may often be difficult to interpret whether one is dealing with a quasi-logical argument or one that is supported by a cause-and-effect relationship, for instance. In any case, argumentation techniques can be used to describe the relation to the audience and the larger mental structure of the used arguments used. Interest focuses on where the argument comes from, and not how a certain argument fits into Perelman's categorisation. (Koistinen 1999: 46)

4 PRESENT STUDY

This section introduces the purpose of the study by presenting the research questions. In addition, the choice of participants and data collection method are explained. Finally, the methods of analysis are discussed.

4.1 Research questions

The aim of this study is to examine the English writing skills of upper secondary school students in argumentative texts. The main focus of the study is to find out how upper secondary school students revise their argumentation of an opinion piece with the help of a word processor after receiving additional instructions. The study aims to reach its objectives by answering the following research questions:

How does the argumentation of an opinion piece change after instructions are given?

- What argumentation techniques do the students employ in their texts?
- Are the changes in argumentation reflected by the instructions or are there other changes?
- How does the text change quantitatively?

The hypothesis is that the opinion pieces will change considerably. Following this assumption, the study will likely demonstrate that the instructions improve the quality of the opinion pieces and that the students add more argumentative elements to their texts.

4.2 Participants

The participants of this study were Finnish upper secondary school students in their third year. Third-year students were chosen as participants because they were expected to

possess enough skills for opinion writing since they had completed almost all upper secondary school English courses and they had also practised written assignments when preparing for the English essays in the Finnish matriculation examination. However, students practise writing opinion pieces fairly rarely in upper secondary schools, especially in English classes (see section 2.2). Third-year students may therefore be considered to possess decent argumentation skills, but they may still have room for improvement particularly in writing opinion pieces. Most of the students were 18 years old (18 students), while the rest were 17 years old (2 students). 18 participants (90%) were female and 2 (10%) were male.

In the background questions for this study (see Appendix 2), students were asked about their abilities in using word processors (for example, MS Word) and about their typing skills. This was to clarify whether capabilities related to word processing software impose limitations on editing texts. Ten students assessed their word processing skills as good, nine students as fair, and one student as poor. However, none of them felt that their skills were excellent (see Figure 2). In my view, either excellent or good skills are required to be able to work quickly and with few errors.

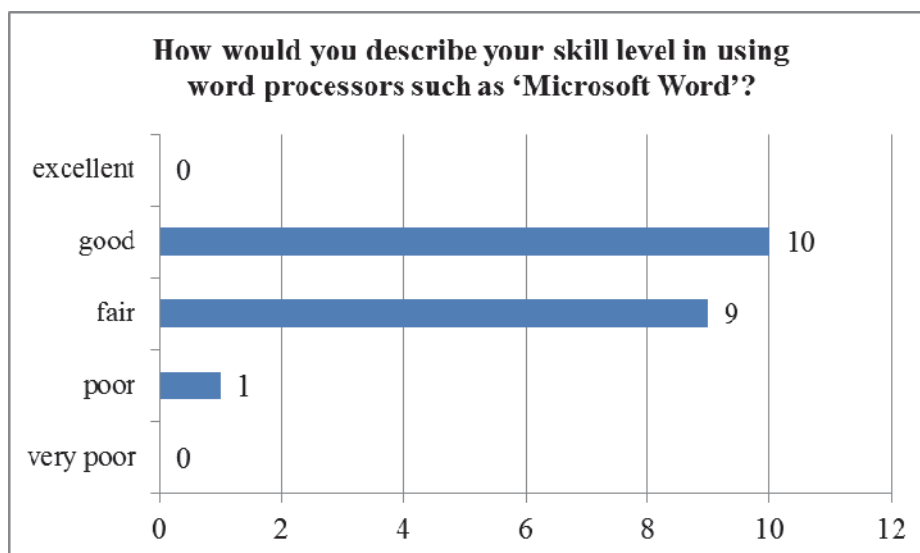


Figure 2. Students' skills in using word processors

The typing speed additionally affects the ease of text production, but also possibly the degree of meaningfulness students feel towards the task of typing assignments on a computer. The majority of the students, 17 of them, assess their keyboard typing skills as good or excellent, and 3 students as fair (see Figure 3).

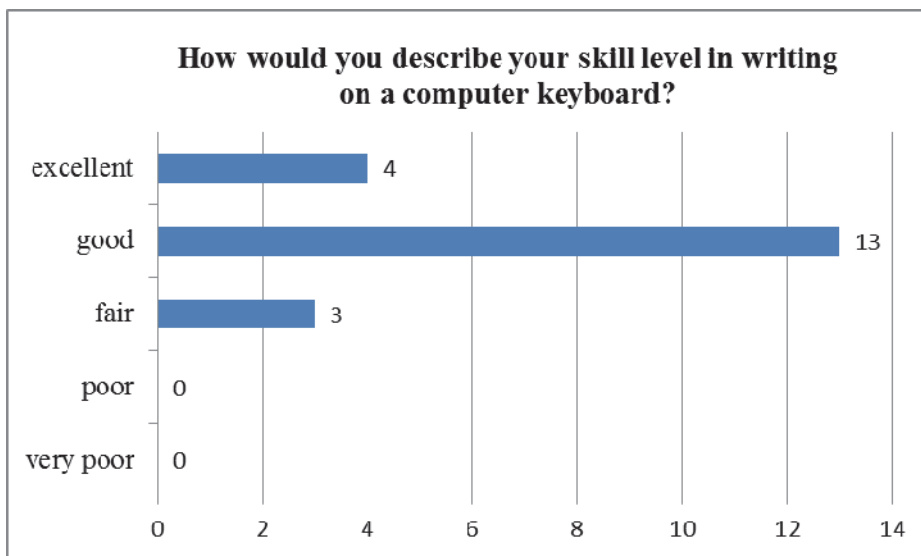


Figure 3. Students' skills in writing on a computer keyboard

In addition, the background questions invited the students to state their views on the future electronic matriculation examinations and consequent requirements to use a computer to type out the English essays. This aimed to clarify the students' attitudes towards working on a computer in general. The students' open-ended answers can be interpreted as including opinions both for and against (see Appendix 5). Five students saw using a computer as a good thing and five students saw it as bad. Four students found both positive and negative things in the reform, and the remaining six students were unable to state their opinion. In their replies, the students gave various reasons for their opinions. For instance, Lilja (Example 1) felt that typing on a computer was a positive aspect since it made editing easier. Jussi (Example 2), in turn, suggested that there may be issues regarding equality.

- (1) Voi olla hyvä juttu. Jos tekee esim. virheen niin ei tarvitse tuunata välttämättä joka kohtaa sen jälkeen. (Lilja)
[It can be a good thing. For example, if you make an error you do not have to correct every bit after it.]
- (2) Hyvä niille, jotka osaavat tietokoneita käyttää ja hyödyntää. Saattaa aiheuttaa ongelmia niille, jotka eivät tietokoneita paljoa käytä. (Jussi)
[Good for those who know how to use and make the most of computers. It might cause problems for those who do not use computers much.]

Other reasoning included the fact that using a computer increases the frequency of misspelling or that it may limit creativity. One student was of the opinion that typing on a computer was positive in itself, but had doubts regarding the complexity of arranging the electronic matriculation examinations. Several students felt, however, that using computers will save time and effort.

I wanted to shed light on the participants' background information, as they can provide additional information to be used in evaluating later edits to the texts and students' attitudes towards working with word processors and computer keyboards. One could assume that upper secondary school students have excellent word processing skills in today's information society, but this does not seem to be the case, at least in the students' personal views.

4.3 Data collection

The data were collected in an upper secondary school of 750 students in Western Finland in November 2013. The data consist of 40 opinion pieces written by the third-year students of an upper secondary school. A class of 20 students wrote their opinion pieces in two stages and for this reason, two text versions from every student will be analysed. The data were collected during a regular English lesson. For the purposes of collecting this data, the lesson was held in a computer lab because the students were to edit their opinion pieces with the help of a word processor instead of the usual pencil and paper method.

The students were given a consent form for participation a few days before the test. The form briefly explained the purpose and means of this study. It is presented in Appendix 1.

At the beginning of the lesson, the students were informed of all the relevant details in order to carry out the writing process from start to finish. First, I introduced myself to the class and briefly talked about my study. I also made it clear to the students that their texts would only be used in this particular study and that nobody's identity would be revealed at any point. Then, I gave instructions on how to proceed during the class and gave the students the titles for the opinion pieces (see Appendix 3). The students were also instructed to write their texts as if they were going to be published in a newspaper. To start the writing process, the students were given 30 minutes to write the first version of the text. They were advised to save the text on the computer with the name *etunimisukunimi_versio1* [firstnamelastname_version1]. After 30 minutes, the students were given a handout with guidelines and instructions on what an opinion piece should be like. The students were advised to read the instruction paper independently. They were also told to rename and save their document as *etunimisukunimi_versio2* [firstnamelastname_version2] before continuing their writing. They then had another 30 minutes to revise their text and make alterations to it according to the handout. Finally, I reminded the students to save their document for the last time before leaving the class.

The titles given for the opinion piece were:

1) *The age for a driving licence in Finland should be 16*

or

2) *The age for a driving licence in Finland should not be 16*

These titles were chosen for this study firstly because it was expected that a student aged 17 or 18 would have an opinion on the minimum age for obtaining a driving licence, since it is a relevant issue for them at that stage of their lives. Secondly, it was believed to be easier for the students to write about a familiar subject and get the writing done within the limited time (an English lesson of 1 hour and 15 minutes). Thirdly, it is easier for students to reason arguments in different and diverse ways when they can choose an argument that they agree with personally. Students were advised to write 100–250 words on their chosen subject. This word count was chosen to reflect the criteria for the length of the advanced-

level English essays in the matriculation examinations (150–250 words). Moreover, students are accustomed to writing compositions of a similar length on English courses.

