Using language for multiple purposes: Swedish language teachers' beliefs of teacher competences

Pauliina Pessi

Master's Thesis in Education
Spring Term 2019
Department of Education
University of Jyväskylä

TIIVISTELMÄ

Pessi, Pauliina. Kevät 2019. Kielen käyttäminen moniin eri tarkoituksiin: ruotsin kielen opettajien uskomuksia opettajan osaamisalueista. Kasvatustieteiden Pro Gradu-tutkielma. Jyväskylän yliopisto. Opettajankoulutuslaitos. 85 sivua.

Opettajan uskomukset ja käsitykset opettajan osaamisalueista ovat keskeisiä, sillä ne vaikuttavat ja muokkaavat opettajien käytännön työtä. Tämä tutkimus on Lounais-Suomessa toteutettu tapaustutkimus, ja siinä tutkitaan ruotsin kielen opettajien uskomuksia tärkeistä osaamisalueista sekä vastaavatko ne opettajien käytännön opetusta. Tämä kvalitatiivinen tutkimus suoritettiin puolistrukturoituina, virikkeitä antavina haastatteluina. Haastatteluiden virikkeinä käytettiin kuuden tutkimukseen osallistuvan opettajan ruotsin kielen oppituntien videonauhoituksia, jotka näytettiin opettajille välittömästi tunnin jälkeen. Haastatteluissa opettajia pyydettiin kommentoimaan omaa toimintaansa haastattelijan ennalta valmisteleman haastattelurungon pohjalta. Datan keruun jälkeen vastaukset analysoitiin aineistolähtöisen sisällönanalyysin periaatteiden mukaisesti.

Tutkimustuloksista käy ilmi, että yleisesti ottaen opettajien käsitykset vastasivat heidän käytännön toimintaansa. Osallistujien uskomukset havainnollistivat useita opettajan osaamisalueita sisältäen sekä yleisiä että kielen opettajuuteen erityisesti liittyviä osaamisalueita. Tarkemmin analysoitaessa kävi ilmi, että yleiset opettajan osaamisalueet havainnollistivat oppijoiden yksilöllistä kohtaamista ja luokan hallintaan liittyviä asioita, kun taas kielen opettajuuteen erityisesti liittyvät osaamisalueet luonnehtivat kielikoulutusjärjestelmän ymmärtämiseen ja oppiainesisältöön liittyviä asioita. Opettajien tulkinnat heidän käytännöistään sisälsivät esimerkiksi tärkeyden käyttää laajalti erilaisia materiaaleja ja erilaisia keinoja edistää kohdekielen käyttöä sekä hallita luokkaa.

Tutkimus tehtiin ruotsin opettajien keskuudessa. Näin ollen jatkotutkimus voitaisiin toteuttaa esimerkiksi tutkimalla millaisia osaamisalueita

erilaisen pohjakoulutuksen saaneet opettajat (muiden aineiden tai kielten opettajat, erityisopettajat jne.) pitävät tärkeinä ja sitä, millaisessa yhteydessä ne ovat käytännön työhön.

Avainsanat: opettajan osaamisalue, uskomus, kieli, vieraan kielen opetus

ABSTRACT

Pessi, Pauliina. Spring 2019. Using language for multiple purposes: Swedish language teachers' beliefs of teacher competences. Master's Thesis in Education. University of Jyväskylä. Department of Education. 85 pages.

Teacher's beliefs about teacher competences are essential in the way they are influencing and shaping their practice. This study is a case study implemented in the south-west coast of Finland and it investigates Swedish language teachers' beliefs about significant competences and whether those beliefs resonate with their practice. This qualitative research was implemented as a half-structured, stimulated recall interview, as the six participant teachers' practice was first recorded after which they were all asked the same questions while playing the recordings. After gathering the data, the answers were analysed according to the principles of data-based content-analysis.

The findings suggest that the teachers' beliefs resonated with their practice in many ways but some inconsistencies were visible. The participants' beliefs illustrated various teacher competences having characteristics of non-domain specific and language-teaching specific competences. In the further analysis, non-domain specific teacher competences illustrated addressing learners as individuals and issues in classroom management whereas language-specific teaching competences characterised competences regarding the understanding of the language education system and the subject knowledge. The teachers' interpretations of their practice implied for example significance of the wide use of varying materials and different means to promote the use of the target language as well as to manage the classroom.

The study was conducted among Swedish language teachers. Further research could be made to investigate the possible differences in the beliefs of significant competences and their converseness in practice among teachers with varying teacher experiences and of other languages, too.

Keywords: teacher competence, belief, language, foreign language teachers

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 7

2 BELIEFS 10

2.1 Teacher's beliefs 11

2.2 Foreign language teacher's beliefs 13

3 TEACHER COMPETENCES 17

3.1 Non-domain specific teacher competences 18

3.1.1 Dealing with Diversity of Student Intake and Changes in the Teaching environment 19

3.1.2 Communicative Competence 20

3.1.3 Developing frameworks for learning 21

3.1.4 Developing levels of Professionalism 23

3.2 Foreign Language Teacher Competences 26

3.2.1 Diagnosing and Attendings Students' needs 27

3.2.2 Course and Lesson Planning 28

3.2.3 Promoting the use of the target language 29

3.2.4 Managing the class 31

3.2.5 Intercultural Competence 32

4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH & RESEARCH QUESTIONS 36

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY 38

5.1 The Participants and the Setting 38

5.2 Data collecting 39

5.2.1 Research approach 40

5.2.2 Interviews 41

5.3 Data Analysis 43

5.4 Ethical Solutions 46

6 FINDINGS 49

6.1 Beliefs of important non-domain specific competences 49

6.1.1 Child-rearing competences 50

6.1.2 Competence of Self-evaluation and Professional Development 53

6.2 Beliefs of important language teacher specific competences 55

6.2.1 Beliefs of the language education system 56

6.2.2 Subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum 58

6.3 Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practice 63

6.3.1 Major role of teacher-talk in Finnish in the classroom 63

6.3.2 Addressing the shared interface between language and culture 66

7 DISCUSSION 69

7.1 Review of the findings and conclusions 69

7.2 The reliability of the study and further research challenges 72

REFERENCES 77

APPENDICES 82

1 INTRODUCTION

As teachers are responsible for preparing future generations in the constantly changing world, their interpretations and beliefs of important competences should be under a constant evaluation and reflection. What teachers believe, that is the mental representation of their state of mind and attitude regarding their work, as well as the way in which they put their beliefs into practice has been explored from a number of different perspectives. This study draws on theorisations of beliefs as well as existing research on professional competences as these two have been seen inseparable in the light of the connections between beliefs and human actions (Fives & Buehl, 2008; Ruohotie-Lyhty, Ullakonoja, Moate & Haapakangas, 2016). Furthermore, considering the particular character of foreign language teaching, the study will take a look at in both non-domain specific and language teaching specific competences as the two share a bi-directional connection with the beliefs, influencing one another.

As illustrated above, teachers' beliefs of the teachers' competences can be illustrated as the mental representation of their state of mind and attitude regarding the professional competences of a teacher. Professional competence, in turn, refers to all academic knowledge and abilities which together with a person's characteristics result in professional performance. Thus, the professional competence of a teacher can be seen as a combination of constantly developing pedagogical knowledge, experience together with personal qualities leading to professional practice. Furthermore, human actions are not isolated from their beliefs but share a fundamental interface, why the teachers' beliefs of the main competencies crucially affect how they implement their instruction. Therefore, the key element in the realisation of a teacher's profession is neither only the action a teacher does nor the important competences defined from outside but the ones defined within and by the practitioner self. Furthermore, the above-illustrated complexity of the conceptualisation of the teacher competences the practitioners are able to realise in their pedagogical practice is enhanced by the issues arising from the teachers as individuals. However, individuals'

beliefs do not always align with their actions in practice, and additionally, even though the question of 'competencies' can be comprehended as a universal issue, it has been highly demanding to find out answers to the issue of beliefs and their possible failure to correspond with the actions. Thus, the need and framework for this study is created as the answers to these issues should be answered within the actual teacher practice.

As a future Swedish language and primary school teacher, I have a personal interest in scrutinizing practicing instructors' beliefs of important competencies. Furthermore, since the relatively new change in the Finnish language education policies considering the obligatory studying of Swedish language already in the primary school, there is an increasing need for Swedish teachers in the field of second language teaching. Thus, it would be important to explore the beliefs of practicing Swedish teachers to comprehend their perspectives on competences, which leads to the significance as well as the space and need for this study. Additionally, related to the issue of exploring the competencies within the actual practice, is a critical perspective arguing that a teacher and his/her competences cannot be described in isolation from either the beliefs or the practice since such disregards such aspects of teachers' beliefs and values which have been seen inseparable from the knowledge and competence, and on the other hand, the connections between beliefs and human actions (Day, 2002; Fives & Buehl, 2008; Ruohotie-Lyhty & al., 2016). However, in spite of these outcomes of contemporary studies, the concept of 'beliefs' has been used in investigations of language teachers, but not very often put into dialogue with actual practice, which gives further justifications for this study. In that regard, this study intends not only either to explore the possible consistencies and inconsistencies in the Swedish teachers' beliefs or to find out what takes place in the classroom but also why, as well as the relations of beliefs and their possible occurrence in the teachers' practice. In other words, this study aspires to examine teachers' beliefs of significant competencies as well as to explore the implications of the beliefs in the instruction in practice.

This thesis begins by first looking at the conceptualisation of 'belief' and its influence in the teaching context detailing in the specific beliefs of language teachers. The review of beliefs leads on to scrutinizing non-domain and language specific teacher competences required to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Moreover, the aim is to clarify the mutual interface and dynamic relationship of these two, illustrating that language teachers' profession is not only acting, but practicing on the basis of beliefs, which, in turn, are influenced by the ongoing actions. Further on, the paper extends to the clarifying the implementation, findings as well as possible outcomes and future challenges of this study, to better understand the above-illustrated phenomenon.

As this study is a qualitative case study, there is no intention to generalise either the participant teachers' beliefs or the findings brought up in the analysis of the answers. In other words, the purpose of the study is to illustrate the beliefs of significant language teacher competences and to characterise the relations of these beliefs to practice in the individual cases of the participants of this study.

2 BELIEFS

Beliefs play a major role in determining and constructing any action a human does. Thus, the key element in the realisation of a teacher's profession is neither only the action a teacher does nor the important competences defined from outside but the ones defined within and by the practitioner self. Furthermore, the complexity of the conceptualisation of the teacher profession needs to be understood considering teachers as individuals who have beliefs that are realised in a number of ways. In other words, each individual has their specific beliefs which has a social background and, on the other hand, become visual in social interaction through actions and the use of language (Dufva, 2003; Ruohotie-Lyhty & al., 2016). Thus, even though teachers tend to see themselves as professionals, each decision they do considering the choice of materials and methodologies can be illustrated to depict the realisation of their personal beliefs, arising from various sources, of what is important.

Contemporary studies (e.g. Woolfolk-Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006), have proposed that, in addition to the possessed content knowledge, teachers' practice is influenced by multiple merely more implicit than explicit processes, conditions, and theories, all of which together form the foundations for a teacher's beliefs, and subsequently, actions. Furthermore, such teacher competences as organising learning contexts and settings in which teachers implement their practice, are guided by the teachers' obtained beliefs about teaching knowledge and nature of teaching as well as their own identities and abilities as teachers (Woolfolk-Hoy & al., 2006; Alanen, Kalaja & Dufva, 2013). Thus, teachers' beliefs may lead them to question the integrity of the issue, content and methods as well as guide them in making assumptions about the relevance of the teaching content in question. On the other hand, teachers' beliefs might support the existing viewpoints on the nature of teaching and the relevance of a teacher's personal development. In regard of this, the influence of the teachers' beliefs in

shaping the comprehension of relevant competences is crucial. Therefore, as the beliefs dominantly modify and shape the teacher's practice, the following sections will detail on discussing first teachers' beliefs in general after which the specific beliefs which might shape a language teacher's practice are characterised.

2.1 Teacher's beliefs

Reflecting and questioning the beliefs of what is important to know as a teacher can be considered essential as it informs and impacts the picture of the nature of language teaching and, therefore, influences the actions and procedures chosen to be implemented in the classroom (Woolfolk-Hoy & al., 2006; Alanen & al., 2013). As contemporary studies (e.g. Griffin, McGaw, & Care, 2012; Ruohotie-Lyhty& et al., 2016) illustrate, teaching involves a number of decisions considering the pedagogical approach, methods and materials of instruction which are dealt with based on the teachers' personal beliefs of the surrounding conditions, involving aspects from the goals of learning and teaching to the obtained resources. Thus, as beliefs are so significantly influencing practicing teachers' beliefs of teaching and learning as well as matters of importance, it is vital to conceptualise 'a belief' first. However, the exact clarification and meaning of the concept is rather difficult to compound as the concept of beliefs involves several aspects and definitions rising from different study fields. In this study, the term 'belief', and more specifically 'teacher belief' is used as a relation to all assumptions and notions teachers have related to teaching as teachers as well as to learning and education, gathering the notions emerging from the study field of cognitive psychology and educational research (Pajares, 1992; Johnson, 1999; Dufva, 2003).

In addition to the ambiguous conceptualisation of a 'belief', as Johnson (1994 & 1999) and Ruohotie-Lyhty & al. (2016) has illustrated, teachers' beliefs influence and appear in varying dimensions, constructing of cognitive, affective and behaviourist elements. First, teachers' beliefs affect assumption-

making as well as valuing and assessing situations, which, in turn, influence the actual acting and decision-making in classrooms. For example, if the teacher believes that the groups of students and the individual students are homogenous, he/she might assume that the same content and methods work for every class. On the other hand, if a teacher believes in and comprehends the students' diversity, he/she might assume that the students act in different ways, and thus, the same class does not work for every group. Second, teachers' beliefs play a critical role in how teachers interpret teaching, that is, what they consider to be important and how that resonates in classroom practices. For instance, the classroom instruction reality appears as totally varying if a teacher comprehends teaching as merely passing on the information, or, in turn, as providing the learners with appropriate setting to explore the content matter. Furthermore, it is considered challenging to merely ask teachers about their beliefs or 'principles,' as beliefs are embedded in their actions, resulting in the complexity of making those beliefs explicit (Johnson, 1999; Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thwaite, 2001). Thus, if a teacher for example believes classroom management is a dominantly essential teacher competence, the managemental choices should be explored within and from the actual practice, as it can be suggested to have a prominent role shaping his/her pedagogical approach and teaching, and, therefore, influencing the students' entire learning experience.

Besides the multiple ways of realisation beliefs, when defining and describing the phenomena, it is important to consider their origins and the challenges of eradicating existing beliefs and, in turn, constructing and adapting fresh ones (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Johnson, 1999). Considering teachers as individuals, it is vital to comprehend that teacher's beliefs cannot be isolated as 'professional choices' operating apart from all other beliefs. As Pajares (1992) and Johnson (1994) illustrates, teacher's individual beliefs are in relation to and structured by their personal backgrounds and relatively fully organised to some extent inflexible by the time they enter university and teacher studies. As teachers' beliefs tend to be based on their own personal experiences, the inevitable disadvantages and advantages regarding teachers' instruction

need to be considered. On one hand, these experiences can help the teachers to make sense of the classroom reality, but on the other hand they can operate as an interference, circumscribing the way in which the teachers shape and construct their reality and their teacher identities (Pajares, 1992; Johnson, 1994 & 1999). Further, this above-illustrated affective dimension of a belief, in turn, contributes to whether and how the teachers deal with criticism and possibilities of teacher development, which, conversely, might contribute to the lack of knowledge, mirroring the broad effects of the beliefs on the concrete classroom reality.

Thus, as suggested above, teachers' beliefs influence a number of choices and factors shaping the classroom reality. Furthermore, beliefs can be identified in diverse areas, linked and categorised according to the different areas of competences, involving beliefs about learners and learning; beliefs about teaching; beliefs about the subject; beliefs about learning to teach and beliefs about self and the role as a teacher (Pajares, 1996; Alanen & al., 2013; Ruohotie-Lyhty & al., 2016). As these different beliefs can be illustrated to compound from varying clusters, they are also related to different competence areas as beliefs about learners and learning can be identified in teachers' competences such as diagnosing and attending to students' needs whereas beliefs about self and the teacher's role are connected to and can be realised in the teacher competence of professional development. Moreover, as beliefs can be suggested to connect with various competences, involving both general and more language-teaching specific characteristics, it is important to scrutinise what kind of beliefs might particularly influence language teachers' instruction.

2.2 Foreign language teacher's beliefs

Teacher beliefs in the context of foreign language instruction can be considered vital since teachers' assumptions and beliefs regarding the target language in questions as well as the specific characteristics of language instruction influence the nature of their practice, i.e. how they establish the setting for the foreign

language learning. While studies in teacher beliefs in general can be taken advantage of when considering foreign language teachers' beliefs, the special characteristics of foreign language teaching and learning should also be considered. The unique nature of foreign language teaching affects the specific beliefs foreign languages teachers possess, which, in turn, have an impact on particular conceptualising, interpreting and decision-making within the context of language instruction (Richards, 2010; Alanen & al., 2013).

Contemporary studies have examined language teachers' beliefs considering the basis and flexibility, i.e. where they emerge from and whether and how they can be reconstructed as well as the beliefs considering the goals of language teaching, and whether and how these beliefs are visible in the language teachers' practice. Prevailing notion on beliefs in the field of cognitive psychology and education have highlighted the sole and unchanging nature of beliefs, indicating that beliefs are static and mental representations that each individual holds (Dufva, 2003). However, Johnson (1994) has illustrated in her studies on language teachers' beliefs that while teachers described their beliefs using varying expressions to illustrate their perceptions, the narratives revealed certain patterns of beliefs about foreign language teachers and teaching, which illustrates a contradicting persuasion of beliefs being something that can be shared and influenced in a community. For example, a dominant pattern of language teacher beliefs is that an effective foreign language teaching applies such methods that address different dimensions of language learning, i.e. reading, listening, writing and speaking simultaneously in a maximised way and incorporates grammar instruction into everything (Johnson, 1992 & 1994).

However, a visible pattern in language teachers' interpretations illustrates that the personal experiences within formal language classrooms shape the teachers' beliefs of the nature of foreign language teaching and the teachers' beliefs of their own teaching, thus having a practical dimension, too (Johnson, 1994). In other words, the teachers' implicit beliefs originating from their own school career tended to be more visible and influencing in their practice, whereas the possibly contrary and more explicit perceptions acquired later on in their

life, such as aspects emerging in teacher education, did not correspond with the practice, reflecting the persistent and rather static character of once acquired belief (Johnson, 1994). Therefore, as contemporary studies (Johnson, 1994; Richards, 2010) illustrate, teachers' beliefs on effective language teaching are deeply connected to the images emerging from teachers' personal experiences from the formal language learning setting rather than from their teacher education and university studies. Furthermore, it has been illustrated that the basis in which language teachers build on their language teacher identity, considering such aspects as the use of the target language, evolves from their own language learning experiences and the language identity built at that time, but mainstream beliefs tend to be relatively similar among practicing teachers (Johnson, 1994).

The studies regarding the shared interface between teachers' beliefs and practice have revealed that, despite the above illustrated views of beliefs corresponding with language teachers' practice, teachers' beliefs do not always align with reality (Borg, 2006). A distinctive pattern suggested by Johnson (1994) and Kagan (1992) illustrates that teachers might share idealised and too optimistic beliefs of their classroom practice, including the idea of what kind of practitioners they actually are. In other words, it is proposed that teachers might have such idealised goals and images of their practice that do not correspond with their practice. For example, a teacher might believe in practice being truly meaningful when involving authentic materials and a large amount of the usage of the target language, and thus being able to successfully contribute to the foreign language acquisition, but their actual instruction might not realise these beliefs. Furthermore, one pattern-like emerging dilemma in foreign language teaching perceptions and practice is the belief of the importance of giving enough time and space for class discussions and other communicative activities in the target language (Pajares, 1992). In regard of this issue, it has been suggested that either teachers are not too confident to step aside and give the space to the students or the discussion between students do not generate enough, leading to the teacher taking the lead, both of which are the cases in which the

belief of effective practice does not resonate with the actual reality of instruction (Pajares, 1992; Johnson, 1994; Ghani, Shujaat & Iqbal, 2016).

As illustrated above, an essential issue considering language teachers' beliefs and competences resonating with the actual practice is the issue of the amount of the target language used in a class. It is proposed and acknowledged that the amount of the input and output in the target language influences significantly the foreign language acquisition, i.e. a large amount of the target language included in interactive tasks accelerates and enhances the language learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Cook, 2016). However, contemporary studies (e.g. Ghani & al., 2016) on the issue have suggested that the beliefs do not always meet the practice, illustrating the contrary that despite acknowledging the importance of the use of target language, the school instruction language is used in larger amount than it is believed to be efficient considering the balance between the languages. Furthermore, it has been illustrated that teachers' own language identities play an essential role in regard of the maximized use of the target language (Richards, 2010). Despite contemporary studies (e.g. Canagarajah, 1999; Canh & Renandya, 2017) suggesting that teacher's native-like language proficiency in the target language is not essential, language teachers might have a belief that the better proficiency contributes to the more effective practice. Thus, if a teacher's language identity includes a belief of not having enough proficiency in the language which is being instructed, his/her use of the target language might be decreased.

Thus, as illustrated, beliefs affect the actions in multiple ways, as they are realised through both language and non-verbal communications and actions. Therefore, the following sections will scrutinize the teachers' actions, in the form of competences, as they can be considered to illustrate the realisation of teachers' beliefs to a large extent.

3 TEACHER COMPETENCES

The understanding of the nature of teacher competences can be regarded as crucial in shaping the way in which teachers' beliefs are realised through the choices that teachers make when implementing their practice. Furthermore, the macro level changes, such as reforms around the world, as well as micro level changes in the Finnish school system and curricula have led to the increasing significance in taking teacher competences into serious consideration. As to the possible lack of qualified Swedish teachers in Finland since the renewal of the National Curriculum, it is important to consider what constitutes a "good" and "competent" teacher in general, with skills appropriate to the 21st century. In that regard, what is significant as a teacher can be comprehended as one of the most important factors determining the instructors' actual practice of teaching. Since a teacher's knowledge and skills depend on his/her continuous learning, reflection and development, he/she should have to deal with the complexity of personal beliefs and experiences, current research and the stream of constant changes in the social environment in which the teaching and learning takes place. Furthermore, even though the question of 'competences' can be seen as an international issue, the conceptualisation of 'competence' is shaped by multiple varying aspects as existing studies have suggested several views and theories on the issue (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Professional competence refers to a teacher's knowledge, skills, abilities and personal qualities. Thus, it can be comprehended as a holistic phenomenon, being a combination of several individual characteristics and qualities which are needed to implement effective teaching as well as to enable further progress as a professional and agency in the professional development (McBer, 2000; Tynjälä, 2006; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

3.1 Non-domain specific teacher competences

The nature of teacher competences is, as suggested above, not straightforward to define because the conceptualising of effective practice varies between cultures (Tsui, 2009). In some contexts, efficient teaching consists of, for example, considering classroom management, very authoritarian and controlling teaching in which learners have a rather passive role whereas in other cultures, such as in the Finnish one, teachers' competence involves not only delivering the expertise but rather establishing a setting which facilitates the learning to take place (Tsui, 2009; Richards, 2010). Therefore, it can be illustrated that a teacher's competence' in this study thus refers to an extensive perception of a combination of all qualities teachers possess considering their levels of professionalism in the context of Finnish education, as will be detailed below.

As suggested above, 'competence' refers to the tools and means a teacher uses in his/her practice. However, considering examining the complexity of competences, the kind of general definition of a 'competence' is not enough. Thus, it is needed to take a more detailed look at what these tools and means are composed of. It is suggested that the general framework considering teacher competencies constructs of several different aspects such as subject competencies, developmental and curricular competencies, social-emotional competencies, communicative competencies, technological (ICT) and environmental competencies (Stronge, 2018). Furthermore, all these aspects can be illustrated having some common 'clusters', being compositions of further depicted elements which the following sections of this study will analyse. The competencies that are taken into deeper consideration in the following section are chosen as to their significance to the teacher of the 21st century as well as in the light of the Finnish national basic education curriculum (2014).

3.1.1 Dealing with Diversity of Student Intake and Changes in the Teaching environment

According to Tynjälä (2006) and Richards (2010) teaching involves comprehending the contextual nature of teaching as same instructional approach cannot be adapted from one setting into another. Moreover, as illustrated above, the changes in the modern society regarding the diversity and enhanced heterogeneity, skills appropriate to the teachers currently practicing cannot possibly be the same that even in the beginning of the 21st century. Furthermore, considering the continuous transformation in the constructs of societies, the teachers need an increasing ability and willingness to adjust their practice according to the surrounding context to promote new learning outcomes in the most maximised way. In terms of that, teachers need a broad cline of socio-cultural and emotional competences including the understanding of the varying dynamics and relationships within the classroom and between different classes. Comprehending the specific behavioural patterns emerging in a particular context of individual learners and acting as a teacher according to the observations plays thus a crucial role among the teacher competences (Tynjälä, 2006; Richards, 2010). In other words, a teacher needs to, for example, acknowledge that regardless of a common national curriculum, the local curricula contribute to the slightly varying regional differences (the Finnish national core curricula, 2014). Furthermore, each school has its own ways of doing things, and inside each school, each class and group of learners has their own routines, consisting of individuals having their own habits and preferences.

Thus, effective teaching requires the teacher's ability to restructure and modify the applied techniques and methods according to each class which, in turn, corresponds with dealing with the diversity of learners having varying social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Addressing the students' diversity, in turn, further enables the teacher to organise such learning settings in a learning community, which facilitates learning processes to take place. However, in order to create an environment in which the learners' backgrounds are sufficiently considered, teachers need to a large extent collaborate with the pupils' homes

(Martin, Tett & Kay, 1999). As illustrated above, the teacher's needs to consider the student as 'a whole', and thus acknowledge the matters beyond the classroom context influencing the acquisition process. Furthermore, developing an understanding of a learner as a whole can only be accomplished by involving the learning environment beyond the school context, and establishing various means to get the guardians involved, and, thus regarding them as 'key partners' in the education of the child (Martin & al.,1999). As the internationalisation and other changes in societal structures accelerates the diversity of students with various backgrounds in a class, the cooperation between schools, homes and several social partners grows into a significant agenda and a competence of a teacher.

However, not only the student diversity influences the changes in working environments. Fundamental changes in the Finnish National Basic Education Curriculum, considering for example the role of different subjects versus cross-curricular teaching have profoundly influenced how the instruction should be managed and governed. The changes in the instructions to approach the curricular contents demands the teachers to create a community in which they work in teams with other teachers and professionals (Richards, 2010; Alanen & al., 2011; Stronge, 2018).

3.1.2 Communicative Competence

Of the competences defined by Stronge (2018) communicative competence stands here on its own as it as a concept itself involves a range of ideas and subcompetencies. Furthermore, in the light of above-mentioned contextual nature of competent teaching, a teacher needs the competence of communicating in varying contexts in appropriate ways. Thus, considering the large body of communicative competence, it has been illustrated that communicative competence can be interpreted as a phenomenon of various dimensions which composedly enable teachers to organise effective teaching in action (Canale & Swain 1980; Savignon, 1983).

Further, as Larsen-Freeman (2003; 2015) illustrates language as dynamic system, also communicative competence has been referred to as dynamic rather than a static concept being highly contextual in its nature, depending on the negotiation of meaning in an infinite number of situations (Savignon, 1983). Furthermore, as some of the sub-competencies will be more language-teaching specific, such as grammatical competence linked to language proficiency, than others, they will be discussed subsequently in this study. However, some of the aspects within the broad term communicative competence can be considered non-domain specific covering any communication regardless of the language or subject in question.

Nevertheless, Richards (2010) suggests that becoming a teacher consists of the ability of learning to 'talk the talk', and, thus, exploring and adapting the particular discourses used in a class and, in turn, familiarising with the specific terms used among the professionals in the field of education. Furthermore, contemporary research has suggested the existence of various kinds of discourse types occurring in a class, illustrating the ambiguous, multi-levelled nature of discourses of teaching (Moate, 2011). However, even though to illustrate the different classroom discourses, it is essential to comprehend that, in practice, the different talk-types are merely overlapping and acting along a continuum rather than operating separately, and the extent to which the different discourses are visible in a class varies (van Lier, 2000) Furthermore, the appropriacy of the chosen discourse is strongly contextual as the nature of each content influences the desired outcomes and particular methods to reach those goals (Moate, 2011). However, regardless of contents, teachers need to some extent to create a space for learners' reconstructing of the ideas, which in turn requires such strategic and discoursal competences such as forming questions in a way that utilizes the learners' scrutinizing around the contents of issue.

3.1.3 Developing frameworks for learning

Promoting new learning outcomes can be suggested as the goal of all teaching (Carter, 2012). As illustrated in the earlier section of this study, promoting new

learning outcomes can be illustrated as a context-sensitive matter supposedly covering all the teacher competences. Nevertheless, promoting learning outcomes requires certain skills that are essential to function as an efficient professional in order to develop adequate frameworks and settings for learning. Furthermore, in the terms of above mentioned teacher competences described by Stronge (2018), this aspect of cultivating frameworks for learning relates more specifically to subject knowledge as well as technological and environmental competence as this subtitle clarifies such important aspects as integrating ICT in all formal practice and learning situations and in all professional practice and deals with such significances as teaching how to learn and process information in a problem-solving way as well as fosters creativity and innovation. As field or content knowledge relates to what teachers need to know about what they teach and more subject-specific matters, thus constituting to, and constructing of the knowledge that would not be shared with teachers of other areas and subjects, the field knowledge specific to language teachers will be illustrated more detailed in the following chapter of this study.