For my study, I created my own instructions for writing an opinion piece based on textbooks, the theories of argumentation and rhetoric and the results of the studies by Perelman and Mikkonen. As the basis of my instructions, I chose the instructions given in a textbook, as it is to be expected that textbook instructions are drafted to follow the generally accepted norms of the genre (see section 2.2). Furthermore, the instructions were taken from a book that had been used in the students' school, which meant that the students may have already been familiar with them. The basis for the instructions is the English 4th course textbook *Open Road* written by Karapalo et al. (2009: 120) where advice for planning and writing an opinion piece is listed in a chapter called "Argumentatiivinen kirjoitustehtävä" [Argumentative writing assignment]. I then utilised Kakkuri-Knuutila and Halonen's (1998: 76–77, 82, 103) ideas about the criteria of a good argument. According to them, leading articles and letters to the editor usually contain one main argument with several reasons to support it. Based on these views, I added advice for the students about taking a position and giving reasons (see points [1] and [2] in the instructions given to the students). I then made additions to the instructions with the help of the argumentation techniques in the argumentation theory developed by Perelman (for more details, see section 3). Mikkonen's dissertation (2010) analyses Perelman's argumentation techniques, identifying those that are common in opinion pieces written by students. These techniques were chosen for the instructions for this study. Although Mikkonen (2010) has studied opinion pieces in Finnish, argumentation techniques are not language-specific, which is why it was used to help with the choices. Points [3] and [4] in the instructions are therefore based on Perelman and Mikkonen.

Below are the instructions given to the students. Additions based on theory have been underlined and marked with numbers. The other points have been taken from the textbook *Open Road. Course 4*. The original Finnish version is included in Appendix 4.

- - -

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING AN OPINION PIECE

An opinion piece is an argumentative text. The aim of an argumentative writing assignment is to give the reader reasons why a certain point of view on a controversial topic is justified. It challenges the reader to look at the topic from the writer's point of view and often includes a strong argument supported by examples and reasons.

- Consider whether the text really shows your point of view. [1]
- Consider whether you have given adequate reasons for your opinion and whether you could add more. [2]
- Consider the possible counterarguments to your opinion and seek to contradict them. For example, “Although it has often been claimed that... the truth is...” [3]
- There should be a good reason for every argument, whether it is for or against.

For example, it could be [4]

- a causal relationship [4]

- an example [4]

- invoking authority [4]

- a comparison. [4]

- In the closing, it is advisable to further emphasise your own opinion and try to convince the reader.
- By linking sentences with linking words (although, because, but, on the other hand, for example, therefore, finally) you can make your text easier to read and more connected.
- Make sure you have collected the best ideas for your text and combined them into sensible totalities.

- - -

The instructions were handed out to the students in Finnish in order to minimise the possibility of misunderstandings. Furthermore, there was limited time in the English lesson of 1 hour and 15 minutes in which the opinion pieces had to be written.

4.4 Method of analysis

In my study, I will utilise Perelman's argumentation theory, and will focus on the arguments in the texts and the analysis of argumentation techniques. My analysis of the texts focuses on the differences between the text written before reading the instructions (version 1) and the text written after it (version 2). With these changes, I will focus on whether the students added arguments or reasons and the argumentative methods they utilised. I did not look at factors such as the audience of argumentation or the premises of argumentation, as many other studies have done (for example, the Master's theses by Saarikangas 2010 and Lehmusvaara 2012), because my study compares different text versions and these can be assumed to be the same and therefore not relevant for the changes. Besides the argumentation, I looked at changes in the placement of paragraphs and words, i.e., whether something had been removed from the text or added to it.

In my analysis, to get an overall picture of argumentation, I looked at the general argumentative structure of the texts and answered the following questions: How are the added arguments related to the argumentative structure of opinion pieces? Have claims providing reasons been added/removed? Has the opening/closing been modified? I then outlined the analysis to changes made in texts because the changes were relevant to the aims set for this study. The changes were interpreted as totalities that can include several claims.

First, I went through all the opinion pieces – two text versions from each student – read them several times and marked all of the changes the students had made to them. Then, I classified and listed the changes. I also counted the words in both text versions and the number of sentences the students had added to their texts. In studying changes in argumentation, I noted as potential changes all additions to content that form full sentences.

I then analysed whether the addition can be interpreted as an argument that is linked to the other arguments in the text. I then analysed the argumentation techniques used by the students by categorising the claims interpreted as arguments using Perelman's (1996) classification and the results from Mikkonen's (2010) dissertation.

Classifying and interpreting arguments is not always easy and straightforward. For example Kakkuri-Knuuttila and Heinlahti (2006: 30) emphasise that argumentation is always bound up with context and situations. The definition of an argument depends on the reader whose interpretation is based on his presuppositions about the matter in question (Kakkuri-Knuuttila and Heinlahti 2006: 30–42). It was challenging to distinguish between Perelman's numerous argumentation techniques and they also partly overlap. In cases where students employed two argumentation techniques in the same sentence the arguments were classified to both techniques but the argument that was considered weaker was categorised as being inside another technique. Statistically, the overlapping arguments were both taken into account and distinguished with a small or large tick mark (see Table 1 in section 5.2).

Below there is an example of a sentence that was categorised into two argumentation techniques (Example 3). In it, the student used the closing to repeat the main argument that a 16-year-old is a traffic hazard by giving an example of herself and how she values safety and common rules. This sentence was therefore interpreted as an argument by example inside a closing.

- (3) As I'm 18 now, what I prefer in traffic is safety. I want everyone to be on the same line and obey the same rules. (Suvi)

Finally, I also analysed linking words and other linguistic features in the texts, for they too may be related to changes in argumentation or at least say something about the changes made to the texts in general.

5 ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS BY STUDENTS

In this section, I will report the results of the analysis of the opinion pieces. Firstly, there is an outline of the texts in general with an overview on the first versions. Alterations found in texts are discussed in detail and the changes are divided into different categories with examples from the texts.

The analysis consists of 40 texts (2 by each student) written by third-year upper secondary school students. The titles given for the opinion essay were:

- 1) *The age for a driving licence in Finland should be 16*
or
- 2) *The age for a driving licence in Finland should not be 16*

One student chose to write about the first option and 19 students wrote about the second.

5.1 General views on the texts

The essay titles about the age for obtaining a driving licence contained a clear statement on which the students were asked to take a stand. As a rule, the students were able state their opinion in discussing the topic, and, for the most part, seemed to stay on topic and avoid digressing. The arguments used were mostly related to the students' own everyday lives, experiences and observations of their surroundings.

According to De Rycker and Ponnudurai (2011), a 'good' argumentative essay follows a set structure and has a clearly stated main argument that is supported by diverse reasons. In my data, a few of the students' first text versions were 'good' in that sense that they already contained a clear structure, some argumentative elements and fluent use of language. Most of the students had followed what they had learnt at school about the generic structure of a text: the text had a heading, opening paragraph, body paragraphs and a closing paragraph.

The students had segmented the body of the text into one to three paragraphs, except for the five students who had not used any segmentation at all. Of the argumentative elements students had used closing (placing the main argument at the end of the text), examples, causal relationships and comparisons in their first versions. The first versions of the texts were not, however, subjected to a systematic analysis, because this was not the main goal of the study.

Texts that were considered weak had limited vocabulary and errors in grammar and spelling. Also, texts included contracted forms such as *I've*, *aren't*, *it's* and expressions from spoken language such as "*job to give u money*". As a whole, the first texts were fairly well structured opinion pieces and the given assignment was understood well.

Considering the changes made for the second text versions, two texts out of 20 had no alterations. Four students did not make any changes that might be reflected by the instructions. In addition to argumentative changes, corrections were made to grammar, such as finite and person forms, the order of words and paragraphs, and some words were added or removed. Altogether, 64 complete sentences were added to 20 texts, giving an average of 3.2 sentences added per text. The most significant addition was nine complete sentences. Five texts had no added sentences. The average length of the first version was 175 words and the second version averaged 224 words. The length of the text increased by an average of 48 words (the variation was from 0 to 120 added words/text). Figure 4 below illustrates the number of the words in text versions 1 and 2.