However, to promote new learning outcomes and meet the demands of the 21st century teaching, each teacher regardless of the subject matter needs to acquire certain level of proficiency in ICT competence (Reinders, 2009; Richards, 2010; Alanen & al., 2011; Tondeur, Aesaert, Pynoo, van Braak, Fraeyman & Erstad, 2015). Additionally, it has been illustrated that ICT competence becomes more significant in modern society as teachers need the ability to maintain with, and even be ahead of their students' abilities in technology (Reinders, 2009; Alanen & al., 2011). Furthermore, Reinders (2009) and Richards (2010) have illustrated that a teacher's technological competence can be identified at varying levels consisting of not only an ability to use ICT but also to establish own teaching material with the help of technology, after which, subsequently to teach with the technology. In other words, the multi-faceted structure of ICT competence of a teacher can be illustrated to relate first to the competencies of using the technology self, second, supporting pupils' use of ICT in class and, third, competencies to use ICT for designing and implementing in-

structional material in practice. However, it has been pointed out (Alanen & al., 2011; Tondeur & al., 2015) that teachers need to apply all types of their ICT competence in practice as only providing the pupils instruction with technological materials is not enough, as examining the use of technological applications is not sufficient itself as it is significant to provide the pupils engaging experiences with authentic materials. Thus, it can be illustrated that a teacher's ICT competence involves for example, her using a technical device in class, e.g. playing authentic radio program on computer but also providing the learners opportunities to use the materials themselves, for example, by doing video recordings with iPads in groups.

Furthermore, as the development of new technological and digital devices is constantly accelerating in a high rate speed, the challenge with considering the ICT framework for a teacher's competence is that new technologies and tools are constantly being produced but schools and teaching environments have varying resources to afford them. Thus, it can be suggested that a teacher's ICT competence should not simply consist of skills of using specific devices and applications, as they will vary from setting to setting. Therefore, it has been proposed, that a conceptualisation of a teacher's ICT competence should alternatively be identified rather as a willingness to learn how to use and implement technology for teaching and learning across technologies and subject domains. (Alanen & al., 2011; Tondeur & al., 2015)

3.1.4 Developing levels of Professionalism

The final competence illustrated in this section of general teaching competences relates to the demands of continuous development in the nature of teacher profession. Contemporary research (e.g. Richards & Farrell, 2005; Tynjälä, 2006; Alanen & al., 2011) have illustrated the competence of developing levels of professionalism as one of the most essential ones among a teacher's competencies and also as a very complex one, as it can be defined to consist of such elements as acting as professionals in problem-solving, taking responsibility and reflect-

ing one's own professional development as well as managing own career development. Thus, this illustration can be related to the dimensions of research and lifelong learning competences illustrated by Stronge (2018).

In addition to the dimensions of professional development illustrated above, Leung (2009) has specified the further aspects of a teacher's professionalism. The first dimension is illustrated as 'institutionally prescribed professionalism' referring to an administrative and organisational perspective on professionalism, relating to the views of ministries of education describing and ordering a teacher's practice in terms of defining what teachers should know and what their instruction should be like. However, as it comes no surprise, this dimension is highly context-dependent, varying not only between different countries, but also between areas and schools within one country. For example, considering the Finnish education context, in addition to the national curricula, there are local curricula and several school boards determining the teachers' practice. However, teacher's professionalism and its development cannot be comprehended merely defined by the hierarchical organisations. Each teacher's own reflection according to which the practice is possibly modified is considered as the second dimension to professionalism, 'independent professionalism', relating to each teacher's personal perceptions on teaching and the ways in which teachers reflect on their values, beliefs, and practices as well as their relations (Leung, 2009).

Furthermore, effective professional development of a teacher requires different levels of cooperation and involvement of other individuals. An effective development of teaching professionalism, including both dimensions illustrated above, involves a community of instructors sharing opinions and ideas, which enables one's own realising of the potential for learning and development (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Johnston, 2009; Alanen & al., 2011). For example, teacher collaboration can first reveal shared questions, decisions considering suitable materials and methods as well as the role of assessment and, second, enable examining possible solutions for the possible, which in turn, can

contribute to the relevant research, such as exploring fresh aspects on learning strategies and applying them in practice (Tynjälä, 2006; Johnston, 2009).

Moreover, in addition to access to a teacher community, an important aspect of teacher development and life-long learning involves cultivating means of reflection for one's own practice. This, in turn, covers exploring more deeply what teaching represents for oneself, as well as reconstructing ideas and conceptualising theories in the light of the experiences of practice (Borg, 2006; Alanen & al., 2011). Further, this kind of theorising of practical experiences enables the development belief system, which, in turn, helps teachers to make sense of their experiences as well as operates as a means to consider the decision-making they apply in the class (Borg, 2006). Additionally, contemporary studies (Borg, 2006; Alanen & al., 2011) have illustrated that the theorising of practice involves the teacher to become committed in the occurring learning process in order to reflect and thus, creating an understanding of the basis for the notion of learning and teaching as well as the foundation for one's own agency in professional development.

Therefore, the reflection can be suggested as essential for a teacher's professional development. However, the reflection and conceptualising of practice might emerge in various approaches. First, the theorising might be associated with theoretical explanations such as cause and effect relationships or generalizations of rationalised ideas. Further, the reflections might be realised as formed principles operating as the basis for subsequent actions, which, in turn contribute, to the development and reconstruction of a teacher's personal teaching philosophy, covering the cline from abstract items such as attitudes to more concrete approaches and methods. (Richards, 1998).

To conclude this section on general teacher competence, it can be said that the competence of a primary teacher and the development of a teacher's professionalism includes a broad range of different dimensions. Furthermore, professional development does not merely take place in isolation but involves respective activity, including participating in teacher communities and sharing

ideas as well as more personal avocations and components such as critical observations and reflections in the form of journal writing.

3.2 Foreign Language Teacher Competences

As illustrated above, teachers share a need of certain competencies regardless of the content or subject matter. However, in addition to these non-domain specific competencies, teachers of each subject can be suggested to require particular, specific skills and competencies. Studies on language learning and teaching have been able to establish a framework on the learners and their competences. Thus, the focus has shifted on the teachers involving their knowledge, education and competences as well as the development in them. As foreign language teaching and learning context consists of specific characteristics, there are also certain requirements and competences that a foreign language teacher must possess and respond to. In other words, foreign language teacher competences include several different and additional aspects compared to other subject contents, such as the need to provide the language learners with such learning settings in which the language learning can occur and be achieved in the most efficient way.

Further, Richards (2010) has illustrated two dimensions of content knowledge; disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, which can be identified and distinguished. Disciplinary knowledge is related to the expertise arising from the study of linguistics, including awareness of the history of language teaching methods, theories of language acquisition language itself, as well as the structure of language, whereas pedagogical content knowledge, in turn, as a broad theory and concepts covers such aspects that provide a base and support for language teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richards, 2010). In other words, pedagogical content knowledge is a theory arising from studies of practice, and can, therefore, be taken into advantage in practical decision making and problem solving in class, within the actual practice, including issues considering, for example, classroom management and lesson planning.

As suggested earlier, teacher competences involve several elements constructing of various aspects, some of which can be suggested to influence teaching regardless of the content. However, as illustrated above, some of the teacher competences are composed of more domain-, language teaching specific, characteristics. As highlighted, setting up suitable learning situations can be regarded as a major issue in enabling language learning to take place. Furthermore, setting up adequate learning situations requires certain competences, which can be suggested to correspond with the conceptualization of teacher competences defined in the earlier section of this study. However, the language learning context sets specific challenges for both, the teacher and the learner, which leads to the need of illustrating the particular competences a language teacher requires (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Richards, 2010). Therefore, the following sections will take a deeper look at in the competences that have not been described earlier in this study but are specifically significant for a foreign language teacher.

3.2.1 Diagnosing and Attendings Students' needs

Observing learners' and addressing their needs has been described as an essential teacher competence, as it enables teachers to set appropriate goals for teaching and learning which, further on, contributes to and influences the chosen approach and decisions of activities applied in a classroom Tynjälä, 2006; (Seedhouse, 1995). Furthermore, the capability of being able to deal with the learners' heterogeneity in a language class is especially significant, as the language acquisition process can be illustrated as an individually varying, dynamic, non-linear continuum which, in turn affects that the learners address different challenges and needs during the acquisition process (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2015). Thus, as the flexible and dynamic nature of a learner's interlanguage development leads to a language class including several learners having different and varying levels of interlanguage development the importance of teacher's competence of addressing the learners as individuals is highlighted (Carter, 2012).

In turn, the extent to which the teacher addresses pupils as individuals is related to the extent to which direct and indirect feedback from learners influences the contents and construction of each lesson, as well as how and when student participation and interaction occurs. In addition to this, addressing learners' needs can be seen to be reflected in the teacher's capabilities of introducing themes from a learner's perspective, which, in turn, requires knowledge of learners as individuals (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2015). The knowledge of learners and their diverse backgrounds is acknowledged even more essentially in the internationalising society, as the foreign language acquisition is always at some degree influenced by the learner's first language, in both, positive and negative ways, considering for example possible transfer between the languages as well as association making in order to enable tracing the acquired knowledge back from the long-term memory (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

3.2.2 Course and Lesson Planning

Course and lesson planning can be addressed as one of the most important competences of a foreign language teacher, as the tasks and tools used in the classroom can be comprehended to illustrate the beliefs of what a teacher thinks is important. Thus, how the teacher perceives the other competences and their importance, can be identified through examining the lesson constructions.

Contemporary studies (e.g. Larsen-Freeman, 2015) have illustrated that language lesson planning cannot be adapted from straight from one setting to another, as the learning goals and challenges are essentially dependent on a certain context of certain individual learners. Richards (2010) has referred to a teacher's lesson planning competence as the teacher's pedagogical reasoning skills which can be suggested to include such skills that enable language teachers to observe and analyse potential content for a lesson such as a children's storybook and search for the ways of implementing it within the practice, as a teaching resource in terms of identifying specific goals for the lesson, i.e. defining learning outcomes in speaking, vocabulary, reading or writing.

Furthermore, the mode of the activities chosen to be used in a classroom has a significant effect on how the pupils perceive the target language, which highlights the importance of a teacher's lesson planning competence. Already the relatively early studies on effective foreign language teaching illustrated that choosing the type of exercises used in the class has a significant influence on the learners' activity and language acquisition, which has been verified in contemporary research (Doughty & Pica 1986; Berwick 1990; Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Carter, 2012). For example, it has been illustrated that meaningful tasks involving problem solving initiated by the learners themselves contributes to pupils' richer vocabulary. (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Hummel, 2014).

Moreover, it has been illustrated considering the variety of methods and materials used in a language class, that a teacher needs to achieve a certain extent of proficiency in order to provide the learners with improvised tasks and not only rely on ready-made materials and resources such as textbooks (Richards, 2010). As illustrated, a teacher's use of the target language is essential regarding the materials and methods used in a class. However, not only that but there are also other dimensions in the use of the target language which are considered crucial when pondering a teacher's competences, as will be proposed in the following section of this study.

3.2.3 Promoting the use of the target language

The majority of foreign language teachers are not native speakers of the language they are teaching, and it has been validated that having a native-like fluency of a language is not a necessity and not corresponding to the ability to implement effective practice (Canagarajah, 1999). However, the issue seems to be to what extent of proficiency is needed to be able to teach the language and whether proficiency in a language relates to other dimensions of effective teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Furthermore, there are aspects of language teaching competence regarding a teacher's language proficiency that are needed in order to provide the learners with sufficient learning setting, such as the capability of providing enough language output and appropriate input flood and to

support the learners with proper feedback on their interlanguage, as well as to being able to use the target language in learning settings in general (Richards, 2010).

Supporting pupils' own use of the language includes that they understand the structure of the target language as well as how it is being correctly used in varying situations (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). Thus, teachers need to provide the pupils with extracts and examples of how the target language is used in different contexts. Furthermore, as a teacher provides the pupils with a variety of examples of the language the students' previous knowledge should be used as a background on which the new knowledge will be built with suitable learning strategies and methods such as focusing attention on relevant issues and finding out similarities and differences between the target language, first language as well as additional languages (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Cordon, 2015). Additionally, the teacher needs to provide the students with and support various opportunities for using the language by organising diverse tasks in which the language is used. Additionally, setting up the tasks appropriate language learning tasks requires certain levels of language proficiency as the emergence of learning requires various interactional processes established and maintained by the teacher, such as setting critical 'why' and 'how' questions enabling the space for learners to reconstruct and explore around the phenomena in question (Van Lier, 2000; Moate, 2011).

Furthermore, Stern (1990) highlights the use of language in the language learning classroom illustrating that learning happens naturally when the learners are provided with time and space for interaction in a class where all components of language learning are embedded, taken the social and cultural aspects of the language into account, too. Further, it has been illustrated that effective language learning can be achieved in a class in which the teacher knows when to step aside, providing the space for the learners' use of language considering output practice involving interaction and negotiation meaning, as each pupil is involved in developing a mutual understanding (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). Furthermore, if and when students are involved in discussions, it is pos-

sible to create an appropriate atmosphere in which pupils are willing to interact. Therefore, the concepts of communicative and sociocultural competence defined earlier in this study can be suggested to overlap in the language learning contexts as such language teaching setting that involves promoting the use of target language requires the components of the two teacher competences to act and develop simultaneously.

3.2.4 Managing the class

Managing the classroom and guiding along a lesson can be illustrated as an initial challenge that every teacher faces, particularly in the beginning of their career (Richards & Farrell, 2005). As contemporary studies (Borg, 2006, 2009; Richards, 2010) illustrate teachers' need for acquiring the basic tools for classroom management contributes to comprehending teaching as an act of performance, requiring practitioners a range of techniques and routines, such as classroom instruction and explaining as well as different ways to end the lesson. Furthermore, as contemporary studies (e.g. Borg, 2009) illustrate, the teacher's decision-making concerning notions of classroom management skills compounds from a cognitive dimension as developing and processing the skills involves the teacher engaging in multiple synchronised cognitive processes such as observing, reflecting, evaluating and making decisions of suitable actions. However, as illustrated, it is mostly beginning teachers who encounter the issues in classroom management as practicing teachers are continuously accumulating their experience and knowledge, and thus shifting towards the development of varying techniques and flexibility in teaching, which contributes to more automatized classroom management (Borg, 2009). In addition to the general, non-domain specific struggles such as questions how to arrange the class, a language teacher faces a number of additional questions that need to be considered when instructing in a foreign language, why classroom management can be considered as a language teaching specific competence. For example, a beginning language teacher needs to practice and test suitable phrases for opening a language class for certain, varying age groups, but through trial and experi-

ence, knowledge exceeds, and the techniques need not be thought that explicitly.

In addition to management elements illustrated above, language teachers face a number of additional factors influencing the classroom management. As Richards (2010) describes, language teachers practice in a very different context and in order to implement sufficient instruction, they need to acquire the appropriate contextual knowledge of the classroom and comprehend the shared interface between language and culture. The acquired culture-contextual knowledge will, in turn, enable, for example, a Finnish teacher to be an effective Swedish teacher in a class comprising pupils having 15 different cultural backgrounds, and thus, the classroom managemental factors can be seen to have a strong relationship with intercultural competence.

As proposed earlier in this study, several competences can be suggested to overlap, which is the case also considering the competences of classroom management and the use of the target language. Contemporary studies (e.g. Nation, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Carter, 2012) have illustrated that in learning situations in which the learners have not enough possibilities to use the target language outside class and in authentic settings, the use of the target language in classroom management, when properly planned and implemented, might operate as a very effective means of delivering input which enables the learners to acquire useful chunks of meanings. Furthermore, Nation (2001) proposes that classroom management phrases are an applicable approach when aiming to maximise the input in the target language as they involve concrete and highly contextualised expressions such as instructing the class what to do (take out your books, raise your hand if you know the answer), controlling behaviour (be quiet) and explaining activities (get into groups of three).

3.2.5 Intercultural Competence

Foreign language teacher competence is strongly related to intercultural competence since, as Kramsch (1993) has illustrated, language is always a part of culture as it develops within the culture. However, the cultural impact is always

two-dimensioned as language also affects the culture as well as is interpreted within a cultural context whereas the intercultural competence refers to the usage of appropriate behavioural patterns to establish a satisfactory dialogue between cultures (Olson & Kroeger, 2001). Thus, it is vital to consider culture when teaching a foreign language. Moreover, in the current state of the internationalising world, the conceptualisation of intercultural competence is being highlighted as one of the most important outcomes of languages learning and it should be embedded in all learning and teaching (POPS2014; Zilliacus, Holm, & Sahlström, 2017). In regard of this, intercultural competence can be considered as a significant competence of a teacher in the increasingly multicultural modern society in which a teacher needs an ability to run this dialogue to solve pedagogical issues in the most effective way (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Stronge, 2018). Furthermore, as the language learners' outcome is to achieve intercultural competence, the teacher needs to foster such environment of intercultural education and in which it is possible for the learners to reach the goals. Thus, as contemporary research suggests (e.g. Holm & Zilliacus, 2009; Grant, 2016) intercultural education consists of a various issues and actions that cannot be differentiated from one other, influencing the majoring role of a teacher's intercultural competence. The cruciality of the element in the composition of language teacher competences can be highlighted further when illustrating that the eventual goal of a learner's intercultural competence and, on the other hand, the goal of intercultural language teaching is to help the individuals to make a swift from a simple perspective of the world towards the understanding of multicultural world consisting of varying cultures, languages and individuals. However, for a long time it has been a shared belief that the best way to learn about a foreign culture was to be 'exposed' to it through, for example, study abroad (Kramsch, 1991). Nevertheless, existing studies (e.g. Kramsch, 1991) have suggested that this kind of 'being exposed to a culture' does not necessarily lead to a better cross-cultural understanding, which leads to the significance of a teacher's intercultural competence in providing the learners with settings in which

they can have an access to means of improving their own cultural understanding and the interface between language and culture (Coulby, 2006).

Considering the cruciality of the teacher's intercultural competence, it is significant to comprehend the broad field the competence covers. As it has been illustrated (Larsen-Freeman, 2003) a teacher's intercultural competence can be identified in such pedagogic methods and decisions in practice which involve working with authentic texts and include tasks targeted at enabling success in communication and interaction that acknowledges varying cultural manners. Thus, language classes are a construction of interactive and learner-involving tasks such as role plays, in which intercultural communication specialities are realised and taken into consideration.

Concluding, even though the specific language teacher competences and their characteristics can be described and discussed separately as illustrated above, it is most significant to take into account that, in practice, the various competences do not act separately but co-ordinately, overlapping and influencing one another. Furthermore, as Tynjälä (2006) illustrates, it is important that the different competences work in corroboration as different components of the whole didactic knowledge, as that is the requirement for acting as a professional, enabling the maximised possibilities for the learners. For example, when pondering the amount of the target language used in the classroom, as well as how it is being used, i.e. considering the aspect of promoting the use of language and the materials and methods applied in the class, teachers need to be aware of the students' needs and capabilities. Furthermore, as illustrated earlier, attending individual pupils' needs connects deeply with addressing their varying backgrounds which, in turn, requires the intercultural competence. On the other hand, teacher's intercultural competence in designing intercultural teaching involves additional competences such as lesson planning. In regard of this, each competence can be illustrated to include and involve other competences but, in turn, a certain competence can be more clearly identified in particular parts of teachers' practice.

Furthermore, it is significant to acknowledge that a teacher's practice is not only actions, realisation of the above illustrated competencies, but an on-going, dynamic cycle in which the teacher's beliefs influence the competences that will be realised in teacher's actions. Moreover, considering the dynamic interface, the teacher's practice in action will further reinforce, or in turn, undermine certain beliefs which will affect the future practice.

4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this chapter I will outline the purpose of this study and what kind of research questions I am intending to answer in this study.

The aim of the research is to find out and examine practicing Swedish language teachers' beliefs of important teacher competences. The emphasis is on the teachers' beliefs; how they illustrate their beliefs important teacher competences. Moreover, the study intends to find out whether these beliefs of significant competences highlight more non-domain-specific, general teacher competences or more domain, language teacher specific competences.

Furthermore, as suggested earlier in this study, beliefs play a major role in shaping any action a human does. Thus, the second aim of the study is to investigate whether the expressed beliefs of teacher competences appear in and contribute to the Swedish language teachers' actual classroom practices. In the light of these issues the major research task compounded is to understand *How Swedish language teachers illustrate their beliefs of important teacher competences and do these beliefs correspond with their actual practice?* To approach the issue, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) What kinds of non-domain specific and language teacher specific competencies teachers believe as important as a language teacher?

2) Do the beliefs of the competences resonate with the teachers' current classroom realities and practices?

The purpose of the first sub question is to find out the competencies that the participants believe as significant for a teacher, considering the competences valid across the subject matter, and, in turn, the particular needs and requirements for a language teacher. Further, the second sub question intends to exam-

ine whether the beliefs correspond with the teachers' practice and actual teaching with an interest to find out if there are certain patterns of what kinds of competences might (not) be realised in the classroom practice.

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

5.1 The Participants and the Setting

The data consists of video recordings of teachers' instruction and individual interviews based on each recording implemented during autumn 2018. The six participants were all female teachers from the same Finnish-speaking municipality in south-west Finland. All the participants teach Swedish in public primary schools, but they implement their practice in four different schools, and one of the participants teaches additionally in a secondary school. Three of the participants are class teachers as their major professions, teaching Swedish only a couple of lessons a week, whereas three of the teachers are language teachers, teaching English and German alongside Swedish. All the six participants are experienced teachers, having been teaching at least ten years but their Swedish teaching experience varies a lot as some of them started the Swedish teaching in the autumn 2017 as the language became obligatory to study for all primary school pupils according to the new curriculum of Finnish basic education. Furthermore, the participants' relation to the interviewer varied as some of them had met the interviewer beforehand at least once while some did not know the interviewer before taking part in the study.

However, even though the participants do not share identical backgrounds considering the Swedish language teaching experience, the focus is not on their backgrounds but their beliefs and interpretations of their practice. When choosing the participants for the study, I contacted first the municipal manager of education to ask whether the municipality agrees with conducting the study with its employees. Having got a positive answer, I contacted the teachers individually. After explaining the purpose of the study and how it would proceed each of them was willing to participate. In addition to clarifying the aims of the study, the participants were made aware of the reliability of the study including issues such as how the gathered data would be handled. The

number of the participants compounded was six as that number of participants enabled enough data in the form of video recordings, observations and interviews illustrating various interpretations. Furthermore, the wide range of data considering the varied backgrounds of the participants enables establishing a profound base for the study, allowing several, thorough aspects on the research questions still enabling detailed analysis given the resources of the study.

Whereas the participants had various backgrounds, the basis for and the implementation of the study was identical for everyone, i.e. the participants shared similar settings for the interviews. Each teacher was first recorded and observed during one 45 minutes' language class they taught after which they were interviewed on one occasion during the following two weeks, allowing a little time between the recording and the interview, enabling reflection to take place, without any hindering memory issues to occur.

5.2 Data collecting

The context in which a qualitative study is implemented plays an essential role in determining the eventual (dis)ability of generalisation of the findings (Eskola & Suoranta, 2008). Furthermore, as the chosen data gathering method in this study follows the principles of the interpretive approach, the subjective nature of the findings of the study is enhanced (Willis, 2007). However, the purpose of this study is not the generalisation of the arising ideas but an in-depth examination of the relations between Swedish language teachers' beliefs about teachers' competencies and their instructional practices. In regard of this, the study thus focuses on the teachers' beliefs regarding their teaching practice in action, which justifies the chosen methods to collect and analyse the data on the foundations of qualitative study field. Furthermore, as Eskola and Suoranta (2008) have illustrated, the main purpose of a qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon that is being studied as thoroughly and deeply as possible and to understand the perspective the participants of the study possess, which leads to

the particular choice of using interpretative paradigm and stimulated recall interview as a precise methodology in this study.

5.2.1 Research approach

Interpretivism is a research approach deeply connected to the qualitative field of studies, and can be benefited with a precise methodology of recalled stimulus interview as both aim to deepen the understanding through individual expressions. An interpretivist approach comprehends and values the world as a human experience as the reality is discovered through the participants' views, experiences and perspectives (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Creswell, 2003; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2011). In seeking the answers, an interpretive paradigm uses those experiences and the participants' interpretations to construct and interpret the understanding from gathered data by allowing them to recall and reflect their actions through provided stimulus (Tracy, 2013). Thus, as a result of including the participants' own voices in the data interpreting, as well as considering them within the analysing process, it can be suggested that the interpretative approach enables an aspect in which various perspectives of the phenomenon are considered. Therefore, since the purpose of this study is to explore the beliefs of important teacher competences of a small sample of language teachers as well as investigate whether their classroom practices correspond these perceptions, the interpretive approach was a natural choice for the study. Furthermore, as proposed earlier in this study and existing studies (e.g. Calderhead, 1996; Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thwaite, 2001) have illustrated, the complexity of processing and making the beliefs explicit leads to the value of teachers being able to interpret and explain their personal views of what is important through examining self their practice.

5.2.2 Interviews

As illustrated, interviewing composed as an essential element in the data gathering process of this study. Interviews are used as a data collection method when the intention is to find out an individual's personal perspective, thoughts and opinions, and they can be structured, half-structured, theme or open interviews. The interviews of this study followed partly the principles of a half-structured interview, indicating that the participants were asked the same, thematically grouped questions. This kind of approach and the usage of an identical skeleton of questions is favourable when the purpose is to ascertain that varying question setting will not influence the answers (Eskola & Vastamäki, 2010, p. 28). However, the interviews noticeably originated from the basis of theme interview as the skeletons of questions were thematically grouped, and the order of the questions varied in each interview. Furthermore, not all the questions were dealt with as broad extent with all the participants, which allowed the interviews to proceed according to the interviewee's interpretations and aspects (Eskola & Vastamäki, 2010).

In addition to the above illustrated basis of a semi-structured interview, in order to capture the participants' voices and illustrate them as clearly as possible, the study implemented the technique of stimulated recall interview which has been illustrated to involve interviewing individuals simultaneously with playing them recordings of their own behaviour and asking them to explain and clarify the underlying matters behind the chosen acts (Calderhead, 1981; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Dempsey, 2010). In this study the aiding stimulus within the interviews implemented by playing the video of each teacher's recorded practice while asking the questions to enable the participants to thoroughly reflect and interpret their concrete, actual actions, rather than to make things up, with help of the aiding stimulus, video recording. The material for the provided stimulus was conducted by recording each teacher instructing one, beforehand agreed lesson, which also acted as a foundation for constructing the interview skeleton.

All the recordings were carried out in a similar way, with the help of an iPad, and conducted by the researcher. After recording the lesson, the study proceeded according to the principles of stimulated recall interview illustrated by Calderhead (1981) as well as Gass and Mackey (2000) as the participants were asked to interpret their own lessons and to stop the recording when they believed their actions illustrated some significance, and explain why they chose those actions as well as to implement the interviewing with the constructed interview skeleton. Any preparatory interviews were not conducted as the process of stimulated recall interview is largely based on each individual aiding stimulus, in this case the recording, engaging the participant to recall the actions that occurred, and to interpret the theory behind the choices by replaying the practice (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Tracy, 2013). Thus, conducting a preliminary interview when using the methodology of stimulated recalled interview is questionable, as to be effective, any preparatory interview would require the aiding stimulus, too. Therefore, the study process proceeded within a two-week time after the recording of the lesson, when each participant was interviewed individually while playing the recording of her practice, which constructs the actual data according to which the further analysis process is constructed of. Therefore, as the interviews in this study were carried out shortly after the video recordings by showing them to the participants' to explore how the participants' approached and explained their interactions in authentic situations as well as interpreted their beliefs and the converseness of the beliefs with their practice, the participants' own interpretations of the situations were not limited by memory issues as the videoing enabled the informants to take a step closer to the interactive situations.

The interviews, which were conducted in the afternoon after each teacher's school day, began by asking the teachers to describe their practice during the videoed lesson. The descriptions were further guided by the thematically grouped questions formed according to the observations based on the video recordings, as well as relevant theory. The covering interview theme was the different teacher competences which were further sorted out to three additional

themes. Thus, considering the language teaching context, the topics covered the usage of the language and the choices between different materials and methods realised in the class, and, on the other hand, nature of the language education. Furthermore, the question forms intended to compel the informants to illustrate their beliefs embedded in their communication and interaction with the pupils and such sections in lessons through which the believed significant competences were (not) taken into account. Thus, the implementation of interviewing the participants while allowing them to interpret their practice by playing the recordings enabled them to elicit their beliefs about competences from the actual practice.

As illustrated, the teachers were interviewed following the similar thematically organised skeleton and question pattern. However, teachers reacted to the played video recordings differently and recognised varying actions of practice, which influenced the interviews as the order of the questions and the time spent with each question varied. Nevertheless, all informants recognised their own actions and justified the choices made during the lesson clarifying in their own words what they considered occurring and why, relating to their perceptions of important competences. Furthermore, despite the interpretations proceeding in varying paths, similar patterns of perceived significances emerged, i.e. the participants motivated and interpreted such behavioural patterns that indicated related and similar competences, which the further data analysis incorporated.