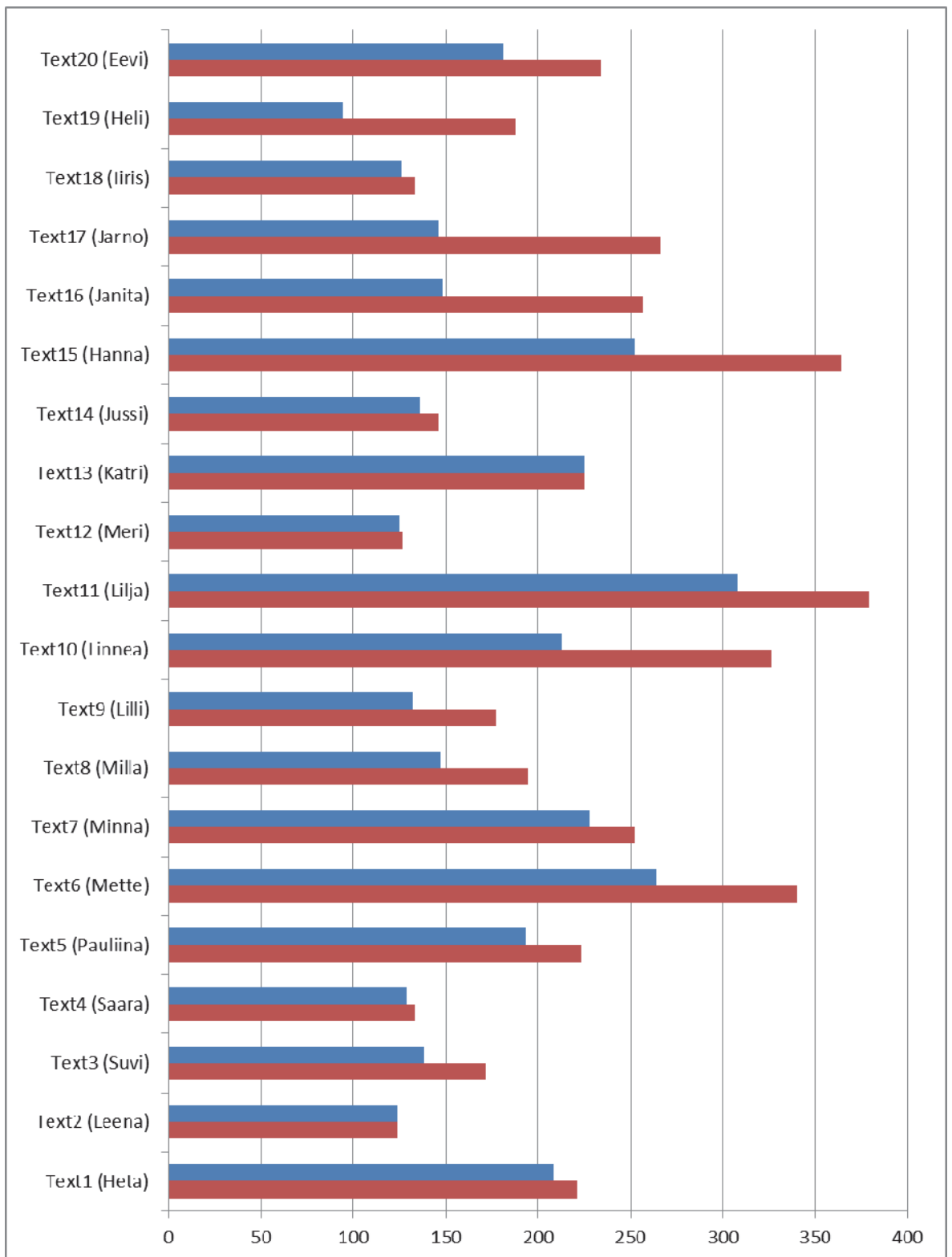


Figure 4. The number of words in text versions 1 and 2. The blue line indicates the first text version and the red line the second version.

The general impression of the students' second, revised versions was that the texts were better and more illustrative in dealing with the topic. The changes made in the texts were in many cases improvements to the argumentation that were related to the given instructions. In the following section, the changes made in argumentation will be discussed in more detail.

5.2 Changes in argumentation

In this section I will describe the results of the analysis and divide the argumentation techniques added by the students to version 2 of their texts into different categories. The categorisation was done with the help of the argumentation techniques described by Perelman (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971, Perelman 1996). In addition, the results of Mikkonen's (2010) dissertation were used as a basis for the categorisation.

The argumentative changes in students' texts were identified as contradictions, arguments by comparison, arguments by causation and arguments by example: argumentation techniques which all belong to Perelman's associative techniques. Closing – emphasising the main argument at the end of the text – is an argumentative method that Mikkonen found to be common in students' opinion pieces. Closing elements were also discovered in students' texts in this study and therefore closing was categorised as one of the argumentation techniques in the analysis. Figure 5 below demonstrates the classification of argumentation techniques used in this study.

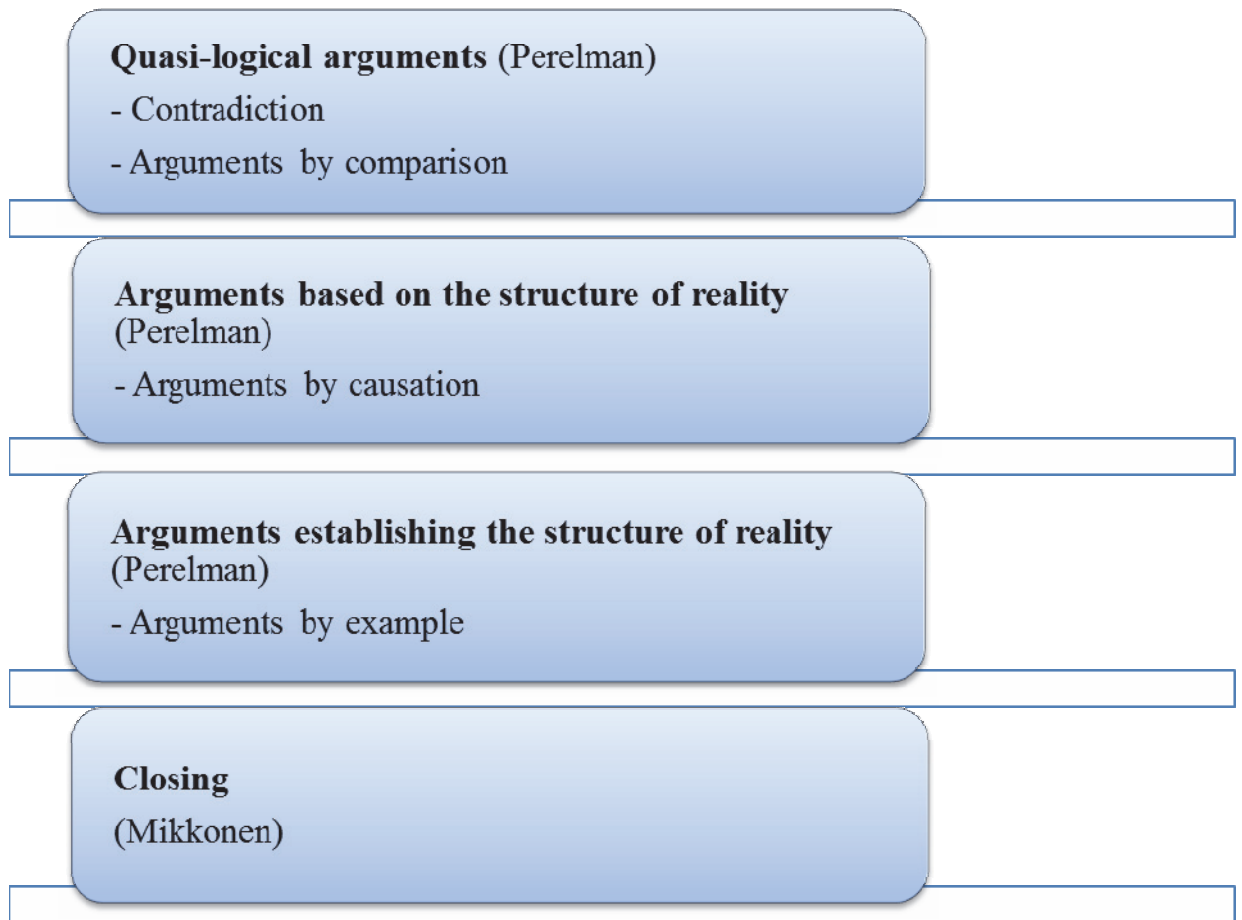


Figure 5. Classification of argumentation techniques

Table 1 represents the changes made by the students for version 2. The students' real first names and surnames have been replaced with pseudonyms. The 'Total' column first includes the total number of changes, followed by the number of students who used that element in parenthesis. The argumentation techniques have been marked in green and the order has been determined by Perelman's classification of associate argumentation techniques. The same presentation order will be used in the analysis in sections 5.2.1–5.2.5. A small tick mark represents an argument that has been interpreted as being part of two different argumentation techniques and is considered to be inside another technique. Also included in the table is each student's latest grade in English, which they were asked to provide as background information. As the table shows, an interesting detail is that students with an English grade of 9 made very few changes, while those with a grade of 6 have made several. I will cover this in more depth in section 6.1.

Table 1. Changes in argumentation

	No changes	Changes in language in general	Changes influenced by the instructions	Contradiction	Argument by comparison	Argument by causation	Argument by example	Closing	Linking words	Grade in English
Text1 (Heta)		X								7
Text2 (Leena)	X									7
Text3 (Suvi)			X			X	x	X	X	8
Text4 (Saara)		X	X					X	X	7
Text5 (Pauliina)		X	X	x	X					7
Text6 (Mette)		X	X				XX	X	XXXX	8
Text7 (Minna)		X	X				X	X	X	8
Text8 (Milla)			X			X	X	X	XX	8
Text9 (Lilli)		X	X			X		X		6
Text10 (Linnea)		X	X	XX		X		X	X	?
Text11 (Lilja)		X	X		X			X	XXX	7
Text12 (Meri)		X								9
Text13 (Katri)	X									9
Text14 (Jussi)		X	X		X				X	8
Text15 (Hanna)			X	X		X	X	X	XXX	8
Text16 (Janita)		X	X			X	X	X	XX	8
Text17 (Jarno)			X	X		X		X	XXXX	6
Text18 (Iris)		X	X				X		X	6
Text19 (Heli)			X	x	X	x	X		XX	7
Text20 (Eevi)		X	X		X	XX			X	8
Total	2	13	16	6 (5)	5	10 (9)	9 (8)	11	27	

When giving examples from the students' texts in the following sections, I will present the changes made by the students to version 2 of their texts. Earlier passages of text or sentences from the first text versions are usually not included. If they are included they are

put in square brackets. The examples have been numbered and the first name of the student (the names have been altered from the original) who wrote the example is in parentheses after the example.

5.2.1 Contradiction

One piece of advice given in the instructions was to think about the opposite arguments and try to contradict them. Making a point by presenting a contradiction is one of Perelman's quasi-logical arguments (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 195). In arguments based on contradiction, the rule suggested or argument supported contradicts an earlier rule or a generally accepted argument (Perelman 1996: 63–64). The writer then seeks to deny an argument contrary to their opinion and prove their own opinion right (Mikkonen 2010: 147). Five students (25%) had added segments to their opinion pieces that fall into this category. One of them had added two segments.

Many students believed that 16-year-olds are not responsible enough in traffic, and that at that age, they want to be rebellious and break rules. Examples 4 and 5 below demonstrate how the contradiction structure was used to support the main argument that 16-year-olds should not get driving licences. In Example 4, the student argued that many young people are responsible, but then immediately denied it by saying that many want to break rules. In Example 5, the student made a denial by asking “but is it safe for everyone?”, therefore raising the possibility that it is not safe and immediately answered the question himself.

- (4) I don't say that all of the sixteen years old boys wouldn't take responsibility. There are many teenagers who really can. But when you are thinking fast it is a fact that the most of the teens like to be just teenagers who want to break the rules and just been rebel. (Linnea)
- (5) If teen agers get their driving license at age 16 it will make their moving a lot easier from place A to place B, but is it safe for everyone? my opinion is that it's not safe for everyone... (Jarno)

In Example 6, the student first stated that she knew many boys are interested in driving at the age of 16, but also denied the possibility by referring to the poor financial situation of 16-year-olds.

- (6) I know that there are many boys who are interested in driving but I'm sure that not many of 16 years old individuals have as much money as they need when they want to get a driving licence. (Hanna)

By adding sentences that can be interpreted as contradiction, students were able to gain support and new points of view for the main argument of their texts.

5.2.2 Argument by comparison

Argumentation by comparison also belongs to quasi-logical arguments. Argumentation by comparison occurs when several objects are considered in order to evaluate them through their relations to each other (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 242). A comparison is based on a wordless assumption whose validity can be tested in practice, if necessary (Perelman 1996 :87). Comparisons can be made by opposition (the heavy and the light), by ordering (bigger than, the biggest), by quantitative ordering (the first, the second) and by sacrifice (measure of the value attributed to the thing for which the sacrifice is made) (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 242, 248). A total of five students (25%) had added an argument based on comparison to their text.

In their comparisons, students mostly used ordering based on degrees of comparison, as demonstrated by the following examples. The author of Example 7 compared the weight of a car to the weight of a motorcycle to demonstrate the responsibility of driving a car. In Example 8, driving a car was seen as different in comparison to driving a moped, while the author of Example 9 considered 18-year-olds to be wiser and more responsible than 16-year-olds. They all used comparison to support their argument that the minimum age for a driving licence should not be lowered to 16.

- (7) Also the driving license gets you a permission to drive a car or a vehicle which weights 3500kg and that is a whole lot more than the small motorcycle what they had driven only a year earlier. (Lilja)

- (8) Driving licence for a moped is a different thing. It doesn't mean that you can drive a car if you can drive a moped. (Eevi)
- (9) The 18-year-olds are much more responsible and wiser than 16-year-olds. (Jussi)

Example 10 compared the driving conditions in Finland and America, with the student strengthening her argument that 16-year-olds are not mature enough to drive a car by pointing out that driving in Finland is more difficult than driving in America.

- (10) But I would say that the driving conditions here in Finland are so different than in the most parts of America that the driving is much more difficult to us. (Heli)

There were also two cases in the texts where students had used contradiction in the same sentence as comparison. In Example 11, the student compared the minimum age for a driving licence in Finland to American teenagers who get their licences at 16. In text version 1, she had presented an argument that 16-year-olds are not responsible and mature enough for traffic and then added a sentence containing comparison and contradiction to version 2 to add weight to her argument.

- (11) I'm not saying that every 16-year old would be a bad driver because surely there are teens who can be responsible drivers and many are probably thinking that why can't we get a driving licence at 16 years old if the teens in America do. (Heli)

Another example (Example 12) also compared Finland to America, where one can get a driving licence at 16, and simultaneously deemed Finland to be a safer place than America in general using contradiction.

- (12) Some people say: "Well, in America they get a driving licence in the age of 16." I say; how many things are safer in America than in Finland? (Pauliina)

Examples 10, 11 and 12 also showed that familiarity with and knowledge of another culture make it possible to give more diverse reasons for an argument. Therefore, convincing argumentation is not based solely on linguistic skills.

Through comparison, students were able to strengthen their main argument. The comparison of a car being heavier and bigger than a motorcycle (Example 7), for instance,

showed that providing demonstrative comparative data adds weight to an argument. These additions can be said to be successful from an argumentative point of view.

5.2.3 Argument by causation

Causal relationships are arguments based on the structure of reality. This technique is used to introduce causal relationships between phenomena. The argumentation links two consecutive cases, focuses on studying the causes and gives a reason for the existence of something (Perelman 1996: 93–94). The frequent use of argumentation based on causal relationships is based, for example, on the fact that using it is related to our everyday thinking (Mikkonen 2010: 129). Nine students (45%) added arguments including causal relationships to their texts. One student did so twice. Arguments by causation were the second most frequently used technique.

By adding cause-and-effect elements, students wanted to draw attention to the increased frequency of traffic accidents, because if 16-year-olds were given driving licences, they would cause danger both to themselves and others (Examples 13, 14 and 15). The author of Example 15 was also concerned about driving schools not having enough room in class if 16-year-olds were allowed in.

- (13) [They (= teenagers) could drive extremely fast and recklessly.] Other drivers, pedestrians and cyclists would be in continuous danger (Suvi)
- (14) What would really happen for the most of sixteen year olds. Being in a car accident would be the one of the most usual thing that would bring injuries for teens. (Linnea)
- (15) In addition the amount of motorbikes would decrease and there would be more and more accidents on the road and there wouldn't be space for everybody in the driving schools. (Hanna)

Destruction of nature and increased obesity were also considered consequences of 16-year-olds having driving licences, as demonstrated by the following Examples 16 and 17.

- (16) We can all make our own decisions, to go by car or bicycle? If there is more people who choose cars, the nature will slowly be destroyed. (Janita)

- (17) If all 16 years old people had a car they would not walk or bike and that would have effects to overweight. (Eevi)

By presenting the harmful consequences of getting a driving licence at the age of 16, the students presented arguments that supported their main argument that the minimum age for a driving licence should be kept at 18.

5.2.4 Argument by example

Arguments by example represent the relations establishing the structure of reality. With examples, the author gives reasons for an argument by referring to an individual case that appears to prove the argument. Examples are also used to create rules and precedents (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 350-353). Upper secondary school students are familiar with using examples from their writing lessons because it is advised that examples can be used as a tool for beginning and illustrating the text (Mikkonen 2010: 135). It is therefore not surprising that eight students (40%) added examples to strengthen their argument. One of them added two examples.

In Example 18, a reason was given for the argument that a driving licence gives the driver freedom by offering an example that public transportation does not work in the student's hometown.

- (18) [Driven license gives freedom and it's so much easier to move from the place A to the place B] because like in my home town public transport doesn't work. (Mette)

One of the examples is related to the text's main argument because the reason given for a 16-year-old being too young to get a driving licence was that, at that age, some might want to "show off" their toughness with dangerous tricks (Example 19). One of the students practically refocused the main argument by arguing that the relevant question is not age, but that the quality of driving instruction should be reconsidered (Example 20).

- (19) [16 years old is not old enough to drive a car.] In that age some want to "show off" and they might do dangerous things in traffic just because they want to show how tough they are. (Milla)
- (20) There are many other things to which Finland should put weight on, for instance quality of lessons in driving schools. (Hanna)

In Example 21, the student used herself as an example after having explained how difficult it is to concentrate on driving in the middle of traffic, even though she was already 18 years old. Through her own example, she wanted to illustrate and emphasise her message. Also in this text example, referring to the mother might be seen as an argument from authority.

- (21) I'm 18 year old and got my driving license this summer. It's been fun but always my mother says to me that I need to be careful. (Mette)

Giving reasons through examples was the third most common way of strengthening the argument. Examples added to illustrate the main argument were a good addition to the students' texts and made the texts more detailed.

5.2.5 Closing

According to Mikkonen (2010: 89), in Finland students are taught to repeat the main argument at the end of the text because it is thought to have special weight and because the closing paragraph sticks in the reader's mind. This was also evident in the material of this study, where 11 students (55%) added a strong argument at the end of their text. In Mikkonen's study, the most commonly used closing method was presenting the author's own opinion. The closing of the text was also strengthened by presenting a challenge, advice or question (Mikkonen 2010: 89).

Several students in this study also used their own opinion as a closing method, as shown by Examples 22, 23 and 24. In these examples, adding sentences gives the text a more empathic ending.

- (22) I think that it would be crazy idea to lower the age of driving to 16. (Mette)

- (23) In my opinion everything is just fine as it is right now. (Minna)
- (24) The age for a driving licence hasn't caused any problems in our country so I think that there are no reasons to think about it. (Hanna)

In Examples 25 and 26, the students closed their text with advice or a statement that everyone should wait until they turn 18 because they will still have the rest of their lives ahead of them.

- (25) Everyone can wait till they are 18 year old it's not a big deal! (Jarno)
- (26) You will have rest of your life time to drive a car. (Milla)
- (27) Some may think 16-years old is ready to take responsibility, and due to that could have a driving licence. Yeas, they might be ready. But why should they be? They have a whole life in front of them. (Janita)

The author of Example 27 shared the opinion with authors of Expamples 25 and 26, and also used contradiction in her closing. She believed that it was not necessary for 16-year-olds to be ready to take responsibility for driving, even if they did happen to be ready.

5.2.6 Summary of the added argumentation techniques

Figure 6 below summarises the use of the argumentation techniques added into second text versions. The most commonly used ones were closing elements, which were used by 55% of the students. The next most common ones were arguments by causation (45%) and examples (40%). Contradiction and comparison were used equally often – 25% of the students added them into their texts. Argument from authority was used only once, and even then it was only a part of a reason interpreted as an example and therefore not categorised as a technique in its own right.