5.3 Data Analysis

The gathered data was analysed following the principles of a qualitative content analysis. The definition of the concept of content analysis might refer either to a particular analysis method or to a more expanded theoretical framework from which several varying in-depth analyses can be drawn (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). The qualitative content analysis approach used in this precise study will be subsequently carefully outlined in detail in the following section.

The overall aim of a content-based analysis is to find that which is significant from a large amount of data and to organise it systemically into a compact whole in order to create a comprehensible and integral understanding of the informant's perspective. In comparison to a quantitative content analysis which counts the number of instances in each unit of analysis, a qualitative content analysis focuses on interpreting the data, analysing similar and different expressions in order to find the substantial information from the units of analysis (Patton, 2002). Further, the collected data is first abridged into smaller pieces after which it is systematically conceptualised in thematical groups, and subsequently arranged into a logical and coherent entity (Patton, 2002). However, as Tuomi and Sarajärvi illustrate (2009, p. 103), the content analysis operates merely as a means to organise the data in order to determine significant information into a compressed whole. Thus, the content analysis itself is not adequate to conclude the findings but to assist the researcher to re-organise the gathered data enabling to subsequently draw conclusions.

Content analysis is one of the most widely used research techniques in the field of qualitative research. However, rather than being a single method, qualitative content analysis can be divided into three forms according to the use of theory as a base for the analysis. The three forms of content analysis are data-based, theory-based and theory-driven content analysis. In the data-based content analysis the data is approached inductively from the aspect of the collected data, i.e. the analysis is not guided by the theory, but the goal is to form a theory based on the data (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 108). In turn, a theory-based analysis relies on deductive reasoning as the data is examined and explained in a theoretical framework as well as thoroughly investigated in order to encounter something that connects with the literal framework (Patton, 2002; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). The third method of the content analysis, theory-driven content analysis, can be acknowledged as something in between the preceding two as the coding process has a basis on the emerging data as in data-driven analysis, but the findings are applied in existing theoretical framework (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). In addition to the illustrated selection of analysis approaches, an

essential issue when applying a qualitative content analysis is to decide whether the analysis process concentrates on manifest or latent content (Patton, 2002). The former, the manifest content deals with the analysis of the visible, transparent components in the discourse whereas the latter, the latent content, in turn, operates at the deeper and more abstract level, aiming to characterise the underlying meanings of the discourse (Patton, 2002).

As illustrated, the range of selections when conducting a qualitative content analysis is rather wide, and the appropriate choices must be addressed respective to each study. Therefore, the method for the data analysis for this precise study was compounded a data-based approach as it allows the analysing process to ground on the data itself. Furthermore, the focus in this study is on the deeper, structural relations conveyed in the discourses in the gathered data. Therefore, in this study the analysis of the data was implemented using data-based, latent-focused content analysis approach as the analysis units and the concepts rising within the process are built based on the data, without applying it into a pre-existing literal framework or analytic preconceptions of the researcher. Furthermore, as the data-based approach proceeds from examples emerging from the data towards more generalised proportions, the approach can be illustrated as inductive reasoning (Patton, 2002). Thus, inductive reasoning leading to clarifying concepts from the data can be illustrated as a vital element in the analysing process of qualitative research. Additionally, Patton (2002) has illustrated various clusters in which the conceptualisation process can begin and proceed, as at one point a single observation can be solemnly separated whereas sometimes the observed notes are combined to establish more meaningful units.

However, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) have described a three phased progress according to which a data-based content-analysis can be illustrated to proceed; 1) reduction, 2) clustering and 3) abstraction of the data. The whole systematically proceeding process involves compressing the data into a contracted, abstracted size while still preserving the quality and significance of the data. Further, in the reduction part all the irrelevant is discarded, while there is

still no indications of the qualities of the remaining data, which leads to the further steps in the analysis process. After removing all the insignificant, the clustering part involves grouping the remaining data into categories according to the relations and similarities after which the abstraction part subsequently covers the process of coding theoretical concepts in terms of the initiated information (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009).

The data analysis in this study proceeded according to the above-illustrated standards of data-based analysis. First the data was examined to detect the most relevant observations and, on the other hand, to eliminate all the irrelevant data to establish a transparent, comprehensible dataset. Second, the remaining interpretations were categorised according to the content indicating on one hand, general teacher competences, and in turn, language teacher specific competences after which the analysis expanded on defining the responses into coherent entities. Subsequently, the answers with similar expressions were unified into coded subcategories below the two head categories. For example, answers indicating addressing the pupils when considering classroom management such as 'I know they can support each other when they are practising speaking but they cannot concentrate here' and 'Here, I have oral tasks, these pupils are working in the same group but when I am instructing, it is different.' were unified into a subcategory "child-rearing competences" of the main category 'general teacher competences'. Finally, the hypernyms such as "Managing the classroom and creating an atmosphere" were classified in consideration of the above illustrated subcategories. Therefore, as the coded conceptualisations of the categories are conducted based on the emerging data, the process of the analysis can be illustrated to follow that of the data-based content-analysis.

5.4 Ethical Solutions

This study was conducted pursuing the standards of good research ethics, addressing all ethical principles, decision-making and values the researcher pursues when conducting the study process. A general policy considering the eth-

ics in a qualitative study is to take a look at in three different ethical dimensions, the beneficence, respect and justice, in the respective study, and ensure the adequateness in all three (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). The first element to consider, the beneficence, relates to guaranteeing the implementation of the study process in a way that contributes to the research in a best possible way without producing any inconvenience to the participants (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). In this study, the implementation of the data collection, i.e. the video recording and interviewing was conducted without constraining the participant teachers in any way as the recording took place during an ordinary lesson after which the chosen method to interview the participants enabled them to freely interpret their practice and bring up aspects they considered significant.

Second, the respect and confidentiality dimension in a study refers to the anonymity of participants (Fisher & Anushko, 2008; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). When describing the findings, the anonymity of the participants of the study must be ensured by changing or deleting personal names and any additional information that might contribute to recognising or identifying the participants (Kuula, 2006). In this study the anonymity of the participants is guaranteed by giving the participant teachers code names when the transcribing started, continuing ensuring the anonymity through the whole process of analysing and reporting the findings. Thus, any aspect through which the participants could be recognised were deleted and not illustrated in the findings. Furthermore, the respect aspect covers guarantying the participants' knowledge about the research process and providing them with the possibility to disengage and leave the study on any occasion (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). Considering this study, each participant was explained the proceeding of the research process beforehand, and given the possibility to withdraw from the study at any point. Thus, taking part in the study was voluntary for the participants whose anonymity was ensured through the whole process, pursuing the respect principle in this study.

The third issue that Fisher and Anushko (2008) illustrate considerable in research ethics is the justice aspect. The justice aspect in this study overlaps

with above illustrated principle of explaining the study process as the justice relates to the transparency of the study. In this study, the whole research process has been made clear for the participants. Moreover, neither the gathered data nor the findings will be applied in any other purposes than the study agenda itself, and the data is preserved in a way that guarantees that not any third party will have access to that. Furthermore, the participants' justice is ensured as the analysis process or interpreting the findings does not categorise or classify the participants in any way, and the gathered data will not be given or presented to any third party during or after the study process.

6 FINDINGS

In this chapter I will introduce the findings of this study, i.e. the participants' beliefs of the important competences both, in general as well as subject-specifically, considering the particular character of foreign language teaching. Furthermore, those interpreted beliefs could be suggested to illustrate the ways in which teachers comprehend the nature of language learning and effective language teaching as well as how they consider their learners and their needs. Thus, the intention is subsequently to shed light on how teacher beliefs are realised and visible in the teachers' instruction. Thus, this chapter is divided into three sections; first I will illustrate what kinds of beliefs of competencies the participant teachers characterised which can be described as non-domain specific competencies; secondly, beliefs of domain specific competences, that is those particularly significant for a foreign language teacher will be illustrated. Thirdly, the findings clarify whether the significantly marked competencies resonated with the teachers' practice and if so, further what kinds of competencies corresponded with the practice and which did not. The competences that can be interpreted to arise from the participants' beliefs and analysis of them can be illustrated to fall into the two above mentioned categories both of which are in the further analysis divided into additional subcategories. Furthermore, considering the interface between beliefs and practice, the revealed beliefs of important competences resonated to a large extent with the teachers' practice. However, some patterns of inconsistencies between the participant teachers' beliefs and practices were found.

6.1 Beliefs of important non-domain specific competences

This section illustrates beliefs of general, non-domain specific competencies identified in the participants' interpretations provided in the stimulated recall

interviews. Although non-domain specific and language teaching specific competences overlap (e.g. Richards, 2010), the findings of this study illustrate that teacher beliefs of important non-domain specific competences were identifiable as they were illustrated by various instructional practices and decisions described by the participants when they were asked to interpret their practices.

Further, the participants' expressions illustrated a large body of various beliefs of teacher competences. However, as illustrated earlier in this study, some of the competences can be characterised as having more similar clusters than others. Moreover, the participants' answers exemplified certain clusters of beliefs of significant competences regardless of the content matter, described as Child-rearing competences and, on the other hand, Competence of Professional Development.

6.1.1 Child-rearing competences

As noted above, teaching involves beliefs of such general competences which relate to meeting and rearing children, and this tendency was illustrated in beliefs such as addressing each pupil as an individual as well as managing the classroom and creating an acquisition-friendly atmosphere. Although the competence of addressing each pupil as an individual can be considered significant especially in the language learning context, the participant teachers' expressions suggested the competence as linked to more non-domain specific characteristics as the example below suggests:

> Here, I have oral tasks, these pupils are working in the same group but when I am instructing, it is different. I know they can support each other when they are practising speaking but they cannot concentrate here, they have too many things going on [...] I change the order here, and this pupil moves to that place to work with that one and so (Teacher 1)

> I think that they are afraid to talk here because they think that someone is going to say they are wrong so I need to change the actions and courage them (Teacher 2)

These two examples illustrate the way in which the teacher believes in devoting her time and energy to the individual students' needs and personalities in order to establish the best possible learning setting. The teacher explains how the pupils and the physical class setting changes during the lesson, taking the various class activities into account. In other words, the physical setting of the pupils is different when something new is introduced than when they are practicing themselves, which is a way of guarantying that each pupil knows and understands what is going on in the class. Furthermore, by creating a variety of different class settings, the teacher aims to provide the pupils with an opportunity of practicing the language in the setting that establishes the best atmosphere for learning, which connects with other beliefs of general teacher competences, i.e. managing the classroom and creating the suitable atmosphere for learning.

> Here, you see they are all different, their personalities, they are not the same. This pupil here, in this class, she affects these pupils and the whole class [...] I have to think I am here thinking how this and this pupil can learn best (Teacher 2)

> Here I ask how their day has been so far and he answers that terrible then I ask him to tell why (Teacher 4)

Furthermore, in this example above the teacher's own interpretation of what is going on can be described as a way of visualising the belief of the competence of 'treating the learners as individuals' by showing interest in them as individuals not only as language learners. Moreover, the examples imply that teachers believe that the competence entails addressing the pupils as individuals and broadly considering their individual needs as well as the influence of the characteristics of individual pupils for the whole class. In other words, the teacher believes that each student brings something special and considerable to class in

terms of who they are, their feelings and their interests, which influences the whole learning setting, and the teacher should master these aspects of each pupil in order to establish the appropriate conditions to provide suitable settings for learning.

In addition to the expressions illustrating a teacher's belief of a significant competence of addressing each pupil as individual, the findings indicate other beliefs of child rearing competence, i.e. beliefs of managing the classroom and creating an atmosphere essential. However, as the following examples show, the participants' believed that the classroom management and establishing the proper learning environment correlate, share an interface and influence each other, being mutually important.

> They know each other in the class, they are familiar with each other (Teacher 3)

> You know at the beginning of the year, I try to get everyone to know each other […]and then we start working (Teacher 4)

> I allow them to choose their seats freely as I have discussed the matter at the beginning of year and trust them. We discussed that if they can concentrate on studying, they can sit where they want. But if they just play around and don't do the tasks, I said we would change the order. But, you see, I trusted them and it works here, I would say that we have a good learning atmosphere (Teacher 6)

The examples above illustrate how the teachers believes in the essentiality of creating the appropriate conditions before starting the actual content teaching, after which they enable students to interact with each other, which further on will benefit them in the language development. Additionally, as the expression illustrates, the teacher believes in the mutual trust between her and the pupils, as well as enhancing the pupils' agency, and how it affects the atmosphere and setting for learning.

> Here they are playing here but I don't yell here because I know it makes it worse [..] these kids they are playing because they don't know what to do that's why the solution is not to yell (Teacher 4)

> I know I might sound harsh here but it is needed. These pupils need this kind of discipline. They cannot work and learn otherwise (Teacher 6)

The participants' identified several means of classroom management illustrating the believed importance of the competence, such as varying the kind of speech used in managemental issues from gentle to sharper use of language. Additionally, as can be seen in the examples above, the implied belief involves the contextual knowledge of the class and individual pupils, as the teachers expressed for example, how certain pupils 'need' a certain kind of discipline, explaining the rather harsh-sounding instruction.

> Here you see I am starting to speak Swedish and they fall silent [...] they don't understand so they need to stop playing and fussing around it is a way of managing this class (Teacher 5)

Furthermore, the participants' beliefs characterised the overlapping and interfacial nature of the competences considering the linguistic choices regarding classroom management. The example supports contemporary studies (e.g. Nation, 2001) suggesting that the use of the target language operates as an effective means of classroom management. In regard of that, the example illustrates how the participant teacher beliefs that her use of Swedish plays an important role in managing the class and preventing the pupils' disturbance, as they need to concentrate comprehending a conveyed message.

6.1.2 Competence of Self-evaluation and Professional Development

As illustrated, a large amount of the expressed beliefs of significant competences was related to the ways of meeting the pupils. However, in addition to the above-mentioned child-rearing competences, the participant teachers' beliefs illustrated the significance of continuous reflection and development as well as

the means they are able and willing to use to reach the development, which corresponds with contemporary research (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Tynjälä, 2006; Johnston, 2009) suggesting that first, one's own believing in the potential for learning and development is essential, and second, there are multiple, varying ways in which this belief of professional development can be realised.