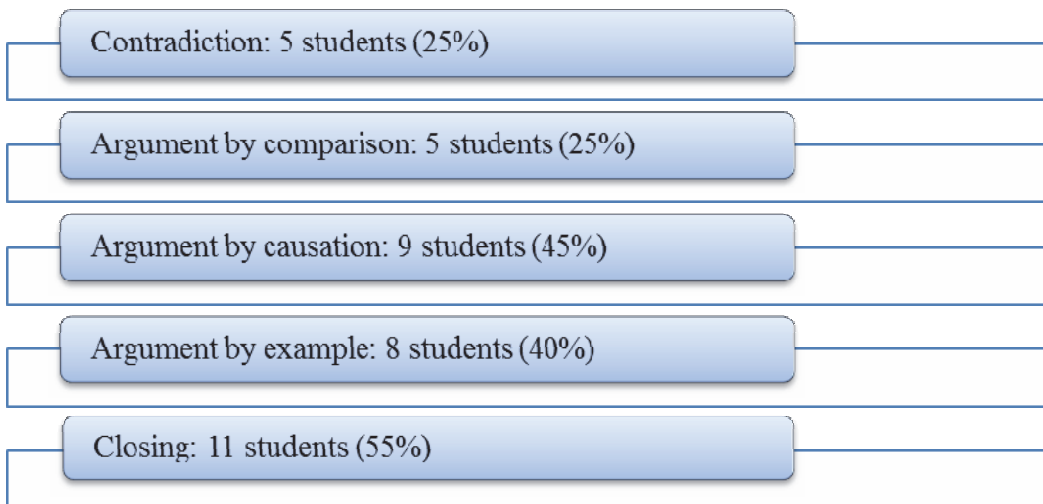


Figure 6. Summary of the added argumentation techniques

Based on the analysis of the materials in my study, I can say that the results are similar to those of Mikkonen (2010), who identified the most commonly used methods as causal relationships followed by examples. Comparison was the third most commonly used method and argument from authority the fourth. In Mikkonen's study, more than half of the students expressed their main argument in the closing. The explanation for the differences between my study and Mikkonen's (the greatest variation was in argument from authority) is that, in her case, the texts were responses to an existing letter to the editor. In this study, the participants did not have a prompt; instead, they built their texts from scratch themselves.

5.3 Linking words

This section briefly describes the linking words that the students added to their texts, because linking words can be used to support argumentation. For example, Kakkuri-Knuuttila and Halonen (1998: 66) note that by identifying linking words in a text one can also recognise arguments. Likewise van Eemeren et al (1996: 13) point out that linking words enable writers to identify claims and reasons. Perelman's theory also discusses grammatical and affective categories that include modality, personal pronouns, linking

words, naming and adjectives, but the description of these methods in theory is not very systematic (Mikkonen 2010: 41).

One of the points in the instructions given to the students also mentioned that linking sentences to each other using linking words can make the text easier to read and more connected. 14 students (70%) had added linking words to their text. The added linking words are illustrated in Figure 7.

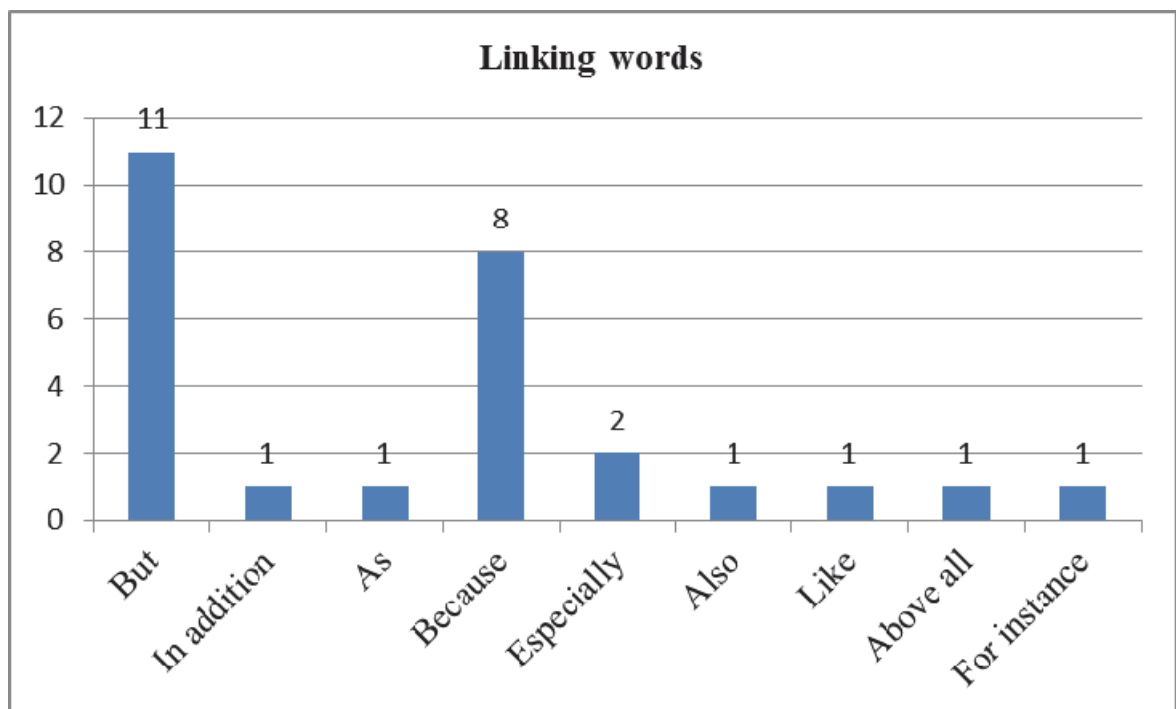


Figure 7. Added linking words

The most popular linking words were ‘but’ (11 times) and ‘because’ (8 times). The seven other added linking words appeared only once or twice. Students used linking words together with their argumentation techniques. For example, ‘but’ was mainly used together with denial and contradiction arguments and ‘because’ with arguments by causation as the Examples 28 and 29 below show.

(28) Moped is easier to control *but* car isn’t that easy (Mette)

(29) [...there should be more lessons in driving school] *because* that could decrease the number of accidents. (Milla)

In conclusion, it can be said that students utilised linking words well in their second text versions to connect sentences by linking their ideas and arguments together and therefore making the text clearer and easier to read.

6 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the English writing skills of upper secondary school students in argumentative texts. The main objective was to find out how upper secondary school students edit their argumentation of an opinion piece with the help of a word processor after receiving additional instructions. The study was a comparative study; the material consisted of opinion pieces written in two separate stages by the students of one upper secondary school class (20 students). In the first stage, the students wrote the opinion piece on given subjects. After the first stage, they received instructions on how to improve the text, and in the second stage, after receiving the instructions, they edited their opinion pieces. The theoretical framework of this study was based on Chaïm Perelman's argumentation theory and Perelman's argumentation techniques served as methods for the study.

This section discusses the results of this study with a link to the previous research. In addition, the possible implications of the findings for English language teaching are covered. Finally, the use of computers and opinions on electronic matriculation examinations are considered and suggestions for future research on the issue are offered.

6.1 Conclusions on the use of Perelman's argumentation techniques

Based on the data analysis of this study, it can be said that the students employed Perelman's argumentation techniques in a versatile manner in their opinion pieces. All associative techniques; quasi-logical arguments, arguments based on the structure of reality and arguments establishing the structure of reality were found in the data. The argumentation techniques were relatively evenly distributed. Ten students had added quasi-logical arguments to their later, edited versions; nine had utilised arguments based on the structure of reality; and eight students had employed arguments establishing the structure of reality.

Of quasi-logical arguments, the data included contradiction and arguments by comparison. Among arguments based on the structure of reality, the data presented arguments by causation and also one argument from authority that existed as part of another argument placed in another technique, and was thus not classified into a separate category. Examples were used to implement arguments establishing the structure of reality.

The most common change in argumentation was confirming the main statement by using closing elements, as 11 students (55%) had added these to their texts. Closing is not among Perelman's argumentation techniques, but it was included in the study as closing is generally regarded as a key element in the impressiveness of a text. The dissertation by Mikkonen (2010) also examined closing as one argumentation method, and the closing element was included as a separate item in the instructions given to the students. Apart from closing, among the most frequent argumentation techniques were argument by causation and argument by example with argument by comparison being the fourth most common technique.

The findings of this study are similar to those in Mikkonen's (2010) study which looked at the argumentation skills of upper secondary school students in writing letters to the editor. Mikkonen also found the three most common argumentation techniques to be causal arguments, examples, and comparisons; the fourth was argument from authority. In addition, more than half of the students in Mikkonen's material expressed their main statement in the closing element. The similarities in this study and that of Mikkonen are likely caused by the fact that they both deal with the same genre, opinion writing, and naturally by the fact that the provided instructions directed the students as the instructions utilised the most common concepts from the study by Mikkonen. On the other hand, the results indicate that the instructions were functional and well-suited to this specific task and type of writing, as the students might have found it difficult to make changes in their texts if they had been instructed to use arguments by transitivity or analogy, which are very specific of Perelman's techniques, and not obvious and familiar such as comparisons and examples. All things considered, it was unexpected how much the instructions guided the changes made by the students.

Based on the analysis, the impact of the instructions on the second text versions seems evident, because all the added arguments were interpreted as belonging in the categories suggested in the instructions. On the other hand, some students made no changes at all, which may be caused by several factors. For instance those students with grade 9 in English made no changes, or ones that could be interpreted as arguments. Was it because they considered their texts or skills so advanced that they did not find any reason to improve on anything in their later texts, or were their word-processing skills lacking? Students of average level (English grade 6, 7 or 8) seem to have benefitted most from the instructions, because they had added arguments and linking words the most.

As I mentioned in section 4.4, interpreting and defining arguments is not completely unproblematic. Due to the high number and variety of Perelman's argumentation techniques, it can be challenging to distinguish between the techniques – and, in addition, they often overlap. The researcher's individual interpretation also has an influence on the outcome. To be sure, Perelman has received criticism regarding the overlapping aspect of his argumentation techniques (see e.g. Koistinen 1999, Sääskilahti 2006, Lehmusvaara 2012), but partial overlapping, according to Sääskilahti (2006: 230) does not necessarily imply theoretical deficiency but the fact that argumentation is a complex issue and it cannot be comprehensively limited to distinct categories.

Perelman's theory was well-suited to the textual analysis of my study, since argumentation and persuasive language are central when expressing opinion. Perelman's theory, complemented by the observations made by Mikkonen, was also highly useful in classifying the argumentation techniques in the data, and the classifications did not appear too diverse or too numerous. One reason for this is the means of carrying out this study. As the set of instructions gave particular suggestions concerning the techniques to be used, the students were distinctly guided towards the use of these specific techniques. This also enabled effective analysis of the argumentation techniques. Mainly, the one issue left for debate was how to classify the expressions that employed two different techniques simultaneously. However, it is important to emphasise that the advice in the instructions did not guide my interpretation of the data.