> I know that I am not that comfortable with my Swedish […] I need to work on that (Teacher 2)

> Here, I know that this might not be the best [...] But I know that so I can develop that. I see the thing that I need to know that I am not perfect, I make mistakes so that I can develop as a teacher. I see that a teacher can always learn more. I take part in different programmes and read a lot, I try to educate myself and become better (Teacher 6)

> You know, the thing is that here I make mistake, my language is not [..] I think it is important to improve and know how the language evolves. I read magazines and newspapers and I watch teenage programmes to know the language that is relevant and my pupils could use (Teacher 5)

The three examples above illustrate that teachers are constantly reflecting their practice, questioning their choices and admit their mistakes. Further, the extracts signify that the teachers believe such reflecting and questioning as significant for their professional development which, in turn, they regard vital. This kind of belief of reflecting over one's own practice, can be comprehended as 'theorizing practice', illustrating that the beliefs are able to provide a basis for linking the reflections to appropriate theoretical knowledge, and, thus, further professional development (Borg, 2006). Moreover, the example shows how the teacher believes in the importance of the various means of developing herself. Additionally, the teachers' interpretations illustrated the beliefs of continuously developing themselves in some particular competences significant for the current needs as represented in the two examples below:

> Technology is so important and it develops all the time, I feel like, I have just learned something, for example this new assessment thing, and then there is a new one. And then the pupils are so skilful, I need to keep up their pace. But then, it is many times when they get to help their teacher (Teacher 5)

As illustrated above, the teacher relates the belief of professional development to the constantly developing technology as well as the changes in the focus and criteria of assessment. The reflection of one's own skills is illustrated as she expresses a belief of how she has just acquired something when there is already a need for another. However, the example greatly illustrates the belief of the significance of having an ability to acknowledge the own non-expertise and taking a step away from the expert position in order to learn together with and from students who might have more advanced knowledge in the particular area. Moreover, believing in the potential of learning from the pupils can be illustrated not only to enhance the professional development but also characterises the 21st century teachers' vital competence of reflecting and modifying the practice and the varying role of the teacher in constantly evolving contexts.

6.2 Beliefs of important language teacher specific competences

In addition to the above-mentioned non-domain specific competences that could be identified in teachers' beliefs, the expressions contained also beliefs of significant competences specific for the language teaching context. However, as illustrated earlier in this study, the concepts and competences are constantly overlapping, and the child-rearing and classroom managemental competences as well as a teacher's professional development are as important as the identified language teaching specific competencies. Nevertheless, the participants' beliefs illustrated two dimensions of specific competencies of a language teacher, the more abstract belief of Understanding the language education system as well as the more concrete belief of competence of the Field knowledge. The two

subcategories contain further certain pattern-like emerging beliefs such as the Variety of used materials and the extent to which the target language is used in the class, which the following sections will detail in.

6.2.1 Beliefs of the language education system

As illustrated earlier in this study, some teacher competences are more domain specific whereas others can be validated across subjects and context. In regard of that, the participants' interpretations highlighted also beliefs of certain competences specifically related to language teaching contexts. Furthermore, these beliefs of domain-specific competences were identified in two subdivided categories considering differences in the depth and the level of abstraction. As the Finnish National Curriculum and contemporary research (e.g. Zilliacus & al., 2017) suggests, intercultural awareness and intercultural teaching is an essential part of beliefs in language teaching. In the light of this, it was no surprise that the participant teachers in this study brought up beliefs of the importance of intercultural competence as a part of the language education system.

> I try to bring something about Swedish culture each lesson but it's kind of hard not to create stereotypes [...] here you see, I have this Leksand's crisp bread and roe paste and the children are so excited [...] but you see, here they ask if I had been in Sweden, they consider it can be found only in Sweden, this is something I tackle as I really think culture is important but how to deliver it without stereotyping (Teacher 4)

As can be seen in the example above, the teacher believes in the link between the language and the culture, and the significance of culture in language learning. However, evidently, she considers the two as separate, comprehending culture as something that needs to be brought into the language class, which leads to her fearing that conveyed culture is rather a stereotyped image.

> I think the intercultural competence is just here, everywhere [...] I don't think it is something I should teach, but I think when I am teaching the

> language, the culture will be there as well. You know, when they are able to speak the language, they will be able to read magazines, have connections with the people and so on, like the language gives them tools for understanding and participating the culture (Teacher 1)

The example above illustrates that the interviewee believes the conceptualisation of intercultural competence as something that cannot be that explicitly taught, being just "everywhere", something that comes along with the language teaching. This kind of approach to culture in language teaching corresponds with the illustrations in contemporary research (e.g. Coulby, 2006), proposing that a teacher's intercultural competence is implementing such intercultural education that cannot be taught separately but as an embedded element in every action and decision carried out in the class. Thus, as illustrated above, the teachers believed in the importance of intercultural competence, which supports existing studies but the teachers' conceptualisation and realisation of the belief varied a lot.

However, not all the interpretations were correspondent with contemporary studies. Even though existing research (Richards & Farrell; 2005) has considered the contribution to the language education system as an important language teacher competence, the interpretations of the participants of this study did not illustrate beliefs of the loaded relevance of the contributing to the curriculum development. Further, only one teacher expressed her contribution to the local curriculum and its believed influence in her instructional decisions:

> You know the books contain so much more compared to the curriculum, I have been working on our local curriculum, I know that it is rather open, and teacher have the freedom. There are only certain points that need to be taught but these books contain so much more (Teacher 6)

The example proposes that teachers believe that the knowledge of the curriculum, and the possibility to contribute the contents of it, has a potential in shaping the teacher's practice. The teacher brings up the issue of books containing a

lot of subject matters that the curriculum does not require to go through, as well as the freedom that the Finnish Curricula provides the teachers with. Thus, she rationalises her actions of not using the book in large amounts as she determines her beliefs of books not equalling the curriculum based on her own work on developing the curriculum.

6.2.2 Subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum

As illustrated earlier in this study, various patterns of beliefs of essential competences could be identified in the teacher's interpretations. First, the participants' interpretations suggested the beliefs of importance of understanding the language education system as a rather abstract whole, considering the intercultural competence. However, the findings illustrate that beliefs of more concrete language teacher competences could be identified to a very large extent in the form of for example designing materials and curriculum. Thus, in addition to the abstract beliefs of the language education system, the teachers' interpretations illustrate on the other hand their beliefs involving the competent, concrete pedagogical content knowledge and the usage of a broad range of materials in language instruction. As illustrated in the examples below, the teachers' believed the competence consisting of not only creating own materials, but also being able to recognise the good in the ready-made, textbook materials, as well as implementing and adjusting them into practice when appropriate.

> Here I think, this text book exercise is really good, it works here. I think the textbook exercises are quite good but nowadays I don't usually use them as they are but modify a bit […] I think it is a skill to be able to use the text books but do a little twist, then the tasks are really good. Like before I didn't modify them but now I have more experience, so I can do it (Teacher 2)

> You know, I think it is the most important thing to know that you can use the textbook but also other materials, it is the skill to know the balance,

> you don't just need to follow the book, as it has good things but also not-so-relevant content (Teacher 6)

The teachers' interpretations suggest the belief that it is crucial for a teacher to comprehend when and how to use the text book exercises as well as adapting additional materials into practice when appropriate and possible. However, the example below illustrates a belief of a loaded significance of using materials out of book, suggesting that applying authentic materials and thus taking a step further from the textbooks operates as a means of making children more interested in the language as well as getting more in-depth views of it. Furthermore, the expression indicates the belief that using materials outside the book will lead to the better levels of meeting the objectives and achieving better learning outcomes:

> I took this children's story book with me as I think, when you have something special in the class, it makes the pupils more enthusiastic and interested. When you go a little bit out of book they see the lesson in a different way, they are more interested and they can learn more (Teacher 2)

> I think this is the matter especially in language teaching as the books are so full of things but we don't have many lessons. We need to try to just get the pupils interest in the issue, then they can learn more later [...] I have only two lessons with these sixth graders but here, as you see, they are enthusiastic, and that's why I do this and not with books [..] you know the books contain so much more, compared to the curriculum (Teacher 5)

Moreover, the instance above illustrates the belief of the competence of being aware of and knowing the content of the curriculum. As can be identified in the example, the teacher believes that textbooks need not to be gone through systematically, as she acknowledges them containing material not represented in the curriculum. Moreover, she believes that the limited number of lessons for language instruction as well as the beginner level of the learners' interlanguage

need to be acknowledged when thinking the amount of the target language being used, which leads her to trying to promote the learners' enthusiasm as the most important thing, as it leads to the willingness of learning more later.

> I use digital materials a lot, they are essential in my practice. I think without them my practice would be worse, they are a lot of help for example in providing models for pronunciation (Teacher 6)

> As you see, I use this computer a lot and it helps. But you, know the pupils use books [...] I would like to use more technology but we don't have the resources here at school. And these digital materials I use are the basic (Teacher 3)

> The technology is important as they need it so much now in their future. I think that most of them also like the digital tasks, so I try to book the iPads or computer class every now and then, but, you know, it is kind of hard as we have only twenty of them and you, know we are a big school. But you see, here I use my own computer almost all the time when the pupils are not speaking. To be honest, this teacher's book, I don't use it but these digital materials (Teacher 4)

The beliefs of the significance of the competence of using varying materials can be illustrated to cover the ICT competence, which was visible in the participants' beliefs. However, in the light of the various dimensions of a teacher's ICT competence illustrated earlier in this study and contemporary research (Reinders, 2009; Alanen &. al, 2011; Tondeur & al., 2015), the findings of this study indicate that teachers believed in the importance of all dimensions but as to the lack of resources, they could only practice according to the first aspect, i.e. use technology as their device, in for instance, providing models for pronunciation. The beliefs of the advantages of the use of ICT were visible, as in the examples above, both informants express the belief that they would provide the pupils with more opportunities of using technology, and thus support their de-

velopment in the ICT skills, but it is not possible considering the limited number of devices the schools possess.

However, an interpretation of one teacher illustrated a belief that the lack of resources affects her own motivation to learn about new approaches and ICT devices. The expression below exemplifies that the teacher acknowledges her inadequate ICT competence as she knows how to use and uses only the basics but the lacking resources the school has is partly responsible for her reluctance to develop further skills.

> I use technology but just the basic things. I know about these fancy Smartboards and so on [...] But I don't know how to use them and honestly, it would be no use for me to attend those courses as we don't have those things here and we won't get before I retire (Teacher 3)

In addition to the use of materials, the participants interpretations illustrate other beliefs related to the teacher's 'field competence', such as promoting the use of target language in class. Moreover, the example below suggests that teachers believe that language teacher's specific competences are related to each other as well as to the general teacher's competences such as creating an appropriate atmosphere (example), i.e. choices regarding the materials and activities applied in the classroom illustrate the considered importance of the learners' use of language as can be seen in the example below.

> So, we play this game [..] and because now they are relaxed [...] they can start to speak and they can use the language more naturally (Teacher 4)

As the example illustrates, certain choice of materials enables the teacher to establish a suitable setting in which learners' use the target language, in this case the playful atmosphere contributes to a more natural and relaxed use of language, which indicates the belief of the importance of promoting the use of the language. Furthermore, the belief of the significance of a tolerant, affectionate and friendly environment in establishing the setting for pupils' speech in the

target language can be interpreted through the expressions. The example below illustrates how the teacher suggests that if the appropriate atmosphere is not achieved, the pupils will not speak, using the intense word 'not possible' to propose her belief considering the importance of the learning atmosphere correlating with the pupils' willingness and capability for output:

> Before teaching a Swedish class, it's that you need to make sure that they aren't scared of Swedish because if so, that limits much. And then [...] it is not possible, it is so important to speak (Teacher 6)

Thus, the example above illustrates that the teacher believes in the importance of using the target language as one of the crucial competences of language teacher as she addresses the concern that the pupils' speaking is limited.

> As you see, I try to use Swedish as much as possible in the class, when appropriate. All these, when I give instructions and orders, I am giving them the model and maximise the input (Teacher 6)

> Yes, we try to speak together very much as you know, they don't hear Swedish outside the class that much. You know, English is everywhere but Swedish [...] that's why I speak much in Swedish and they speak too, but still I think it's not enough (Teacher 4)

Furthermore, the two examples above illustrate the teachers' concern of the limited amount of input and output practice the learners get outside the classroom setting, which leads to their efforts maximize the use of the target language in the class when appropriate. Thus, promoting the use of target language can be illustrated as important competence linked to two beliefs; first it is linked to a belief of a teacher's own use of language; and, second, it is related to a belief of significance of enabling the students' maximised use of the language in question. However, as the extract from Teacher 6 illustrates, the importance of maximising the use of the target language links with the child-rearing competences,

as it is vital to contemplate the appropriate amount of the target language considering the learners' individual language levels.

6.3 Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practice

The findings reveal that the teachers act in a varying cline according to their beliefs of important competences. This corresponds partly with earlier research as it has been suggested that teachers practice resonates with their beliefs about what is important, i.e. significant competences (González Peláez, 2008; Ruohotie-Lyhty & al., 2016). For example, the expression below illustrates how teachers' decisions considering different classroom arrangements are related to the believed essentiality of the classroom management competence as well as the belief of the competence of establishing an appropriate learning environment:

> Like here […] you need to establish the space for various activities. Here the pupils are in small groups of three or four in which they can discuss and share their experiences (Teacher 1)

It can be illustrated that in the example the teacher acknowledges the classroom management as an important competence which, further on, corresponds with how she actually implements her practice through arranging the pupils in different ways in order to meet the pupils and take care of them as well as to be able to instruct them in the best possible way.

However, despite the fact that in general, the participants' beliefs could be suggested to resonate, some certain patterns of inconsistencies between the two could be identified, which will be detailed below.

6.3.1 Major role of teacher-talk in Finnish in the classroom

Even though the participant teachers addressed the importance of the usage of the target language in the classroom, the beliefs were rather contrary in compar-

ison with their practice. On the other hand, the phenomenon is not unusual as there is existing research according to which teachers easily maintain in the school language in class (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). Findings of this study illustrated that in general the teachers acknowledged the importance of using the target language as much as possible in the class. However, even though they described the significance while interpreting their practice, the actual amount of Swedish used in the class was rather limited, whereas Finnish, the school language, played a major role. The contrary between the believed and described importance of maximising the use of Swedish, and the actual implementation in practice was explained in various ways as illustrated below.

> Hmm I think it is important to have a lot of Swedish in the class [...] but when giving activity instructions or explaining meanings. I understand that I use quite a lot of Finnish but I think Finnish is appropriate to use to be understood by all pupils (Teacher 4)

> I think it affects a lot the learners and their attitude and knowing, I would use more Swedish but [...] I think my own skills are not that good, for example here, the pronunciation is such I think they would not understand what I mean (Teacher 5)

It is clearly visible in the examples above that the teacher believes in the importance of using the target language but thinks that foreign language is not appropriate language of instruction in all situations and contexts. These findings correspond with existing studies (e.g. Chambers, 1991) which illustrate that teachers comprehend the importance of using the target language but still stick in the use of the school language. Furthermore, the interviews revealed additional reasons of not using Swedish, as illustrated in the latter example above, the teacher is insecure of her own skills in Swedish, which influences the use of the language. She believes the teacher's use of the target language essential in enhancing the learners' attitudes and language acquisition but still detains in the use of the school language, fearing that her language skills are not adequate

enough. This corresponds with existing research (e.g. Richards & Farrell, 2005) illustrating that a teacher who believes herself to have an inadequate level of proficiency in the target language will face insecurity when practicing. Furthermore, the example below illustrates that the teachers does not use the target language in fear of losing the classroom management as a result of pupils not understanding the message. Further, even though the beliefs of using the target language in a maximised way do not correspond, the examples below illustrates the reasons behind, signifying the beliefs of such child-rearing competences as making sure that each individual understands what is going on in the class, as well as knowing the pupils' characteristics, as predicting the possible behaviour that might follow if the pupils lacked understanding the delivered message.