Had the amount of data been larger, I could have included Perelman's argumentation techniques even more specifically and thus arrived at more exact generalisations. However, as the study's target group was upper secondary school students in their last year of studies, a larger group of participants was not possible to attain due to the fact that not all students have English courses left for the last year. Acquiring the data for this study was already challenging, as not all course participants were present at the test situation.

6.2 Teaching of argumentation

Students have use for argumentation skills at school as well as in later life. Marttunen and Laurinen (2004: 159–160) believe that students should be able to analyse argumentation when evaluating the significance of teaching materials, text books and websites. Citizens of today's interactive information society are expected to participate in social dialogue on topical issues and to present justified opinions on them. Also many social issues are international, such as pollution, energy policy, and conflicts of interest concerning gene technology.

Marttunen and Laurinen (2004: 159–160) emphasise the role of schools in teaching argumentation skills. According to Mikkonen (2010: 11–12), argumentation skills are "empowering", in the sense that they give the prerequisites to cope with different kinds of communication situations. I consider it the school's task to teach the knowledge and skills that students need to be able to discuss topics in national and global forums. This requires critical thinking and argumentation skills. I also agree with Mikkonen (2010: 8) that the time to invest in argumentation is now, because society sets new kinds of language processing challenges, requiring the ability to express an opinion and justify it convincingly both orally and in writing, and to be critical towards other people's views in many communication situations.

In section 2.2, I suggested that despite their importance, only relatively few argumentation skills are taught in schools, and argumentation skills are under-represented in the teaching of English language. The teaching of English language argumentation skills should

therefore be increased. Firstly, because young people of today communicate in an unprejudiced way across borders in English, for instance in social media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter etc.). Secondly, further education, particularly in university, requires students to possess diverse and convincing argumentation skills. And thirdly, young people may in the future work for international companies in Finland or abroad, and will need argumentation skills when making speeches that are intended to have an impact, in presentations that relay information, in decision making discussions, and in different kinds of negotiations and meetings.

It is also useful to consider what kinds of teaching methods will enable students to become aware of different argumentation methods, what they are suitable for, which of them they are already familiar with, and which areas could be improved on. For this reason it is important to write texts, but also to debate them and analyse them afterwards. When teaching argumentation skills, teachers could utilise the method of editing opinion pieces in several stages. Then, instead of the traditional method, in which the text is written and the feedback is received from the teacher, the students could give each other peer feedback or the students could analyse the argumentation methods of their own texts. As well as written texts, it would also be important to teach argumentation through spoken communication.

6.3 Views on the use of computers and electronic matriculation examinations

Matriculation examinations will become electronic in autumn 2016. The change has been criticised as happening too fast because technical problems have not yet been ironed out. The Matriculation Examination Board has not yet addressed all of the basic questions, such as whether the examinations will be held on wireless networks, or what a backup plan might be. Sirpa Lappalainen, a teacher of biology and geography, stated in a Helsingin Sanomat interview (Valtavaara and Grönholm 2014) that the first-year students of upper secondary school should be allowed to practise electronic examinations soon but teachers are hesitant, in particular the older generation who have not used electronic devices. Also Hannu Huhtala, a teacher of physics and IT, is of the opinion that many technical factors

are causing confusion and that there has not been enough guidance (Valtavaara and Grönholm 2014). The planning of electronic examinations is at an initial stage and teachers lack tools as well as IT skills.

Electronic matriculation examinations may involve numerous technical problems. As well as solving these, it is also necessary to develop pedagogical solutions in order to ensure that making the matriculation examination electronic does not mean only solving the problems of conveying examination answers. In order to make the use of computers part of everyday student life, computers should be used during studies in different ways and in a target-oriented manner. The educational use of information and communication technology (ICT) is already expected to be part of everyday life in teaching and learning. However, this seems not to be the case according to Susanna Pöntinen's (2013) dissertation in which she examined how the culture of educational use of ICT is constructed during discursive practices of class student teachers. Her one main goal was to identify student teachers' shared discursive practices to express the relations between ICT use and teaching and learning. The study indicated that ICT is not unconditionally accepted as a part of education.

Writing on a computer is not only a skill that is required in the workplace. It is also a useful tool from the point of view of text production and conveying the writer's message. Pirjo Sinko, Counsellor of Education at the Finnish National Board of Education argues in the *Ilkka* newspaper article (Kataja 2014) that the frame of the text should be formed by typing, rather than writing by hand, as it is easy to edit while searching for the correct terms. According to Sinko, schools are persisting with a culture of handwriting even though the rest of the society writes using computers. She says that teleinformatic writing has been ignored in teaching. According to the new curriculum that takes effect in autumn 2016, computer keyboard techniques must be adopted in primary school and pupils in grades 1 and 2 will receive lessons on keyboard skills and other basic word processing skills. The objective of starting electronic text processing as early as in primary school is to ensure that all future students will have equal opportunities when matriculation examinations become electronic in 2016. (Kataja 2014)

Today's students are experts at using social media and digital devices for entertainment purposes, but it cannot be assumed that everyone is adequately skilled in word processing, using spreadsheets and other applications that will be needed in electronic matriculation examinations.

In the background questions of this study, students were asked to give their opinions about the forthcoming electronic matriculation examinations and using a computer to type out the English essays. This is what Katri wrote:

Kirjoittaisin mieluummin käsin. Kaikki oppii kirjoittamaan samoihin aikoihin (kynällä!). Mutta kaikilla ei ole varaa ostaa konetta. Monet, jotka käyttää konetta vaan pelaa eikä kirjoita. Liian iso ero olis siinä kuinka hyvin ja nopeasti kirjoittaa, ne hyötyis jotka on tottunut käyttämään näppiksiä. (Katri)

[I would rather write by hand. We all learn to write at the same age (by pencil!). But not everyone can afford to buy a computer. Many who use computers just play and don't write. There would be too big a difference in how well and fast people type. Those used to writing on a computer keyboard would benefit.]

Keeping up with the technological development must not be dependent on the family's wealth. Luckily, many municipalities have recently begun acquiring tablet computers for schools' use. This enables even those students who do not have the latest technology at home to keep abreast of developments in technology.

6.4 Suggestions for future research

As this study comprised a small group of students, studies including a larger number of participants should be conducted in order to draw profound conclusions on upper secondary school students' skills in argumentation. In any case, it raised a lot of questions and suggestions for future research.

The focus of this study was not how well students were able to write for a particular audience. Future studies could use Perelman's theory to a greater extent by specifying in the assignment a particular audience for whom the text would be directed to. This would enable the use of the concept of an audience in argumentation to be examined. Writing texts with a particular audience in mind is a skill required in many occupations, which is why the

learning of this skill should be researched. It would also be interesting to see how much difference there is in students' abilities to use argumentation techniques when they are writing in English in comparison to writing in their native language. This study was able to indicate that upper secondary school students can at least utilise argumentation techniques.

In upper secondary education, students receive feedback on their texts, but the texts are not revised afterwards, even though this could significantly improve students' linguistic and writing skills. One explanation for this is that giving feedback is time-consuming, and revising and re-reading the same text is even more so. Instructions given after completing the first version of a text are used in a manner somewhat similar to personal feedback, as with the help of the instructions, students can evaluate their texts themselves and find ways to improve them. If the aim is to have the students revise their texts, using instructions in teaching could make this easier. Furthermore, the instructions can be combined with the possibilities offered by information technology. This study also demonstrated that after reading the instructions, some of the students were able to improve their opinion pieces and their argumentation. It would be beneficial to find out how giving instructions and utilising them to write revised texts could be used to develop students' essay- or analysis-writing skills. A similar method of improving writing skills could also be applied to other subjects in which writing skills affect academic success.

It would also be interesting to further study the process of text writing by using word processing programmes, and see, for example, if the quality of texts improves relative to the increased amount of time and means available for revising texts after the first draft. This would involve investigating matters other than argumentation.

Argumentation is an important skill in today's information society, and therefore research related to argumentation in various texts and different contexts is also needed in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abitreenit. YLE. <http://oppiminen.yle.fi/abitreenit/englanti/yo-kokeet>. (16 May, 2014).

Bhatia, V. K. (2004). *Worlds of written discourse. A genre-based view*. London: Continuum.

Corti, C., Day, A. and Backhouse, G. (2000). Confidentiality and informed consent: Issues for consideration in the preservation of and provision of access to qualitative data archives. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. [online] 1 (3), n. pag.
<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1024/2207>

De Rycker, A. and Ponnurudai, P. (2011). The effect of online reading on argumentative essay writing quality. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*. [online] 11 (3), 147–163
[http://www.ukm.my/ppbl/Gema/GEMA%20vol%2011%20\(3\)%202011/pp147_162.pdf](http://www.ukm.my/ppbl/Gema/GEMA%20vol%2011%20(3)%202011/pp147_162.pdf)

Eemeren, F.H. van, Grootendorst, R., Henkemans, S., Blair, J., Johnson, R., Plantin, C., Krabbe, E., Plantin, C., Walton, D., Willard, C., Woods, J. and Zarefsky, D. (1996). *Fundamentals of argumentation theory: A handbook of historical backgrounds and contemporary developments*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kakkuri-Knuuttila, M.-L. (1998). Retoriikka. In M.-L. Kakkuri-Knuuttila (ed.), *Argumentti ja kritiikki. Lukemisen, keskustelun ja vakuuttamisen taidot*. Tammer-Paino Oy: Tampere, 233–272.

Kakkuri-Knuuttila, M.-L. and Halonen, I. (1998). Argumentaatioanalyysi ja hyvän argumentin ehdot. In M.-L. Kakkuri-Knuuttila (ed.), *Argumentti ja kritiikki. Lukemisen, keskustelun ja vakuuttamisen taidot*. Tammer-Paino Oy: Tampere, 60–113.

Kakkuri-Knuuttila, M.-L. and Heinlahti, K. (2006). *Mitä on tutkimus? Argumentaatio ja tieteenfilosofia*. Gaudeamus: Helsinki.

Karapalo, E., McWhirr, J., Mäki, J., Päckilä, T., Riite, M. and Silk, R. (2009). *Open Road. Course 4*. Keuruu: Otava.

Kataja, J. (2014). Näppäimistö puskee luokkiin. Alakouluissa on ryhdyttävä piakkoin opettamaan paljon nykyistä enemmän koneella kirjoittamista. *Ilkka*, February 21, 2014, p. A2.

Katajamäki, H. (2003). Taloussanomalehtien pääkirjoitusten viestinnän tarkoitukset. Tulkintoja kolmen kokeneen toimittajan haastattelusta. In M. Koskela and N. Pilke (eds.), *Kieli ja asiantuntijuus*. Suomen soveltavan kielitieteen yhdistyksen AFinLAN vuosikirja 2003 nro 61, 179–202.

Katajamäki, H. (2004). *Taloussanomalehtien pääkirjoitusten viestinnän lähtökohtien ja tekstien merkitysten kohtaamisia*. Unpublished Licentiate Thesis. University of Vaasa, Department of Communication Studies.

Kauppinen, A. (2011). Lukiolaisten tekstimaisemat ja kieliasenteet – kyselytutkimuksen satoa. In A. Kauppinen, H. Lehti-Eklund, H. Makkonen-Craig and R. Juvonen (eds.), *Lukiolaisten äidinkieli: suomen- ja ruotsinkielisten lukioiden opiskelijoiden tekstimaisemat ja kirjoitustaitojen arviointi*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 303–383.

Kaurala, E. (2002). *Argumentoivan ylioppilasaineen dialogisten ja argumentoivien piirteiden tarkastelua*. Unpublished Pro Gradu Thesis. University of Helsinki. Department of Finnish Language.

Koistinen, M. (1999). Pelkkää taloutta. Retoriikka journalismin tutkimuksessa. In A. Kantola, I. Moring and E. Väliverronen (eds.), *Media-analyysi. Tekstistä tulkintaan*. Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy, 40–63.

Koskela, M. and Katajamäki, H. (2012). Ammattikielisten tekstien tutkimisesta – esimerkkinä tilintarkastuskertomuksen tarkastelu. In V. Heikkinen, E. Vuotilainen,

P. Lauerma, U. Tiihilä and M. Lounela (eds.) *Genreanalyysi – tekstilajitutkimuksen käytäntöä*. [online] Kotimaisten kielten keskuksen verkkojulkaisuja 29.

<http://kaino.kotus.fi/www/verkkojulkaisut/julk29/>

Kuusisto, R. (1996). Sodan retoriikasta. Persianlahden ja Bosnian konfliktit läntisten suurvaltajohtajien lausunnoissa. In K. Palonen and H. Summa (eds.), *Pelkkää retoriikkaa*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 267–291.

Lehmusvaara, V. (2012). *Tekstitaitovastaus ja argumentointi*. Unpublished Pro Gradu Thesis. University of Helsinki. Department of Finnish Language.

<https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/37866/tekstita.pdf?sequence=1>

Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet (2003). Finnish National Board of Education [online].

http://www.oph.fi/download/47345_lukion_opetussuunnitelman_perusteet_2003.pdf.

(4 May, 2014).

Marttunen, M. and Laurinen, L. (2004). Lukiolaisten argumentointitaidot: perusta yhteisölliselle oppimiselle. *Kasvatus: Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja* 35 (2), 159–173.

Mauranen, A. (1993). *Cultural differences in academic rhetoric*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris and Wien: Peter Lang.

Mikkonen, I. (2010). “*Olen sitä mieltä, että...*”. *Lukiolaisten yleisönosastotekstien rakenne ja argumentointi*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopistopaino.

Nyström, C. (2003). *Argumentera! En presentation av gymnasisters argumenterande texter i databasen ARGUS*. FUMS Rapport, 209. Uppsala: Uppsala universitetet.

Pak, C.-S. and Acevedo, R. (2008). Spanish-language newspaper editorials from Mexico. In U. Connor, E. Nagelhout and W. V. Rozycki (eds.), *Contrastive rhetoric. Reaching to intercultural rhetoric*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 123–146.

Perelman, C. (1996). *Retoriikan valtakunta*. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Perelman, C. and Olbrechts-Tyteca, L. (1971) *The new rhetoric. A treatise on argumentation*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Puro, J.-P. (1998). Puhetaidosta retoriikkaan, vai oliko se päinvastoin. *Tiedotustutkimus* 21 (3), 82–91. <https://www12.uta.fi/kirjasto/nelli/verkkoaineistot/yht/puro.pdf>

Pöntinen, S. (2013). *Tieto- ja viestintäteknologian opetuskäytön kulttuurin diskursiivinen muotoutuminen luokanopettajaopiskelijoiden puheessa*. Publications of the University of Eastern Finland. Dissertations in Education, Humanities, and Theology No 49. Joensuu: University of Eastern Finland.

Rojas-Drummond, S. and Zapata, M. (2004). Exploratory talk, argumentation and reasoning in Mexican primary school children. *Language and Education* 18 (6), 539–557.

Saarikangas, S. (2010). *Recession rhetoric. Economic rhetoric in Finnish budget presentations during a global financial crisis*. Unpublished Pro Gradu Thesis. University of Tampere. Department of Speech Communication and Voice Research. <http://tampub.uta.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/81847/gradu04496.pdf?sequence=1>

Shore, S. and Rapatti, K. (eds.) (2014). *Tekstilajitaidot. Lukemisen ja kirjoittamisen opetus koulussa*. Helsinki: Äidinkielen opettajain liitto.

Summa, H. (1996). Kolme näkökulmaa uuteen retoriikkaan. Burke, Perelman, Toulmin ja retoriikan kunnianpalautus. In K. Palonen and H. Summa (eds.), *Pelkkää retoriikkaa*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 51–83.

Summa, H. (1989). *Hyvinvointipolitiikka ja suunnitteluretoriikka. Tapaus asuntopolitiikka*. Yhdyskuntasuunnittelun täydennyskoulutuskeskuksen julkaisuja A 17. Espoo: Teknillinen korkeakoulu.

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis. English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sääskilahti, M. (2006). *Vapise, kuningas alkoholi. Alkoholivalistuksen tekstilaji ja sen muuttuminen vuosien 1755 ja 2001 välisenä aikana*. Acta Universitatis Ouluensis, B Humaniora 70. Oulu: Oulun yliopisto.

Valtavaara, M. and Grönholm, P. (2014). Yo-tutkinnon sähköistys arveluttaa. *Helsingin Sanomat*. [online] May 27, 2014.

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/Yo-tutkinnon+s%C3%A4hk%C3%B6istys+arveluttaa+/a1401084718706#kommentit>

APPENDIX 1: Consent form for participation

Hyvä abiturientti

Opiskelen Jyväskylän yliopistossa kielten laitoksella englannin kieli pääaineena. Pyydän suostumustasi opintoihini kuuluvan pro gradu -tutkimuksen (opinnäytetyön) suorittamiseksi. Tutkimuksessa tulet kirjoittamaan englannin tunnilla mielipidekirjoituksen tietokoneella (versio 1), saamaan lyhyen kirjoitusohjeistuksen mielipideteksteistä ja muokkaamaan ohjeistuksen luettuasi kirjoituksen lopullisen version (versio 2). Tutkimukseni tavoitteena on selvittää, miten lukiolaiset muokkaavat kirjoittamaansa mielipidekirjoitusta tekstinkäsittelyohjelmaa hyödyntäen. Kerättäviä tekstejä ja tietoja käsitellään vain tässä tutkimuksessa ja siten, että niistä ei voi tunnistaa kenenkään henkilöllisyyttä. Tutkimuksen tekijä ei myöskään arvioi ketään kirjoitusten perusteella.

Jos haluat lisätietoja tutkimuksesta, voit olla yhteydessä sähköpostilla tai puhelimitse.

Ystävällisin terveisin

Venla Keskitalo
Kielten laitos
Jyväskylän yliopisto

sähköposti: venla.keskitalo@netikka.fi
puh: 050 505 6800

SUOSTUMUS TUTKIMUKSEEN OSALLISTUMISESTA

Suostun siihen, että kirjoittamaani mielipidetekstiä saa käyttää pro gradu -tutkimuksessa

En suostu siihen, että kirjoittamaani mielipidetekstiä saa käyttää pro gradu -tutkimuksessa

Vaasassa ____/ 11.2013 (päivämäärä)

Allekirjoitus: _____

Nimen selvennys: _____

Syntymäaika: _____

Taustakysymykset

APPENDIX 2: Background questions

Viimeisin englannin kurssin arvosana _____

Miten hallitsit mielestäsi tekstinkäsittelyohjelmien (esim. Word) käytön?

- hyvin heikosti
- heikosti
- kohtuullisesti
- hyvin
- erinomaisesti

Miten mielestäsi tekstin tuottaminen tietokoneen näppäimistöllä sujuu?

- hyvin heikosti
- heikosti
- kohtuullisesti
- hyvin
- erinomaisesti

Mitkä seuraavista ovat mielestäsi edesauttaneet englannin kielen oppimistasi:

- tietokonepelit
- musiikin kuuntelu
- television ja elokuvien katselu
- sosiaalinen media (esim. Facebook, blogit)
- englanninkielisten lehtien lukeminen
- jokin muu, mikä? _____

Mitä mieltä olet englannin kielen ylioppilaskokeessa kirjoitettavan aineen muuttumisesta käsinkirjoitetusta tietokoneella kirjoitettavaksi?

APPENDIX 3: Titles for the opinion piece

Kirjoita sanomalehteen tarkoitettu mielipideteksti englanniksi. Valitse otsikoista jompikumpi:

The age for a driving licence in Finland should be 16

The age for a driving licence in Finland should not be 16

Kirjoitelman ohjeellinen pituus on 100–250 sanaa.