> Well, some of my pupils are so in the beginning of their language learning [...] That's why I think it is necessary to speak Finnish. They become frustrated if they don't understand and start making a fuss (Teacher 4)

> I use Finnish here as I want to make sure they understand this thing properly. If I start explaining this in Swedish they don't understand anything. I think they might not understand even though I explain it in Finnish, but at least I hope I think that they can grasp something, they have so beginner skills (Teacher 5)

Additionally, as illustrated earlier when describing the identified beliefs of important competences, the teachers in general believed the maximised use of the target language significant. In spite of that, the example above illustrates the teacher describing that she considers the use of Finnish more suitable in the particular section of the class, i.e. the grammar instruction. These findings correspond with contemporary research (e.g. Larsen-Freeman, 2003) proposing that despite believing in the significance of using the target language, teachers have a tendency to keep using the school language especially in the beginner classes. However, it has been proposed not only as a disadvantage, as the ap-

propriate amount of the use of target language is contextual, and teachers need to adapt and adjust their practice in the particular needs and capabilities of each class and setting (Larsen-Freeman, 2015).

6.3.2 Addressing the shared interface between language and culture

Most teachers clearly believed in the significance of cultural awareness. However, the term 'intercultural competence' seemed to be ambiguous for them and they considered delivering the cultural aspect not so important in Swedish classes as in other languages such as in English class even though it has been highlighted in contemporary studies (e.g. Zilliacus & al., 2017) that intercultural competence and education should not be treated as separate but embedded in every lesson. The extract illustrates that the teacher does not clearly comprehend that each language is linked to a culture, and to comprehend the structures of the language one needs to have the access to a culture as the she (teacher 2) considers Swedish culture being so similar to the Finnish one, that it does not need to be taken into consideration.

> I consider cultural awareness important but as a Swedish teacher in Swedish class, it is not as important as when I am teaching English [...] For me, it is that English culture is more different from the Finnish one and that's why we need to pay more attention to the cultural aspects in English class (Teacher 2)

> Well, this aspect of culture, we have these culture pages in this book and we go them through here now and then. But actually the culture and Swedish, it's not much different from the one we have here in Finland [...] you know some of my pupils have Swedish-speaking family and they are like, you know, I think it's not that important the culture things, than everything else we need to do here in class, there is not time for everything, you see here, the class goes so fast. If I would have more time or classes [...] (Teacher 3)

The example above illustrates that the teacher does not truly believe language and culture go hand in hand, but that the teaching and learning of the two as something different or culture as a part of language even though Kramsch (1993) has illustrated quite the opposite, highlighting language being a part of culture and developing within the culture. The example also illustrates that the limited resources, i.e. the amount of the language lessons, influences the cultural considerations, as, the expression 'if I had more time' and the subsequent pause in the speech illustrates. However, it could be suggested that the participant (Teacher 3) unconsciously acknowledges the shared interface of language and culture, as she picks up the Swedish-speaking family background of some of her pupils, and conveys the message that the culture can be seen as stating 'you know some of my pupils have Swedish-speaking family and they are like, you know' even though she does not finish the sentence.

To conclude the discussion above, teachers' practices and their own beliefs indicate that in general teachers act based on their beliefs about competences. In other words, teachers consider students' needs and they plan and implement classroom activities according to them while they might not explicitly think whether they are operating in line with their perceptions. However, participants considered language teacher's competence and the pupils' effective learning to have a relation to physical classroom setting as well as the chosen teaching materials and methods, and they acted accordingly. Nevertheless, the belief of importance of the using the target language did not relate to the classroom practices, as much of the talk was teacher talk in the school language, and further, not realised in the target language by the learners themselves. However, the teachers' actions are not always corresponding with the interpreted beliefs, but in a deeper examination reveals that there might be other beliefs that influence the chosen decisions and actions. For instance, while teachers are implementing their practices, they might not use the target language that much as they are addressing and supporting the learners as individuals, making sure that each and everyone understands the contents of the lesson, which corresponds with their beliefs of teacher's child rearing and emotional competence.

Moreover, teachers' statements while interpreting their practice indicated that the seeking of professional development was believed as an important teacher competence. Nevertheless, as it might come as no surprise, this competence was hardly visible in the classroom practice. Thus, the analysis implies that the teachers' beliefs of important teacher competences regardless of the subject, such as creating the classroom atmosphere, were more easily related to actual practice whereas the beliefs of more domain and language-specific competences such as promoting the use of the language were not in relation to what actually happened in the classroom.

7 DISCUSSION

In this concluding chapter the findings of the study will be summarized in brief, the significance of the findings is illustrated as well as the way in which the findings connect with existing research and perspectives after which the limitations and reliability of the study are discussed, followed by suggestions for possible further research as well as how the findings could be applied in practice.

7.1 Review of the findings and conclusions

The aim of the research was to find out what kind of competences Swedish language teachers believe as significant and whether and how those beliefs correspond with the teachers' actual practice. The two research questions were *What kinds of competencies teachers do believe as important as a language teacher* and *Do the beliefs of competences resonate with current classroom realities and practices.*

A teacher's beliefs of the significant teacher competences, including several aspects of non-domain specific and foreign-language specific competences, can be comprehended essential as they undoubtedly affect teacher's practice. Furthermore, considering contemporary research (e.g. Carter, 2012; Larsen-Freeman, 2015) indicating, for example, the importance of promoting the language use and a teacher's intercultural competence enhancing the learner's language acquisition the findings of this study are on one hand surprising as the participant teachers acknowledged the importance of the usage of target language in their practice but the dominating language of instruction was Finnish. On the other hand, these kinds of inconsistencies between the beliefs and actual practice corroborate existing studies (e.g. Chambers, 1991) illustrating that teachers comprehend the importance of their use of the target language but still the school language plays a dominant role in classroom instruction. Nevertheless, the findings indicating that the teachers believe in the use of the target

language but still apply the school language correspond with contemporary research (e.g. Larsen-Freeman, 2003) proposing that teachers have a tendency to keep using the school language especially in the beginner classes. Furthermore, considering the connections between beliefs and practice, the findings illustrate that teachers' beliefs of important teacher competences regardless of the subject, such as creating the classroom atmosphere, were more easily related to actual practice whereas the perceptions of more domain and language-specific competences such as promoting the use of the language were not in relation to what actually happened in the classroom.

Nevertheless, considering this study being a small-scale study, it has to be taken into consideration that not every teacher faces issues balancing between the use of the target language and the school instruction language. However, it is apparent that there is a tendency of inconsistency in belief and performance considering the use of the target language. Thus, even though it has been illustrated that much of teachers' actions is influenced by beliefs (e.g. González Peláez, 2008; Ruohotie-Lyhty & al., 2016), it cannot be presumed that each decision illustrates the teacher's perceptions of what is important. Therefore, what is even more interesting and observable as a contribution from this study is the way in which the findings illustrate the presence of various competences still forming distinctive patterns, which is not compromised by the relatively small number of participants.

As illustrated, when taking a deeper look at the interpretations of significant competences, certain patterns can be identified. First, each participant teacher acknowledged self-reflection and -development as an important competence. Thus, the present study undoubtedly corroborates the value of reflecting on one's own practice in order to be able to provide the pupils with the best possible teaching as well as acknowledging teachers' profession having the nature of continuous development and lifelong learning. The findings are also convergent with earlier research illustrating that addressing students as individuals is one the most important possessed competences for a teacher (Seedhouse, 1995; Larsen-Freeman, 2003 & 2015). Furthermore, the findings of

this study highlight the connections between different competences. Existing research (Nation, 2001) has proposed that conveying classroom management expressions in the target language is a natural and useful way to maximise the students' meaningful input in the target language. Conversely, the findings of this study reveal that the participants use the target language in classroom management not only to increase the input but also to activate the learners more as they need to focus on understanding the conveyed message instead of being able to play around in the class. However, the findings reveal that teachers use not only linguistic means to influence the classroom management but also physical and organisational means, for example by arranging the learners in different positions and groups in class according to the varying tasks.

In addition to the diverse competences illustrated above, pedagogical reasoning when choosing the materials in various language learning settings has been considered one of most significant skills of a language teacher (Richards, 2010; Larsen-Freeman, 2015). The findings of this study support the illustrated importance of pondering and choosing among various materials in the language class as the participant teachers of this study believed the language-specific field knowledge significant as their interpretations identified a various use of teaching materials, such as modifying book exercises and using IT, as significant.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the participant teachers believed the competence to implement their practice acknowledging the shared interface of language and culture, being highlighted in the Finnish National Curriculum (2014), too. However, the findings contradict in a way the conceptualisation of contemporary research (e.g. Coulby, 2006; Holm & Zilliacus, 2009) suggesting that culture and language are not separated, highlighting intercultural education as something embedded in every class, and thus, the teacher's intercultural competence embedded in every action they do as although the concept of intercultural competence was visible in teachers' beliefs, the findings indicate that teachers comprehended the term in rather different ways than the one suggested in contemporary research and outlined above. In other words,

the participants believed intercultural education rather as something that should be highlighted and brought into the language, not as something embedded in every action.

When concluding the findings, it is important to acknowledge, as illustrated above, the importance of the beliefs and their correspondence with the teaching practice itself. First, the answers illustrate how teachers' decisions in class are to a great extent based on their beliefs which essentially shape the way they approach their practice in the classroom. Therefore, it is not only necessary but even crucial to comprehend teaching as complex and dynamic action. Furthermore, it is vital to highlight the importance of awareness of the relationship between beliefs and practice as beliefs undeniably play a considerable role shaping the teachers' practice. Moreover, the value of being aware and bringing together two different frameworks of instruction, i.e. beliefs and competences, is vital as they contain such different orientations to making sense of teaching and learning as phenomena as beliefs are usually open-ended, whereas competences are more positivistic providing thus different theoretical frameworks for the nature of teaching. Furthermore, the point that by taking on the challenge of bringing these two different frameworks together actually provides greater insight into both beliefs and competences as the two do not work in isolation but are mutually influencing each other, operating as a continuous cycle. In addition to this, the findings illustrate that one hand the relationship between beliefs and practice are strengthened, and on the other hand competences are personally owned and informed, rather than techniques that are developed.

7.2 The reliability of the study and further research challenges

When assessing the reliability of a qualitative research the aspect is to some extent different from that of a quantitative research as the goals of these two approaches vary from each other too. However, when analysing and assessing the reliability of a qualitative study, there are certain issues to pay attention to. First, transferability is one the primary elements assessing the reliability of a

qualitative research, referring to the generalization of the findings in such an amount that is possible while taking the contextual nature of qualitative research into account (Eskola & Suoranta, 2008). As one of the characteristics of qualitative research is that it is not possible to generalize the results to concern any broader context, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all language teachers in Finland. On the other hand, it is possible to suggest the transferability of the results to other teachers having similar educational backgrounds as well as current contexts, i.e. schools and pupils, in which they are implementing their practice. In addition to this, although the participants of the study seemed to share similar backgrounds and thus being a representative sample, the possible backgrounds of having Swedish-speaking relatives and other social elements that might affect the motivation were not asked before the study.

The credibility of the study refers to the question of the equivalence between the participants' actual perceptions and the findings of the study (Eskola & Suoranta, 2008). In this study, as illustrated earlier, the data was collected by implementing stimulated recall interviews, which has its advantages but also considerations. As proposed earlier in this study, this kind of approach enables the participants to critically reflect their behaviour. However, regarding this study, it is essential to consider, whether the recorded lessons illustrated the participant teachers' every day practice. Second, although only a short time between recordings and interviews the teachers obtained challenges to some extent to recall what went on during the lessons, and the reasoning behind certain decision-making. Third, the interview questions demanded the participants to consider such issues that they might not had previously reflected upon, which, in turn, might have lead them responding in a way that do not necessarily complement with the unconsciously produced decision-making. Therefore, the compatibility between the findings and the participant actual perceptions cannot be completely verified.

However, the interviews were implemented during the autumn 2018, which supports that the teachers' current perceptions are equivalent to those

which the findings are based on. Furthermore, the interviews were implemented in a quiet place while playing the recordings, which enabled the participants to reflect their practice without any distractions. In addition to this, the familiarity with the interviewer and her role as a becoming language teacher varied among the informants, which might have influenced some of the answers. For instance, two of the participant teachers had been working as colleagues with the interviewer, and, thus, their answers may have been influenced by their perception of the role and attitudes of the researcher. Nevertheless, there was relatively calm and easy-going atmosphere in each interview, which allowed the participants to express their genuine beliefs in a relaxed way.

Further considerations in qualitative research, and therefore in this study too, is the researcher's own commitment to the study as the researcher has been illustrated as the fundamental criterion for the assessment of the reliability of a qualitative study (Eskola & Suoranta, 2008) However, the researcher's own commitment to the research questions can either be an advantage or a disadvantage considering the reliability of the implementation of the study. In regard of this study, the topic and motifs of this study are to some extent close to me as a researcher, and more essentially, as a future Swedish language teacher. Considering the reliability of the study, I have, however, purposefully assessed the reliability of the study during the entire research process from collecting and analysing the data to interpreting and concluding the findings.

Furthermore, considering the reliability of a study, especially as the data collecting and analysis is implemented by one single person, it is significant that the researcher's own perceptions do not affect the participants' answers or the analysis of the data. To guarantee this, the data collecting, i.e. the interviewing followed the principles of half-structured interview. On one hand, this kind of approach allowed the participants to answer as freely and truthfully as possible, and on the other hand, it ensured that the interviewer's perceptions did not guide the interview. In addition to this, the skeleton of the questions was neutral, and the researchers' own perceptions did not affect the interviews as each interview similarly formulated questions which prevented any word structures

that could guide the interview in the desired direction. Furthermore, playing the recordings while interviewing allowed each interview to concentrate more freely on the themes that each individual participant considered important, as the extent to which the questions were discussed varied between the interviews.