Tallenna kirjoituksesi tietokoneen työpöydälle nimellä *etunimisukunimi_versio1*

Sinulla on 30 minuuttia aikaa kirjoittaa ensimmäinen versio, minkä jälkeen saat lyhyen ohjeen. Tämän jälkeen sinulla on aikaa toiset 30 minuuttia tekstisi muokkaamiseen.

APPENDIX 4: Instructions for writing an opinion piece

Huom!

Muistithan tallentaa ensimmäisen version työpöydälle nimellä *etunimisukunimi_versio1*.

Nyt tallenna tiedosto nimellä *etunimisukunimi_versio2* ennen kuin alat muokata kirjoitustasi.

OHJEITA MIELIPIDETEKSTIN LAATIMISEEN

Mielipideteksti on kantaaottava teksti. Kantaaottavan eli argumentatiivisen kirjoitustehtävän tavoite on perustella lukijalle, miksi tietty näkökulma kiistanalaiseen aiheeseen on puolusteltua. Se haastaa lukijan ajattelemaan aihetta kirjoittajan näkökulmasta ja sisältää usein vahvan kannanoton, jota esimerkit ja perustelut tukevat.

- Mieti, näkyykö tekstissä varmasti kantasi.
- Mieti, perusteletko riittävästi tai miten voisit vielä perustella kantaasi.
- Mieti, millaisia omalle kannalle vastakkaisia väitteitä voisi olla ja pyri kiistämään ne. Esimerkiksi “Vaikka usein on väitetty, on silti niin...”
- Jokaiselle väitteelle, oli se sitten puolesta tai vastaan, tulisi löytyä sopiva perustelu. Se voi olla esimerkiksi
 - syy-seuraussuhde
 - esimerkki
 - auktoriteettiin vetoaminen
 - vertailu.
- Lopetuksessa kannattaa vielä korostaa omaa näkökulmaa ja vakuuttaa lukija.
- Kytkemällä lauseita toisiinsa sidesanoin (*vaikka, koska, mutta, toisaalta, esimerkiksi, siten, lopuksi*) helpotat tekstisi lukemista ja teet tekstistäsi sidosteisemman.
- Tarkista, että olet koonnut tekstiisi mielestäsi parhaimmat ajatukset ja yhdistellyt ne järjkeviksi kokonaisuuksiksi.

Lähteet

Karapalo, Elina, Jim McWhirr, Jaakko Mäki, Teijo Päckilä, Marjut Riite & Riitta Silk (2009). Open Road. Course 4. Otava: Keuruu.

Mikkonen, Inka (2010). “Olen sitä mieltä, että...”. Lukiolaisten yleisönosastotekstien rakenne ja argumentointi. Jyväskylän yliopistopaino: Jyväskylä.

Perelman, C. (1996). Retoriikan valtakunta. Tampere: Vastapaino.

APPENDIX 5: Answers to background open questions

To collect background information for this study, the participating students were asked what they thought about the matriculation examinations that will be taken electronically with computers in the near future. This is how they answered:

(1) En kannata sitä. (Pauliina)

[I do not support it.]

(2) Niillä on etu, jotka ovat paljon tekemisissä tietokoneiden kanssa. Toisaalta virheiden korjaaminen menee nopeammin. (Janita)

[Those who use computers a lot will benefit from it. On the other hand, correcting errors is quicker.]

(3) Säästää aikaa ja vaivaa paljon. (Jarno)

[It saves a lot of time and effort.]

(4) Voi olla hyvä juttu. Jos tekee esim. virheen niin ei tarvitse tuunata välttämättä joka kohtaa sen jälkeen. (Lilja)

[It can be a good thing. For example, if you make an error you do not have to correct every bit after it.]

(5) Luovuus ei pääse mielestäni niin hyvin esille koneella kirjoitettaessa. Joillekin voi olla vaikeaa kirjoittaa koneella. (Hanna)

[It is not so easy to be creative when writing on a computer. It can be more difficult for some to write on a computer.]

(6) Kuulostaa hyvältä kirjoittamisen kannalta, mutta muut asiat järjestelyt yms. aika monimutkaiselta. (Eevi)

[Sounds good in terms of writing but other things, such as arrangements, seem complicated]

(7) En osaa sanoa. (Saara)

[I cannot say]

(8) Ei hyvä juttu mutta on siinäkin puolensa. (Milla)

[Not a good thing, but it can have its benefits]

(9) Kuulostaa ihan kivalta. (Minna)

[Sounds quite nice.]

(10) Alussa voi hieman olla totuttelemista mutta aine on loppupeleissä helpommin ja kätevämmiin tehtävissä tietokoneella kirjoitettavana. (Linnea)

[Getting used to it takes time in the beginning but in the end it is easier and handier to write on a computer.]

(11) Hyvä niille, jotka osaavat tietokoneita käyttää ja hyödyntää. Saattaa aiheuttaa ongelmia niille, jotka eivät tietokoneita paljoa käytä. (Jussi)

[Good for those who know how to use and make the most of computers. It might cause problems for those who do not use computers much.]

(12) Mielestäni se ei ole hirveän hyvä juttu, koska koneella kirjoittaessa saattaa tulla enemmän kirjoitusvirheitä (Heli)

[I think it is not a very good thing because one might make more spelling errors writing on a computer.]

(13) Kirjoittaisin mieluummin käsin. Kaikki oppii kirjoittamaan samoihin aikoihin (kynällä!). Mutta kaikilla ei ole varaa ostaa konetta. Monet, jotka käyttää konetta vaan pelaa eikä kirjoita. Liian iso ero olis siinä kuinka hyvin ja nopeasti kirjoittaa, ne hyötyis jotka on tottunut käyttämään näppiksiä. (Katri)

[I would rather write by hand. We all learn to write at the same age (by pencil!). But not everyone can afford to buy a computer. Many who use computers just play and don't write. There would be too big a difference in how well and fast people type. Those used to writing on a computer keyboard would benefit.]

(14) Itse kirjoittaisin mieluummin käsin. (Heta)

[I would rather write by hand myself.]

(15) Ihan hyvä juttu. (Leena)

[It is quite all right.]

No comments: 5 students

APPENDIX 6: A student's opinion piece, text version 1 (example 1)

The age for a driving licence in Finland should not be 16

Nowadays Finnish teenagers can pass their driving licence at age eighteen and the moped licence when they are 15 years old. The amount of accidents on the road has creased and most of them are caused by young drivers. I wonder that if there are already problems among young drivers, why we should sink the age for a driving licence.

Traffic safety is one of the most important things in our country and the environmental questions are still big. The busses are in high demand and many people, especially teenagers go to school and to the city by bus or they cycle so in my book there are not any reasons for changing the driving licence age. If the amount of drivers would get bigger, it would also cause more problems to our nature.

When individuals are in age 16 they are not yet adults and their stage of thinking is not as high as it should be. Teenagers get good practice when they drive for example moped cars. In addition we should cheer up young adults to use more busses and that's one reason to that why the costs and the lessons in driving school have changed. It is also important to conserve teenagers.

In my opinion the age for a driving licence is as good as it can be and it is better for everyone if teenagers can wait to age eighteen until they can drive a car.

APPENDIX 7: A student's opinion piece, text version 2 (example 1)

The age for a driving licence in Finland should not be 16

Nowadays Finnish teenagers can pass their driving licence at age eighteen and the moped licence when they are 15 years old. The amount of accidents on the road has creased and most of them are caused by young drivers. I wonder that if there are already problems among young drivers, why we should sink the age for a driving licence.

Traffic safety is one of the most important things in our country and the environmental questions are still big. The busses are in high demand and many people, especially teenagers go to school and to the city by bus or they cycle so in my book there are not any reasons for changing the driving licence age. If the amount of drivers would get bigger, it would also cause more problems to our nature.

When individuals are in age 16 they are not yet adults and their stage of thinking is not as high as it should be. Teenagers get good practice when they drive for example moped cars. In addition we should cheer up young adults to use more busses and that's one reason to that why the costs and the lessons in driving school have changed. It is also important to conserve teenagers.

In my opinion the age for a driving licence is as good as it can be and it is better for everyone if teenagers can wait to age eighteen until they can drive car. I know that there are many boys who are interested in driving but I'm sure that not many of 16 years old individuals have as much money as they need when they want to get a driving licence. In addition the amount of motorbikes would decrease and there would be more and more accidents on the road and there wouldn't be space for everybody in the driving schools.

There are many other things to which Finland should put weight on, for instance quality of lessons in driving schools. The age for a driving licence hasn't caused any problems in our country so I think that there are no reasons to think about it.

APPENDIX 8: A student's opinion piece, text version 1 (example 2)

The age for driving licence in Finland should not be 16

Many young people get driving licence 16 years old in America. In Finland driving licence get 18 years old and older. It's very good that in Finland youngsters can't drive a car. Many of them aren't enough mature own driving licence. Driving by car in traffic is very accurate behavior. There you can't start to present your drive skills. You must remember that in traffic is else people.

In magazines tell a lot of traffic accidents. Many young people have been in accident when they have driven by car. Many of them have had driving licence only few time. So it's very good that younger people can't dive by car without police's permission. I hope that this law will never change!

APPENDIX 9: A student's opinion piece, text version 2 (example 2)

The age for driving licence in Finland should not be 16

Many young people get driving licence 16 years old in America. In Finland driving licence get 18 years old and older. It's very good that in Finland youngers can't drive a car. Many of them aren't enough mature own driving licence. Driving by car in traffic is very accurate behavior. There you can't start to present your drive skills. You must remember that in traffic is else people.

In magazines tell a lot of traffic accidents. Many young people have been in accident when they have driven by car. Many of them have had driving licence only few time. So it's very good that younger people can't drive by car without police's permission. I hope that this law will never change! State saves a lot of money when victims are less. Sometime I think that somebody 18 years old have got too young driving licence. They don't understand liability some join driving by car. The age for driving licence should maybe advance even 20 years old.