With regard to the considerations of applying the findings of this study in practice, it is possible to illustrate various opportunities, alternatives and benefits. First, the findings can be taken advantage of in language teacher education programmes and when planning the curricula. As illustrated earlier, and as contemporary research as well as the outcomes of this study suggest, the beliefs influence significantly the decisions, actions and inclusive behaviour an individual generates. Therefore, the perceptions and beliefs about the significant teacher competencies to great extent influence how and what kind of instruction a teacher implements but, as it has been illustrated and come up in the findings of this study, not all beliefs necessarily resonate with the actual practicum. However, the examples that the findings provide are interesting as they seem to be very closely interwoven between general and domain-specific competences. Furthermore, this tells something about teacher beliefs as well as provides a critical review on the theoretical framework of teacher competences. It does not necessarily mean that teacher competences do not exist or can not be identified or developed, but it does challenge the notion of 'general' competences that are anything more than rather superficial conceptualisation.

Nevertheless, as the findings of this study illustrate, the teachers believed in certain skills and patterns which can be considered competences. Moreover, it is the language teachers themselves who can be suggested to have the best possible comprehension what kind of competencies can be believed as most urgently required to correspond the needs of the modern society, which undeniably justifies these findings. Finally, as contemporary research (e.g. Fives & Buehl, 2008; Ruohotie-Lyhty & al., 2016) and corroborating findings of this study illustrate, the practitioners' beliefs and actions have a bi-directional connection, influencing one another, leading to the teachers' practice being in a

constant change. Thus, it is significant to hear and comprehend the professionals', currently practicing teachers' beliefs of what is important as well whether that contributes with the practice to be able to understand the basis of their teaching. Furthermore, these kinds of explorations and studies can be considered essential in order to develop teacher training as well as to answer the needs of the practitioners of language teaching today and future. Thus, studies such as this, exploring a practicing foreign language teacher's beliefs of competences, through enabling reflection, can subsequently help to establish projects on developing teachers' teaching in practice. Therefore, applying studies like this could help practicing teachers to contemplate between the expectations coming outside, and arising within themselves, and, therefore, help them to operate in the puzzling nature of teaching profession.

Therefore, aiming to achieve above mentioned outcomes, further research could be implemented using the similar research pattern in other Swedish teachers in other schools and parts of Finland to explore possible regional differences, as well as among just graduated teachers to investigate the significance of teaching experience. It could be highly interesting to find out the possible variety in the beliefs of the decisive competencies as well as their correspondence and, on the other hand in inconsistencies with practice, as this study was made among the teachers who had relatively strong teaching experience. Furthermore, it could be investigated with similar methodology but within the society of teachers of other foreign languages, whether patterns of beliefs that emerged in this study arise or not.

Thus, it could be explored whether the hypothesis about the beliefs of the notable and crucial teacher competencies as well as possible (in)consistencies are shared with language teachers across the Finland and with variety of teaching experience as well as across language boundaries. The confirmation or, on the other hand, rejection of such a difference could have important implications on one hand in reconstructing the teacher education, and on the other hand in the actual implementation of foreign language teaching.

REFERENCES

Alanen, R., Huhta, A., Taalas, P., Tarnanen, M., & Ylönen, S. (2011). Toimijuus ja asiantuntijaksi kasvaminen monimediaisessa kielenopettamisessa. [Agency and growing as a professional in multimedial language teaching] In E. Lehtinen, S. Aaltonen, M. Koskela, E. Nevasaari, & M. Skog-Södersved (Eds.), *AFinLA vuosikirja 2011, 69*, 23-39. Jyväskylä, Finland: AFinLa.

Alanen, R., Kalaja, P. & Dufva, H. (2013). Visuaaliset narratiivit ja valmistuvien aineenopettajien käsitykset vieraiden kielten opettamisesta. [Visual narratives and graduating subject teachers' perceptions of teaching foreign languages] In T. Keisanen, E. Kärkkäinen, M. Rauniomaa, P. Siitonen & M. Siromaa (Eds). *AFinlA-e. Soveltavan kielitieteen* tutkimuksia 2013, 5, 41-56. Jyväskylä, Finland: AFinLa.

Barnett, R. (1994). *The Limits of Competence: Knowledge, Higher education and Society*. The Society of Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (1999). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school.* Washington, DC, US: National Academy Press.

Breen, M., Hird, B., Milton, M., Oliver, R., & Thwaite, A. (2001). Making Sense of Language Teaching: Teachers' Principles and Classroom practices. *Applied Linguistics Journal*, 22(4), 470-501.

Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher Cognition and Language education: Research and practice.* London: Continuum.

Calderhead, J. (1981). Stimulated recall: A method for research on teaching. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 51, 211–7

Calderhead, J. (1996). Teachers: Beliefs and knowledge. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology*, 709-725. New York, NY, US: Macmillan Library Reference USA; London, England: Prentice Hall International.

Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). Interrogating the "native speaker fallacy;" Non-linguistic roots, non-pedagogical results. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 77-92). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Canh, L. V., & Renandya, W. A. (2017). Teachers' English Proficiency and Classroom Language Use: A Conversation Analysis Study. *RELC Journal*, *48*(1), 67–81.

Carter, Ronald (2012). *Vocabulary: Applied Linguistic Perspectives (Routledge Linguistics Classics).* Abingdon: Routledge.

Chambers, F. (1991). Promoting Use of the Target Language in the Classroom. *The Language Learning Journal*, 4(1), 27-31.

Cresswell, J. W. (Ed.). (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1994). *Research Methods in Education* (4th ed). London: Longman.

Cook, V. (2016). *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. New York: Routledge.

Cordon, A.I.F. (2015) The teacher's competence 'Promoting use and reflection on language' in an oral interaction task. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 178,* 94 – 99.

Coulby, D. (2006). Intercultural education: Theory and practice. *Intercultural Education*, 17, 245–257. doi:10.1080/14675980600840274

Dempsey, N.P. (2010). Stimulated Recall Interviews in Ethnography. *Qualitative Sociology*, 33(3), 349-367. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-010-9157-x

Dufva, H. (2003) Beliefs in Dialogue: A Bakhtinian View. In: Kalaja P., Barcelos A.M.F. (eds.) *Beliefs about SLA. Educational Linguistics,* vol 2. Springer, Dordrecht

Eskola, J. & Suoranta, J. (2008). *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. [An Introduction to Qualitative Research]. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Eskola, J. & Vastamäki, J. (2010). Teemahaastattelu: opit ja opetukset. In J. Aaltola & R. Valli (eds.) *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin 1. Metodin valinta ja aineistonkeruu: virikkeitä aloittelevalle tutkijalle*. [Entries to research methods 1. Choosing the method and data collection: tips for a beginner researcher]. 3rd edition. Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus, 26–44.

Finnish National Board of Education. (2014). *Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2014* [National Core Curriculum of Basic Education 2014].

Fisher, C. B., & Anushko, A. E. (2008). Research ethics in social science. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman & J. Brannen (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social research methods,* 95-109. Wiltshire, Great Britain: Sage.

Fives, H., & Buehl, M. M. (2008). What do Teachers Believe? Developing a Framework for Examining Beliefs about Teachers' knowledge and ability. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33(2), 134–176.

Fullan, M. G., & Hargreaves, A. (1992). *Understanding Teacher Development*. London: Cassell.

Gass, S.M. and Mackey, A. (2000). *Stimulated Recall Methodology in Second Language Research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ghani, R., Shujaat, S.A. & Iqbal, M. (2016). The Gap Between English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices. *The Dialogue*, 10(3), 296-311.

Grant, C. A. (2016). Depoliticization of the language of social justice, multiculturalism, and multicultural education. *Multicultural Education Review*, 8(1), 1–13. doi:10.1080/ 2005615X.2015.1133175

Griffin, P., McGaw, B., & Care, E. (2012). *Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills*. Dordrecht, Germany: Springer Science+Business Media B.V.

González Peláez, M. E. (2008). English Teachers' Beliefs about Communicative Competence and their relationship with their Classroom Practices. *Profile Issues in Teachers` Professional Development*, (10), 75-90. Retrieved October 09, 2018, from http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1657-07902008000200005&lng=en&tlng=en.

Holm, G., & Zilliacus, H. (2009). Multicultural education and intercultural education: Is there a difference? In M. Talib, J. Loima, H. Paavola, & S. Patrikainen (Eds.), *Dialogs on diversity and global education*, 11–28. New York: Peter Lang.

Hummel, K.M. (2014). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition: Perspectives and Practices*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Johnson, K. E. (1994). The emerging beliefs and instructional practices of preservice English as a second language teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10 (4), 439-452.

Johnson, K. (1999). *Teachers' beliefs: The rock we stand on. Understanding language teaching*. Canada: Heinle & Heinle publishers.

Johnston, B. (2009). Collaborative teacher development. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 241-249). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kagan, D. M. (1992). Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, 62, 129-169.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2003). *Teaching language: from grammar to grammaring.* Heinle ELT.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2015). Research into practice: Grammar learning and teaching. *Language Teaching*, 48(2), 263–280. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leung, C. (2009). Second language teacher professionalism. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education,* 49-58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McBer, H. (2000). *Research into teacher effectiveness. A model of teacher effectiveness.* Research report 216. DfEE. Norwich: Crown Copyright

Moate, J. (2011). Reconceptualising the role of talk in CLIL. *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies* 5(2), 17–35.

Nation, I.S.P. (2001). *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. & Richards, J.C. (1990). *Second Language Teacher Education.* Cambridge University Press.

Olson, C. L., & Kroeger, K. R. (2001). Global competency and intercultural sensitivity. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 5(2), pp. 116-137.

Pajares. M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. Review of Educational Research, 62, 301-332.

Patton. M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative, research & evaluation methods*. Sage publications Inc., Thousand Oaks, California

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C. (2010). Competence and performance in language teaching, *RELC Journal* 41(2), 101-122.

Ruohotie-Lyhty, M., Ullakonoja, R., Moate, J., & Haapakangas, E.-L. (2016). Teaching a skill or using a tool? Studying Finnish EFL teachers' beliefs about the teaching of reading and writing. *AFinLA* (74), 87-107. Retrieved January, 28, 2019 from https://journal.fi/afinlavk/article/view/59721

Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice*. U.S.A.: Addison- Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.

Seedhouse, P. (1995). Needs analysis and the general English classroom. *ELT Journal*, 49, 59-65.

Stern, H. H. (1990). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stronge, J. H. (2018). *Qualities of Effective Teachers*, 3rd Edition. Alexandria, USA: ASCD.

Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact.* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Tsui, A. B. M., & Tollefson, J. W. (Eds.). (2007). *Language policy, culture, and identity in Asian contexts*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Tynjälä, P. (2006). Opettajan asiantuntijuus ja työkulttuurit [Teacher professionalism and working cultures] In A. R. Nummenmaa & J. Välijärvi (eds.) *Opettajan työ ja oppiminen.* Jyväskylä: Department of Educational Research, 99–122.

Yanow, D., & Schwartz-Shea, P. (2011). *Interpretive Approaches to Research Design: Concepts and Processes.* Netherlands: Routledge.

Zilliacus, H., Holm, G., & Sahlström, F. (2017). Taking steps towards institutionalising multicultural education – The national curriculum of Finland. *Multicultural Education Review*, 9(4), 231–248. doi:10.1080/2005615X.2017.1383810

van Lier, L. (2000). From input to affordance: Social-interactive learning from an ecological perspective. In J. Lantolf (ed.) *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 245–259.

Willis, J. W. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: interpretive and critical approaches*. London: Sage.

Woolfolk-Hoy, A., Davis, H., & Pape, S. J. (2006). Teacher knowledge and beliefs. In P. A. Alexander & P. H. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (2nd ed,. 715–737). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Guideline for the interview

- The permission to record the interview is asked.
- The informant is told that the aim is to study the beliefs of teacher competences and the role of presented videos.
- How long have you been working as teacher? How long have you been teaching Swedish? Do you teach other languages as well? Have you been specialised in Swedish language?

All the questions are asked in the form as they are outlined below.

1. Language of instruction
-What is the balance between the school language, i.e. Finnish and the target language, i.e. Swedish in class?
-When do you use each language?
-How do you take different learners into account in your practice?

2. The materials of instruction
- How much do you make your own teaching materials and how much do you use ready-made materials in the textbook?
- How do you comment the contents in the textbooks and how they can influence the pupils' language acquisition?
- What do you think about the contents in textbooks and how they can influence the teacher's instruction?
- How much do you use technology in your practice? As a teacher, do you find technology and digital materials useful? What kinds of effects technology has if you consider language acquisition?

3. The Interface of Language and Culture

- Every language is linked to culture. As a Swedish teacher you teach the culture linked to the language as well. How do you approach the culture in your practice? What kinds of means do you use?
- What is your approach the delivering of different aspects of surrounding language culture in your practice? How do you comprehend yourself in relation to the culture as a language teacher?
- Is intercultural competence a familiar term for you? What does it mean to you?

Appendix 2 Haastatteluohje

- Pyydetään lupa äänittämiseen.
- Haastateltavalle kerrotaan, että tarkoituksena on tutkia opettajan kieltä sekä kerrottiin haastattelussa näytettävistä videoista.
- Kuinka kauan olet ollut opettajana? Kuinka kauan olet opettanut ruotsia ja opetatko tällä hetkellä? Oletko erikoistunut ruotsiin?

Kaikki kysymykset listataan alapuolelle kuvatuissa muodoissa.

1. Kieli opetuksessa
-Mikä on koulun yleisen opetuskielen ts. Suomen ja kohdekielen tasapaino oppitunneilla?
-Miten otat erilaiset oppijat huomioon opetuksessa?

2. Oppimateriaalit opetuksessa
- Kuinka paljon teet omia oppimateriaaleja ja kuinka paljon käytät valmiita ja oppikirjan materiaaleja?
- Miten kommentoit oppikirjojen sisältöä ja miten ne voivat vaikuttaa oppilaan kielen oppimiseen?
- Mitä mieltä olet oppikirjojen sisällöstä ja miten ne voivat vaikuttaa opettajan opetukseen?
- Kuinka paljon käytät erilaista teknologiaa hyödyksesi opetuksessa?
- Onko sinulle ollut itsellesi opettajana hyötyä teknologiasta ja digimateriaaleista?
- Minkälaisia vaikutuksia teknologialla on kielen omaksumisen kannalta?

3. Kieli ja kulttuuri
- Jokainen kieli on linkittynyt kulttuuriin. Ruotsin opettajana opetat myös aina kieleen liittyvää kulttuuria samalla. Millä tavoin lähestyt kulttuuria opetuksessa? Mitä keinoja käytät?

- Miten lähestyt kielikulttuurin eri näkökulmien välittämistä opetuksessasi? Miten näet itsesi suhteessa kulttuuriin kielen opettajana?
- Onko kulttuurien välinen osaaminen sinulle tuttu termi? Mitä kulttuurien välinen osaaminen sinusta tarkoittaa?
- Onko kulttuurien välinen osaaminen sinun mielestäsi opettajan tärkeä taito? Millä tavoin kehittäisit sitä?